

The “Particular Situation” in the Futa Jallon: Ethnicity, Region, and Nation in Twentieth-Century
Guinea

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ABSTRACT

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The dissertation begins with a seeming paradox in twentieth-century Guinean history: how did ethnic Fulbe, constituting some 40% of Guinea’s population, come to be labeled “neo-colonial traitors” in a country that was supposedly founded upon a broad-based, multi-ethnic nationalism? Less than two decades after Guineans’ 1958 rejection of membership in a reformed French community, Guinea’s first president, Sékou Touré, argued that there existed a “particular situation” in the Futa Jallon, the historic homeland of the Fulbe, that had caused the Fulbe to diverge from the rest of the country. Using Touré’s speech announcing the “particular situation” as a point of entry, the dissertation argues that the legacy of hierarchies rooted in the pre-colonial Islamic Futa Jallon state, contestation between African political parties during decolonization, and the partial failure of the post-colonial state’s attempt to create a “modern” Guinean society combined to produce a Fulbe fragment of the Guinean nation.

The dissertation’s first two chapters examine how the presentation and practice of chiefly authority in the Futa Jallon following the imposition of French rule resulted from the entanglement of local and colonial discourses, and how the opening of colonial spaces – markets, cities, and cash crop fields, for example – allowed room for marginalized groups such as former slaves and women to renegotiate Fulbe social hierarchies. The dissertation then examines how the practical work of building political coalitions as well as ideological debates about the meaning of modernity during decolonization led to the marginalization of Fulbe elites and the

conceptual “othering” of the Fulbe. The dissertation then shifts to Fulbe (self-)positioning within an emerging post-colonial order. One chapter argues that political, economic, and social reforms enacted by the Touré-led government marked the Fulbe as resistant to attempts at modernization, leading to the elimination of Fulbe elites and the designation of the Fulbe as “anti-citizens.” Another follows the pathways of Fulbe exiles, migrants, and merchants took after independence, arguing that the Fulbe diaspora created by repression shaped ideas about citizenship, political community, and belonging in post-colonial Guinea. The histories examined by the dissertation demonstrate that the current welding of political community and ethnicity is the result of Guinea’s status as a post-slavery, post-colonial, and post-socialist society, rather than the deterministic result of “natural” regional differences or the structure of the colonial state.

The dissertation is based upon two years of research in Guinea, Senegal, and France. Using previously neglected oral and archival sources in French and Pular, it makes several significant interventions in Africanist historiography. Countering temporal and conceptual frameworks based solely upon colonial intervention, I argue that ideas about ethnicity were formed and reformed throughout the twentieth century and that ethnic identities were shaped as much by local ideas as they were by the colonial state. I also argue that, contradicting portrayals of post-colonial balkanization, debates about the nation and citizenship after independence took place in both local and trans-national contexts. Lastly, while previous studies have often cast ethnicity and nationalism in Africa as inherently different forms of political thought, I argue that both arise from similar processes. The failure of the post-colonial African nation-state is often attributed to the supposed immutability of ethnic identity. The political history of Guinea, on the other hand, demonstrates that African politicians and parties used ethnicities as an “other” in opposition to which they articulated their own visions of the nation. Thus, Fulbe identification

and Guinean nationalism were in fact mutually formed and their histories closely intertwined over the course of the twentieth century.

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures	ii
Acronyms and Abbreviations	iii
A Note on Names, Places, and Pular Words	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Introduction – Situating and “Particular Situation”	1
Chapter One – “The Enigmatic Alfa Yaya”: Colonial Rule and the Fulbe Chieftaincy in the Futa Jallon	40
Chapter Two – Social Change in the Colonial Futa Jallon, 1897-1958	105
Chapter Three – Storming the Citadel: Political Parties, Ethno-regionalism, and Decolonization, 1945-1961	172
Chapter Four – Producing the “Particular Situation”: Reform and Political Conspiracy during the First Republic, 1961-1976	234
Chapter Five – Neither Home nor Abroad: Fulbe Migrants and Exiles, 1958-1984	304
Epilogue: Returning to a Post-Socialist Guinea	351
Works Cited	360
Appendix I – Voters in Guinean Elections, 1945-1958	378
Appendix II – The Futa Jallon, Guinea, and Fulbe in West Africa	379

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Registered Voters (RV) and Voting in Guinea, 1945-1957	378
Table 2: Voters by Region in Two Elections, 1956 and 1958	378
Figure 1: The Futa Jallon	379
Figure 2: Fulbe Regions in West Africa	379
Figure 3: Population Density and Major Ethnic Groups in Guinea	380
Figure 4: Administrative Map of Guinea (2010)	381

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFFPPG – Association des Familles Françaises de Prisonniers Politiques en Guinée
AGV – Amicale Gilbert Vieillard
AmbaFrance – Ambassade de France
ANF – Archives Nationales de France, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine
ANG – Archives Nationales de Guinée, Conkary
ANS – Archives Nationales du Sénégal, Dakar
AOF – Afrique Occidentale Française (French West Africa)
ARL – Archives Régionales de Labé
BAG – Bloc Africain de Guinée
BNF – Bibliothèque Nationale Française
BPN – Bureau Politique Nationale (Guinea)
CADC – Centre des Archives Diplomatiques, La Courneuve (France)
CADN – Centre des Archives Diplomatiques, Nantes (France)
CAOM – Centre des Archives d’Outre-Mer, Aix-en-Provence (France)
CARAN – Centre d’Accueil et de Recherche des Archives Nationales (France)
CEG – Comité d’Entente Guinéenne
CFTC – Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens
CGCE – Comptoir Guinéen du Commerce Extérieur
CGCI – Comptoir Guinéen du Commerce Intérieur
CGTA – Confédération Générale des Travailleurs Africains
DSG – Démocratie Socialiste de Guinée
EMGN – État-Major de la Gendarmerie Nationale (Guinea)
FGC – Fondation Charles de Gaulle (Archives)
FLNG – Front de Libération Nationale de la Guinée
FPU – Papers of Jacque Foccart, Fonds Publiques, Archives Nationales de France
FV – Fonds Vieillard, Institut Fondamental d’Afrique Noire (Dakar)
GEC – Groupes d’Études Communistes
GG – Gouverneur Général
JORF – Journal Officiel de la République Française
JRDA – Jeunesse de la Révolution Démocratique Africaine
LG – Lieutenant-Gouverneur
MAE – Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (France)
MDNS – Ministère de la Défense Nationale et de la Sécurité (Guinea)
MFOM – Ministre de la France d’Outre-Mer (France)
MIS-G – Ministère Intérieur et Sécurité, État-Major de la Gendarmerie Nationale (Guinea)
MIS-P – Ministère Intérieur et Sécurité, Police (Guinea)
PAIGC – Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde
PDG – Parti Démocratique de Guinée (RDA)
PRA – Parti du Regroupement African
QS - Le Quotidien de la Sécurité
RDA – Rassemblement Démocratique Africain
RGE – Regroupement des Guinéens de l’Extérieur
RGS – Regroupement des Guinéens au Sénégal
RPF – Rassemblement du Peuple Français

SEIS – Services Techniques du Secrétariat d'État chargé de l'Intérieur et de la Sécurité (Guinea)
SDECE – Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionnage (France)
UFG – Union Franco-Guinéenne

A Note on Names, Places, and Pular Words

Throughout the following text I have attempted to reflect the ways both historical actors and my present collaborators have used names, places, and Pular words themselves. This has led to some idiosyncrasies. Full names are often inverted in the Futa Jallon, at least compared to American convention. This means that names are sometimes presented in last name/first name order when used that way in conversations and historical sources: for examples, Barry Diawadou instead of Diawadou Barry. One is also faced with another challenge in regards to last names. The vast majority of Fulbe in the Futa Jallon carry one of four last names: Barry, Diallo, Bah, and Sow. There are variations in how these last names are spelled – for example, Bari, or Bâ, or, for those with roots in Anglophone countries, Jalloh – and I have sought to reflect particular spellings when necessary. The ubiquity of Diallos and Barrys has also led me to identify some actors by their first names in the text. This is not meant as a sign of informality, but rather to allow for easier identification of specific individuals by the reader. There are also varying spellings for the places mentioned in the text. I use the spelling that is common today, except when there is a change in status; so, for example, Soudan for the French colony and Mali following independence. There is also a town and region in Guinea named Mali, which I identify in the text if needed.

I prefer “Fulbe” instead of the Francophone “Peuhl” and Anglophone “Fulani” (or variants), as “Fulbe” and the singular “Pullo” are what are used in Pular. I have also chosen to use Latin script Fulbe spellings rather than their French variants: so, *kummabite* rather than *koumbabité*. Singulars and plurals of Pular words, which can differ significantly, are included in the text when necessary. I have, however, chose to omit implosive consonants for ease of reading.

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Introduction

Situating the “Particular Situation”

On August 22, 1976, Sékou Touré, Guinea’s first president and leader of its only political party, the *Parti Démocratique de Guinée* (PDG), addressed thousands of supporters in the “People’s Palace,” or the Guinean National Assembly, on a subject of critical importance.¹ PDG security forces had uncovered a new plot to overthrow the government. Influential leaders of the nation’s largest ethnic group, the Pular-speaking Fulbe, were accused of directing an international “neo-colonialist” effort to bring an end to the eighteen year-old PDG regime. By the time Touré reached the podium at the Palace, government forces had re-established order. Yet unease still lingered. While this particular plot had apparently been stifled in its cradle, more worrisome was the idea that Guinea’s largest ethnic community had supposedly, at best, stood passively aside while its most prominent members plotted away or, at worst, actively supported what Touré called the Fulbe “fifth column” of internal traitors.

In a nearly two hour-long speech, Sékou Touré claimed that the Fulbe as a whole had become traitors to their own nation, and offered three supporting arguments. First, Fulbe elites had always been “racist,” and their power and wealth was based upon the exploitation of others, mostly former slaves. Their fundamental character flaws, Touré remarked, had roots in the pre-colonial Futa Jallon theocracy and were exacerbated by the colonial distortion of chiefly authority. Second, the large number migrants and merchants who hailed from the Futa were traitors to an independent and supposedly self-sufficient Guinea, more interested in making

¹ The text of the speech was printed in the state-run newspaper, *Horoya*. See “Le racisme Puelh, nous devons lui donner un enterrement de première classe, un enterrement définitif”: Une analyse géniale du chef de l’État sur les activités criminelles de la 5ème colonne,” *Horoya* no. 2237, 29 August – 4 September 1976, pp. 8-43. The speech, entitled “Enterrer le racisme puelh,” was also printed in a collection of Sékou Touré’s writings, *Unité Nationale, Revolution Démocratique Africaine* no. 98, (Conakry: Imprimerie Nationale Patrice Lumumba, 1976), 178-192.

money abroad than building their own nation. And third, the Fulbe had never fully committed to supporting Guinean sovereignty, instead continuing to align themselves with neo-colonial powers and resisting post-colonial attempts to reform Guinean society. The Fulbe's compromised loyalty, Touré argued, had been presaged by the Futa's divergence from the rest of the territory during the September 28, 1958, referendum on the constitution of the Fifth French Republic, when Guinean voters chose immediate independence over modified ties with the French metropole. Combined, the three developments had produced what Touré called a "Particular Situation" in the Futa Jallon, a large plateau historically dominated by the Fulbe, that set the region and its population apart from the rest of Guinea and, Touré claimed, against the tides of change in an emerging post-colonial world.

The narrative presented above, however, stands in opposition to more favorable characterizations of the PDG-led Guinean nation put forward shortly after independence and, for some PDG supporters, still today. According to these accounts, during the 1950s, the PDG ushered in a broad-based, multi-ethnic anti-colonial movement that held the promise of fostering a strong national and pan-African identity.² Guineans' emphatic "*non*" in September 1958 and the country's formal proclamation of independence five days later signaled Africa's continued rejection of colonialism and the dawn of a new era. The Guinean state and economy was beset by crises almost immediately after the former colony's contentious divorce from the former French metropole. Yet well into the 1960s – and for some, even after the purges began – the dream of

² For early examples of this characterization of the regime, see *Guinée, prelude à l'indépendance* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1958); Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press 1963 [1961]), 227-235. For other studies written by those sympathetic to the PDG since, see Sidiki Kobélé Keita, *Ahmed Sékou Touré: L'homme et son combat anti-colonial, 1922-1958* (Conakry: Editions SKK, 1998); Sidiki Kobélé Keita, *Ahmed Sékou Touré, l'homme du 28 Septembre 1958* (Conakry: INRDG, Bibliothèque Nationale, 1977); Sidiki Kobélé Keita, *P.D.G., artisan de l'indépendance nationale en Guinée (1947-1958)* (Conakry: INRDG, Bibliothèque Nationale, 1978).

Guinean nationalism was kept alive, a beacon of light in an otherwise dimmed West Africa, particularly after the unceremonious removals of Kwame Nkrumah in 1966 and Modibo Keita in 1968 through military coup d'état.

How does one, therefore, square these two moments in post-colonial Guinean history that seem so out of plumb? Attempting to bring the Guineas of 1958 to 1976 into one conceptual and narrative framework brings to the fore more fundamental questions about twentieth-century Guinean history. How did individuals and groups in Guinea think of themselves and others as parts of political communities and state structures? And how did politicians, political parties, and activists seek to build durable and effective political movements in times of rapid change? The partial answers offered in the following pages shed light on a more particular question that has continued to shape Guinea's politics to the present: how did the Fulbe, constituting some 40% of Guinea's total population, come to be characterized as the anti-national "other" in a nation supposedly founded on a broad-based, anti-ethnic nationalism?

Themes and Arguments

This dissertation argues that the production of the "Particular Situation" was the result of historical trajectories tied to the articulation of the Futa Jallon as a cohesive political, social, and cultural field associated with diverging views of "Fulbeness." As a political unit, the Futa has ranged from an independent state to administratively not existing at all. Yet the Futa Jallon as an imaginary whole – as conceptualized both by those who lived there, and those who characterize the Fulbe-dominated region from the outside – has largely remained intact since c. 1726, when a *jihād* established a pre-colonial Islamic state in the region. This primary argument is comprised of two interlocking parts, roughly coterminous with the imagined boundaries of "the Fulbe," that describe the internal development of identification, the external construction of identifying

characteristics tied to the Fulbe and Futa Jallon, and the interaction between the two.

From within, the Futa has historically been structured by a set of social hierarchies that differentiated between persons of (formerly) free and non-free status. These hierarchies were at the center of elite privilege in the pre-colonial Futa Jallon state. They were transformed by colonial rule, in ways both intended and not, opening spaces of maneuver of persons of slave status but also ensuring the short-term political power of elites. During decolonization, hierarchies became a tool upon which Fulbe politicians drew in order to build political coalitions. And under the post-colonial state, they became the focus of intense reforms initiated by the First Republic government, which meant to erase elite and ethnic identification in order to make a uniform national political space but ironically opened up new pathways for persons of non-free status to adopt the markers of “Fulbeness.” The stiffness of social hierarchies within the Futa Jallon decreased over time – but they did not disappear. People with ties to the Futa Jallon might not have spoken (at least outwardly) of slaves and masters, free and non-free in the 1970s, nor did the Fulbe politicians of the 1950s openly style themselves as the representatives of the region’s elite alone. Yet, both in practice and discourse, social hierarchies were the structure through or against which individuals and groups in the Futa thought of and did politics.

From without, social hierarchies came to be closely associated with characterizations of the “Fulbe character,” ones that marked at first the region’s elite and later on the Fulbe as a whole as conservative, exploitative, and resistant to change. French colonial administrators at different times sought to co-opt and deconstruct elite Fulbe privilege within the Futa Jallon, and their first sustained contact with the region’s elites during the period of the protectorate proved to be an important stage in the formation of images of the Fulbe as a whole. Social hierarchies in the Futa Jallon – and their supposed immutability – became one of the defining battles of

decolonization, dominating other French-oriented anti-colonial discourses as the greatest social and political hurdle that Guinea had to overcome in order to leave behind its colonial past. After independence, when the PDG enacted an ambitious set of reforms in order to make the new nation-state “modern,” political leaders identified the Futa Jallon as the area most resistant to change, and therefore the most deserving of repression. Over the course of the twentieth century, social hierarchies – or, to use the political language of its critics, the “feudal structure” of the Futa Jallon – came to be associated with progressively larger portions of those who self-identified as Fulbe, until 1976, when Sékou Touré linked these ills with the Fulbe as a whole.

Thus, the Futa Jallon as a region – as both the “homeland” of the Fulbe and as the fount from which sprang Fulbe characterizations – marked the Fulbe as divergent from the rest of Guinea. The articulation of Fulbe difference, both from within and without, relied upon a series of historical developments across the twentieth century: the marking of the Futa Jallon as a distinct region; the association of the Futa Jallon with ethnic Fulbe, and in particular images of Fulbe elites; the uneasy and incomplete insertion of the Futa Jallon and Fulbe within an emerging Guinean nation; and the development of trans-national networks of Fulbe traders and migrants over the course of the twentieth century. It is within these four conceptual areas – the region, ethnicity, the nation, and trans-national networks – that this dissertation seeks to make broader interventions.

*The Region*³

The Futa Jallon is a plateau of around 1000 meters altitude comprising some 70,000 km² in total territory ringed by imposing escarpments (see Figure 1). As a “citadel” partially sheltered from the disruptions of the Atlantic slave trade, and a region in which Fulbe elites were able to

³ Unless otherwise stated, the “region” in this dissertation denotes sub-national units rather than the supra-national counterpart.

consolidate control both in the years preceding and following colonial conquest, the Futa's conterminous geographical and cultural boundaries have reinforced its status as a distinct historical and political unit. Other administrative and/or ethno-cultural units may have been constructed due to the practice and ideology of colonial rule. The high plateau's historical rootedness and continuity, however, sets it apart from many other more recently constituted territories in Africa, a fact that Fulbe intellectuals and politicians have often been eager to point to as a sign of inherent superiority.

The Futa Jallon is also one of the four what is often called "natural" regions of Guinea. It and the other three regions – the Basse Côte, Haute Guinée, and Région Forestière – trace their roots to 1920s colonial policy that wed geographic and climactic features with ethnic, linguistic, and cultural markers in order to divide Guinea into four administrative units.⁴ While Touré's post-colonial government divided the regions into smaller federations, state-sponsored cultural production still imagined a Guinea comprised of four distinct cultural sources from which a national identity could be forged.⁵ In the years since the PDG's fall in 1984, popular political discourse in Guinea has accorded a timeless, "natural" quality to the four regions, with many people pointing to this ahistorical division within Guinea's political structure as the root of an ethnicized national politics. In sum, over the course of the twentieth century, one sees a calcification of the division of Guinea into four distinct political communities based upon the paradigm of the ethno-region. For those scholars and activists hoping to counter the growing association of Guinean political parties with particular ethnicities, a trend that has, some believe, only accelerated since the country reestablished free and (somewhat) fair national elections in

⁴ Odile Goerg, "Couper la Guinée en quatre ou comment la colonisation a imaginé l'Afrique," *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'Histoire* 111 (2011), 73-88.

⁵ Goerg, "Couper la Guinée," 83-84.

2010, regionalism has reified divisive political, cultural, or social cohesion where no such phenomena existed previously. Pointing out the regions' historical construction, therefore, is an attempt to remove or at least reduce the prominence of ethnic identification as the prime form of political mobilization.

Such a narrative of colonial invention, however, only presents a partial history of Guinean regionalism, and does not apply uniformly to all four regions. Given its demographic importance and centrality in shaping both colonial and post-colonial policy, the Futa Jallon remains an important exception. Similar to other regions in Guinea, the linguistic, cultural, and ethnic terrain of the Futa has never been uniform, and the region still today is home to several enclaves of ethnic Djallonke, Coniagui, and Maninka. Unlike other regions, however, the Futa Jallon's elite almost uniformly self-identified as Fulbe. They all spoke Pular. And they practiced a specifically Fulbe form of Islamic religiosity that was used to justify their authority. Furthermore, the Futa was not cobbled together by the colonial state, but rather incorporated as a whole into the French empire in 1897 by a treaty of protectorate. Regionalism tied to ethnic identification did become more prevalent within Guinean political culture over the course of the twentieth century – although it is important to note the ebbs and flows of such a form of political community, especially after African political parties emerged in the wake of post-WWII reforms. In imagining four distinct ethno-regions that together constituted a unified Guinean territory, colonial administrators shaped how early politicians and political organizations in Guinea organized and expressed themselves, which until 1947 was predominantly through the paradigm of ethno-regional political organizations. And yet, in constructing the ideology and structure of their movements, regional parties drew upon intellectual and strategic sources that either preceded colonial rule or were not determined by a supposedly hegemonic colonial state.

More broadly, scholars have often characterized regionalism as a derivative or irredentist barrier to the formation of what became the dominant nationalist forms.⁶ Such an approach – which tends to both flatten and simplify the historical and ideological causes of regionalism while failing to recognize the range of political formations imagined by African politicians and parties during the post-Second World War period of imperial reform – fails to account for the relevance and durability of regionalist movements throughout the twentieth century. Discourses and practices connected to the region remained important both before and after independence, and in the case of Guinea and several other nation-states, continued to shape the trajectories of African states and societies long after the end of colonial rule. This dissertation takes one such regionalist movement for what it was: a fully-formed reflection of how individuals and groups both inside and outside the Futa Jallon imagined the division of political space within Guinea and attempted to shape effective political organizations. Furthermore, the history of political thought and strategy in the Futa Jallon demonstrates that not all regionalist movements took up the language of nationalism. Rather, Fulbe elites put forward an alternative idea of political community, one that was rooted both in pre-colonial legacies, the colonial politics of difference, and the particularities of Guinean decolonization, but one that at the same time resisted the dominant model of a uniform nation-state.

Ethnicity

Fulbe identification and identity in Guinea took on a specifically territorialized connotation over the course of the twentieth century. Historians and social scientists have considered more generally the foundation and development of social difference in Africa, most

⁶ For critiques of such an approach, see Jean Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine: Asante Nationalism in an Emergent Ghana* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 4; and Jean Sebastian Lecocq, *Disputed Deserts: Decolonisation, Competing Nationalisms and Taureg Rebellions in Northern Mali* (Boston: Brill, 2010), 23-24.

commonly through the idiom of ethnicity.⁷ Starting in the 1970s, interpretations focused on the role colonial institutions and rule played in the emergence and codification of ethnicity.⁸

Subsequent studies, in particular focusing on the Great Lakes region, emphasized colonial legacies in post-colonial forms of rule, highlighting the agency of the colonial state in shaping ethnic identities and constructing hierarchies between ethnicities.⁹ Mamdani points to the role colonial legal systems –in particular customary law – and a broader rule of difference played in creating structures of political identities based upon vertically ranked “races” and horizontally distinct “ethnicities.”¹⁰ Other scholars have examined the ways in which communities and

⁷ For a discussion of approaches to ethnicity up to the 1980s, and a general outline of the primordialist/constructionist debate, see Crawford Young, “Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Class in Africa: A Retrospective,” *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 26, no. 103 (1986), 421-495; and for another up to the mid-‘90s, see Carola Lentz, “‘Tribalism’ and ethnicity in Africa: a review of four decades of Anglophone research,” *Cahiers des sciences humaines* 31, no. 2 (1996), 303-328. Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper have pointed out the inherent limitations of “strong” and “weak” notions of identity upon which both groups’ approaches are based, see “Beyond ‘Identity’,” *Theory and Society* 29, no. 1 (2000), 1-47; and Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: theory, knowledge, history* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

⁸ Some influential early studies that accord a leading role to colonial rule in “inventing” ethnic identities are John Iliffe, “The Creation of Tribes” *Modern History of Tanganyika*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 318-341; Terence Ranger, “The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); and Terence Ranger, “The Invention of Tradition Revisited,” in Ranger and Vaughan, ed. *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth-century Africa: Essays in Honour of A.H.M. Kirk-Greene* (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1993).

⁹ An especially deep literature dealing with the legacy of colonial rule has developed around the colonial and post-colonial history of the Great Lakes region. See, among others, René Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Jean-Pierre Chrétien, “Hutu et Tutsi au Rwanda et au Burundi,” in Jean-Loup Amselle and Elikia M’Bokolo, eds. *Au coeur de l’ethnie: Ethnies, tribalisme, et état en Afrique* (Paris: La Découverte, 1985).

¹⁰ Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Mahmood Mamdani, “Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 4 (2001), 651-664; and Mahmood Mamdani,

individuals have used ethnic identification to their own ends, arguing that ethnicity can constitute and structure a moral community¹¹ in which individuals and groups produce their own ideas of custom and tradition and are the “brokers” or co-producers of their own history.¹² In these studies, both the “external” and “internal” influences on the formation of ethnic identity and identification are rarely incorporated into one analytical framework.¹³

Furthermore, studies that focus explicitly on the agency of the colonial state often fall prey to pared down or underdeveloped narratives, at times neglecting ideas and practices with roots in the pre-colonial past and/or arguing that ethnic or racial thought was fully cured, like concrete, sometime in the 1930s or ‘40s.¹⁴ In the last decade, a group of scholars have produced more explicitly historical studies of the development of racial and ethnic thought.¹⁵ While rooted

When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). On the colonial rule of difference in nineteenth-century British South Asia – which, in *Citizen and Subject*, Mamdani characterizes as a “halfway house” in the development of customary law (p. 49-50) – see Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: colonial and postcolonial histories* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 20; and Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 9-10.

¹¹ John Lonsdale, “The Moral Economy of Mau Mau: Wealth, Poverty & Civic Virtue in Kikuyu Political Thought,” in Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, ed. *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya & Africa: Book Two: Violence and Ethnicity* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992), 326-350.

¹² See Derek R. Peterson and Giacomo Macola, (eds.), *Recasting the Past: History Writing and Political Work in Modern Africa* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2009).

¹³ Brubaker and Cooper, 14-17.

¹⁴ On the phenomenon of “leapfrogging legacies” in constructivist approaches, and in particular by Mamdani, see Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 17-18.

¹⁵ Jean Sebastian Lecocq, *Disputed Desert: Decolonisation, Competing Nationalisms and Taureg Rebellions in Northern Mali* (Boston: Brill, 2010); Bruce S. Hall, *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa, 1600-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Bruce S. Hall, “Bellah Histories of Decolonization, Iklan Paths to Freedom: The Meanings of Race and Slavery in the Late-colonial Niger Bend,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 44, no. 1 (2011), 61-87;

in their particular historical cases, these researchers have identified similar processes: intellectuals and politicians of different kinds drew from multiple sources – local and global, before, during, and after colonial rule – in order to shape and contest ideas about belonging tied to race, ethnicity, and nation. In doing so, these historians have demonstrated that racial and ethnic thought was the result of processes – described as a modified circularity for some, or overlapping for others¹⁶ – that were not the deterministic result of colonial law or determined wholly by forms of colonial rule, but were still shaped by the circulation of texts and ideas situated within imperial frames. Lastly, these recent studies have shifted attention away from interwar “high colonialism” to later post-war imperial reform, decolonization, and early post-colonial consolidation, a period that is often neglected in studies that emphasize the agency of European administrators. Due to both evidentiary and historical determinants, this dissertation focuses on the brokers – meaning those who sought to mediate and construct their own historical narratives – of ethnic ideas, the central argument stands: histories of political and social difference must utilize dynamic models that recognize intellectual diversity.

According to the colonial state a hegemonic role in the production of Fulbe identity and identification, the latter’s association with social hierarchies, and eventually the politicization of ethno-regionalism is unsustainable. The structure, images, and practices of rule in the colonial Futa Jallon grew as much from local, pre-colonial precedents as they did from forms of decentralized

Jonathon Glassman, “Slower than a Massacre: The Multiple Sources of Racial Thought in Colonial Africa,” *The American Historical Review* 109, no. 3 (2004), 720-754; and Jonathon Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011); James Brennan, *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013).

¹⁶ For the former, see, Glassman, *War of Words*, 40-41; for the latter, see Hall, “Bellah histories of decolonization,” 62.

despotism.¹⁷ And while the colonial administration's (sometimes halfhearted) attempts at reform in the Futa Jallon opened spaces for maneuver – as well new mechanisms for exploitation – for persons and communities of non-free status, these herders, women, and former slaves often moved at cross-purposes to the desires of the colonial administration and Fulbe chiefs. Finally, while 1940s colonial repression pushed Africans to create publically non-political organizations, often constructing them along the lines of regional and/or ethnic identification, the ways in which politicians and activists went about forming these nascent political parties and articulating political positions went beyond simply cribbing colonial ideology and tactics.

This is not to argue that the colonial state had no role at all in producing the “particular situation.” In fact, while conducting research in colonial archives I was often struck by the resonances between the anti-Fulbe language deployed by the colonial administration and later PDG officials. Rather, I argue, an explicitly historical approach to the development of Fulbe identity and identification demonstrates that the establishment of the Futa Jallon protectorate was a break, but not a rupture. As such, ideas and practices connected to the articulation of ethnicity and political community resulted from a process of entanglement rather than, as has been characterized before, French action, Fulbe reaction, and the eventual disintegration of pre-colonial systems.¹⁸ During and after French rule, a wide range of actors, both African and French alike, drew from a variety of sources, including ones with roots in pre-colonial Futa society, to construct ideas of political community and ethnic identification. Lastly, it was not the interwar “high-noon” of French colonialism that welded political community and ethnicity in Guinea, but rather the post-war period of imperial reform marked by at times violent contestation between

¹⁷ Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 37-61.

¹⁸ Most notably by Ismaël Barry, *Le Fuuta-Jaloo face à la colonisation*, 2 vols. (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997).

rival sets of African political parties. Therefore, a host of factors including the emergence of multi-party politics, rather than simply the colonial system itself, produced the “particular situation” in the Futa Jallon.

The Nation

The other main contribution of these recent historical works on racial and ethnic thought is their contention that articulations of social difference based upon race, ethnicity, and nation emerge from similar processes and ultimately reflect a human predisposition for categorization. To cite Glassman’s argument: “There is no firm line between national thought and racial thought, and a racial paradigm of exclusion and dehumanization is implicit in virtually all nationalist projects, even the most liberal.”¹⁹ If, as Glassman does, one considers racial and ethnic thought to be a question of degree rather than type, it would follow that ethnic and nationalist forms of identity and identification spring from the same discursive well, are deployed in similar ways, and often inhabit, either in overlapping or oppositional relationships, the same political terrain.

Previous generations of scholars interested forms of political community in Africa, on the other hand, theorized a starkly different relationship between the two phenomena, often characterizing ethnicity and nationalism as inherently different, if not antithetical forms of political thought and mobilization. Some have argued that, being the result of particularly European historical development, nationalism in Africa (and indeed in the larger colonial world) is a political interloper, a “derivative discourse” and ultimately doomed to internal fragmentation

¹⁹ Glassman, “Slower than a Massacre,” 728. Lonsdale makes a similar link between ethnicity and the nation in *The Moral Economy of Mau Mau*, 462.

or eventual failure.²⁰ Another line of argumentation contends that “fixed” forms of ethnic identity with roots in colonial rule prevented the development of functional nationalist movements in Africa, or at least ones that incorporated widespread consent and a vibrant civil society.²¹ As both Young and Glassman have argued, though, such a characterization of the (dysfunctional) relationship between ethnicity and the nation simply recreates the conceptual framework deployed by the first generation of African nationalist leaders, men like Sékou Touré whose political programs drew heavily from the modernization paradigm. As such, politicians and scholars alike have conceptualized ethnicity as pre-modern, retrograde, and likely doomed to dissolution within the emerging nation, the latter which was seen to be the paragon of modernity.²²

Post-war Guinean history demonstrates that if post-colonial nationalism is based upon the articulation of difference,²³ then post-colonial nation-builders’ most forceful and visible “other” were often supposed “fifth column” groups like the Fulbe, products not only of colonial corruption but also of the failure to adapt or erase “handicapping” social structures to a “modern” state. Sékou Touré and other leaders within the PDG often chalked up their various domestic failures and international conflicts to the pernicious forces of neo-colonialism. In mobilizing evidence to support their claims, however, they often pointed first to internal traitors and

²⁰ Basil Davidson made the argument most famously for Africa: *The Black Man’s Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (London: Times Books, 1992). See also Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: a Derivative Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993 [1986]).

²¹ Bruce J. Berman, “Ethnicity, Patronage, and the African State: the Politics of Uncivil Nationalism,” *African Affairs* 97 (1998), 305-341.

²² Glassman, “Slower than a massacre,” 729-730.

²³ Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*.

eventually to the stubborn irredentism of Fulbe “racism.” It was against these anti-popular forces that Touré and the PDG most clearly articulated their vision of the Guinean people and national identity.²⁴ Mobilizations of Fulbe political identities have since seized upon perceived victimhood, which remains a key component of Guinean political culture to the present.²⁵ In this manner, rather than being antithetical formations, I argue that Guinean nationalism as shaped by the PDG and Fulbe deviation therein are in fact mutually constitutive. One did not develop without the other.

Trans-national Networks

Additional, larger contexts structured by trans-national networks also shaped the formation of the ideas about citizenship, belonging, and ethnic identification in twentieth-century Africa. Scholars have undertaken significant work on the development of ideas about citizenship within the framework of empire.²⁶ Far from developing into hermetically sealed national debates, though, debates over what it meant to be a citizen in a post-colonial nation-state continued to be

²⁴ Such an oppositional definition of ideology and identity is common to populist movements, including those rooted in both the political right and left. See Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (New York: Verso, 2005).

²⁵ Alexis Arieff and Mike McGovern, “‘History is Stubborn’: Talk about Truth, Justice, and National Reconciliation in the Republic of Guinea,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55, no. 1 (2013), 198-225.

²⁶ Much of the literature on ideas of citizenship in West Africa has focused on Senegal’s Four Communes. See G. Wesley Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics in Senegal: The Struggle for Power in the Four Communes, 1900-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); Mamadou Diouf, “Assimilation coloniale et identités religieuses de la civilité des originaires des Quatre Communes (Senegal),” *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 34, no. 3, (2000), 565-87; Rebecca Shereikis, “From Law to Custom: The Shifting Legal Status of Muslim *Originaires* in Kayes and Médine, 1903-1913,” *Journal of African History* 42 (2001), 261-283. Frederick Cooper has examined arguments about citizenship in the broader post-WWII French Empire (then Union and later Community) in Africa. See *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1945-1960).

informed by larger contexts after independence.

In Guinea, these larger contexts took several forms. One was the larger Cold War conflict, and Sékou Touré's attempts to navigate – and by doing so both profit and remain independent – between the East and the West.²⁷ Touré was also popularly known as a pan-Africanist theorist, and his vision of a unified and strong Africa informed both the PDG's foreign policy and the party's conceptualizations of political community. Less attention, however, has been paid to the role trans-national networks of migrants and exiles with roots in the Futa Jallon played in discourses of citizenship and belonging during the First Republic. These networks and flows have deep historical precedents,²⁸ but their growth in both flows and public prominence shifted their position within political discourses following independence. As the flow of Fulbe emigration increased rapidly during the 1960s, due primarily to a combination of economic malaise and political repression, PDG leaders began to mark the Futa Jallon as a region defined in part by trans-national connections. Networks of Futa Fulbe communities in Dakar, Abidjan, Paris, and further afield acted as a resource for both communities in the Futa Jallon who felt the brunt of periodic economic crises as well as political exiles who sought to secure their position in sometimes-ambiguous settings abroad. But the Fulbe trans-national community also served as a liability, with, as previously mentioned, Touré claiming that the Fulbe were more interested in making money abroad than staying home and building their country. Furthermore, the Guinean leader argued that Fulbe exiles were stooges of neo-colonial forces, and directors of a broader

²⁷ See Mairi Stewart MacDonald, "The Challenge of Guinean Independence, 1958-1971," (PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 2009); André Lewin, "La Guinée et les deux Allemagnes," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 210 (2003), 77-99; and Alexis Arieff, "Still Standing: neighbourhood wars and political stability in Guinea," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 47, no. 3 (2009), 331-348.

²⁸ Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, trans. by Ayi Kwei Armah (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Fulbe disloyalty. Either as a resource or a mark of treason, networks of Fulbe migrants and exiles played a central role in the PDG's articulation of the Fulbe as Guinea's anti-citizens.

In emphasizing the broader context of Fulbe communities as composed first and foremost by networks, and arguing that historians should focus on the structure and practice of particular networks in order to write broader histories, I diverge from previous scholarly approaches to the study of “the Fulbe” in West Africa. Scholars have often described the geography of Fulbe settlement in West Africa as an “archipelago” of communities spanning from southern Mauritania to northern Cameroon.²⁹ The Fulbe – also known as the “Peuhl” or “Fulani” – are, at their most basic level, a group of Pular-speakers who possess a connection with cattle and semi-nomadic herding. Early sources, most notably the Timbuktu chronicles, refer to the Fulbe as “pagan” raiders that harassed sedentary communities and larger Islamic states.³⁰ Groups of Fulbe eventually began to settle near – and intermarry with – settled communities. Most notably in the region that would eventually become Senegal's Futa Toro, after raids that developed into wars of conquest, Fulbe elites found themselves as leaders of states. Eventually, as was common in pre-colonial West Africa, these leaders converted to Islam.³¹ Sedentary, Muslim Fulbe, in turn, migrated to other regions of West Africa, eventually creating their own Islamic states. Over time, then, the Fulbe connection to their cattle and to a nomadic lifestyle became more imaginary than

²⁹ See Roger Botte and Jean Schmitz, “Paradoxes identitaires,” in Botte and Schmitz (eds.) “L'Archipel Peul,” *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 34, nos. 1-3 (1994), 7-22; Jean Boutrais, “Pour une nouvelle cartographie des Peuls,” *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 34, nos. 1-3 (1994), 137-146.

³⁰ Abderrahman ben Abdallah ben 'Imran ben 'Amir es-Sa'di, *Tarikh es-Soudan*, edited and translated by O. Houdas (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1964); Al Hajj Mahmud Kati, *Tarikh al-Fattash* edited by Christopher Wide, translated by Christopher Wise and Haba Abu Taleb (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011).

³¹ David Robinson, *The Holy War of Umar Tal: the Western Sudan in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 47-49.

real. Along with the relative latecomer of Islam, though, they constitute what Fulbe have often considered as the core of their states and societies. Similar historical trajectories played out in a variety of regions, first in the Futa Jallon, and then later in the Futa Toro, Maacina in Mali, and Sokoto in Northern Nigeria (see Figure 2). During the pre-colonial and colonial eras, Fulbe communities drew upon their wide geographic spread to build vibrant networks of trade, migration, and Islamic learning. However, such a geography of settlement has resulted more recently in marginalized communities within West African nation-states.³²

According to this scholarly analogy of the archipelago, “islands” of peripheral Fulbe hegemony, geographically distant and historically distinct yet still supposedly alike in type, are commonly surrounded by or in some cases subsumed within the “seas” of larger non-Fulbe socio-cultural communities. Such a characterization of Fulbe settlement and culture has led several social scientists to adopt a comparative approach when discussing the past and present of Fulbe communities in West Africa.³³ This type of work has produced fruitful analysis on shared aspects of Fulbe culture on each of the “islands,” the most notable examples being studies on the Fulbe concept of *pulaaku*, whose closest translation in English would be “honor.”³⁴ Nearly all

³² For example, while today Pular-speakers number around 20 million (though totals are contested), they constitute no majority or plurality in any post-colonial nation-state – except, notably, in Guinea. See Yaa P. A. Opong, *Moving Through and Passing On: Fulani Mobility, Survival, and Identity in Ghana* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 29.

³³ Most notably Victor Azarya, *Aristocrats Facing Change: The Fulbe in Guinea, Nigeria, and Cameroon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); and Marguerite Dupire, *Organisation sociale des Peul: étude d’ethnographie comparée* (Paris: Plon, 1970).

³⁴ For two of the most influential versions of *pulaaku*, see Marguerite Dupire’s comparative approach rooted in the *Wodaabe* of Niger, *Organisation Sociale des Peuls* (Paris: Plon 1970), 189; for the *Fulbe jelgoobe* of Burkina Faso, see Paul Reisman, *Freedom in Fulani Social Life: an Introspective Ethnography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998 [1977]), 127-129; and Reisman, *First Find Your Child a Good Mother: the Construction of Self in Two African Communities* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 201-202. Both Dupire and

Fulbe cultures in West Africa have some concept of the term, and most agree that it is central to Fulbe self-identification and society. Yet even *pulaaku* as an example of a commonality throughout West African Fulbe communities largely fails. As De Bruijn and Breedveld have demonstrated, there exists an important divergence in definitions and roles of *pulaaku* in West Africa, and the concept's mobilization as a sort of "essence" of Fulbe-ness is rooted as much in colonial ethnography as in local research.³⁵

An alternative approach, one that this dissertation adopts, is to examine the actual links that have historically existed between distinct Fulbe communities. Given both the depth and breadth of Fulbe flows of people, goods, and ideas – and the cultural, religious, and perhaps political imaginary to which they gave rise – an emphasis on networks and linkages might serve as the basis for a broader history of the West African Fulbe. It is important to recognize, however, that Fulbe communities have interacted frequently with other groups in their immediate vicinity. Thus, it is not sufficient to simply acknowledge that there exists a plurality of specific but closely related Fulbe cultures; one must, as De Bruijn and Van Dijk have argued, recognize that Fulbe identification and identity is the direct product of local historical discourses between

Reisman agree that one of the meanings of *pulaaku* is an "honorable" way of comporting one's self. It's important to note, though, that Reisman stresses that *pulaaku* is also a social category, mostly of free adult men, and does not attempt to develop a broader definition. For more recent comparative approaches to *pulaaku*, see Paul Kazuhisa Eguchi and Victor Azarya, ed. *Unity and Diversity of a People: The Search for Fulbe Identity*, Senri Ethnological Studies no. 35 (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 1993); and E. Boesen, "Pulaaku: Sur la foulanté," in Botte, Schmitz, and Boutrais (eds.) *Figures Peules* (Paris: Karthala, 1999), 83-97.

³⁵ Anneke Breedveld and Mirjam de Bruijn, "L'Image des Fulbe: Analyse critique de la construction du concept de 'pulaaku,'" *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 36, no. 144 (1996), 791-821.

the Fulbe “islands” and the surrounding “seas.”³⁶

Guinea

Scholarly work on Guinea since 1945 has tended to cluster in three general groups. The first seeks to identify the causes and legacies of Guineans’ rejection of the constitution of the Fifth French Republic in a 1958 referendum, an event that has loomed large over both academic and popular discussions of Guinea’s perceived divergence from other former French colonies in West Africa.³⁷ While it is hard to overstate the importance of the referendum, especially within current memories of Guinea’s post-colonial past, a singular focus on the September 1958 vote has in the past reduced Guinean politics during decolonization to the rise of the PDG. Furthermore, the grouping of most narratives into pre-’58 optimism and post-’58 failure has led some to adopt a modern form of political Marcionism, in essence portraying two Sékou Tourés and two PDG’s with radically different personalities and ideologies. A second, related body of work has focused in particular on the figure of Sékou Touré, drawing a line of influence from the party head and president to the PDG, and from the PDG to the post-WWII history of Guinea as a whole.³⁸ Both frameworks leave little room for examinations of political movements rooted in the Futa Jallon other than as proxies for colonialist forces.

³⁶ Mirjam de Bruijn and Han van Dijk, “Introduction: Peuls et Mandingues. Dialectique des constructions identitaires,” in *Peuls et Mandingues: Dialectique des constructions identitaires*, de Bruijn and van Dijk eds. (Paris: Karthala, 1997), 13-29.

³⁷ Ruth Schachter Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 219-54; Elizabeth Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005); Elizabeth Schmidt, “Anticolonial Nationalism in French West Africa: What Made Guinea Unique?,” *African Studies Review* 52, no. 2 (2009), 1-34.

³⁸ See, in particular, Sidiki Kobélé Keita, *Ahmed Sékou Touré: L’homme et son combat anti-colonial, 1922-1958*; and Sidiki Kobélé Keita, *Ahmed Sékou Touré, l’homme du 28 Septembre 1958*; but also André Lewin, *Ahmed Sékou Touré (1922-1984), Président de la Guinée de 1958 à 1984*, 7 vols. (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2010).

A third pair of studies produced by McGovern and Straker examine PDG-led social engineering in the post-colonial Forest Region, the former through the lens of the demystification campaign and the latter through state-mandated popular theatre.³⁹ Straker argues that the relationship between officials in Conakry and communities in Macenta and N'Zérékoré were shaped by the peripheral status of the Forest Region in relation to both the capital and other regions in Guinea.⁴⁰ This position on the margins of the Guinean nation marked the Forest Region and its inhabitants as prime targets for state-directed transformation. In order to do so, as McGovern explains, the Guinean state focused generally on exploiting inter-generational and gender conflict and more specifically on breaking power associations and objects in order to effect change.⁴¹ The result of the Socialist revolution coming to the Forest was a set of contradictory political identifications that marked communities in the region as both part of the Guinean nation yet at the same time an “other” in opposition to which the rest of Guinea positioned itself.

In the Futa Jallon, similar reforms enacted by the PDG envisioned the same ends as those in the Forest region: the forging of a new Guinean society that left behind what PDG officials called the “handicapping practices” of the past. However, the main defining feature of Futa society as diagnosed by colonial and PDG officials – namely, the set of social hierarchies that established and maintained elite privilege in the region – proved to be stubbornly durable and

³⁹ Jay Straker, *Youth, Nationalism, and the Guinean Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); Mike McGovern, *Unmasking the State: Making Guinea Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

⁴⁰ Straker, *Youth, Nationalism, and the Guinean Revolution*, 107-132.

⁴¹ McGovern, *Unmasking the State*, 167-194.

generative of an elite capable of mounting an organized opposition.⁴² Thus, the policies enacted by the PDG starting with the establishment of the party's control over internal self-rule in 1957 sought first and foremost to break these hierarchies and then, as a secondary goal, to transform Futa society. The stakes for gaining control over the Futa were different from the rest of Guinea, and so, therefore, were both the implementation and results of attempted reform.

Drawing from recent studies on the history of ethnic and racial thought, I adopt an explicitly historical approach that examines how ideas and practices the informed the construction of political community in Guinea unfolded and transformed over time. In doing so, I characterize this process as one defined by entanglement rather than continuity or colonial rupture.⁴³ Such an approach highlights where and when specific lines of argumentation emerged, how they were used and transformed by subsequent actors, and how some eventually developed into unquestionably accepted "truths." At the same time, I am also interested in how ideas both sprung from and molded forms of political mobilization, ones that often came to shape the internal fractures of post-colonial Guinea. Together, I argue, the two conceptual fields – idea and

⁴² In highlighting the importance of reform in the Futa Jallon and the breaking of the region's elites to the PDG government, I depart from Straker's analysis, which argues that Touré conceived social hierarchies (or "feudalism") as left in the past – although not without troublesome legacies – while the perceived chaotic order of "fetishism" in the Forest Region was much more troublesome to the PDG. The significant resources the PDG devoted to transforming the Futa Jallon and Touré and allies' methodical effort to eliminate the region's political elite would imply otherwise. Nevertheless, both regions were considered much more problematic than Haute Guinée and the Basse Côte. Straker, *Youth, Nationalism, and the Guinean Revolution*, 121-122.

⁴³ On entanglement as a fundamental feature of African history, see Carolyn Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 3-4; Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 16; Lynn M. Thomas, *The Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 17-20; and Julie Livingston *Debility and Moral Imagination in Botswana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 5.

practice, discourse and strategy – resonated and combined with one another in order to produce the “particular situation.”

The heart of the project, though, remains the Futa Jallon. As such, some historical background is in order before embarking on the more detailed analyses and arguments presented in the following chapters.

The Futa Jallon

Ethnic Fulbe dominance in the Futa Jallon can be traced back to c. 1726. In that year, a coalition of nine extended families led a *jihad* against the non-Muslim state on the high plateau, hoping to both end the exactions of the ethnic Djallonke ruling elite and to cement Islam as the defining religious and political model in the region.⁴⁴ Historians have disagreed over the causes of the Islamic revolution. Barry contends that its leadership was multi-ethnic and acting in reaction to the upheaval unleashed by Senegambia’s incorporation into Atlantic trade networks, while Robinson emphasizes the rise of a new Muslim Fulbe identity that broke from a nomadic and non-Muslim past.⁴⁵ By the end of the eighteenth century, however, the initial character and ethnic composition of the revolution mattered little. The small religious and political elite that controlled the state self-identified as Fulbe, and legitimized its rule by displaying their status as both Muslims and free Fulbe. While Islamic clerics tied to particular ethnic groups enjoyed a privileged status, a combination of religious and Fulbe cultural markers determined one’s position within Futa Jallon society.

Elite Fulbe privilege was propped up by sets of social hierarchies which shaped

⁴⁴ Walter Rodney, “Jihad and Social Revolution in the Futa Djalon in the Eighteenth Century,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 4, no. 2 (June 1968), 275-277.

⁴⁵ Cf. Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, 95-102; and Robinson, *The Holy War of Umar Tal*, 49-59.

relationships of reciprocity and domination within the pre-colonial Futa Jallon. Perched atop these hierarchies was a group of chiefly Fulbe elites who traced their lineage to – or at least imagined a connection with – the nine families who led the early eighteenth-century *jihad*. Each of these families ruled over a *diwal*, or province, with the ruling family of the Timbo *diwal* serving as the *Almamy*, or paramount ruler.⁴⁶ Overlapping sets of social divisions crisscrossed the ruling elite. The first was based upon groups of *lenyi*, or extended families based upon maximal patrilineages. *Lenyi* were not limited to distinct areas, however there are concentrations of families from one *lenyol* (singular of *lenyi*) in certain areas of the Futa. However, the pool of individuals with legitimate claims to a chieftaincy at both the level of the *misside*, or village group, and the *diwal* were limited to a single *lenyol*; for instance, only members the Kalidiabé family, whose history is examined in chapter one, could assume the position of *lando*, or chief, of the Labé *diwal*.⁴⁷

The other main system of social organization in the Futa Jallon was connected to the practice of alternation of rule between two sets of families within a single *lenyol*. Following the deaths of the first two *Almamy* of the Futa state - the cleric Karamoko Alfa and the general Ibrahima Sori Yero Poore – civil war broke out between the descendents of the two leaders over control over the paramount chieftaincy. Around 1790, the chief of the *diwal* of Fougoumba, considered to be the spiritual leader of the Futa, negotiated a truce between the families. The two groups would separate into distinct lineages – the descendents of Alfa called the Alfaya, and the descendents of Sori known as the Soriya – and the heads of each family would rule in

⁴⁶ On the early history of the Futa Jallon state, see Joseph Earl Harris, “The Kingdom of Fouta-Diallon,” (Ph.D diss., Northwestern University, 1965); Thierno Diallo, *Les Institutions Politiques du Fouta Dyalon au XIXe Siècle*, (Dakar: IFAN, 1972); and Barry, *Fuuta Jaloo*.

⁴⁷ El Hadj Thierno Mamadou Bah, *Histoire du Fouta-Djallon des Origines au XXe Siècle* (Conakry: SEAC, 1998), 29-34.

alternation, serving for two years at a time. Informal alternation spread to the provinces, as each new Almamy would appoint a new set of *diwal* chiefs attached to his family, and over time the Alfaya/Soriya social organization was formally implemented in the provinces. The system of social organization produced a ruling elite that was marked by rivalry and infighting – and therefore prone to internal exploitation and external raiding in order to amass resources – but one that was still clearly identifiable, largely insular, and mostly able to consolidate when threatened by external forces.⁴⁸

Free but non-elite Fulbe, or *lassilibe*, constituted a much larger group than the ruling elite. Free Fulbe were organized into *lenyi*, but could not hold positions of authority. Due to their descent from families that freely joined the *jihad*, *lassilibe* were exempt from any obligation of labor and most taxes to the chiefs. The other social groups in the Futa – all of non-free status – were defined primarily by economic activity. The Fulbe *burure*, or bush Fulbe, were herders. They too were organized into *lenyi*, but were subordinate to specific village chiefs, and were subject to a group of taxes, including an estate tax called the *kummabite*. The subjugation non-free status of the Fulbe *burure* was justified by the claim that the at the time non-Muslim herders had sided with the Jallonke during the *jihad*.⁴⁹

At the bottom of social hierarchies in the Futa Jallon, constituting some 30-50% of the state's total population depending on sub-region, were persons of slave status.⁵⁰ Included in this

⁴⁸ Diallo, *Institutions Politiques du Fouta Dyalon*, 37-49.

⁴⁹ While the *kummabite* applied to all inhabitants of the Futa, those who had converted after the *jihad* paid a much larger “inhumation tax” that was supposedly rooted in pre-Islamic Jallonke practice. See Diallo, *Institutions Politiques du Fouta Dyalon*, 133-134.

⁵⁰ My use of “slave status” and “former slaves” is meant to highlight social position (and their legacies) rather than economic activity alone. Derman in particular has argued that *maccube* should be referred to as “serfs” due to their economic self-sufficiency. See Derman, *Serfs*, 27-29,

broad group were artisans, namely blacksmiths (*waylube*), leather workers (*garankebe*), wood carvers (*lawbe*), praise singer or “griots” (*awlube*), and weavers (*sannyobe*).⁵¹ By far the largest group, however, were slaves who worked in the fields of their masters, often referred to as *maccube*.⁵² Field slaves were further divided between those whose families who had been brought to the Futa, either through purchase or slave raids in neighboring non-Muslim communities, within the last two generations, and those who claimed descent from the “indigenous” Jallonke. While they were not chattel – once established in the Futa, persons of slave status could not be sold, and slave families could own property themselves – *maccube* were

fn. 8. Following Hanretta – and departing from Derman’s approach – I emphasize the historicity and local situation of terminology for enslaved persons. See Sean Hanretta, *Islam and Social Change in French West Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 210-217.

⁵¹ Derman, *Serfs*, 37-38.

⁵² The definition of *maccube* is prone to slippage in previous scholarship on slavery in the Futa Jallon. Diop ties the term to place of labor and habitation, while Dupire and Furth argue that the defining characteristic is generational proximity to the moment of enslavement. Derman uses the term *ardoobe*, meaning “those who were brought [to the Futa],” to describe the latter category, while reserving *maccube* for persons of slave status (or “serfs,” in his analytical language). Rivière, arguing that the nearly all of slaves who worked in the fields had resided in the Futa for only three or four generations, conflates both meanings. In my research in the archive and field, the distinction between the two definitions seemed to be situational. When one wanted to speak of “slaves” as an abstract group, often when compared to the free Fulbe, *maccube* sufficed. When compared to those of slave status with longstanding claims to indigeneity, *maccube* took on a more specific definition of recently enslaved (or recently brought to the Futa). In deploying certain terms for slave status, individuals, both free and servile, were making claims and arguments about social hierarchies. My use of associated terms below attempts to mirror the claims I see historical actors attempting to mobilize. See Moustapha Diop, *Réformes foncières et gestion des ressources naturelles en Guinée: Enjeux de patrimonialité et de propriété dans le Timbi au Fouta Djallon* (Paris: Karthala, 2007), 38, 205; Rebecca Furth, “Marrying the Forbidden Other: Marriage, Status and Social Change in the Futa Jallon Highlands of Guinea (PhD Diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2005), xvii; Marguerite Dupire, “Identité ethnique et processus d’incorporation tribale et étatique,” *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 34, no. 133/135 (1994), 273; Claude Rivière, “Dynamique de la stratification sociale chez les Peuls de Guinée,” *Anthropos* 69, no. 3/4 (1974), 371-372; Derman, *Serfs*, 32

required to give significant amounts of their labor and crops to their masters.⁵³

Social hierarchies in the Futa were structured and reinforced by a set of social, political, and economic poles. The first was the elite's mobilization of a particular form of Islamic religiosity. While the initial *jihad* may not have been explicitly tied to forms of ethnic identification, by the nineteenth century, Islam as practiced in the Futa Jallon was tied closely to ideas of a specifically elite Fulbe privilege. Fulbe religious and/or political leaders fused Islam with markers of Fulbe cultural identity to make claims that they were the region's anointed rulers.⁵⁴ Aspirant chiefs, for instance, commonly took on the title of religious scholar, or *cerno*, in order to bolster their claims to legitimacy.⁵⁵ Relations between masters and slaves also took on religious connotations. Masters in the Futa Jallon – and indeed throughout Islamic Africa – argued that through enslavement those captured or bought were being shepherded in the fold of Islam.⁵⁶ These masters justified continued enslavement even after conversion by pointing to the supposed “inferior” form of Islam as practiced by slaves. In order to maintain more profound religious knowledge, and therefore access to authority, among elites, opportunities for slaves to

⁵³ Derman, *Serfs*, 124-125.

⁵⁴ One of the key markers of Fulbe difference was their language, Pular. Pular was the language of the elite in the Futa Jallon at least since the initial Islamic revolution in 1726, if not before, as the accounts of Ayuba Suleiman Diallo (more widely known in the Anglophone world as Job ben Solomon) show. The language played a central role in the fusion of religious and political authority during the 19th century, second only to Arabic in importance in religious instruction. See David Robinson, *The Holy War of Umar Tal*, 57-59.

⁵⁵ Paul Marty, *L'Islam en Guinée*, (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1921), 338; André Arcin, *La Guinée Française: races, religions, coutumes, production, commerce*, (Paris: Challamel, 1907), 524; Derman, 223.

⁵⁶ For Guinea, see Joseph Earl Harris, “The Kingdom of Fouta-Diallon,” (Ph.D diss., Northwestern University, 1965), Ch. 3.; for Africa as a whole, see John Ralph Willis, “Jihad and the Ideology of Enslavement,” in John Ralph Willis, ed., *Slaves in Slavery in Muslim Africa, v. I: Islam and the Ideology of Enslavement*, (London: Frank Cass, 1985), 16-26

study the Qur'an and more generally Islamic thought were tightly restricted.⁵⁷ Furthermore, the uneven relationship between masters and slaves was periodically renewed through religious ceremony. Futa Islamic ceremonies such as marriages often required the sacrifice of a cow, animals that *maccube* were banned from owning and therefore had to obtain from their masters. Furthermore, at a naming ceremony for a *maccube* child, an occasion that required the sacrifice of a goat, only a free Fulbe master could cut the throat of the animal. He, unlike his *maccube*, was "pure" enough to perform religious ceremonies.⁵⁸ Islamic religiosity in the Futa Jallon, therefore, largely supported social hierarchies that perpetuated exploitation.

Second, and related to the practice of Islam on the plateau, Fulbe ideas about racial difference marked persons of free and slave status. Central to this construction of distinction was the classification of the *maccube* as *baleebe*, or "those who are black," and therefore fitting of slave status. On the other hand, free Fulbe stressed their foreign origins, often claiming ancestry with one of the companions of the Prophet and conceived of themselves as being *erduube*, or "red" (see chapter One).⁵⁹ It is important to note, that *baleebe* did not necessarily equate to having dark skin. It was rather the concept of "blackness," and the social status associated with it, that was the most important factor. In this equation, phenotype was not necessarily the key determinate of slave or free status; rather, by stressing their foreign origins, the Fulbe asserted their distinctly Islamic heritage, and therefore their status as religious and political leaders. Such

⁵⁷ Roger Botte, "Stigmates sociaux et discriminations religieuses: l'ancienne classe servile au Fuuta Jaloo," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 34, no. 133/135 (1994), 129.

⁵⁸ Derman, *Serfs, Peasants, and Socialists*, 200-201.

⁵⁹ For example, Ernest Noiro, *À travers le Fouta-Djallon et le Bambouc (Soudan occidental): souvenirs de voyage*, (Paris: M. Dreyfous, 1884), 130; Paul Marty, *L'Islam en Guinée*, 36-37; Louis Tauxier, *Histoire des Peuls du Fouta-Djallon*, (Paris: Payot, 1937); and Jean Bayol, *Voyage en Sénégambie: Haut-Niger, Bambouc, Fouta Djallon et Grand-Bélédougou*, (Paris: L. Baudoin, 1888).

racial thought, similar to other ideologies found throughout the Islamic Sahel and West Africa, was expressed through the ideology and language of Islam, and stressed descent over visible characteristics.⁶⁰ Thus, social hierarchies and the legitimating discourses and practices that supported them were a defining characteristic of the pre-colonial Futa Jallon state and society, and would, as subsequent chapters attest, prove to be quite durable.

The third and most readily apparent structure that supported elite privilege was a system of spatial segregation. Each *diwal* in the Futa Jallon was divided into smaller village groups, or *missidi* (sing. *misside*). These local political, social, and economic units were structured by a central village, also called a *misside*, and a surrounding group of dependent villages, called *fulasso* when inhabited by free Fulbe and Fulbe *burure* and *dune* (sing. *runde*) when home to *maccube*. Religious and political authority flowed from the *misside* to the dependent villages; local elites lived in the central *misside*, and only there could one construct a mosque. *Misside* chiefs appointed secondary leaders called *Manga* – notably, a term of Mande or Susu and not Fulbe origin, thus further marking the alterity of slave status – in dependent villages but the latter group’s authority had no independent standing, and the chiefs of slave villages were often the slaves of the *misside* chiefs.⁶¹ This spatial organization ensured several benefits for elite Fulbe. It maintained distinction between social groups, and, given widespread conversion to Islam after the *jihad*, spiritual dependency of peripheral villages. Furthermore, it established villages comprised of non-elites as semi-autonomous groupings, ones that were largely self-sustaining while passing on any surplus to the *misside* elites.

Spatial segregation was one part of a larger pole of elite privilege in the Futa Jallon,

⁶⁰ Hall, *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa*, 44-55.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 40-41; Diallo, *Institutions Politiques du Fouta Dyalon*, 108.

namely the economic system shaped by the pre-colonial state. In addition to being separated from the elite-controlled *misside*, *dune* were also located in the middle of agricultural fields. Nearly all land in the Futa functioned as collective property, but *misside* and *diwal* chiefs, did not accord rights of use to lands. Rather, the senior heads of each of the *lenyi* decided who worked the fields, and the (almost always other) people who benefitted from the fruits of agricultural labor. These family heads often gave free but not elite-status Fulbe rights to freehold farms. The most widespread form agricultural practiced in the Futa, however, was done by slaves in fields planted with fonio (a West African millet species) or rice near the *dune*. These slaves were expected to feed both themselves and their masters, the latter which they did through a 10% tax on the yearly harvest called the *farilla*.

Animal husbandry functioned in a similar manner. Those *Fulbe burure* who only converted by force after the *jihad* were forced to transfer ownership of 1/3 of their herds to the elite conquerors. The *kummabite*, or estate tax mentioned above, further ensured that over time wealth in cattle was gradually moved up social hierarchies.⁶² Artisan social groups also constituted an important part of the Futa economy. *Sannyobe* could produce up to 50 meters of high-quality indigo-dyed cloth called *leppi* per day, while the neighboring gold fields of Bambuk and Bure supplied the plateau's jewelers. *Waylube*, or blacksmiths, produced significant amounts of arms, farming tools, and locks, and were looked at warily by elites due to the widespread belief that the *waylube* possessed hidden powers. While an important part of the Futa Jallon economy, artisans were still of servile class, and therefore attached to a master family. Unlike the *maccube*, though, they often lived either in the concessions of elite families or in adjacent

⁶² Barry, *Fuuta-Jaloo*, 69-78.

structures.⁶³

Finally, there existed vibrant trade networks between the high plateau and surrounding areas, as well as more limited commerce within the Futa. As it occupied a watershed between the coast and the Niger river basin and served as the source of several regional river systems, the plateau was naturally both at the center of extended trade networks and at a crossing point between the coastal and savannah systems. Futa elites tightly controlled trade to, from, and across the Futa, collecting taxes from, controlling the movement of, and offering protection to a dedicated group of ethnic Mande, Soninke, and Diakhanke traders called *juula*. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the stability of the Futa state stimulated increased outside trade, in turn further enriching the region's elites.⁶⁴ These vibrant external trade flows, though, stood in contrast to a limited form of trade on the plateau. Exchanges of goods amongst Fulbe took the form of barter or were conducted under the framework of patron/client relationships. Unlike the plains to the East and West, little currency such as cowry or iron ingots circulated within the Futa Jallon. Finally, the chiefs largely forbade the establishment of spaces dedicated to commerce such as markets.⁶⁵ Overall, the Fulbe elites used the plateau's imposing cliffs to control the flow of merchants and goods in and out of the region, and either co-opted or limited pathways for enrichment within the Futa Jallon. When combined with political and spiritual power, the material benefits accorded to elites within the Futa economy perpetuated the social hierarchies that structured the pre-colonial state.

While providing an overview of the history of the pre-colonial Futa Jallon that focuses in

⁶³ Barry, *Fuuta-Jaloo*, 78-81.

⁶⁴ Odile Goerg, *Commerce et Colonisation en Guinée, 1850-1913* (Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan, 1986), 157-162; Barry, *Fuuta-Jaloo*, 83-89.

⁶⁵ Goerg, *Commerce et Colonisation*, 146-153; Barry, *Fuuta-Jaloo*, 81-83.

particular on social hierarchies, the above account falls prey in part to both ahistoricity and simplification. The practice of alternation did not emerge until the late eighteenth century, and rarely worked as it intended. Furthermore, Islam was not always wielded as a tool of domination; reflecting broader trends throughout West Africa, dissident Islamic movements – most notably the Hubbu movement of the 1850s and the community surrounding the Wali of Goumba that remained intact up to 1912 – attracted large numbers of former slaves and non-elite free Fulbe to their cause by promising to renew Islam and put an end to the most flagrant examples of elite exploitation.⁶⁶ These alternative forms of Islamic religiosity would remain a powerful model for later movements comprised of marginalized groups throughout West Africa. Yet, in the Futa Jallon – and just as importantly for the colonial and post-colonial states intent on reforming the region and its inhabitants – spiritual and temporal power was contained in one figure: the chief. Islam and elite privilege in the Futa Jallon, therefore, were only separated from one another through overwhelming force.

As the nineteenth century came to a close, the Futa Jallon would become increasingly enmeshed within Atlantic economic networks. British and French state agents and merchants

⁶⁶ On the Hubbu, see Boubacar Barry, “Crise politique et importance des révoltes populaire au Futa Djalou au XIXème siècle,” Communication faite au Séminaire du Département d’Histoire (Dakar: Faculté de Lettres et Sciences Humaines, 1979); Roger Botte, “L’Esclave, l’almani et les impérialistes: Souveraineté et résistance au Fuuta Jaloo,” in *Figures peules*, edited by Roger Botte, Jean Boutrais, and Jean Schmitz (Paris: Karthala, 1999); Botte, “Révolte, Pouvoir, Religion: Les Hubbu du Futa-Jallon (Guinée),” *The Journal of African History* 29, no. 3 (1988), 391-413; and Lamine Sanneh, “Futa Jallon and the Jakhanke Clerical Tradition Part I: The Historical Setting,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 12, no.1 (1981), 42-43; on the Wali of Goumba, see Lamine Sanneh, “Tcherno Aliou, the Wali of Goumba: Islam, Colonialism and the Rural Factor in Futa Jallon, 1867-1912,” *Asian and African Studies* 20, no. 1 (March 1986), 73-102; and Christopher Harrison, *France and Islam in West Africa, 1860-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 74-89. On broader trends of cleric-led militant movements, see Rudolph T. Ware, *The Walking Qur’an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

began to make their way up to the high plateau in order to establish trade relations with the Futa state, and were almost always confronted with an unreceptive and at times hostile ruling elite. Starting in the twilight of the nineteenth century, colonial rule would precipitate significant changes in the region and Guinea as a whole. In the Futa Jallon, these transformations would cluster around the social hierarchies that structured the asymmetrical relationships between the various social groups described above. The transformation *and* durability of social hierarchies on the high plateau – and how those hierarchies shaped both outside views of Futa Jallon society and Fulbe self-understandings – constitute, in sum, the social and political terrain the dissertation sets out to explore.

Sources

In order to examine the twentieth-century history of the Futa Fulbe, I consulted a variety of source bases. These sources – and the history I hoped they would illuminate – in turn shaped the emphases and structure of the dissertation that follows. The characters that populate the histories presented in the following chapters are, by and large, elite males, although chapter two examines how marginalized groups such as former slaves and women used spaces for maneuver opened by colonial rule. This narrative bias is partially due to the sources I was able to consult and the people with whom I had the opportunity to speak. I would also suggest that my focus on mostly male elites is rooted in historical circumstances. Elite Fulbe in the Futa Jallon became one of the main concerns of French colonial administrators wishing to bring the Futa chiefs to heel. Elite Fulbe politicians – and their chiefly backers and, overwhelmingly, fathers – largely drove politics within the Futa Jallon during decolonization, a power that Sékou Touré and his allies both recognized and sought to break. Undermining elite privilege became the central focus of PDG policy in the Futa Jallon after independence. And it was only on the eve of the

announcement of the Fulbe plot that Touré diagnosed the spread of the particular disease named “Fulbe racism” to the Fulbe community as a whole. Schmidt has made forceful arguments for the importance of women and youth in driving and shaping PDG politics during decolonization.⁶⁷ The history of the Fulbe divergence from the rest of Guinea, however, is one driven largely by elites, although with important exceptions examined in subsequent chapters. Thus, they are at the center of my analysis.

For much of the history of discipline of Africa History, scholars have turned to social history and more specifically oral sources to uncover these hidden perspectives and histories.⁶⁸ In conducting oral research in Guinea, I was confronted with a series of particular circumstances that determined to which oral histories I had access. While there have been times when his prominence has waned, political discourse in Guinea today is still in many ways dominated by contradictory representations of the First Republic.⁶⁹ Reflecting the locally produced literature on Touré’s regime, public characterizations of the First Republic often rely upon standard narratives, ones that I heard repeated nearly verbatim across interviews with several different people. While these narratives can illuminate the ways in which current circumstance shades the production of particular memories, and in turn how historical narratives can shape current forms

⁶⁷ Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses*; Elizabeth Schmidt, “Top Down or Bottom Up? Nationalist Mobilization Reconsidered, with Special Reference to Guinea (French West Africa)” *The American Historical Review* 110:4 (2005), 975-1014.

⁶⁸ Luise White, “Hodgepodge Historiography: documents, itineraries, and the absence of archives,” *History in Africa* (Forthcoming); David William Cohen, Stephan F. Miescher, and Luise White, “Introduction: Voices, Words, and African History,” in *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History*, edited by Luise White, Stephen F. Meischer, and David William Cohen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 1-27.

⁶⁹ Alexis Arieff and Mike McGovern, “History is Stubborn.”

of identification,⁷⁰ they are less helpful for illuminating historical processes.

I was also confronted with the problem of actually finding people with whom to talk. Many people who had not crafted a public persona of being someone with strong opinions about the Touré regime did not want to speak about their or their families' histories during that period. Other potential oral sources had passed away. Had I conducted this project a decade earlier, I might have been more successful in finding interviewees, but given the passage of time I often came up against dead ends. One elderly gentleman with whom I talked simply stated that “everyone has died. There is no one left to talk to.”⁷¹ I still conducted interviews with both former PDG officials and former opposition members, both in Guinea and outside the country, in order to gain a more comprehensive picture of the political terrain of the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. I also collected family histories of prominent Fulbe politicians in order to better map the web of elite allegiances and relationships that shaped politics in the Futa Jallon. These sources were valuable for providing information about ideas or events that had been excised from the archival record, or had simply never been written down. They could not, however, provide the core corpus of sources for this project.

Thus, I turned to the familiar colonial archives one finds in Dakar (ANS), Aix-en-Provence (CAOM), and Pierrefitte-sur-Seine (ANF), ones that have dominated the lion's share of histories of Francophone West Africa. Tracing the passage of colonial reports and administrators' particular perspectives up and down the hierarchical chain of the French colonial administration provided a window on how colonial policies towards the Fulbe and the Futa Jallon were worked and reworked by figures ranging from local *commandants* to the advisors of

⁷⁰ See Liisa Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

⁷¹ Interview with Abdoulaye Sow, Dakar, 7 April 2012.

the French Minister of Colonies. Colonial archives outside Guinea were complemented – and sometimes contradicted – by a collection of Pular-language poetry, religious tracts, and political treatises contained in the Fonds Vieillard at the Institut Fondamental d’Afrique Noire in Dakar.

Archival sources in Guinea proved to be especially helpful. Reports of the Guinean National Archive’s (ANG) demise have been exaggerated. While there continue to be problems associated with the limited amount of resources available to archive’s staff and periodic closures, the Conakry archives remain an important source for the local manifestation of colonial policy in Guinea. The National Archives also have limited but very historically valuable post-colonial holdings. These include security briefings written by the National Gendarmerie and Police provided daily to the Office of the President, which provide an important window onto the internal logics of the PDG government during the First Republic. Due in part to the National Archives being closed for the first two months I was in Guinea, I also made great use of the Regional Archives of Labé (ARL). This archive consisted of one windowless, dark room filled with six-foot-tall stacks of unorganized documents caked in the red dust that seems to cover everything in the Futa Jallon during the dry season. They presented a logistical nightmare, but with persistence and a bandana covering my face to combat the dust, provided a wealth of material on local forms and contestations of statecraft in both the colonial and post-colonial periods.

In fact, my use of archival sources in Guinea brought to the fore two interrelated issues connected to producing post-colonial histories.⁷² First, while Guinea has a long history of archival mutilation – meaning the destruction of documents through intent or neglect – the

⁷² For a more in depth discussion of these issues, see John Straussberger, “Fractures and Fragments: Finding Postcolonial Histories of Guinea in Local Archives,” *History in Africa* (Forthcoming).

former, more methodical elimination of sensitive documents followed pre-existing geographies of power. Thus, while coded government cables and security reports may have been destroyed in Conakry – although not completely – they were often preserved in local archives. Second, as Guinea was a “closed” state under Touré, studies of the First Republic have often relied upon outside sources, including reports from foreign embassies and intelligence services, testimony from exiles, and Touré’s own voluminous published political treatises.⁷³ While I have made use of these familiar sources, they also paint a particular image of the Guinean state and society, one that stresses uniform control by and consent for PDG rule. Documents contained in the archives in Labé and to a lesser extent in Conakry, however, reflect a different political structure, one that includes a state that is aware of the limits of its ability to project power into the interior and is often faced with resistance. In sum, the images of the post-colonial state one finds in archives in Pierrefitte-sur-Seine and in Labé diverge dramatically. Thus, a certain amount of triangulation is required to paint a more complete picture of post-colonial Guinean history.

While archives in Guinea provided a rich group of previously unexamined documents, other sources amenable to writing histories of ideas proved to be few and far between. Glassman and Brennan’s studies on the history of race, nation, and ethnicity in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam, respectively, draw from a large corpus of local political writing, most notably newspapers published by political parties and organizations as well as more specific political tracts.⁷⁴ Both the number and variety of these types of sources are not available for Guinea.

⁷³ This last group of texts is only of limited use for the historian interested in the practice of politics during the First Republic due to, as McGovern argues, the glaring “empty speech” of much of Touré’s rhetoric. See “Unmasking the State: Developing Modern Political Subjectivities in 20th Century Guinea,” (PhD diss., Emory University, 2004), 32-33, 563-578; McGovern, *Unmasking the State*, 210.

⁷⁴ Glassman, *War of Words*; Brennan, *Taifa*.

1950s political parties often published their own newspapers, but only the PDG's appeared consistently, and many of the newspapers associated with Fulbe-led parties have not been preserved. Thus, one is presented with a wealth of material produced by the PDG – perhaps explaining in part why politics in Guinea from the Second World War to 1984 has often been conflated with the political party – but a lack of alternative viewpoints. In trying to recover opposition ideologies and arguments, therefore, I was often forced to infer from actions listed in reports of public meeting contained in the archives of the colonial and post-colonial state. These source constraints, however, also forced me to focus in particular on the structure and strategies of different political parties. The resulting analysis places emphasis on how ideology and strategy (and the constraints thereof) both resulted from and shaped one another over the course of the twentieth century.

Ultimately, my use of archives in Labé, Guinea, Senegal, and France both springs from and is generative of the multi-scalar approach my dissertation adopts to examine the history of the Fulbe within the Futa Jallon, the colonial territory and post-colonial nation of Guinea, and the trans-national community that emerged in the 1960s. Such a methodology seeks to identify the different articulations of the Fulbe and the Futa Jallon at multiple levels, rather than unreflectively adopting the conceptual categories of empire and then post-colonial nation-states.

Structure

The chapters of this dissertation are broken down into two groups, with a pivot chapter in between them. The first two chapters examine the transformation of ideas and practices connected to chiefly authority and social hierarchy from 1897 to the early 1950s. The first chapter argues that the colonial system that developed during the early period of protectorate drew from the most exploitative aspects of the French and Futa Jallon political systems, and that

ripples from this period came to shape both the institution of the chieftaincy and popular images of the Fulbe well past the deconstruction of the Futa Jallon as a unique political unit in 1905. The second chapter explores how colonial rule opened up new opportunities for previously marginalized groups such as women and former slaves to reconfigure social hierarchies in the Futa, and also opened up new avenues of elite exploitation. Chapter three examines a watershed moment in twentieth-century Guinean history, when from the end of the Second World War to 1961 political contestation was expressed through rival parties. This chapter contends that internal competition between Fulbe and PDG politicians and activists marked the Futa Jallon as divergent from the rest of Guinea. The last two chapters consider the gradual but still jarring sorting out of post-colonial order in both Guinea and further afield. Chapter Four examines how both elite and non-elite Fulbe were gradually alienated and marginalized by the PDG leaders, the former through a brutal campaign of elimination and the latter as a consequence of a set of policies put into place in the Futa and in some cases throughout the nation intended to make Guinea “modern.” Chapter Five charts the paths that Fulbe exiles and migrants took after independence as well as the growing prominence of Fulbe trans-national networks in Guinean discourses of citizenship. Finally, the epilogue asks, through the imagined perspective of a returned exile, what sorts of ripples from the Touré regime and the production of the “particular situation” can still be felt in Guinea today.

Chapter One

“The Enigmatic Alfa Yaya”: Colonial Rule and the Fulbe Chieftaincy in the Futa Jallon

“Alpha Yaya, l’énigmatique Alpha Yaya... [de Sanderval] avait été dès le premier jour fasciné par ce garçon ascétique et sombre, qui mangeait peu, parlait peu, se montrait peu en public, descendait rarement de cheval et se contentait pour tout repas d’une poignée de fonio ou de trois oranges. Un beau garçon mince, élancé, vigoureux, athlétique, intelligent, pragmatique et attaché aux ambitions utiles! L’allié idéal, quoi, déterminé, difficile à vivre mais agreeable en affaires! Le genre d’ennemi à redouter, aussi! Solitaire et distant, il détestait les effusions et les familiarités. Le roi-né, en somme: cynique et calculateur, ne s’encomrant ni de scrupules ne de bons sentiments. Il voyait la vie exactement comme Olivier de Sanderval voyait le jeu d’échecs: la faute ne pardonne pas; quand un pion te gêne, tu le manges sans te poser des questions.”
Tierno Monenembo, *Le Roi de Kahel*, 211-212

The subject of this chapter is the French conquest of the Futa Jallon in 1896 and the transformation of political structures over the course of the slightly more than six decades of colonial rule that followed. Immediately, though, some qualifications are in order. French forces never “conquered” the Futa Jallon. Rather, using a civil war between factions of the Futa elite, representatives of the French state, whose influence had previously been limited to the coast, were able to negotiate the status of a French protectorate in 1897 by way of a treaty with the remaining Futa leaders.¹ The Futa was not unique in being incorporated into the French empire through treaty; similar arrangements emerged in what became the colony of Senegal, to name the most prominent example.² However, nearly all of the protectorates outside of Guinea were based upon starkly asymmetrical relations of power at the moment of signing, most having taken place

¹ Suret-Canale uses “occupation” while Derman describes the 1897 treaty as a “conquest.” As I will explain below, I am less convinced of the strength of the French government’s position during the treaty negotiations, and more importantly of their ability to effect change at least up to 1905. See Jean Suret-Canale, “La Fin de la Chefferie en Guinée,” *Journal of African History*, 7, no. 3 (1966), 465; William Derman, *Serfs, Peasants, and Socialists: A Former Serf Village in the Republic of Guinea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 44.

² For Senegal, see Martin A. Klein, *Islam and Imperialism in Senegal: Sine-Saloum, 1847-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), 138-142; H. O. Idowu, “The Establishment of Protectorate Administration in Senegal, 1890-1904,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 4, no. 2 (June 1968), 247-267.

after battles between French and African forces in which the new colonial power was victorious. This was not the case in the Futa Jallon. Significant numbers of French troops never occupied the plateau, while numbers of administrators were low and changes light up to the Second World War. Indeed, the small cadre of French administrators posted to the Futa meant that African chiefs and auxiliaries undertook much of the daily work of colonial rule.³ The force of the colonial state may have later had the power to radically change African societies – although there were limits to transformation even at the height of the colonial project⁴ – but during the early years following the Futa Jallon’s incorporation into the empire, there was neither a widespread will nor ability to precipitate significant transformations.

An earlier generation of scholars thought of colonial conquest with the conceptual framework of collaboration or resistance, and its historical fellow traveler continuity and rupture.⁵ Previous studies of the French “conquest” of the Futa have adopted a similar analytical

³ Henri Brunschwig, *Noirs et Blancs dans l’Afrique Noire Française, ou comment le colonisé devient colonisateur* (1870-1914) (Paris: Flammarion, 1983), 209-213.

⁴ See Thomas Spear, “Neo-traditionalism and the Limits of Invention in British Colonial Africa,” *Journal of African History* 44, no. 1 (2003), 3-27. Although French administrators considered the French rule’s ability to transform more powerful, there were still very visible limits to even “direct rule,” even where such a system it could be identified in French colonial Africa.

⁵ On the literature of resistance and rupture, and subsequent critiques, see Frederick Cooper, “Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History,” *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (1994), 1516-1545. On the historiography of collaboration, see Benjamin N. Lawrence, Emily Lynn Osborn, and Richard L. Roberts, “Introduction: African Intermediaries and the ‘Bargain’ of Collaboration,” in *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African employees in the making of colonial Africa*, edited by Benjamin N. Lawrence, Emily Lynn Osborn, and Richard L. Roberts, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 3-34. The seminal essay on continuity is J. F. Ade Ajayi’s “Colonialism: An Episode in African History,” reprinted in *Tradition and Change in Africa: The Essays of J. F. Ade Ajayi*, edited by Toyin Falola (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2000), 165-174. Subsequent scholars have taken, if not explicitly then in spirit, one of Ajayi’s main interventions – that histories of Africa should not be dominated by European frameworks, or based solely upon colonial sources that silence the voices and perspectives of African – to present studies of Africa that do not use colonial

approach, stressing French action, Fulbe reaction, and the latter group's eventual resignation.⁶

Robinson, working on interactions between religious leaders and the colonial administration directly to the North of the Futa Jallon in Senegal, argues for a relationship based on "accommodation" between the colonizer and particular figures among the colonized. Yet the autonomous spaces necessary to maintain such a framework were not possible in the Futa Jallon; French and Fulbe actors alike saw themselves as occupying the same political, social, and economic terrain.⁷

Rather, this chapter argues, both how authority was defined and power was practiced in the early colonial Futa Jallon is more aptly described as "entanglement."⁸ Fulbe elites and French administrators imperfectly forged a system that drew from colonial and historically deep local

intervention as their sole conceptual and temporal framework. See Steven Feierman, "Colonizers, Scholars, and the Creation of Invisible Histories," in *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, edited by Victoria E. Bonnell, Lynn Hunt, and Richard Biernacki (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 182-216; Neil Kodesh, *Beyond the Royal Gaze: Clanship and Public Healing in Buganda* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 192-193; and Sean Hanretta, *Islam and Social Change in French West Africa* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 4-11.

⁶ In particular, Ismaël Barry, *Le Fuuta-Jaloo face à la colonisation*, 2 vols. (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997).

⁷ David Robinson, "Beyond Resistance and Collaboration: Amadu Bamba and the Murids of Senegal," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 21, no. 2 (1991), 149-171; David Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation: Muslim Societies and French Colonial Authorities in Senegal and Mauritania, 1880-1920* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000).

⁸ Lynn M. Thomas, *The Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley: U of California Press, 2005), 17-20; and Julie Livingston, *Debility and Moral Imagination in Botswana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 5. Compare with the idea of "dismantling," which has been the dominant conceptual framework commonly used when analyzing transformations connected to colonial rule in the Futa Jallon. See Thierno Diallo, "La Stratification des Structures Politico-Sociales de la Société Traditionnelle au Fuuta Jaloo: Évolution et Transformation," in *Pastoralists under Pressure? Fulbe Societies Confronting Change in West Africa*, edited by Victor Azarya, Anneke Breedveld, Mirjam de Bruijn, Han van Dijk (Boston: Brill, 1999), 113-135; and Barry, *Fuuta-Jaloo*.

sources, building fractured, constantly shifting hierarchies that reflected what Achille Mbembe has argued is a “*interlocking* of pasts, presents, and futures, each age bearing, altering, and maintaining the previous ones.”⁹ Relations of power between the colonizers and the colonized were asymmetric; yet, when attempting to carry out the basic functions of colonial statehood – in particular, conducting censuses, collecting taxes, and maintaining a suitable level of exploitation – French administrators found themselves not only relying upon Fulbe chiefs, but also freely using and thereby transforming the signs and practices of authority that had existed before the creation of the protectorate. For their part, chiefs in the Futa Jallon used the backing of the French state – most notably through the veneer of colonial administration and troops – to maintain exploitation of dependent populations, even more so when the changes unleashed by emancipation undermined their authority. Ultimately, the chimeric system that emerged from the disruption of colonization reflected the unique “colonial situation” of protectorate Futa Jallon, neither an imposition from Paris nor a clear continuation of the pre-colonial Islamic state, but drawing upon the pasts, presents, and future imaginings of both domains. The embodiment of these transformations, I argue, became the “Last *Almamy* of Labé,” or the “enigmatic” Alfa Yaya, a man of elite heritage but one especially adept at adapting to changing situations and taking on new signs and practices of authority.

This chapter also argues that the regularization of disorder was the central strategy shaping the establishment of colonial rule during the protectorate. Due to a combination of a thinly spread colonial administration and most likely willful negligence, French rule in the Futa Jallon protectorate relied upon ad hoc negotiations between administrators and Fulbe elites. These arrangements were exploitative and violent, and while specific practices may have been

⁹ Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 16.

new, the existence of violent coercion was not.¹⁰ And even when stripped of its most excessive elements, the basic system of ruling through notable personages or families continued to structure the institution of the chieftaincy in the Futa well past the supposed “rationalization” of local administration during the early 1910s. For the period of the protectorate, and indeed up to post-WWII imperial reforms, the main standard practice of colonial governance was the maintenance of authority through the exercise of a particularly “hard” form of power. The French colonial state was, at certain times, defined by administrative or juridical systems that sought to impose order over a highly fractured and uneven terrain.¹¹ Yet, as the history of the early twentieth-century Futa Jallon demonstrates, these attempts to create uniformity often gave way to more pressing concerns of budget and *commandement*.

Lastly, this chapter argues that the practice and perception of the colonial chieftaincy in the Futa Jallon had their roots in the period of the protectorate. First, The fall of Alfa Yaya and the end of the protectorate in 1905 might have brought an end to the “pioneer” period of Guinean history, yet the model of *grands commandements*, which was reliant on elite families with ties to the pre-colonial Islamic state, remained a pole of administrative organization up to independence. Periods of reform and standardization might have swept across the region, but the chieftaincy continued to oscillate back to the system of large provinces administered by hierarchies of Fulbe chiefs. Second, the period of the protectorate proved to be important in the

¹⁰ Cf. Suret-Canale’s contention that colonial conquest was the prime cause of chiefly exploitation. Jean Suret-Canale, *French Colonialism in Topical Africa, 1900-1945* (New York: Pica Press, 1971 [1964]), 79-83.

¹¹ Such a framework for understanding the structure of rule, as Gregory Mann argues, fails to account for the *indigénat* – and associated violence – which covered the vast majority of colonial subjects under French rule and constituted “the very core of the exercise of colonial power.” See “What Was the *Indigénat*? The ‘Empire of Law’ in French West Africa,” *Journal of African History* 50 (2009), 331-353.

shaping of French descriptions of the “Fulbe character.” Starting with early missions to establish diplomatic ties to the Futa Jallon state, French explorers, administrators, and later ethnographers found resonances of their own racial hierarchies within Fulbe self-imaginings, giving rise to a set of supposed traits that grew out of the excesses and exploitation tied to the Futa Jallon elite. These discourses would prove to be an important source of post-WWII debates about the chieftaincy and “modern” reforms to local administration, ones that would eventually bring an end to the chieftaincy in 1957 and contribute to marking the Futa Jallon as divergent from the rest of Guinea.

Ripples from the era of the protectorate continued to be felt in the Futa Jallon and in Guinea for decades afterwards. In considering the practices and ideas that emerged from this chaotic but influential period, this chapter examines a watershed moment in the development of exploitative authority in the Futa Jallon, a historical trajectory that would later come to be closely associated with the Fulbe as a whole.

Alfa Yaya: the rise of a quintessential Fulbe chief

This chapter opens with a recent, although not necessarily historically unrepresentative description of one of the most influential chiefs in Guinea’s history: Alfa Yaya. Images of the Fulbe chief have ranged widely. French colonial administrators portrayed Yaya as an ingenious but dangerous man, the perfect epitome of the conservative, fanatical, and reactionary components of “Fulbe character.” Guinea’s first president, Sékou Touré, propped him up after independence as one of the great resisters to colonial conquest, a problematic role, as we will see, given Yaya’s collaboration with the French in bringing about the protectorate. Through the eyes of French explorer and self-made “King of Kahel” Olivier de Sanderval, Tierno Monénembo casts Yaya as the epitome of long-standing French ideas about the “noble” and

“refined” nature of the Fulbe and other supposedly Semitic ethnic groups in Africa.¹² As such, Alfa Yaya has lived several fictive lives, none of which – as is often the case – have corresponded too closely with reality.

Despite being re-imagined in successive decades, Alfa Yaya’s life reflected and indeed was generative of larger transformations within the Futa Jallon chieftaincy. Yaya was born in 1850 in Labé, the capital of the eponymous *diwal*, or province, which was the largest of its kind in the pre-colonial Futa Jallon.¹³ His family was part of the elite Kalidiabe *lenyol*, or maximal lineage, whose members traced their descent from one of the first family heads to join the eighteenth-century *jihād*. Kalidaibé members alone had the right to be named the *lando*, loosely translated as “chief,” of Labé *diwal*.¹⁴ In fact, Yaya’s father, Alfa Ibrahima, was the *lando* of Labé, and his mother, Kumanco, was part of the ruling family of the kingdom of Ngaabu, which had rivaled the Futa for power in the early nineteenth century but at the time was a vassal of the Fulbe state.¹⁵ In other words, Yaya was as highborn as one could be within Labé.

Yaya was born just before the territorial apogee of the Futa Jallon state. Since the 1726 *jihād* that founded what eventually became a Fulbe-dominated Islamic state, the boundaries of Fulbe hegemony had steadily increased through a series of raids and conquests. The largest expansion occurred to the North and West of Labé. As newly conquered lands were connected to

¹² On French imaginings of the Fulbe, see also Anna Pondopoulo, *Les Français et les Peuls: Histoire d’une relation privilégiée* (Paris: Indes Savantes, 2008); and Thierno Monémbo’s novel, *Le Rio de Kahel* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2008).

¹³ “Alfa” is an honorific title usually adopted when one rose to the position of *diwal* chief. Before becoming an Alfa, Yaya held the title of a “Modi,” signifying one who had assumed a level of Islamic scholarship. The term was also used in conversation as a term of respect.

¹⁴ The title denotes both temporal and religious authority. See Derman, *Serfs*, 19-25.

¹⁵ For a Fulbe account of the conquest of Ngaabu, see Amadou Oury Diallo, *Épopée du Foûta-Djalou La Chute du Gâbou* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2009).

the closest *diwal*, Labé had by the 1850s become the largest and richest province in the Futa, constituting nearly half of the total land in the Futa Jallon state, as well as accruing large numbers of slaves and agricultural lands in the Kadé region, which were under the direct control of Alfa Yaya's family. The wealth under the control of the Labé Kalidiabe afforded the ruling family considerable room for maneuver vis à vis Timbo, the capital of pre-colonial Futa Jallon state and the seat of the region's paramount ruler, or *Almamy*. While the title of *Almamy* came with a mix of prestige and material benefit, it did not enjoy unchecked – or even substantial – control over the Futa Jallon as a whole. Provincial chiefs pledged fealty and paid tribute to Timbo, but they also enjoyed control over local affairs and relations with neighboring states.¹⁶

Local politics in the Futa were marked by conflict and instability. The system of alternation rarely worked as intended (see “Introduction”), with scheduled regime changes often followed by infighting and eventually either death of one party or a hastily organized truce. As such, the practice of espionage, political intrigue, and assassination was an integral part of Fulbe political culture by the time Alfa Yaya was born. Conflict was not limited to rival families; even within one family or between brothers, the cream was thought to rise to the top, partially through the process of elimination by assassination. Late colonial and post-colonial commentators were partially correct to point to “democratic” aspects of the Futa Jallon state, including the use of councils. But decision-making was limited to a group of prominent extended families, excluding both non-elite free Fulbe and the large portion (in Labé, around 1/3) of the Futa's population that

¹⁶ Thierno Diallo, *Les Institutions Politiques de Fouta Dyalon au XIXe Siècle* (Dakar: IFAN, 1972), 128-137; Derman, *Serfs*, 12-15; Barry, *Fuuta-Jaloo*, v. 1, 66-68.

was of servile status.¹⁷ Thus, the system of governance that emerged in the pre-colonial Futa Jallon was, through the initial *jihad*, external raids, internal fighting, or the enslavement of nearly 200,000 persons, both founded upon and maintained by violence.

It comes as little surprise, then, that Alfa Yaya's rise to power would eventually mark the future chief as possessing a certain stoic ruthlessness. According to historical accounts, Alfa Yaya was an exceptional young man. After excelling at Islamic study and growing to a height and size that far surpassed his age mates, Yaya and his brothers were given sub-provinces, or *missidi*, to govern, the idea being that the most capable would eventually be named Alfa Ibrahima's successor. Yaya was effective leading raids against neighboring non-Muslim communities, and ruled his *missidi* without substantial problems.¹⁸ Despite the youngest son's rapid rise, though, one of Yaya's older brothers was eventually named the successor to Alfa Ibrahima. Yaya was ordered to remain in the *misside* he governed, Kadé, and to under no circumstances set foot in Labe. For a while Yaya stewed in semi-exile. However, European incursions into the Futa gave rise to sense of uncertainty amongst the Futa elite, opening a space that allowed Yaya to rise to the top of the hierarchy in Labé. In 1890, Yaya ordered two subordinates to kill his brother and *lando* of Labé, Alfa Aguibou. According to accounts, the two assassins shot the *lando* while he was exiting the Labé mosque after prayers. Later that same year, Yaya killed another brother and pretender to the throne, Alfa Mamadou Saliou. After waiting for the Alfaya representative Modi Gaasimu to serve out his term, Yaya assumed the title

¹⁷ J. Richard-Mollard, "Démographie et Structure des Sociétés Negro-Peul Parmi les Hommes Libres et les 'Serfs' du Fouta-Dialon," *La Revue de Géographie Humaine et d'Ethnologie* no. 4 (1948-1949), 47.

¹⁸ Jean Suret-Canale, "The Fouta-Djallon Chieftaincy," in *West African Chiefs: Their Changing Status under Colonial Rule and Independence*, edited by Michael Crowder and Obaro Ikime (New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1970), 80-81; and Barry, *Le Fuuta-Jaloo*, 90.

of *lando* of Labé. After two years, Yaya did not want to hand over power, so he did as he had done before, having both Modi Gaasimu and his son assassinated in order to maintain his position.¹⁹

Alfa Yaya soon found an opportunity to extend his power further. Allying himself with a French colonial state, whose influence had previously been limited along the coast but was at the time eager to secure control over the Futa's economy, Yaya intervened in a civil war between the Almamy Bokar Biro and the disgruntled *lando* of the Fougoumba *diwal*, eventually using the backing of French forces to hunt down and kill Biro 1896. The following year, the French government and its allies on the high plateau met to negotiate a new relationship between the Futa and the French state agents in Conakry. The Fulbe *lambe* (plural of *lando*) would be incorporated into the colonial administration as village, canton, and cercle chiefs, from the most local to highest positions. Provincial chiefs were given virtual autonomy from Timbo and at first a large amounts of control over their internal affairs. Yaya was promised complete autonomy from Timbo, and assumed the title of the *Almamy* of Labé. In exchange, the Futa Jallon became an official protectorate of the French government, the Futa chiefs were placed under the authority of a French resident, and the French government gained control over the Futa's foreign affairs, including a monopoly over trade to and from the region.²⁰

The run-up to and negotiation of the treaty would come to shape many characteristics of the protectorate period, and eventually sow the seeds of its demise. Conflict and violence among Fulbe *lambe* had been one of the constants of the Futa Jallon state's history. The fact that the French had gained control over the region by exploiting a civil war shaded the new colonial

¹⁹ For a brief but thorough (although somewhat hagiographic) biography of Alfa Yaya, see Thierno Diallo, *Alfa Yaya, roi du Labé (Fouta-Djallon)* (Paris: Editions ABC, 1976).

²⁰ Barry, *Fuuta-Jaloo*, 202-209.

conquerors' views of the region and the Fulbe elite in particular. Furthermore, the fact that Alfa Yaya – perhaps the greatest beneficiary of the conquest – had risen to his position through a series of assassinations and betrayals played heavily into French portrayals of the Fulbe as being both cunning and untrustworthy. Finally, there existed a fundamental misunderstanding between the two sides. While the Futa chiefs believed that they had simply traded one *Almamy* for another, French commanders and eventually colonial administrators saw their hold over the region as more complete. Over the next 15 years, these rival visions of the Futa Jallon's place within the French empire would struggle for supremacy with long-standing effects on both popular portrayals of the Fulbe and how the Futa Jallon would later articulate itself in relation to other centralized, “foreign” powers.

Taxation and Exodus in the Futa Jallon

The treaty of protectorate accorded the French state a monopoly on trade to and from the Futa, and administrators within the French colonial office expected to gain some financial windfall from taking control over the region. Potential profit had, in large part, justified the extension of French control over the high plateau. The economic reality they encountered after the treaty, however, quickly disabused the colonial administration of their hopes. The Futa Jallon lacked many of the important resources that its neighboring regions and territories enjoyed. Unlike Senegal's Peanut Basin or Côte d'Ivoire's cocoa plantations, poor soil from erosion precluded the development of cash crop agriculture. The grassy highlands were conducive to animal husbandry, but the large amounts of value and prestige attached to livestock – and especially cattle – by Fulbe society meant that families would only sell if they found themselves in dire straits. For the first decade after the treaty, the French state focused on rubber extraction. However, the boom and bust cycle of overexploitation, adulteration, and a 1913 price

crash made the raw product only a short-term revenue source.²¹

The one resource the Futa Jallon did enjoy was a high population density relative to neighboring regions within Guinea and other colonial territories, and higher population meant greater income from annual taxes.²² The tax system in Guinea was based upon a hut tax, meaning that the head of each continuously inhabited house paid an annual sum, around 10 francs in 1900.²³ Based primarily upon these yearly collections, the Futa Jallon and its inhabitants became integral to the balancing of the colonial administration's budget, eventually contributing more than 50% of the total tax receipts for the entire territory.²⁴ Furthermore, the system had two main benefits, at least according to French officials: it pushed the rural peasantry out of low-yield farming in order to find capital while also paying for the lion's share of administrative costs, as chiefs' salaries taken as a percentage of the taxes collected. As long as local revenue streams were strong, the colony could be largely self-sustaining, or so higher up administrators in Paris

²¹ Examining the neighboring Haute Guinée region, Emily Osborne argues that the rise of the rubber trade "opened up new economic and social opportunities to the people of Upper Guinée [Haute Guinée]." While there were some independent cultivators, in the Futa Jallon rubber collection was largely directed by the chiefs, who often required their subjects to pay yearly taxes in the raw good. Thus, as Botte argues, the rubber trade became a means through which chiefs continued to exploit the labor of former slaves, especially after official emancipation in 1905. Such a system also led to over-cultivation and eventually reduced harvests even before the 1913 crash. See Emily Osborn, "'Rubber Fever,' Commerce and French Colonial Rule in Upper Guinée, 1890-1913," *Journal of African History* 45 (2005), 445; Roger Botte, "Stigmates sociaux et discriminations religieuses: l'ancienne classe servile au Fuuta Jaloo," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 34 no. 133/135 (1994), 111-112. On falling rubber harvests before 1913, see "Rapport d'Ensemble, Service des Douanes, Guinée," 25 April 1911, ANS 2G10/18.

²² On the eve of conquest, the population of the Futa was between 600,000 to 700,000, with a density of 9 persons/km². On the central Futa plateau between Dalaba and Mali, the population was even higher, reaching 20 persons/km². See Barry, *Fuuta-Jaloo*, 43-45.

²³ "Extrait du rapport d'Ensemble sur la situation politique et administrative du Fouta-Djallon," March 1900, pièce no. 3, ANS K28.

²⁴ Barry, *Fuuta-Jaloo*, 237.

believed.

Yet hut taxes never fully covered the colonial state's budget in Guinea, a significant problem given the Financial Law of 13 April 1900, which required colonies to cover their own cost of administration.²⁵ In response, French agents pushed local chiefs to increase their annual tax hauls. If the territory experienced a jump in revenue, these administrators would notify their superiors of the profitable turn of events, perhaps hoping for a promotion out of the undesirable Guinean colony. Local chiefs also had an incentive to extract as much money in the form of taxes out of the population as possible, as their salaries were directly linked to annual tax income (they kept around 25-30% of the total).²⁶ The primary means through which chiefs inflated their share of taxes was through manipulation of hut censuses. Taxes were based upon the numbers of huts owned by a family head. Increasing the numbers of "continuously inhabited shelters," therefore, would result in a financial windfall. To do so, chiefs counted seasonal huts – meaning those near fields used for three months during the growing season, or those used as informal hunting shelters – as full-time habitations, pocketing a larger share of tax income as a result. French administrators, for their part, either turned a blind eye or simply did not care about increased exploitation as long as more money was being collected. Other colonial officials were often complicit in the inflation of census totals. In a report from 1902, the commandant of Timbi Madina remarked that he had counted some 12,000 huts in his canton. The total was more than double from the previous year, resulting in 66,000 francs of additional tax income. The local chief, who had previously conducted the censuses, could have been undercounting due either to negligence, underreporting and pocketing the difference in taxes, or more optimistically wishing

²⁵ Suret-Canale, *French Colonialism*, 87.

²⁶ Barry, *Fuuta-Jaloo*, 237.

to lower the tax burden of those under his command. In any case, de Mauduit declined to reprimand the chief, remarking only that he was “happy to have gotten such a result.”²⁷

Local officials did not see inflated censuses as a problem until 1904. That year, several administrators notice large numbers of individuals and families in the Futa fleeing the region. Administrator Ernest Noirot, at the time head of Bureau of Native Affairs, noted that the countryside had seemingly fallen into a “malaise,” with large parts of the population – and especially youths – removing themselves from the productive economy, refusing to pay taxes, and rejecting state-mandated *corvée* labor. He acknowledged that the excessive tax burden, which he speculated was the cause of the difficulties, was most likely due to over-counting of huts in order to inflate annual receipts.²⁸ Reports from the interior around the same time mention an exodus of rural farmers from many parts of the Futa Jallon. The causes of the mass flight were myriad. In 1905, the French government enacted *de jure* emancipation, expanding its previous ban on the slave trade to outlaw the institution altogether. Despite some chiefs using a combination of persuasion and force to stop the exodus, thousands of former slaves, and especially those taken during Fulbe raids during previous decades, either returned to their homelands or sought better conditions elsewhere.²⁹

²⁷ De Mauduit to LG Guinée, “Recensement du Diwal de Timbi-Médineh [sic],” 17 July 1902, ANS 2G2; Barry, *Fuuta-Jaloo*, 230-232.

²⁸ Ernest Noirot, “Situation Politique de la Guinée au mois de Décembre,” 6 February 1905, ANS 2G4/1.

²⁹ Legal emancipation only intensified the already existing movement of large populations of former slaves out of the Futa. See Colonie de la Guinée Française, Rapport Politique, February 1903, ANS 2G3/1; Colonie de la Guinée Française, Rapport Politique, September 1903, ANS 2G3/1; Colonie de la Guinée Française, Cercle de Touba, Rapport Politique no. 215, March 1905, ANS 7G60; Colonie de la Guinée Française, Cercle de Labé, Rapport Politique, no. 32, March 1905, ANS 7G60; Affaires Politiques (Guinée) to GG AOF, “La Situation du Fouta,” 10 July 1905, ANG 2D101.

The main reason that pushed rural farmers to depart was the continued levying by chiefs of “traditional” taxes like *farilla*, *zakkat*, and *kummabite* on top of the hut tax. All forms of “customary” taxation with roots in the pre-colonial Futa state had been forbidden in the 1897 protectorate treaty, but they continued in large part due to French non-enforcement of the ban. In fact, French administrators remarked almost immediately after the treaty was signed that chiefs continued to collect the *farilla*, *zakka*, and *kummabite* despite being banned, a refrain that was echoed again and again in reports until the twilight of French rule in the 1950s.³⁰

In fact, the system of taxation as a whole – including legal and illicit forms – worked as French administrators and their African counterparts intended. Both groups wished to extract as much money as possible from the Futa Jallon with the least amount of labor. The reliance on local chiefs stemmed from a philosophical orientation held by prominent administrators like Noirot that advocated for the use of the established chieftaincy as proxies. Perhaps more importantly, the low numbers of French administrators present in the Futa Jallon relative to the region’s large size and population made direct intervention and administration untenable. For their part, chiefs seized upon the removal of many of pre-colonial practices that had acted as a check on their power – notably the practice of alternation and presence of councils of notables – in order to more brazenly exploit local rural communities. No longer able to raid neighboring regions for booty, the chiefs instead turned on their own subjects in order to fund their extended networks of clients.

³⁰ For a temporally representative set of examples, see: “Guinée-Rapport Politique,” October 1903, ANS 2G3/1; Monographie des Timbis Touni et Madina, 1896-1908, ANG 1D45; Rapport Bobichon, “Mission Politique dans le Fouta Djallon,” 16 June 1909, ANS 7G86; Julian to LG Guinée, 23 March 1921, ANS 7G7(2); Administrateur en chef des Colonies Pechoutre, “Rapport sur Administration Politique, Labé” December 1939, ANG 2D438; Haut Commissariat de l’AOF, Service de la Statistique Générale et Institut Française d’Afrique Noire, “Études agricoles et économiques de quatre villages de Guinée Française,” October 1955, BNF.

Excess and Exploitation in the Protectorate

The exploitative system of legal and “traditional” taxation emerged from the articulation and practice of authority in the post-conquest Futa Jallon. Unchecked abuse of power and discordant, personal regimes of rule were the norm during the Futa protectorate rather than an aberration caused by excess.

The French administrator who shaped much of French rule in the Futa Jallon was Ernest Noirot, at first the region’s Resident and later named the head of Native Affairs in Conakry. Noirot had experience negotiating with Fulbe elites, having joined the French army after a brief theatre career and participated in the 1880-1881 Bayol mission that passed through the Futa Jallon. The former soldier returned to the Futa in 1897 to direct the negotiations of the treaty of protectorate following the defeat of Bokar Biro. After strong-arming the chiefs into accepting a series of provisions that checked their power, including limits on the slave trade, Noirot set about fashioning an administrative system that would best facilitate the collection of taxes and, some claimed at the time, his personal enrichment.³¹

The newly appointed French Resident’s first goal was to undermine the authority of the new Futa *Almamy*, whose predecessor had dared to resist French incursion into the region. Noirot made two moves to do so. First, he limited the scope of the *Almamy*’s authority to two *diwe* (pl. *diwal*) immediately surrounding Timbo, a reduction from the pre-conquest 9 provinces over which the Futa sovereign had previously claimed nominal control.³² Therefore, Alfa Yaya in Labé was released from any oversight by Timbo, as were the chiefs of the Middle Futa. The

³¹ Martin A. Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 148-149. For a biography of Noirot, see Philippe David, *Ernest Noirot: Un administrateur colonial hors normes, 1851-1913* (Paris: Karthala, 2012).

³² Suret-Canale, “La fin de la Chefferie,” 467; Diallo, *Fuuta-Jaloo*, 365-368.

Almamy of Timbo would continue to claim spiritual authority over the Futa as a whole. His administrative reach, however, would be progressively whittled down as French rule continued. Second, Noirot made sure that Baba Alimou, a young, pliable candidate with a weak claim to the vacated position, was named the new *Almamy*. Alimou hailed from a minor wing of the Timbo *Soriya*, but was from a family that could not be named to the Almamate in the pre-colonial Futa Jallon. Thus, the new *Almamy* could conceivably lay claim to some sort of “traditional” authority, yet he was also seen as illegitimate by large sections of the Futa aristocracy.³³ Alimou was, in Noirot’s mind, the perfect figurehead: able to lend the veneer of legitimacy to the administrator’s actions, but not independent enough to survive without the backing of the French colonial administration.

Noirot realized that the new *Almamy* was in a precarious situation and in 1898 provided Baba Alimou a group of African soldiers to serve as a personal guard. The decision would eventually prove disastrous. At the outset, Alimou’s guards belonged to the French military and were paid out of French coffers. In 1900, however, the guards stopped being paid regular salaries but were never officially discharged from the colonial army. Instead, the men assumed a role similar to the *sofas*, or men at arms, of the pre-colonial Futa chiefs. Tasked with providing for themselves and their superiors, the soldiers pillaged the countryside just as their pre-colonial counterparts had before. According to a French investigation, the soldiers were often ordered to round up chickens, eggs, or butter to feed the Almamy and French administrators, traveling around the countryside, stopping in villages, and seizing the goods without paying.³⁴ Such behavior might have been tacitly accepted during the period of military control in other parts of

³³ See the Enquête Stahl, ANS 7G85.

³⁴ Enquête Stahl, ANS 7G85.

French West Africa (AOF), but once civilians took over administration it represented a visible regularization of violence. Clothed in French army uniforms, armed with French guns, and armored with the backing of French administrators while at the same time practicing the well-established practice of aristocratic pillaging, the *Almamy*'s personal troops represented the new, hybrid system of authority and power in the Futa.

French administrators also took advantage of lax oversight. The most vivid example of a French official running amuck under the cover of superiors' plausible deniability was the man who replaced Noirot as the resident and head administrators in the Futa Jallon, H. Hubert, who constructed what later investigators called a virtual "satrapy" in the middle of the colonial territory.³⁵ Hubert became famous for his combination of excess, dim-wittedness, and being the beneficiary of nepotism. The nephew of Louis Gustave Binger, a famous French explorer and later Governor of Côte d'Ivoire, Hubert rose from the position of an unremarkable lower-level clerk to the commandant of the cercle of Timbis in the central Futa. A protégé of Noirot, Hubert was named the Futa Jallon resident after the former moved to Conakry to head up Guinea's Bureau of Native Affairs. Just as many French colonial administrators who came before and after, Hubert used lax oversight in order to enrich himself and his followers. Hubert, however, also created a personal fiefdom seemingly drawn from French exoticist fever dreams. Aside from using Baba Alimou's troops to enact personal vendettas – for example, Hubert once ordered them to murder an unarmed Chief of Fougoumba along with two of his sons³⁶ – the resident was also famous for traveling around the Futa with an outsized cortege. One French teacher posted in Ditinn described Hubert's arrival to his town:

³⁵ M. Le Hérissé, "Affaire Frézouls," ANS 7G61.

³⁶ Enquête Stahl, ANS 7G85.

When a very fast courier announced the arrival of the M. le Commandant of the Futa Jallon region... in Ditinn, the post took on an unusual energy. There was an extraordinary coming and going of soldiers, natives, and women. We were taken quite a distance to go and meet the “Grand Commandant,” almost to the border of the cercle itself. All of the Chiefs in the area were also taken along. About an hour after being told what was happening, there appeared M. Hubert, perched atop his tall horse. To his side, naturally, was the Commandant of Ditinn, M. Bastié, who always went to greet Hubert [when he came to Ditinn]. Behind them were a series of native notables, the village chiefs, flanked by their flag bearers, griots, militiamen, the most bizarre musical instruments, and finally the general population... A couple hundred meters behind them there advanced majestically two very comfortable hammocks guarded by soldiers armed to the teeth and wearing first-class golden lace. These “brave” soldiers escorted the three wives of M. le Commandant de Région; the two smallest shared one hammock and the largest had the second to herself. With no added malice, [a bystander told me] “those two foula-soussous [of both Fulbe and Susu ancestry] have the same mother, they are two sisters.”³⁷

To this Frenchman, Hubert had long crossed several bright lines of proper conduct for a colonial administrator. Not only had he installed himself as a sort of king, complete with a personal army and parade of musicians, vassals, and praise singers, the French head of the Futa Jallon had also married three local wives, two of whom were siblings. While colonial administrators’ relationships with African women, both consenting and forced, were certainly not exceptional, that Hubert had seemingly raised the women to the level of being wives offended the sensibility of the French school teacher. Neither was Hubert’s parade reflective of Fulbe custom; pre-colonial chiefs often traveled only with their soldiers, and were known for their reserved nature. Rather, Hubert’s tour of the countryside reflected a healthy mix of French and Fulbe markers of authority, combined with exoticist fantasies of pre-colonial rule in Africa and a simple case of falling prey to the temptations of excess.

Hubert was only the most ostentatious example of French excess during the era of the protectorate. Noirot, the architect of the ad hoc colonial system himself, also created state within

³⁷ Castéré to Stahl, 26 May 1905, Enquête Stahl, ANS 7G85.

a state in the Futa Jallon. Osborn provides an insightful window into how Noirof's interpreter, a former slave named Boubou Penda, was able to leverage his position as an intermediary within the colonial administration in order to enrich himself and his patron, often through flouting both French and Fulbe rules of propriety and demanding bribes from Fulbe chiefs. Osborn also places the two closely linked men at the center of a 1905 scandal that precipitated Noirof's fall. Word of what was going on in the Futa Jallon eventually made its way to the French press, and laid bare the Metropolitan fiction of a colonial rule in Africa defined by the *mission civilisatrice*. The moral failings of French administrators reflected, some argued, the failure of the colonial project itself. Indeed, most press coverage of the affair in Paris centered on perceived violations of the assumed colonial racial code, especially the more salacious details of Hubert's personal entourage mentioned above.³⁸

Perhaps the most important effect of the Noirof-Hubert-Boubou affair, though, was the arrest and eventual exile of Alfa Yaya. The Labé chief had been an early ally of Noirof during the 1897 protectorate treaty negotiations, agreeing to use his influence to bring the other Futa chiefs in line in exchange for autonomy. In the intervening years, the two had developed a close relationship, often exchanging gifts as a sign of respect. The Labé chief often sent sheep to the Noirof via Boubou and the French administrator reciprocating with printed cloth.³⁹ The two even shared a battlefield at one point; when the chief of N'Dama, a region outside of Labé, refused to pay taxes, the two men and their personal guards confronted (and eventually turned tail and fled

³⁸ Emily Lynn Osborn, "Interpreting Colonial Power in French Guinea: the Boubou Penda-Ernest Noirof Affair of 1905," in *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African employees in the Making of Colonial Africa*, edited by Lawrence, Osborn, and Roberts, (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 56-76.

³⁹ Deposition d'Alpha Yaya, 7 November 1905, ANS 7G96.

from) the usurper and his thousand-strong army.⁴⁰

At its core, Noirof and Yaya's relationship was mutually beneficial. Noirof tacitly approved and even sometimes covered up Yaya's pillaging of the Labé countryside. In one especially egregious case, the Labé chief stole a herd of cattle from a local notable named Ibrahima Sy and then intimidated the man into not reporting it to local colonial administrators.⁴¹ Unfortunately for Yaya, Sy was either literate in French or had access to someone who could write, and proceeded to send a series of complaints to the AOF Governor General on Gorée. The theft first came to the attention of the Guinea colonial administration in 1901, but was supposedly buried by Noirof and his French allies in the Futa. When in 1903 the AOF administration ordered that the cows be returned, it turned out that the livestock had been incorporated into Alfa Yaya's herds "for safe keeping" shortly after their "disappearance," and in the intervening years 2 had died and 7 had been stolen. Thus, of the original 11 taken from Sy, only 2 were actually returned. When Yaya was ordered to pay Sy for the cattle that were lost, the Labé chief imprisoned the notable for a month. Sy was eventually released with his compensation of 1125 francs and allowed to return home, but while on the road was robbed by a "bandit," who coincidentally ended up being a local militiaman under the control of the French commandant of Labé. Noirof claimed that Sy had stolen the money himself in order to collect twice; the administration in Conakry did not agree, and ordered the Commandant of Labé to arrest the militiaman. The latter would never have his day in court. While the accused thief was being held in prison, he supposedly committed suicide. Instead of placing the prisoner in a prison

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ "Rapport du Capitaine d'infanterie coloniale Bouche, de l'État Major particulier, chargé de le Région du Labé, sur le premiers résultats de l'enquête entreprise à la suite d'une plainte du dioula sénégalais Ibrahima Si contre le chef de diwal Alpha Yaya et son fils Aguibou," no. 458A, 26 November 1903, ANS 7G94.

cell, a subsequent report found, a guard locked the militiaman in the armory. Witnesses heard a shot ring out shortly thereafter, and the militiaman was found dead with a supposedly self-inflicted gunshot wound in the chest from a long-barreled rifle, escaping a lengthy prison sentence and somehow defying the laws of physics.⁴² That local French administrators and Yaya believed that they could cover up the multiple instances of obvious theft, kidnapping, and murder – a well justified belief, as neither the administration in Conakry or Gorée punished the conspirators – only reflects the brazenness with which those in power in the Futa Jallon acted during the protectorate.

Yaya's theft of cows by proxy from those less powerful would have fit well within the range of accepted practices in the pre-colonial Futa Jallon. That it continued after French conquest with implicit permission of Noirot was part and parcel of a more general short-term policy of using the political authority and tactics of the pre-colonial chiefs in order to secure the legitimacy and profitability of the nascent French rule in the Futa. Noirot stated as much during a tour of the Northern Futa in 1902, remarking that the Commandant of Labé has been able to achieve many of the administration's goals due to Alfa Yaya's strong and active position in the region, while the regions of the Timbis floundered because its chief did not exercise enough authority. For the long-term economic development of the Futa Jallon, Noirot argued, stability in the short-term was essential.⁴³

Yet the Yaya's rule was not wholly free from criticism. As early as 1902, French administrators – especially those at the AOF level and in the metropole – started to raise concerns about what they considered to be the dangerous growth of Yaya's power within the

⁴² Enquête Stahl, ANS 7G94.

⁴³ Noirot, Rapport de Tournée, ANS 2G/2.

new colonial system.⁴⁴ The commandant of Labé worried in 1903 that the Labé chief was directing all of the French cercle commandants in the region; in response, he ordered all French administrators to cease direct contact with Yaya.⁴⁵ A 1902 report from Kadé, the region over which Yaya first ruled as *misside* chief during the 1870s, remarked that the Fulbe in the area did not want to work, refused to recognize the authority of the French, “only follow their ‘king’ Yaya,” and either refused or fled when ordered to pay taxes and provide corvée labor.⁴⁶ Alarms raised by other administrators contained the same refrain. While Yaya’s rise had served French interests immediately after Bokar Biro’s fall, in the time since he had used the small number of French administrators on the ground combined with the end of oversight from Timbo in order to create his own shadow state comprised of loyal chiefs and collaborationist French administrators. Without more direct intervention, they argued, the French government ran the risk of losing control of the Northern Futa Jallon, the demographic and economic heart of the colony.⁴⁷

The appointment of a new Governor in late 1904 signaled a sea change in policy towards the Futa chiefs. Antoine Marie Frézouls arrived in Guinea determined to reform what he considered to be an undisciplined frontier of the French empire. The new Governor was concerned himself primarily with regularizing and professionalizing the administration of Guinea, and in particular putting an end to various personalized jurisdictions that had grown during the period of protectorate. These states within a state ranged from small and informal to large and integral to the functioning of French rule in Guinea. An example of the former was

⁴⁴ Rapport Politique, Guinée, July 1902, ANS 2G2/2.

⁴⁵ Rapport Politique, Guinée, May 1903, ANS 2G3/1.

⁴⁶ Rapport Politique, Boussourah (Guinée), January 1904, ANS 2G4/1.

⁴⁷ Commandant Boussourah to LG Guinée, Rapport Politique, May 1904, ANS 2G4/1; Rapport Politique, Labé, May 1903, ANS 2G3/1.

used in debate in the French National Assembly as an example of the misgovernment of Guinea before Frézouls arrived. Early into his tenure, the new governor discovered that two men, one a former scribe in the Conakry courts, had set up a kangaroo court in Coyah, a town only 20 km from Conakry, and set about judging locals based upon their “code of laws,” which happened to be a dated copy of a Hachette almanac. The two men’s ad hoc legal system was the only representation of the French colonial “state” in the area, and for a period of time ran the town as their own personal domain. The two renegade “judges” were sentenced to forced labor, although both fell ill with beriberi and died shortly after being imprisoned in Conakry.⁴⁸

On the other end of the spectrum was Alfa Yaya’s control over the upper half of the Futa Jallon. Frézouls argued in a report to Gorée that his hand had been forced. Noirot, Hubert, and Boubou, with the approval of Alfa Yaya and Baba Alimou, the governor claimed, had been making moves to restore the Futa Jallon as a unified administrative unit similar to what had existed before the treaty, with Noirot at its head and Hubert as his second in command. Frézouls’ identification of a Noirot-led conspiracy was within the realm of possibility; in later testimony, Baba Alimou would claim that Noirot had told him that, “you will be the last Almamy of the Futa Jallon. If you do what you are supposed to do, I will not remove you. But after you, it is me who will take the title of Almamy of the Futa Jallon.”⁴⁹ The governor’s accusation that Yaya was collaborating with Noirot in this grand project made less sense, as the Labé chief had turned against the Almamy in 1896 specifically to separate his territory from Timbo’s control and, if anything, Noirot represented both a more forceful and demanding paramount ruler than what had

⁴⁸ “En Guinée – Petites causes. Grandes effets,” 26 December 1907, ANS 7G61; Assemblée Nationale, France “Chambre des Députés, Séance de 19 Novembre 1907,” *Annales: Débates parlementaires* v. 83, 9^{me} Législature, Session Extraordinaire de 1907 (22 October to 26 November 1907) (Paris: Imprimerie des Journaux Officiels, 1908), 561.

⁴⁹ Enquête Stahl, p. 205, ANS 7G85.

previously exited. Nevertheless, Frézouls argued that any such consolidation in the Futa by Noiro, Huber, and Yaya would cause a “profound division amongst the races” in Guinea at a time when the colonial administration should be working towards integrating the different regions and ethno-linguistic groups into a cohesive whole.⁵⁰ Noiro’s supposed plan soon fell apart. Frézouls sent the influential administrator into the literal wilderness – namely, the borderlands between Guinea and Liberia – officially to delineate the border between the two territories but in practice to remove the administrator from any center of influence.⁵¹ Frézouls then turned to Noiro’s translator, accusing Boubou of sowing discontent amongst the Futa chiefs by claiming that the new Governor was dedicated to the abolition of slavery, intended to place a tax of livestock, was going to expand demands for corvée labor, and would soon replace gold coins with paper currency; in sum, charges that were especially effective due to their plausibility. Boubou also supposedly told Yaya that the Governor planned on sending him and his son Aguibou to Gabon and planned on naming Yaya’s *Alfaya* rival, Oumarou Bademba – whose father Yaya had killed – as chief of Labé. Frézouls had Boubou arrested, and the influential translator died in November from a case of beriberi.⁵² Hubert was suspended from the colonial

⁵⁰ Frézouls to GG AOF, Rapport 1ere Trimestre, no. 436, 26 April 1905, ANS 2G5/1.

⁵¹ Noiro at first refused the order, claiming that the border had already been delimited in 1903, but eventually acquiesced to the Governor’s demands. Frézouls to Noiro, 19 March 1905, Papiers Noiro, ANF 148AP.

⁵² Rumors would later circulate that Boubou’s death had been intentional. Boubou at first took the fall for Noiro, refusing to implicate Noiro in any of the rape, murder, and pillaging that of which the two were accused. The seemingly loyal interpreter died in November before he was able to give his full testimony. Two months after Boubou’s death, though, the Governor of Guinea, Frézouls, found a letter signed by “Davis” alleging that the prison’s doctor had poisoned Boubou with arsenic because the former interpreter was intending to testify against his former patron. The doctor denied the accusations, and the Governor General of the AOF declined to pursue an investigation, either because he did not believe it credible or he did not want to feed what was quickly becoming a public scandal in the Metropole over a colony “run amuck.” The

administration while on vacation in France and would never return to Guinea. Noirot joined him shortly after.⁵³ Thus, the administrative cogs of the exploitative mini-state in the Futa protectorate had been removed from the scene.

The Labé chief proved slightly more difficult to bring to heel. Frézouls moved to limit Yaya's proceeds from taxes, and reported in early 1905 that he had succeeded in reducing Yaya's portion of yearly proceeds by 1/3.⁵⁴ The new governor also began to intervene in the internal functioning of the "traditional" administration of Labé. A conflict over the succession to the deceased Chief of Yambering, a region on the periphery of Labé nominally under Yaya's control, emerged between rival candidates supported by Yaya and Frézouls. Yaya was initially able to install his choice, but the new chief was removed and replaced by another candidate more in line with Conarky's interests. Yaya sent his militia to reverse the change, but colonial forces stopped his troops before they reached Yambering.⁵⁵

The final straw seemed to have been a dispute over territories under Yaya's control. At the time, French and Portuguese officials were engaged in negotiations over the border between their respective Guinean colonies. In part to undermine Yaya's fertile and profitable holdings in

supposed poisoning, though, did have lasting effects on Frézouls; he became convinced that there was a large cabal ranging from certain Futa chiefs – notably Alfa Yaya – to Noirot and higher-ups in the colonial administration dedicated to covering up the abuses of power that had occurred in Guinea since 1897. Frézouls (LG Guinée) to Roume (GG AOF), "Décès de Boubou Penda ex-interprète de M. Noirot," 10 Nov 1905, no. 1240A, ANS 7G96; Frézouls to Roume, "Envoi d'une dénonciation calomnieuse," 1 Feb 1906, no. 19C, ANS 7G61.

⁵³ Osborn, "Interpreting Colonial Power," 67-68.

⁵⁴ Frézouls (LG Guinée) to GG AOF, Rapport 1er Trimestre, no. 436, 26 April 1905, ANS 2G5/1.

⁵⁵ Enquête Stahl, ANS 7G94.

Kadé, the French government agreed to cede large portions of land to the Portuguese.⁵⁶ Yaya interpreted the governor's moves as a direct assault on the chief's authority. The Labé chief's suspicions were largely correct, as Frézouls had already started grooming one of Alfa Yaya's advisors, Modi Alimou, as a possible successor as chief of Labé.⁵⁷ In doing so, Frézouls would pass over Yaya's own son, Aguibou, who was supposedly cut from the same cloth as his father; the chief's son was infamous for his exploitation of villagers, had killed one of his own brothers, and was prone to violent outbursts.⁵⁸ According to Governor, the only question that remained was how to dispatch of Yaya. One option was to deal with the chief through "extinction," meaning waiting for Yaya to die while making clear that Aguibou would not take over. The other path forward was to force Yaya to hand over his territory to the French. Due to an agreement signed with Yaya in 1897, however, the colonial administration would have to compensate Yaya for his (substantial) holdings. Frézouls made clear that the latter route was not possible, yet at the same time declared that by 1907 the position of chief of Labé should be abolished and only the individual canton chiefs in the Northern Futa would remain.⁵⁹ Frézouls's two stated policies seemed to be at odds. He did not want to come to agreement with Yaya, whereby the chief would give up his power in exchange for compensation, as such an arrangement ran the risk of Yaya still controlling the region's administration behind the scenes. A better solution would be the

⁵⁶ Frézouls (LG Guinée) to Roume (GG AOF), "Affaire Alpha Yaya," no. 1235, 10 Nov 1905, ANS 7G96.

⁵⁷ Frézouls (LG Guinée) to Roume (GG AOF), "Rapport Politique, Mois de Mai," no. 5782, 17 June 1905, ANS 7G95.

⁵⁸ Frézouls (LG Guinée) to Roume (GG AOF), "Affaire Alpha Yaya," no. 1235, 10 Nov 1905, ANS 7G96.

⁵⁹ Billault (Commandant la Région du Labé) to Frézouls (LG Guinée), "Au sujet de l'attitude récente du chef de diwal," no. 2R, 26 April 1905, ANS 7G95.

chief's disappearance from the region, but death by natural causes did not fit in with the proposed schedule for reform, as Yaya was in good health. Ultimately, the governor lucked upon – or, some speculated, manufactured – a third course of action that would remove Yaya in short order: rebellion followed by exile.

The official narrative presented by Frézouls relied heavily upon tropes associated with the “Fulbe character” and the Labé chief in particular. In a report to the AOF Governor General, Frézouls laid out Yaya's by now familiar list of crimes. At first the Labé chief had been loyal to the French, siding with them against Bokar Biro, and Yaya had been rewarded in the 1897 treaty that gave him a certain amount of autonomy and ended the practice of alternation in Labé. Yet Yaya had soon become drunk with power. Backed by Noirot and buttressed by tax revenue, the self-styled “Almamy of Labé” murdered his political rivals, established a personal army comprised of “Senegalese mercenaries,” and extended the illegal collection of *kummabite* and *farilla*. Yaya's goal, Frézouls claimed, was nothing less than gaining control of the Futa Jallon as a whole and eventually expelling the French from the high plateau. In response to the new Governor's obvious attempts to undermine his authority, the Labé chief supposedly decided to move against the French. According to Frézouls, Yaya stalled by refusing to obey French orders to return to Labé, all the while marshalling his forces in Kadé. After the series of confrontations over the nomination of Canton chiefs and tax revenues, Yaya made the final preparations for war. He sent his women, children, and herds to Portuguese Guinea for protection and sent emissaries “throughout Guinea” to foment unrest. The Governor of Guinea quickly outmaneuvered the Labé chief. Frézouls ordered that only part of the 1905 Tax revenue due to Yaya be paid, and that the Labé chief would have to travel to Conakry to confer with the colonial administration about the rest. Wary of an uprising, the Governor also ordered troops to move to

Kadé and for all the Europeans in the Northern Futa to amass in Labé. Upon his arrival in Conakry, Yaya was detained by French guards and sent to Dakar. Yaya's son, Aguibou, was arrested after he supposedly drew a sword on the Commandant of Labé, and was brought to Kouroussa under guard. The Labé chief was soon thereafter sentenced to five years of exile in Dahomey, to be accompanied by a small retinue, for attempted rebellion against the French colonial administration.⁶⁰

Yaya's perception of the events leading to his exile diverged drastically from the Governor's. In a deposition after his arrest, the Labé chief maintained his innocence and loyalty to the French government. He had always tried to further French goals and had helped Noirof whenever the French administrator needed. He had actively fought against those chiefs below him who exploited communities under their control and had neither bribed French officials nor stolen from others while chief of Labé. He had even donated generously to a monument in honor of a French administrator who had died while serving in Guinea.⁶¹ In other words, Yaya had been a model chief: powerful enough to advance French interests in the Northern Futa, but still recognizant of the fact that authority ultimately rested in the hands of the Europeans.

In the end, the conflict between Yaya and Frézouls came down to a clash of opposing administrative approaches. During the period of protectorate from 1897 to 1905 – more than a decade before Lord Lugard would arrive in Nigeria – an improvised system of indirect rule had been developed through a collaboration of Yaya, the chief of Labé, and Noirof, the French

⁶⁰ Frézouls (LG Guinée) to Roume (GG AOF), "Rapport politique trimestrielle," no. 34, 8 January 1906, ANS 2G5/1; Frézouls (LG Guinée) to Roume (GG AOF), "Affaire Alpha Yaya," no. 1235, 10 Nov 1905, ANS 7G96. Aguibou would join his father in Dahomey in 1907, after the Governor of Guinea voiced concerns that prisoner was secretly directing allies in the Futa Jallon from his cell through intermediaries. LG Guinée to GG AOF, "A.S. d'Aguibou, fils d'Alfa Yaya," no. 164, 20 February 1907, ANS 7G96.

⁶¹ Deposition d'Alpha Yaya, 7 November 1905, ANS 7G96.

administrator. Their system was based in part on the treaty of protectorate itself, which established French dominance yet also promised that the new rulers would “respect local custom.” The treaty allowed both sides to imagine a new state that suited them the best. The French gained a new revenue stream, control over trade to and from the Futa, and, they believed, an opportunity to enact social, political, and economic reforms to “civilize” the Futa and its inhabitants. The Fulbe chiefs and Yaya in particular saw the French administrators as a slightly more hands-on version of the Timbo *Almamys*, semi-absent sovereigns who demanded tribute and labor but for the most part representatives of a distant federal power who did not meddle in local affairs. The arrival of a Governor who pursued consistency and rational administration eventually forced the two sides to reconcile their divergent ideas of the protectorate, eventually leading to Yaya’s exile and the temporary end of the large, personalized jurisdictions in Guinea.

While the imaginary of colonial rule by Fulbe and French leaders diverged during the period of protectorate, its practice did not. French administrators, Hubert and Noirot included, borrowed freely from Fulbe symbols and practices of authority, the former more liberally and absurdly than the latter. In turn, chiefs like Yaya used the existence of French guns and troops to undergird their own authority during a time of rapid change, especially after important pre-colonial institutions like councils of notables and alternation were thrust to the wayside. Both sides converged on a model that, unfortunately for the vast majority of the Futa’s inhabitants, emphasized excess, exploitation, and violence. Yet the system forged by French and Fulbe notables during the protectorate was not sustainable, due primarily to its reliance on stripping the region of wealth and on exporting difficult to replace goods such as rubber and cattle. Interested parties were able to cover up the slow disintegration of the protectorate for its first decade, primarily due to Guinea’s peripheral position within a large and complex French empire. After

reports of colonial administrators' excesses in the Futa were leaked to the French press in 1907, the system became impossible to sustain publically. Although he was able to partially enact his reforms, Frézouls did not emerge from the Noiro-Hubert-Yaya scandal unscathed. The crusading Governor would be removed from his post in 1906 – retribution, he claimed, for attacking the well-connected Hubert– and would later recant his accusations against the two disgraced administrators in an attempt to fall back into the good graces of the colonial administration and to avoid a libel lawsuit. There were few winners in the Huber-Noiro-Hubert-Yaya-Frézouls affair, not least of which were the Futa communities which had suffered under the demands of parasitical French and Fulbe elites.

Making the Chieftaincy “Rational”

The debate about the benefits and dangers of Alfa Yaya's influence set the tone for the colonial administration's approach to the Fulbe chiefs up to the Second World War. For much of the next 40 years, colonial policy regarding the chieftaincy would swing between two poles, one arguing that administrators must rely upon “traditional” proxies and respect local custom to effectively govern such a large territory, the other arguing that the chiefs should be integrated into more “rational” administrative structures and treated as civil servants. In sum, the ideological battles of Noiro and Frézouls continued long after the two men were forced to leave Guinea.

Government attention in the aftermath of Yaya's exile turned to rooting out what many administrators believed to be a far-ranging plot to overthrow French rule in the Futa Jallon. According to Frézouls' reports, Yaya had been at the head of a large cabal of Fulbe chiefs and

religious leaders whose goal was to foment popular revolt against the colonial state.⁶² The 1909 murder of M. Bastié, the commandant of the Timbis cercle (about 40 km south of Labé) only stoked lingering French fears. The administrator had been a close colleague of Hubert's before the 1905 scandal broke – he was the local administrator who accompanied Hubert's cortege described above – and even molded himself after the excessive and violent head administrator of the Futa Jallon. According to local villagers, for example, Bastié kept a caged leopard on his residence's verandah, and eventually shot the animal 18 times late one night in a drunken stupor.⁶³ It is not hard to imagine, therefore, that he was widely despised by those under his charge, and that his murder by a group of marauders was due to pent up anger rather than a vast conspiracy.

Finding the latter explanation of the murder more compelling, the colonial administration's reaction to the murder was both quick and severe. Believing the attack was religiously motivated, French investigators linked Bastié's killers with "religious fanaticism" amongst the Fulbe as a whole. Despite the surviving interpreter pointing to the commandant's near constant harassment of the local population, local administrators' gazes quickly turned to a charismatic but elderly religious leader named Tchernon Aliou, also known as the "Wali of Goumba." The Wali led a semi-autonomous community in a Susu-dominated area adjacent to the Futa plateau. The religious movement Aliou headed was based upon what he believed was the need for reform in Islam as practiced in the Futa Jallon. Similar to earlier and more violent socio-religious movements like the Hubbu, the community welcomed persons of non-elite due to their

⁶² On French paranoia surrounding supposed religious plots in the Futa Jallon, see Christopher Harrison, *France and Islam in West Africa, 1860-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 68-89.

⁶³ Castéré to Stahl, 26 May 1905, Enquête Stahl, p. 99-100, ANS 7G85.

articulation of the egalitarian aspects of Islam. As such, Aliou's movement was antithetical to the Fulbe elite's claims of social superiority based upon their more perfect practice of Islam.

Nevertheless, French administrators linked Bastié's killers with the Wali of Goumba, and from then with a wide-ranging conspiracy amongst much of the Futa Jallon chieftaincy. The conspiracy's goal, according to investigators, was nothing less than precipitating the arrival of a "Mahdi," or a "redeemer of Islam" who would rule before the end times, to liberate them from Christian rule.⁶⁴

Combined with the colonial administration's failure to transform the Futa Jallon's social hierarchies and bring the region's elites under control, as well as mass exoduses from the high plateau of those recently enslaved during the Samori Touré wars, the murder of Bastié only reinforced a general sense amongst French administrators that their grip on the Futa Jallon was slipping. Klein speculates that the deteriorating situation in Guinea pushed William Ponty, the Governor General of the AOF, to enact an important change to the structure of federation-wide local administration in 1909.⁶⁵ Called the "*politique des races*," Ponty's vision of a reformed chieftaincy sought to chart a middle path between the models Noirots and Frézouls had previously advocated. The Governor General argued that each ethnic or "racial" community had the right to be ruled by one of its own. Such a system precluded the existence large, multi-ethnic

⁶⁴ Rapport Bobichon, 16 June 1909, 7G86; Guinée, Rapport Politique, 1er trim, 2G9/13. On the ideological development of "Mahdi" figure before the onset of colonial rule in West Africa, See John Ralph Willis, "Jihād fī Sabīl Allāh – its Doctrinal Basis in Islam and some Aspects of its Evolution in Nineteenth-Century West Africa," *The Journal of African History* 8, no. 3 (1967), 395-415. The figure of the Mahdi figures prominently in forms of Islamic resistance to colonial rule, especially in movements inflected by Fulbe society. See *The Holy War of Umar Tal: the Western Sudan in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 216; and Paul E. Lovejoy and J. S. Hogendorn, "Revolutionary Mahdism and Resistance to Colonial Rule in the Sokoto Caliphate, 1905-1906," *Journal of African History* 31, no. 2 (1990), 217-244.

⁶⁵ Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule*, 188.

administrative units – or *grands commandements* – such as Labé under Alfa Yaya.⁶⁶ As such, the new orientation of native administration represented an important change in colonial policy in the Futa, which was emerging from a period of protectorate that explicitly protected administrative boundaries based upon the pre-colonial *diwe*, as well as the larger than life chiefs who often ruled them.

Several colonial administrators in Guinea were in favor of dismantling of the Futa Jallon state. Local officials also looked at the Futa Jallon through the lens of the “tribe,” whether as a reflection of socio-political realities or distorted through the lens of misguided social theory based upon supposed “racial” characteristics (see below). And many administrators were partially right to point to the “Muslim” exploitation of “non-Muslim” populations; one of supporting pillars of social hierarchies in the Futa Jallon state, after all, was based upon the belief

⁶⁶ The *politique des races* proved to be a foundational concept in French colonial rule in West Africa, and its effects were felt wide and far and in multiple domains. As such, the policy shift has received considerable attention from scholars. Conklin characterizes the reforms as a noble yet misguided result of republican paternalism, an attempt to promote self-determination and “civilization” in West Africa with the added benefit of undermining an aristocracy that, according to Ponty, “could not be trusted.” Klein points to Ponty’s recognition of ethnic difference, arguing that the reforms were indicative of “the need to respect the ethnic ties and traditional political and social structures that made an African colony different from an overseas version of France.” Other scholars are more circumspect of the Governor General’s motives; Mamdani sees the reforms as an attempt enact a classical form of direct rule through dismantling pre-colonial states, while Babou argues that they reflected Ponty’s (and the colonial administration as a whole’s) belief that “African societies were fundamentally ‘tribal,’ and that all the large and multi-ethnic political formations found in the continent were the result of conquests and authoritarian rule imposed primarily by Muslims.” Each of these scholars’ characterizations of the *politique des races* could have described the motivations behind the reform’s application in the Futa Jallon. The main end of Ponty’s reforms, though, was most likely control over influential (but not always cooperative) chiefs. See Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 110-111, 116; Klein, *Islam and Imperialism in Senegal*, 230; Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 83; and Cheikh Anta Mbacké Babou, *Fighting the Greater Jihad: Amadu Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya of Senegal, 1853-1913* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007), 155-156.

that elite Fulbe leaders were the original Muslim conquerors, and that those of non-free status, either Fulbe herders or Mande and Djallonke slaves, assumed their lower position because of supposed past refusal to convert, incomplete conversion, or present unbelief. If the Futa Jallon indeed precipitated Ponty's reforms, it would make sense that the social harms he sought to redress were so present in the first decade of French rule on the high plateau.

Yet, as was both clear at the time and since, Ponty's *politique des races* served first and foremost one end: control.⁶⁷ Great chiefs like Alfa Yaya and to a lesser extent the Almamys of Timbo had at times actively or passively undermined French rule. Territorial governors needed to find a way to make the Futa chiefs wholly dependent upon the colonial state. One of the most effective tactics was undermining the economic independence of chiefs while at the same time deconstructing existing political structures.

The former *diwal* of Labé provides an example of how the Ponty's reforms played out in a local setting. For four years after Yaya's exile, one of the former advisors to the erstwhile head of Labé, Alfa (formerly Modi) Alimou, served as the chief of Labé. Alimou's position was tendentious – he was not a Kalidiabe, and thus had no local claims to the throne – and therefore relied upon strong support from the French to be a viable leader. In order to shore up his material and spiritual support from Labé notables, the Labé chief tuned to local religious leaders, commonly referred to as *marabouts*, in order to offer protection and legitimize his rule. At one point, Alimou was said to wear nearly 50 pounds of items that ensured religious protection and power on his person at all times. The appeal to religious power, though, was largely ineffective. Alimou became progressively exploitative in order to raise more funds to pay clients, and French administrators began to receive more and more complaints from local communities. Alimou's

⁶⁷ See Elizabeth A. Foster, "Rethinking 'Republican Paternalism': William Ponty in French West Africa, 1890-1915," *Outre-mers* 95, no. 356-357 (2007), 224-227

end came when the Labé chief was implicated in the Bastié murder. The Lieutenant Governor of Guinea used the supposed connection to remove an unpopular and ineffective chief, eventually arranging for Alimou to be convicted of slave trading – one amongst a bevy of other potential charges, the report mentions – and the chief was sentenced to three years in prison.⁶⁸ Alimou invoked the right of *kummabite* in his defense, saying that he only enslaved children from families who could not pay their legal and “customary” taxes, but his pleas fell upon deaf ears.⁶⁹ One administrator was clear about the motivation behind Alimou’s removal: “to best understand the reasons and consequences behind the arrest of Alfa Alimou, you have to go back to the deposing of Alfa Yaya in November 1905. That step was not especially motivated by Alfa Yaya’s personality, but rather by the necessity to break the feudal organization that was the accidental representative [of French rule in the Futa Jallon] and impeded our actions.”⁷⁰

Alfa Alimou would be the last person to serve as the chief of the greater Labé region, an administrative unit that was the successor to the pre-colonial *diwal* and had encompassed nearly one half of the Futa Jallon’s total territory and population. In the wake of the Bastié murder, Alimou’s arrest, and Ponty’s reforms, the former *diwal* of Labé was progressively broken down into smaller units. The same plan of decentralization was put into place in the rest of the Futa Jallon’s eight other former *diwe*, and in 1912, the title of *Almamy* of Timbo was erased. A limit of 25,000 persons in any once canton was enacted the following year.⁷¹ The process of breaking

⁶⁸ LG Guinée to GG AOF, “Envoi du dossier de l’affaire Alfa Alimou et consorts,” no. 758, 5 August 1909, ANS M170.

⁶⁹ Commandant de Labé, “A/s d’Alfa Alimou,” no. 1422, 9 July 1909, ANS M170.

⁷⁰ “Note sur l’arrestation d’Alfa Alimou Chef du Labé,” 9 July 1909, ANS M170.

⁷¹ LG Guinée, Rapport Politique, 4ème trimestre, 1912, ANS 2G12/15; LG Guinée to GG AOF, Rapport Politique 4ème trimestre 1913, no. 203A, 17 February 1914, ANS 2G13/14.

down large jurisdictions into smaller units also served the second goal of Ponty's reforms, namely that ethnic communities be administered by one of their own. Pockets of ethnic minority villages in the Futa Jallon, mostly ethnic Jallonke and Maninka, had been under the control of Fulbe chiefs dating to before French rule. These communities often bore the brunt of exploitation and enslavement, a burden that only grew following the 1897 treaty of protectorate. Allowing these types of villages, including communities populated by former slaves called, to have their own chief would deny chiefs the ability to demand illicit payments such as *kummabite* and *farilla*. In turn, administrators hoped, autonomy would staunch the exodus from the Futa countryside to neighboring areas while undermining the existing "feudal" social hierarchies.⁷²

Combined with a new push to prosecute flagrant examples of exploitation and an influx of French troops into the region, the *politique des races* as applied in the Futa signaled what the Lieutenant Governor of Guinea in 1910 described as France's dedication to "finish the conquest" that was, due to the lack of open conflict between French forces and the Fulbe elite in 1897, only partially completed with the establishment of the protectorate.⁷³

Revisiting the *Grands Commandements*

It took less than a decade for the French administration to recognize significant flaws in its plan to better control the Fulbe chiefs in the Futa Jallon. The system had encouraged loyalty amongst the Futa chiefs – the most important trait of all, one 1917 report remarked, meaning that the "rational" system had in a sense been effective. Yet changes in administrative units and a shift towards naming chiefs from families who had spurious "traditional" claims to the position

⁷² LG Guinée to GG AOF, Rapport Politique, 2ème Trimestre 1909, no. 729, 30 July 1909, ANS 2G9/13.

⁷³ LG Guinée to GG AOF, "La société Foula et l'action Française," no. 732, 17 Oct 1910, ANS 7G87.

had translated into an overall erosion of chiefly authority. Furthermore, the frequent revocation of chiefs and their replacement by family members had encouraged intrigue within ruling families, promoting instability and frequent claims of extortion in order to unseat chiefs.⁷⁴

The answer to the post-reform crisis of authority was clear, at least to Abel Thoreau Levaré, who was the commandant of Labé in 1918: the colonial administration should move back to the *grands commandements*, reattaching a group of independent districts back to Labé cercle that had “long been integral parts” of the former *diwal*.⁷⁵ The next year signaled a formal shift towards consolidation. The number of cantons in the Labé cercle was reduced from 23 to 9 in order to “simplify” the region’s administration.⁷⁶ In the rest of the Futa Jallon, colonial administrators used the deaths or revocations of chiefs in order to break apart their cantons and attach them to neighboring ones.⁷⁷ At the same time, the Guinean administration did not abandon the founding tenet of Ponty’s *politique des races* that required ethnic communities to be ruled by one of their own. Rather, independent villages populated by the same ethnicity were grouped together, despite the fact that they were often not contiguous. In 1937, one French administrator in the Mali cercle described the rationale behind maintaining the policy by paraphrasing a Fulbe

⁷⁴ LG Guinée to GG AOF, Rapport Politique 1er trimestre 1917, ANS 2G17/9.

⁷⁵ LG Guinée to GG AOF, Rapport Politique 1er trimestre 1918, no. 157A, 3 June 1918, ANS 2G18/4.

⁷⁶ LG Guinée to GG AOF, Rapport Politique 4ème trimestre 1919, ANS 2G19/6.

⁷⁷ The general policy of using deaths to reduce the number of cantons was signaled in 1917; its application continued for over a decade. See LG Guinée to GG AOF, Rapport Politique 1er trimestre 1917, ANS 2G17/9; LG Guinée to GG AOF, Rapport Politique 1er Trimestre 1923, no. 213A, 18 May 1923, ANS 2G23/18; LG Guinée to GG AOF, Rapport Politique Année 1927, no. 140A, 28 February 1928, ANS 2G27/14.

proverb: “the goats [lie with] the goats, the sheep with the sheep.”⁷⁸ Colonial subjects used the policy for their own benefit. In many cases, minority communities – Jallonke and Maninka within the Futa Jallon as well as Fulbe in Haute Guinée or Basse Côte – only gained autonomy after petitioning administrators to create independent cantons or, in some cases, separate chiefs for all of the minority subjects in one region.⁷⁹

Policies regarding the appointment of canton chiefs shifted along with the move towards reconstituting the *grands commandements*. Following the exile of Alfa Yaya and the end of the protectorate, local French administrators had largely picked chiefs at will. Many who were chosen had legitimate claims to the position in the pre-colonial Futa state. However, following the turmoil of the end of the Futa protectorate and later on during the First World War, legitimacy took second billing to loyalty. This often meant identifying individuals with close ties to the French state – in particular veterans or those from lesser elite families – who could only rule with the backing of the French.⁸⁰ Such chiefs were often not considered legitimate by local notables, who were still important figures in Fulbe society. In response to a crisis of chiefly authority, starting in 1918 local administrators were instructed to “consult” with local notables when naming chiefs. Informal councils quickly transformed into organized elections, wherein notables would choose from a list of candidates put forward by the Commandant de cercle. Commandants were not bound by the election’s results and were free to choose the candidate they thought would most “reinforce French authority.” Yet, the Lieutenant Governor of Guinée

⁷⁸ R. Bichat, “Rapport sur le Sangalan,” no. 14C, 4 June 1937, ANG 2D/444.

⁷⁹ Ibid.; Colonie de la Guinée Française, 3ème Bureau, Rapport Politique Année 1935, no. 237 A.P.I., ANS 2G35/8.

⁸⁰ Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 89-90.

remarked in 1931, given two equal candidates, one should always select the prospective chief with the most legitimate “traditional” claims.⁸¹ In order to develop chiefs who were at the same time loyal, knowledgeable of French administration, and hailed from the Futa’s elite, the colonial administration in Guinea decided to more strictly enforce a 1924 decree that required chiefs to send their sons to French schools. By 1936, some 628 students were enrolled in the school, an increase from 29 total between 1927-1930. One report still remarked that the numbers from the Futa Jallon were significantly lower than other regions of Guinea in proportion to population.⁸² Yet the colonial administration had made the first moves towards molding the “traditional” elites in the Futa into effective colonial agents.

The shift back towards the *grands commandements* also revived the model of Fulbe chiefs whose influence extended beyond their administrative borders. The clearest successor to Alfa Yaya’s legacy, the colonial chief Ibrahima Sory Dara Barry, hailed from the *Alfaya* line of Timbo, one of the two families with a claim to the title of *Almamy* in the Futa Jallon in the pre-colonial state. In fact, Sory Dara was the nephew of *Almamy* Ibrahima Bademba of Timbo, the last of the *Alfaya* heads and rival to the usurper Soriya head, Baba Alimou. Born near Timbo in 1887, Sory Dara attended a Catholic primary school in Conakry and supposedly had “a spirit open to every modern innovation... read[ing] all the French publications he can find.” By 1912, he had been named the Chief of Téliko canton, about 100km southeast of Labé, and was considered by the colonial administration as an example of the new generation of Fulbe chiefs

⁸¹ LG Guinée to Commandants de Cercle et Chefs de Subdivisions, “Commandement Indigène,” no. 45A, 13 October 1930, ANG 2E2.

⁸² Ibid; LG Guinée to GG AOF, Rapport Politique Année 1936, 6 May 1937, ANS 2G36/30.

who would help reform the Futa.⁸³

In 1926, Sory Dara Barry was named the chief of the Timbo canton following the death of his father.⁸⁴ The territory over which he ruled had changed drastically since its time as the paramount seat of the pre-colonial Futa Jallon state. The *diwal* of Timbo had been broken into six smaller cantons in 1911 when the region's Soriya chief and the brother of the deceased Almamy Baba Alimou, Bokar Biro, was deposed due to a variety of issues. Biro was named the chief of a small, peripheral canton of Téré in the Kankan region, and an Alfaya family member named the chief of the new, smaller Timbo canton.⁸⁵ The Timbo Soriya were not content with their drastically lowered position, and after years of general insubordination and complaint were eventually reassigned to a new post: the canton Chief of Dabola, a region in Haute Guinée split between ethnic Fulbe and Maninka communities.⁸⁶ The Timbo Alfaya, on the other hand, were handed control of both the canton of Timbo and of Mamou, a rapidly growing city along the new Conakry-Niger railroad line that served as one of the most important economic crossroads in Guinea.⁸⁷ Therefore, while Sory Dara Barry did not enjoy influence over the whole of the Futa Jallon like his nineteenth-century predecessors, he was well positioned at the center of both the "modern" and "traditional" axes of power within the Futa. This fortuitous location, unlikely

⁸³ P. Hublot, "Villes d'Afrique. Une ville-champignon du Fouta-Djallon: Mamou," *Renseignements coloniaux et documents* 22 (1912), 297-309.

⁸⁴ 1er Bureau, Colonie de la Guinée Française, "Note a/s de l'Almamy Mody Sory Dara," c. 1944, ANF 7G/28/200MI4140.

⁸⁵ G. Poiret (LG Guinée), Arrêté no. 1401A, 14 November 1912, ANG 2E27.

⁸⁶ H. Sarran, Inspection des Affaires Administratives, Cercle de Dabola, no. 22 A. A., December 1939, ANG 2D/367.

⁸⁷ LG Guinée, "Nomination d'un chef de canton," Decision no. 268 PI, 1 February 1940, ANG 1D150; Colonie de la Guinée, Note de 1er Bureau "a/s. de l'Almamy Mody Sory Dara," c. 1939, ANF 7G/28 – 200MI2140.

arranged by happenstance, offered Barry a significant advantage over other Fulbe chiefs wanting to retake, if only in spirit, the mantle of paramount chief of the Futa Jallon.

And take advantage of the situation he did. When the chief of Mamou, “*Almamy*” Mody Abdoulaye – the title had lost by this point any official capacity, but still held social significance in the Futa – died in 1934, Sory Dara Barry took over the title of chief of Mamou and the designation as the *Almamy* of the Futa Fulbe.⁸⁸ Barry responded to French calls for increased production and recruitment for the army during the Second World War and, according to reports, was able to mobilize all of the Futa chiefs for the war effort. In 1943, Barry was also able to recruit some 20,000 *navétanes*, or seasonal agricultural workers, to engage in the “peanut battle” in Senegal.⁸⁹

The colonial administration rewarded Barry for his contributions. In 1943, he was named *chef supérieur* of the combined province of Mamou and Timbo, the first chief in Guinean named to the title that elevated him above all other canton chiefs. A dramatic increase in salary accompanied his improvement in status; Barry was paid 20,000 francs/year, well above the normal pay for a canton chief. Shortly thereafter, he was named a Knight in the colonial Order of Nicham-el-Anouar, and was sent on hajj as both a reward and to increase his prestige within the Futa Jallon. Thus, 38 years after Alfa Yaya’s removal and exile, colonial administrators had

⁸⁸ Sory Dara Barry would hand off the position of chief of Timbo to one of his brothers from 1937 to 1939, after local administrators voiced concerns that the relatively young chief was in over his head. After his brother’s death, though, Barry would retake the Timbo chieftaincy. By all accounts his second try at administering a territory comprising over 30,000 persons was much more successful. 1er Bureau, Colonie de la Guinée Française, “Note a/s de l’Almamy Mody Sory Dara,” c. 1944, ANF 7G/28/200MI4140.

⁸⁹ Berthet, Direction Générale des Affaires Administratives et Sociales “Notice de Renseignements, Almamy Ibrahima Sory Dara Bary, Chef de Canton de Mamou, Chef Supérieur de la Province Mamou-Timbo (Guinée Française)” 15 November 1943, no. 2317.P./2, CARAN 7G/28/200MI2140. See also Ch. 3.

found their reliable, consistent ally in the Futa Jallon. Sory Dara Barry possessed all of the desirable and none of the dangerous traits associated with “the Fulbe”: “intelligent and handsome,” one report raved, he displayed a “great piousness devoid of all pettiness and fanaticism.”⁹⁰ Barry maintained his political and social influence well into the 1950s. The Chief served as one of Guinea’s representatives to the *Grand Conseil* of the AOF, an advisory group to the French Governor General, and was the main benefactor of a generation of Guinean Fulbe politicians – notably Yacine Diallo, Ibrahima Barry “Barry III,” and Barry Diawadou – who would come to constitute the major opposition to Sékou Touré’s *Parti Démocratique de Guinée* during the 1950s. Sory Dara Barry was removed from his position as canton chief only when the Touré-led territorial government eliminated the positions of all chiefs above the village level in 1957.

Despite his prominent position in both the colonial administration and Futa society, Sory Dara Barry was still not immune to many of the charges directed at other Futa chiefs. Following his revocation as canton chief of Timbo, Barry’s brother, Mody Sidy Barry, accused the *chef supérieur* of agitating within the colonial administration for his removal in favor of Sory Dara Barry’s son.⁹¹ Furthermore, the PDG party newspaper *Coup de Bambou* – a publication whose main editorial focus was the undermining of the Futa chieftaincy – frequently attacked “HIS MAJESTY EL HADJ ALMAMY IBRAHIMA SORY DARA BARRY... ‘Father of the Fulbe faithful’... and Commander of the Legion of Honor” for protecting Fulbe chiefs accused of extortion and abuse of power when, according to the PDG leaders, the Fulbe leader should have

⁹⁰ Ibid.; 1er Bureau, Colonie de la Guinée Française, “Note a/s de l’Almamy Mody Sory Dara,” c. 1944, CARAN 7G/28/200MI4140.

⁹¹ Roland Pré (LG Guinée) to Commandant de Cercle de Mamou, 15 August 1950, no. 630 A.P.A., ANG 2D/445.

been working to reform the “exploitative Fulbe feudalism” present in the Futa Jallon.⁹² The long and somewhat inflated list of titles that the Fulbe chief had accrued only further demonstrated the former’s complicity within the exploitative colonial system, at least the article’s authors implied. Nor was Sory Dara the only Fulbe chief to rise to prominence. Sory Dara Barry’s Soriya rival in Dabola, Aguibou Barry, as well as the canton Chief of Dalaba Thierno Oumar Bah, would eventually rise to the rank of *chef supérieur*.⁹³ Despite critics and potential rivals, Sory Dara Barry still commanded significant influence within both the colonial administration and Futa Jallon society. He had become, some 40 years into French rule, the personification of the chimeric system of authority and rule initiated by the establishment of the protectorate, although stripped of its more obviously exploitative tendencies.

Starting with Lieutenant Governor Frézouls, many Frenchmen believed they could drag the Futa Jallon into “civilization” and later “modernity” through sheer force of will. That experiment largely failed, a reality embraced by the colonial administration in Guinea shortly after the end of the First World War. What emerged afterwards was a familiar system of local administration based upon personality and personal ability. Those chiefs such as Sory Dara Barry who proved themselves to be loyal and useful servants to the French colonial state saw their territory and wealth increased. Those who did not provide enough raw resources and taxes, or those who pillaged too excessively, saw themselves thrown out of office usually to be replaced

⁹² “Mi suti kétoungol djindaye fi mon: EL HADJ ALMAMY IMBRAHIMA SORY DARA SE MOBILISE DANS L’AFFAIRE DE YAMBERING,” *Coup de Bambou* no. 7, 17 April 1950.

⁹³ The chief of Dabola because his family was functionally exiled from the Futa Jallon following their removal from Timbo by French administrators in the 1920s; the Chief of Dalaba because his family had only been village chiefs before the colonial conquest and were only raised to the position of canton/*diwal* chief by the French, and were therefore not respected by many elites within the Futa Jallon. For the latter, see “Activité politique de Tierno Oumar Dalaba depuis son retour de Conakry,” 13 December 1946, ANG 2D371; Bah Boubakar, Infirmier Vétérinaire ordinaire de 1ère classe en service à Labé, to LG Guinée, 15 August 1946, ANG 2D371.

by a close family member. The system was “rational” in that it provided a clear set of upper and lower limits for the size of a canton and general guidelines for how those cantons should be organized. In the end, however, the administrative boundaries of the Futa Jallon were determined by the desire to maintain authority through the legitimacy of chiefs. That desire for effective stability ultimately drove the policies and decisions of the colonial state in Guinea more than republican impulses towards rationalism.

An Exercise in Consistency: French policy towards village chiefs

Village chiefs were the most ubiquitous representatives of French colonialism in Guinea. Their functions were smaller-scale versions of their canton counterparts: namely, providing bodies (as troops and laborers) and collecting taxes. As the tip of the spear of French extraction of resources from Africa societies, the village chiefs were often the most obvious manifestation of exploitation. Several scholars, however, have portrayed the village chief as a tragic figure, caught between the demands of the Commandant and communities that increasingly resented growing demands on their resources and labor. Threatened with removal and imprisonment, these chiefs used all means at their disposal in order to meet tax goals based on faulty census numbers. Most village chiefs were eventually unable to meet their French superiors’ demands, leading several village council of notables to appoint their own “straw chiefs” who were protected from revocation but retained “traditional” authority.⁹⁴ The experience of village chiefs in the colonial Futa demonstrates that, while at the level of the individual frequent revocation may have been devastating, French policy towards naming chiefs meant that the position of privileged extended families and the social group of local elites as a whole were maintained

⁹⁴ Robert Louis Delavignette, *Freedom and Authority in French West Africa* (London: Cass, 1958 [1948]), 82; Victor T. Le Vine, *Politics in Francophone Africa* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 46-47; Michael Crowder, “The White Chiefs of Tropical Africa,” in *Colonial West Africa: Collected Essays* (New York: Routledge, 1978), 137.

under colonial rule.

The French administration's management of village chiefs in the Futa Jallon both diverged from and mirrored its approach to the more senior rungs of the chieftaincy. Unlike their cantonal counterparts, village chiefs were often revoked, most commonly due to incapacity from old age, incompetence, or flagrant abuse of power. The experience of each village was idiosyncratic; an especially effective chief could serve for several decades, while another village might see a succession of chiefs serve only two years at a time. A mixture of the two was more common, though, with a chief serving for an extended period before stepping down or dying, followed by a series of shorter appointments until the French administration settled on a longer-term solution. Examples of numerous revocations may give credence to scholars' arguments about the precarious position of local chiefs. After all, rare was the chief who vacated a seat of his own accord. Focusing on the individual experience of chiefs, however, ignores the social networks in which they were embedded. Chiefs are some of the most visible figures in the colonial archives, underscoring their importance within colonial systems in French West Africa. Yet their authority and legitimacy ultimately relied upon the extended relations of family and clan, ones that are only noted in brief statements or marginalia. These social connections, however, constituted in large part the nebulous concept of "authority."

As stability was the main goal of colonial administration in the Futa, French officials began to recognize the importance of keeping chiefly authority within established social groups. After what one French administrator called the "slaughter" of local chiefs before 1913, due largely to mass revocations tied to exploitation, commandants were content to turn a blind eye to

“customary” forms of exploitation like *kummabite* and *farilla*.⁹⁵ Even when chiefly demands were so excessive that administrators were forced to act, the most severe sentence handed down was revocation with no further punishment. The only crime that merited imprisonment was engaging in the slave trade – and not, significantly, actually having slaves, as informational reports on chiefs included sections on “servants” well into the 1920s. The most common punishment for the trade was two years in prison. Given the poor conditions of colonial jails, it was certainly a significant sentence. Yet French administrators rarely handed down punishments for slave trading, and when they did it was only when other circumstances – for instance, failure to collect taxes or meet quotas for military recruits – required that a chief be removed.⁹⁶

Perhaps most importantly, a close look at the relationships between successive village chiefs shows how even a large number of revocations did not significantly undermine pre-existing social hierarchies. For example, take the village of Sérima, located about 30 km east of the town of Labé. Due to its proximity to the regional capital, the elites of Sérima for a long time had a close relationship with the *lenyol* of the *lambe* of the *diwal*, the Kalidiabe, of which Alfa Yaya had been the head until his death in 1912. In fact, at the time of the treaty of protectorate, the family that had ruled Sérima since at least the early 19th century were Kalidaibé’s themselves, and many of the family heads had served as close lieutenants of the Chief of Labé.

The imposition of French rule displaced the reigning family – although, as we’ll see, only temporarily – but kept the position of chief within the control of a handful of influential families in the Sérima. Modi Abdoulaye, son of a local notable named Modi Mamadou Dian, served as

⁹⁵ LG Guinée to GG AOF, Rapport Politique 1er trimestre 1918, no. 157A, 3 June 1918, ANS 2G18/4.

⁹⁶ See, for instance, the tables of punishments handed down by the Chambre d’Homologation from 1900 to 1910 for engaging in slave trading in ANS M125, M169, and M170, and the chief dossiers contained in ANG 1D132, 1D133, and 1D135, to name just a few examples.

chief of Sérima for the first 17 years of French rule.⁹⁷ He was revoked in 1914 for “complacency,” having supposedly neglected local affairs after abandoning the village for his house in Labé. For his replacement, the local administrator consulted the village notables, who chose one of their own, a man named Modi Ayouba, as the new chief. The relationship between Ayouba and Abdoualye is not clear; what is evident, however, was that Ayouba hailed from the region’s elite, as he had been one of the canton chief’s main advisors before being named chief.⁹⁸ Modi Ayouba resigned in 1927 due to ill health, and was replaced by his cousin Modi Téli. Téli died in office one year later, and was replaced by Modi Ayouba’s brother, Ibrahima Diallo.⁹⁹ Ibrahima Diallo served one year before being removed due to his participation in a cattle theft. He was not punished beyond revocation. The former chief’s replacement was Abdoulaye Diallo, whose father had served as village chief two times during the 19th century, and who himself was a Kalidiabe.¹⁰⁰ Abdoualye Diallo served until 1931, when he was removed due to “incompetence.” He was replaced by another village notable, Mamadou Dian, who would serve for 18 years before being revoked, this time without documentary explanation.¹⁰¹ It took until

⁹⁷ Affaires Indigènes, Colonie de la Guinée Française, Renseignements Individuels, Modi Abdoulaye, 14 June 1911, ANG 1D136.

⁹⁸ Administrateur de cercle de Labé to LG Guinée, “Nomination d’un chef,” no. 100A, 27 February 1914, ANG 1D136; Affaires Indigènes, Colonie de la Guinée Française, Renseignements Individuels, Mody Ayouba, ANG 1D136.

⁹⁹ Cercle de Labé, Colonie de la Guinée Française, Procès-Verbal de Démission no. 26, 6 March 1914, ANG 1D136; Direction des Affaires Indigènes, Colonie de la Guinée Française, Bulletin Individuel de Renseignements, Modi Téli, ANG 1D136; Direction des Affaires Indigènes, Colonie de la Guinée Française, Bulletin Individuel de Renseignements, Ibrahima Diallo, ANG 1D136.

¹⁰⁰ Direction des Affaires Indigènes, Colonie de la Guinée Française, Bulletin Individuel de Renseignements, Abdoulaye Diallo, ANG 1D136.

¹⁰¹ Lambin, Cercle de Labé Décision no. 17, 31 March 1931, ANG 1D136.

1950 for the French administration to find its ideal chief in Sérima: Ibrahima Diogo Diallo. The new chief was a veteran of the French army and knew how to speak and write both French and Arabic. Most importantly, he was also a Kalidiabe and part of the family that had founded the village centuries before.¹⁰²

Most villages in the Labé region had between 5 and 10 chiefs during the sixty years the colonial institution existed from 1897 to 1957. An exceptional village might have been administered by only two chiefs, most often a father and a son. Yet even in a village like Sérima that fell on the more tumultuous side of the spectrum, the title of chief still remained, at most, within two of the village's elite families. Furthermore, given the social interconnectedness through marriage of elites in the Futa Jallon, those two families were most likely related to one another. What emerges in Sérima and in other villages in the Futa Jallon is a picture of social continuity, with individual chiefs often falling to the wayside but with families and social classes retaining their grip on political power. In a few cases, French administrators experimented with naming a village chief from a family of former slave status. These chiefs were almost unanimously rejected by local notables, and were eventually removed because they could not effectively implement French policies.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Direction des Affaires Indigènes, Colonie de la Guinée Française, Bulletin Individuel de Renseignements, Ibrahima Diogo Diallo, 5 June 1950, ANG 1D136.

¹⁰³ Even recent arrivals to the Fulbe elite were not respected by notables. For example, Modi Alpha Sory, the chief of Hérico, a town 50km west of Labé, was undermined by local notables who did not respect the chief due to the fact that his family had converted to Islam only one generation earlier. Furthermore, Mody Sory commonly drank alcohol, a taboo in the conservative Futa. In response, the village chief chose to use his French-backed power and while strictly enforcing the demands of the administration, especially with regards to yearly taxes. Mody Sory's position as chief eventually became untenable due to widespread resentment among the village's population, and he was removed. In response, the former chief sent a series of letters to colonial administrators, culminating in an attempt to bribe a local administrator with 500 francs. He did not succeed, and was further humiliated when he was made to take back his

Fulbe Images

Relationships between French administrators and Fulbe chiefs were based first and foremost on the timely collection and taxes and the maintenance of authority. Yet policy and daily interactions alike were also shaded by a set of ideas drawn from both French and Fulbe sources about the character of the Futa Jallon elite and Fulbe society as a whole. This section examines the production of these ideas during and immediately after the protectorate, their transformation over time, and their lasting legacy in public discourses in Guinea.

Sustained contact between the French and the Fulbe – at first infrequent and distant, but after conquest sustained and intimate – produced a set of images of “the Fulbe” as a “race” with a particular history and group of characteristics. Previous conflict between the French officials and Pular-speaking communities had instilled in the former a set of ideas about the “Fulbe character.” In particular, the colonial administration’s contentious relationship with El-Hadj Umar Tal and the Torodbe community in the Senegal River Valley had cast the Fulbe as religious fanatics, arrogant and prone to violence.¹⁰⁴ Twentieth-century French administrators in Guinea, therefore, had several sources upon which to draw in order to “understand” the Fulbe, and pre-conceptions were further fortified by both experiences with the Fulbe chiefs as well as the exoticist imaginings of men like Hubert.

By the interwar years, images of the Fulbe had divided into two main groups: one dedicated to at first building and then tearing down supposed Fulbe superiority; and another

bribe back and publicly explain his crimes and punishment. See Lavit, Affaires Politiques to Comm. De Cercle Labé, “Tentative corruption fonctionnaire par Mody Sory,” no. 883A, 13 Nov. 1919, ANG 1D135; Talley, Administratuer de Cercle de Labé, to LG Guinée, 2 October 1919, ANG 1D135; Mody Sory, ex-chef de province de Hérico, to LG Guinée, 20 May 1922, ANG 1D135; Mody Sory to “Monsieur le Commandant Coppét à Conakry” 26 February 1920, ANG 1D135.

¹⁰⁴ Robinson, *The Holy War of Umar Tal*, 143-145.

rooted in the more ethnographic pursuits of colonial administrators like Noirot and later Gilbert Vieillard. Both camps, however, concerned themselves with three primary aspects of Fulbe history and culture: origins and character.

On Fulbe Origins

A nomadic past has been integral to both Fulbe self-imaginings and outside portrayals of the Fulbe. All sources – Fulbe, colonial, historical – agree that the Futa Jallon Fulbe came to the high plateau sometime in the two centuries before they established Futa theocracy in 1726. Local sources, both oral and written, stress the external roots of the Futa Jallon Fulbe. Pular-language chronicles collected by Vieillard in the 1930s point to a variety of origins. One such history, entitled the “*Tarickh* [sic][history] of the Fulbe,” recounts the tale of two men from Arab families, Seydi and Séri, who fled “Fas” (perhaps Fez?) due to political “troubles” in their homeland. They came to settle in the Futa Jallon after the Maninka “patriarch” El Hadj Salimou Souaré told them to go to the plateau. The two would come to found the *lenyol* of the Seydiyanke, to which Alfaya and Soriya lineages of Timbo belong, and the Sériyanke, which became the religious leaders of the Futa based in Fougoumba, constituting the political and religious poles of power on the high plateau. Conflict between the “pagan” rulers of the Futa and the Muslim descendents of the two Fulbe brothers broke out when Almamy Sori of the Sériyanke cut the skin of a large drum around which the “pagans” were dancing. Along with the help of the leader of the Seydiyanke, Karamoko Alfa, the Muslim Fulbe were able to established to Futa Jallon theocracy.¹⁰⁵

Another history traces the origin of the Fulbe back to a companion of the Prophet Mohammad, Umar ben el Khattab (Umar bin al-Khat’tab). While serving as the second caliph in

¹⁰⁵ “*Tarickh du Fouta Dialon*,” Cahier no. 1, FV. The same story is recounted in Derman, *Serfs*, 19.

the mid-seventh century Hijaz, el Khattab sent one of his generals, Umar bun el Asi (‘Amr ibn al-‘As) to conquer Egypt by boat. El Khattab’s instructions, according to the account, were to disembark after sailing for two months and install themselves in the territory. If the inhabitants were Muslim, they were to teach them the Koran; if they were not, el Asi and his men were instructed to “take them for Islam,” make them pay tribute, and if they refused to convert to conquer them. El Asi eventually made his way to Maasina (today in Niger delta of Mali) and converted the King of the territory as well as “the majority of the people.” Although the King of Maasina pleaded for el Asi to stay and not abandon them in “ignorance,” the general yearned to return to Medina. However, el Asi left behind one a religious teacher, Uqubata bun Yasiri (Ugu Battu bin Yasir), who eventually married the King’s daughter and had four sons. Those four sons came to found the four *yettore*, or family names, of the Fulbe – Barry, Diallo, Sow, and Bah – when their descendents moved to the “country of the Blacks” to the South and West. Some of the Fulbe forgot their own language and began to speak the language of the people where they migrated; they became the Wassoulou. Others made their way to the Futa Jallon, where they found and defeated the Diallonke. The Fulbe conquerors, however, fell away from Islam. It was only when a later wave of “saintly and savant” Muslims from Maacina came to Futa Jallon that the *jihad* overthrew the “pagan” Fulbe leader Jan Yero Hore Tene, establishing the Futa theocracy.¹⁰⁶

As Derman argues, the two stories stress different components of Fulbe political structures and authority in the pre-colonial Futa Jallon. The first story of the two men from Fas supports the claims two most important *lenyol* of the pre-colonial state: the Fougoumba Sériyanke and the Timbo Seydiyanke, or the religious and political pillars of the theocracy. The

¹⁰⁶ Muhammadou Bah, “Tarickh de Mamadou Bah,” Cahier no. 5, FV. A similar account appears in Derman, *Serfs*, 18-19.

second puts forward the theory of a multi-wave Fulbe settlement, explains the emergence of the four Fulbe *yettore*, and provides a common ancestry for all Fulbe. The common thread that connects the two was that the Fulbe arrived in the Futa from outside origins, either North Africa or the Hijaz, (eventually) bringing with them a devotion to Islam and a desire to build a theocratic state. As the basis for authority of the ruling class in the pre-colonial was in the combined political and religious power of the Fulbe elite, the foreign origins of the Muslim rulers were integral to building histories that proved the Fulbe elites superior religiosity and ultimately provided legitimacy for social hierarchies on the plateau. The Fulbe rulers came from elsewhere and brought Islam with them. They alone, therefore, had the right to rule in the pre-colonial Islamic state.

Given that external origins were seemingly integral to elite Fulbe self-constructions of privilege, it comes as little surprise that European travelers who passed through the Futa included versions of these origin histories in their travel accounts. Most repeat some version of one of the stories above. In his account of the Bayol mission, Noirot wrote that his interlocutor told him that the Fulbe came from *fudnaanke*, or “the East,” and arrived in the Futa in search of better pasture for the cattle, while Lambert repeated the story of Seydi and Séri from Fas.¹⁰⁷ In both histories, peaceful but failed attempts at conversion turned to war, with the Fulbe victory establishing their rule over the Diallonke. Some have argued that European travelers invented Semitic origins of the “noble” “races” (including the Fulbe or Fulani), which in turn entrenched ethnic division and hierarchies. European accounts of the Futa Jallon, however, track closely – although often in

¹⁰⁷ Ernest Noirot, *À travers le Fouta-Diallon et le Bambouc (Soudan occidental): souvenirs de voyage*, (Paris: M. Dreyfous, 1884), 130; M. Lambert, “Voyage dans le Fouta-Djallon,” *Revue Maritime et Coloniale* II, no. 2 (1861), 301.

mediated language – with Fulbe self-imaginings of their roots.¹⁰⁸ Vieillard collected his manuscripts and Pular-language accounts in the 1930s, and Derman did not conduct fieldwork until the 1960s. Therefore, it is conceivable that by that point contact with colonial modes of racial thought may have “invented” external Fulbe roots, specifically ones that make a distinction between the conquering Fulbe as “white” or “red” and the vanquished Diallonke as “black.”

As I’ve argued above, though, to do so would greatly overestimate the French administration’s – or even more implausibly, infrequent European travelers’ – ability to shape Fulbe art forms and historical discourses. Furthermore, similar modes of racial thought and self-constructed histories are widespread across both West Africa and the greater Sahel.¹⁰⁹ The scale of invention would have had to have been massive and pressure persistently applied. A more likely scenario is that Europeans travelers and administrators, confronted with a seemingly organized and culturally rich state, found resonances of their own racial thought within Fulbe use of external origins as legitimization of political and religious domination. What came later, though, did not simply wash away what had existed before. Rather, French and Fulbe theories of external roots became increasingly entangled, reinforcing and transforming one another over time.

In fact, even if the influence of colonial administrators and ethnographers had greatly outstripped their numerical paucity, widespread French theories about the origins of the Futa Jallon Fulbe in reality sought to *undermine* elite claims to superiority through external roots.

¹⁰⁸ Abdullahi Smith, *A Little New Light: selected historical writings of Professor Abdullahi Smith* (Zaria: Abdullahi Smith Centre for Historical Research, 1987); and Bala Usman, *Beyond Fairytales: selected historical writings* (Zaria: Abdullahi Smith Centre for Historical Research, 2006).

¹⁰⁹ Bruce S. Hall, *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa, 1600-1960* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 34-68.

Current or former colonial administrators wrote the early “scientific” works on the Futa Fulbe, beginning with Paul Guebhard’s 1909 study on the history and culture of the Fulbe. Guebhard had been a close confidant of the dismissed Futa Jallon administrator Hubert and was accused of stealing supplies from a Mamou schoolhouse, but had largely escaped any punishment.¹¹⁰ After his service in the Futa Jallon, he had an especially dim opinion of the Fulbe character. His account of the period leading up to the *jihād* is familiar, and based upon multiple waves of immigration, starting with the “fetishist” “Poulli” or Fulbe *burure* and followed by Muslim “Peuhl” or settled Fulbe from Maasina. The distinction he makes between the two is important, however. According to Guebhard, only the Fulbe *burure* were “true” Fulbe, in the sense that of possessing “pure” Fulbe blood and associated traits. The settled Fulbe, on the other hand, had, per the administrator, intermarried with Mande communities while living in Maasina to the point where “their Fulbe origin is questionable.”¹¹¹ Due to the “intermixing” of blood, the settled Fulbe had taken the worst traits from both races, Guebhard argued. From the Mande, the Fulbe had taken up a warrior’s spirit, eager and capable of conquering. From the Fulbe character, the settled “Peuhl” had taken the predilection for mysticism and propensity for laziness. When “mixed disastrously” with Islam, it had produced a Fulbe majority in the Futa Jallon that was “more motivated by speculative things than real ones, letting [their] mind[s] wander while living in laziness and idleness.”¹¹² Pre-colonial state-building in the Futa Jallon, Guebhard argued, was due to Mande influence; after years of contact with the “Moors” and “Arabs,” the latter had learned the ways of “civilization” and had passed it on to the settled Fulbe offspring. Thus, he

¹¹⁰ Enquête Stahl, ANS 7G86.

¹¹¹ Paul Guebhard, “Les Peuhl du Fouta Dialon,” *Revue des Études ethnographiques et sociologiques* (1909), 88.

¹¹² Guebhard, “Les Peuhl,” 92.

claimed, the Fulbe were an unpredictable mixture; intelligent and cunning, they were also prone to violence when not idly pondering the more esoteric aspects of Islam.

André Arcin, another colonial administrator, had a more favorable view of the Fulbe, their culture, and their history. Arcin traced the roots of the Fulbe back to ancient Egypt, arguing that they were the descendants of the biblical figure “Phout” (Phut or Put), one of Ham’s sons, who were chased out of the Nile valley during a civil war. In their westward travels to Morocco, the sons of Phout, or the “Foula,” had intermarried with “Black” populations, but had kept their nomadic ways before settling down and playing an integral role in the formation of the city of Walata. These herders, Arcin argued along the same lines as Guebhard, were the “true” Fulbe, and the majority of “Fulbe” in West Africa were in fact *métis* (a term he uses), the sons of Mande and Fulbe parents. The *métis* Fulbe were empire-makers, establishing states in the Futa Toro, Maacina, and eventually and further west, moving en masse and with sufficient wealth in cattle to the point that their troops “drained the rivers of all their water.”¹¹³ The fire, intelligence, and stubbornness of the Fulbe combined with the “civilizing” aspects of Mande culture, Arcin argued, to make many of the great pre-colonial states in West Africa.

Yet another administrator who had been posted in the Futa Jallon, Louis Tauxier, borrowed heavily from Arcin in his own study of the Fulbe, although with more emphasis on phrenology and seemingly arbitrary percentages of which “blood” – Arab, “Red,” or Black – coursed through Fulbe veins. Tauxier went further to explain differences among the Soriya and Alfaya branches of the Timbo elites, arguing that the former are “red skinned” and of almost full Fulbe blood, while the latter are “the sons and grandsons of Diallonke,” a distinction that is often repeated within family histories in the Futa today. Tauxier is clear to restate what previous

¹¹³ André Arcin, *La Guinée Française: races, religions coutumes, production, commerce* (Paris: Challamel, 1909), 230-232.

studies had already claimed: the Fulbe ruling elite as, by and large, the product of generations of intermarriage, and hardly “pure” at all.¹¹⁴

The outlines of the three “studies” of the Fulbe share two fundamental aspects. First, the “pure” Fulbe at one time hailed from the Egypt via North Africa, although the European authors reject Fulbe claims of descent from a companion of the Prophet, relying instead on biblical accounts. They share with the Fulbe the belief that due to outside influences, the Fulbe had initiated a period of strong state building in West Africa. European racialists found resonances of their own pre-set ideologies within Fulbe accounts, adding further viability to their theories of Fulbe foreignness. Second, the European authors are clear to point out that the ruling class of the Futa Jallon, counter to their own claims, are not “pure” Fulbe but rather partially the descendents of Mande. In my interviews with descendents of the ruling families, not much was made of Fulbe “purity” and people were often very open about having Mande ancestors – usually mothers – in their family trees. One living descendent of the Soriya family that eventually ended up in Dabola was quite open about his family’s being “at least half Maninka.” It was that mixture, he argued, that gave them legitimacy while ruling as the chiefs of the half-Maninka and half-Fulbe region. It was something of which he was proud.¹¹⁵ His recounting of his family’s ancestry was certainly inflected by his great-grandfather and grandfather’s role as colonial chiefs, as well as his family’s suffering at the hands of Sékou Touré’s regime. Even for one of the two most traditionally prominent families in the Futa Jallon, *métissage* was resource upon which to draw.

Claims by European studies of Fulbe *métissage*, on the other hand, were clearly meant to undermined Fulbe claims to the right of rule in the Futa by blurring borders between the Fulbe

¹¹⁴ Louis Tauxier, *Le Noir de Guinée* (Paris: Bureaux de la Science Sociale, 1909), 209-211.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Tierno Oumar Barry, Conakry, 11 February 2013.

and “others.” Fulbe self-imaginings and the theories put forward by the Europeans employ different vocabularies and logics – Fulbe elites made claims to superiority vis à vis their social inferiors and other ethnic groups in Guinea on the basis of culture and, most important, religiosity, while European administrators cum ethnographers employed biological understandings of race. The borders one side sought to maintain and another sought to undermine, however, were the same, just approached from different directions. Thus, while the language of “native” and “settler” may in other parts of Africa have roots in the colonial project, in the Futa Jallon the express goal of the colonial administration was to blur the distinction between the two, and therefore undermine the “traditional” claims to authority of the Fulbe elite.

On Fulbe Character

It is difficult to ascertain whether the ideological bent of the studies by Guebhard, Arcin, and Tauxier were determined by their own experiences in Guinea, or if their remembrances of Fulbe actions and culture were shaded by pre-conceived racial hierarchies (it was probably a bit of both). What is clear, however, is that these former administrators influenced perceptions of Fulbe by rank-and-file administrators in Guinea. For example, I found Guebhard’s article on the Fulbe in a file along with the Stahl report on the Hubert, Noirot, and Yaya investigation. Indeed, there were often references within political reports to certain actions by Fulbe elites being rooted in large part in the Fulbe character.

Disputes between colonial administrators and Fulbe chiefs often revolved around the latter’s inability (or unwillingness) to provide required corvée labor or army recruits. Many frustrated administrators invoked the trope of Fulbe “mysticism” mentioned above, claiming that

the Fulbe were too devoted to their “supernatural beliefs” in order to farm.¹¹⁶ Others blamed Fulbe non-participation in colonial projects on pure stubbornness, claiming that although the Fulbe have access to plow technology they have no will to adapt to French practices.¹¹⁷ Some administrators who were more forgiving of the Fulbe argued that the ethnic group was “less robust” than their Maninka counterparts and were therefore not equipped to do manual labor.¹¹⁸

Yet most administrators in Guinea remained critical of Fulbe society and culture. Camille Guy, Governor of Guinea from 1910 to 1912, detailed how aspects of the “Fulbe character” were systematically undermining French rule in a report to the AOF Governor General in 1911.¹¹⁹ After trotting out familiar statements on Fulbe religiosity and aversion for labor, Guy turns to explaining how Fulbe social structure and history have led to a fundamentally conservative society in the Futa Jallon. A distant history of nomadism, Guy claimed, had instilled hierarchies of power centered on familial ties rather than territory, a perspective born out in part by the importance of *lenyol* in elite Fulbe social structures. As such, French rule could only be mediated through central individuals, namely the pre-colonial chiefs, who had a vested interest in preserving the existing order. Furthermore, Guy argued, attempts to effect change would fail because the past was integral Fulbe self-understandings:

One sees [in the figure of the chief] the primordial concern of the Fulbe, extremely jealous of his traditions and preoccupied, above all, with safeguarding the personality of his race. The past is where [personality] is affirmed, haloed, for

¹¹⁶ Colonie de la Guinée, Rapport Politique, 2eme Trimestre, no. 729, 30 July 1909, ANS 2G9/13.

¹¹⁷ LG Guinée, Rapport Politique Annuel, no. 93A, 28 February 1927, ANS 2G26/13.

¹¹⁸ Colonie de la Guinée, Rapport sur la situation politique de la Guinée pendant la 4eme trimestre 1906, no. 287, 2 February 1907, ANS 2G6/9.

¹¹⁹ Camille Guy, LG Guinée, “La société Foula et l’action Française,” no. 732, 17 Oct 1910, ANS 7G87.

him, in a real glory of which he finds confirmation in books such as those of El Hadj Omar and Usman dan Fodio.¹²⁰ The history of their conquest of lands is presented as the essence of the Fulbe. The organization that followed remains intact in memory of [the conquerors] and still enjoys the same prestige. [The Fulbe] seem, above all, rebels to progress such as the one the administration wishes, because they hold in their minds a completely different ideal, for which their past furnishes the [main] elements, and that the arrival of the Mahdi will, one day or another, allow them to realize it.

The chiefs were not as “superstitious” as their adepts, Guy argues, but serve as distilled versions of their exploitative nature:

They show the same ardent and insatiable desire for enriching themselves in any other way than work. Their extortions are measured only by their degree of authority... their habit of lying is equally characteristic. One can rarely count on them for accurate reports. The accounts of their history that have remained the most popular are those that show their slyness and trickery.

But with work the Fulbe aristocracy could be bent to the French will:

The same passion for preeminence that characterizes the Fulbe aristocracy gives us a means to control them. The chiefs would rather rule for us than not rule at all. The most intelligent among them now make the necessary concessions to gain our support. The Fulbe race as a whole brings together faults and qualities that make it difficult to handle [them], but they also permit one to visualize that a progressive improvement of relations with us will come about. Our task is to develop those qualities while still taking into consideration local necessities.

Thus, in Guy’s treatise on the problems his administration had encountered while attempting to bring the Fulbe elites and general population to heel, we find the fundamental parts of the “Fulbe character” that would later constitute an integral part of Sékou Touré’s articulation of a “particular situation.” They were mired in what they see as a glorious history, whether or not said past was grounded in reality. Because of their backwards orientation, the Fulbe and their leaders were resistant to change, preferring rigid social hierarchies to social, political, and economic

¹²⁰ Both were Fulbe leaders of nineteenth-century *jihads* in West Africa. For the former, See David Robinson, *The Holy War of Umar Tal*; and for the latter, see Mervyn Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth: the life and times of the Shehu Usman dan Fodio* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

transformation. And above all, they were all too willing to employ treachery and duplicity to secure their vision of Futa culture and society.

Guy's description of the Fulbe was rooted in certain amount of racist thought, French fetishization of the Fulbe as a semi-civilized colonial "other," and no doubt also in a large bit of bitterness. Yet, his views and those of other French administrators and ethnographers found enough resonances in Fulbe-produced histories and self-imaginings to produce the sense of a locally confirmed "truth." Skull measurements and origin tales provided the building blocks of legitimacy in the accounts of French administrators. Their time in the Futa, and most importantly the colonial state they constructed along with and sometimes in opposition to Fulbe elites, provided the strong cement of lived experience that set popular understandings of the Fulbe "essence." These ideas, in turn, shaded how French administrators both portrayed and approached the Fulbe chiefs. One chief in particular found himself, yet again, both at the center and ultimately on the wrong side of French ideas about "Fulbe character."

The End of the Great Fulbe Chiefs?

In French administrators' debates over the policy towards the chieftaincy in the 1910s – and therefore on the character of the Fulbe chiefs themselves – Alfa Yaya continued to be a key referent, even though he had been stripped of his official title in 1905. After five years in exile, the former chief was allowed to return to Guinea.¹²¹ On December 4, 1910, both the Governor General of the AOF and the Governor of Guinea received Yaya in Conakry, welcoming him

¹²¹ Yaya's return was subject to intense debate within the colonial administration. Some, especially those in charge in Guinea, argued that the former chief continued to constitute a threat to French rule, and could serve as a figure around which discontent portions of the Futa Jallon elite would rally. In the end, though, legal advisors in Gorée decided exile in perpetuity would be an arbitrary continuation of the sentence, and wished to use Yaya's release as "a show to our natives that the French carried out and followed justice." See *Affaires Civiles, Politique Générale, Guinée Française, "Affaire Alfa Yahia et consorts,"* 1910, ANS 7G97.

back to his homeland with a set of restrictions: he would never visit the Kadé region, formerly his base of operations; he would not exert any sort of contract upon his former servants; and he would never leave the colony of Guinea. In return, Yaya was to be paid 25,000 Francs a year, roughly what a mid-level canton chief could expect from tax receipts. Yaya swore upon the Koran that he would never again commit treason against the French.¹²² He would remain free man for slightly more than three months.

According to administrators in Guinea, trouble started almost immediately after Yaya's return. One commandant in the Futa reported that the "native population became restless," rumors circulated that Yaya would be restored as the Almamy of Labé, and letters from Yaya to religious leaders in Sierra Leone claiming that he had been given back all of his former powers were supposedly intercepted by the administration. According to one French official, the Fulbe had never stopped thinking of Yaya as the Almamy of Labé, and thanks to the leader's still strong *Baraka* (roughly translated as spiritual power) his followers would become "champions of Islam" and overthrow the Christian rulers.¹²³ Alfa Yaya, his son Aguibou, and his advisor Oumarou Coumba were arrested on February 9, 1911, in Conakry. By order of the President of the Republic, Yaya and Aguibou were sentenced to exile in perpetuity in Gabon, on the same island where Samori Touré, a late nineteenth-century political leader who had led a protracted Guerilla war against French forces before being captured in 1898, had died in 1900, and where Cheikh Amadou Bamba, the leader of the Muridiyya Sufi brotherhood, had been exiled from

¹²² Politique Indigène, Colonie de la Guinée to Direction des Affaires Politiques et Administratives, Sous-direction de l'Afrique, Paris, "A.S. d'Alpha Yahia," 7 April 1912, no. 582, ANS 7G97.

¹²³ Ibid.

1895 to 1902.¹²⁴ Alfa Yaya died from ill health on October 10, 1912. One administrator in Labé remarked that the population was “stunned,” as the chief did not seem to have been bent low by age, but only his fellow Kalidiabe showed any discontent.¹²⁵ Similar to what Diouf has argued about Lat Dior in Senegal, Alfa Yaya hailed from and represented the interests of the Futa Jallon aristocracy. His rise to power reflected his own elite heritage and innate cunning, yet at the same time was only possible within the context of French colonialism.¹²⁶ And just as quickly as he came to power, Yaya became obsolete within a rapidly changing political structure.

Although by the end of 1912 Alfa Yaya would be dead, his memories would live on in the imaginations of French Administrators for decades to come. Chiefs who either were seen to be too devoted to Islam or started to push back against French policies would often be retroactively associated with the Yaya’s various plots and supposed collaboration with the Wali of Goumba.¹²⁷ In 1936, administrators still looked at Yaya’s second exile and the Goumba affaire as a time of particular trouble, when the Fulbe rose up to overthrow the French. Only the administration’s ability to effectively control the population through being “respectful of tradition, understand[ing] the native, and striv[ing] to enact impartial justice,” they argued, had spared the territory from subsequent revolts.¹²⁸

Alfa Yaya also came to represent both the promise and danger of investing too much

¹²⁴ Camille Guy, LG Guinée, to GG AOF, “Internement d’Alfa Yaya, de son fils Mody Aguibou, et de son conseiller Oumarou Koumba,” session de 1911, ANS 7G98.

¹²⁵ LG Guinée, Rapport Politique, 3ème Trimestre, 9 October 1912, ANS 2G12/15.

¹²⁶ Mamadou Diouf, *Le Kajoor au XIXe siècle: pouvoir cedido et conquête coloniale* (Paris: Karthala, 1990).

¹²⁷ Rapport Politique, 2ème trimestre, Guinée, 31 October 1917, ANS 2G17/9.

¹²⁸ LG Guinée, Rapport Politique année 1936, 6 May 1937, ANS 2G36/30.

independence and power in the Futa chiefs. In 1918, the commandant of Labé, Thoreau-Levaré, proposed recreating the same administrative system that had existed under Alfa Yaya's rule, as it was a more efficient means to maintain authority and collect taxes.¹²⁹ Just three year later, however, a French colonist Camille Julian complained that the chief of Labé, Modi Tanou, had been keeping servants as slaves, collecting *kummabite*, forcing villagers to work on his farm, and had stolen cattle from a French colonist. In other words, as Julian was quick to point out, the chief had been acting just as Alfa Yaya had during the latter's prime. The overzealous chief, he argued, should be dealt with likewise.¹³⁰

As reform spread throughout the French Empire following the end of the Second World War, African politicians, activists, and eventually the general public began to debate what form the now territory of Guinea would take. In particular, former colonial subjects in Guinea articulated their visions of what a "modern" post-colonial society might look like. In doing so, these groups – ranging from Fulbe cultural societies in the Futa Jallon to an insurgent Sékou Touré-led political party – pointed in particular to the institution of the chieftaincy as either the avenue or impediment to enacting their vision of into what Guinea – or a part therein – should transform.

In order to make their arguments, these individuals and groups drew upon a set of sources that were shaped in large part by Guinea's most visible and, some argued, strongest chieftaincy,

¹²⁹ Rapport Politique du 1er Trimestre, Colonie de la Guinée, no. 157A, 3 June 1918, ANS 2G18/4.

¹³⁰ Fitting of political culture in the colonial Futa, the local Labé commandant accused Julian of making the accusations against Tanou in order to replace the Labé chief with a local notable, with whom the French colonist was allied and hoped would be favorable to his economic ventures. See Camille Julian to LG Guinée, 17 March 1921 and 23 March 1921, ANS 7G7; Lefebvre, Commandant Labé to LG Guinée, "Plainte contre Mody Tanou," no. 27C, 15 April 1921, ANS 7G7.

namely that in the Futa Jallon. The images of Fulbe chiefs and of the Fulbe in general that were deployed by Guinean politicians and activists were shaped during the period of protectorate and the see-saw between respect of “tradition” and radical reform that followed. The protectorate represented a distilled version of the plan based upon extraction and authority put forward by French and African elites alike. In creating a practice and ideology of rule based upon the systematization of exploitation and violence, the two groups were especially effective at achieving their goal of enriching themselves or their superiors, or more generally securing their continued importance within the colonial administration. They were also especially effective at creating images of Fulbe elites as ruthless and corrupt.

Therefore, while the chimeric practice of colonial rule in the Futa Jallon ensured the short-term position of Fulbe elites, it undermined the long-term prospects of the chiefly institution as a whole. Examples of exploitation and excess opened the chiefs up to criticism, and ultimately either allowed or pushed non-elite or outsider groups to actively resist the social hierarchies that defined what popularly came to be known as the “feudal” Futa Jallon society. This chapter has focused in particular on the construction and images of authority in the colonial Futa Jallon. Yet such a system, although especially repressive, was not hegemonic. If social hierarchies based upon economic, political, and religious power were the means through which elite Fulbe controlled non-elite and non-free inhabitants of the Futa Jallon, those very hierarchies became increasingly unstable as French rule unfolded in the Futa and Guinea as a whole, as transformation that the next chapter will take up.

Chapter Two

Social Change in the Colonial Futa Jallon, 1897-1958

“Mo kala hokkitaama gebal mun.”

*To each went his share.*¹

“Huwoobe e rimbe yo danbido fow / nde’e tanpere maunde e dandinagol”

*Servants and the free, may they escape together / this great suffering that they have shared.*²

Pular-language histories and poetry produced during the colonial era often employed the language of “sharing” in Fulbe remembrances (or imaginings) of the past. The most common narrative was as follows. Under the pre-colonial Futa Jallon Islamic state, each person – slave, artisan, herder, free, or elite – had his or her role. The fruits of Fulbe labor in the Futa might have been apportioned unevenly due to social status, but together all prospered. The first quotation above – “to each went his share” – was invoked each time a new *Almamy* was crowned, pointing to a supposedly common political, social, and economic system that stretched back to the 1726 *jihād*, a state and society that the paramount leader was tasked with protecting. The arrival of French rule, however, had disrupted – if not destroyed – that system and the social hierarchies that structured it. Colonialism had brought about new taxes, demands for corvée labor, and opportunities for previously oppressed groups like persons of slave status and women to reconfigure asymmetrical relationships. It had unraveled the bonds between former slaves and masters, and between chiefs and the communities under their protection. Colonialism had, in other words, created a new order in which free Fulbe saw few if any prospects for improvement.

¹ “Commandement des Almâmi – généalogie, divisions territoriales, notes en Français et en Pulaar,” Cahier no. 21, FV.

² “*Ittamen Porto e Fuuta Dyaloo/Seigneur, chasse-nous les Français*,” cahier no. 58, poem no. 4, FV.

It is of little surprise, then, that the same individuals who had benefitted from pre-colonial hierarchies, free men like the author of the second epigraph, saw themselves as sharing “this great suffering” that, by most historical accounts, had previously been limited to non-free groups.

This chapter examines how social hierarchies within Futa Jallon Fulbe society were both reconfigured and re-imagined during colonial rule. In the Futa Jallon, the pre-colonial asymmetrical bonds that tied together different social groups proved to be durable and adaptable, continuing both through and beyond colonial rule. However, the colonial system offered new possibilities for marginalized groups such as former slaves and women. The integration of the Futa Jallon into colonial economies and administrative structures opened up spaces for maneuver, in which individuals and groups sought to improve their economic, social, and/or political positions. At times, people were able to convert a specific form of capital into another, for instance using newfound wealth to buy honorific titles, and in doing so taking up the markers of elite “Fulbeness.” Just as often, though, persons of low social status found themselves frustrated in their attempts to reconfigure exploitative social hierarchies. This chapter seeks to explore the wide range paths open to some individual and groups, the numerous barriers to social mobility that were either continued or newly erected during colonial rule, and how Fulbe of different social status thought about those changes and continuities.

Not all social groups in the Futa Jallon saw colonial transformations as opening up new opportunities. Fulbe of free but not chiefly status, such as the authors invoked above, saw themselves as losing social position – as well as their livelihoods – under colonial rule. While chiefs amassed the region’s resources through the backing of the colonial state, and persons of slave status and women seized upon French attempts at reform to either assert independence or negotiate more favorable conditions, free men pined in poetry for an imagined pre-colonial past,

a time when slaves and women obeyed, the chiefs and their followers were not scavengers, and a specifically Islamic Fulbe culture was shared by all. This middle group, in turn, would later assume an important role in the production of the Fulbe fragment by refusing to participate in many of the late colonial Guinean political parties and increasingly withdrawing from engagement with the state after independence. It is to this social group comprised of colonialism's self-perceived losers that this chapter first turns, using poetry composed by Islamic scholars and *awlube* (sing. *gawlo*), a social group of bards, that reflected on and proposed solutions for the anxieties felt by free Fulbe during the interwar period.

The remainder of the chapter is structured by the spaces either modified or created by colonial rule: the *dune*, or slave-status villages, now inhabited by emancipated slaves; the *burure*, or countryside, where Fulbe herders traveled with their cattle; the peanut fields of Senegal, to which thousands of laborers from the Futa Jallon migrated annually; the battlefield, where generations of young men from the Futa Jallon fought in the French Army as *tirailleurs Sénégalais*; the market, where women and former slaves turned to support their families and raise their status; the city, where Fulbe migrants built new communities and engaged in debates about belonging and custom; and the family, where colonial rule opened up spaces of maneuver for certain groups of Fulbe women. By placing emphasis on colonial spaces, such an approach runs the risk of, as Hanretta has argued, rendering “invisible... the possibility of African inventions in social technology, political rhetoric, and self-fashioning that took place during the ‘colonial era’ but which owes little to colonial institutions, discourses, or projects.”³ Unlike the history of the Yacoubist religious movement Hanretta presents, however, the Futa Jallon, as a political, social, and economic space, was perhaps the prime focus of the colonial officials in

³ Sean Hanretta, *Islam and Social Change in West Africa: History of an Emancipatory Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 10-11.

Guinea up to the 1950s. Constituting nearly one half of the colony's total population, and thus the lion's share of its tax revenues and labor supply, the high plateau and more specifically social hierarchies within Fulbe society became closely tied to the ideology and practice of colonial rule in Guinea. Yet, even as the primary focus of the colonial administration, the region's transformations under colonial rule were largely unanticipated. Individuals and groups used colonial policies and spaces for their own ends, ones that often worked at cross-purposes to both colonial and elite Fulbe intentions.

In charting both changing structures and divergent trajectories, this chapter argues that the unequal distribution of opportunities under the colonial state created fissures within the "shared" structure of social hierarchies in the Futa Jallon, gaps that political parties after the Second World War would either exploit or ignore at their own peril. As part of an already thin literature on colonial Guinea, the period between the implementation of colonial administration and the post-1945 period of imperial reform has received little attention from historians. The histories presented below represent a first gesture towards highlighting this important episode of twentieth-century Guinean history, one that bridges the relatively more unsettled periods that preceded and followed it.

A Fulbe Lament

Perhaps even more so than the chiefs and former slaves – both groups who were of primary concern to French administrators in the Futa Jallon – the middle group of free but not elite status Fulbe are often absent from colonial political reports and the records of investigations. Their daily lives had not undergone the same amount of change as the groups below and above them within the Futa social hierarchy and thus did not catch the eye of administrators. By the late 1930s, however, many free Fulbe had become disillusioned with

colonial rule and the transformations the arrival of the French had brought to the high plateau.

While free but not elite Fulbe might not have figured prominently in colonial reports, other documents – in particular religious and political poetry – give insight into their understandings and characterizations of social change under colonial rule. The archives of the Institut Fondamental d’Afrique Noire (IFAN) in Dakar contain an extensive collection of early twentieth-century Pular-language poetry from the Futa Jallon. The original documents were collected, transliterated from Ajami to Latin script, and in some cases translated into French by Gilbert Vieillard, a colonial administrator cum ethnographer who had spent significant time both posted on missions in the Futa, to the extent that Fulbe religious and political leaders called him the *Pullo timmudo*, or “the whole Fulbe.”⁴ After Vieillard’s 1939 death in France while serving in the French army, his papers were donated to Dakar’s IFAN. They would sit there until the 1960s, when two young scholars – one, Thierno Diallo, the son of one of the Futa’s most prominent post-war politicians, the other, Boubacar Barry, one of the most prominent historians of pre-colonial West Africa and the Futa Jallon – catalogued the holding, including the numerous poems Vieillard had collected during the 1930s as a research project.⁵

As a colonial official and ethnographer familiar with Fulbe culture, Vieillard was well positioned to both hear and understand the complaints of religious leaders, local notables, and freehold farmers who lived in the Futa, and the poems Vieillard gathered point to widespread discontent. The targets of Fulbe ire reflected what Fulbe of free but not chiefly status thought

⁴ Mamadou Bah, “Notre Ami Vieillard,” *Notes Africaines, bulletin d'information et de correspondance de l'IFAN* no. 19, July 1943, 1-2; cited in Claude Malon, “Gilbert Vieillard, administrateur et ethnologue en Afrique Occidentale (1926-1939),” *Cahiers de sociologie économique et culturelle, ethnopsychologie* no. 33 (2000), 107-131.

⁵ On the Fonds Vieillard's contents and history, see Thierno Diallo, *Catalogue des manuscrits de l'I.F.A.N. : Fonds Vieillard, Gaden, Brevié, Figaret, Shaykh Mousa Kamara et Cremer en langues arabe, peule et voltaïques* (Dakar: IFAN, 1966).

was a squeezing effect due to colonial transformation: from below, persons of slave status and women; and from above, chiefs and the new class of African civil servants. Believing that they were rapidly losing economic, social, and political status, many of the poems specifically faulted French rule for a degradation of “traditional” Fulbe society.

In a poem entitled *Ittamen Porto e Fuuta Dyaloo* (“Chase the French out of the Futa Jallon”), an anonymous author lamented what he saw as the religious and social downfall of Fulbe society. “Allow us to keep our slaves,” the author pleads to Allah, “make them return, so that they can return to their work... permit us to recover our *dune* [*maccube* villages], our herds, and our women,” or, the three poles of the pre-colonial economic system that had supported elite prosperity. The author also turns his eye to those colonial spaces that had facilitated the region’s integration into the colonial economy: “erase all idols from the Futa Jallon, and the markets and merchants, O all powerful... rid the Futa of the railroad, and of the work on the roads.” In the preceding verse, the author begins with a seeming devolution of Islam in the region to point shortly thereafter at those colonial practices and spaces – namely, the opening of markets that had not previously existed (see below), as well as the free and coerced shift of labor towards infrastructure projects – that had undermined faith and wealth, both markers of Fulbe elite identity. Above all, the author prayed for the end of French rule, asking that God “exterminate the Europeans in all of the Futa... [and] clean the Futa of all Europeans.” He or (much less likely) she envisioned a “return” to a past where Fulbe social groups would return to their “natural” places: “Ourourbé, Dayébé [two of the four *yettore*, or family names, in the Futa] may each get their due; Dialloubé, Férobé [the other two] throughout the Fouta!”⁶ In the past, all four

⁶ “*Ittamen Porto e Fuuta Dyaloo*/Seigneur, chasse-nous les Français”, FV, cahier no. 58, poem no. 4; also published in Gilbert Vieillard, “Poèmes Peuls du Fouta Djallon,” *Bulletin du Comité*

yettore knew their places and roles, an arrangement that had benefitted the region's free and chiefly social groups. Although such a system was inherently unequal, it was one that was shared throughout the region and, more importantly, was comprehensible for free Fulbe.

Other authors turned their gaze towards the greater mobility and positions of women. One poem, translated by Vieillard as a "satire on the prostituted" but seemingly more a tirade, places specific blame on Fulbe women wearing an *ndoola*, or a beaded belt worn underneath clothing that is associated with feminine charm and meant for only a husband to see.⁷ After expounding on women's loose sexual mores in the years following the battle of Porédaka, the poem identifies which practices in particular have turned women into "prostitutes": "they speak the white's language without knowing it, just to imitate the *tirailleurs*' talk so that they can solicit... they put on the belt [*ndoola*] and voila they leave their house to go the markets, to Kindia, to Mamou, [they are] the women who wear *ndoola*." The author is clear throughout the text that what the women were selling was their own bodies, and the process through which they were doing it, namely incomprehensible spoken enchantments and objects imbued with special powers to seduce. Another layer of interpretation, though, points to women who sought economic gain – including sex workers themselves – by entering colonial spaces like the *tirailleurs* camps, the markets, and the colonial cities. Furthermore, the visibility of *ndoola* has often been associated with slave status, as these women either left their torsos exposed or the beads were worn outside clothing. Thus, the increasingly *ndoola* cited by author reflected the increased visibility of women of slave status in colonial spaces, and more specifically the power over free men it represented. Whether armed with "smelly powdered drugs" to seduce or some of the scarce

d'Études Historiques et Scientifiques de l'Afrique Occidentale Française 20, no. 1-2 (1937), 240-247.

⁷ *Mido yetta innudo lan aliyyu mo faaliluyaa mo mangaraa yenni ndoola/ Satire contre les prostituées,* Fonds Vieillard, IFAN (Dakar), cahier no. 58, poem no. 5.

currency needed to pay taxes, the author explicitly links colonial rule with the growing exposure and influence of women, and especially women of slave status.

The social and economic mobility of women and persons of slave status was not the only subject of ire for Fulbe poets. Closely tied to the despised transformations cause by French conquest were those African chiefs and agents empowered by colonial rule. Complaints focused in particular on French consumption of taxes, Fulbe collaboration in their collection, and their combined damnation:

Therefore let us give [the French] the taxes, so that they can eat it! And us others, let us observe our religion; Allah will pay us back with food from the next world! / But those who eat the taxes along with [the French], they will certainly go with [the French] in the hellfire of the next world! / Just as they shared with the tax-eaters in this lowly world, they will also share the eternal flames of the next world!⁸

The chiefs' complicity with French administrators, as well as their own exploitation of communities under the guise of "traditional" taxes, led to widespread abuses and, it would seem, damnation. The author's emphasis on the material benefits of tax proceeds – of eating and a full belly, as it were – serve to also drive a wedge between those who kept alive the spiritual core of the Futa, and those, like the chiefs and their followers, who had fallen prey to foreign temptation.

Another poem makes clear that many Fulbe saw both the chiefs and the African civil servants as the most local and visible manifestations of an extractive system:

The clerks and the chiefs are fingers of the same hand / their colors will look the same on judgment day! / The clerks put down their books and no longer serve / they obey the chiefs in the pursuit of wealth / like when the lion is on the hunt in the brush / the dirty little hyenas follow it to poach away some small bones.⁹

⁸ *"Mido yetta jooman tawnudon e jamaanu han gelinoobe dun torino yo nattire laakhira* / "Sur les împôts," Fonds Vieillard, IFAN (Dakar), cahier on. 61, poem no. 32; Gilbert Vieillard, "Poèmes Peuls du Fouta Djallon," 248-257. The discourse of "tax-eating" reflects what Bayart calls the "politics of the belly" in Africa. See Jean-Francois Bayart, *The State in Africa: the politics of the belly* (New York: Longman, 1993).

⁹ *Moodibe e lambe no sindindira*/"Les clerks d'aujourd'hui et les Chefs," FV, cahier no. 61.

In these verses, the author is highlighting the loss of Islamic knowledge amongst the clerks in particular, and in the pursuit for carrion – one would assume from the metaphorical corpse of the free Fulbe themselves – the ceding of their ability to check chiefly power. That poacher of kills, the hyena, appears often in poems decrying the economic straits caused by colonial rule. In another poem, the author described bride’s families, who, spoiled by consumer goods, demanded higher bride wealth, as “like hyenas surrounding a piece of meat who bite at one another, like vultures on a carcass.”¹⁰ The men who composed these poems mourned the “death” of their society. Their only hope, the poems argue, was to await the arrival of the *Mahdi* and the *Yawm ad-Din*, or the end of times, when, as in the other Abrahamic religions, the dead will at last rise from the grave.

Other poems counseled either submission or adaptation. In “Let us Accept the French,” the author, Cerno Mamadu Luudaajo Dalaba, reminded the Fulbe that it was their duty to accept the will of Allah, which at this point was to let the French rule. It was not the fault of the French that they commanded the Futa, nor that they made demands upon the Fulbe; the French were simply playing the part of a ruler under attack – a reference to the World Wars and the demands of labor and goods that followed – in this transient “lesser” world: “This world is a camp, and a camp is not a home / many others who camped here before the French have gone... [now] their enemies attacked [the French], which forced us to furnish them with soldiers, but that was not the desire of the French.”¹¹ Furthermore, the author argued, one should not blame the chiefs for their

¹⁰ Cerno Lugumaana Jaraban Koyin, “Les femmes d’aujourd’hui,” FV, cahier no. 61, poem no. 29.

¹¹ Cerno Mamadu Luudaajo Dalabaa, *mi yetii yetteedo e kullu haalin o tawniilan zamaanu jeyal faransi* / “Acceptons les Français,” FV, cahier no. 62, poem no. 38.

demands on the population. “If the chiefs endure some sort of difficulty,” he argued, “that will heat things up for the subjects also / if everything goes well for them, we will not be troubled by the French.”

Another poem by the same author counseled a more proactive approach. In “On the merits associated with agriculture,” Dalaba warns that, “so your slaves will not surpass you,” the free Fulbe must take up the hoe or plow “in obedience of God.” He also attached spiritual reward for labor, claiming that “when you start work on your fields, God says to angels: register their thousands merits for what they do.” In the end, Dalaba argued, the free Fulbe should hold themselves to the same standards they held their former slaves: “And who loves, O believers, a slave who does not work, who eats his portion and who wastes seed without shame! And you? You do not love, you say, a slave who does not work. So why would the One who commands all of creation love the person who does not work?”¹²

In the poems Vieillard collected, one sees a variety of reactions to colonialism: frustration, a wish for violent revenge, condemnation, resignation, and finally proactive acceptance. What is clear in the collected poems is that free Fulbe, the former small-scale masters and freeholders within the Futa, saw themselves as getting short shrift under French rule. This middle group, caught between the increasingly exploitative chiefs and newly empowered social groups, would play an important role in the twilight of the colonial rule and the dawn of the post-colonial state. While Fulbe politicians would court the elite and the Touré-led PDG would attract former slaves and women into the party through promises of further reform, the free Fulbe largely sat out the political battles of decolonization. Free Fulbe did not vote in the

¹² Cerno Mamadu Luudaajo Dalabaa, *Mido yetta huwudo ngoo tageefo ko hattataa woni huuwanaydo ngo pooma abadaa haabataa!* “Sur les mérites attachés à la culture des champs,” FV, cahier no. 66, poem no. 74.

1958 referendum. They eventually turned their attention to migration and trade, and would later flout economic and border controls enacted by Conakry following independence. And due in part to their perception of marginalization under colonial and post-colonial rule, this social group would come to constitute the center of the Fulbe fragment of the Guinean nation.

The *Dune*

In lamenting the loss of control over “their” *dune*, free Fulbe focused in particular on the increased room for maneuver available to individuals and communities of slave status. This section examines the transformations to the practice and structure of slavery that took place under colonial rule in the Futa Jallon, and how persons of slave status sought to renegotiate or even sever relationships with the former masters.

Shortly after the establishment of the protectorate, the *dune* attracted the attention of the French colonial administration, which intended to at first reform and then eventually eliminate the practice of slavery in the Futa Jallon. Following a congress of Futa chiefs and French officials held at Timbo in 1897 – and after a considerable amount of pressure placed on the Futa elite by the highest ranking French administrator in the region, Ernest Noirot – the slave trade had, along with corporal punishment and the collection of “traditional” taxes, been outlawed in the region.¹³ The juridical status of “slave,” however, persisted, and Noirot and the Lieutenant Governor of Guinea, Tautin, placed limits on the proposed transformations to the institution.¹⁴ Noirot remarked in 1900 that to free the slave would be to unmoor her or him, as she or he

¹³ Ernest Noirot, “Extrait du rapport d’Ensemble sur la situation politique et administrative du Fouta-Djallon,” March 1900, ANS K28.

¹⁴ See Ismaël Barry, *Le Fuuta-Jaloo face à la colonisation* v. 1 (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1997), 292-293.

gained all social meaning from being attached to the master's family.¹⁵ Additionally, the Governor wrote in a letter to Paris that "certain promises had been made" to "respect the customs" of the Fulbe.¹⁶ As such, the Guinean administration's dedication to ending the slave trade and the practice of slavery was ambivalent at best.¹⁷ For example, while the colonial administration established so-called "liberty villages" to host former slaves in parts of West Africa, in Guinea they were restricted to the Haute Guinée region.¹⁸ Furthermore, formal declarations of emancipation called "certificates of liberty" issued in neighboring colonies were rarely recognized by administrators in Guinea, who hardly ever handed out the certificates themselves.¹⁹ As long as overly exploitative practices were kept to a minimum, most French

¹⁵ Ernest Noirot, "Extrait du rapport d'Ensemble."

¹⁶ Tautin, LG Guinée to Département (Paris), no. 373, 24 September 1902, ANS K28.

¹⁷ See most notably Martin Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 141-158. See also Klein, "Slave Resistance and Slave Emancipation in Coastal Guinea," in *The End of Slavery in Africa*, edited by Suzanne Miers and Richard Roberts (Madison: University of Madison Press, 1988), 203-219; and Emily Lynn Osborn, *Our New Husbands are Here: Households, gender, and politics in a West African state from the slave trade to colonial rule* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011), 169-174.

¹⁸ Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule*, 153. On the policy as a whole in the AOF, see Denise Bouche, *Les Villages de Liberté en Afrique Noire Française (1887-1910)* (Paris: La Haye, 1968). For Soudan, see Andrew F. Clark, "Freedom Villages in the Upper Senegal Valley, 1887-1910: A Reassessment," *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 16, no. 3 (1995), 311-330. For Senegal/Soudan, see Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule*, 85-88.

¹⁹ French administrators often argued that slaves would simply cross the border into a neighboring colony and declare their freedom without compensating their now former masters. In one case, two former slaves from the Touba region of the Futa returned after a brief period in the Casamance region of Senegal with certificates, demanding that they be released of any obligations to their master. The two men then stole merchandise from the master – perhaps reasoning that they were owed for past work – and began participating in slave trading, capturing or buying individuals in the Casamance or in Portuguese Guinea and selling in the Futa. See Colonie de la Guinée, Cercle de Touba, Rapport Politique no. 7, mois de Juillet 1905, 18 August 1905, ANS 7G60.

administrators were content to let the system function as it had before

In fact, the French were not very successful at achieving the one reform upon which they hung their emancipationist and civilizing credentials: ending the slave trade. By their own admission, the colonial administration in Guinea did not enact any policies to stem the flow of slaves to, from, and within the Futa until 1902, five years after the practice was outlawed. Only in 1903 did they establish checkpoints along the major trade routes to stop slave caravans and starve clandestine slave markets.²⁰ And even when put into place, the initiatives did little end the trade.²¹ Again, as long as slave traders were not obvious while undertaking the trade, French officials were content to turn a blind eye to the practice.

The protectorate status of the Futa Jallon came to a close following the exile of Alfa Yaya in 1905, and with it legal status of “slave” came to an end. The practice of slavery continued, however, often with the support of the colonial administration. Several administrators warned that, stripped of hierarchies, the region would fall into a deep economic malaise as the Fulbe masters refused to work.²² Furthermore, even after the French Minister of Colonies mandated

²⁰ Bouchez, Commandant la Région de Labé, “L’État de Captivité dans la région du Labé et les mesures prises pour arriver à sa disparition,” 29 February 1904, ANS K20; Directeur des Affaires Indigènes (Guinée), Rapport Politique, June 1903, ANS 2G3/1.

²¹ For example, in 1904, the British Governor of Sierra Leone sent a letter to his French counterpart in Guinea complaining of a flood of British subjects being taken to the Futa Jallon as slaves. The Leonean Governor’s letter pushed the French administration to increase punishment for those caught participating in the slave trade, and some 22 persons were in fact arrested and sentenced to terms ranging from 6 months to 5 years during the last three months of 1904 alone. Yet only recognition by a colonial rival that the slave trade continued spurred French administrators into action, and their zeal for reform often faded as the colony of Guinea receded into background. King Harman, Governor of Sierra Leone to LG Guinée, 19 May 1904, ANS K28.

²² Bouchez, Commandant la Région de Labé, “L’État de Captivité dans la région du Labé et les mesures prises pour arriver à sa disparition,” 29 February 1904, ANS K20; Ernest Noirot,

that the AOF administration finally suppress the practice of domestic slavery in 1908,²³ administrators in Guinea still worked within a pre-emancipation framework. For example, in 1911, the Governor in Guinea was admonished by his AOF superior in Dakar for continuing to require *cercle* commandants to list the “number of servants” held by political and religious leaders on intelligence reports when both the status and practice had supposedly already ended.²⁴

Faced with a colonial administration ambivalent or even resistant to the end of slavery, many persons of slave status chose to self-emancipate.²⁵ For the first decade and a half of their rule in Guinea, French administrators faced mass exoduses of former slaves from the Futa Jallon. The majority of those who chose to leave were first generation slaves, particularly those who had been brought to the Futa as a result of the wars connected to Samori Touré’s state in the Kankan region. Aside from shallow roots in the region, the choice to leave was also motivated primarily by the application of officially banned “traditional” taxes like *kummabite*, *zakka*, and *farilla*. In areas where the local canton or village chief was particularly exploitative, French administrators reported that large swathes of the countryside were empty.²⁶

Most former slaves, though, chose to stay in the Futa Jallon, often in the same *runde*

Situation Politique de la Colonies au mois de Janvier 1905, no. 5156, 1 March 1905, ANS 2G5/1.

²³ Ministère des Colonies to GG AOF, “Mesures à prendre pour amener la disparition de l’esclavage,” 27 February 1908, ANS K26.

²⁴ LG Guinée to GG AOF, no. 857, 19 September 1911, ANS 7G63.

²⁵ Similar mass self-emancipations occurred throughout West Africa at the time, especially in Banamba area of Soudan. See Richard Roberts and Martin Klein, “The Banamba Slave Exodus of 1905 and the Decline of Slavery in the Western Sudan,” *Journal of African History* 21, no. 3 (1980), 375-394; and Richard Roberts, “The End of Slavery in the French Soudan, 1905-1914,” in *The End of Slavery in Africa*, edited by Suzanne Miers and Richard Roberts (Madison: Madison University Press, 1988), 282-307.

²⁶ See Chapter 1.

(plural of *dune*) and in modified but still asymmetrical relationships with their former masters. Spatial segregation helped maintain social hierarchies in the Futa, but other ties linked former masters and slaves. By the 1900s it had become difficult to discern which proportion of former slaves could trace their ancestry back to ethnic Jallonke, the “original,” pre-*jihad* inhabitants and rulers of the Futa. Nevertheless, the concept of indigeneity had significant purchase within slave communities. While the pejorative term *maccube* was often used by free Fulbe to describe persons of slave status as a whole, it also carried a more particular meaning that ranged from “slaves who work in the fields” to, most importantly, “first generation enslaved.”²⁷ After a few generations of living in the Futa, inhabitants of the *dune* called themselves *ndimaaybe*, meaning “those who are indigenous,” establishing a link with the soil and the pre-Fulbe past. Furthermore, former slaves had close ties with both their former masters and Fulbe culture as a whole. Slaves in *runde* villages assumed the lineage of their masters, and regardless of origin, nearly all slaves in the Futa spoke Pular.²⁸ As important ceremonies connected to birth, death, and circumcision required the participation and blessing of the master, former masters also held significant religious power over former slaves.²⁹ Finally, the two social groups were linked by blood, as free Fulbe men often took women of slave status as wives and concubines.³⁰

²⁷ Claude Rivière, “Dynamique de la stratification sociale chez les Peuls de Guinée,” *Anthropos* 69, no. 3/4 (1974), 371-372; William Derman, *Serfs, Peasants, and Socialists: A Former Serf Village in the Republic of Guinea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 32.

²⁸ Derman, *Serfs*, 39; LG Guinée to GG AOF, Rapport Politique du 1er trimestre 1908, Colonie de la Guinée Française, no. 409, 27 April 1908, ANS 2G8/16.

²⁹ Derman, *Serfs*, 42;

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 116-119; Rebecca Furth, “Marrying the Forbidden Other: Marriage, Status and Social Change in the Futa Jallon Highlands of Guinea,” (PhD Diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2005), 146-158.

Just as importantly, many slaves realized that they held greater power over their former masters after the imposition of French rule and (partial) reforms. Before the 1897 treaty, families from the two social groups had constituted an unevenly reciprocal relationship. Masters gave slaves access to land to which the latter held rights of use, and in return the slaves turned over *farilla*, or 10% of the harvest, and worked the masters' own fields during the morning for five days of the week.³¹ The expectation from both groups was that under French rule masters would pay the hut tax for their slaves. Steadily increasing taxes and inflated censuses made such an arrangement financially untenable. Combined with increased demands of "gifts" from newly emboldened colonial canton and village chiefs, former masters found themselves unable to satisfy their material obligations to former slaves.³²

Relationships between former masters and slaves did not disintegrate over night, as the two groups were connected through social and religious ties and by the fact that former slaves continued to work land that the French recognized as being owned by former masters. However, colonial rule did reconfigure the demands former masters could ask of their dependents, and in particular put an end to restrictions on former slaves' mobility. Largely free to move where they wanted, former slaves were able to find a new master or patron if theirs proved too burdensome. And many did just that. Even before the formal elimination of the legal status of "slave," one *runde* inhabitant made clear to a French administrator that space for physical and social maneuver had opened following the imposition of French rule, warning that "if someone makes

³¹ Derman, *Serfs*, 35-37.

³² *Ibid.*, 52-53.

me work, I will escape.”³³

The colonial administration attempted to stabilize the volatile situation by instituting a new labor system based upon sharecropping (French *métayage*), a policy that unfolded throughout the AOF at the same time.³⁴ Despite expectations that the former slaves would “constitute a new social class, that of the free worker,” the attempted shift to sharecropping largely failed, as both former masters and slaves were generally not interested in negotiating legal agreements.³⁵ Similar efforts in the 1910s would fall short, as the meager rights and guarantees afforded under the contracts did not justify the bureaucratic hassle and, perhaps more importantly, the meddling participation of a colonial administrator.³⁶

While economic obligations between the two groups shifted as tax regimes changed, social and religious ties proved more durable. The markers of slave status, former or not, reflected durable social hierarchies in the Futa Jallon that persisted well into the twilight of colonial and beyond.³⁷ Relationships between former slaves and masters during colonial rule, however, were not simply continuations of pre-colonial practice, as the unstable situation in the two decades following the imposition of French rule afforded former slaves standing upon which

³³ Ernest Noirot, Situation Politique de la Colonie au mois de Janvier 1905, no. 5156, 1 March 1905, ANS 2G5/1.

³⁴ Ibid.; Martin A. Klein, “From Slave to Sharecropper in the French Soudan: An Effort at Controlled Social Change,” *Itinerario* 7, no. 2 (1983), 102-115; Martin A. Klein, “Slave Resistance and Slave Emancipation in Coastal Guinea” and Richard Roberts, “The End of Slavery in the French Soudan, 1905-1914,” in *The End of Slavery in Africa*, 203-219, 282-307.

³⁵ LG Guinée to GG AOF, “La captivité en Guinée,” no. 1052, 29 October 1908, ANS K26.

³⁶ LG Guinée to GG AOF, “Rapport Politique, 2ème trimestre 1913,” no. 454A, 27 August 1913, 2G13/14.

³⁷ Roger Botte, “Stigmates sociaux et discriminations religieuses: l’ancienne classe servile au Fuuta Jalloo,” *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 34, no. 133/135, L’archipel peul (1994): 109-136.

to make demands. As such, the Futa Jallon's incorporation into the French colonial state opened up several new opportunities for former slaves to raise their economic condition. Space for maneuver might have been tight and the surrounding social atmosphere viscous. But it existed, and was expanding in new and unanticipated directions.

The *Burure*

The inhabitants of *dune* comprised the most prominent segment of persons of non-free status in the pre-colonial and colonial Futa Jallon. The second largest group in this broader category was semi-nomadic herders referred to as *Fulbe burure* or *Poulli*. Similar to persons of slave status in the *dune*, *Fulbe burure* found more room to renegotiate relationships with their chiefly patrons, although colonial rule also brought about more uncertainty and, to an extent, danger.

Burure translates to the bush or countryside, and indeed, herders and their families spent much of the year guiding cattle from pasture to pasture along seasonal migration routes. In the imaginations of both colonial administrators and Fulbe elites, this “untamed” or “natural” condition marked the *Fulbe burure* as “noble savages” or “pagans,” respectively, unfit for “civilized” life. The practice of *Fulbe burure* transhumance, though, did not fit completely within colonial stereotypes of unmoored nomads wandering the countryside. Unlike persons of slave status, *Fulbe burure* were organized into *lenyi* (plural of *lenyol*), or maximal lineages, like free and elite Fulbe. Furthermore, while groups of herders traveled extensively both on the plateau and in the surrounding plains, they were tied to *misside* from which they supposedly hailed. *Fulbe burure* often kept huts in *foullasso*, or villages of free Fulbe, in their “home”

misside, and would periodically reside in these permanent residences.³⁸ The most important ties to these villages were herders' subordinate relationships with chiefly *lenyi*. Like *maccube*, Fulbe *burure* were obligated to pay the *kummabite*. As the families of herders often grew small crops, they were also subject to *farilla* and, especially during times of war, seizure of portions of their herds. In return, the *Fulbe burure* received protection from demands while traveling with their cattle, trading the payment of “customary” taxes for a mobile security.³⁹

By the 1930s, however, disruptions to the pre-colonial relationships between herders and chiefs had led to what colonial administrators called a “mass exodus” of *Fulbe burure* from the Futa Jallon into neighboring colonies. The movement of cattle and their keepers was not new; most herds and the families that tended them migrated along a North-South axis, bisecting several ecological and climactic zones during their rainy and dry season travels. Neither was the departure of cattle from Guinea especially novel, even during the colonial period, as Guinean herders had since the protectorate era exploited greater demand in neighboring (British) Sierra Leone and Portuguese Guinea to get higher prices for their livestock. French administrators at first were not explicitly opposed to the *Fulbe burure* crossing imperial borders, as they believed the supply of cattle could eventually be funneled towards the growing port of Conakry.⁴⁰ However, the basic factors that caused herders to take their livestock and families to Portuguese and British territories – namely high taxes and lower prices for meat in Guinea – did not change, and neither did migration patterns. The French administration responded with greater restrictions

³⁸ Gilbert Vieillard, Administrateur Adjoint de 3eme classe des colonies, to l'Administrateur, Commandant le Cercle de Labé, “Exécution lettre no. 336 A.P.I. du 16 Mai 1936,” 5 July 1936, ANS 21G/62.

³⁹ Ibid.; Barry, *Fuuta-Jaloo*, 89-92; Derman, *Serfs*, 17.

⁴⁰ LG Guinée to GG AOF, Rapport du 2ème Trimestre, no. 764, 11 July 1905, ANS 2G5/1.

on movement, either through attempted prevention of departures or intensified policing along the border. They were often frustrated in their attempts to staunch the flow of cattle and families to neighboring colonies. In 1909, for instance, the village chief of Daralabé, 130 km East of Labé, left with his family and cattle for Satadougou in Southern Senegal. The chief was sent back to Guinea, sentenced to 15 days in jail, and warned that any future attempts at flight would be dealt with sternly. The chief responded by forthrightly telling the local commandant that once he was released he would travel to Satadougou once again. As long as taxes, labor demands, and population density in the Futa Jallon was high while available pasture was scarce, the chief argued that herders like him would continue to leave.⁴¹

Most conflicts between Fulbe herders and the colonial state, however, occurred along imperial borders. Ordered by the administration in Conakry to more strictly enforce tariffs and stem emigration, border guards often overzealously interpreted their powers. In one incident in 1911, a group of Fulbe and their cattle were suspected of planning to cross into Portuguese Guinea by circumventing a border station in the Kadé region. Hearing rumors of an impending departure, border guards traveled some 10 km into the Guinean interior – well past their jurisdiction, which was limited to the immediate vicinity (about 1 km) of the border – to stop the family. In the ensuing confrontation, one guard was killed and the Fulbe herders crossed the border as they had intended.⁴² Following the incident, the administration ordered guards to not be overly strict in their application of border restrictions, and the steady trickle of *Fulbe burure* and

⁴¹ LG Guinée to GG AOF, Rapport Politique du 3ème Trimestre, no. 1014, 28 October 1909, ANS 2G9/13.

⁴² A. Liurette, Commandant le cercle de Kadé to Gov Guinée, “Incident de Frontière. Meurtre du garde-frontière Morlaye Kania,” no. 828, 1 March 1912, ANS 7G63.

their cattle leaving Guinea continued into the 1920s.⁴³

Increased emigration during the early 1930s forced the Guinean administration to change course. The “push” factors of *Fulbe burure* migration were now combined with a strong “pull” from outside territories, especially Sierra Leone. One Guinean administrator remarked that the British colony had not weathered the early years of the global depression any better than its French neighbor to the north, and therefore economic activity was not any livelier in the British colony. Rather, British officials had attracted groups of herders by waiving tariffs and yearly head taxes to those who migrated to Sierra Leone, with the amount of relief based upon the number of cattle each group brought with them.⁴⁴ A suggestion from Guinea’s Director of Political Affairs to waive excise taxes for those herders who wanted to return was quickly dismissed by the Director of Economic Services and Taxes, as it would require a special exception to established rules.⁴⁵ French colonial administrators had diagnosed a potentially crippling economic problem, as cattle were integral to the Futa Jallon’s economy. At this point, though, they offered few ideas on how to entice *Fulbe burure* to stay in the colony.

Another incident in 1936 precipitated a more comprehensive inquiry into the exodus of herders. Frustrated with increased policing along the Sierra Leone border and numerous instances of guards demanding bribes, a group of *Fulbe burure* attacked a local border post, burning down its buildings and attempting to chase the colonial officials away. Guards opened

⁴³ LG Guinée to GG AOF, Rapport Politique 2ème trimestre 1919, ANS 2G19/6.

⁴⁴ A. F. Palade, “Renseignements Recueillies sur le Sierra-Leone, 2ème trimestre 1933” ANS 21G62.

⁴⁵ Le Directeur des Services Économiques, “Note pour Monsieur le Directeur des Affaires Politiques et Administratives,” no. 577 SE/7, 28 February 1934, ANS 21G62.

fire on the marauders, killing four and wounding several others.⁴⁶ In response, the AOF Governor General sent Gilbert Vieillard, a colonial administrator and early ethnographer who had spent considerable time researching the *Fulbe burure*, to look into the causes and possible policy changes that would keep herders in Guinea and prevent more incidents like ones that had occurred in 1911 and 1936. Vieillard pointed to a series of colonial policies that had applied pressure on *Fulbe burure*. Restrictions on intentional brush fires – which allowed new, nutrient-rich grass to grow during the long dry season – reduced the size of herds. Chiefs and administrators also frequently forced herders to sell what cattle remained at lower than market price. Finally, taxes had grown overly burdensome for *Fulbe burure*, who looked to the south and saw a less onerous tax regime. These policies reflected a general disregard for Fulbe herders, who must have felt as though a thousand leaches were sucking them dry.

However, the most important set of factors pushing Fulbe *burure* to leave, Vieillard argued, was connected to the administrative parceling of Guinean space under the colonial state, and to a connected fraying of social hierarchies. As with former slaves, the imposition of colonial rule altered the relationship between patrons and clients. While the colonial state chose their village chiefs from families who had reigned in the pre-colonial *missidi*, administrative boundaries often shifted, altering the geography of social connections in the Futa. The *missidi* continued to serve as religious and social hubs, but the pre-colonial administrative units ceded their political importance to the newly appointed *canton* centers. In creating localized chains of political hierarchies, which extended from villages/*missidi*, to cantons, to cercles, and finally to regions and the colony as a whole, the colonial government had broken the relationships between the migratory *Fulbe burure* and their connected *missidi* chiefs, sets of obligations that had

⁴⁶ Colonie de la Guinée Française, Rapport Politique Année 1936, 6 May 1937, ANS 2G36/30.

traveled along with the herds. Ultimately, Vieillard remarked, the *Fulbe burure* now “see themselves cut off from their former masters, and the security that allowed them to range about on their journeys through [ethnic] Susu country.” Due to high population densities on the plateau, the *Fulbe burure* had already moved to the periphery of the Futa Jallon in order to find pasture by the time the French arrived. The changes put into place by colonial rule, he argued, had simply provided the final push into Portuguese Guinea and Sierra Leone.⁴⁷

Vieillard proposed a series of reforms to help alleviate the problems herders faced under the new colonial system. Limited brush fires would be allowed and taxes lowered. Herders would no longer be forced to feed what the *Fulbe burure* called the “eaters of beef,” or local administrators and chiefs who forced the sale of cattle and demanded bribes for protection.⁴⁸ Vieillard’s most innovative solution was to recreate the political hierarchies that had marked herder/elite Fulbe relations under the pre-colonial Futa state. Called “mobile subdivisions,” he imagined a de-territorialized administrative unit sitting astride the Mamou and Kindia *cercles* that would be populated by the *Fulbe burure*. The subdivision would be assigned its own colonial administrator, who would travel with the herds and arrange for health and education services along the route. Most importantly, the *Fulbe burure* would be responsible to that administrator alone rather than having to negotiate with – or more commonly give into the demands of – colonial chiefs through whose cantons the herds passed. Although more conservative reforms such as lowering taxes in border regions were enacted, the AOF Governor General rejected the mobile subdivision, arguing that it would prove too complicated to fit within

⁴⁷ Gilbert Vieillard, Administrateur Adjoint de 3eme classe des colonies, to l’Administrateur, Commandant le Cercle de Labé, “Exécution lettre no. 336 A.P.I. du 16 Mai 1936,” 5 July 1936, ANS 21G/62.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

established administrative chains.⁴⁹

As cattle moved to the periphery of the Futa Jallon and Guinean economy, colonial administrators gave less attention to the plight of the *Fulbe burure*. Nevertheless, the basic conditions that had pushed the herders to range progressively farther from the high plateau continued. Colonial reforms had created a rift between the *Fulbe burure* and their chiefly superiors, while several factors had made life in the Futa more difficult. British and Portuguese incentives simply provided an opportunity for the herders to improve their situations, if only temporarily. Finally, a shift towards a market economy and the regular sale of livestock prioritized those buyers who could pay the best prices, and they were rarely found in Conakry. The *Fulbe burure* did not represent the same demographic force as their *maccube* counterparts, and therefore did not play a central role in Guinean politics during the rise of electoral politics following the Second World War. Their changing relationships with the now colonial chiefs, however, provide vivid examples of the transformations and new opportunities initiated, often unintentionally, by colonial rule.

The Peanut Fields

The Futa Jallon's integration into the French imperial economy opened up new opportunities for young, mostly male Fulbe, especially those who were of slave status. By the interwar period, the most significant area of economic expansion, at least according to numbers of participants, was the practice of seasonal farming in Senegal's peanut fields. Known as *navétanes*, thousands of young men would depart from the Futa in the months before the start of rains in May, work in the peanut fields for the duration of the growing season, and return home with some money and/or commercial goods at the onset of the dry season in August or

⁴⁹ GG AOF to LG Guinée, "a/s Exodes vers le Sierra-Léone," no. 90 AP/2, 4 February 1937, ANS 21G62.

September. In the currency-starved Futa Jallon, seasonal agricultural migration became an integral part families' economic strategy. Reflecting its importance in the AOF's colonial economy, the colonial administration attempted to shape its flows and practice, although their dedication to control did know its bounds, most notably in the 1952 Code de Travail. As with other transformations, seasonal labor in Senegal's peanuts fields also perpetuated exploitative practices – ones that were near carbon copies of those between masters and slaves before emancipation – now covered under the guise of “traditional labor” and thus outside the gaze of the colonial state.

Seasonal agricultural workers from the colonial Futa Jallon engaged in a form of labor migration with roots to at least the mid-nineteenth century.⁵⁰ Wide scale peanut cultivation emerged along the Gambia River during the 1830s, due in part to increased demand for the product in the United States. Following modifications to French duties in 1840, cash-crop cultivation of the groundnut spread first along the Senegalese coast and then quickly into the interior. A combination of growing demand and favorable policy led to rapidly increasing exports, and by the 1870s peanuts had displaced gum arabic as Senegal's largest agricultural export.⁵¹ The growing importance of peanut crops, in turn, contributed to the French colonial state's spread into the Senegalese interior, which was later solidified by the construction of

⁵⁰ For a history of some of the first *navétanes*, see François Manchuelle, “Slavery, Emancipation and Labour Migration in West Africa: The Case of the Soninke,” *Journal of African History* 30 (1989), 89-106.

⁵¹ George E. Brooks, “Peanuts and Colonialism: Consequences of the Commercialization of Peanuts in West Africa, 1830-70,” *The Journal of African History* 16, no. 1 (1975), 29-54; James L. A. Webb, Jr., “The Trade in Gum Arabic: Prelude to French Conquest in Senegal,” *The Journal of African History* 26, no. 2-3 (1985), 149-168.

railroads.⁵²

As Manchuelle argued, the relationship between slavery and seasonal agricultural labor in West Africa was complicated. While some historians have argued that temporary labor migration did not emerge as a common practice until the twentieth century, Manchuelle demonstrated that seasonal labor tied to cash crop cultivation and more specifically to peanuts was fully developed by at least the 1880s.⁵³ Resonances with pre-colonial practices went beyond patterns of mobility. The practice of seasonal labor migration in peanut fields was very close to what one would have found in the *dune* of the Futa Jallon both before and after emancipation. Migrant laborers agreed to work the fields of landowners for two to four days a week, sometimes receiving up to 10% of the total crop. In return, they were provided with food and lodging, and were given smaller plots of land to work, the proceeds from which they would keep for themselves.⁵⁴ Although lacking the religious and social links that bound former slaves and masters, the basic system of obligations that structured the *navétanes*' relationship with landowners was close to forms that were common in the pre-colonial Futa Jallon.

For the first two decades of the twentieth century, *navétanes* were drawn primarily from the large labor pool of the French colony of Soudan. Large-scale migration from Guinea to Senegal did not emerge until the interwar period. Once work in Senegal's peanut fields became

⁵² Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*. Ayi Kwei Armah, trans. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 215.

⁵³ Manchuelle argued that it was British efforts to stop the slave trade, rather than emancipation itself, that required the use of free labor on first the Gambian and later Senegalese peanut fields. See François Manchuelle, "Slavery, Emancipation and Labour Migration in West Africa," 91-94.

⁵⁴ Kenneth Swindell, "Serawoolies, Tillibunkas, and Strange Farmers: The development of Migrant groundnut farming along the Gambia River, 1848-95," *Journal of African History* 21(1980), 93-94.

common, rates of migration expanded rapidly. Numbers of *navétanes* from Guinea, almost all Fulbe, grew from a few thousand in the 1920s to between 15,000 and 20,000 during the early 1930s, with a peak of about 30,000 during the 1936 and 1937 growing seasons.⁵⁵ The steady increase during the 1930s might have grown from a new AOF policy meant to both encourage and control the *navétanat* enacted in 1934.⁵⁶ Known simply as “the trade,” peanut exports, and by necessity the laborers upon which production depended, were at the heart of the colonial economy in Senegal; one colonial administrator claimed that, “all of Senegalese life revolves around the peanut trade.”⁵⁷ In order to stimulate the flow of cheap labor into the fields, French officials instituted a series of incentives tied to a laissez-passer (also known as a “*navétane* card”) given to each *navétane*. Over time, the card offered a range of benefits, including reduced and then free fare on the Dakar-Niger railroad, 1 kg of rice, a meal in Tambacounda and Kaolack, main transports centers in Senegal, and a cloth ration.⁵⁸

These incentives, though, do not explain the rapid emergence of Guinean *navétanes* during the 1930s, as according to colonial administrators the vast majority of migrations from Guinea did not register and chose to travel north on foot.⁵⁹ One colonial administrator in Labé remarked that due to colonial chiefs reassuming the role of conducting censuses during the early

⁵⁵ Lebègue, Inspecteur Général de 2ème classe des Colonies, “Situation Économique de Labé,” 29 April 1937, ANG 2D437.

⁵⁶ Phillipe David, *Les Navétanes; histoires des migrants saisonniers en Sénégal des origines à nos jours* (Dakar: Nouvelles Éditions Africaines, 1980), 91.

⁵⁷ Territoire du Sénégal, Rapport Économique (1950), ANS 2G50/53.

⁵⁸ David, *Navétanes*, 339-356.

⁵⁹ Pechoutre, Inspecteur, Administrateur en chef de colonies, Colonie de la Guinée, Cercle du Labé, Deuxième Partie – l’Action Politique, December 1939, ANG 2D/438.

1930s – a practice that had been discontinued in the 1910s due to abuse – instances of exactions through the form of over-onerous taxes grew steadily, pushing more inhabitants to flee the region.⁶⁰ Others pointed to the poor quality of soil in the Futa, which restricted opportunities for cash-crop cultivation in home communities.⁶¹ Finally, recovering prices for peanuts on the world market during the 1930s meant that young men could gain more money abroad than working in the Futa.⁶² The steadily increasing numbers over time also point to the role of migrant networks played in both spreading information about opportunities in the Peanut and funneling migrants from the Futa Jallon northward.⁶³ What began with perhaps a few young men working in Gambia and then Senegal in the late nineteenth century grew to a steady stream, one with enough force by the 1950s to displace Soudan as providing Senegal the plurality of its *navétanes*.

Whatever the cause for migration, the *navétanat* had significant effects on home, transit, and host communities. Colonial administrators in the Labé region noted a 17% population

⁶⁰ Lebègue, Inspecteur Général de 2ème classe des Colonies, “Situation Économique de Labé,” 29 April 1937, ANG 2D437. Here the case of migrants from the Futa Jallon differs in part from Manchuelle’s argument regarding Soninke migrants from Gambia, which stresses the “pull” factor of high wages much more than the “push” factor of taxes. It was not only the formal set of colonial taxes that cause, in part, large numbers of former slaves to leave the high plateau, but in fact primarily the set of “traditional” demands made by the region’s elites and chieftaincies. When combined with the social stigma amongst the Futa’s elite tied to labor, which only began to fade after the Second World War, migrants from the Futa were largely of non-elite status. See François Manchuelle, *Willing Migrants: Soninke Labor Diasporas, 1848-1960* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1997), 6-9.

⁶¹ J. Richard-Mollard, “Démographie et Structure des Sociétés Negro-Peul Parmi les Hommes Libres et les ‘Serfs’ du Fouta-Dialon,” *La Revue de Géographie Humaine et d’Ethnologie* no. 4 (1948-1949), 47.

⁶² Lebègue, Inspecteur Général de 2ème classe des Colonies, “Situation Économique de Labé,” 29 April 1937, ANG 2D437.

⁶³ José Moya describes a similar process in his study on migration from certain regions of Spain to Argentina. See *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

decrease in the northern Futa during the 1930s, due in part to an outbreak of sleeping sickness, but also to seasonal and increasingly semi-permanent migration.⁶⁴ One French ethnographer remarked that in the Labé region there were 1,266 women for every 1,000 men, a gender disparity due almost wholly to labor migration.⁶⁵ Another colonial study reported that at any given point of the year around 12% of the Futa's population was absent from the region, and that men constituted only 40.8% of the population between the ages of 15 and 59. Numbers of men relative to women were low in other regions of Guinea, also due to migration – the study estimated that 77,000 Guineans worked outside the colony – but gender discrepancies and therefore rates of migration were the highest in the Futa Jallon.⁶⁶ *Navétanes* also caused problems when they returned. Flush with cash, they often bought all of the fonio, a couscous-like grain, and rice in their home communities. As much of the available labor left the village during the growing season, local communities in the Futa struggled to keep up with the increased demand for staple foods. One such feedback loop resulted in a 1932 famine in the Sangalan canton of Labé that killed 37.⁶⁷ Thus, while injecting the currency necessary to pay taxes into the Futa, *navétanes* also severely disrupted local practices of subsistence farming and in some communities caused acute food insecurity.

Transit communities also struggled to cope with the semiannual influx of migrants. In

⁶⁴ Pechoutre, Inspecteur, Administrateur en chef de colonies, Colonie de la Guinée, Cercle Labé, Deuxième Partie – l'Action Politique, December 1939, ANG 2D438.

⁶⁵ J. Richard-Molard, "Démographie et Structure," 45-51.

⁶⁶ Administration Générale des Services de la France d'Outre-Mer, Haut-Commissariat Général de l'A.O.F., Service des Statistiques, Étude démographique par sondage en Guinée. 1954-1955, BNF.

⁶⁷ Lambin, Commandant le cercle de Labé to Gov Guinée, "Au sujet canton du Sangalan," no. 1699 A.P.I., 16 September 1932, ANG 2D444.

addition to driving up the local price of food, *navétanes* were also possible carriers of disease.⁶⁸ Colonial officials in Senegal were particularly concerned with smallpox, and considered the labor migrants as prime vectors. In response, the Senegalese administration established a series of vaccination centers and *cordons sanitaires* at major points of transport in order to prevent outbreaks and the spread of infectious disease along migration pathways. The AOF administration also required that all *navétanes* be vaccinated either before departure or in transit.⁶⁹ Colonial attempts to both stimulate and control the *navétanat*, however, were underfunded and understaffed. At the “*navétane* depot” in Tambacounda, where food, cloth, meals, and vaccinations were distributed, a staff of only 18 French and African officials was tasked with inspecting and serving tens of thousands of migrants.⁷⁰ As such, officials in transit hubs like Tambacounda were underequipped to corral what one colonial administrator called, with some hyperbole, “a swarm of locusts, eating nearly everything available and leaving only refuse in their wake.”⁷¹

The colonial administration’s benign – or so it thought – neglect of the *navétanat* was partially by design. Colonial administrators in host communities in Senegal often raised alarms about exploitation by landowners, who often overworked, underfed, and/or bilked *navétanes* of

⁶⁸ James Webb Jr., *The Long Struggle Against Malaria in Tropical Africa*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 108, fn. 10.

⁶⁹ David, *Navétanes*, 249-261.

⁷⁰ The staff at the transit center consisted of, in 1950, “1 inspecteur du conditionnement, 1 contrôleur Africain du conditionnement, 2 commis Africains de la residence de tambacounda, 2 écrivains Africains, 6 manoeuvres, 6 cuisinières.” The same year the 18 administrators processed 22,832 *navétanes*, with an additional 7,200 or so *navétanes* that passed through the city through unofficial channels. See David, *Navétanes*, 345; Sénégal, Inspection du Travail, Inspections Régionales, Rapports Semestriels et Annuel, Kaolack (1950), ANS 2G50/66.

⁷¹ Senegal, Inspection Territoriale et Regionale du Travail (1951), ANS 2G51/67

their portion of the harvest at the end of the growing season. The Senegalese administration enacted half measures to stop the worst of abuses, reducing the days each laborer worked in the fields of the landowner from four to three.⁷² Officials also attempted to tie working conditions to credits meant to stimulate the production of peanuts that were given to landowners.⁷³ A combination of understaffing of inspectors and ambivalence towards intervening in the realm of “traditional” labor, however, made enforcement of the new regulations on the workweek nearly impossible. Most tellingly, “customary workers” like the *navétanes* were exempted from the 1952 Code de Travail, a law that was meant to “modernize” labor in the colonies by regulating, among other practices, wages and hours.⁷⁴ At the behest of Leopold Sedar Senghor, at the time a delegate from and future president of Senegal, the National Assembly adopted a definition of labor tied primarily to cash remuneration, which exempted seasonal agricultural workers.⁷⁵ Due to French administrators’ recognition that they lacked the basic means to regulate *navétanes*, as well as reticence to disrupt a system from which both African elites and the colonial state profited, the practice of seasonal labor migration remained intact, exploitation and all, up to and in some cases past independence.

Thus, while the Guinean Fulbe *navétane* had more room for maneuver, both literally and economically – one could conceivably choose to enter into a relationship with another

⁷² David, *Navétanes*, 251-252. Of course, colonial administrators also realized that restrictions on hours of work in system where laborers worked on informal and personalized work schedules was meaningless and had little effect. See Sénégal, Inspection régionale du travail du Sud – Sénégal, Kaolack, Rapport annuel (1952-1953), p. 10-14. ANS 2G52/71

⁷³ David, *Navétanes*, 250.

⁷⁴ See Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The labor question in French and British Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 277-322.

⁷⁵ Débats, Assemblée Nationale de France, 2 December 1950, 8464, 8897; Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 294-296.

landowner the next year, or even leave mid-season – he was still vulnerable to many of the same forms of exploitation that existed in the Futa Jallon. The *navétanat* was significant in that it represented a first step towards the reconfiguration of the social hierarchies that dominated the high plateau. If the harvest was especially bountiful one year, seasonal migrants could return home with some extra currency and perhaps improve the economic situation of their families. As migrants from the Futa began to move and work in Senegalese cities and spend longer periods of time abroad following the Second World War (see chapter 5), opportunities to amass resources grew. Yet, on the whole, rags to riches cases were few and far between. The peanut fields of Senegal provided an important safety valve to check high population densities and incidences of illegal demands by elites. But all too often young men who left the Futa found themselves in exploitative relationships, just with some different scenery.

The Battlefield

The *navétanes* were not the only group of migrants to depart from the Futa Jallon. From 1897 to 1958, thousands of young men, most of slave status, joined a separate part of the French army comprised of soldiers from West Africa called the *Tirailleurs Sénégalais*. Service in the French army opened new avenues for social mobility. Soldiers and veterans from the Futa attempted to use links with French administrative structures – as well as the economic windfall associated with pensions payments – to improve their status or subvert elite exploitation. These veterans and soldiers would become an important force – although, as Gregory Mann argues, far from monolithic and uniformly anti-colonial⁷⁶ – in Guinean parties during decolonization. They would also constitute a core cadre of Fulbe opposition members in exile after independence. Their trajectories from the *dune*, *fulasso*, and *missidi* of the Futa to Dakar, Paris, and beyond

⁷⁶ Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 108-111.

reflected the widening horizons of Fulbe networks. Similar to the histories presented above, enlistment and its aftereffects also had the effect of strengthening the two poles of social hierarchies in the Futa, namely former slaves and ruling families, while unraveling some of the social and economic ties that connected former slaves and masters.

The history of West African soldiers serving in the French army has been closely tied to the practice of slavery and enslavement. Early “companies of color,” to use the language of the French administration, were comprised almost wholly of slaves purchased from their former masters and subjected to a period of indentured servitude within the army. The French army transitioned towards a volunteer force over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, but the practice of paying the enlistment bonuses of persons of slave status to their former masters persisted well into the twentieth century. The system of recruitment became more problematic in 1912, when the French colonial administration instituted conscription. Each cercle had a quota of young men whom local communities were required to provide as recruits.⁷⁷ As the colonial administration in Guinea was understaffed and spread thin, the responsibility of pressing the requisite number into service commonly fell upon the colonial chiefs.⁷⁸ Unsurprisingly, the system rarely worked as intended, especially in the Futa Jallon. Almost immediately following the implementation of conscription, local administrators complained that

⁷⁷ Myron J. Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts: the Tirailleurs Sénégalais in French West Africa, 1857-1960* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991), 51-58.

⁷⁸ Anne Summers and R. W. Johnson, “World War I Conscription and Social Change in Guinea,” *The Journal of African History*, 19, no. 1 (1978), 26-27; Joe Harris Lunn, *Memoirs of the Maelstrom: A Senegalese Oral History of the First World War* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1999), 36.

they were having problems filling their quotas.⁷⁹ Insufficient numbers freely joined the army, and chiefs turned to choosing who would enlist in the army. Those marked for service most commonly were in precarious social positions: either one of their parents had died, or they were the son of a third or fourth wife. Most commonly, though, chiefs thrust enlistment upon persons of slave status.⁸⁰ Therefore, although the practice of recruitment had moved away from explicit forms of enslavement by the 1910s, its social effects largely had not.

Over the next decade, other administrators would put forward a variety of explanations as to why the Futa, the most populous region in Guinea, saw some of the lowest numbers of yearly recruits. Writing in 1917, the Lieutenant Governor of Guinea, Georges Poiret, expressed sympathy for Guinean communities, remarking that the region had been “ravaged” by war and the slave trade for decades, and that by the third year of the Great War, with its attendant demands of goods and labor by the colonial state, the colony had been tapped dry for recruits. “At the moment when we ask the natives to contribute, to the limit of their economic capabilities, to shoulder the tremendous burdens that press upon the allies,” Poiret asked, “are we going to ask them yet again to sacrifice to us the best of their young men?”⁸¹ Writing the next year, the Lieutenant Governor warned that the non-payment of allowances to soldiers’ families threatened to severely hamper efforts at enlistment. In response, the administration could force young men to join – which, despite a lack of recognition from Guinea’s top official, it did – but to do so would carry the taint of slavery. A better path forward, he argued, would be to convince the

⁷⁹ LG Guinée to GG AOF, Rapport Politique, 2ème Trimestre 1912, no. 564, 30 July 1912, ANS 2G12/15.

⁸⁰ Lunn, *Memoirs of the Maelstrom*, 42.

⁸¹ Poiret, LG Guinée, Rapport Politique, 1er Trimestre 1917, ANS 2G17/9.

population that serving in the army was a “collective tax,” with the hope that young men would willingly present themselves before their elders for service.⁸² Such high hopes were never fulfilled, especially after an outbreak of strikes and soldier revolts rolled through the colony 1918 and 1919.⁸³ While the language of a “blood tax” was often evoked in veterans’ claims of a French “debt” in the aftermath of the war,⁸⁴ it had limited purchase in the Futa Jallon – and especially in communities of free status – when the period of enlistment arrived.

More fundamentally, a system of recruitment reliant upon the full participation of colonial chiefs was flawed by default. Chiefs relied upon the labor of the same young men who would conceivably serve in the army, either to fulfill other quotas for *corvée* labor or, due to the persistence “traditional” practices that supposedly had been banned, to work their fields during the growing season. Therefore, chiefs were reluctant to pressure communities under their control to provide recruits, not primarily out of care for their communities’ well being, but rather due to their own self interest.⁸⁵ In fact, despite several warning from colonial officials, several chiefs were removed from their positions during and in the aftermath of the war for not meeting the quotas.⁸⁶ Combined with the widespread practice of young men fleeing into the bush during

⁸² Poiret, LG Guinée, Rapport Politique, 1er Trimestre 1918, ANS 2G18/4. The Lieutenant Governor also seemed to forget (or not recognize) that under his watch the labor used to construct the Conakry-Niger was far from “free,” even after reforms initiated after reported abuses. See Babacar Fall, *Le Travail Forcé en Afrique-Occidentale Française, 1900-1946* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1993), 104-125.

⁸³ Summers and Johnson, “World War I Conscription,” 30-33; Marc Michel, *Les Africains et la Grande Guerre: l’appel à l’Afrique, 1914-1918* (Paris: Karthala, 2003), 203.

⁸⁴ See Mann, *Native Sons*, 66-78.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 26-27.

⁸⁶ See ANG 2E/27, Chefferie traditionnelle dans le cercle de Dabola; and ANG 1D/132, Chefferie Traditionelle, Cercle de Labé, Canton de Oure-Komba, 1872-1948.

recruitment, the ambivalence of the chieftaincy resulted in the Futa never coming close to fulfilling expected rates of enrollment, and those who did enlist were from specific social groups present in the region, namely those of slave status.⁸⁷ As such, the obligation Poiret envisioned was far from collective, falling instead only on those who either could not flee or whose conditions were so limited that risking death for potential social, economic, and political upward mobility later on made sense.

Whether or not they joined willingly, several soldiers from the Futa took advantage of their enlistment in the French army. Incorporation into the ranks meant that soldiers of former slave status had access to colonial networks that previously could be entered only through the mediation of a colonial chief or African functionary, both groups prone to demands for what they euphemistically called “gifts.” Soldiers and Veterans used these new connections to make claims, most commonly to gain a family member’s or their own freedom, or to attempt to join the ranks of the colonial chieftaincy. Although often thwarted, the very act of joining up, as well as the pensions they would receive after finishing their service, allowed former slaves to both subvert and reconfigure social hierarchies in the Futa Jallon.

Soldiers and veterans often used their position in order to challenge the authority of their supposed social betters, either within colonial or local systems.⁸⁸ In a 1921 letter to his superiors, Sergeant Samba-Massaré of the 21st battalion of *tirailleurs Sénégalais* stationed in Morocco laid

⁸⁷ Poiret, LG Guinée, Rapport Politique, 1er Trimestre 1917, ANS 2G17/9. On flight as passive resistance to enlistment, see Lunn, *Memoirs of the Maelstrom*, 43; and Michel, *Les Africains et la Grande Guerre*, 36-37; on the social status of recruits, see Rivière, “Dynamique de la stratification,” 35; and Mann, *Native Sons*, 36-37.

⁸⁸ On veterans of slave and youth status in Guinea pushing against social and age hierarchies after repatriation, see Joe Harris Lunn, “Kande Kamara Speaks: An Oral History of the West African Experience in France, 1914-18,” in *Africa and the First World War*, ed. Melvin E. Page (London: Macmillan Press, 1987), 45-49.

bare the continued existence of slavery in the Futa Jallon. Claiming that four of his younger brothers were being held in a state of captivity in Sauoroya village in the Cercle of Timbo by two men named Yanéko Diali Boubou and Diara Boubou, Samba-Massaré requested that officials in Guinea investigate and report back on the boys' condition. When questioned by the Minister of Colonies and the AOF Governor General, local administrators in Timbo put forward an alternative story, saying that the four "brothers," whose supposed relation to the Sergeant was called into question, had been "enticed" by "their uncle" to travel to Sierra Leone, but did not want to leave Guinea. Furthermore, the Lieutenant Governor of Guinea remarked, "it seems impossible" that anyone could be held against their will in the Timbo region, as local "natives" knew well the various trails that allowed one to escape to Sierra Leone or elsewhere during tax or recruitment time. In any manner, local officials claimed, the village of Sauoroya did not exist.⁸⁹ The Guinean administration was dedicated to eliminating any official trace of enslavement in their colony, whether or not the practice itself continued. This effort often led to the stonewalling of colonial subjects who now had access to higher ups in Gorée and Paris. Yet, that the Sergeant's request ran up to the Minister of Colonies, back down to the Commandant of Timbo through the AOF and Conakry administration, and then back up to the Minister, shows that the colonial administration heard and pursued the complaints of soldiers from Guinea.

Other soldiers chose to air their grievances more openly. In a report warning about French overdependence on colonial chiefs due to understaffing, which would supposedly bring

⁸⁹ Le Ministre de Colonies to Gov Gen AOF, "Requête du Sergent Samba-Massaré du 21e Bataillon Sénégalais," 22 August 1921, ANS 7G11; GG AOF to LG Guinée, "Requête du Sergent Samba-Massaré du 21e Bataillon Sénégalais," 6 September 1921, ANS 7G11; LG Guinée to GG AOF, "A. S. requête du sergent Samba MASSARE du 21e R.T.S.," no. 490/A, 12 October 1921, ANS 7G11; GG AOF to Ministre des Colonies, "Requête Samba MASSARE," 15 October 1921, ANS 7G11.

about imminent demise of the *mission civilisatrice*, one administrator in Guinea remarked that the veterans who returned home in the wake of the First World War were exerting greater influence on local populations, to the detriment of both administrators and chiefs.⁹⁰ Writing nine years later, another local official warned that there was a growing conflict between veterans and chiefs in the Futa Jallon. The former, “released from the mental bonds of servitude,” were rejecting demands for “traditional gifts” from the chiefs.⁹¹ A more innovative administration might have used veterans to check chiefly power. For a colonial apparatus concerned first and foremost with stability and authority, however, veterans represented a threat to the colonial project as a whole. As such, they had to be quieted and brought under control.

One soldier, Sergeant Seydou Camara of Kénééné in the Ditinn region of the Futa, pushed back against his local chiefly family’s attempt to thwart the marriages the soldier had negotiated thanks to his salary and pension. His “former master” had brought Camara from the neighboring colony of Soudan to the Ditinn subdivision in the Futa during the soldier’s childhood. After his master’s death, Camara joined the army and, he claimed, married one woman and was promised another, both of whom were of slave status. The local village chief disputed the proposed marriage, saying that the latter fiancée was only 7 at the time of her supposed engagement to Camara and, furthermore, that the soldier had never paid the customary dowry of “two cows, three horses, and a sum of 200 francs.” The young girl had been living in the concession of the village chief, Alfa Bakar, for three years, and Camara had no claim to her, which the girl’s parents supposedly confirmed. The latter also established that they were “entirely free to take

⁹⁰ Gov Guinée, Rapport Politique, 2ème Trimestre 1920, ANS 2G20/8.

⁹¹ Gov Guinée to Gov Gen AOF, Rapport Politique Année 1929, no. 485A, 7 April 1930, ANS 2G29/11.

back their child if they desired to do so,” thereby “eliminating” any suspicions of forced servitude. To add insult to injury, Alfa Bakar’s son, Alfa Amadou, had supposedly been courting Camara’s first (and according to the local official, only) wife, Sira Hadi, by giving her a pair of sandals and some cloth as gifts. The conflict was resolved by the rejection of the soldier’s claims to the second wife and by telling the chief’s son to stay away from the soldier’s first wife.⁹² As before, French administrators often protected local chiefs, yet complaints about the latter group’s misconduct only reinforced the common perception that the Fulbe ruling class was by nature exploitative.

Other soldiers sought to carve out their own space within the colonial chieftaincy, either through official connections or newfound wealth. For a period after the First World War, veterans without “traditional” claims petitioned local colonial administrators in the Futa Jallon and elsewhere in the AOF to become chiefs. In some cases, they were successful.⁹³ Conversant in French and visible examples of the “liberation” of former slaves, these soldier-chiefs represented the supposed “modernization” of the institution, a transformation that many colonial administrators advocated. However, these chiefs often encountered vehement opposition from village and canton notables, free Fulbe who resented former *maccube* for taking what was at the time a rather influential and potentially lucrative position within the colonial administration. As such, French commandants often noted that veterans of former slave status serving as chiefs were almost uniformly ineffective, unable to accomplish the basic functions of ensuring order and collecting taxes. The era of naming veterans as chiefs proved to be brief, lasting about 3

⁹² L’Administrateur adjoint des colonies, Chef de la Subdivision de Ditinn to Monsieur l’Administrateur Commandant le Cercle de Mamou, “A/S. Réclamation sergent de Tirailleurs Sénégalais Seydou Camara,” 20 November 1927, ANS 2G20/8

⁹³ Mann, *Native Sons*, 41-48, 89-91.

years after the end of the war. In subsequent debates over nominations, colonial administrators often justified their rejection of numerous requests to join the chieftaincy by qualified veterans by using the refrain that a potential chief of former slave status could never rule without “traditional authority.”⁹⁴

One veteran of former slave status from the Ore Djima canton north of Labé sought to circumvent many of the barriers to non-elites being named as chiefs by attempting to convert newfound economic power into higher social status. Preferring to hold wealth in the form of cattle and resistant to engaging in trade during the first decades of French rule, Fulbe elites often did not have ready access to currency. Only those with connections to *navétanes* or trade held francs, and even then most families chose to deal with currency in amounts that only covered yearly taxes. Thus, with their pensions paid in francs by the French state, veterans were in a unique position to acquire both goods and influence. After a failed 1936 nomination, when the local commandant chose a former interpreter with only tangential claims to the Ore Djima canton chieftaincy and then shortly thereafter removed him due to local resistance, the administration in Conakry decided to go against the wishes of the local commandant and undertake another consultation of the area’s notables through a non-binding vote. Of the seven candidates “worth consideration,” according to a local administrator, most were either former chiefs or the sons of former chiefs. Some had experience working within the colonial system either as teachers or soldiers, while others had served as Arabic language clerks of former chiefs.

One name stood out amongst the others, however. Aldiouma Diallo boasted a distinguished career as a soldier, rising to the rank of *Adjudant-chef* (or Chief Warrant Officer, a senior non-commissioned officer) and having been decorated with several medals, including the

⁹⁴ LG Guinée to Commandants de Cercle et Chefs de Subdivisions, “Commandement Indigène,” no. 45A, 13 October 1930, ANG 2E2.

Criox de Guerre. Diallo claimed that he was a free Fulbe of the *Lalyabé lenyol*, a lineage with claims to the chieftaincy of Pellal and Bondéya *missidi* in the Mali region.⁹⁵ The administrator tasked with sorting out the messy succession, though, remarked that Diallo only “called himself Fulbe,” but was in fact a Jallonke and of slave status. Hoping to establish himself as one of the region’s elites, the veteran had paid the former chief 300 francs in order to take the title of *Alfa*, which denoted both elite lineage and Islamic learning. Diallo’s gambit, though, had failed; the inspector remarked the upstart had little chance of being elected, let alone being respected by local notables. Although in demeanor and ability Diallo was thought to be an ideal chief, his candidacy was dismissed out of hand.⁹⁶

Similar to thousands of his fellow brothers in arms, service in the French army had provided Diallo an opportunity through a corrupt chief to use economic power for prospective social gain. Joining the Futa’s elite, however, proved to be more difficult than anticipated. The social memory of slavery was nearly impossible to erase.⁹⁷ Furthermore, the window of opportunity for soldiers’ and veterans’ social mobility would close rapidly, as the sons of established chiefs soon realized that their chances of being chosen as successors above their brothers were greatly enhanced by service in the French army.⁹⁸ Still, the space opened up by the *tirailleurs Sénégalais* allowed soldiers to envision a future in which social hierarchies were either transformed, or one in which they were amongst its top echelons. During the interwar

⁹⁵ El Hadj Maladho Bah, *Histoire du Fouta-Djallon*, (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2002), 30.

⁹⁶ Demougeot, “Chefferie d’Oredjima,” 25-27 June 1937, CARAN 7G21/200MI2193.

⁹⁷ Hanretta, *Islam and Social Change*, 204; Mann, *Native Sons*, 33-36.

⁹⁸ The most notable example of an elite joining the army was Aguibou Barry, eventual head of the Futa Jallon Soriya Branch, chief of Dabola, and father of post-WWII politician Barry Diawadou. See Michel, *Les Africains et le Grande Guerre*, 74.

period, their dreams were nearly always deferred. But the opening of African party politics following the Second World War offered them the opportunity to maneuver once again, this time as a politically active force.

The Market

During the decades following the Futa Jallon's incorporation into the French empire, colonial administrators on the plateau and officials in Conakry sought to integrate the region into a specifically colonial economy. The establishment of marketplaces, networks of roads and railroads, and a mode of exchange based on currency – all previously absent in the Futa – became the means through which the colonial administration sought to bend trade towards its capital on the coast, Conakry. These initiatives also opened spaces for non-elite Fulbe to participate in and sometimes profit from an economic sector that chiefs and “proper” Fulbe shunned.

Many regions in Guinea had several markets established well before the formal imposition of colonial rule, the most notable being a series of entrepôts along the coast, and Kankan in the savannah northeast. However, the Futa Jallon did not have a history of markets or trading conducted by ethnic Fulbe (see Introduction). The high plateau was enmeshed within networks of trade and Islamic learning, and was therefore not isolated. Economic activity tied to exchange, however, was cordoned off to specific portions of Futa Jallon society, which were often closed to Fulbe, either of free or slave status.

French control over the Futa Jallon brought about significant changes to the region's economy. As one of the main justifications for colonization was the opening up of the region to French commercial interests, the colonial administration in Conakry sought immediately to circumvent the series of intermediary markets and merchants who had before moved goods from

the Futa Jallon to the coast. Their strategy of channeling trade from the Futa towards Conakry without mediation was comprised of two initiatives. The first was the establishment of transport routes into the interior, the most ambitious of which was the construction of the Conakry-Niger railroad. Designed to circumvent established populations centers in order to avoid negotiating with local authorities, the railroad, when combined with an expanding road network, served to funnel exports – most importantly rubber harvested on the plateau – to the growing port of Conakry.⁹⁹ Tracks reached Kindia in 1904 and the Futa Jallon by 1908, where the French established the new, planned town of Mamou along the line to serve as a center of trade and administration. Only 50 km from Timbo, the capital of the pre-colonial Futa Jallon state and seat of the paramount *Almamy*, Mamou was meant as an alternative pole of power for the new colonial state, and shortly after its establishment administrative capital of the *cercle* was transferred from Timbo to the new colonial town. As trade goods flowed on the railroad through the new center, Mamou's population grew from 1500 in 1909 to 2000 in 1912.¹⁰⁰ Located at the crossroads of both transportation routes and administrative structures, Mamou came to represent for French administrators the potential for transformation within the Futa, a “modern” city for a civilizing mission.

Although hailed as the means through which “economic liberty” would be introduced to the interior, new transport routes in fact perpetuated many of the exploitative practices that the more idealistic administrators supposedly sought to eradicate. The construction of the railroad and roads required labor. Writing to Dakar in 1904, the Lieutenant Governor of Guinea argued that this new type of wage labor to build infrastructure could be a tool for emancipation, giving

⁹⁹ Goerg, *Commerce*, 288.

¹⁰⁰ Goerg, *Commerce*, 282-283.

newly liberated slaves an occupation and breaking bonds with their former masters.¹⁰¹ In reality, the wages offered for labor were too low to attract sufficient numbers of working-age men. French administrators responded by turning to chiefs along the major transportation routes to provide labor, either willingly or not, from their villages.¹⁰² Chiefly demands predictably fell upon persons of slave status, and just as they had reacted to similar requisitions from the colonial chiefs, former slaves subject to *corvée* labor fled. By 1909, administrators in the newly established *cercle* of Mamou reported that the area around the railroad was nearly deserted.¹⁰³ Furthermore, far from displacing "that last vestige of servitude" constituted by the network of porters who had previously carried export goods like rubber to the coast, halting delays in construction due to the lack of labor did little to put an end to the exploitative practice.¹⁰⁴ Colonial administrators would continue to promise well into the 1930s that new reforms or the construction of yet more roads would once and for all eliminate demands for porters and forced

¹⁰¹ Cousturier, LG Guinée, "Rapport sur la suppression de l'état de captivité dans la Guinée Française," 11 August 1904, ANS K20.

¹⁰² Colonial administrators put forward a scheme to increase available labor that included replacing the annual head tax with labor or offering chiefs 10 francs for each person they "recruited" to work along the line. Progress building the railroad still largely depended on the cooperation of and coercion by the chiefs, including promises by the chiefs of Labé and Timbo to provide 3000 laborers combined. See LG Guinée to GG AOF, Rapport Politique, 3ème Trimestre 1907, no. 878, 25 September 1907, ANS 2G7/12; and GG AOG to le Min (Paris), "Situation Politique et administrative de la Guinée pendant le 1er trimestre 1906), no. 1170, 21 June 1906, ANS 2G6/9; Fall, *Le Travail Forcé*, 115-124.

¹⁰³ LG Guinée to GG AOF, Guinée - Rapport Politique, 4ème Trimestre 1909, no. 100, 28 January 1910, ANS 2G9/13.

¹⁰⁴ Fall, *Le Travail Forcé*, 77-81.

labor.¹⁰⁵ Their echoed guarantees reflected the same reality that gave rise to multiple “eradications” of slavery in the AOF up to independence. Repeated forecasts of future change, after all, often meant that there had to the present been little at all.

The second initiative focused on establishing markets in all of the Futa Jallon’s major towns, which was meant to stimulate economic exchange and facilitate the installation of European commercial firms in the region. The construction of markets took on the language of development through private commerce rather than state investment, as supposedly financially self-sufficient colonies had few funds to allocate for ambitious projects. Shortly after arriving in Labé in May 1902, Pierre Francon, the chief administrator in the cercle, set about making the regional capital into a sanitary and modern city. Part of his plan of development included cleaning up the stream in between the center of the city and the new administrative post in order to supply cleaner water for the growing city. He also ordered the re-roofing of both his residence and the local administrative center, giving the buildings, “when the sun shines, the appearance of stylish and cheerful cleanliness.” Finally, Francon went about “completely rebuilding” the “badly dilapidated” local market, “where some shacks were nothing but ruins.” Ordering the construction of twenty new huts “entirely closed and covered with care,” complete with a new road running on the market’s perimeter allowing one to “see all the beautiful cows and merchandise” for sale, the new administrator had, he hoped, breathed life into local commerce.¹⁰⁶

Similar market projects unfolded in other administrative centers in the Futa. By 1907,

¹⁰⁵ Colonie de la Guinée Française, Rapport Politique: Commandement Indigène, Année 1931, no. 564A, 1 April 1932, ANS 2G31/13; Colonie de la Guinée Française, Rapport Politique, Année 1938, ANS 2G38/27.

¹⁰⁶ Pierre Francon, l’Administrateur p.i. du Labé to Gov Guinée, Rapport Mensuel no. 52, 1 June 1902, ANS 2G2/2.

most large towns on the plateau had established markets and were waiting for the arrival of the railroad and roads to be fully integrated into the colony's economy, or so French administrators speculated.¹⁰⁷ For the most part, however, markets' power of transformation was limited. Fulbe continued to shun participation in commerce, with an influx of Susu traders from the coast joining the established "Fulbe-ized" dioulas in the new markets.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, markets in rural portions of the Futa were much slower to develop. According to Derman, weekly market days were not a common practice until the 1930s, and even then only adopted by local Fulbe communities with colonial pressure. He recounts one story of a *canton* chief in Popodara, where the first rural market was established in 1937, sending out armed men to force inhabitants to bring goods to sell at the behest of the local French administrator.¹⁰⁹ Once markets were established, though, they grew steadily and offered some opportunities to previously marginalized social groups. Women in particular benefited; the gardens they traditionally tended were an important nutritional source on the soil-poor plateau, and any surplus they grew could be sold at market for their own benefit.¹¹⁰ Although profit margins were commonly very small, as economic crisis gripped the Futa during the 1930s and later during the 1960s, women's income from market sales became an important part of a typical Fulbe family's livelihood.

Fulbe participation in large-scale commerce was also slow to develop. Increased integration of the Futa into colonial and international trade networks during the 1910s was accompanied by the appearance of European and Lebanese firms on the high plateau. The

¹⁰⁷ Guinée Française, Rapport Politique, 1er Trimestre 1907, ANS 2G7/12.

¹⁰⁸ Goerg, *Commerce*, 387-388.

¹⁰⁹ Derman, *Serfs*, 55.

¹¹⁰ Derman, *Serfs*, 122.

former, enticed by the booming rubber trade that peaked in the early 1910s, established outposts in the major cities of the Futa Jallon, at the time one of the largest producers of the raw product in the colony.¹¹¹ The latter, content to engage in an economic activity with a smaller profit margin, brought commercial products and staple foods and resold the goods on the plateau.¹¹² Charged with transporting and selling these goods in rural locales, local Fulbe representatives of Lebanese merchants gradually became involved in trading.¹¹³ Yet their ability to engage in large-scale trading and commerce was constrained by European and Lebanese dominance of the wholesale market. Combined with the social stigma attached to merchants in Fulbe culture, there were several hurdles to Fulbe participation in trade in the Futa.

Outside of the Futa Jallon, however, Fulbe of both free and former slave status were able to find more opportunities to enter into commerce. Migration of Fulbe towards the coast had steadily increased during the last decades of the nineteenth century, and several Fulbe communities were already established in the Basse Côte region by the interwar period. Searching for new ways to make a living, many of these Fulbe migrants gravitated towards the new markets. The recent arrival of Fulbe merchants into regional networks of trade relative to their Maninka and Susu counterparts also made the former better suited for a rapidly changing colonial economy. Without established practices trading certain goods along established routes, Fulbe merchants instead sought out any commerce that would produce a profit. As such, they

¹¹¹ Goerg, *Commerce*, 347-368.

¹¹² For a broader and longer history of the Lebanese in West Africa – and a study in which Guinea, being a frontier zone, plays an important early role in the development of Lebanese trade networks – see Andrew Arsan, *Interlopers of Empire: The Lebanese Diaspora in Colonial French West Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹¹³ Ahmadou Bocar N'Diade, “Capital Formation and Ethnic Entrepreneurship in Modern Guinea” (PhD Diss., University of Arizona, 1999), 140-142.

gradually came to dominate the local sale of goods imported from European sources. One study noted that by 1962, Fulbe merchants made up some 90% of small shop owners and 85% of cloth sellers in Basse Côte markets. Susu merchants may have dominated the sale of “traditional” goods like salt, kola, smoked fish, and onions, but Fulbe traders relied upon familial relations stretching from Conakry to the Futa Jallon in order to build profitable economic networks.¹¹⁴ Other Fulbe struck out to Haute Guinée, Sierra Leone, and Côte d’Ivoire in the east and south in order to capture the kola nut trade to the Futa Jallon. Having slowly acquired both capital as well as trust with outside sellers, Fulbe kola traders found both demand and profit margins high.¹¹⁵ Once word of the lucrative trade practices spread, other Fulbe were quick to form their own enterprises, giving rise to expanded Fulbe networks that eventually spanned from Dakar in the north to Abidjan in the south.

The introduction of a cash economy in the Futa Jallon and the expansion of Fulbe communities into neighboring areas in the wake of colonial rule had several important social ramifications. When combined with the slow disintegration of subsistence agriculture based upon unraveling slave/master relations, the rise of wage labor and commerce offered opportunities for previously marginalized groups to accumulate economic power. These new activities were partially removed from the system of social hierarchies that dominated the region. New occupations arose, ones that were not explicitly tied to a certain social class like they had in the pre-colonial Futa or, in some cases, were openly shunned by elite Fulbe. For example, Derman describes how the most prosperous butcher in Popodara was of former slave status. The occupation had no predecessor before the emergence of cattle selling after the imposition of

¹¹⁴ Jacques Binet, “Marchés en Pays Sousou,” *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 3, no. 9 (1962), 110.

¹¹⁵ N’Diade, “Capital Formation,” 190-197.

colonial taxes, and no elite Fulbe would have even considered such a profession. Therefore, a former slave filled the demand and in the process became rich. Furthermore, accumulation of capital sometimes became a means for social mobility. Based upon a pre-colonial ceremony called *rindingol* (translated literally as “making [a person] free”), it was possible for slaves to purchase their own freedom from their masters. While the colonial experiment of “certificates of liberty” proved short-lived, persons of slave status who found profitable niches within the colonial economy could conceivably join the ranks of the Free Fulbe.¹¹⁶ Like the story of the soldier who bought himself a title, though, the social stigma of slave status often lingered.

It is important to note, however, that few former slaves became rich under colonial rule, and even fewer decided to transfer their newly acquired capital to their former masters by purchasing their freedom. Furthermore, the market did not have the magically liberating effect that the more idealistic French administrators predicted. The infrastructure required to integrate Futa Jallon into the colonial economy necessitated the mass exploitation of African labor. As it had before, the burden of providing that labor fell disproportionately upon former slaves. The arrival of the market – as both a place of commerce and an international economic system – did, however, allow for more space for maneuver. Thus, as with the colonial spaces discussed above, colonial rule was paradoxical, both opening new avenues and introducing new forms of oppression, and rarely in the ways intended either by French administrators or the Fulbe elite.

The City

One space opened by colonial rule tied together many of the trajectories discussed above: the city. While population densities in the Futa Jallon were high compared to other regions, most Fulbe lived in smaller settlements spread evenly throughout the countryside. When concentrated

¹¹⁶ Derman, *Serfs*, 53-56.

population centers did emerge, they functioned more as large conglomerations of separate villages than unique urban settings. Integration into the colonial administration and economy gave rise to new, rapidly growing towns and eventually cities. In turn, migrants from the countryside flocked to colonial cities such as Mamou, and from the plateau down to the new capital, Conakry. In these towns and cities, migrants from the Futa made and remade versions of Fulbe society, negotiating the meaning of social hierarchies within their communities while at the same time contesting political control with local “autochthones.”

Along what would become the colony of Guinea’s coast, a series of entrepôts had developed by the latter half of the nineteenth century. Small towns like Rio Pongo emerged as the Upper Guinea coast was integrated into the Atlantic trade system, and were intended both as areas of exchange between European merchants and African traders with connections in the interior and as defensive positions controlling strategic waterways, which constituted the main means of transportation past the coast.¹¹⁷ Before 1897, some traders with roots in the Futa Jallon made their way to these coastal towns with caravans of export goods and slaves. As most Fulbe shunned active participation in trade, however, these early merchants tended to be Mande speakers.¹¹⁸

Starting in the 1880s, the French state dedicated itself to consolidating control over what the early colonial administrative unit called the *Rivières du Sud*, or the coastal area that today corresponds with the borders of Guinea. In order to serve as both the administrative and economic center of the expanding colony, in 1885 the French colonial administration established

¹¹⁷ Bruce L. Mouser, “Trade, Coasters, and Conflict in the Rio Pongo from 1790 to 1808,” *Journal of African History* 14, no. 1 (1973), 45-64.

¹¹⁸ Goerg, *Commerce*, 146.

a new city named Conakry on Tumbo Island, which was separated at the time by a narrow, shallow strait from the tip of the five-kilometer long Kaloum peninsula. Although several local communities occupied the island, French officials approached the space as a *tabula rasa* on which they initiated an ambitious plan for a “model city” constituted of plots outlined by perpendicular roads.¹¹⁹ A group of settlement laws were enacted from 1901-1905 to control development. While these restrictions were supposedly based upon cultural characteristics and levels of cost of living rather than race, in practice they divided the city into European, African, and intermediary zones of habitation.¹²⁰

During these first decades, the first migrants to the African zones of Tumbo were primarily from Senegal or Sierra Leone, or if from Guinea were ethnic Susu. The rapidly growing city did attract migrants from the Futa Jallon, who decided to settle farther inland along the peninsula in a neighborhood that would come to be called Dixinn-Foulah (Foulah being a synonym for the Fulbe). French administrators took a hands-off approach to regulating villages outside of Tumbo. Over the course of the first decade of the 20th century, administrators began to officially recognize village chiefs who acted as intermediaries. By 1908, Mamadou Thiam, who had previously served as an interpreter in the colonial civil service, had been named the Chief of Dixinn-Foulah, due in large part to his good relations with local Baga villages. Thiam also hailed from a *torodo* family of religious leaders who had been allied with the pre-colonial Futa Jallon Almamys. Following the 1897 defeat of the Almamy Bokar Biro, Thiam’s father, Mamadou

¹¹⁹ Odile Goerg, “Conakry: un modèle de ville colonial Française? Règlements fonciers et urbanisme de 1885 aux années 1920,” *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 25, no. 99 (1985), 319.

¹²⁰ Odile Goerg, “From Hill Station (Freetown) to Downtown Conakry (First Ward): Comparing French and British Approaches to Segregation in Colonial Cities at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, 32, no. 1 (1998), 12-14.

Seydou Sy, had been forced to move to Conakry along with 50 family members and around 100 slaves. The village that they established eventually developed in the Dixinn-Foulah neighborhood, an island of Fulbe settlement in the surrounding sea of Susu and Baga communities.¹²¹ In an effort to subvert the local ethnic Susu Soumah family, who made claims to authority connected to their leadership of the pre-colonial Dubreka kingdom that controlled the peninsula, Mamadou Thiam was named the “canton chief of Conakry” in 1914 and placed over the control of all suburban neighborhoods, included areas that were not populated primarily by Fulbe.¹²² Thiam’s elevation to paramount chief of the suburbs, in direct opposition to more legitimate claims of autochthony by rival groups, depended heavily upon colonial arguments that the Fulbe were “more civilized” than their Susu and Baga counterparts, who were in contrast “drunkards” and not suited to ruling.¹²³

Thiam would continue to serve as canton chief until his death in 1926. Based in part on AOF General Governor William Ponty’s 1908 articulation of a “*politique des races*” – or the idea that ethnic groups should be ruled by one of their own – a member of the Soumah family that had been displaced by Thiam was named the canton chief of Conakry in 1927. Furthermore, the colonial administration reasoned, Thiam’s long reign had undermined any autonomous claim by the Susu family to authority. Thus, Kerfalla Soumah, apparently neither qualified nor well suited to administration, was named canton chief without major objections from local Baga and

¹²¹ Odile Goerg, “Chieftainships Between Past and Present: From City to Suburb and Back in Colonial Conakry,” *Africa Today* 52, no. 4 (2006), 11-12.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 6-7.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 12.

Fulbe communities.¹²⁴

Soumah served as the canton chief of Conakry until the institution's abolition in 1957 by the Sékou Touré-led territorial government. His reign, though, would not go without challenge from the Fulbe communities under his control. Due in part to the global depression and the inability of many Futa Jallon inhabitants to gather enough capital to pay taxes, Fulbe migration to Conakry had increased steadily during the 1930s.¹²⁵ The colonial administration had attempted to stem the tide of mostly poor and rural migrants from the interior to the city by enacting policies that banned urban inhabitants who had not by one year after their arrival established recognized residency and employment in the city. While the regulation had temporarily shifted the flow of migrants to neighboring Portuguese and British colonies, it had not significantly changed the economic calculus that drew migrants from the densely populated Futa Jallon to the coast and eventually Conakry.¹²⁶

By the 1940s, the growing community of Fulbe living in the Conakry's suburbs had begun to chafe under the rule of Soumah. In an apparent attempt to re-organize the Dixinn neighborhood, the chief administrator of Conakry ordered the resettlement of a group of local families to the Cameroun neighborhood farther up the peninsula. Tasked with executing the order, canton Chief Soumah supposedly chose only Fulbe landowners to be evicted in an apparent attempt to undermine what he considered to be a rebellious community and, some

¹²⁴ Ibid. 19-20.

¹²⁵ Fulbe migration contributed in part to the nearly tripling of Conakry's population between 1924 to 1943, from nearly 10,000 to 27,000 persons. See Odile Georg, "Autorités coloniales, chefs administratives et 'collectivités.' L'enjeu du foncier dans les années 1950 dans la banlieue de Conakry," in *Gouverner les villes d'Afrique: État, gouvernement local et acteurs privés*, edited by Laurent Fourchard (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2007), 93.

¹²⁶ Michel Trentadue, "La Société guinéenne dans la crise de 1930: fiscalité et pouvoir d'achat," *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer* 63, no. 232-233 (1976): 635.

argued, as a naked grab for Fulbe land. After Abdoulaye Diallo, the president of a Fulbe cultural and political organization called the *Amicale Gilbert Vieillard*, intervened on the behalf of the dispossessed Fulbe, rifts both within the colonial administration and between Susu, Baga, and Fulbe notables in Conakry's suburbs were thrust to the surface. In a particularly testy exchange, the Governor of Guinea, taking the side of the Fulbe, and the newly installed civil servant Mayor of Conakry, supporting the claims of Soumah and the Susu notables, disagreed over both the execution of "native" authority and the degree to which the incident reflected deeper tensions between the "recent" Fulbe migrants and the autochthonous Susu and Baga communities. The former worried that tensions could develop into a larger Fulbe rebellion in Conakry, while the latter chalked the uproar up to petty elite politics.¹²⁷ The stakes of the disagreement were important. To recognize that the Fulbe constituted a unique – and uniquely dispossessed – population would require the colonial administration to wade into the messy politics of overlapping and contradictory ideas of custom and culture in the growing city. While the governor sought to minimize conflict, the Mayor of Conakry, who was, after all, most directly responsible for the day to day running of the city, advocated for continuing to conceive of the identification of authority and the application of custom as a primarily political tool, thereby circumventing more complex issues to customary rights.

This administrative skirting of questions about custom and authority, though, would not last long. Open conflict between Fulbe and Susu notables did not erupt until a disagreement emerged over a widow's right to her departed husband's estate. Tierno Siré Diallo, a longtime Fulbe resident of the Conakry suburbs, died sometime in early 1946, leaving behind a small herd

¹²⁷ Fourneau, Acting Governor Guinea to Goujon, l'Administrateur-Maire Commandant le cercle de Conakry, "Incidents survenus dans la banlieue de Conakry," 5 April 1946, ANG 2D321; Goujon to Fourneau, 15 April 1946, ANG 2D321.

of livestock, a house in Dixinn-Foulah, and, most importantly, no will. Having no children of his own, the responsibility of executing Siré Diallo's estate fell to the departed's nephew from Labé, Mamadou Saliou Diallo. Arguing that Siré Diallo was Fulbe and therefore that his property should be divided based upon Fulbe "custom," Saliou Diallo stipulated that Siré Diallo's widow, Koumba Diallo, was owed only 1/8th of the estate, which translated into five cows and five goats and, notably, did not include the house in which Koumba and Tierno had lived for the past three decades.

Understandably dissatisfied with the arrangement, Koumba Diallo appealed to the suburban Conakry Customary Court, which was charged with settling civil disputes based upon a nebulous and contested conception of "tradition" and was headed by the canton chief Kerfalla Soumah. Deciding that Siré Diallo's estate was in fact subject to Susu and Baga custom, as the two ethnic communities were "native" to the area and therefore had stronger claims to authority, Soumah stipulated that the widow would retain temporary rights to the house and property until her death, at which time ownership would transfer to the nephew. As an added display of Baga and Susu authority, or so local Fulbe notables argued, Soumah had drums played throughout the day following the decision in order to "correct the Fulbe" for their impunity. The playing of drums was considered by the conservative Muslim Fulbe as an affront to Islam.¹²⁸ Therefore, Soumah's choice to display his authority through drums – although he claimed he was simply calling a community meeting – was interpreted by the Fulbe as a provocation. In fact, a meeting was held, or at least scheduled. Once Kerfalla Soumah began to address the local crowd, an incensed Mamadou Saliou Diallo arrived to confront the canton chief. A scuffle ensued, with Soumah violently grabbing Diallo by his boubou and Diallo responding by taking a swing at the

¹²⁸ Derman, *Serfs*, 42.

chief. Both Fulbe notables and the chief's guard joined the fracas, leading to a community brawl that was eventually broken up by the police.¹²⁹

As the local mayor had argued, the incident between the canton chief and the departed's nephew did not portend larger scale ethnic violence between the Fulbe, Baga, and Susu communities in Conakry's suburbs. However, the entanglement of disputes over both property rights and the jurisdiction of custom did reflect an unsettled political and social terrain, one where the hierarchical relations of first comers and latecomers were hotly contested.¹³⁰ The emergence of fault lines based upon nascent African political parties was also implicit in many of the communications between colonial administrators. Abdoulaye Diallo, the president of the AGV, had intervened in part as a show of support for other Fulbe and as a means to build a constituency in the capital. Abdoulaye Diallo was also at the time linked to one of Guinea's leading politicians, a Fulbe named Yacine Diallo, who in turn was allied with the French Socialist Party (SFIO) and several prominent chiefs in the Futa Jallon. Kerfalla Soumah, on the other hand, had recently been named as a "counselor" on the board of a newly created union for African postal workers. The organization's secretary general was a prominent union leader and rising politician named Sékou Touré.¹³¹ Thus, even before political organizations with explicit

¹²⁹ Goujoun to Fourneau, 15 April 1946, ANG 2D321; E. Jean, le Procureur de la République to Fourneau, "a/s affaire M.P contre Almamy Kerfalla Soumah chef de canton de Kaporo et autres," 5 April 1946, ANG 2D321.

¹³⁰ On claims of authority tied to moment of arrival in a given space in sub-Saharan Africa, see Igor Kopytoff, "The Internal African Frontier: The Making of an African Political Culture," in *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies* (Bloomington: Indiana Press, 1987), 52-61. On the discourse surrounding this concepts in a particularly urban space, see James Brennan, *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013), 58-70.

¹³¹ André Lewin, *Ahmed Sékou Touré (1922-1984)*, v. 1, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009), 71.

ideologies and strategies emerged, Guinean politicians were beginning the important work of building coalitions, often along the lines of ethnic community. These early divides in Conakry's suburbs would continue. As the close of Second World War was followed by an opening of African politics in Guinea, the 1950s would see a series of conflicts between political parties turned into ethnic riots, as well as continued disputes over "custom" as the colonial administration sought to apply private property rights to the Conakry suburbs.¹³²

Furthermore, the emphasis on the Fulbe/Susu/Baga divides within Conakry demonstrated the changing importance of ethnic identification in relation to social hierarchies. In contrast to colonial administrators who feared that African migration to cities would dissolve their "traditional" ethnic bonds, the presence of Fulbe in Conakry made imminently visible perceived differences between "native" and "settler" communities in the capital.¹³³ Inter-ethnic conflict, in turn, gave rise to coalitions between social groups within ethnic communities, leading to a situation where, for instance, the elite Abdoulaye Diallo came to the support of dispossessed Fulbe of a variety of social classes. As such, ambiguity over who had claims to political authority in a new urban space, as well as conflict over opposing views of cultural tradition, played an important role in welding ethnic identification to political community. Put simply, for those living in Dixinn-Foulah, being Fulbe was just as if not more important than being of slave or free status. This is not to say that the social hierarchies disappeared; rather, they became one of a

¹³² See Chapter 3; and Goerg, "Autorités coloniales," 103-104.

¹³³ On colonial fears of "detrribalization" linked to labor in urban settings, see Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 58-60. Several studies have examined how migration to cities either strengthened or recreated forms of ethnic identification, but the most influential remains Abner Cohen's *Custom & Politics in Urban Africa: a Study of Hausa Migrants in Yoruba Towns* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

series of organizing structures in the rapidly changing capital.¹³⁴

Finally, the rapidly changing urban space represented by Conakry's suburbs could have allowed for reconfigurations between Fulbe social groups. There is no indication in the archives of whether or not the evicted Fulbe property owners, or for that matter Siré Diallo, his wife, and his nephew were former slaves or not. It is not inconceivable, however, that the landowners could have risen from a state of servitude to own significant resources in the growing capital. The original Fulbe inhabitants of Dixinn-Foulah were socially heterogeneous, comprised of both elites and former slaves. New professions in the capital, whether inside the market or not, afforded former slaves the opportunity to improve their economic (if not always their social) position. Lastly, the opening of African politics in Guinea and elsewhere in the AOF following the Second World War gave economically powerful but socially marginalized former slaves influence within emerging urban politics. The African Franchise was still tightly restricted during the late 1940s, but urban denizens were more likely to have their names listed on voter rolls. With a limited number of voters – only 9420 in a 1946 election for Guinea's representative to the French National Assembly – any person eligible to vote, whether elite or not, was a valuable asset for an aspiring politician.¹³⁵ Former slaves living in Conakry's suburbs, therefore, might have been able to assert their identity as constituents and demand attention from their prospective representatives.

¹³⁴ Carola Lentz describes a similar connection between migration and the construction of ethnic identifications, although she emphasizes the benefits ethnicity offered to migrants with rural roots living in the city rather than competition between different ethnic communities. In the case of the Fulbe in Guinea, it would seem as though conflict became a way to reinforce ethnic solidarity, which in turn offered those in specific communities both protection – from conflict of both the violent and customary sort – and forms of mutual aid. See Carola Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History in Northern Ghana* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).

¹³⁵ Cercle de Conakry, *Revue Trimestrielle*, Quatrième Trimestre 1946, ANG 2D321.

It is important not to overstate the transformative powers of the city, or the colonial administration's will in creating any space for maneuver for Fulbe former slaves. French officials' support for the incompetent and seemingly violent canton chief Kerfalla Soumah proved that most French mayors of Conakry were more interested in the stability offered by claims of autochthony than effective administration. Colonial urban spaces like the peninsula, however, were new social, economic, and political terrains for Fulbe inhabitants. This novelty, in turn, afforded former slaves the room to assert new claims, gain economic power, and ultimately reconfigure social hierarchies that had been only imperfectly imported from the high plateau.

“The man will order outside, but will obey inside the house”: Reconfiguring Gender Relations in the Futa Jallon

Along with persons of slave status, women were perhaps the most significant group in the Futa Jallon to use the social, political, and economic changes under colonial rule to reconfigure asymmetrical relationships. As with the other groups and places examined above, however, colonial rule was not simply tied with liberation, but rather the opening of new opportunities for specific groups as well as the calcification of other exploitative practices. Women pushed back against both French and Fulbe male ideas of “proper” gender roles, using education, connections to colonial networks, and economic opportunities to inhabit public spaces and to push back against the wills of their fathers and husbands – or, indeed, to choose not to have husbands at all. Opportunities for maneuver, however, were still closely tied to social status.

Perspectives of Fulbe women during the colonial period are hard to come by. Almost all portrayals of Fulbe women during colonial rule come from male French administrators. Even then, women appear only briefly and in little detail in colonial documents, at most figuring as one or two sentences in much longer reports on administrative and economic affairs focused

primarily on abstract social groups such as former slaves or elites. When Fulbe women were mentioned in official reports, administrators almost uniformly emphasized their cloistered lives in the Futa Jallon. Writing in 1902, Ernest Noirot, then Guinea's head of Native Affairs, remarked that he rarely saw women when passing through villages during periodic tours of the countryside.¹³⁶ A 1909 report from the Lieutenant Governor of Guinea filed after a tour in Pita commented that for the first time the head administrator saw women and children coming out to greet him.¹³⁷ One year later, the French commandant of the cercle of Mamou reported that women walked through the new railroad town's streets, but that they covered their hair, were silent, and averted their eyes when passing a man.¹³⁸ These types of reports tended to reinforce French perceptions of Fulbe culture as strictly separated by gender and dominated by a conservative version of Islam. In the opinions of French administrators, women's confinement to private spaces as well as their reserved nature in public were symptoms of a larger trend of Fulbe resistance to the "civilizing" aspects of French rule.

One exception to the near invisibility of women in colonial documents was a 1916 report on "politeness amongst the Fulbe" written by a French administrator posted to the Futa Jallon named Dupuch. In theory, the document was meant as a tutorial on how to navigate Fulbe culture for colonial administrators. In practice, the administrator's report reflected a superficial understanding of gender in the Futa Jallon and relied only upon male informants. The document does, though, contain some useful information on the significant demands on Fulbe women's

¹³⁶ "Extrait d'un rapport de Monsieur Ernest Noirot, sur une tournée d'inspection dans la partie Nord de la Colonie," May 1902, ANS 2G2/2.

¹³⁷ LG Guinée to GG AOF, Rapport Politique du 3ème Trimestre, no. 1014, 28 October 1909, ANS 2G9/13.

¹³⁸ Thoreau Levaré, Extrait du Rapport du Mois d'Avril 1910, Cercle de Mamou, Guinée Française, ANS 7G63.

labor. After spending several pages on Fulbe women's propensity to show their limbs, and the administrator open titillation from seeing exposed skin, Dupuch turns to one male informant to describe the work most women were required to complete each day. Young girls were often tasked with the most demanding household chores, including cleaning, cooking, and drawing water from the well. Once in adolescence, they were married young and without any consultation as to the choice of their partner. While married, their primary task was to serve their husbandly "master," were barred from eating with him, and were subject to domestic abuse.¹³⁹ As with previous reports, Dupuch's treatise on Fulbe culture reflected French colonial stereotypes, which viewed Fulbe culture in the Futa Jallon as both prone to intemperate passion and at the same time violent repression. Dupuch also had an incentive to emphasize the more "backward" elements of Fulbe society, as the "liberation" of groups perceived to be exploited was an important legitimizing claim of French rule in West Africa. Yet, even when read through the lens colonial ideology and rhetoric, one sees a picture of Fulbe society in which relations between men and women were largely asymmetrical. Fulbe women often found room for maneuver and ways to assert power within certain circumstances, but even after the post-independence First Republic social reforms in the Futa (see chapter 4), Fulbe women still derived their status either through their husbands or male children.¹⁴⁰

By the 1930s, however, many of the same transformation precipitated by colonial rule described above had reconfigured some gender relations on the high plateau. These indications of change were contained in a groundbreaking colonial report. Researched and written by Denise

¹³⁹ Ch. Dupuch, "Aperçus sur la Politesse Indigène au Fouta-Djallon," (1916), ANS 7G60.

¹⁴⁰ See Rebecca Furth, "Marrying the Forbidden Other," Chapter 5, "Fulbe Wives, Jiyaabe Wives: the interplay of Gender and Status in Polygynous Households," 198-226.

Moran Savineau, the wife of a colonial administrator, a social reformer, and early critic of French rule in Africa, what came to be known as the “Savineau Report” was the result of the French Popular Front’s concern with the practice of colonialism and its effects on women subjects in the AOF.¹⁴¹ In interviews with both high and low status Fulbe women and men, Savineau shed light on Fulbe perceptions of pre-colonial “traditions” and their transformation or unraveling under colonial rule. One male Fulbe teacher in Dalaba reported that according to “former custom,” meaning before the arrival of the French, all women in the Futa Jallon were kept from public before marriage, closely watched by their mothers, and “held captive by fear” by their fathers. Once married, women exercised some authority in the family, managing the running of the household and “jealously spying on [their] husband[s].” Even after divorce from or death of a spouse, though, women were required to maintain status through men, and after a short period of time were pushed to remarry. If they did not, “paradise would, for them, remain closed.”¹⁴²

Colonial rule had, according to the teacher, destabilized previous practices: “The whites came and, soon enough, erased slavery,” impoverishing former masters and allowing women to “depart from their idleness.” Women’s tastes in expensive French-imported commercial goods such as cloth outpaced the financial means of their husbands. The economic crisis of the 1930s lowered the status of men even further: “while men who grew for export were ruined, the women, who worked for local sale, lost almost nothing.” Newfound economic resources shifted

¹⁴¹ Jennifer Anne Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: the Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 202-203; Ghislaine Lydon, “The Unraveling of a Neglected Source: A Report on Women in Francophone West Africa in the 1930s,” *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 37, no. 147 (1997), 555-584.

¹⁴² Excerpts of interviews below are taken from Savineau, *Conseillère Technique de l’Enseignement to Gov Gen AOF, Rapport no. 15, “Le Fouta Djallon,”* c. 1939, ANS 17G381.

the balance of power within families, with women “feeding their humiliated men” and spending their currency on goods for themselves. Taking advantage of opportunities in newly opened markets, women “adopted the verbal exuberance and libertine/casual nature of the Susu, and the spirit of commerce and liberty of the Malinké [Maninka].” Women began to move to colonial centers – Mamou, then Kindia, Conakry, and Dakar – and to settle near camps of *tirailleurs*, eventually abandoning their Fulbe husbands who stayed behind in the Futa. These women would return, “covered in jewels,” enticing even more women to seek fortune outside of the Futa. As a last effort to save marriage on the high plateau, the teacher proposed a division of marital responsibilities: “The man will order outside, but will obey inside the house.”¹⁴³ His concerns might have been hyperbolic. Yet it is clear that he and other men in his position were wary, to say the least, of the opportunities opened to women by colonial rule.

Other interviews conducted by Savineau reflect women’s changing self-understandings and self-positioning within a society in flux. Passing through the towns of Timbi Touni and Timbi Madina (40 km southwest of Labé), Savineau found that several women had attended to the local French school, although, she remarks, “their ‘housekeeping education’ consisted of sweeping the classroom floors.” One woman with whom Savineau spoke, however, used her education to subvert expectations for her life trajectory. The daughter of a village chief, Aminatou Serif Bah had attended a local school for five years. After leaving the school, Bah worked for her mother and balanced the books for her father. Even though she was well past the age at which Fulbe women were expected to marry, Bah had been able to push back against proposed betrothals arranged by her parents. In fact, Bah had run away from home for eight days to elope (fr. *convoler*) with a small shop owner in Pita. When asked whether she obeyed the shop

¹⁴³ Rapport Savineau, 6-8.

owner's two older wives, Bah demonstrated the continued importance of social status: "it was [I] who ordered. They did not dare say anything, because [I] was the daughter of a chief." Bah, therefore, used her social status to her own ends. When asked whether or not she was going to (re) marry, the young woman replied, "no, no," and when asked whom she would like to marry said, "no one." Bah's ability to push back against "traditional" gender expectations was aided by her status as a chief's daughter.¹⁴⁴ She was also able to parlay education into seizing control, at least in part, of her father's finances, and was able to use the presence of a small merchant in nearby Pita to delay marriage. Both domains, precipitated by French rule, served a function for Bah that was far from the colonial ideal. Yet they both provided the young woman a certain amount of liberty.

Another elite Fulbe woman used migration within colonial systems in order to gain some independence. Diara Diallo, the wife of the Chief of Maci, Tierno Oumani Ba, was the daughter of a religious leader, or "marabout," and had received only limited instruction at a Koranic school. Diallo, however, soon became the "woman of a white person" – French administrators often entered into romantic and/or strategic relationships with African women – and through that connection had learned French. Her husband, a former warrant officer, had married Diallo while he was in the military, and both had lived in Conakry and Dakar. Savineau's description of Diara Diallo runs counter to earlier depictions of the cloistered and silent Fulbe woman: "she was not a *figurante* ["bit player," literally a ballerina who does not perform solos or an actor who does not have any lines], but a person who looks, laughs, speaks and when required leads." Diallo was also barren, which would commonly lower the family's status and sometimes led to divorce. Yet she alone lived with her husband, while the chief had two other wives who lived in separate

¹⁴⁴ Rapport Savineau, 23.

compounds because, he claimed, “being a chief requires a lot of cooking and feeding of visitors.” Diallo also felt free to contradict her husband. When Savineau asked the couple about the state of women, the chief replied, “they are happy.” Once her husband began to answer, Diallo was quick to interject with a correction: “the rich women are happy. But there are a lot of poor households, whose harvest is just enough to pay their taxes, who have barely enough to eat.”¹⁴⁵

Diara Diallo’s comment was an insightful reflection on the fortunes of Fulbe women under colonial rule. Elite women – the wives or daughters of chiefs or civil servants – had access to education or the material benefits of working within the colonial administration. They learned French, an increasingly important tool for moving between local and colonial spheres, and were at times able to negotiate more equitable relations of power with men. On the other end of the spectrum, Fulbe women who engaged in trade, largely out of a need to replace the lost revenue that their husbands had previously gained from agriculture. Eventually, these women attempted to translate their newfound economic power into authority within the household. Social status, therefore, determined in part which opportunities were open to which women. Those of high status moved within both elite Fulbe and French realms, using both to solidify their position. Those of low status cared more about feeding their families than elite Fulbe ideas of proper behavior, and were therefore able to seize the opportunities opened through integration into the colonial economy. Schmidt has demonstrated that after the Second World War the Sékou Touré-led *Parti Démocratique de Guinée* (PDG) provided an opportunity for women to participate in politics, and in turn women’s cadres became integral to the party’s meteoric rise.¹⁴⁶ The Savineau report – as well as the complaints of Fulbe men – demonstrate that women had begun

¹⁴⁵ Rapport Savineau, 4-5.

¹⁴⁶ Elizabeth Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005).

the work of gaining the social and economic influence that would ensure their central position in post-war Guinean politics well before political parties were able to use their newfound freedom.

Conclusion

Social hierarchies still carried significant weight in the Futa Jallon well into the postwar period. As a generation of Fulbe politicians emerged – all either the sons of chiefs or from noble families – it was difficult for former slaves and non-elite to ignore that even in the new period of African politics, social status still determined who claimed the mantle of the Futa Jallon’s leader. Furthermore, while free Fulbe may have lamented what they perceived to be a slipping grip on groups previously kept under their thumb, it was still clear that persons of free status continued to benefit from the political, economic, and social structure in place in the Futa Jallon, even after the French disrupted what had, for them, been an “ideal” shared pre-colonial system.

The spaces opened up by colonial rule – and more importantly, former slaves and women’s use of those spaces to attempt to reconfigure social hierarchies – did have important effects. As *maccube* accrued currency but almost always were unable to convert it into social capital, fissures between former slaves and masters became increasingly pronounced. Furthermore, as women, and especially women of former slave status, reconfigured asymmetrical gender relations and enjoyed newfound economic power within families, free and elite Fulbe political discourses built upon ideas of return to or preservation of “tradition” became increasingly unattractive. In the coming years, Sékou Touré’s PDG, a new political organization with roots in the Conakry trade unions would use these growing gaps in order to partially break the hold of Fulbe elites over the Futa Jallon.

The next chapter explores how new political parties grappled with these transformed social hierarchies while attempting to mobilize sections of Futa Jallon society, most notably the

elite and persons of slave status. These parties, however, failed to capture the power of those Fulbe in the “middle,” caught between a group making more claims to power and another enjoying the privileges of state-endorsed exploitation. Their laments and prayers examined at the beginning of this chapter, it would seem, were destined to remain unanswered.

Chapter Three

Storming the Citadel: Political Parties, Ethno-regionalism, and Decolonization, 1945-1961

The moment of independence looms large in Guinea's history. Guineans' dramatic "non" in the September 28, 1958 referendum on the constitution of the French Fifth Republic reflected a unique political culture that set the territory apart from its counterparts in Senegal, Soudan (Mali), and Côte d'Ivoire, or so it is often argued. Furthermore, The French government's vindictive reaction to the vote heavily influenced Guinea's decision to not only adopt a position of non-alignment during the Cold War but also court potential donors from the Eastern and Western blocs. Lastly, for many both inside and outside the nation, Guinea's rejection of thinly veiled colonialism announced the arrival of African nationalism in the former French colonies and, for some, the potential of a pan-Africanist imaginary. Reflecting its historical importance, September 28th, as both watershed moment and political symbol, has come to represent both the promise and peril of Guinean nationalism in the decades since 1958.¹

This chapter argues for a more drawn-out process of imperial reform followed by decolonization. In particular, I locate an additional watershed in Guinea's transformation into a post-colonial state and society: the 1957 election for the newly created Guinean assembly, after which Guinea became a semi-autonomous territory within what was then the French Union, with control of the majority of territorial administration now in the hands of African political rather than French colonial administrators. This alternative moment represented the peak of a crescendo of political activity that began shortly after the close of the Second World War. During the

¹ On the legacy of the "non" in Guinean politics, as well as its fading salience as of late, see *Le Non de la Guinée: Entre myth, relecture historique et resonances contemporaines*, ed. by Odile Goerg, Céline Pauthier, and Abdoulaye Diallo (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010), in particular Céline Pauthier's "Le Non de la Guinée: un lieu de mémoire national," and Mike McGovern's "The Refusal to Celebrate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the 1958 NO."

1950s, political parties in Guinea attempted to build constituencies and mobilize voters within the context of a rapidly growing franchise. These parties fell into two types, one comprised of the Fulbe-led *Bloc Africain de Guinée* (BAG) and *Démocratie Socialiste de Guinée* (DSG), focused on building territory-wide coalitions through ethno-regional political organizations, and the other by the Sékou Touré-led *Parti Démocratique de Guinée* (PDG), which sought to build a territory-wide party with a uniform organization. While by 1957 Touré's PDG had ridden a wave of rural discontent to solidify its control over most of the Guinean territory, one region – the Fulbe-dominated Futa Jallon – resisted the party's spread. Both Fulbe politicians and the PDG leadership soon recognized that the Futa Jallon was the key to either continued viability of a party or political hold over the territory as a whole.

What unfolded afterwards was an at times violent contestation over rival visions of the boundaries and content of emerging post-colonial political communities. Both the PDG and Fulbe-led parties engaged in a debate over the legacy of social hierarchies in the Futa Jallon, the authority of the 'traditional' chieftaincy, and the position of Futa Jallon society within a 'modern' Guinea. This symbolic struggle was complimented by the parties' different strategies for building political solidarities, the PDG's animated by territory-wide aspirations and a uniform conception of political space, the BAG and DSG's rooted in local dynamics and a colonial politics of difference.² By the time the PDG successfully "stormed the citadel" of the Futa Jallon and rode to a sweeping victory in the 1957 territorial elections, the fractures that

² Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: power and the politics of difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010). Burbank and Cooper's articulation of a 'politics of difference' acknowledges colonial subjects' participation in and formation of difference, as opposed to the more top-down 'rule of difference.' For the latter, see Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: colonial and postcolonial histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 20; and Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 9-10.

would mark post-colonial politics in Guinea had already been set: from both an internal and external perspective, the Fulbe and Futa Jallon were divergent from the rest of Guinea, a fragment in the making. The PDG's consolidation of control between the 1957 territorial election and the 1961 presidential elections only further cemented internal divisions that marginalized Fulbe politicians and marked the Futa Jallon as fundamentally different from the rest of Guinea. The opening and closing of multi-party politics in Guinea between 1945 to 1961 points to two key trajectories in mid-century Guinean political history: first, the welding of ethnicity and political community, a key aspect of contemporary Guinean politics, developed in relation to contestation between rival sets of political parties; and second, that that conceptual articulation of Fulbe difference – what would later be described by Touré as the “particular situation” – was the result of the PDG's anti-colonial politics and more broadly of multi-party politics. As the crucible in which both developments were forged, therefore, the 1957 election becomes an important watershed in Guinea's history, along with its more widely known counterpart in 1958.

Due to its divergence from other French territories in Africa leading up to and following the 1958 referendum, the political history of late colonial Guinea has been the subject of a series of studies. Early characterizations of decolonization in Guinea cast Sékou Touré as the triumphant leader of Guinean anti-colonialism, especially those studies that relied upon PDG self-imaginings.³ Subsequent historical studies by Schmidt have added needed nuance, extending the scope of activity beyond the figure of Touré and pointing to the integral role previously marginalized groups – notably women, students, and the ‘rural peasantry’ – played in the PDG's

³ *Guinée, prelude à l'indépendance* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1958); Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963 [1961]), 227-35; Sidiki Kobélé Keïta, *Ahmed Sékou Touré, l'homme du 28 Septembre 1958* (Conakry: INRDG, 1977).

rise.⁴ Yet Schmidt's approach, which privileges PDG narratives and identifies the rise of a broad-based anti-colonial nationalism as the prime force driving political activity during the period of imperial reform, gives a distant second billing to alternative political movements. As such, political skirmishes in the Futa Jallon between Fulbe elites and the PDG were only relevant inasmuch as they were proxies for larger struggles against colonialism. Shading political contestation between African parties as only part of a larger struggle against colonialism became integral to post-colonial PDG recastings of the past, ones that would undergird the party's claims to legitimacy following independence. Such a narrative, though, does not reflect the diversity of ideas and practices mobilized by rival political movements, ones that would come to shape many of the internal fault lines of the Guinean postcolony.

Instead of focusing on teleological narratives tied to the rise of anti-colonial nationalism, this chapter will examine the legacy of competition between rival political movements during Guinea's winding transition from colony to nation-state from 1945 to 1961. Examining the history of alternative political movements takes on added importance when one recognizes that decolonization in Guinea and elsewhere in Africa was not only about throwing off the colonial state. Rather, African parties, politicians, and activists also thought about what a post-colonial future might look like and engaged in intellectual and strategic struggles to make sure their vision won out. The work of imagining political communities and constructing political movements, although taking place throughout the continent and within the context of imperial

⁴ Ruth Schachter Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 219-54; Elizabeth Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005); Elizabeth Schmidt, "Top Down or Bottom Up? Nationalist Mobilization Reconsidered, with Special Reference to Guinea (French West Africa)," *The American Historical Review* 110:4 (2005), 975-1014; Elizabeth Schmidt, "Anticolonial Nationalism in French West Africa: What Made Guinea Unique?," *African Studies Review* 52:2 (2009), 1-34.

reform, were embedded within local contexts and histories, which in turn shaped the trajectories of decolonization in particular African territories. The subject of this chapter was no different. Although Guinea is best known as occupying the vanguard of anti-colonial African nationalism, opposition to the PDG by Fulbe politicians did not take the form of a competing nationalism, as it did for the Asante of Ghana and the Kel Tamasheq of the Malian Sahara, but rather as an ethno-regionalism with roots in forms of pre-colonial and colonial rule.⁵ And while Guinea's recent colonial past loomed large over the tactics and ideology of competing movements, politicians and activists also grappled with much longer histories of social hierarchies, much like the competing political movements in mid-twentieth-century Zanzibar.⁶ Ultimately, Fulbe and PDG leaders and activists faced fundamental questions about the nature of authority, the place of 'tradition' in a 'modern' society, and the boundaries and content of post-colonial political communities. Formal independence might often receive first billing in histories of decolonization in Guinea. However, the unsatisfying and partial answers that emerged from the PDG conquest of the Futa Jallon played the central role in shaping internal fractures in post-colonial Guinea.

I divide this chapter into three periods. The first, from 1945 to 1954, was marked by the dominance of regional/ethnic parties and debate among Fulbe politicians over ideas of "tradition" and "modernity" in the Futa. The second began with the contested partial election of 1954 that marked the end of explicit PDG repression by the colonial administration and

⁵ Jean Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine: Asante Nationalism in an Emergent Ghana* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993); Jean Sebastian Lecocq, *Disputed Desert: Decolonisation, Competing Nationalisms and Taureg Rebellions in Northern Mali* (Boston: Brill, 2010).

⁶ Jonathon Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011). On similar debates over ideas of race and nation in Dar es Salaam, see James Brennan, *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013).

continued up to the PDG sweep of the 1957 Territorial Assembly elections. This period that was defined by at times violent competition between rival political parties centered in particular on the Futa Jallon region. Furthermore, struggles over ideas about “Futa society” shifted, focusing primarily on the institution of the colonial chieftaincy. The last period, from 1957 to the first presidential election in 1961, saw the partial consolidation of the PDG’s hold over the Futa and the party’s first attempts to drastically reform the region’s society. Taken together, the three periods reflect a political structure that moved from a limited electorate dominated by elite-led regional parties, to a period of multi-party mass politics, to finally a state controlled by a single party. The trajectory mirrors that of other AOF territories, but due to the particularity of the political competition during decolonization and the history of social hierarchies in the Futa, the timing was accelerated and the emphasis on political consolidation more acute.

The question of Guinea’s position in international law may have been settled by the end of 1958, and the internal hegemony of the country’s only post-colonial party consolidated by 1961. Debate about the Futa’s “particular situation” and the legacy of struggle over control of the region, however, would continue to dominate Guinean politics well into the 1960’s and ’70s.

“So that they may live once again”: Yacine Diallo, the AGV, and debating “modernity” in the Futa Jallon

Early postwar politics in the Futa Jallon reflected the policy of asymmetrical cooperation that drove colonial rule on the plateau since the 1897 treaty of protectorate. The rise of Futa’s first notable politician, Yacine Diallo, resulted from an attempt by colonial chiefs and administrators to find a suitably malleable response to the challenges of electoral politics.

Diallo’s family hailed from the aristocracy of Labé, the Futa Jallon’s largest region. His father, though, was a new arrival to the chiefly class, having been named a village chief by Alpha Yaya

after serving as the Labé chief's advisor. Part of a generation of chiefs' sons with grounding in both local and colonial political structures, Yacine Diallo completed his studies at the École William Ponty on Gorée in 1917, and served in Pita, Kissidougou, Fotoba, Coyah, Kindia, Guéckédou and finally Conakry as a teacher.

Diallo's makeover from schoolteacher to Assemblyman resulted from a push for transformation within the French Empire following the Second World War. During the last years of the war, calls for reform were spurred on by the widespread recognition that promises that colonial subjects would be able to gain citizenship during the French Third Republic were mostly hollow.⁷ After fighting came to an end, French-educated West African elites pushed for colonial representation within the body charged with defining what the post-Vichy French Republic and Empire would look like, while unrest in Algeria and an independence movement in Indochina in 1945 pushed the French government to begin the work of forming a new imperial community that would stress inclusion for colonial subjects.⁸ Work soon began on a new constitution for what would become the Fourth French Republic, which together with the former colonies and associated territories would constitute the French Union.

A series of government committees tasked with writing the new constitution grappled with the proposed voting rights of 15 million colonial subjects in Africa, with one camp advocating for full and equal representation while another argued that it was at the moment

⁷ Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 28-29.

⁸ The level of inclusion for subjects, and their status as possible citizens within the community, was subject to diverging opinions, ranging from plans that stressed the continued and unquestioned sovereignty of France, to those who sought to eliminate the category of subject altogether. The French government was also motivated to transform colonial into territories by fears that the United Nations (as well as the United States) would intervene. See Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 31-39.

impractical to extend universal suffrage to the former colonies. In the end, a compromise was made. French West Africa (AOF) was assigned ten deputies for the Assemblée Nationale Constituante, which was tasked with drafting the new constitution, to be chosen by two separate electorates or *colleges*: four would be elected by the small number of French citizens living in the colonies while the remaining six spots would be chosen by the much larger group of non-citizens allowed to vote at the time, which in Guinea was still just 1% of the total population.⁹ These elections, in which for the first time significant (although still limited) numbers of Africans voted, ushered in a new era of politics within the AOF.

On October 22, 1945, Diallo became Guinea's first representative to the French Constituent Assembly, elected through the non-citizen second *college*. According to widely held rumor both at the time and since, a group of prominent Futa chiefs and French colonial administrators chose Yacine as a Guinean representative.¹⁰ One account I was told contends that a French colonial administrator approached Almamy Aguibou Barry, chief of the canton of Dabola and head of the Soriya family, and asked him to take the seat in the Assembly. Not knowing French and wary of the metropole's climate, Aguibou declined. Having just graduated from William Ponty, his son, Barry Diawadou, was too young. Aguibou therefore consulted with his rival in Mamou and head of the Alfaya family, Almamy Ibrahima Sory Dara Barry, to find a suitable and temporary alternative. The two settled upon Yacine Diallo, who had roots in the Basse Côte (his mother was Susu) and, given his family's minor position in the Futa aristocracy,

⁹ Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 61; Tony Chafer, *The End of Empire in French West Africa: France's Successful Decolonization?* (New York: Berg, 2002), 61-63.

¹⁰ Jean Suret-Canale, "La Fine de la Chefferie en Guinée," *Journal of African History* 7, no. 3 (1966), 477; Sidiki Kobélé Keïta, *Les élections en Guinée Française (1945-1958)* (Paris: Anibwe, 2011), 67-71.

was someone the chiefs thought could be controlled.¹¹

A first draft of the new French constitution was rejected, due primarily to opposition from the French right, although a series of laws abolishing forced labor, extended citizenship to former subjects, and ending the colonial subject penal code, or *indigénat*, had been passed by the delegates of the first Assembly.¹² Diallo again won a seat in the Second Constituent Assembly, which produced a revised constitution draft that was eventually voted into law. But many of the more drastic reforms of the first draft, including language that described the French Union as a political community “freely entered upon” – thus opening up the possibility of free departure – were stripped from the final document, although it did still recognize the plurality of nations that composed the French Union.¹³

With the establishment of the French Fourth Republic, new elections were held for Guinea’s two representatives to the French National Assembly, in which Yacine Diallo’s *Liste d’Union Socialiste et Progressiste de Guinée* received the largest number of votes.¹⁴ As an assemblyman, Diallo supported a series of laws intended to shore up support amongst the Futa’s elite. In 1946, he sponsored a bill that extended voting rights to a larger population, most notably those literate in Arabic. Given widespread Islamic education among Futa Jallon elites, the change in the electoral code widened voting rights to a group disposed to vote for an

¹¹ Thierno Oumar Barry, Interview, Conakry, 11 February 2013. Aguibou Barry’s centrality in this narrative might be due to the fact that my interlocutor was the Dabola chief’s grandson. Each family in the Futa, it seems, has their own version of postwar politics.

¹² Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 91-92; Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 42-43.

¹³ Chafer, *The End of Empire*, 65-67; Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 121-122.

¹⁴ Sidiki Kobélé Kéïta, *Les élections en Guinée Française* (Conakry: Anibwe, 2011), 76-78.

establishment candidate.¹⁵ In 1947, Diallo introduced legislation to “clarify” the role of chiefs from a “material, moral, and statutory point of view.” The proposal outlined a set of clear sanctions that could be used to combat chiefly excess. It also markedly increased the pay of chiefs, especially those with large and influential jurisdictions – a group that notably included his political patron, Almamy Sory Dara Barry.¹⁶

Despite his attempts to ensure their position within the colonial administration, Yacine Diallo’s relationship with the Almamy of Mamou and the majority of the Futa chiefs quickly deteriorated. Diallo’s proposed law reforming the chieftaincy never made much progress in the Union Assembly, stalling before coming to a vote. By 1947, many of the Futa chiefs had decided that the Guinean representative had not done enough to support their authority, and began to complain.¹⁷ In response, Diallo started to move more away from his regional base of power, and later that year he created the Association Franco-Guinéenne (later Union Franco-Guinéenne (UFG)), a group defined by its a pro-French stance and affiliation with the metropole SFIO party.¹⁸ Starting in 1947, he also attempted to forge alliances with prominent politicians from Haute Guinée and the Forest Region, and in 1948 toured the area around Kankan (in Haute Guinée), the first time a Guinean politician had significantly campaigned outside of his region of

¹⁵ Loi no. 47-1606, JORF 28 August 1947.

¹⁶ “Rapport hebdomadaire d’information,” no. 983, 30 June 1947, ANS 17G421.

¹⁷ “Renseignements a/s passage à Conakry de Député Lamine Gueye,” no. 205/c, 17 and 18 March 1947, ANS 17G421.

¹⁸ LG Guinée to GG AOF, “Rapport Information” no. 436/c, 20 March 1947, ANS 17G421; “Renseignements a/s Yacine Diallo et Association Gilbert Vieillard,” 15 March 1947, ANS 17G573. The UFG grew out of a socialist study group.

origin.¹⁹

By the time the 1951 Assembly elections arrived, Diallo's support amongst the Futa chiefs degraded to the point where an older and more experienced Barry Diawadou mounted a serious challenge to the incumbent. A late push by Yacine in the Futa before the elections shored up his support in the region, but French observers warned that Diallo's public persona was "too French" for many within the "conservative" Futa.²⁰ His critics, including Barry Diawadou, often claimed that he had converted to Christianity, supposedly a religious reflection of his close relationship with French politicians.²¹ Yet Diallo continued to make gestures towards the "tradition" of the Futa Jallon and underscored his Islamic faith.²² Yacine stood with a foot in each domain – in Paris and the Futa– but was never able to gain a solid footing in either.

Other groups of political active Fulbe in the Futa Jallon also grappled with merging French and Fulbe influences. During and immediately after the Second World War, the majority of African-led organizations in the AOF were not outwardly political, as before 1945 and especially under the wartime Vichy regime, explicit political activity by Africans was banned and subject to punishment. Instead, elites formed cultural and ethnic associations, which often functioned as fora for semi-private political discussions and early organizing. These groups ranged widely, from *Art et Travail*, a fine arts group with connections to the French Communist

¹⁹ LG Guinée to GG AOF, "a/s compte rendu de tournée" no. 144/c, 15 July 1946, ANS 17G146.

²⁰ "Rapport Hebdomadaire, Semaine du 26 Février au 4 Mars 1951" no. 289/128/C/PS/I, 8 March 1951, ANG 1F21.

²¹ Barry Diawadou, "Yacine Diallo contre Yacine Diallo," *La Voix de la Guinée* no. 39, 17 to 27 November 1950.

²² Yacine Diallo, "L'Union Guinéenne: serait-il en péril?" *Le Progrès Africain* no. 7, 15 January 1948; Yacine Diallo, "Réflexions d'un élu Africain sur une circulaire ministérielle," *Le Progrès Africain* no. 18, June 1949.

Party, and in which future President of Mali Modibo Keïta was a key figure, to *Quatrième République* (or “Fourth Republic”), a Gaullist “patriotic association” formed in 1945 by a group of mostly Senegalese civil servants posted in Kankan who were eager to show their dedication to rebuilding “the great civilizing nation that is France.”²³ Other organizations represented the interests of particular groups, be they ethnic, like the *Groupement des Fons d’Abomey*, which later became the *Union Progressiste Dahoméenne*, one of Dahomey’s first political parties, or organized along class and profession, such as the *Syndicat Agricole Africain* of Côte d’Ivoire, which was established in 1944 by future president Félix Houphouët-Boigny and in 1946 transformed into the *Parti Démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire*.²⁴ These early associations, therefore, served as both the incubators of a new generation of African politicians and the early organizational foundations for subsequent political parties.

The first such association established by Guineans was the *Amicale Gilbert Vieillard* (AGV).²⁵ Established in 1943 by a group of Futa Jallon Fulbe students at the prestigious École William Ponty in Dakar, the AGV as an explicitly ethnic organization, meant to “bring together... [and] stimulate the political, social, and cultural evolution of Futa Jallon people.” At first, like most of the other *amicales*, the AGV placed emphasis on cultural activities; members produced “modern” histories of the Futa Jallon, staged plays, and wrote poetry extolling the

²³ Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 17; Association Patriotique “Quatrième République,” Procès Verbal de Réunion, 10 April 1945, ANG 2Z16.

²⁴ Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 18, 176-183.

²⁵ The organization’s namesake, Gilbert Vieillard, was a noted French administrator and ethnographer who undertook several studies on the Futa Jallon. See Claude Malon, “Gilbert Vieillard, administrateur et ethnologue en Afrique occidentale (1926-1939),” *Cahiers de sociologie économique et culturelle* 33 (2000), 107-131; and Chapter 2.

virtues of Futa Fulbe society.²⁶ As the social composition of the group was homogenous, the members of the group had a vested interest in “preserving” Futa Jallon culture and society. Most AGV members were from the Futa Jallon elite, the sons of chiefs and hailing from some of the most prestigious families in the region.²⁷ Thus, as both “*Pontins*” and “traditional” elites, AGV members embodied the dual impulses of respecting the region’s elite history while at the same time seeking to express this heritage within the idioms of metropolitan respectability.

Following the Second World War, the AGV engaged in a more explicitly political mission. In August 1946, the organization’s leadership established a permanent headquarters in Conakry, while sympathizers established satellite branches in the regional capitals. One of the early leaders of the AGV branch in Labé was Ceerno Abdourahmane Bah, an Islamic scholar, cleric, and poet. Ceerno Bah fused the AGV’s cultural origins with its new political goals, undertaking frequent tours in the Northern Futa Jallon that included poetry readings and political meetings. One of Bah’s poems composed in 1945, “*Amicale ko fâbo*,” or “In support of the Amicale,” lamented that the Fulbe had been ignored by the political establishment – both local chiefs and the colonial administration – for too long, “taken to be stupid” and used as pawns in political intrigue. He beseeched a new generation of leaders to “rescue” their brothers in the Futa, “so that they may live once again.”²⁸ Thus, the AGV considered itself a means of uplift for the Futa Jallon society, a gradual program of political and social reform that would slowly

²⁶ “Publication de déclaration d’associations,” 18 October 1946, note 1439 APA, ANG 2Z17; El-Hadj Ibrahima Caba Bah, Interview, Labé, 28 February 2013.

²⁷ The most notable example being Barry Diawadou, son of Almamy Aguibou, Chief of the Canton of Dabola and the head of the Alfaya family. Amadou Hampaté Bâ was also a member of the AGV while at the École William Ponty. El-Hadj Ibrahima Caba Bah, Interview, Labé, 3 March 2013.

²⁸ Ceerno Abdurahmân Bah, *Amicale ko fâbo*, (Labé: Defte Cernoya, 2013); also printed in Ibrahima Caba Bah, *Cerno Abdourahmane Bah*, (Labé: Defte Cernoya, 2008), 98-101.

incorporate new political ideas into established hierarchies. That Ceerno Bah was both a reformer and hailed from a long line of religious and political elites in the Labé region reflected again the dual impulses of the organization.

While being the first and perhaps most well connected of the nascent parties established in Guinea, the AGV was just one of several regional organizations active in territorial politics following the end of the War. Each of the four regions in Guinea – the Susu-dominated Basse Côte, the Fulbe-dominated Futa, the Maninka-dominated Haute Guinée, and the diverse Forest region – hosted its own organization.²⁹ Some of these organizations, such as the AGV and the Haute-Guinée-based *Union de Mandé*, combined regionalism and ethnic identification as a basis for solidarity. Others, like the *Union Forestière* in the Forest Region and to a lesser extent two organizations based in the Basse Côte, sought to group together a number of smaller ethnic communities into a political party that could compete with the Fulbe and Maninka, the two largest ethno-linguistic groups in Guinea. The first half-decade of Guinean politics was dominated by groups like the AGV, and the two main territory-wide parties that would emerge in the 1950s were at first formed by coalitions between the regionalist associations. The other three regional associations' membership also mirrored the basic internal conflicts found in the AGV; comprised of a transitional elite with roots in the “traditional” and “modern” domains, the associations struggled to advocate for reform while still relying upon regional social hierarchies whose most visible representations were the colonial institution of the chieftaincy.

Indeed, what to do with the chieftaincy became an important question for the AGV's members. Opposition to the excesses of the Futa chieftaincy became a key component of the organization's political platform. From August 1946 to July 1947, AGV representatives sent a

²⁹ For a useful overview of each of the regional/ethnic associations, see Kéïta, *Les Élections*, 36-50.

series of letters to the Governor of Guinea condemning the chief of Dalaba, Thierno Oumarou Bah, calling for his censure and removal. The AGV letters presented a familiar list of chiefly crimes, from demands for illicit payments and attempted nepotism to applying pressure on colonial administrators to transfer bothersome African civil servants stationed in Dalaba.³⁰ The AGV leadership's opinion on who should be the errant chief's replacement, however, was unclear. While advocating for a vote to choose the next chief, members also argued for the return of the Dalaba chieftaincy to those who had "legitimate rights" to the position.³¹ Above all, the AGV was against any choice that would, somewhat paradoxically, "violate custom and democratic principles." The crux of the contradiction between "legitimate rights" and "democratic principles" revolved around who exactly would be allowed to vote. For the two positions to be harmonious, the AGV leadership either counted on the general population supporting the "traditional" choice for chief, and thus reinforcing the chieftaincy while providing a new source of legitimacy, or advocated for the restriction of the franchise to the notables of the region, who were nearly unanimously aligned against Bah and his sons. The two impulses to reform the institution – one adapting it to a growing electorate, the other harkening back to idealized interpretations of the "democratic" pre-colonial Futa state based upon tightly curated local councils of nobles – presented competing versions of change for the Futa Jallon chieftaincy. More generally, they also reflected more "progressive" and "traditional" lines of

³⁰ "Renseignements, activité de l'association Gilbert Vieillard," 3 September 1946, ANG 2D371; Abdoulaye Diallo to Terrac, 16 September 1946, ANG 2D371; Bureau de l'AGV, "Motion d'indignation et de protestation," 21 August 1946, ANG 2D371.

³¹ Bah was an upstart, hailing from a minor elite family, whose family in the past had had no claim to leadership of the Dalaba diwal. Notables hailing from the family who had ruled Dalaba during the 19th century resented his newfound authority – and wealth – and undertook a decades-long campaign to undermine Bah's family. This was probably an important contributing factor in the AGV's decision to attack him in particular.

political thought within the organization, and indeed amongst Futa elites as a whole.

AGV members' attempts to imagine a reformed Futa moved beyond adapting the chieftaincy to a new political landscape. In a meeting in April 1945, Chaikhou Baldé, an early AGV leader in Labé, argued that the development of an African elite was necessary for the political evolution of Guinea. Yet Baldé rejected the familiar trope of the African *évolué*, most notably endorsed by Yacine Diallo and his UFG:

The necktie billowing in the wind, handsome patent leather shoes, well-tailored suits, glasses, the smoke of perfumed cigarettes filling the atmosphere of dapper salons with a pungent and sweet odor, the powdered faces of *grands enfants* and *grandes filles* at dances filled with the sound of the rhythmic jazz of rumbas; if those are the gaudy manifestations of Western Civilization, they are neither a foundation, nor nourishment [*aliment*], nor an end and for us must not define the word "elite."³²

Baldé went on to contend that neither Western intellectuals nor Africans, due in large part to a lack of training, knew much about developing Guinean society, and that the key to betterment was the education of a new Futa elite. Yet exactly what form such an educated group should take – Would it remain loyal to the deeply Islamic history of the Futa? How would it both take advantage of the French education system and remain specifically Fulbe? Which cultural and intellectual sources would it draw upon to form a new Futa politics? – remained ambiguous. It was clear, however, that many of the arguments put forward by young Fulbe elites confounded the “conservative” orientation assigned to the region by many within Guinea, including the colonial administrators and chiefs who counted on the young men's allegiance.

The AGV's political affiliations were similarly muddled. The organization sent representatives to the October 1946 congress that gave birth to the AOF-wide *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (RDA), but mutual distrust prevented any substantive alliance between

³² Abdoulaye Diallo to Alfa Barry, 8 April 1945, intercepted by the AOF postal service, 14 April 1945, ANS 17G140.

the two groups.³³ Shortly thereafter, a group of AGV members split off to join Yacine Diallo's UFG, while others backed Barry Diawadou in an unsuccessful conservative coup of the organization's bureau.³⁴ By 1949, infighting had paralyzed the organization, and during the April congress the AGV members voted to remove the organization from party politics.³⁵ The AGV's political retirement was brief. Later that year the organization joined the *Comité d'Entente Guinéenne* (CEG), an umbrella party that brought together the regional and/or ethnic organizations to provide a territory-wide alternative to the Guinean RDA.³⁶ Yet the AGV's influence would never reach the heights of 1946-1949. However, while internal discord had relegated the AGV to Guinea's political shadows, the central debates that the organization had attempted to grapple with – most notably reforming the chieftaincy – would continue to dominate Futa and Guinean politics over the coming decade.

The period from 1945 to 1954 was marked by an elite-driven politics and the central role chiefs played in selecting and supporting candidates. During this early era of Guinean politics, nearly 75% of all delegates in the Guinean Territorial Assembly hailed from chiefly families, a number that along with Niger far outstripped the chief's representations in all other AOF

³³ "Renseignements, Impressions du R.D.A.," 27 May 1948, ANS 17G573.

³⁴ "Renseignements a/s Passage à Conakry Deputé Lamine Gueye," no. 205/C, 17 and 18 March 1947, ANS 17G421. "Renseignements a/s Union Franco-Guinéenne – Touré Fodé Mamadou – Amicale Gilbert Vieillard," 9 August 1948, ANS 17G573.

³⁵ "Les parties politiques..." CAOM, 1AFFPOL/2263; Kéïta, *Les élections*, 39.

³⁶ Barry Diawadou was named vice-president of the CEG; Mamadou Diallo, then president of the AGV, was named as an advisor. The CEG also included Karim Bangoura, member of the Comité de Rénovation de Basse-Guinée, as secretary, and Framoï Béréte, representative of the Union de Mandé, as president. See Kéïta, *Les élections*, 48-50; "Renseignements a/s Comité de Rénovation de Basse-Guinée," 20 July 1949, ANG 2Z29; Delmas to Soustelle, October 1950, Archives of FCG, RPF 675.

territories.³⁷ The political dominance of the chieftaincy, however, in part sowed the seeds of its own destruction. So many sons and brothers of chiefs in the Territorial assembly thrust the much-maligned colonial institution to the forefront of the political stage, a visibility that would later prove to be a liability.

Marshalling the Troops: The 1954 special Election and early skirmishes in 1956

Early in the morning of April 14, 1954, Yacine Diallo died while preparing for an upcoming session of the Guinean Territorial Assembly, the result of a brain hemorrhage.³⁸ The French government hastily organized a special election to fill the departed assemblyman's vacated seat in the National Assembly. Metropolitan SFIO leaders, scrambling to find a replacement for their man in Guinea, dispatched Ibrahima Barry, the son of a Futa chief who was studying law in France at the time, back to Guinea to run in the elections. "Barry III," as he was popularly known, would later rise to prominence in the Futa, but for the moment lacked the political connections and grassroots organization to mount an effective campaign.³⁹ Two viable candidates for the Union Assembly seat quickly emerged. The first was Sékou Touré, the head of a the Guinean RDA branch, the *Parti Démocratique de Guinée*, who enjoyed widespread support within the labor movement and among civil servants in Conakry and the major towns in the interior.⁴⁰ The PDG had faced systematic repression by the French administration since its inception due to ties with the metropolitan communist party, and many of its civil servant

³⁷ Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 402-411.

³⁸ "Yacine Diallo, Député de la Guinée, est décédé," *La Guinée Française* no. 4937, 15 April 1954.

³⁹ Pariston (LG Guinée) to GG AOF, 21 June 1954, no. 265/Cab, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

members were transferred to far-flung corners of the AOF.⁴¹ A series of strikes in 1951 and 1953, though, revived the party while raising Sékou Touré's profile, and by 1954 the party had used momentum started in Conakry to establish branches in the major towns of the interior.⁴²

The second was Barry Diawadou, the clearest successor to Yacine Diallo as spokesman for the Futa elites. To consolidate his support amongst the Futa chieftaincy, Diawadou and his Soriya-head father undertook a trip to Mamou to meet with Almamy Sory Dara Barry before starting to campaign in earnest. The head of the Alfaya reluctantly pledged his support to Diawadou, and the candidate sewed up endorsements from the main ethnic and/or regional parties, although due more to shared animosity towards Sékou Touré and the PDG than a display of a shared purpose. Abdoulaye Diallo, a former president of the AGV, made a late entry into the race and campaigned on an anti-chief platform while attempting to mobilize communities comprised of persons of former slave status, especially in the Labé region. Diallo only succeeded in pushing the Labé chiefs to Diawadou's side – they had held out pledging support as a show of opposition to Sory Dara Barry – thus securing the Soriya scion's position as the Futa's representative in territorial politics.⁴³ With the support of the conservative forces in most of the four regions, and most importantly the backing of the Futa chiefs, Diawadou formed an ad hoc coalition called the *Union Française pour une Action Sociale* and put himself forward as its

⁴¹ See Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization, 1946-1958* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007), 34-43.

⁴² Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 228-229; Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses*, 77-90.

⁴³ Pariston (LG Guinée) to GG AOF, 21 June 1954, no. 265/Cab, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143. Animosity between the chiefs of Labé and the family of the paramount leaders of the pre-colonial Futa Jallon based in Timbo and later in Mamou and Dabola stretched back to the late nineteenth century. See ch. 1.

candidate.⁴⁴

Barry Diawadou won the election with 145,497 votes (59.2%), Sékou Touré followed with 85,808 (34.9%), and a group of non-aligned and Socialist Party candidates together did not break 20,000 votes.⁴⁵ Immediately after the results were announced, PDG leaders alleged that the administration had secured Barry Diawadou's victory through a series of fraudulent actions both before and on the day of the election. The PDG leadership claimed that chiefs forced those under their supervision to vote for Diawadou, that the Governor of Guinea had told administrators to exert pro-Diawadou pressure, that people running the polling places were illiterate, allowing for local administrators to falsify results, and finally that pro-Diawadou activists falsely registered voters, allowing some to vote more than once.⁴⁶ Diawadou, on the other hand, decried meddling by outside RDA activists, including Ouezzin Coulibaly and Madeira Keita.⁴⁷ The majority of Guineans – including supporters of Diawadou – found the PDG's version of events more plausible, believing that the administration and the Futa chiefs had chosen Diawadou as the winner and rigged the results to make it so.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Kéïta, *Les Élections*, 98-100.

⁴⁵ Telegram, AFCOUR Dakar to MFOM, no. 2.99I, 30 June 1954, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143. Parisot (LG Guinée) to Cornut-Gentille (GG AOF), no. 265/Cab, 21 June 1954, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143.

⁴⁶ LG Guinée to GG AOF, "Réclamation relative aux élections partielles de la Guinée – scrutin de 27 Juin 1954," no. 320/APAS 7 August 1954, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143. Elizabeth Schmidt and Sidiki Kobélé Keïta, using primarily PDG sources, find the PDG claims credible, including the more damning charges of deliberate vote rigging. See Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization in Guinea*, 73; and Keïta, *P.D.G.*, 316.

⁴⁷ MFOM to Haussaire Dakar, no. AP/2, no date, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143.

⁴⁸ Interview with Tierno Oumar Barry, Conakry, 11 February 2013; Interview with Tiala Gobaye Mountaye, Labé, 28 February 2013; interview with Franco Diallo, Conakry, 21 February 2013; interview with Aminata Barry, 12 February 2013.

PDG-led protests erupted in Conakry. Confrontations between PDG and Diawadou supporters soon broke out in Coyah and Kindia, two towns in the Basse Côte, and eventually widened to smaller villages along the coast. Most clashes took place in public spaces – roads, markets, and cinemas in particular – following public rallies or protests.⁴⁹ As 1954 wore on, protests transformed into a more general indictment of the chieftaincy. PDG supporters in villages, mostly in the Basse Côte, confronted their chiefs, at times running the village and canton heads out of town and creating parallel administrative structures.⁵⁰ The rural battle reached its apogee with the February 1955 murder of Camara M’Baliala, a pregnant PDG supporter, by the chief of the canton of Tondon, David Sylla.⁵¹ Camara’s death was the culmination of a weeks-long battle between PDG and Sylla partisans, which had escalated when a group of PDG-appointed guards, who were part of a larger parallel local administration created by local party branches, arrested a Fulbe man supposedly sent by Sylla to murder the head of the local PDG section. PDG activists forced the Fulbe man to walk through the village, head shaved, declaring his guilt and apologizing for his supposed crimes.⁵² Thus, in a public ceremony the institution of the chieftaincy had been linked to an ethnic interloper, together a reflection of

⁴⁹ Central Commissioner Conakry to Divisional Commissioner French Guinea, “Incidents au quartier Coronthie,” no. 76 S/P, 7 September 1954, ANS 17G586; “Renseignements, Réunion publique R.D.A. à Conakry, et ses suites,” no. 6826, 8 September 1954, ANS 17G586; “Renseignements, Incidents en Guinée,” no. 9590, 15 December 1954, ANS 17G586; Pruvost, “Incidents de 1954-1955 en Guinée,” 11 March 1955, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2144, 9-15; “Tentative d’Assassinat à Conakry [sic]” *La Liberté* no. 32, 26 October 1954; “Encore des incidents sanglants à Conakry et à Tondon” *La Liberté* no. 47, 13 February 1954.

⁵⁰ LG Guinée to GG AOF, no. 1 CAB/AF, 16 December 1954, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143; Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization*, 85.

⁵¹ “Reconstitution des Incidents de Tondon,” *La Liberté* no. 54, 19 April 1955; Pruvost, “Incidents de 1954-1955 en Guinée,” CAOM 1AFFPOL/2144, 16.

⁵² Le Procureur Général près de la Cour d’Appel de Dakar to MFOM, “Incidents de Tondon,” no. 1779, 23 February 1955, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143

repression and duplicity.

At their core, these incidents were about establishing domination over public areas for rival political parties. Controlling these spaces were displays of parties' power and influence for undecided voters, and in the case of cinemas denied important fora for rival parties' meetings. In some cases political conflicts took on ethnic hues. Chants by PDG activists alluded to Diawadou's ethnic identification, calling him "The Foulah," and in some cases the throwing of stones and burning of buildings broke down along Susu/Fulbe lines in addition to political affiliation.⁵³ For a moment, and especially in Basse Côte cities that had experienced an influx of Fulbe migrants during colonial rule, political fights often became a more general struggle over who belonged, who had the right to rule, and, more materially, who could claim access to land and stalls in local markets.

The PDG's position had improved considerably after the cycle of elections, protests, and conflicts. The rural and urban protests had at times gotten out of hand, but they were a very visible sign that the PDG was courting previously ignored portions of the population in neglected areas, groups that were taking up more prominent roles in the expanding electorate (see table 1). The rapid resurgence of the PDG following the 1954 elections took many conservative forces in Guinea by surprise, including Barry Diawadou and the Futa chiefs. Realizing that much of their rival party's strength came from its ability to organize a territory-wide grassroots campaign, Diawadou and his supporters along with allies within the colonial administration created a new political party named the *Bloc Africain de Guinée* (BAG) intended to serve as a conservative doppelganger to the PDG. The party mimicked many of the more successful PDG strategies, focusing on organizing women's branches and sections in rural areas while mobilizing

⁵³ Pruvost, "Incidents de 1954-1955 en Guinée," CAOM 1AFFPOL/2144, 9, 14.

supporters in the major cities. Representatives from the regional parties named as president Koumandian Keïta, the head of the Guinean teacher's union and a Malinké from Haute Guinée, as a riposte to Sékou Touré (himself Malinké and a union leader).⁵⁴ The party also enjoyed the support of several prominent chiefs, including Almamy Ibrahima Sory Dara Barry.⁵⁵

The conservative party was a near complete failure. Barry Diawadou was in France for much of early 1955, and while briefly in Guinea he was more concerned with shoring up his fragile base among the Futa elite than playing a substantive role in the BAG.⁵⁶ The new party didn't hold its first official congress until August 1955, and undertook little to no local organizing.⁵⁷ The party also failed to outline a notable platform. The delegates to the BAG's first congress adopted policies that their PDG rivals had claimed years before, calling for the application of the 1952 Code de Travail, the reform of the French Union, increased primary education and health services, and the creation of a party newspaper called *La République* to advertise the party to the small but influential class of literate civil servants and small businessmen.⁵⁸ Finally, and most importantly, many of the regional organizations – notably the *Union Mandé* – resisted ceding control to the territorial party. Members of the *Union* saw themselves first and foremost as Maninka from Haute Guinée, and BAG supporters as a distant

⁵⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁵ GG AOF to MFOM, “A/s Congrès de Bloc Africain de Guinée (Août 1955),” no. 2466AP/2, 23 August 1955, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143.

⁵⁶ Ibid.; Keïta, *Les Élections*, 145-150; Cornut-Gentille to MFOM, Tel no. 507-508, 11 August 1955, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143.

⁵⁷ GG AOF to MFOM, “A/s Congrès de Bloc Africain de Guinée (Août 1955),” no. 2466AP/2, 23 August 1955, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143; Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization*, 91-94; Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 232-233.

⁵⁸ GG AOF to MFOM, “A/s Congrès de Bloc Africain de Guinée (Août 1955),” no. 2466AP/2, 23 August 1955, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143, 5.

second.⁵⁹ A weak central bureau meant that the party could not coordinate recruitment activities in the countryside and interior cities. It also meant that any attempt to present the BAG as a unified alternative to the PDG was readily undermined. Ultimately, the party had decided to live – and, indeed, die – by the regionalist model, which had a deep and strong position within Guinean political culture but severely hampered territory-wide initiatives.

Hammering out the BAG position on the chieftaincy proved to be even more problematic. Canton chiefs were the main material and spiritual backers of the party, yet the colonial institution was increasingly unpopular. Thus, the BAG had to chart a course between riding the wave of popular discontent against the chieftaincy and being seen as the stooges of the aristocracy, all the while avoiding offending the party's benefactors. The congress delegates attempted to do just that, advocating for the "evolution" of the Chieftaincy while "taking into consideration the desire of the population" when designating chiefs.⁶⁰ Despite adopting what was a fairly conservative position, the party leaders still upset the chiefs; when Koumandian Keïta remarked at a congress meeting that he would "throw into prison any chief who stole the chicken of a poor man," all of the chiefs in attendance left the room in protest.⁶¹

Scholars have argued that the BAG represented the interests of elites in Guinea, casting

⁵⁹ Gipoulon to Bernard, 10 November 1954, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143; "Renseignements, Bloc Africain de Guinée, Formation du Bureau provisoire de Kankan," no. 785, 27 January 1955, ANS 17G586; GG AOF to MFOM, "A/s Congrès de Bloc Africain de Guinée (Août 1955)," no. 2466AP/2, 23 August 1955, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143.

⁶⁰ GG AOF to MFOM, "A/s Congrès de Bloc Africain de Guinée (Août 1955)," no. 2466AP/2, 23 August 1955, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143.

⁶¹ InterAfrique Presse, "Le B.A.G. en Guinée," no. 43, 8 September 1955, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143.

its rivalry with the PDG as a proxy for bourgeoisie and proletariat (or rural mass) competition.⁶² Such an explanation accounts for a part of the ideological and strategic differences between the two parties. The BAG was unable to extend itself beyond a small group of well-connected and relatively wealthy individuals, whether they were commercial planters in the Basse Côte, members of prominent families in the Futa, or educated civil servants in Conakry. However, while rooted in class difference, diverging ideologies between the two parties extended beyond the competing interests of urban workers and elites. The parties also differed in how they imagined a future Guinean political space being ordered. While the PDG advocated for a uniform, territory-wide idea of political community, the BAG sought to create a territory-wide party that was an extension of regions. Regionalism in the Futa Jallon tapped into deeper histories of distinctiveness, both self-proclaimed and imposed, that symbolically marked the region as different from the rest of Guinea. From language, to religion, to pseudo-scientific colonial theories of the Semitic origins of the Fulbe,⁶³ both insiders and outsiders considered the Futa and the Fulbe as unique. This body of thought also limited the options of the majority of Fulbe politicians, requiring that their most basic political platform be based in regionalism. As soon as a politician began to broaden his based outside of the Futa, as Yacine Diallo had, the region's elites balked. Such a project forged coalitions using the politics of difference, both colonial and local, in order to create a territory-wide organization. Furthermore, this basic strategy forced the BAG to rely upon the parallel structures of the regional "traditional" aristocracy. As the chieftaincy became increasingly unpopular, it also doomed the party to the political margins.

⁶² Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses*, 147-153.

⁶³ See Anna Pondopoulo, *Les Français et les Peuls: Histoire d'une relation privilégiée* (Paris: Indes Savantes, 2008); and Chapter 1.

Not every regionally based party was beholden to the chieftaincy. Although not explicitly rooted in the Futa Jallon, the *Démocratie Socialiste de Guinée* (DSG) grouped together the educated, reformist wing of Fulbe intellectuals along with socialist French civil servants in Guinea. The party's leader was Barry III, the self-styled ideological successor to Yacine Diallo. Since the 1954 elections he had charted a middle course between the "conservative" BAG and "radical" PDG, a strategy that recognized the cultural underpinnings of regionalism while rejecting the social hierarchies represented by the chieftaincy. His party, for instance, published propaganda in Pular and in Arabic script, and often underscored its leader's Islamic religiosity.⁶⁴

Barry III's own biography reflected the fine line his party sought to walk. His father was the canton chief of Bantignel, in the Pita region, and he was the only son of his mother, a younger wife of his father.⁶⁵ Barry III studied at Ponty and obtained a law degree from the University of Montpellier, where he developed close ties with the SFIO.⁶⁶ Like Yacine Diallo, he hailed from a minor aristocratic family in the Futa and at first was used as a proxy for more powerful families. His father was a client of Almamy Sory Dara Barry, and for a time the Mamou chief supported Barry III during the elections, although mostly as a check on Barry Diawadou's political ambitions.⁶⁷ Following the '54 elections, though, the young politician's relationship with Sory Dara Barry soured. Shortly after creating the DSG in October 1954, Barry III signaled a growing rift between his party and the chiefs, claiming at a meeting in Labé that all

⁶⁴ La Démocratie Socialiste en Guinée, "Appel," March 1955, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143.

⁶⁵ Interview with Alpha Barry, Conakry, 14 February 2013.

⁶⁶ Ibid.; Kéïta, *Les Élections*, 151.

⁶⁷ Interview with Alpha Barry, Conakry, 14 February 2013; Henri Bernard, "Note sur l'élection partielle à l'Assemblée Nationale..." CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143.

chiefs who support candidates did so out of their own interests and not of Guineans in general.⁶⁸ By March 1955, the break was complete. At a DSG rally in Conakry and under the approving gaze of Barry III, the head of the local party section claimed that the canton chiefs wanted “the return to the former colonialist regime, which favored bullying, extortion, and pillaging.” In response, a group of Futa chiefs led by Almamy Sory Dara Barry passed a motion at a meeting in Mamou condemning Barry III, while “declining all responsibility” for “reactions by Fulbe natives” against Barry III’s acts that “dishonor all of the Futa.”⁶⁹

Barry III and the DSG’s hostility towards the chieftaincy echoed many of the same critiques that Sékou Touré and the PDG had made in the wake of the ’54 elections. In fact, Barry III and the DSG leadership consciously styled themselves after the PDG, claiming in early meetings that the two parties’ platforms were the same.⁷⁰ Barry III also embraced the popularly coined nickname of *Syli Yoré*, or “little elephant,” a reference to the PDG party symbol and Touré’s own nickname (*syli*).⁷¹ The main distinction between the DSG and the PDG, perhaps the reason why they were two parties instead of one, lay in separate networks. The PDG grew out of the union movement based in Conakry, and the party’s rank and file was mostly composed of

⁶⁸ “Renseignements, Réunion publique à Labé de la ‘Démocratie socialiste de Guinée,’” no. 44/I8 2, 7 January 1955, ANS 17G586.

⁶⁹ The chief’s accusations against Barry III are contained in a protest submitted to the French administration. Barry III’s father, Alpha Abdoulye Barry, signed the document. “Motion, Les Chefs du Foutah-Djallon, réunis le dix Juillet 1955 à Mamou, sous la Présidence de l’Almamy Ibrahima Sory Dara Barry, Chef de Province, Grand Officier de la Légion d’Honneur, Grand Conseiller de l’A.O.F., Chef religieux du Foutah,” CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143.

⁷⁰ Renseignements, Réunion publique à Labé de la ‘Démocratie socialiste de Guinée,’” no. 44/I8 2, 7 January 1955, ANS 17G586.

⁷¹ “Renseignements a/s prochaines élections municipales,” no. 2072 C/PS.2 ANS 17G586; Kéïta, *Les Élections*, 152-153; Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization*, 74-76.

Malinké and Susu members.⁷² The DSG, however, styled itself as the “party of intellectuals,” and Fulbe teachers, merchants, and mid-level civil servants staffed its regional branches.⁷³

Despite PDG attacks against the DSG as a “copycat” party based in regionalism,⁷⁴ rumors spread in September 1956 that the two parties would join forces against the BAG and its chiefly supporters.⁷⁵ The proposed alliance represented a moment of opportunity for both parties. The PDG to this point had found few supporters among Fulbe civil servants, relying instead on “outsiders” or recent migrants to the Futa’s major cities to create local branches. The DSG, for its part, had little appeal outside of the Futa and Conakry, and its campaign against the Futa chiefs had made powerful enemies out of influential men like Almamy Sory Dara Barry. A fusion between the PDG and DSG would have shored up weaknesses on both sides while fulfilling the two parties’ goals of creating a truly territory-wide party.

The courtship between the DSG and PDG, though, came to a sudden halt in October 1956. Incidents between BAG and PDG partisans had become increasingly frequent as the 1956 rainy season wore on, and sporadic fights between PDG and BAG supporters broke out in August.⁷⁶ On September 5th, the president of the PDG section in the Dixinn-Soussou neighborhood of Conakry was the victim of a burglary. When he visited a local religious figure to ask for guidance, the latter said that it was 4 inhabitants of Dixinn-Foulah, a neighborhood that

⁷² Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 243.

⁷³ “Editorial,” *Le Populaire de Guinée* no. 14, 2 July 1954.

⁷⁴ “Renseignements, Réunion publique RDA à Labé,” no. 550, 14 January 1955, ANS 17G586.

⁷⁵ “Renseignements a/s prochaines élections municipales,” no. 2072 C/PS.2, 9 October 1956, ANS 17G586.

⁷⁶ Humbert, Commissaire Divisionnaire de Police, to LG Guinée, “L’ordre publique à Conakry du 15 au 31 Août 1956,” no. 799C/2, 3 September 1956, ANS 17G586.

was populated by Fulbe who had migrated to the capital during the last four decades, who had stolen the president's property. The accusation led to reprisals in the Fulbe-dominated neighborhood. Later that day in the Niger Market in central Conakry, a group of Fulbe merchants assaulted a Susu street vendor following a heated political discussion. In response, a Fulbe merchant's table in the Coronthie market was pillaged while another Fulbe worker was knocked unconscious at 11 PM.⁷⁷ Battles between partisans raged in Conakry and its suburbs for the next 5 days. Rivals burned down the other side's market stalls and houses. PDG activists erected makeshift roadblocks checking party membership cards, beating those that did not belong to the PDG. Two days into the riots, battles became more general conflicts between Susu "natives" and Fulbe "foreigners," and houses were burned regardless of political affiliation. During one incident outside of the central Ballay Hospital, Fulbe and Susu groups fought one another following the death of a Pullo (sing. of Fulbe) at the hands of a Susu. A crackdown by security forces that included liberal use of tear gas and live fire ended most violence by the 9th. Final tallies counted 7 dead and 263 injured, including several DSG activists.⁷⁸

Reactions to the incidents were swift. The PDG leadership in Guinea cast blame on the French municipal administration in Conakry, claiming that administrators had bribed DSG leaders in order to block the unification of the two parties. PDG leaders also claimed that "certain people" had incited ethnic conflict in order to stop the party's spread in the Futa.⁷⁹ Koumandian Keïta, the BAG president, cast the conflict in starkly ethnic terms, declaring during

⁷⁷ "Renseignements a/s tension à Conakry entre Soussous et foulahs," no. 1808/629 CPS.2, 6 September 1956, ANS 17G586.

⁷⁸ Chef d'Escadron Bernier, "Rapport sur les troubles survenus à Conakry du 29 Septembre à Octobre 1956," no. 548/4, ANS 17G586.

⁷⁹ "Renseignements a/s Commentaires sur les incidents des 29, 30 Septembre et 1er, 2°, 3° Octobre derniers à Conakry," no. 2091 C/PS.2, 10 October 1956, ANS 17G586.

one meeting that “we buried eight Fulbe dead and there is no proof that other bodies weren’t thrown into the sea.”⁸⁰ In a meeting held one week later, Keïta argued that “if the whites leave there will be a pitched battle between the Fulbe and those who believe that Guinea is Sékou Touré.”⁸¹ The DSG leadership quickly soured on a possible alliance with the PDG. *Le Populaire de Guinée*, the DSG party newspaper, claimed that PDG partisans had killed five DSG activists, all originally from the Futa Jallon, during the week of violence. “Blood thirsty mobs” of PDG supporters had fallen prey to anti-Fulbe racism, the newspaper claimed, and to pursue an alliance would do disservice to the DSG wounded and dead.⁸² Several within the party advocated for the building of a common front with the BAG against the PDG.⁸³ Barry III, though, opposed any affiliation with the BAG, a party he considered to be fundamentally anti-democratic.⁸⁴

The Futa canton chiefs used violence as a rallying cry for ethnic solidarity. Almamy Sory Dara Barry traveled to Conakry on Oct. 13th and held a meeting with over 3000 Fulbe in Dixinn-Foulah, during which one speaker called for the Fulbe to unite together and put “the

⁸⁰ “Renseignements a/s voyage en Guinée du depute Barry Diawadou,” no. 2075/725/C/PS.2, 9 October 1956, ANS 17G586; “Renseignements a/s conférence tenue le 28 Octobre 1956 à Mamou par le Bloc Africain de Guinée,” no. 2249/736/C/PS.2, 30 October 1956, ANS 17G586.

⁸¹ “Renseignements a/s Conférence publique tenue à Conakry, cinéma ‘Vox’ le dimanche 4 Novembre 1956, par le Bloc Africain de Guinée,” no. 2277/792/C/PS.2, 5 November 1956, ANS 17G586.

⁸² Jean-Paul Alata, “Editorial,” *Le Populaire de Guinée* no. 18, 15 October 1956; “Evènements Tragiques à Conakry,” *Le Populaire de Guinée* no. 18, 15 October 1956.

⁸³ “Renseignements, Copie d’une lettre addresses par député Barry Diawadou à un ami de Kankan,” no. 2285/797 CPS.2, 6 November 1956, ANS 17G586.

⁸⁴ Jean-Paul Alata, “Editorial,” *Le Populaire de Guinée* no. 18, 15 October 1956; “Renseignements, vers une union possible B.A.G.-D.S.G.,” no. 2346/823 C/PS.2, 15 November 1956, ANS 17G586.

bonds of kin before those of politics.”⁸⁵ In Mamou, a group of local canton chiefs called on Fulbe to reinforce their “racial unity” and claimed that Saïfoulaye Diallo, confidant of Sékou Touré and the PDG’s secretary general, had declared in a public meeting that “the Fulbe is like a tortoise, only sticking out its head when its rear is held to the fire.”⁸⁶ At the time, the appeal to ethno-regionalism made political sense, as voters in the Futa Jallon, although not comprising a monolithic group, constituted nearly 46% of voters in the January 1956 election for Guinea’s representatives in the National Assembly.⁸⁷ Perhaps, in stressing ethnic solidarity, leaders within the Fulbe community sought to win back some of the Fulbe voters who had started to drift towards the PDG. Nevertheless, an appeal based on ethnicity had a limited shelf life. In elections for village councils held in May 1958, voters in the Futa, while still comprising the largest regional representation in Guinea, by then were only slightly under 30% of the territorial total (see table 2).

For much of the 1950s, Conakry was the central site of contestation between rival political parties and ethnic communities. As casualties and examples of arson mounted, it became increasingly impossible for colonial administrators and African politicians alike to ignore the increasingly blurred line between political allegiance and ethnic identification. Conakry had become and would continue to be, in effect, the crucible in which both forms of marking political community would be forged together. In the run-up to coming elections for the

⁸⁵ “Renseignements a/s réunion publique tenue le 13 Octobre dernier à Dixinn (Banlieu) par les Foulahs de Conakry,” no. 2130/736 c/P.S.2, 15 October 1956, ANS 17G586.

⁸⁶ Renseignements a/s réunion publique tenue le 21 Octobre à Mamou par les Foulahs,” no. 2185/761 C/PS.2, 24 October 1956, ANS 17G586.

⁸⁷ The PDG list had still won the election, and even garnered more votes than the second-place finisher, the BAG, in the Futa Jallon. It was a trend towards PDG dominance that would only continue. See Kéïta, *Les Élections*, 157-164.

territorial assembly in early 1957, though, the PDG, BAG, and DSG turned their attention to consolidating control over what Sékou Touré called the “citadel of reactionary forces” in Guinea: the Futa Jallon.⁸⁸

Storming the Citadel: the PDG Spread in the Futa and Debating the Colonial Chieftaincy

Following the end of administrative repression in 1954, the PDG spread rapidly from its urban bases into the interior on the back of its opposition to the chieftaincy. Outside of some pockets of BAG and DSG support in Conakry and its suburbs, the Touré-led party quickly became the dominant political organization in the Basse Côte. Despite some resistance from the *Union de Mandé*, Sékou Touré and the PDG made considerable ground in Haute Guinée. By 1956, only in the Futa and the Forest Region had the PDG not fully installed itself. In order to take what the PDG newspapers called the “last bastion of feudalism” in Guinea, the party leadership organized a two-pronged attack in the Futa.⁸⁹ First, the party engaged in a debate over social hierarchies and the chieftaincy in order to attract groups that had previously been underrepresented in politics, most notably women and communities of former slave status. These groups were especially valuable as voters to political parties, as French law progressively expanded the franchise from a small group of most elites in the late 1940s to eventually all citizens of the French Union in 1956.⁹⁰ Second, to better organize new groups of voters and activists the party threw significant resources into spreading the reach of the party, organizing sub-sections in as many villages as possible. The two approaches were complementary, driving

⁸⁸ ‘Vous ne souffrez pas l’affaire de Yambering,’ *Coup de Bambou* no. 4, 11 April 1950; P. Koniba, ‘La chefferie dit traditionnelle et l’évolution Guinéenne,’ *La Liberté* no. 98, 10 July 1956.

⁸⁹ “La chefferie dit traditionnelle et l’évolution Guinéenne,” *La Liberté* no. 98, 10 July 1956.

⁹⁰ Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 55-56; Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The labor question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 526, fn 27; Chafer, *The End of Empire in French West Africa*, 147-152.

wedges within existing divides in Futa social hierarchies while channeling the larger electorate into an effective political force.

PDG leaders realized early on that criticizing the chieftaincy was an effective strategy for turning rural communities against the local elites hostile to the party. The Futa chiefs, supposedly the most entrenched and powerful of the “traditional” elites, became the main targets of the new PDG policy. If the party was able to undermine them, so PDG leaders reasoned, the chieftaincy as an institution stood little chance of surviving. The PDG faced several hurdles before winning the hearts and minds of the Futa. Early attacks on the party focused on its leaders purported fidelity to communism and anti-religious attitudes. One conservative newspaper claimed that if the PDG were to triumph, “our mosques would be transformed into barracks, the reading of the Koran would be considered as laziness, and our prayers as useless occupations.”⁹¹ In response, PDG officials focused on outward displays of religiosity while campaigning in the Futa. While passing through Labé, for example, Sékou Touré attended Friday prayers at the central mosque and held a rally afterwards, arguing that the faithful “don’t have to believe in the Governor, or the Cercle Commandant, or the Commissaire of Police, who didn’t create them.”⁹²

Touré and other PDG activists also encountered significant resistance from religious elites in the Futa. Reflecting the pre-colonial combination of spiritual and temporal authority, many of the Imams of the Futa’s largest and most influential mosques were the brothers or

⁹¹ “À Madeira Keïta et Compagnie,” *La Voix de la Guinée* no 24, 6-13 July 1950.

⁹² “Renseignements, Sékou Touré et les Foulahs de Labé,” no. 2531/913, 15 August 1954, ANS 17G277. In other parts of Guinea, especially in Haute Guinée at the Forest Region, Touré deployed his disputed claim that he was the grandson of Samori Touré to prove the depth of his faith. Samori’s complicated and often contentious relationship with the Futa aristocracy during the late 19th century, though, made such an appeal moot on the high plateau, forcing the PDG leader to deploy more basic signs of religiosity. For Touré’s use of Samori as a sign of Islamic faith, see Mike McGovern, *Unmasking the State: Making Guinea Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 135-137.

cousins of canton chiefs.⁹³ Placing family members in different “wings” of authority ensured a broader base of legitimacy for elite families. An attack on one wing, therefore, was an attack on the family as a whole. PDG attempts to drive wedges between both religious leaders and the chieftaincy, and between religious leaders and the faithful were only partially successful. Party strategy, therefore, turned to undermining the Futa aristocracy as a whole. From 1956 on, the main PDG newspaper, *La Liberté*, focused on exposing cases of canton chiefs and religious leaders “pillaging” and exploitation of persons of former servile status, a phenomenon that party leaders claimed occurred throughout colonial Guinea. Articles on exploitation in the party newspaper, however, provided examples almost exclusively from the Futa.⁹⁴

One of the most effective PDG critics of the Futa chieftaincy, Saïfoulaye Diallo, had an intimate knowledge of the region and its aristocracy. Diallo was born in 1923 in a town not far from Labé. His father was a canton chief, and his family was part of the noble *ngediyanke lenyol* that had ruled the pre-colonial *diwal* of Diari. Diallo attended primary school in Labé, studied at the École Georges Poiret in Conakry, and graduated from École William Ponty in 1942. From 1943 to 1947 he was employed as an accountant in the colonial administration in Niamey. While in Niger, Diallo broke with his conservative family (his brothers and fathers would eventually join the BAG), joined a communist study group, and served as one of the territory’s

⁹³ Following the same meeting in Labé, the head of the local Customary Court, and a PDG supporter, asked the local Imam of the central Mosque of Labé, who was a brother of a notable AGV activist and hailed from an elite lineage, to offer a prayer for Sékou Touré. The imam balked, saying “prayers are said for all Muslims, not just one person.” “Renseignements, Sékou Touré et les Foulahs de Labé,” no. 2531/913, 25 August 1954, ANS 17G277.

⁹⁴ See e.g., Savané Moricandian, “Touré Sékou à Mamou,” *La Liberté* no. 45, 1 February 1955; Samba Lamine, “L’éveil de Dalaba,” *La Liberté* no. 95, 11 June 1956; Caba Sory, “Ils nous trompent,” *La Liberté* no. 96, 18 June 1958; Pleah Koniba, “La chefferie dit traditionnelle et l’évolution Guinéenne” *La Liberté* no. 98, 10 July 1956.

representatives to the 1946 Bamako conference.⁹⁵ While serving in Niamey, Diallo also wrote an anti-administration article in a pro-RDA newspaper, which led Djibo Bakary, then a key figure within Niger's RDA branch, to write that, referring to the Guinean civil servant, "Black Africa should be proud to have produced men such as you."⁹⁶ Diallo was found guilty of subversion shortly thereafter, and hoping to neutralize the RDA activist by naming him to his sick father's position as canton chief, the AOF administration had him transferred to Guinea in late 1947. His refusal to take up that position upon his return home, Keïta writes, represented his "definitive rupture with the feudal system."⁹⁷ Only 6 months later, Diallo was transferred yet again due to his political activity, this time to Haute Volta. In 1950, Diallo returned to Guinea after falling ill, left the French administration, and devoted himself full-time to PDG activism. He quickly struck up a close relationship with Sékou Touré, the two working and living together in Conakry. According to Diallo's son, the son of a Fulbe chief and the firebrand union leader complemented one another, the former an "intellectual" who provided the ideological thrust of the early PDG, and the latter a "man of action" who could effectively organize and inspire activists.⁹⁸

Following Diawadou's pyrrhic victory in the 1954 special election, Touré charged Saïfoulaye with "delivering the Futa for the PDG." Due to his fluency in the cultural and religious language of legitimacy in the Futa, Diallo became an effective critic of region's elites. His crucial step was to sever the colonial chieftaincy from its pre-colonial predecessor. In a *La Liberté* article, Saïfoulaye argued that, due to its double role as both religious and civil authority,

⁹⁵ Interview with Franco Diallo, Conakry, 21 February 2013.

⁹⁶ Sidiki Kobélé Kéïta, *Un homme de conviction et foi: Saïfoulaye Diallo, 1923-1981* (Conakry: SKK, 2003), 27.

⁹⁷ Kéïta, *Saïfoulaye Diallo*, 27.

⁹⁸ Interview with Franco Diallo, Conakry, 21 February 2013.

the pre-colonial chieftaincy integrated Futa society from top to bottom. Furthermore, pre-colonial chiefs ruled with the advice and consent of councils of notables, making the Futa Jallon state an early democratic system. Following French conquest, though, the powerful pre-colonial chieftaincy was a threat to the nascent colonial administration. French officials therefore dismantled the pre-colonial system, giving chiefs significant administrative powers while attempting to strip them of religious and civil authority outside of the colonial system. The colonial administration also broke apart ethnically diverse groups of villages while breaking apart the Futa specifically and the AOF in general into smaller cantons in order to “divide and rule.” Any attempt to reform the colonial chieftaincy would fail, Diallo argued, as the institution was corrupt from its roots:

Our [the PDG] position on the topic [reform of the chieftaincy] here is clear: the chieftaincy, degraded by colonial administration, no longer represents that which could appropriately be called “traditional authority”... The chiefs betrayed their office by making themselves the servile instruments of power against the ongoing interests of the population.⁹⁹

Combined with the steady beat of reports on violence and extortion committed by chiefs, the critique proved to be both effective and evocative for the majority non-elite classes in the Futa.

Critiques of the chieftaincy by other PDG activists often bled into commentary about Futa society as a whole. Writers in *La Liberté* remarked that the “Fulbe masses” were often “behind” their Susu, Malinké, and Forestière counterparts in joining the PDG and turning against

⁹⁹ Saïfoulaye Diallo, “Chefferie Administrative ou Chefferie Traditionelle?” *La Liberté* no. 94, 5 June 1956. Diallo’s critique echoed earlier attacks on the chieftaincy by Madeira Keita, at the time the head of the PDG, in 1949. Keita argued that the chieftaincy had lost legitimacy due in part to the naming of “former interpreters, *tirailleurs*, militiamen, and houseboys” to the position. Diallo’s attack went further, though, claiming that even those with “legitimate” claims – for instance, Almamy Sory Dara Barry – had been compromised by their collaboration with the colonizers. Perhaps by 1956, much of the PDG leadership had come to the conclusion that the chieftaincy must not only be undermined, but uprooted from the Guinean soil altogether. See Keita, quoted in Gregory Mann, *From Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel: The Road to Nongovernmentality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 66-67.

the chieftaincy.¹⁰⁰ This divergence, they argued, sprung from the particular history of the Futa Jallon that supported a strong feudal aristocracy.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, years of repression, political manipulation, and dire economic straits caused by colonial rule had pushed the Fulbe to create ethnic organizations.¹⁰² Nevertheless, the example of the “democratic” pre-colonial chiefs could provide a basis for both the reform of the institution and the return of democracy to the region.¹⁰³ PDG leaders echoed the emancipatory narrative presented in the pages of *La Liberté* while campaigning in areas with large Fulbe populations. In turn, early signs of support for the party in the Futa became proof that even in the most conservative reaches of the territory the progressive march of history represented by the PDG-directed anti-colonial movement was unstoppable.¹⁰⁴

The PDG campaign against the chieftaincy served as a wedge between the aristocracy and the majority of Futa society that did not enjoy the prestige and material benefits of elite status. The PDG took advantage of the space opened through anti-chief attacks by effectively organizing and mobilizing new players in Guinean politics, or the second prong of its attack. The PDG divided its efforts into urban and rural strategies. In the cities, the party used groups of “outsider” civil servants and their wives to form neighborhood committees. The cabinets of local PDG branches in Labe and Pita, for example, contained a minority of persons with Fulbe names,

¹⁰⁰ Diéli Bacar Couyate, “Le Fouta face à la Démocratie,” *La Liberté* no. 41, 28 December 1954.

¹⁰¹ “Autour de la Chefferie traditionnelle du Fouta,” *La Liberté* no. 51, 22 March 1955.

¹⁰² Tounkara Tibou, “Halte du Régionalisme Rétrograde” *La Liberté* no. 114, 12 February 1957.

¹⁰³ R.D.A. Pita, “L’ingrate Fonction de chef de village,” *La Liberté* no. 65, 30 August 1955.

¹⁰⁴ “Renseignements, réunion publique RDA à Labé,” no. 874/355 C/PS.2, 28 April 1955, ANS 17G586; “Renseignements a/s Passage à Kindia du député Diallo Saïfoulaye et compte-rendu de mandat de ce parlementaire,” no. 1396/503 C/PS.2, 17 July 1956, ANS 17G586; “Renseignements a/s réunion publique d’information tenue le jeudi 30 Août 1956, par le Député Diallo Saïfoulaye, à Conakry, salle de cinéma ‘Vox,’” No. 1761/619 C/PS.2, 31 August 1956, ANS 17G586.

¹⁰⁵ and many of the early participants in the party were civil servants from other regions of Guinea assigned to Futa towns by the French administration.¹⁰⁶ PDG Women's branches in the Futa, integral to the party's spread throughout Guinea,¹⁰⁷ were similarly composed of those "outsider" civil servants' wives and in some cases women of former slave status.¹⁰⁸ As a consequence, the largely effective strategy discouraged participation by Futa elites, both "traditional" and "modern." In other words, Saïfoulaye Diallo, a Fulbe of pedigree and formal training active in the PDG, was an exception rather than the rule.

After establishing bases in the cities, PDG activists spread into rural areas by organizing in *fulassos* and *dune*, or communities populated primarily by persons of non-elite or former slave status. According to Tiala Gobaye Mountaye, an early PDG activist, teacher in Labé, and a

¹⁰⁵ In the Futa Jallon there are four *yettore*, or family names, that mark the bearers as being Fulbe: Diallo, Barry, Sow, and Bah. Although the *yettore* are to an extent associated with geographical regions and social status – Barrys, for example, are often referred to as the "leaders" of the Futa and based in Timbo, while Diallos are religious leaders and based in the Labé region – each name group encompasses persons from the whole Futa social hierarchy. See William Derman, *Serfs, Peasants, and Socialists: A Former Serf Village in the Republic of Guinea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 17-18.

¹⁰⁶ "Constitution de Bureau," *La Liberté* no. 32, 26 October 1954; "Composition S/Section Pita," *La Liberté* no. 39, 15 December 1954. Mamou, which is in the Futa, was created in the 1920s as a transit town on the Conakry-Niger rail line. Although the Futa's most influential "traditional" leader, Almamy Sory Dara Barry, was the canton chief of Mamou, the city was never a bastion of Fulbe culture. It was instead an ethnically diverse, polyglot town that was quintessentially colonial in its politics, economy, and origins, a natural base for the PDG. In fact, the Mamou PDG branch often outflanked the central party leadership from the left, and proved to be a thorn in the Conakry leadership's side until its exclusion from the territorial party in 1957. See R. W. Johnson, "The Parti Démocratique de Guinée and the Mamou 'deviation,'" in *African Perspectives: papers in history, politics and economics of Africa presented to Thomas Hodgkin*, edited by C. Allen and R. W. Johnson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) 347-368.

¹⁰⁷ See Elizabeth Schmidt, "Women Take the Lead: Female Emancipation and the Nationalist Movement, 1949-1954," in *Mobilizing the Masses*, 113-144.

¹⁰⁸ "Renseignements, Comité Propagande Barry Diawadou à Labe," no. 2534/916, 25 August 1954, ANS 17G277.

ethnic Coniagui “outsider,” the PDG policy of organizing the rural areas served a double purpose, harnessing the growing electorate and undermining chiefly power at the same time. Political organizing in *fulassos* and *dune* also had the added benefit of tilling virgin ground; these types of communities had been ignored by the Futa-based parties, who were more concerned with consolidating their position amongst Futa elites.¹⁰⁹

The PDG’s spread into the Futa countryside also reflected a broader and longer strain of political organizing that was one of the few constants in the party’s ideological development. The basic outlines of the PDG strategy of developing cells comprised of a core of educated activists who would later mobilize the rural masses was lifted point by point from late 1940s *Groupes d’études communistes* (GEC) courses.¹¹⁰ Both Sékou Touré and Saïfoulaye Diallo’s early political careers had been shaped by the GECs, small study groups led by the metropolitan Communist Party and focused on an emerging urban working class. While the two leaders’ adoption of communist ideology through the courses is questionable – Diallo was a moderate and Touré was above all an opportunist – the basic tactics and political structures of the PDG owed their inspiration to the study groups.

Most importantly, the PDG offered persons of former slave status an avenue towards greater representation within both political and social structures. Fractures between groups of free and non-free in the Futa Jallon had grown before the 1950s, with communities of former slave status sometimes pushing back against the domination of former masters. New occupations tied to the colonial economy had improved the financial position of many former slaves,

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Tiala Gobaye Mountaye, Labé, 1 March 2013.

¹¹⁰ Jean Suret-Canale reprinted GEC course syllabi in *Groupes d’Études Communistes (G.E.C.) en Afrique Noire* (Paris: Éditions L’Harmattan, 1994), 110-111, 118-127.

although associated rises in social status had been hard to secure.¹¹¹ Thus, when presented with a political party that was critical of the chieftaincy and encouraged the participation of persons of former slave status in politics, going as far as giving some leadership positions, inhabitants of the *dune* and *foulassos* joined the PDG en masse.

The PDG strategy in the Futa soon bore fruit. In the January 1956 elections for the Guinean representatives in the French National Assembly, the PDG received more votes in the Futa than either the BAG or DSG. In the November 1956 municipal elections, combined BAG and DSG candidate lists won a majority in the mixed communes of Labé and Dalaba, but the PDG won a majority in Mamou, where Saïfoulaye Diallo was elected mayor.¹¹² Faced with a string of PDG victories, some of the Futa elite began to hedge their bets. Although Almamy Sory Dara Barry did not break his alliance with Diawadou and the BAG, his son Mody Oury Barry resigned from the BAG and joined the PDG because, he claimed, “everyone is RDA now.”¹¹³

The PDG conquest of the Futa culminated in the March 1957 elections for the Guinean Territorial Assembly. The 1956 Loi Cadre established semi-autonomous governments with

¹¹¹ See Chapter 2.

¹¹² Kéïta, *Les Élections*, 162-169.

¹¹³ Some within the PDG speculated that Mody Oury had always been a “progressive,” but had stayed with the BAG out of familial loyalty. A second, and in my opinion more likely, theory speculated that Almamy Sory Dara was using his son as the beginnings of a rapprochement between the Mamou chief and the PDG. Sory Dara was not hesitant to shift his support based upon shifting political winds (as well as his own political goals), and by early 1957 it was clear that in Mamou at least they had turned against Barry Diawadou and Barry III. See “Renseignements a/s vie politique à Mamou,” no. 169 C/PS.2, 5 January 1957, ANS 17G613; “Renseignements a/s adhesion au R.D.A. du chef de quartier Barry Mody Oury, fils de l’almamy de Mamou,” no. 926 C/PS.2, 9 January 1957, ANS 17G613.

partial control over the budget and internal workings of the overseas territories.¹¹⁴ The stakes of the 1957 elections, therefore, were high, awarding the winning party a large amount of control over territorial policy. Saïfoulaye Diallo spent the month before the elections traveling throughout the Futa, and other PDG leaders organized mass meetings to display the growing spread and power of the party in the region. One such public rally held in Timbo, the former seat of the pre-colonial Futa Almamys, brought together 1500 PDG members hailing mostly from neighboring *runde* and *foulassos*.¹¹⁵ The intended symbolism was clear; pre-colonial and colonial hierarchies were giving way to the organized might of near universal suffrage. Barry Diawadou restricted his campaign to the northern Futa, especially the Labé, Tougué, and Gaoual regions, where he still enjoyed widespread support from the chieftaincy.¹¹⁶ Barry III and the DSG focused on the Pita region, from which the socialist candidate's family hailed. Barry III's home region saw some of the worst violence of the campaign. Fights between parties didn't break down along the familiar PDG versus others line, though. When Saïfoulaye Diallo passed through town two weeks before the election, DSG and PDG activists joined forces in Pita against the

¹¹⁴ The Loi Cadre governments, however, did not have control over the integral sections of the civil service such as the police service. Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 424-430; Chafer, *The End of Empire*, 165-167.

¹¹⁵ "Renseignements a/s vie politique dans l'intérieur du territoire," no. 426/191 C/PS.2, 22 February 1957, ANS 17G613.

¹¹⁶ One of the chiefs who threw his support behind Diawadou was Saïfoulaye Diallo's father, a canton chief. When passing through Labé Diawadou would often stay at the elder Diallo's compound. One time before the '57 elections, when both Diawadou and Saïfoulaye were campaigning in Labé, the former stayed at the Diallo family compound while the prodigal son was forced to find accommodations with a friend in town. Interview with Franco Diallo, Conakry, 21 February 2013.

BAG during street fights, leading to six injuries and the destruction of several houses.¹¹⁷

Muddled inter-party violence was caused by a lack of intra-party cohesion between many Futa branches and their respective parties' central leadership. Realizing that the DSG was the dominant force in Pita, local PDG and BAG branches, whose parties' platforms were supposedly diametrically opposed to one another, composed a combined list of candidates. The PDG central bureau distributed a press release claiming that no such alliance had ever existed. Their denials were undermined, though, when reports of a pamphlet published by the local PDG branch carrying both parties' insignia emerged.¹¹⁸ Despite open fighting between the two parties just 60 km down the road in Pita, the BAG and DSG branches in Labé submitted a common candidate list, claiming that PDG manipulation of Susu violence against Fulbe in Conakry had pushed the two parties into presenting a common Fulbe front.¹¹⁹

On the eve of the election, the Futa was the only region where the outcome remained in question. The election results offered a clear answer. Of the 60 seats up for vote, the PDG won 56. The DSG won the three seats representing the Pita region, and the BAG won none.¹²⁰ The

¹¹⁷ "Renseignements a/s vie politique à l'intérieur du territoire" no. 682/292 C/PS.2, 23 March 1957, ANS 17G613.

¹¹⁸ The crescent and star for the BAG and the elephant for the PDG. There were also rumors of a combined BAG-PDG list in the Labé, Mamou, and Dabola regions. While the uneasy union would have ensured PDG dominance, it proved to be unsupportable by a PDG leadership that had cast itself as the anti-colonial vanguard and the BAG as colonialist collaborators and puppets of the chieftaincy. Perhaps more importantly, PDG branches in other regions of the territory considered it to be a breach of trust by the central leadership. "Renseignements a/s vie politique dans l'intérieur du territoire," no. 426/191 C/PS.2, 22 February 1957, ANS 17G613.

¹¹⁹ "Renseignements a/s vie politique à l'intérieur du territoire" no. 617/266 C/PS.2, 16 March 1957, ANS 17G613.

¹²⁰ A list of independents was elected in Dinguiraye, a region that, since the residence of El-Hadj Umar Tall in the 19th century, had a political culture somewhat separate from the rest of Guinea.

PDG took control of the new semi-autonomous Guinean territorial government, and in May the PDG-dominated territorial assembly elected Saïfoulaye Diallo as the body's President and Sékou Touré as the Vice-President of the Government Council, effectively the head of government business.¹²¹

Bolstered by a landslide victory, the party enacted an ambitious set of reforms. One of the first projects taken up by the new government was the complete reorganization of the local administrative structure, achieved through the elimination of the canton chieftaincy and the selection of village chiefs by popular vote.¹²² The move made political sense. Supporters of the chieftaincy were few and far between, and the drastic reform or outright elimination of canton chiefs had been the lynchpin of the PDG's rural strategy since 1954. Even before the BAG and DSG's defeat in the 1957 elections, the chiefs had even lost the support of their supposed colonial collaborators. During a 1956 meeting of French commandants posted in Guinea, most in attendance argued that the institution was ill suited for modern governance and should be phased out.¹²³ Despite the long history of collaboration between the Fulbe chiefs, and the fact that the commandants' meeting was held in Mamou, the hometown a chiefly seat of Almamy Sory Dara Barry, it was clear that the era of the colonial chieftaincy in Guinea was coming to a close.

Debates soon shifted to negotiating the timeline for the eradication of the chieftaincy. The chiefs' earlier efforts to organize and assure their position in the colonial administration, it would

Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 246; Kéïta, *Les Élections*, 181; Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization in Guinea*, 121.

¹²¹ Kéïta, *Les élections*, 182-183.

¹²² Territoire de la Guinée Française, 'Communiqué du Conseil de Gouvernement,' 24 August 1957, Archives of FCG, Guinée II, RPF 676/677.

¹²³ A transcript of the meeting is contained in *Guinée, prélude à l'indépendance* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1958).

seem, had failed. Working in tandem with other “traditional” leaders in the AOF, Sory Dara Barry had played a role in establishing the *Union Fédérale des Syndicats des Chefs Coutumiers* at a November 1956 meeting in Dakar. The organization sought to both define and confirm the generally chiefs’ role within the colonial administration, and more specifically their salaries, benefits, and authority to collect taxes.¹²⁴ As Mann argues, the creation of the union also reflected the colonial chiefs’ argument that they were both “traditional” and administrative, in effect denying the division that Saïfoulaye Diallo had previously established. The chiefs sought to confirm their dual positions in law, although up to 1957 their efforts had failed.¹²⁵ Men like Sory Dara Barry, therefore, faced the prospect of having their positions erased before they were ever explicitly defined.

Realizing that their time was limited, several canton chiefs met from August 25-27 inside Almamy Sory Dara Barry’s Mamou compound to discuss a plan of action. A month earlier, the Fulbe chief had invoked the 1897 French treaty of protectorate with the pre-colonial Futa Jallon state that had promised to ‘respect the customs’ of the Fulbe in order to demand that the French government intervene and save the institution of the chieftaincy.¹²⁶ By the August meeting, Barry and the other canton chiefs requested only that the chieftaincy be gradually phased out by attrition rather than immediate revocation.¹²⁷ Their last-ditch pleas fell on deaf ears. On

¹²⁴ Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 333. The Futa chiefs had attempted to secure the same rights through the intervention of Yacine Diallo during the late 1940s.

¹²⁵ Mann, *From Empires to NGOs*, 68-69.

¹²⁶ “Renseignements a/s voyage à Conakry de l’Almamy de Mamou, Ibrahima Sory Dara Barry, ex-grand Conseiller et Conseiller Territorial,” 23 July 1957, ANS 17G622.

¹²⁷ “Renseignements a/s Réunion privée tenue par l’Association des Chefs Coutumiers de Guinée, à Mamou, les 25, 26 et 27 Août derniers et ayant trait à la suppression de la chefferie guinéenne,” 30 August 1957, ANS 17G622.

December 26th, decree no. 57-231 reorganized local administration in Guinea, breaking the territory down into administrative posts and urban communes, both run by civil servants, and villages, the latter and smallest administrative unit to be governed by elected local councils. Decree no. 57-233, issued 5 days later, formally eliminated the chieftaincy.¹²⁸

Ultimately, the end of the chieftaincy in the Futa and elsewhere in Guinea resulted from a wave of popular discontent combined with the chiefs' inability to adjust to a growing franchise. The chiefs had proven that even in the 'citadel of reactionary forces' that was the Futa Jallon their influence over local communities was eroding, caused in part due to longer-term social and economic trends. In a Guinea marked by universal suffrage, they became a progressively marginal political force. Just as importantly, though, the chiefs had no place in the 'modern' administrative system dictated by the PDG, even if they had been retained in a modified capacity. The structure put in place by the PDG-dominated territorial assembly was a carbon copy of the party's own uniform and replicable structure, one in direct opposition to the way the chiefs conceptualized the organization of political space and the practice of governance. Under the colonial state, the Futa chiefs had negotiated ad-hoc administrations along with hierarchies of titles and compensation that rewarded those individuals most effective at ensuring the

¹²⁸Kéïta, *Les Élections*, 191-93. Contra among others Schmidt, Gregory Mann argues that Guinea was not alone in eliminating the chieftaincy. Indeed, the Malian government erased the administrative position in 1960, except for those who remained in the Sahara, after two years of failing to name replacements and restricting the chiefs' and limiting their authority. The Sawabaled government of Niger employed similar tactics, at least until their removal through what van Walraven calls Africa's first coup d'état in 1958. However, Guinea was unique in being the first (and, indeed, only) territory – as opposed to independent state – to eliminate the institution, and also by doing it in one fell swoop. The question of how various West African government approached the chieftaincy might be better framed as a continuum between outright elimination and cooperation – between, for example, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire – rather than the binary “did they eliminate the institution or not.” See Mann, *From Empires to NGOs*, 70-77; Klaas van Walraven, *The Yearning for Relief: A History of the Sawaba Movement in Niger* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 139-140.

maintenance of order and the timely collection of taxes. The chiefs' post-war approach to electoral politics was essentially the same, cobbling together diverse regional structures to build coalitions.

The chiefs also relied upon two strategies to influence Guinean politics: religious, social, and political authority, which had been in decline since the 1930s; and networks of patronage, which during the colonial state were all too often funded by exploitation. In doing so, they neglected developing policies that resonated with a growing electorate and ultimately could not justify their continued existence. Such a strategy was reflected by the 'chiefs' party,' the BAG, which grouped together loosely regional elites but had largely failed in grassroots organizing, ignored policy beyond vague references to 'traditional culture' until the late 1950s, and failed to build any kind of cohesive political movement. These coalitions, and the ordering of political space they represented, proved to be both fragile and unable to organize a territory-wide campaign. When measured against the PDG's 'modern' form of political mobilization, the chiefs approach to marshalling support was found wanting, eventually leading to their demise.

By the end of 1957, the PDG had eliminated the most visible representations of elite-based regionalist politics. The 1957 territorial elections, therefore, marked the end of substantive competition between multiple political parties initiated in the aftermath of the 1954 special election. Yet the results of the PDG's eventual victory in the Futa Jallon extended beyond the elimination of the Fulbe chiefs as administrators of the Futa Jallon. The process through which the PDG gained a foothold on the high plateau meant that the 'modern' Fulbe elite – namely, those who had, like Barry Diawadou and Barry III, been educated in colonial schools but who also held socio-cultural cache in the region – were never integrated into the party. Furthermore, in addition to casting the Fulbe chiefs as corrupt shadows of their pre-colonial counterparts, PDG

rhetoric also characterized Fulbe society as inherently conservative and resistant to the change the party sought to enact throughout Guinea. Although the PDG's victory was clear, the fault lines between it and other influential sections of Fulbe society would only harden as Touré and other party leaders sought to consolidate their control over territorial politics.

The PDG Consolidates Control, 1957-1960

While the March 1957 elections heralded the arrival of PDG dominance in Guinea, the remnants of the BAG and DSG did not fade into the background. In February 1958, a group of non-RDA parties created the federation-wide *Parti du Regroupement Africain* (PRA). Barry Diawadou and Barry III soon established the Guinean branch.¹²⁹ The two Fulbe opposition politicians positioned their party as a regionalist revolt against the newly empowered PDG government. During a public meeting in Labé, their comments signaled growing discontent with Conakry:

“The Fouta is scorned by the RDA executive who dare to take its resources by overwhelmingly taxing [the Futa's] inhabitants... One says all over that the customary chieftaincy was eliminated because it involved excessive salaries. Then why allocate a stipend of 125,000 francs to an advisor and 200,000 to a minister? They take us for naïfs and dim-witted, but those that pretend to lead us must realize that we hicks [*rustres*] will unite and act if need be.”¹³⁰

¹²⁹ For the creation of the PRA, see Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 310-311; Joseph-Roger de Benoist, *L'Afrique Occidentale Française de la Conférence de Brazzaville (1944) à l'indépendance (1960)* (Dakar: Nouvelles Éditions Africaines, 1982), 354-361; and Chafer, *The End of Empire*, 210-211. For the Guinean branch, see “Renseignements a/s déplacement de personnalités B.A.G. et M.S.A. dans le Cercle de Mamou,” no. 292-99/C/PS.2, 13 February 1958, ANS 17G622.

¹³⁰ “Renseignements a/s Passage des personnalités B.A.G. et D.S.G. à Labé,” no. 333-121/C/PS.2, 20 February 1958, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2292. During the same tour through the Futa, Diawadou also used Touré's self-proclaimed ancestor, Samori Touré, against the PDG leader: “What the Almamy Samory could not do, his grandson will accomplish today, if you let yourselves be dominated, to reduce the inhabitants of the Foutah to a state of slavery”; warned that the PDG would ban polygamy: “Those among you who have several wives will keep only one and send back all the others”; and claimed that the PDG would control religious affairs: “Soon, it will be the minister of the interior that names the imams and will make the choice

Diawadou then claimed that people in the Basse Côte and Haute Guinée had not paid any kind of tax for two years and encouraged the Fulbe to refuse to pay taxes until the government reflected their will, a tactic that the PDG itself had used not half a decade earlier. As the PRA rhetoric became increasingly critical of the Touré government, it attracted other groups to its side, notably former PDG activists who had been excluded from their party during the “Mamou deviation” and former soldiers upset over a newly imposed 2% tax on their pensions.¹³¹

Diawadou’s attacks at another PRA rally in the Futa tapped into historical narratives of external threats to Fulbe sovereignty and culture. Playing upon Sékou Touré’s claim that he was the grandson of Samori Touré, the famous resistor to French conquest and for a time enemy of the Futa chiefs, the Fulbe politicians claimed that “what the Almamy Samori could not do, his grandson will accomplish today if you let yourselves be dominated: to reduce the inhabitants of the Futa to a state of slavery.” The PDG also sought to undermine the foundations of Fulbe culture by controlling the mosques – “Soon, it will be the minister of the interior that names the imams and will make the choice without any consultation” – and banning polygyny – “Those among you who have several wives will keep only one and send back all the others.”¹³² Thus, the PDG’s rise had become an existential threat to Fulbe society itself. Forced into a position of

without any consultation.” All three statements tapped into latent Fulbe concerns over Touré’s Islamic faith (or lack thereof – see above) and strong distrust of outsiders. See M.D.L. Chef Molle, Commandant le Brigade de Gendarmerie de Mamou, “Rapport sur le passage dans le cercle, de deux personnalités Politiques locales,” no. 6/4, 10 February 1958, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2292.

¹³¹ Diawadou’s call to civil disobedience would have been a crime itself, but he was still a Deputy in the French National Assembly and enjoyed prosecutorial immunity. In fact, his immunity was the very reason why he was chosen to provoke Fulbe into not paying their taxes. Marcel Boyer to MFOM, “Incidents en Guinée,” 4 June 1958, CADC 51QO/9.

¹³² Molle, Commandant le Brigade de Gendarmerie de Mamou, “Rapport sur le passage dans le cercle, de deux personnalités Politiques locales,” 10 February 1958, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2292,

weakness, opposition forces lashed back with an explicitly anti-centralization critique of an emerging PDG-dominated Guinean political system.

Renewed conflict between the PDG and its opposition came to a head in April 1958. The PRA held a rally at Yacine Diallo's tomb in early March which 3000 supporters attended, followed by a party congress in Conakry. Shortly after, Diawadou undertook a tour of the Fouta and Forest region to rally anti-PDG forces. At each stop along the way he was met with protesting PDG supporters who, particularly in the Forest, resorted to violence.¹³³ Conflict on the campaign trail turned back towards the capital. Sporadic fighting in Conakry between partisans of the rival parties on the night of April 29th led to over one week of open warfare, and conflict eventually led to arson which, for many in Conakry, looked to be ethnically targeted.¹³⁴ On May 4th security forces finally reestablished control, but the capital had suffered significant damage. Over the course of 8 days, 22 people were killed, 16 of them Fulbe, and scores of houses and market stalls burned.¹³⁵

The PDG government's reaction during and after the incidents both echoed the French administration's response to the '56 riots and also presaging post-independence PDG tactics of violent repression. On May 4th, Keïta Fodéba, Minister of the Interior and former head of *Les Ballets Africaines*, and Ismaël Touré, half brother of Sékou and Minister of Public Works, directed security forces to open fire on protestors if threatened, an order the French-led forces

¹³³ "Rapport de Monsieur le Secrétaire Général Masson, Incidents de Conakry (29 Avril au 4 Mai)," CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143.

¹³⁴ Marcel Boyer to MFOM, "Incidents en Guinée," 4 June 1958, CADC 51QO/9; Rapport de Monsieur le Secrétaire Général Masson, Incidents de Conakry (29 Avril au 4 Mai), CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143.

¹³⁵ Rapport de Monsieur le Secrétaire Général Masson, Incidents de Conakry (29 Avril au 4 Mai), CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143.

refused, as they thought the order excessive and were not under the two PDG officials' command in any case.¹³⁶ The two ministers also ordered the arrest of opposition politicians, an order that was likewise ignored by the gendarmes. In its own ex post facto report on the incidents, the PDG-led government argued that conflict was primarily political in nature and not ethnic.¹³⁷ Yet in its party newspaper, the PDG leadership argued that the PRA had recruited, "from the gutters, disoriented, uprooted, family-less" Fulbe migrants in Conakry to wage a "'Djihad' (Holy War) against the R.D.A., against the Susu, and for the Fouta Djallon!"¹³⁸ Meanwhile, Saïfoulaye Diallo claimed that PRA activists were involved in a counter-revolutionary plot orchestrated by a cabal of colonialists, mining companies, and sections of the French military. These same colonialist forces were sending agents recruited in Senegal into the Futa with arms to incite a rebellion against the PDG government.¹³⁹ The now PDG-controlled police warned of continued violence, reporting that following the incidents the PRA leadership sent a delegation to the Futa spreading word of the attacks and "inviting the Fulbe to avenge their dead and wounded by killing an equal number of Susu and looting their property."¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, police reports claimed, "orders have been given to cattle merchants in the Futa to no longer supply Conakry

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ministère de l'intérieur, Guinée-Française, "Livre Blanc: La Vérité sur les événements de Guinée," 6 May 1958, CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143.

¹³⁸ Sékou Touré and Saïfoulaye Diallo, "Le Complot," *La Liberté* 8, no. 2, 16 May 1958.

¹³⁹ Diallo also placed the Conakry incidents within a larger narrative of anti-colonial struggle, claiming that they were the "last cry of a colonialism that has been defeated in Lebanon, Indochina, Madagascar, Syria and Africa." See Saïfoulaye Diallo, "Échec à la Contre-révolution," *La Liberté* 8, no. 2, 16 May 1958; Marcel Boyer to MFOM, "Incidents en Guinée," 4 June 1958, CADC 51QO/9.

¹⁴⁰ "Renseignements a/s envoi d'une délégation de Foulahs du P.R.A. dans le Fouta," no. 890/333/C/PS.2, 10 May 1958, ANS 17G622

with meat.”¹⁴¹ Whether or not PDG leaders or their PRA rivals had stoked ethnic violence, or if Conakry would shortly be bereft of beef, parts of the Fulbe community in the capital decided that they were no longer safe in the capital. In the weeks following violence, an estimated 1750 Fulbe left to return to the Futa.¹⁴²

Attention in Guinea soon shifted to the metropole. A coup d'état connected to settlers in Algeria nearly toppled the French government, creating an existential crisis within the Republic.¹⁴³ An interim government with Gen. Charles de Gaulle at its head scheduled a territory-by-territory referendum on a new constitution for Sep. 28th, and the middle months of 1958 were consumed with shaping the document's text.¹⁴⁴ Sékou Touré, who increasingly saw himself as a pan-Africanist leader, hoped to use the new constitution to reconstitute the federations that had been dismantled by the Loi Cadre, although it had become clear by August that federal structures would not figure in the final draft.¹⁴⁵ As final text of the constitution was not distributed until weeks before the vote, though, the PDG leadership's position towards the referendum was ambiguous until mid-September. Touré in particular announced that if crucial amendments securing the federations were adopted, the party could throw their support behind a

¹⁴¹ “Renseignements a/s Ravitaillement de Conakry en Viande,” no. 855-304/C/PS.2, 8 May 1958, ANS 17G622.

¹⁴² “Statistique concernant l'exode des Foulah lors des événements de Conakry,” Rapport de Monsieur le Secrétaire Général Masson, Incidents de Conakry (29 Avril au 4 Mai), CAOM 1AFFPOL/2143.

¹⁴³ See Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 280-281.

¹⁴⁴ For the outlines of the debate, especially the question of regional federations in the overseas territories and the executive branch of the reformed French community, see Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 308-322; de Benoist, *l'Afrique Occidentale Française*, 409-414; Chafer, *The End of Empire*, 173-180; and in particular Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 279-325.

¹⁴⁵ Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 280-281.

“yes” vote.¹⁴⁶

A shift in the PRA’s position towards the referendum would soon put pressure on Touré and the PDG. The federal PRA leaders had met with their RDA counterparts to discuss forming a common front to advocate for federal structure within the new French Community. At a July PRA congress in Cotonou, however, segments of the party had surged ahead, advocating for immediate and complete independence. After negotiating with those who advocated for territorial membership in federal structure, notably Senegal’s Leopold Sedar Senghor, a compromise was struck: the PRA would call for independence, but would expect the new nations to join the French community immediately after the referendum.¹⁴⁷ As Cooper has demonstrated, the mobilization of the word “independence” gave PRA politicians leverage against their RDA rivals.¹⁴⁸ In Guinea, Barry Diawadou and Barry III used the language of independence as a rhetorical cudgel against Touré and the PDG. A writer in *La Voix du Peuple*, the PRA newspaper directed by Barry Diawadou, claimed that the PDG leaders were “a SELLOUT to the Whites, to the power of money, [and] to colonialism.”¹⁴⁹ The article capped off Barry Diawadou’s dramatic (and most likely ideologically insincere) transformation from a Gaullist conservative puppet of the Futa chieftaincy to an anti-colonial firebrand. It was a move rivaled only by Touré’s own conversion from anti-establishment gadfly to head of government only too willing to use the same tools of repression he had previously condemned.

De Gaulle planned a barnstorming tour through the African territories to whip up support

¹⁴⁶ Sékou Touré, “L’Afrique et le Référendum,” *La Liberté* 133, 25 July 1958. On the last-minute distribution of the final constitution text, see van Walraven, *Yearning for Relief*, 165.

¹⁴⁷ Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 295-296.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 296.

¹⁴⁹ “Tour d’Horizon,” *La Voix du Peuple* 2, 6 June 1958.

for the constitution. His August visit to Conakry was a well-publicized disaster, complete with antagonistic speeches by Touré and de Gaulle, after which the latter made preliminary plans to pull out all French presence in the prodigal former colony.¹⁵⁰ Articles in the PDG newspaper *La Liberté* began to hint that the PDG leadership would come out in favor of the increasingly popular “no” vote, but still allowed room for Touré to tack back and support the constitution.¹⁵¹ Immediately following the 4th territorial PDG conference held on September 14th, Sékou Touré and the rest of the party leadership advocated definitively for the “no.”¹⁵² Two days later, Touré and Saïfoulaye Diallo met with Barry Diawadou and Barry III to discuss forming a common front, and the PRA leaders agreed to join the PDG in campaigning against the constitution.¹⁵³ Even Almamy Sory Dara Barry, the champion of French rule and the quintessential colonial chief, told “all those who give credit to my voice” to vote “no” in order to “preserve the unity” that Guinea had recently enjoyed.¹⁵⁴ On September 28th, 94% of Guineans did just that.

In order to write a history of Guinea after the Second World War, one is almost obligated

¹⁵⁰ Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization*, 152.

¹⁵¹ “Sur le projet constitutionnel,” *La Liberté* no. 135, 1 September 1958; Sékou Touré, “Le P.D.G. Contre l’Intimidation,” *La Liberté* no. 136, 10 September 1958.

¹⁵² “NON! à la constitution, OUI! à l’indépendance,” *La Liberté* no. 137, 14 September 1958; Lewin, *Ahmed Sékou Touré (1922-1984), Président de la Guinée de 1958 à 1984* v. 2 (Paris: Harmattan, 2009), 130.

¹⁵³ Lewin, *Ahmed Sékou Touré* v. 2, 131; Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses*, 191-192; Kéïta, *P.D.G.*, 143. The Guinean PRA had by that point broken with the leadership of the other PRA territorial parties, in particular Senghor in Senegal – although dissident factions in these now pro-“yes” parties were common. The only other territorial party to advocate for the “no” was Bakary Djibo’s Sawaba, which sent a delegation to Guinea in late August to coordinate a common front. Signaling a broader base of resistance to the constitution, other non-Sawaba politicians and splinter groups of rival parties also argued for a “no.” See Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 303-323; and van Walraven, *Yearning for Relief*, 186.

¹⁵⁴ Kéïta, *P.D.G.*, 144.

to grapple with the causes of 1958's resounding 'no,' and thus the territory's temporary divergence from every other French territory. Schmidt, among others, has argued that the vote reflected the bottom-up influence of previously marginalized groups like women and youth, who pressured Sékou Touré towards immediate independence until the PDG leader eventually caved mere days before the election.¹⁵⁵ Cooper, on the other hand, argues for a more top-down process – namely, that Touré had marginalized any possible opponents by the 1957 elections and could therefore, like other African party leaders in the former AOF, impose his will from the top. In particular, he points to the lopsided results, which were near negative images of results throughout French West Africa.¹⁵⁶

If, as Cooper argues, the referendum's results were reflective of a growing Soviet-style electoral control, Touré and the PDG's grip on Guinea was still both imperfect and uneven, and only partial in the Futa Jallon in particular. In only six administrative regions in Guinea did support for the 'yes' comprise more than 5 per cent of the total votes cast. All six were in the Futa Jallon. Those Futa regions also had higher rates of abstention than the rest of the territory. For example, in Labé, where 'yesses' were 40.1% of the total, 39.6% of registered voters sat out

¹⁵⁵ See Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses*; "Top Down or Bottom Up? Nationalist Mobilization Reconsidered, with Special Reference to Guinea (French West Africa)" *The American Historical Review* 110:4 (2005), 975-1014; and "Anticolonial Nationalism in French West Africa: What Made Guinea Unique?," *African Studies Review* 52, no. 2 (2009), 1-34. On the role of women specifically, both before and after the referendum, see Céline Pauthier, "Tous derrière, les femmes devant! Femmes, représentations sociales et mobilisation politique en Guinée (1945-2006)," in *Perspectives sur le genre en Afrique*, ed. by Odile Goerg (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007), 219-238. On the role of teachers and students in particular, see Abdoulaye Diallo, "Sékou Touré et l'indépendance Guinéenne: Déconstruction d'un mythe et retour sur l'histoire," *Outre-mers* 96, nos. 358/359 (2008), 267-288.

¹⁵⁶ Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 317. The general lack of controversy on election day supports Cooper's characterization of party troops largely falling in line. I would add one caveat, though: in some regions, and in particular the Futa Jallon, PDG officials benefited from the assistance of their former rivals in the PRA, who also were effective in making sure that their supporters followed the coalition.

the referendum. Within the Labé region, there was even a significantly higher rate of abstention in those polling places that registered larger amounts of ‘yes’ votes.¹⁵⁷ The correlation between higher percentages of ‘yes’ votes and abstentions in the Futa Jallon can’t be explained by chiefly intimidation alone. In the whole of the Futa there was only one complaint of a village chief demanding people vote in support of the constitution while standing outside a polling place. That location registered zero ‘yes’ votes.¹⁵⁸ In fact, the results support Jean Suret-Canale’s argument that the power of chiefs to press people into voting a certain way, which had never been particularly effective after 1954, had weakened significantly following the elimination of their official positions.¹⁵⁹ By the time voting started, the only groups supporting continued association with the French state were portions of the chieftaincy, specifically in the Futa, and former soldiers afraid of losing their French government-paid pensions.¹⁶⁰ Those groups were not successful at mobilizing people to vote, thus the higher total of abstention in the Futa, a region where a larger portion of the population would be more amenable to voting ‘yes.’ The results in the Futa also reflected the PDG’s uneven penetration into the region. The political parties, and most importantly their youth and women’s wings, were the main groups mobilizing voters for the ‘no’ throughout Guinea and in the Futa Jallon.¹⁶¹ In urban centers and *runde*, their appeals were effective. But large swaths of the Futa, especially in Labé region communities comprised of

¹⁵⁷ Local results in the Futa from the 1958 referendum can be found in ANOM 1AFFPOL/3517.

¹⁵⁸ 1958 referendum results, Pita, Maci IV, ANOM 1AFFPOL/3517.

¹⁵⁹ Jean Suret-Canale, “La Fin de la Chefferie en Guinée,” *Journal of African History* 7:3 (1996), 491-92.

¹⁶⁰ The latter group’s concerns proved to be well founded. See Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 41-44.

¹⁶¹ Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization in Guinea*, 163-166.

free but not elite status Fulbe, either lacked local PDG structures or ignored activists' arguments. Sékou Touré would later point to the Futa's higher 'yes' vote total as proof of Fulbe partiality towards the 'French colonialists,' and there were certainly segments of Fulbe society that did not want to see the French leave. No longer beholden to the chiefs but at the same time not attracted by PDG rhetoric, however, many voters in the Futa simply decided to stay at home or enjoy some *attaya* rather than vote.

Following the referendum, the PDG government turned to consolidating its position in a newly independent Guinea. De Gaulle made good on his promise that Guinea would enjoy independence with "all its consequences," and by the end of 1958 all official French governmental presence in Guinea had ended, including the cadre of civil servants that had run much of the territorial administration.¹⁶² Many Guinean civil servants working in other French territories were faced with the choice of returning to their territory of birth to aid in its transition to a post-colonial nation or staying within the French administration (see Chapter Five). Several, including Diallo Telli, one of the few Guineans with an advanced degree who would later become the first Secretary General of the African Union, came home. Just as many, including several Fulbe still serving in the French armed forces, chose to stay abroad.

Barry Diawadou and Barry III faced a decision of their own. The September 16th agreement between the PRA and PDG had only temporarily suspended competing political activity in order to present a common front. The two Fulbe politicians, therefore, had the option of restarting the PRA and forming an opposition to the PDG. In fact, a *de jure* multiparty system

¹⁶² The Guinean administration was dominated by French civil servants up to independence, due to the history of weak education in the territory and the only recent Africanization of the administration. In addition to leaving few individuals qualified to run many of the government's basic functions, the French pullout was often spectacularly petty; to wit, before leaving French administrators cut phone lines, dismantled factories, and even went as far to crack the state china. See Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization*, 171-172; Morgenthau, *Political Parties*, 74.

was enshrined in the first constitution. However, the two politicians saw the writing on the wall. Independence – and more importantly their position advocating for the “no,” as most prominent PRA leaders had switched to support the “yes” in the weeks before the referendum – meant that they had been severed from their PRA allies in other territories. Their local party had made little headway in organizing, and had been defeated in every round of elections since its creation. The opposition was effectively dead, a victim of poor planning and the unique circumstances of Guinea’s rapid move towards independence. Diawadou eventually joined the government as the Minister of National Education, although according to his family he never joined the PDG.¹⁶³ Barry III also joined the government as Secretary of State in charge of economic affairs, but likewise was not integrated into the party.¹⁶⁴ Both would remain at the margins of the government and the new Guinean elite through the 1960s.

In November, Sékou Touré set off for his first visit as a head of state to Liberia and Ghana, the former one of the few territories that had remained independent, at least in international status, during the colonial period, the latter one of the first independent post-colonial nations in Africa and home to the continent’s most prominent pan-Africanist head of state, Kwame Nkrumah. At the same time, rumors of resistance to the new government began to circulate. According to French intelligence services, the first signs of discontent started in the Futa. Former soldiers in Labé protested against the government due to unpaid pensions. Following one policeman’s beating of truck driver with an overloaded rig, a mob in Pita attacked the commissariat and chased all of the Susu policemen out of town. In December 1959, religious unrest against the “communist government” that had started in Kankan soon spread to Mamou. Finally, at the level

¹⁶³ Interview with Tierno Oumar Barry, Conakry, 11 February 2013.

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Alpha Barry, Conakry, 14 February 2013.

of the party leadership, a group of “Marxists” and “radicals” in the PDG attempted to overthrow Sékou Touré in favor of Saïfoulaye Diallo.¹⁶⁵ Challenges to the independent country only grew over the course of 1959. The economic situation deteriorated rapidly, not surprising given the disruption of divorce with the metropole along with the French government’s attempts at destabilization. Meat and fish shortages started to appear in the capital, and Sékou Touré blamed manipulation and speculation by businessmen and smugglers.¹⁶⁶ The government instituted price controls and restrictions on foreign trade, but the initiatives were largely ineffective.¹⁶⁷

The January 1961 elections for the President of the Republic of Guinea, the first of its kind, took place in such an unsettled political and economic climate. The outcome, however, was never in doubt. Sékou Touré was the only candidate and there was no organized opposition.¹⁶⁸ Just in case, Touré mobilized all the resources available to ensure his overwhelming victory. The election was both a chance for him to consolidate control over a fractured party and an opportunity for the party to consolidate control over areas of Guinea that had resisted its spread. The PDG branch in Labé exhorted the region’s voters to “repair the shame of its 27,000 ‘yesses’”

¹⁶⁵ MFOM, “Renseignements sur la Guinée,” no. 2492/B.E., CADC 51QO/11; 7e Regiment de Parachutistes Coloniaux, “Bulletin de Renseignements no. 4,” 15 November 1958, CADC 51QO/11; “Eventuelles Manoeuvres au sein de Gouvernement,” 17 November 1958.

¹⁶⁶ Ambassade de France en Guinée, “Éphéméride Politiques, Août 1960,” no. 749/A.L., 8 September 1960, CADC 51QO/43.

¹⁶⁷ Ambassade de France en Guinée, “Éphéméride Politiques, Octobre 1960,” no. 829/A.L., 3 November 1960, CADC 51QO/43; Ambassade de France en Guinée, “Éphéméride Politiques, Mars 1961,” no. 216/A.L., 6 April 1961, CADC 51QO/43.

¹⁶⁸ “This was the single greatest mistake of his life,” Diawadou’s son claims about his father not restarting an opposition party. Barry III and Diawadou’s peripheral status in the PDG government – not part of the party themselves, and without support an autonomous party – gave them little leverage for those, notably Ismaël Touré, bent on their destruction, first political, then existential. Interview with Tierno Oumar Barry, Conakry, 11 February 2013.

in the 1958 referendum by voting *en masse* for the “architect of independence.”¹⁶⁹ On January 15, 1961, Touré was elected, carrying 99.37% of the vote.¹⁷⁰ He would be reelected as Guinea’s president in 1968, 1975, and 1982, each time with similarly gaudy results. Contestation between rival politicians would be pushed to internal PDG putsches or an exiled opposition, but in Guinea the first era of multiparty politics had come to a close.

The period between the creation of the 1957 Loi Cadre government and the 1961 presidential election was marked by both contestation and consolidation amongst Guinea’s political elite. Opposition to the PDG rooted in the Futa flourished for a brief moment in 1958. Yet the rapidly accelerating pace of political change during that year, as well as the PDG’s growing control of local and territorial politics, pushed Fulbe politicians like Barry III and Barry Diawadou towards negotiating a place, although at the margins, within the emerging post-colonial order. The September 1958 “no” might have signaled a drastic break from Guinea in the realm of international and French post-imperial politics, but in villages in the Futa and many neighborhoods in Guinea the ramifications of such a rapidly achieved independence wouldn’t start to be felt until well into the following year.

It’s tempting to cast as both tragic and misguided those sons of Futa chiefs who stood at the sea’s shore and told the rising tide to halt. Such an interpretation, however, reflects a misunderstanding of this period in Guinean history. PRA leaders realized by June 1958 that independence and a drastic reconfiguration of the relationship between the former colony and metropole was on the horizon. What shape that relationship would take between Futa society and

¹⁶⁹ Ambassade de France en Guinée, “Éphéméride Politiques, Décembre 1960,” no. 5/A.L., 7 January 1961, CADC 51QO/43.

¹⁷⁰ Ambassade de France en Guinée, “Éphéméride Politiques, Janvier 1961,” no. 98/A.L., 9 February 1961, CADC 51QO/43.

outside political powers, be they seated in Conakry, Dakar, or Paris, was far from clear, though, even after the referendum severed formal ties between Guinea and the French community. Given imperfect knowledge of a muddled situation, Fulbe leaders and their followers accepted the PDG's rise and sought to find some sort of accommodation. The 1961 presidential election and the political consolidation it reflected did not bring an end to contestation over how that new post-colonial situation would shake out. Those debates and battles were simply pushed underground, only to bubble back up over the 23 years that Guinea's First Republic reigned.

Conclusion

A series of elections that featured increasingly wider participation and greater stakes structured the first period of multiparty politics in Guinea from 1945 to 1961. Politicians, political activists, and the parties they formed engaged in a struggle of ideas and tactics to ensure electoral success. At the most practical, these maneuvers were about winning votes and strengthening the party. At the most abstract, campaigns and speeches became debates about the future of whichever community an individual or group most associated themselves with, be it a *runde* in Labé, the Futa Jallon as a region, or Guinea as a whole, sovereign nation-state or part of a reformed French community. The result of this process was that by 1961 a pattern of opposition to Conakry in the Futa had taken the form of a regionalist rebuke against outsiders. On one level, regionalism among Fulbe elites grew from the same sorts of conversations Fulbe exceptionalism that occupied AGV members, Barry Diawadou, Barry III, and Saïfoulaye Diallo, a discourse that tapped into a history of social hierarchies, colonial rule, and Fulbe culture specific to the region. On another, elite Fulbe opposition grew out of the exigencies of building political alliances during this era, which pushed individuals and groups to accentuate affinities and difference with segments of Futa society. Lastly, the work required to build stable and strong

parties – grassroots organizing in the countryside and city, control of public space through sometimes violent means, highlighting wedge issues in newspapers and speeches – welded ethnic identification to political community.

To talk about the particular history of Fulbe society, for both Fulbe and non-Fulbe alike, was also to imagine what aspects of ‘tradition’ would continue on in a ‘modern’ Guinea, or more generally if there was even a place for the Fulbe in the post-colonial nation at all. These conversation – as well as the war of strategy and mobilization waged by rival political parties – reached a climax during the run-up and aftermath of the 1957 elections for the territorial assembly. Often seen as the birth of the Guinean nation, the PDG’s conquest of the Futa Jallon only cauterized ethno-regional division, leaving a mark that would shape internal Guinean politics going forward.

Starting in 1958 and picking up steam through the ‘60s, the PDG-led government expressed its intent to grind smooth those regional and/or ethnic welds through the dual policy of sweeping reform and construction of the Guinean nation. The next chapter will examine in part whether the post-colonial government’s claim to make Fulbe into Guineans was genuine, if possible at all. In this post-colonial period, as we will see, Guineans grappled with two competing historical trends: the rise of an anti-colonial nationalism, on the one hand, and the growing calcification of the Fulbe fragment therein on the other. The history of the first period of multi-party politics in Guinea presented above demonstrates that in the *moyen durée* history of post-WWII Guinean political history, the linking of ethnic identification and political community has proved to be just as important as the anti-colonial nationalism that was intended to defeated it. “The last bastion of Feudalism’ and ‘we *rustres* will unite if need be’ might lack a degree of certitude and conciseness. The combination of political thought and practice those phrases

represented, however, should be included in any vocabulary of Guinean political history, right alongside that iconic date filled with promise and, for some, impending peril: Sep. 28th, 1958.

Chapter Four

Producing the “Particular Situation”: Reform and Political Conspiracy during the First Republic, 1961-1976

In October 1958, optimism reigned within the sovereign nation-state of Guinea, despite what many considered to be a difficult road ahead in the near term. While some Western intelligence services worried about possible alignment with the Soviet Union, international praise for the first French territory in Africa to gain independence was widespread.¹ Along with Ghana’s President Kwame Nkrumah, Guinea’s Sékou Touré came to represent a new generation of African leaders who articulated a post-colonial pan-Africanist vision of the continent’s future. The new president had laid out a path forward that was based upon an anti-ethnic, inclusionary nationalist movement. The future was bright. Guinea had a charismatic leader with a clear vision, and most importantly a public that was eager to construct their new nation.

By 1968, the first of a series of political purges was in the works, and years of economic hardship due to failed government planning had reduced the vast majority of Guineans to severe poverty. The early ‘70s witnessed increasingly violent repression, and with the “Fulbe Plot” of 1976, previously hidden ethnic conflict not seen since decolonization reemerged into the public sphere. The Guinean First Republic would continue until Sékou Touré’s death in 1984. But by the late 1970s, even the most strident Touré supporters recognized that the Guinean nation-building project was at least partially dysfunctional. In this sense, while Guinea may have diverged from other former French colonies by opting for the “no” in 1958, in the midterm the nation joined a more general trend towards the consolidation of power by single-party regimes and the gradual closing of opportunities for opposition.

¹ *Guinée, prelude à l’indépendance* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1958); Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press 1963 [1961]), 227-235.

Several scholars have attempted to identify which aspects of the post-colonial state caused such a consolidation of power, finding fault either in forms of colonial rule or the unsuitability of “Western” state forms – namely, the nation-state – for African societies.² While these ambitious models open a space for comparison within the analytical category of “Africa,” they also neglect the historicity of specific political communities. The colonial state or “Western” ideas about statehood shaped how Africans interacted with the various governments that developed in the wake of independence, and offered ruling parties some – but not all – of the tools to control populations. Yet local contingencies of governance rather than state types were the prime force shaping Guinea’s post-colonial trajectory. It is that local, internal frame that shapes the historical account that follows below.

This chapter examines local Guinean politics from 1958-1976, and more specifically the relationship between Fulbe communities and the post-colonial Sékou Touré-led government. The argument presented below has two main components. First, the series of social, political, and economic reforms enacted by the PDG-led government following independence engendered an atmosphere of mutual distrust between political leaders in Conakry, on the one hand, and large segments of the Fulbe community in the Futa Jallon on the other. Resentment from both sides eventually unraveled the coalition that had secured the PDG’s “conquest” of the Futa during the 1950s. Some of these policies grew from the PDG’s ideology of egalitarianism through African socialism. Others arose from the practical concerns of building a functioning state in uncertain

² For the former, see Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) For the latter, see Basil Davidson, *The Black Man’s Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Random House, 1992), to name just two of the most prominent studies. For a recent, more comprehensive approach to examining the state in Africa that still identifies colonial legacies but also covers the whole of the post-colonial era, see Crawford Young, *The Postcolonial State in Africa: Fifty Years of Independence* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012).

and at times hostile national, West African, and international contexts. The vast majority of PDG initiative, though, sought to impose closer political control over the country as a whole. In the Futa Jallon in particular, reforms were meant to undermine the power of both “modern” and “traditional” elites, including the Fulbe politicians Barry Diawadou and Ibrahima Barry III, who had resisted the PDG’s rise during the 1950s. Counter to portrayals of Sékou Touré as a megalomaniac bent upon absolute control starting in the 1950s, or mirror-imaged accounts of the Futa elite’s collaboration with foreign intelligence services in order to submit the country to neo-colonialism, animosity between political leaders in Conakry and the Futa Fulbe accrued in large part from a series of smaller decisions and unforeseen consequences. Furthermore, by widening access to mosques, fields, and administration buildings, the PDG opened avenues for non-elite Fulbe families to gain religious, economic, and political prestige, in effect widening the circle of those persons willing to fight for the preservation of an elite version of Fulbe culture and society. Ultimately, government-enacted reforms temporarily ensured the PDG’s short-term ascendancy in the Futa Jallon but eroded its long-term base of support in the region.

Second, the chapter argues that the 1968 to 1976 “era of plots” gave rise to a post-colonial politics where a corpus of “hidden” ethnic characteristics became an explanatory device for understanding purported motives and “traitorous” actions during the 1970s.³ Over the course of the twentieth century, ethnic communities in Guinea became both standardized (in language, culture, religious practice, etc.) and tied with a series of characteristics through a combination of colonial ethnography and popular culture. During the first decade of the post-colonial era,

³ While the “era of plots” or the “reign of terror” is often dated to the 1970 Portuguese-backed invasion of Conakry. I contend that plots were part of the PDG’s organizational culture dating back to at least April 1958, and the watershed moment – namely, when the inquisitorial gaze of the PDG turned to its own top echelons – first occurred in 1968, with the “Kaman-Fodéba Plot.” The 1970 invasion intensified what was an already existing trend towards purges.

ethnically tinged explanations for accused treason or subversive activities were pushed into the concealed world of conspiracy and whispered words spoken amongst intimate friends. This stifling of “ethnicity talk” was the result of the government’s robust anti-ethnic policy, which outlawed any outward manifestation of ethnic allegiance. Punishment for violations of the anti-ethnic laws increased over time. Up to the 1970s, markers of membership in an ethnic community were commonly thought to be the result of historic developments, ones that would eventually be overcome by Guinean nationalism. With the era of increased repression that culminated in the 1976 “Fulbe plot,” though, the previously hidden world of ethnic characteristics burst into the open, and what had before been a result of historical process became a fundamental aspect of the Fulbe identity. Thus, accusations about treason and the political conflict from which they sprung became conversations about belonging and ethnicity, leading in large part to a recent political history that has been defined by the coterminous boundaries of ethnic and political community. The PDG government didn’t create the idea that ethnicities had certain characteristics; they did, however, make such a mode of thought a central aspect of Guinean politics.

This chapter’s structure mirrors its argument. The first half examines the set of economic, political, and social reforms the PDG enacted throughout Guinea. These policies had variable effects on Guinea’s different regions, and this chapter considers what resulted in the Futa in particular. The second half of the chapter turns to competition within an emerging political elite and the age of plots that followed. It charts the process by which Fulbe former opposition members were marginalized over the course of the 1960s, and how the age of plots resulted from pervasive political instability. This section is capped off by an analysis of Sékou Touré’s August 1976 speech announcing the “Fulbe Plot,” a public text that drew together and reinforced the

historical trajectories turned into social “truths” that produced the “particular situation” in the Futa.

As a whole, the chapter roots the political history of the First Republic in the local and daily concerns of the state. Furthermore, it locates the intersection of “hidden” and “visible” aspects of Guinean politics – both important parts of political discourse in post-colonial Guinea and deserving of equal consideration⁴ – at the public site of the plot. What results is a more complex and locally situated explanation for state repression and ethnic violence than what is often advanced in other general studies on the trajectories of the general post-colonial African states.

Controlling the Economy, Sealing the Borders

Guinea’s post-colonial government faced a host of problems immediately after gaining independence, chief of which was stabilizing the nation’s economy. During the previous sixty years, the vast majority of Guinea’s exterior trade was oriented towards the French metropole. Following the September 1958 referendum, the French withdrew from the former colony, halting all material support and refusing to recognize the newly independent state.⁵ The desire to cut ties

⁴ Ellis and ter Haar argue that religion and politics have occupied a single field of maneuver in post-colonial Africa. As such, an emic analysis of African politics recognizes that the “hidden” world, occupied for example by spirits and witchcraft, are not only tied to the visible world of both elite and local politics, but in fact that the former plays a central role as a explanatory device for the former. This chapter includes several examples of religious practices explaining political events. It also argues that ideas about ethnicity and ethnic traits, pushed to the “hidden” realm under the “anti-ethnic” First Republic, functioned in a similar way. See Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar, “Religion and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 36, no. 2 (Jun., 1998), 175-210; Ellis and ter Haar, “Religion and Politics: taking African epistemologies seriously,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 45, no. 3 (2007), 385-401.

⁵ Notably, the French government continued to fund the construction of the Fria bauxite processing plant, which was planned to satisfy much of France’s demand for aluminum. Claude Rivière, *Guinea: The Mobilization of a People*, trans. Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 84.

was mutual. Following Nasser's Egypt, Tito's Yugoslavia, and Nehru's India, Touré and the PDG leadership adopted a policy of "positive neutralism" in relation to Eastern and Western Bloc countries, and set about the difficult work untangling Guinea from French economic dominance.⁶ Guinea left the French-run CFA zone in March 1960 and established its own currency, allowing for internal control over financial policy but unmooring Guinea's franc from the more stable French franc. Later that year, the government established the state-run *Comptoir Guinéen du Commerce Extérieur* (CGCE) and tasked it with controlling foreign trade, intended in part to steer exports and imports away from the former metropole. The organization was given a monopoly on business with Eastern Bloc countries and control over percentages ranging from 30% to 75% of export crops such as coffee, bananas, and palm kernels.⁷ Combined with a new and more volatile currency, the move towards a state-controlled economy led to a flight of foreign investment, causing in turn rampant inflation and periodic shortages of basic goods. To stabilize Guinea's domestic economics, the government then established the *Comptoir Guinéen du Commerce Intérieur* (CGCI). The CGCI assumed control of all wholesale transactions and transportation, set standard prices for food and consumer goods, and established state-run model stores in all cities and villages to ensure a steady flow of merchandise.⁸ The two were intended to work in tandem, organizing internal distribution while at the same time tightly controlling the small portal through which goods flowed in and out of the country.

⁶ On Guinea's international diplomacy, see Mari S. MacDonald, "The Challenge of Guinean Independence, 1958-1971," (PhD Diss. University of Toronto, 2009).

⁷ Rivière, *Guinea*, 105.

⁸ Rivière, *Guinea*, 107; Ansoumane Doré, *Économie et Société en République de Guinée, 1958-1984* (Chenôve: Éditions Bayardère, 1986), 408-409; Amadou Bokar N'diade, "Capital Formation and Ethnic Entrepreneurship in Modern Guinea," (PhD diss., The University of Arizona, 1999), 255-256.

Together, the CGCE and CGCI represented an attempt to minimize instability through state authority. They were also a means for an emerging post-colonial political elite to exert control over independent bases of power, most notably merchants and foreign firms. Both proved to be short-lived experiments. The hastily created organizations failed to relieve the dual problems of product shortages in the interior and runaway inflation. The CGCE did not stimulate international trade and was undermined by smuggling to and from neighboring territories. Furthermore, at first meant to reduce the presence of French firms in Conakry, the shift towards state control of exports had the primary effect of pushing out mid-sized Lebanese-owned trading companies and small-scale African merchants who had previously served many of the rural markets and less profitable urban centers in the interior.⁹ The CGCI performed no better. According to officials, more than 120,000 tons of goods sat in government warehouses in Conakry, the more perishable foodstuffs spoiled or eaten by vermin while awaiting transport to the interior.¹⁰ Less than one year after their creation, both organizations were broken apart into smaller state-run groups serving specific sectors of the economy.

The government continued to struggle with developing a coherent economic policy over the next three years. Commerce and trade would be opened up to middle- and small-scale merchants in order to ensure supply of goods into the interior. When prices invariably rose in reaction to pent-up demand, the government would blame merchants for price gouging, limiting their numbers, opening up state-run stores, and introducing mandated lower prices. The lower prices of goods, restrictions on legal trade, and lack of consumer goods in Guinea encouraged illicit exportation of basic agricultural goods such as flour and fruit to neighboring countries.

⁹ Doré, *Économie et Société*, 408-409; Rivière, *Guinea*, 108-109.

¹⁰ Jean-Pierre Hadengue to Président de la République, "Réorganisation de commerce intérieur Guinéen," MAE, 7 March 1961, ANF AG/5(FPU)/50.

Smugglers would return with hard currency and commercial goods to sell in the interior. State-run stores were unable to provide for even the most basic goods, driving people to the black market to buy things like cooking oil and wheat. The government then opened up trade again to ensure supplies, and the cycle would begin again.

It was in this troubled economic climate that the Guinean government enacted a sweeping set of reforms called the Loi-Cadre of 1964. None of the economic policies were new. The overall number of merchants was decreased and all private traders were required to reapply for work permits. Smuggling and black market trading were, yet again, outlawed. The number of frontier guards was doubled to stop smuggling, and state-controlled enterprises would gradually take over all importing and exporting.¹¹ The law represented the first time, however, that all of the centralized economic reforms were put into place at the same time while also increasing the powers of the state to enforce the new laws.

A second and more important set of reforms enacted by the Loi Cadre applied to government appointees. Prominent figures within the government had supposedly grown wealthy from running state-owned enterprises while forging alliances with many of Guinea's leading businessmen. The two groups' combined influence represented a competing pole of influence, one that could possibly undermine PDG's dominant position within Guinea. In order to weaken these potential usurpers, the Loi Cadre instituted a Commission on the Verification of Property, a body of party activists charged with determining whether or not property held by administrative and political appointees since 1958 had been gained honestly. In addition, government workers and political leader were banned from participating in private commerce, and all those found to

¹¹ Ahmed Sékou Touré, *8 Novembre 1964* (Conakry: Parti Démocratique de Guinée, Imprimerie Patrice Lumumba, 1965), 21-22.

have conducted trade at any time since independence were immediately relieved of their posts.¹² Lastly, the Loi Cadre political reforms reduced the number of *comités de base*, the often-unruly local PDG party sub-branches that had bucked centrally mandated directives the previous year.¹³ The new initiatives represented a drastic political consolidation by the President and his close allies.¹⁴ The PDG leadership's aim was clear: starve possible rivals, notably merchants and politicians, of independent power bases while instituting strict control over activists who had since the 1950s leaned towards radical iconoclasm rather than party orthodoxy.

The 1964 Loi Cadre may have been geared towards controlling the country's active base and leadership, but it also included widespread ramifications for the majority of Guinea's population. Communities in the Futa Jallon felt the full brunt of many of the reforms. Smuggling, black-market trade, and illegal emigration had been outlawed since independence, but the Loi Cadre signaled a shift towards strict enforcement of the ban. In the aftermath of the economic reforms, confidential government security briefings included a steady beat of incidents and arrests along the border and in marketplaces, many of them in the Futa Jallon or involving Fulbe. In April 1965, border guards and members of the *Jeunesse de la Révolution Démocratique Africaine* (JRDA), the paramilitary youth wing of the PDG, fired on a group of Fulbe attempting

¹² Touré, *8 Novembre 1964*, 23-24.

¹³ The PDG's central leadership had struggled with imposing party unity since the 1950s, most notably during the "Mamou deviation." See R. W. Johnson, "The Parti Démocratique de Guinée and the Mamou 'deviation,'" in *African Perspectives: papers in history, politics and economics of Africa presented to Thomas Hodgkin*, edited by C. Allen and R. W. Johnson (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970) 347-368.

¹⁴ Even the French intelligence services, often prone to jeremiads warning of an imminent Soviet takeover in a fervently communist Guinea, saw the Loi Cadre primarily as a power grab by Touré and his confidants. See Phillippe Koenig, Ambassadeur de France en Guinée (AmbaFrance Guinée) to Maurice Couve de Murville, MAE Direction d'Afrique-Levant, "'Loi-cadre' de 1964," 23 November 1964, CADN, 163PO/6/1453.

to smuggle goods into Portuguese Guinea (Guinea Bissau). The following month, economic police seized a herd of cows in the Dalaba region – located in the central Futa and more than 100 km away from the nearest border – supposedly because the herd’s owners were preparing to smuggle their cattle out of the country.¹⁵ Merchants and herders in the Futa were quick to express their discontent, and in June, Sékou Touré was forced to hold a series of rallies around Labé.¹⁶ The government’s attempts to allay Guinean’s complaints did not come with a loosening of restrictions, though. A fundamental conflict remained; while trying to gain control of the national economy, the government was also undercutting the livelihoods of many within the Futa and Guinea as a whole.

Security forces also sought to erect barriers to internal migration. Strict laws attempted to stem the flow of migrants to Guinea’s rapidly growing urban centers, as the “rural exodus” undermined government attempts to boost agricultural output in the interior. Following the implementation of the Loi Cadre, groups of police and JRDA members swept through urban centers picking up the “fake unemployed,” primarily recent migrants with no or only part-time employment.¹⁷ One security briefing reported the arrest of a large group of Fulbe laborers in Conakry. Each one was fined 100,000 Guinean francs – equal to the price of over 1400 kg of rice or about \$3000 2013 US, well above the yearly wages of an average worker¹⁸ – for illegally moving to an urban center. As the men could not pay the exorbitant fine, they were handed over

¹⁵ Le Quotidien de la Sécurité (QS), Ministère de la Défense Nationale et de la Sécurité (MDNS), no. 113/D.G.S.S., 19 May 1965, ANG 374W/2.

¹⁶ QS, MDNS, no. 126/D.G.S.S. 1, 3 June 1965 ANG 374W/2.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Price estimate taken from Doré, *Économie et Société*, 188-189.

to local police to be transported back to their home villages.¹⁹

Rural migrants weren't the only urbanites disgruntled with the Loi Cadre. Even before the Loi Cadre, Guineans argued that the post-colonial state was doing no better than the French. One garage owner in the capital remarked that the 1958 "non" demanding independence didn't really change anything; yes, Guineans were no longer submitted to foreign repression, but many of the restrictions put in place by the government were against PDG ideals and no different from its colonial predecessor.²⁰ The laws imposed by the government in 1964 only raised the volume of public critique. Government security reports from Pita, a town in the central Futa Jallon, listed protests from local townsfolk about the yearly government requisitions of cattle²¹ while women in Conakry complained that rice shortages had paralyzed the city.²²

Security reports depict a tug of war between what had previously been lightly restricted migration and trade systems and a government attempting to exert control over its citizens. Everyday struggles over the reach of government power occurred throughout Guinea, but Fulbe migrants and merchants featured most prominently in reports of seizures and arrests. Long-term social and economic transformations in the Futa had pushed the region's rural poor to migrate.²³ Migrants from the resource poor Futa believed that opportunity lay in the rapidly growing urban centers of Conakry and Dakar, and economic crisis in Guinea only accelerated the trend towards

¹⁹ QS, MDNS, no. 93/D.G.S.S., 24 April 1965 ANG 374W/2.

²⁰ QS, MDNS, no. 103/D.G.S.S., 6 May 1961, ANG 374W/2.

²¹ QS, MDNS, no. 126/D.G.S.S., 3 June 1965 ANG 374W/2.

²² Ibid.

²³ See Chapter 2.

emigration to the capital or abroad.²⁴ Merchants with roots in the Futa built upon these migrant networks to supply a commodity-deficient economy. In turn, the growing mobility of goods and persons to and from the Futa marked the Fulbe as rebellious.

Touré and the PDG-led government may have, in the end, intended the Fulbe migrants and merchants in particular to feel the brunt of the Loi Cadre. The 1964 law was primarily a means of political consolidation throughout Guinea. The Futa Jallon was the last region to resist the PDG's pre-independence rise to power, and many of the politicians who had opposed the PDG during decolonization were from the region. Prominent traders and former chiefs had supported Fulbe opposition members, and Touré, nicknamed *syl* or "the elephant," didn't easily forget. In a November 18, 1964 speech, the president listed the destructive practices that Guineans had said "no" to when they rejected French colonialism in 1958. Touré referred to the familiar cast of economic saboteurs such as traffickers, illegal migrants, and corrupt civil servants. Notably, he also warned of a "renaissance of racism upon which certain [people] base their foolish hopes of political revenge."²⁵ In revolutionary language, "racism" meant any form of ethnic solidarity that hindered the development of the Guinean national consciousness. The word had a particular history, however, one that was linked closely with the Futa Jallon's recent past. During the period of intense and sometimes violent competition between Fulbe-led political parties and the Touré-led PDG during the 1950s, PDG activists often deployed accusations of "racism" as a means to attack Fulbe chiefs. The Futa, they argued, was the "last bastion" of feudalism. The Fulbe elite, mired in their own sense of superiority and racist thought, had caused the region to diverge from others in Guinea that had adopted the anti-ethnic nationalism

²⁴ See Chapter 5.

²⁵ Touré, *8 Novembre*, 33.

championed by the PDG.²⁶ Therefore, when Touré warned that “racism” was holding back the economic, social, and political development of the country, Guineans were likely to remember the political violence of the 1950s that had hinged upon invocations of Fulbe racism in particular.

The 1964 Loi Cadre had many of the same results as the previous half-decade of experimentation with economic centralization. Guineans today remember the year that followed as one of severe economic deprivation and at times starvation. One man recalled there not being a pair of shoes in all of Guinea, forcing people to make sandals out of strips of bark from young saplings.²⁷ Other accounts mention shortages of basic staple goods like rice and oil.²⁸ The Loi Cadre’s aftermath coincided with a drastic fall in agricultural output due to a failed 3-year economic plan based on Chinese and the Soviet models, further pressing on the country’s poor.²⁹ For the time being, though, Guineans would have to sacrifice for their nation. The Loi Cadre reforms – and the political consolidation they enabled – would stay.

Reforming the Futa Jallon

Struggles over the future of post-colonial Guinea were not restricted to the borders and markets. The PDG-led government enacted an ambitious program of social reform in the interior, seeking to revolutionize interactions among the nation’s citizens and modernize the relationship between the state and the populace. PDG policy, the party’s leaders claimed, grew from celebrating those parts of tradition that could act as a resource for the African Socialist state while eliminating other practices that hindered political, social, and economic development.

²⁶ See Chapter 3.

²⁷ Interview with Tiala Gobaye Mountaye, Labé, 1 March 2013.

²⁸ QS, MDNS, no. 126/D.G.S.S. 1, 3 June 1965 ANG 374W/2.

²⁹ Doré, *Économie et Société*, 445-447.

Intended or not, the reforms also had wide-ranging effects on social hierarchies and daily life in the interior, especially in the Futa Jallon.

Recent studies of social reform under the First Republic have focused on the “peripheral” zone of the Forest Region as a prime terrain for the creation of the modern Guinean state.³⁰ In fact, state attempts at modernization sought to transform particular practices found in each of Guinea’s four regions. Mamadou Sanassi Keïta, a former government official and current PDG activist, had a particular window onto the ideology that informed the First Republic state’s attempts at social, economic, and cultural reform. Starting as a teacher in the Forest Region in 1963, Keïta rose through the ranks of the party, becoming a local *Comité de Base* and JRDA leader. He eventually headed up the regional “Bureau of Philo-ideo-sociology,” the body charged with determining and spreading party ideology, and eventually was named Vice President of the National Assembly and a Regional Governor. According to Keïta, each region had its own “handicapping practice” that the party was forced to overcome. The Forest Region was host to *poro* societies, which were broken by the demystification campaign initiated shortly after independence.³¹ In Haute Guinea, the government tightly controlled *juula* traders who threatened to undermine economic reform put in place by the ’64 Loi Cadre.³² In the Basse Côte, PDG activists forcibly clothed villagers who had previously lived naked, or so Keïta claims. All of these “backwards” practices had to be eliminated to ensure Guinea’s march towards modernity.

³⁰ Jay Straker, *Youth, National, and the Guinean Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); Mike McGovern, “Unmasking the State: Developing Modern Political Subjectivities in Twentieth-Century Guinea,” (PhD Diss. Emory University, 2004); McGovern, *Unmasking the State: Making Guinea Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

³¹ See McGovern, *Unmasking the State*.

³² For the pre-colonial history of the *juula* in Haute Guinée, see Yves Person, *Samori: une révolution dyuula*, 3 vols. (Nîmes: Imprimerie Barnier, 1968-1975); and Philip Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 45-47.

In the Futa Jallon, PDG officials set their sight on the social hierarchies that provided the structure of the pre-colonial theocratic Futa state.³³ Futa Jallon “feudalism,” using PDG terminology, had resulted in the subjugation of hundreds of thousands of persons of slave status even after legal emancipation in 1905. Most importantly, Fulbe elites who benefited from social hierarchies in the Futa Jallon were arguably the greatest impediment to PDG spread into the central plateau during the 1950s. And Fulbe society would prove to be frustratingly resistant to post-colonial reform. In order to undermine the social hierarchies that continued to structure Futa society, the PDG implemented reforms in four domains: agriculture and livestock; Islam; local political administration; and the politics of youth. Before independence, the four had served as pillars that supported the privilege of a small aristocracy. Under the post-colonial state they would serve as the means to enforce the equality of all Guineans.

Agriculture and Livestock

Colonial rule altered the practice of agriculture and animal husbandry that had persisted largely intact under the pre-colonial state, but did little to change the inequality such a system engendered. Adopting a mixed system, French statutes gave the colonial state control over lands not being actively worked (French *mise en valeur*) while defining already cultivated fields as communal property of nearby villages. According to loosely defined “customary law” that determined communal land use, *misside* chiefs assigned the rights to exploit fields within their jurisdictions, which they commonly gave to members of their extended families. As the vast majority of village chiefs within the Futa hailed from the region’s elite, colonial land reforms – including French administrators’ attempts to transform the system of slavery abolished in 1905

³³ Interview with Mamadou Sanassi Keïta, Conakry, 10 March 2013.

into sharecropping – perpetuated inequality between former slaves and masters.³⁴

The PDG government continued colonial statutes based upon *mise en valeur*, but used it instead to nationalize large parcels of land previously managed through customary law. As part of economic reforms meant to transform Guinea into an agricultural exporter through the harnessing of rural “human power,” the government stipulated that it had sole rights over lands within the borders of Guinea. Lands not fully exploited came under the direct control of the central state and were often handed over to poorly run cooperatives, while the administration of village communal lands was assigned to local political authorities.³⁵ The policy could have been used to empower former slaves, who had been alienated from the fruits of their labor under the colonial and pre-colonial systems, through the establishment of permanent rights. Instead, temporary rights to exploit these lands were assigned to communities of former slave status, but actual ownership was never transferred. Thus, as Moustapha Diop argues, the PDG land policy was meant more as a means to weaken the land-owning Futa elite or those who had fallen out of favor with Conakry rather than as a full-faith effort to correct past injustices.³⁶ In fact, the PDG policy severely handicapped former *maccube* claims over property during the neo-liberal Second Republic, as Fulbe elites could produce property records from the colonial period while the *maccube*, empowered after independence, could not. Furthermore, while under the First Republic communities of former slaves gained access to lands previously controlled by elites, a combination of graft and agricultural quotas stifled local production and funneled agricultural

³⁴ Moustapha Diop, *Réformes foncières et gestion des ressources naturelles en Guinée: Enjeux de patrimonialité et de propriété dans le Timbi au Fouta Djallon* (Paris: Karthala, 2007), 87-113.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 121-133.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 261-263.

surplus to a new political elite of civil servants.³⁷

The PDG-led government also turned its eyes towards the Futa's greatest resource: cattle. Initial reforms were not explicitly geared towards undermining the Futa's elite, but rather were meant to supple Guinea's cities with meat. Poor soil on the high plateau restricted agricultural surpluses, but the region's grasslands were ideal for grazing. Like its colonial predecessor, the PDG government sought to tap into one of the few goods the region could export. After the 1964 Loi Cadre, the large herds of cattle in the Futa became integral to state supplies of meat in rapidly growing urban centers, especially Conakry. The government reasoned that the region could provide most of Guinea with meat and instituted quotas, around 10% of the total herd per annum for each cattle-producing administrative region in the Futa. By 1971, for example, the central Futa Pita region was required to provide 3500 head of cattle per year to the state-controlled cattle trading company, *Office Guinéen du Bétail* (OBETAÏL).³⁸ In line with other price controls established for agricultural goods, these state run companies consistently offered 50% or less of market price for the cattle.³⁹ In response to the government's demands and low prices, Futa herders simply left with their livestock for Senegal or Sierra Leone.⁴⁰ Those who stayed would flee into the countryside when government census takers, vaccination teams, or

³⁷ Claude Rivière, "Dynamique des Systèmes Fonciers et Inégalités Sociales: Le Cas Guinéen," *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* 54 (1973), 61-94.

³⁸ Synthèse, SEIS, no. 120/SEIS, 27 May 1971, ANG 374W/9.

³⁹ Synthèse, SEIS, no. 270/SEIS, 11 September 1971, ANG 374W/12; Diop, *Réformes foncières*, 347.

⁴⁰ See Chapter 5.

economic police passed through their villages.⁴¹ Both of these tactics were well established by the 1960s and '70s, as rural communities in the Futa had used similar strategies to escape colonial quotas for cattle and labor.⁴²

OBETAİL also proved to be ineffective at providing sufficient supplies of meat to urban centers. Butchers in the capital complained that they made no money by selling meat, as state-mandated prices on the consumer price of beef meant that money was lost on each kilogram sold.⁴³ Many simply decided to stop selling meat altogether. Furthermore, OBETAİL only furnished a portion of cattle needed to meet base levels of demand, and local officials often parceled out what little meat existed based upon personal or political favor.⁴⁴ Given the high price for meat on the black market, local officials often gave in to the temptation of corruption. In Pita, for example, the state-appointed director of the city's refrigerated warehouse labeled large quantities of meat spoiled and then resold the product at much higher prices.⁴⁵ The state responded to the faulty system in 1975 by cracking down on corruption, increasing the amount of cattle each region in the Futa had to furnish, and, to deal with the problem of skirting cattle censuses, establishing state-run pens in which herders were forced to keep their cattle. The first initiative only temporarily reduced graft. The latter two bought about the exodus of whole

⁴¹ QS, MDNS, no. 150/D.G.S.S., 29 June 1961, ANG 374W/1; Synthèse-Renseignements, EMGN, no. 37, 12 April 1975, ANG 374W/26.

⁴² See Chapter 2.

⁴³ QS, MDNS, no. 151/D.G.S.S., 30 June 1961, ANG 374W/1; Synthèse, SEIS, no. 197/SC, 24 August 1970, ANG 374W/4.

⁴⁴ QS, MDNS, no. 153/D.G.S.S., 31 June 1961, ANG 374W/1.

⁴⁵ Synthèse, SEIS, no. 141/SC, 18 June 1970, ANG 374W/4.

villages of herders towards Senegal.⁴⁶ In fact, numerous villages of Futa Fulbe in the Koundara border region of Southern Senegal trace their origin to the mid-1970s.

Combined with the *navétanat*, a system of seasonal migration of Fulbe to Senegal with deep historical roots in the Futa,⁴⁷ the herders' flight was proof positive to government officials that the Futa Fulbe were more interested in becoming rich abroad than building their own country. That the Senegalese government was supposedly at the root of several attempted overthrows of the PDG government only confirmed their treason. For their part, Fulbe elites harbored little love for a state that had eroded their economic foundation by taking away control of agricultural land and giving it to persons of low social status. State policy towards cattle alienated the *Fulbe burure* who, having endured severe exploitation by Fulbe elites during the pre-colonial and colonial eras, should have been the natural allies of the reformist PDG. Villages of *maccube* continued to support the PDG government, but for the majority of Fulbe in the Futa the state represented a threat to their livelihoods. Distrust between the Conakry government and the Futa Fulbe functioned as a feedback loop. For one side, the Futa was a bastion on conservative resistance to modernization, stuck in its feudal and colonial practices and in need of evermore-drastic reform. For the other, the PDG-led government as simply another power in Conakry bent upon extracting resources from the Futa and deserving of either passive or active resistance.

Islam

In both the pre-colonial Futa Jallon state and under colonial rule, the Fulbe aristocracy legitimized their rule by linking social status and political authority with Islamic religiosity.

⁴⁶ Synthèse-Renseignements, EMGN, no. 35, 9 April 1975, ANG 374W/23.

⁴⁷ See Chapter 2.

Fulbe elites were natural leaders, or so religious scholars argued, because they practiced a more “ideal” Islam than their slaves.⁴⁸ Despite the abolition of the juridical status of slave in 1905, unequal relationships between former slaves and masters persisted, due in large part to paired ideas about religious and political authority.⁴⁹ Colonial rule partially dissociated temporal power from its spiritual counterpart. By the 1930s, collaboration by colonial chiefs prompted criticisms of moral bankruptcy even within conservative elements in the Futa,⁵⁰ and Saïfoulaye Diallo, the Fulbe president of the Guinean National Assembly and confidant of Sékou Touré, harnessed rural discontent with exploitation by arguing that the chiefs in the 1950s were corrupted facsimiles of their pre-colonial predecessors. Under colonial rule, the Futa remained a center for Islamic scholarship and learning in West Africa, but by independence the combination of spiritual and temporal authority at the top of the region’s social pyramid had unwound, a process that was accelerated following the demise of the chieftaincy in 1957.

The link between Islamic religiosity and more general elite privilege, however, remained intact in large swaths of the Futa well into the 1960s. This persistence was based in large part on the division of social, political, and economic space within the Futa Jallon, a legacy of the pre-colonial state. Social hierarchies were mapped onto the geography of the Futa through a spatial organization structured by a central town, or *misside*, inhabited by elites and their domestic

⁴⁸ See Chapter 1; Roger Botte, “Stigmates sociaux et discriminations religieuses: l’ancienne classe servile au Fuuta Jaloo,” *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 34, no. 133/135, L’archipel peul (1994), 126; and Joseph Earl Harris, “The Kingdom of Fouta-Diallon,” (Ph.D diss., Northwestern University, 1965), 82-83.

⁴⁹ Religiously justified inequality in the Futa has proved durable, continuing to inflect local and regional politics to the present. See Karen E. Smid, “How Tomorrow Precedes Yesterday: Visions of Time and Locations of Authority for Muslims in the Fouta Djallon, Guinea,” (PhD diss. The University of Michigan, 2008).

⁵⁰ See Chapter 2.

servants, surrounded by a series of dependent villages populated by communities of slave or non-elite status called *runde* and *foulasso*, respectively.⁵¹ The centrality of the *misside* in the political and religious geography of the Futa was underscored by the fact that only in the central elite village could one build a mosque. In order to attend Friday prayers at the mosque – an increasingly common practice given the spread of Islam under colonial rule⁵² – persons of former servile status were often forced to travel, sometimes at significant distance, to the centers of elite privilege and in some *missidi* (pl. of *misside*) enter the mosque through separate doors or even pray outside.⁵³

Weekly reminders of social hierarchies during Friday prayers were incompatible with the “modern” society the PDG sought to build. After independence, community leaders in former *runde* and *foulasso* exerted their newly found political independence by demanding that mosques be built in their local communities. The inhabitants of Kouraba, a *foulasso* 60 km east of Labé and part of the pre-colonial *misside* of Daralabé, made plans to build their own mosque just two months after independence. Still respectful of local religious practices, the notables of Kouraba first asked permission of the former village chief and notables of Daralabé to start construction. Once the mosque was complete, though, the chief of Daralabé refused to consecrate the building, denying his spiritual authority to the *foulasso*’s mosque and making it unfit for worship. Frustrated with the *misside* leaders’ obstinacy, the notables of Kouraba requested the head of the administrative region of Labé to intercede on their behalf. The Labe governor did just that,

⁵¹ *Misside* was the name of both the central village and the collection of elite and servile villages. See William Derman, *Serfs, Peasants, and Socialists: A Former Serf Village in the Republic of Guinea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 14-15. See also “Introduction.”

⁵² See Robert Launay and Benjamin F. Soares, “The Formation of an ‘Islamic Sphere’ in French Colonial West Africa,” *Economy and Society* 28, no. 4 (1999), 497-519.

⁵³ Derman, *Serfs*, 211-215.

reminding the chief and notables of Daralabé that “you must recognize that the liberty of religion is granted to everyone.”⁵⁴ The initial refusal by the heads of Daralabé was most likely rooted in their fear of losing religious authority over a community of lower (although now free) social status. They also realized that in the post-colonial socialist republic religious power was especially valuable, as in the context of waning political and economic influence it was one of the few means to enforce authority over villages of former slaves. In effect, the construction of a mosque in Kouraba was an indirect declaration of social independence, one that, given the *foulasso*’s size (pop. 2000) would have represented a significant blow to the elite’s influence. The Daralabé leaders’ fears were confirmed less than one year later, when the inhabitants of Kouraba requested that their village be administratively detached from Daralabé, and along with a group of 12 other *foulasso* and *runde* constitute an independent village group.⁵⁵ Using the space opened by post-colonial reform, the inhabitants of Kouraba were able to forge their own position within rapidly transforming socio-religious hierarchies in the new, “modern” Futa Jallon.

Other conflicts over religious norms took place in established mosques. In Diountou, 20 km northeast of Labé, each *lenyol* followed strict rules after arriving at the mosque for prayers. The Fatiyanke, the clan of the former village chiefs, entered through the main door and sat at the center of the mosque. The Beibeyanke, a clan of artisans, entered through a side door and sat along the edge. The Mamadouyanke, most likely a newly established *lenyol* comprised of former

⁵⁴ Bah Thierno Mamadou, Chef de la Circonscription Aditive Labé, to Monsieur le Chef de Village et les Conseillers de Village de Daralabé, no. 90/CL/RG, 19 January 1959, ARL.

⁵⁵ La Population des Hameux de Kouraba, Fello-Yalalbé, Santamba, Soguiyabé, Sarayabé, Holladé, Késsou-Bantanhi, Késsou Morouba, N’Danta Sarayabé, N’Danta Bogoyé, Gada Tiaguel, Pelled Féto, and Hansaguéré to M. le Ministre de l’Intérieur et des Collectivités Publiques à Conakry, 25 August 1960, ARL.

maccube and *Fulbe burure*, were barred from entering and forced to pray outside. Once government authorities became aware of the mosque's continued social segregation, the practice was put to an end.⁵⁶ Other conflicts emerged over mosque leadership. In Tougué, another town in the Labé region, the head *muezzin* at the town's mosque objected to the assistant chosen by the mosque's worshippers, arguing that the latter should not be allowed to conduct the call to prayer as he was of slave status.⁵⁷ Local authorities forced the head *muezzin* to resign from his post – ensuring that the assistant took his place – and write a letter of apology that was transmitted to all the villages in the area.⁵⁸ Notably, these two incidents occurred in 1972, a decade and a half after the PDG came to power. While policing by the government ensured that more former slaves were active in the religious lives of their communities, allowing some to even hold positions of leadership, resistance from elites continued well into era of revolutionary reform.

The government was not the only group to use religious spaces as a means of critique or reform, as Futa elites often used religious language to critique post-colonial reforms. On two occasions in 1960, imams at the central mosque of Labé recited prayers asking for the keeping of “native” (meaning Fulbe) civil servants in the Labé region and the transfer of all those from outside the Futa to other posts.⁵⁹ Their complaints confirmed a stereotype I often heard while conducting research in Guinea: Fulbe only want to be governed by their own, because they think they are superior to all other ethnic groups. That political protests that aired in the Futa's mosques were also a powerful reminder for the young government that Islam was closely tied

⁵⁶ Synthèse, SEIS, no. 234/SC, 16 October 1972, ANG 374W/17.

⁵⁷ The elite Fulbe restriction was especially ironic given that the first *muezzin* and companion of the Prophet Muhammad, Bilal ibn Rabah, was himself a former slave.

⁵⁸ Synthèse, SEIS, no. 240/SC, 23 October 1972, ANG 374W/17.

⁵⁹ Rapport Mensuel, Commissariat de Police de Labé, no. 9/C/SP-L, August 1960, ARL.

with Fulbe regionalist identity. For those within the Futa Jallon, the transformations taking place in places of worship were either a means to gain prestige or a fundamental assault of Fulbe culture itself. Both reactions, importantly, ran counter to PDG desires.

In the end, PDG religious reforms left a sour taste in the mouths of Futa Imams and government officials alike. The government's meddling in local religious affairs both undermined the Futa elites' positions of privilege while confirming their suspicions that Touré and the PDG were atheistic Marxists bent upon destroying Islam in the region.⁶⁰ For government leaders, the fact that their attempts to change religious practice in the Futa had proved only partially worked, as opposed to the mostly successful demystification campaign in the Forest Region, reinforced their belief that the Futa elite was especially resistant to social modernization.. For non-elites in the Futa, however, the opening of religious spaces allowed marginalized communities to participate in practices of religious prestige, seizing sources of legitimacy that had previously been cut off. Their attempts to demonstrate their proper religiosity were not unchallenged. After gaining access to the mosque and its leadership, however, these communities would be less inclined to buy into the PDG's program of radical reform.

Local Political Administration

First Republic Guinea's political structure was based upon the central fact that the government functioned as a seamless party-state, and local party branches were the most visible organizations that enacted government policy and ideology. The most basic acts of local, federal, and national governance, therefore, were inseparable from the organization and functioning of corresponding party organs. Although there existed parallel political and administrative structures, the political wing of the government clearly set policy and dictated Guinea's political

⁶⁰ This was a common critique used by Fulbe politicians to attack the PDG during the 1950s. See Chapter 3.

life, from the smallest village council to the National Assembly.⁶¹

The importance of local branches in the day to day functioning of the party had roots in political competition during decolonization. The PDG's spread into the Futa Jallon during the 1950s focused on mobilizing previously marginalized populations – most notably persons of former slave status, women, and youth – and fashioning them into an effective force through participation in *Comités de Base*, or local party branches. Following independence, the basic tasks of the *Comités du Base*, renamed *Pouvoirs Révolutionnaire Local* (PRL, or Local Revolutionary Authorities) in 1967, were to both govern and educate urban neighborhoods or rural villages while disseminating party policy through group meetings and educational conferences.⁶² In the Futa, though, the *Comités* were also used as a means to undermine the power of Fulbe elites. Replacing the colonial system of Councils of Notables, whose members were most commonly named by chiefs or colonial administrators and drawn from local elites, local representatives to the *Comités* were chosen by popular vote on a bi-annual basis. Membership in the PDG was the sole criteria for candidacy. Distinctions between former masters and slaves, therefore, mattered little in the local political process in the Futa, or so the PDG theorized.

The PDG also sought to undermine the power of “traditional” nearly all-male authorities

⁶¹ Aristide Zolberg, *Creating Political Order: The Party-States of West Africa* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1966), 43-47.

⁶² Up to 1962, party and administrative functions were divided amongst separate organizations, the former the domain of elected village councils, the latter by the *comités*. The PDG leadership began to realize, however, that the two organizations constituted competing poles of authority and were often in conflict. The party solved the problem by erasing the administrative councils and placing the *comités* in charge of both administrative and political functions. Thus, after that year, distinctions between the party and the state were, even at the most local levels, non-existent. See ‘Lapido Adamolekun, *Sékou Touré’s Guinea* (New York: Harper Collins, 1976), 20-21.

by empowering women in local politics. Women's branches had been integral to the rise of the PDG, both in Conakry and in the rural Futa. In the First Republic, they would serve as a vanguard for PDG-mandated social reform on the high plateau. According to national law in the 1960s at least of the two representatives on each *Comité* had to be women, breaking down what was before a male monopoly on public political activity in the Futa.⁶³ Women's participation in local administration reflected a broader program aimed at transforming gender relations in the post-colonial nation. During the 1960s the PDG enacted a series of sweeping changes to the country's laws regarding marriage.⁶⁴ A 1962 act mandated that only consenting adults could be married, and required that a civil service accompany any religious ceremony. A second 1968 law went further, grandfathering in previous polygamous marriages but forbidding any new multiple-marriage households. The laws may have had little impact on the vast majority of non-civil marriages in the Guinean interior, but for the visible Futa elite, both "modern" and "traditional," civil marriages, especially those in which one spouse was of former slave status, represented an opportunity to show dedication to the new state, an opening for women to gain status, or for some less enamored with the post-colonial state, a threat to the hierarchies at the heart of Futa society.⁶⁵

Local political reforms stimulated a new set of local conflicts, either between rival factions or competing social groups. The PDG leadership intended the *Comités* to serve, at least

⁶³ Derman, *Serfs*, 173-179; Adamolekun, *Sékou Touré's Guinea*, 16-17.

⁶⁴ For an overview of the laws, a comparison with the de-mystification campaign, and the role both played in articulating the PDG's vision of post-colonial Guinea as a "modern state," see McGovern, *Unmasking the State*, 185-191.

⁶⁵ See Rebecca Furth, "Marrying the Forbidden Other: Marriage, Status and Social Change in the Futa Jallon Highlands of Guinea (PhD Diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2005), 135-144; McGovern, *Unmasking the State*, 188-191.

in theory, as an outlet for local disagreements and as the beating heart of Guinean democracy. PDG activists often told me that, counter to representations of Touré as a despot and the First Republic as a totalitarian state, the First Republic was a fully functioning democracy. While there was a single party and the PDG's leadership was never questioned, the will of the people was supposedly expressed through local elections for the *Comités* and passed up the chain of authority through a series of elections for higher offices at the regional and federal level.⁶⁶ If the defining characteristic of democracy is reduced to political competition and nominal public participation, then internal documents seem to support such an argument. State security reports described conflict between competing factions around elections, although this activity seemed more to reflect political intrigue amongst a core of activists rather than the will of the people winning out.⁶⁷ Local debate over ideology or policy, though, almost never found its way into public accounts.

Therefore, the PDG leadership did not expect for local *Comités* in the Futa to become spaces for protest against the government's social, economic, and political reforms. Yet they did at a regular frequency. Some local complaints were in reaction to familiar manifestations of daily corruption. Local *comités* were responsible for the distribution of staple foods and most high-demand consumer goods. Representatives often chose to give these goods to relatives or, in the most flagrant cases reminiscent of meat distribution, to take the goods themselves and sell them on the black market. In turn, Futa elites were quick to point out the hypocrisy of the PDG's

⁶⁶ Interview with Mohamed Touré, Conakry, 11 March 2013; Interview with Mamadou Sanassi Keïta, Conakry, 10 March 2013.

⁶⁷ QS, MDNS, no. 93/D.G.S.S., 24 April 1965, ANG 374W/2.

earlier attacks on the chieftaincy as a corrupt and exploitative institution.⁶⁸ In the logic of the Futa's "traditional" elites, at least they had long-standing legitimate claims to a community's resources. Corruption in the post-colonial state, on the other hand, represented a naked grab for resources. Other *comités* in the Futa simply ignored party directives. In particular, most Futa sections disregarded one 1971 order to arrest all those who practiced seasonal migration to Senegal, a not insignificant source of material wealth in the Futa.⁶⁹

For other Futa villages, problems within the *Comités* served as proxies for conflicts over changing social hierarchies. One such incident occurred in Korbé, a village about 40 km west of Labé. In 1962, village citizens elected a new president for their *Comité de Base*, but local notables – who, the local government's incident report was careful to note, no longer held any formal positions of authority – refused to recognize the new president and actively disobeyed any order he gave. Their stated reason was that the new head of the *Comité* was a "foulah de brousse," or *Fulbe burure* of low status, and therefore unfit to lead. After hearing of the conflict, the local Governor made his frustration with Korbé's elite clear while also signaling a greater concern about intransigence amongst sections of Fulbe society: "the comrades of Korbé [meaning the notables] haven't understood at all and don't want to understand. They play on hidden racism and represent [noble] clans. [The incident] has nothing to do with women or children, but everything to do with a group of so-called notables."⁷⁰ Local gendarmes eventually put down the notables' miniature rebellion by occupying the village for two days. Yet for many of the "traditional" elites, the *comités* continued to represent a direct affront to claims of privilege

⁶⁸ Synthèse, SEIS, no. 206/SC, 6 September 1969, ANG 374W/3.

⁶⁹ Synthèse, SEIS, no. 244/SEIS, 11 August 1971, ANG 374W/10.

⁷⁰ Rapport mensuel, Poste Administrative de Lélouma, no. 85/PAL/RG, May 1962, ARL.

within the Futa.

Youth

Social privilege in the Futa was under attack on several fronts. Faced with age-based hierarchies that limited their influence, many young men and women sought to gain immediate power through the local sections of the JRDA. The PDG's focus on developing the "youth" as a force for change was not a new development in Guinea politics, although how the state wielded that tool shifted dramatically following independence. As Straker argues in *Youth, Nationalism, and the Guinean Revolution*, "youth" as a social category became a central focus of both the colonial government and its PDG-led successor. During the 1950s, the colonial government focused on developing a cadre of young, educated *évolués* to counter the dangers of urban "de-tribalization." The post-colonial PDG government, though, emphasized rural youth, casting them in the role of both revolutionary collective and conduits through which party policy could be enacted in the interior.⁷¹ Straker's study examines how the PDG used "youth" in the Forest Region, a geographically and conceptually marginal space, to articulate a still ambiguous vision of the post-colonial Guinean nation. The role of youth in the Futa Jallon, situated in the geographic center of Guinea and squarely within the sights of government policy-makers, grew more from the political realities in the post-colonial Futa. In particular, the PDG use youth to articulate and enact their vision of a "modern" Futa society. More importantly, though, the government wielded the JRDA as a blunt tool to demolish the power of entrenched elites on the high plateau.

JRDA members served as government shock troops in spaces central to revolutionary reform. The PDG government faced a shortage of trained security forces following the rapid

⁷¹ Straker, *Youth, Nationalism*, 33-45.

French retreat in 1958, often turning to the party's youth wing to fill gaps. When the government focused on sealing the Guinea borders, it began by drafting brigades of young men and women to patrol with regular border guards. In 1960, a conference of regional government officials questioned if youth brigades should be securing the borders, as they were not well trained and, as we'll see, were often prone to excessive use of force.⁷² The explosion of smuggling and migration to and from the Futa into Senegal after independence, though, overrode the officials' concerns, and JRDA sections took up basic policing actions, seizing merchandise and arresting clandestine migrants along the border.⁷³ JRDA members also policed local economic activity. In one incident in Fafaya, a town about 100 km northwest of Labé, an enraged middle-aged veteran lashed out at youth activists who were checking permits for vendors at a weekly market. The older man was arrested, taken to the local head administrator, jailed for a week, and eventually released only after he was made to stand by the JRDA members at the following market day while the administrator gave a speech declaring that protest against government policies would be "abolished in this region."⁷⁴ The optics of the public demonstration were clear; the government planned to forcibly enact new economic practices, and the youth were their means to that end.

Eager to display their newly found position of influence, JRDA members were prone to overextending their reach. In one incident in 1963, JRDA members in Labé stood in a local butcher's shop indicating which customers could or could not be served based on their perceived

⁷² "Conférence Interrégionale tenue à Labé," République de Guinée, Région Administrative de Labé, 11 December 1960, ARL.

⁷³ QS, MDNS, no. 93/D.G.S.S., 24 April 1965, ANG 374W/2.

⁷⁴ Adjoint Sékou Donzo, Commandant la Brigade de Gendarmerie de Labé, "Rapport, tournée dans le canton de Koubia en date du 4 au 10 Août 1959," no. 77/GEND, 13 August 1959, ARL.

loyalty to the state. The head of the local police warned that the young militants' actions gave rise to rumors that JRDA members were behind the scarcity of merchandise and food in the region, and that they ran the risk of undermining the party's position in general.⁷⁵ Later that year, an officer in the Labé JRDA suspected his wife of committing adultery with a local high school student. The officer and a group of other JRDA members dragged the student before the principal of the high school and demanded that the accused student be given 50 lashes with a bamboo stick. The school head reminded the militants that corporal punishment had been banned in independent Guinea, and said that he would take care of the matter. Enraged by the affront to their power, the JRDA members ignored the warning, abducting and beating the student the following day. The principal complained to local authorities, but the vigilantes were never punished.⁷⁶ Labé's inhabitants also became more enraged when JRDA members, seemingly of their own initiative, conducted sweeps throughout the city arresting anyone engaging in gambling or card playing.⁷⁷

JRDA members used the ambiguity of state hierarchies in the years following independence to display the growing influence of a newly empowered youth. The influence of the JRDA, though, should not be overstated. Examples of excess presented above come from Labé. Youth wing members might have believed that they could leverage the PDG's early emphasis on reform in urban markets, schools, and shops in order to extend their own power. Derman's ethnographic research during the late 1960s in a rural village in the Futa Jallon, however, argues for a more gradual process of accommodation between the JRDA and local age-

⁷⁵ Commissariat de Police Labé to Gov. Région de Labé, no. 32/C, 25 April 1963, ARL.

⁷⁶ Saikhou Diallo, le Censeur du Lycée de Labé, "Compte rendu sur l'agression," no. 119/LL, 10 July 1963, ARL.

⁷⁷ Police de Labé, Renseignements, no. 58, 8 to 11 June 1964, ARL.

and status-based hierarchies. Derman describes how in investigations into a series of thefts in a Futa Jallon village JRDA members were eventually forced to rely upon village elders to broker settlements between the thieves' and victims' families. Police involved themselves only if restitution was not paid, or if the dispute involved parties from different villages. Thus, while JRDA members were expected to police all village youths, they were unable to successfully negotiate the frayed family politics caused by theft.⁷⁸ The mere fact that village elders had to negotiate settlements with youth wing militants, many of them from non-noble status, reflected a partial reorganization of local social and political hierarchies. Yet, counter to the government's own proclamations that "traditional" elites no longer held any influence, local notables were still integral to the daily functioning of justice in post-colonial Futa communities.

Defining a New Political Elite

Taken together, the government initiatives described above point to a double motivation for local reforms. On one level, widened access to land and mosques combined with participation in the local administration of villages and towns reflected a basic PDG ideology, namely that modernization of Guinean society required an eradication of troublesome "traditional" practices. Despite charges from exiles that Guinea was an autocratic state, some policy makers within the government believed that they were building a socialist democracy based upon grassroots participation in the political process, and that equal access to public spaces and political structures reflected the post-colonial nation's dedication to democratic principles more than multiple parties. However, reforms enacted by the PDG in the Futa also reflected a very practical political program. Fulbe elites had represented the last hurdle to Sékou Touré and the PDG's consolidation of power in Guinea, and the Futa was the last region to be brought into the party

⁷⁸ Derman, *Serfs*, 179-191.

fold. Even after independence, large segments of Futa society held what could be generously described as ambivalent opinions about the new government. Thus, while reforms reflected the government's will to transform Guinean society, they were also rooted in the PDG leadership's desire to once and for all eliminate any possible competitors for the allegiance of Guinean citizens in the Futa.

That interplay between visible and hidden motivations for policies, between public pronouncements of “modernization” and the political calculus that undergirded reform, reflected similar machinations within an emerging post-colonial political elite in Conakry. During the 1950s, Fulbe former opposition members had in the run-up to independence galvanized for a brief moment Futa discontent with the central government. So what would Sékou Touré and his inner circle do with those Fulbe politicians who had previously disparaged the Guinean President as an autocrat in the making? For the decade following independence, the answer seemed to be an uneasy *détente*. Opting to forego restarting their struggling opposition party after independence, the Fulbe politicians Ibrahima Barry III and Barry Diawadou instead decided to join the government. The two politicians soon embarked upon a decade of frequent transfer and precarious positions within the government. Barry III served as the Secretary of State at the Presidency (Oct. 1958-April 1958), Head of Economic Affairs (April 1959-March 1960), Minister of Justice (March 1960-January 1961), Minister of Planning (January 1961-February 1964) and Minister of Commerce (February 1964-November 1964), before being dismissed from the government altogether.⁷⁹ Diawadou was named Minister of National Education (1958-1961), Minister of Finances (1961-1963), the Guinean ambassador based in Cairo (1963-1966), and

⁷⁹ Rapport Mensuel, AmbaFrance Guinée, February 1965, ANF AG/5(FPU)/2279.

finally served as head of the state-run Patrice Lumumba Press.⁸⁰ Their frequent reassignments reflected in part the political instability of a young Republic. It was also a means of control by Sékou Touré, who made sure that no potential rival was able to build his or her own power base in a government ministry.

Despite the active role played by both Diawadou and Barry III in the post-colonial government, rumors of participation in anti-PDG plots followed both men throughout the 1960s.⁸¹ Outside reports, either from French intelligence services or newspapers, commonly included their names in lists of leaders of potential coup attempts.⁸² Diawadou's brother, Barry Bassirou, a former PDG activist and union leader, was arrested in the 1961 Teacher's plot, only adding to suspicion that his family was trying to undermine Touré and his close advisors.⁸³ Indeed, there might have been a grain of truth in the rumors about Diawadou. His son contends that the former opposition leader was approached by French intelligence services in 1959 to organize a plot, going as far as coordinating a delivery of trucks and guns at the Senegalese border. Diawadou promptly called Keïta Fodéba, then Minister of Defense and Security, and told him to send a group of soldiers to pick up the French supplies. Hoping to demonstrate his dedication to the Guinean government, Diawadou then wrote French President Charles de Gaulle

⁸⁰ Interview with Thierno Oumar Barry, Conakry, 17 February 2013.

⁸¹ The first supposed probably imagined plot identified by French intelligence services, including the unlikely bedfellows of Saïfoulaye Diallo, Ismaël Touré, Keita Fodéba, and Barry Diawadou, was hatched a mere 6 weeks after Guinea's independence. See Bureau d'études, MAE, "Eventuelles manoeuvres au sein du gouvernement," no. 2558/B.E., 17 November 1958, CADC 51QO/11.

⁸² "Un 'complot' vite liquidé: M. Sékou Touré met en prison trois de ses ministres" *Combat* 22 April 1960, ANS, Fonds de la Vice Présidence, carton no. 141; Koenig (AmbaFrance Guinée) to du Murville (MAE Direction Afrique-Levant), "a/s: de la situation intérieure en Guinée," no. 744/AL 27 October 1965, CADC 51QO/46.

⁸³ Rapport Mensuel, Région de Labé, March 1961, ARL.

a public letter, telling him that Guineans would fight against any French invasion.⁸⁴

The Fulbe politicians' future within the PDG was the subject of intense debate within the party leadership. Some within the PDG worked to keep Diawadou and Barry III at the margins of the new political elite, believing that the two had only joined the government to destroy it from within.⁸⁵ Other leaders, though, sought to more closely integrate the Fulbe politicians in the name of reconciliation and national unity. Differences in opinion were often thrust into the open during periodic PDG summits. From 1958 to 1964, the PDG leadership convened a series of party congresses meant to determine state policy and elect members to the *Bureau Politique Nationale* (BPN), a powerful central governing council modeled after the Soviet Politburo. Party statutes required that these congresses be held every 5 years, but in practice Touré convened the meetings at unpredictable times and often with little warning, perhaps hoping to push through policies by surprise. Mohamed Camara suggests that they were in fact meant as an opportunity for Touré to eliminate perceived rivals by pushing them out of the BPN, an argument that is born out by the evidence and stories I collected.⁸⁶ But even Touré's best-laid plans often went awry, as the congresses also served as fora to critique, sometimes vehemently, the actions and policies of the central government. As such, the meetings reflected the more general tug of war between a center eager to consolidate control and the fractious coalition in the interior it depended upon for political and popular support.

Such a struggle also played out on a local level. For the first six years of independence, Touré and his inner circle's attempts to gain hegemony over the rebellious *Comités de Base*

⁸⁴ Interview with Thierno Oumar Barry, Conakry, 11 February 2013.

⁸⁵ Interview with Sidiki Kobélé Kéïta, Conakry, 8 February 2013.

⁸⁶ Mohamed Saliou Camara, *His Master's Voice: Mass Communications and Single Party Politics in Guinea under Sékou Touré* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 61-65.

failed. The central government would send down directives on who should be elected to these local councils and what policies they should enact. But every so often the more independent groups bucked central commands. In one such case, the central government dismissed all of the representatives of the Federation of Conakry, an administrative unit similar in position to the colonial *cercles*, for “political intrigue” and opposing officially sanctioned candidates for local union posts.⁸⁷ Political discontent also extended to the state-run unions. In 1961, teachers throughout Guinea, frustrated with Government educational policies and low pay, went on strike.⁸⁸ Students and their parents joined in solidarity, and large protest marches took place in Conakry and Labé. The government response was swift and severe. Several union leaders were arrested and condemned to death for supposedly plotting to overthrow the government. In Labé, troops opened fire on students holding local school officials hostage, killing several.⁸⁹ Touré would later blame the strike on Soviet meddling and expel the country’s ambassador in Conakry.⁹⁰ It was in such an unsettled climate that Touré and the PDG leadership in Conakry decided to consolidate their grip on the nation’s political structure by holding a new party congress.

The insurgency from below reached its apogee during a November 1962 planning meeting at Foulaya, a small town on the outskirts of the city of Kindia. The Foulaya conference brought together delegates from all of Guinea’s federations to prepare for the sixth PDG party

⁸⁷ Rapport Mensuel, AmbaFrance Guinée, February 1964, CADC 51QO/43.

⁸⁸ For an overview of the Teacher’s Strike from a union leader’s perspective, see Koumandian Kéïta, *Guinée 61: l’École et le Dictature* (Paris: Nubia, 1984).

⁸⁹ Rapport Mensuel, AmbaFrance Guinée, November 1961, CADC 51QO/43.

⁹⁰ Ibrahima Baba Kaké, *Sékou Touré: Le Héros et le Tyran* (Paris: Jeune Afrique Livres, 1987), 99-100.

congress, to be held the following month in Conakry. Sékou Touré intended to inform the delegates which policies they should propose at the upcoming congress and whom they should elect to the BPN. The conference delegates thought otherwise. Sitting on the porch of his house next to the Labé governor's residence, one participant and Federation representative, Tiala Gobaye Mountaye, recounted to me what he recalled about the meeting:

We [the delegates] came from every corner of Guinea, but by coincidence we had the same ideas. What were those ideas? First... the normalization of relations between France and Guinea. Sékou Touré wasn't happy with that, he didn't want it. [Second], reconsider our relationship with the Soviet Union. They had helped Guinea, but they were technologically behind the West... We saw Sékou Touré lower his head, he was not happy! [Third], there are too many prisons, you put too many people in jail, and they are mistreated – you can't do that. And then I got up and said, "First, you must eradicate the death penalty in Guinea. I saw Sékou Touré glaring at me, he was really mad! Two, normalize relations with France. Three, apply the clauses of the [1958] Mamou meeting, integrate all the leaders of the political parties into the BPN. Eeeeh! [meaning Touré was mad]."

Mountaye's final demand pushed Touré over the edge. Although Barry Diawadou and Barry III had joined the government, neither was incorporated into the BPN, the only group with any real political power outside of Touré and his inner circle. Therefore, Mountaye argued, the PDG leadership had never fully enacted the 1958 Mamou agreement that had established a unity government.⁹¹ As long as the two Fulbe leaders remained on the margins of Guinea's political structure, no true reconciliation could be achieved, not between former political rivals and, more importantly, not between the segment of Futa Jallon society that had supported the opposition and the rest of Guinea. Other participants in the Foulaya conference balked at Touré's attempted consolidation of political and administrative power, as the president served as both president and head of the country's only political party. Some believed that Touré should resign as Secretary

⁹¹ See Chapter 3.

General of the PDG and let Saïfoulaye Diallo take his place.⁹² Believing Foulaya to be a pro forma preparation for the upcoming party congress, Touré was faced instead with an internal rebellion. Moutaye continued:

We said all this because [Sékou Touré] had said that this was the conference of truth and of militant responsibility. We understood the words “truth” and “responsibility.” Therefore, everyone was critical, and that didn’t make Sékou Touré happy. So, he stood up, and he told the BPN and his other advisors, “We’re going to Kindia [and therefore leaving the conference].” We said, Sékou Touré thinks the conference is over, but we didn’t think it was done. So we composed a bureau that would direct the conference by ourselves...

We made a list of the candidates for the BPN for the upcoming congress in Conakry and we included Barry Diawadou and Barry III as two of the BPN’s 15 full members. We also included Keïta Fodéba [who Touré demanded be elected to the BPN, but was by party statute not eligible]; when he had toured with the *Ballets Africains* he had gotten rich. He helped the PDG materially [before independence], so the group named him as part of the BPN. So we made a list of all the candidates for the BPN, and all of the recommendations. We then sent a representative to Kindia with all the papers outlining the motions, and Sékou Touré returned to Foulaya.

He made a four-hour-long closing speech. In his speech, he attacked Houphouët-Boigny, president of Côte d’Ivoire, he attacked Senghor, president of Senegal, he attacked Modibo Keïta, RDA and president of Mali... he attacked them all as bourgeois traitors: “He is a traitor and sold to colonialism!” At that point, Sékou Touré didn’t even know where he was any longer [Moutaye waves his hand in front of his eyes, fixed and staring forward]. So the speech was transmitted on the radio without Sékou Touré knowing. Someone told him that the speech could be heard in Conakry. He yelled, “Stop! Stop!” And all the leaves on the trees fell when he yelled. We said, “eh, eh, eh, he is doing his sorcery.” Many people fled. Diawadou then called the radio in Conakry to tell them to stop transmitting the speech.

So that’s why some people who don’t understand talk about the “Foulaya plot.” There was no plot. But there was this: the truth was spoken, and [the truth] was no longer with Sékou Touré.

Sékou Touré was famous for his intense rhetoric, lengthy speeches, and tirades against foreign leaders who he claimed were plotting to overthrow Guinea. Observers both at the time

⁹² Kaké, *Sékou Touré*, 116-118.

and since have put forward several theories as to why Sékou Touré's comments about foreign states and leaders were erratic and prone to frequent changes. Some have argued that the threats to Guinea were so numerous that much of the world's governments were aligned against the PDG and Guinea.⁹³ Others have speculated that Touré suffered from schizophrenia, or perhaps syphilis-induced paranoia.⁹⁴ Yet Touré's public statements and behavior were, as Mountaye implies, primarily a means of political control. As such, Houphouët-Boigny, Senghor, and Keïta stood in for the dangerous neo-colonial "other" bent on the destruction of Guinea. In populist reason, the only response was the unification of the Guinean people in opposition. To survive, internal disagreements over policy would have to be put aside in the name of a common front against foreign aggression.

Rumors of Sékou Touré's "sorcery" also served a clear political logic. It is hard to determine whether or not the president knew about or even encouraged commonly held suspicions about his secret powers. Archival records demonstrate that he put value in the counsel of Islamic religious leaders, at times ordering local administrative posts to sacrifice cattle with specific skin patterns followed by detailed descriptions of which prayers should be recited a certain number of times in order to ensure favorable results, including in one instance a Guinean team's victory in an international soccer match.⁹⁵ Touré could have believed the sacrifices gave him protection. It could have also been a rumor he played up in order to instill fear in potential political rivals.

⁹³ See Sidiki Kobélé Kéïta, *Y-a-t-il eu des complots contre la Guinée entre 1958 et 1984?* (Conakry: Editions Universitaires, 1993).

⁹⁴ See Alsény Réne Gomez, *Camp Boiro: Parler ou Périr* (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 2007), 191.

⁹⁵ Message Chiffré, Ministre Délégué Moyenne Guinée Labé à tous Gouverneurs Commissaires et Commandants Brigade Gendarmerie Moyenne Guinée, no. 32/C, 5 March 1968, ARL.

I then asked Mountaye what Saïfoulaye Diallo, then president of the National Assembly, did during the Foulaya “rebellion.” Saïfoulaye Diallo was a close confidant of Sékou Touré since the early 1950s and had played an integral role in the PDG’s installation in the Futa against the will of the colonial chiefs. Similar to the Fulbe former opposition members, he was also the son of a former chief, was educated at the prestigious *École William Ponty*, and indeed was a friend of Barry Diawadou and Barry III.⁹⁶ Mountaye said:

[Saïfoulaye] was there, a member of the BPN, the second highest figure [in the country]. But him, being a Peulh [Fulbe], the son of a canton chief, he was very intelligent. He didn’t act at all, he didn’t say a word. You couldn’t know what Saïfoulaye was thinking about, even if he gave a speech. You could visit with him for hours, and wouldn’t know what he wanted, what he thought... always like that. That’s what saved him. [Saïfoulaye was one of the few party figures never to be imprisoned].

Mountaye then describes what happened later at the party congress:

At the time Sékou didn’t have control over all of the sections [one level up within the political hierarchy from the *Comités de Base*] of the party. There were 200 heads of sections. They were free men, he couldn’t order them around. So they elected Barry III, Barry Diawadou, and Fodéba as part of the BPN. But when the vice president of the National Assembly announced the name of the people elected to the BPN, their [the Fulbe politicians’] names were not included. Including me, I was elected but left out. [The new list] was the same 15 people who had served in the BPN before.

... Everything deplorable about Camp Boiro [an infamous concentration camp for political detainees] sprung from that. The non-application of the decision of the Mamou conference...

Mountaye’s account traces a clear line from the September 1958 Mamou coalition to Camp Boiro through Foulaya. It was a line on which many elites in Guinea, especially those from the Futa Jallon, found themselves on the wrong side.

The Foulaya conference and the party congress that followed pushed Sékou Touré to

⁹⁶ See Chapter 3.

crack down on dissent by implementing a more rigorous party orthodoxy, from local *Comités de Base* to the BPN. The most visible representations of the insurgents' mutiny were the figures the delegates had elected to the BPN against the president's will, notably Barry Diawadou and Barry III. Touré and his advisors pushed the two further to the margins of Guinea's political elite. Diawadou was sent to Cairo as an ambassador in 1963. According to his son, Diawadou did so against his will, as he feared that Touré's power would grow unchecked without counterbalance. Barry III was removed altogether from the government following the 1964 Loi Cadre due to his connections with foreign firms.⁹⁷ The Loi Cadre, Touré argued, ushered in a new era in post-colonial Guinean history, a "radicalization of the revolution," one that didn't allow for dissent. Prominent Guineans would soon test the new order with fatal results. When Mamady Touré, a small merchant also known as "Petit Touré" and a distant relative of the president, filed papers to establish an opposition party in October 1965, he was immediately arrested and imprisoned in Camp Boiro. PDG leaders claimed that upstart politician was part of a vast plot to overthrow the Guinean government.⁹⁸ The French ambassador was expelled from the country for supposedly supporting the plot. Petit Touré was never seen in public again.

For the four years following the Loi Cadre, Guineans at both the highest rungs of the political hierarchy and within local villages in the interior had a general sense that the government was moving towards a more repressive form of governance. There were rumors of torture, a series of hidden prisons, and whole families swept up by the security forces. But for the

⁹⁷ Barry III had previously worked with COFICOMEX, a Geneva-based commercial firm with business concerns in Guinea. Mouradian, "Note a l'attention de Monsieur le Conseiller Technique," 10 November 1964, ANF AG/5(FPU)/2029.

⁹⁸ Rapport Mensuel, AmbaFrance Guinée, October 1965, CADC 51QO/46; Koenig (AmbaFrance Guinée) to du Murville (MAE Dir. Afr-Lev), "a/s: de la situation intérieure en Guinée," no. 744/AL 27 October 1965, CADC 51QO/46.

time being, the government's statements that all Guineans were working together to build their new nation held sway, at least in public

Defining a New National Identity

When I asked Tiala Gobaye Mountaye why the conference at Foulaya had failed, and why Fulbe politicians had not been fully integrated into the party structures of the PDG, he gave me an answer that points to the complicated legacy of the First Republic's approach to ethnicity:

That was the promise of Mamou. We all go together for the “no” in the referendum. After, we sit down again at the table and redistribute the roles and responsibilities. It would have started with the inclusion of the leaders of the opposition parties in the BPN. It's just that – excuse me, I'm not racist like he jokingly said earlier [a Fulbe friend who has sat down with us and had earlier said that Mountaye hated all Fulbe because he was an ethnic Coniagui]. Him [his friend] neither – he's Fulbe, but not racist. But the Malinké [Maninka], they have that fault: they are more stubborn than a mule. When the Malinké says no [Mountaye throws up his arms]... even until death. Very stubborn. When [a Malinké] takes a position, it's over. He [Touré] had that fault, starting with Samori, who was the grandfather of Sékou Touré.”

In Mountaye's comments, which played between denying racism and using ethnicity/race as an explanatory device, we see one of the fundamental contradictions at the heart of the Guinean nation-building project during the First Republic. Touré argued that ethnic particularism, or what he called “racism,” must be erased for the Guinean nation to exist. Grouped with the other “handicapping practices,” ethnic and regional identification served as a hurdle to building a “modern” Guinean society and nation. In fact, all acts of propaganda and preference based upon ethnicity or region were outlawed shortly after independence and were punishable by two to five years imprisonment and a fine of 70,000 to 700,000 francs.⁹⁹ Thus, Touré theorized, only through the eradication of “backwards” practices and identities like ethnicity would Guinea achieve its full potential.

⁹⁹ Adamolekun, *Sékou Touré's Guinea*, 127-128.

At the same time, Touré drew upon pan-Africanist ideas that valorized the recovery of African “tradition” as a basis of a non-Western social and political formation. As such, state texts, plays, and radio addresses sought to rehabilitate figures such as Alfa Yaya, Thierno N’Dama, Bokar Biro, and Samori Touré, maligned previously as examples of African “backwardness,” into anti-colonial heroes and fathers of the Guinean nation.¹⁰⁰ Touré touted what he claimed to be his own status as Samori’s grandson in order to demonstrate his anti-colonial *bona fides* and Islamic religiosity. The same general process unfolded in the domain of local language and performance traditions, where specific histories and cultures were used to establish the “authenticity” of the Guinean nation-building project. Yet, these historical figures, practices, and languages were and still are situated within local cultures. Samori Touré, for example, is subject to both particular and divergent interpretations within the Haute Guinée – ones that in some communities run counter to his nationalist portrayal as a unifier and liberator¹⁰¹ – that are the result of local historical processes. The same could be said for Bokar Biro and the Pular language in the Futa Jallon, the former who was and still is seen by Fulbe as the last head of a “pure” Fulbe society and the latter which has been tied closely to Fulbe self-identification

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, *L’Empereur Almamy Samori Touré Grand Stratège*, (Conakry: Revolution Démocratique Africaine (PDG) no. 48, 1972); and Rivière, *Mobilization*, 90-91. In the case of Biro and Yaya, their transformation into national heroes included a good amount of intentional forgetting, as both had hailed from the pre-colonial Futa Jallon elite, a group whose prestige and wealth was the result of the labor a hundreds of thousands of slaves, and the latter had betrayed the former when he allied with the French and welcomed the Futa Jallon’s incorporation into the colonial state as a protectorate. See Chapter 1.

¹⁰¹ Brian J. Peterson, “History, Memory and the Legacy of Samori in Southern Mali, c. 1880-1898,” *Journal of African History* 49 (2008), 261-279.

and understandings of Islamic religiosity.¹⁰² Thus, the “traditional” *bona fides* of the Guinean state were built upon regional and/or ethnic cultural markers. The resulting uneasy combination of cultural authenticity with political and social reforms resulted in what McGovern has described as the “competing cosmopolitanisms” of Marxism and pan-Africanism inherent in Touré’s articulation of African Socialism.¹⁰³ This never fully resolved contradiction was a defining principle of the state, and led to a conflicted relationship with ethnic identification and regional “tradition.”

Such a contradiction led to a climate in which Guineans were reticent to talk publicly about the political implications of ethnicity –above all, no one wanted to be labeled a racist – but one where people still made general statements about ethnicity and ethnic characteristics that would have been at home in the most strident of colonial ethnographies. In this manner, Malinké are “stubborn,” and Fulbe are “racists” and “intelligent.” Perhaps most importantly, ethnic descriptors functioned as a means to understand political maneuvering and conflict during a time when motives and opinions were best kept secret.¹⁰⁴ For much of the First Republic, using ethnic background to justify one’s questionable actions was an unfortunate but excusable act. On the other hand, willful intent to undermine the government, whether imagined or real, landed many a politician in Camp Boiro. Until 1976, as we’ll see, an unconscious “racist” could be forgiven and reformed. A traitor could not.

¹⁰² For the former, see many of the Fulbe poems collected by Gilbert Vieillard during the 1930s, including Alfa Baakar Bayillo, “Mido yetta jooman oo gooto wawdo tawnudo en zamaanu jeyal faransi.” Poem no. 74, Cahier no. 66, FV; for the latter, see Chapter 2.

¹⁰³ On the uneasy relationship between Marxism and Pan-Africanism in Guinea, see McGovern, *Unmasking the State*, 19-20, 160-164. On Touré’s development of African Socialism, see Ahmed Sékou Touré, *Strategy and Tactics of the Revolution* (Conakry: Press Office, 1978).

¹⁰⁴ Discretion, McGovern argues, was the only way for many prominent figures to survive the First Republic. McGovern, *Unmasking the State*, 221-226.

The Age of Plots

According to state arguments, plots to overthrow the PDG-led government had beset Guinea starting almost immediately after independence. The PDG leadership saw French actions during the latter's 1958 withdrawal from Guinea for what they were – deliberate attempts to sabotage the territory's incipient economic and political independence. 1960 witnessed the first government accusation that men and weapons were amassing along the Guinean border, preparing for a French-led and Senegalese-aided invasion to topple the Touré regime. The following year, government officials tied the teacher's strike to meddling by the Soviet Union. The 1964 Loi Cadre, according to Sékou Touré, was in response to corrupt civil servants and merchants undermining the regime, and the Pétit Touré's 1965 attempt to start an opposition party was a plot by the French government to eliminate Guinea's one-party state. Thus, "the perennial plot," as the government described the near constant state of alert caused by a series of purported coups d'état, had been an integral part of Guinean politics stretching back to 1958, if not before.¹⁰⁵ The goal of this section is not to evaluate the veracity of supposed plots. There already exists an extensive literature that deals with those very questions. The basic battle lines of said "exchange" have been the same since the 1970s, and haven't shown any signs of changing in the foreseeable future.¹⁰⁶ A more analytically fruitful approach – one I adopt below – is to consider the role plots played in the emergence of specific political discourses in post-colonial Guinea.

¹⁰⁵ Touré and Keïta Fodéba had claimed that the April 1958 political violence in Conakry had been instigated by Fulbe elites, who were in turn supported by "neo-colonial" forces. See Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁶ Kéïta, *Y-a-t-il*; Gomez, *Camp Boiro*; and Sidiki Kobélé Kéïta, *Autopsie d'un pamphlet "Camp Boiro. Parler ou Périr" d'Alseny René Gomez* (Paris: Anibwe, 2009) are the most recent examples. See also Straker's critique of the "battle-scarred" debate within Guinea: Straker, *Youth, Nationalism, and the Guinean Revolution*, 5-8.

The set of post-colonial reforms enacted by the PDG did little to improve the economic, social, and political problems that beset the country. If anything, the power grab reflected by the 1964 Loi Cadre exacerbated political division by pushing competing elites to build autonomous power bases that rivaled the Touré cabal's preeminent position within the party. As the 1960s wore on and the glow of independence faded, the president and his inner circle faced an unruly population and a group of political elites eager to seize more power and influence.¹⁰⁷ They responded by ushering in what would become a period defined by periodic plots and purges. In September 1967, Touré announced a new phase of Guinean politics by naming himself the "Supreme Leader of the Revolution" and theorizing a seamless integration of party, state, and people. To criticize Touré now was not only to be an enemy of the PDG but also an enemy of the Guinean people.¹⁰⁸ The next year, the PDG leadership announced the Socialist Cultural Revolution (SCR), which drew heavily from a similar program enacted by Mao in China.¹⁰⁹ The

¹⁰⁷ Rivière argues that conflict within the ruling elite was due in particular to the growth of elites within the government, which, due to increasing state control of the economy, offered the only viable option to amass resources in 1960s Guinea. The various plots that emerged at a regular clip during the First Republic, then, were the result of some groups, especially young civil servants, from advancing within government structures. Only Sékou Touré's charisma, skill of organization, and investment in forces of coercion had prevented destabilization. If plot attempts were the most visible reflections of fissures within the state elite, I would argue that they also provided an answer to the problem. Starting in the late 1960s, plots gave cover to Touré and his allies to eliminate any real or perceived threat. See Claude Rivière, *Classes et Stratifications Sociales en Afrique: le cas guinéen* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1978).

¹⁰⁸ Camara, *His Master's Voice*, 71.

¹⁰⁹ The main change enacted by the Socialist Cultural Revolution was a wholesale change to Guinea's educational system. The government eliminated what had briefly been a two-track system of schooling, split between schools geared toward urban elites and rural communities. The reforms dictated that all schools as Centres d'Études Révolutionnaires, which focused on ideological and practical education while offering as much instruction as possible in Guinea's "national languages" (i.e. Pular, Malinké, Susu). See Straker, *Youth, Nationalism, and the Guinean Revolution*, 72-78. On instruction in national languages in Haute Guinée, see Dianne White Oyler, "A Cultural Revolution in Africa: Literacy in the Republic of Guinea since

new phase was meant, at least in part, to integrate urban and rural spaces while undermining a burgeoning educated government elite.

The SCR also represented shift towards violent repression of perceived threats to the Touré regime. For much of the '60s, government accusations had implicated groups such as teachers and merchants, or parts of a growing bourgeoisie, in a series of destabilizing actions. In 1968, though, Touré and his close advisors turned their sights to figures within the government itself. One of the new targets was Fodéba Keïta, a former artist, choreographer, and early PDG activist. As Minister of Defense and Security, Keïta controlled Guinea's powerful and wide-reaching police, armed forces, and intelligence services. In many ways, he acted as head of a semi-autonomous state within a state, complete with networks of spies and informants responsible to only him. As Tiala Gobaye Mountaye described, "nothing escaped him. No matter where you were in Guinea, even if you scratched yourself, he knew about it. Even if you farted, he knew." Keïta was willing to say as much to his colleagues within the government; when he was brought before the National Assembly commission created to verify the personal property of all government officials after the 1964 Loi Cadre, the head of security stated in introductory remarks that he knew all of the committee members' secrets and that they should tread carefully.¹¹⁰ Even if this anecdote was representational rather than historical, Keïta's purported intransigence reflected a real fear within segments of the PDG's ruling elite that the security head's reach was far and grip was strong.

In the end, it was Keïta's control of the army that eventually caused his downfall. Following the military coup d'état that overthrew Kwame Nkrumah, the President of Ghana and

Independence," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 34, no. 3 (2001), 585-600.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Tiala Gobaye Mountaye, Labé, 1 March 2013.

close ally of Guinea, Touré and his inner circle sought to gain greater control over the armed forces.¹¹¹ They did so by establishing an independent militia recruited from JRDA members and, to the shock of Guinea's political elite, reassigning Fodéba Keïta as Minister of Rural Economy.¹¹² Keïta took up his new position with gusto, organizing a census of land and farming equipment while initiating a series of reforms proposed by agricultural engineers. As many of Touré's inner circle and family had benefitted from state-financed agricultural and land reforms enacted during the 1960s, including gaining control over new tracts of land and use of state-bought tractors meant for public use, the ambitious minister continued to be a thorn in the side of many influential leaders in the government. Many speculated that it was only a matter of time before Keïta was eliminated.¹¹³

Touré and his inner circle found their opportunity in February 1969. The first purge within the highest ranks of the political elite began with two army officers in Labé criticizing the president during a conversation with acquaintances at a bar and after a couple of beers.¹¹⁴ The two men were arrested shortly after and put on a flight bound for Conakry and, more specifically, Camp Boiro. Touré's harsh reaction to the military critiques was most likely due to yet another African coup d'état, which had recently overthrown Modibo Keïta, Mali's first president and

¹¹¹ After being deposed, Nkrumah went into exile in Guinea. Ghana and Guinea had pursued a short-lived union during the early '60s and held similar pan-African foreign politics. See Elizabeth Schmidt, "Black Liberation and the Spirit of '57: the Ghana-Guinea Legacy," presented to the conference on "Black Liberation and the Spirit of '57," Binghamton University, November 2-3, 2007.

¹¹² Adamolekun, *Sékou Touré's Guinea*, 140-141; Rivière, *Guinea*, 134-135.

¹¹³ Interview with Tiala Gobaye Mountaye, Labé, 1 March 2013.

¹¹⁴ Touré found out about the two officers' unkind words through intelligence reports. While being taken to Conakry in a helicopter, the two officers threw their guard overboard. That guard, Mamadou Boiro, became the namesake of the infamous Camp Boiro concentration camp. See Rivière, *Guinea*, 134-135.

sometime Guinean ally, three months before. Touré and his advisors feared a similar military coup in Guinea, and sought to eliminate a series of figures who had either built up independent bases of power or were rumored to have been involved in earlier plots. Fodéba Keïta fell into the former category of suspicious persons, and was arrested along with several army generals for participating in a plot that was supposedly supported by the French government and its proxies in Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, and post-coup Mali.¹¹⁵ He would eventually end up in Camp Boiro, the same Conakry prison that he had ordered be built in 1960.¹¹⁶

Using a tenuous set of relations, government officials turned their eyes to Barry Diawadou, who had recently left politics to head up the Patrice Lumumba Press in Conakry. Barry Diawadou's son, Thierno Oumar, was with his father the night the former opposition member was arrested. Thierno remembers listening to the radio on March 29th, 1969, and hearing his father named as a conspirator in what came to be known as the "Kaman-Fodéba Plot."¹¹⁷ Diawadou knew that his arrest was imminent, and decided to spend his last night of freedom with his children attending a Senegal-Guinea basketball game in downtown Conakry. The family arrived back at their home in the Kipé neighborhood around 2 AM that night. Security forces were waiting for them, and arrested Diawadou. His family never saw him again. Diawadou and Fodéba Keïta were executed without trial two months later. Barry Diawadou was not the only member of his family arrested in connection with the plot; several of his brothers were arrested

¹¹⁵ Lansine Kaba, "Guinean Politics: A Critical Historical Overview," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 15, no. 1 (1977), 34.

¹¹⁶ "That's why people say Guineans shouldn't build prisons," Tiala Gobaye Mountaye's Fulbe friend (see above) told me when the three of us talked about Fodéba. "The builders will just end up in one of them themselves some day."

¹¹⁷ The other part of the plot's name belonged to Kaman Diaby, assistant chief of staff of the Army.

and executed. Most dramatically, Diawadou's 75 year-old father, Almamy Aguibou Barry, head of the Timbo Alfaya family and former Dabola canton Chief, was arrested and released only after the execution of his son. The former chief would die one year later.¹¹⁸

The November 1970 Portuguese-backed invasion of Conakry by mercenaries and anti-PDG Guinean exiles further radicalized the regime, or so PDG activists argue.¹¹⁹ On the night of November 21, 1970, around 400 armed men disembarked from a ship off the coast of Conakry and attacked several strategic points in the capital, including one of Sékou Touré's residences in the Belle Vue neighborhood. Motivations behind the assault were murky. The Guinean government claimed that the invasion was primarily a Portuguese-led neo-colonialist attempt to overthrow the PDG government.¹²⁰ Guinean exiles abroad maintained in the face of obvious contradictory evidence that the Portuguese government did not support the invading forces – most likely because the exiles wanted to distance themselves from one of the few imperial powers that remained in Africa – and claimed that the invasion represented a popular uprising against the PDG.¹²¹ The most likely explanation for the attack is that, rather than explicitly aiming for a regime change, the Portuguese forces wanted to liberate prisoners taken by the *Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde* (PAIGC) and to assassinate Amílcar Cabral, the group's leader. Guinean exiles hoped to use the chaos unleashed by the invasion to

¹¹⁸ Almamy Fodé Sylla, *L'Itinéraire sanglant* (Paris: ERTI, 1985).

¹¹⁹ Interview with Sidiki Kobélé Kéïta, Conakry, 8 February 2013; Interview with Mohamed Touré, Conakry, 11 March 2013.

¹²⁰ *L'Agression portugaise contre le République de Guinée: livre blanc* (Conakry: Impr. Nationale Patrice Lumumba, 1971).

¹²¹ Regroupement des Guinéens à l'Extérieur, "Lettre ouverte aux gouvernements Africains, aux mouvements africains de liberation, et a l'ONU," Renseignements, Prefecture de Police (Paris), 10 December 1970, ANF AG/5(FPU)/1257.

topple the government as a whole.

Far from destabilizing the Guinean government, the attack solidified the PDG regime's position both domestically and internationally. Touré and his inner circle used the attack to eliminate enemies, including Ibrahim Barry "Barry III," who was arrested along with a slew of other government officials shortly after the Portuguese assault was repelled. Saïfoulaye Diallo, the other main "progressive" politician to emerge from the Futa during the 1950s, was one of the first to witness the aftermath of the purge. According to Diallo's son, the PDG second in command had been a friend of Barry III since the 1950s, as both were sons of colonial chiefs and had turned their backs on their conservative families to embrace progressive politics. When in Conakry, Saïfoulaye took an early morning walk in the city's botanical gardens. To get to the gardens, which were in Conakry's suburbs, Diallo would drive from his house in the downtown section of the city on the only road that connects the city center, formerly an island, to the rest of the peninsula. According to the story, on his way on the morning of January 25, 1971, Saïfoulaye Diallo was one of the first people to see Barry III and three "co-conspirators" hanged from a highway overpass that serves as a choke point on the isthmus between the peninsula and city center.¹²² Security forces reported that an impromptu celebration, which including dancing and singing, formed at the bridge, during which a daughter of one of the executed men declared "you are no longer my father, you betrayed your people, and I will have no pity for you." A revolutionary "man on the street" observing the spectacle remarked that "these strangers born in Guinea want to strangle the people while killing hundreds of innocents."¹²³ The execution's location had symbolic importance. The "November 8th" bridge under which the three supposed

¹²² Interview with Franco Diallo, Conakry, 21 February 2013.

¹²³ Synthèse, SEIS, 26 January 1971, ANG 374W/6

traitors died was named in honor of the 1964 Loi Cadre. Their hanging represented the bloody continuation of the 1964 law's *raison d'être*, namely to eliminate any potential alternative sources of power within Guinea.

Suspicion during the post-invasion crisis hinged upon the government's claim that a "fifth column" of neo-colonialist collaborators, supposedly counting amongst its ranks some of the most prominent political figures in the country, was currently attempting to destroy Guinea from within. Suspects were identified through a series of forced confessions gained through starvation – known as the infamous "dièt noire" – and reportedly torture. These prisoners' statements painted spectacular pictures of a highly organized and far reaching conspiracy including former Nazi SS officers, significant sums from foreign intelligence services being funneled to fifth-column members, and "long cons" against the PDG dating back to the early 1950s (Barry Diawadou, for instance, had supposedly been on the payroll of the French intelligence services since at least 1954). The narratives weaved together by the "Revolutionary Committee" charged with investigating and judging members of the Fifth Column were not just a means to implicate Touré and his inner circle's political rivals or enemies. It was also indicative of a broader political climate. Previously secret motivations for actions – those whispered justifications for slights or non-sanctioned activity that were not possible in the revolutionary state – burst into public and spread to every corner of Guinea through confessions broadcast on state radio. As such, the plot served as proof positive that invisible motivations – including those informed by ethnicity – were inseparable from visible political action.

Rumors eventually became justification for arrest and imprisonment. State security briefings over the course of 1971 detail a pervasive sense of distrust as well as the settling of local scores in the name of defending the revolution. One briefing reported that the head of Fria's

Gendarmes was arrested by the local PDG committee for “grave political acts and for not reacting to public security reports in a timely manner.” He was subsequently implicated in a vast plot including the managers of the city’s bauxite processing plants. The same briefing described how in Labé a network of fifth-column conspirators was uncovered, including several teachers at the town’s high school, party leaders, religious leaders, and various relatives of the accused. The majority of those detained were charged with aiding mercenaries planning on invading Guinea. Other local political activists pointed to signs that proved the dishonesty of civil servants, political leaders, and government ministers who were implicated in the attack. These portents ranged from not negotiating in good faith with the local union to giving overly long speeches and backing rival candidate during local elections for party organisms.¹²⁴

Despite the government’s long-standing argument that every person in Guinea was a citizen and subject to the same treatment by the government, race and ethnicity soon became a way to explain treason against the state. Emile Condé, who had once served as Governor of Labé and still lived in the town, was eventually named as a fifth column traitor. Security forces justified Condé’s arrest by claiming that, “being *métis* [mixed race; Condé’s father was French], he could never overcome the legacy of his ancestors.”¹²⁵ Condé had notably attended the 1961 Foulaya conference and was part of the group that supported Saïfoulaye Diallo for Secretary General of the PDG. The Governor of Kindia, Emile Cissé, was also accused of being a member of the fifth column the following month. A noted author, Cissé had served as the head of the Labé high school and had headed up Kindia’s Revolutionary Committee investigating accused

¹²⁴ Synthèse Hebdomadaire, SEIS, no. 5/SEIS/DSE, 6-12 August 1971, ANG 374W/6.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

collaborators after the invasion.¹²⁶ Although he complained that the only reasoning he was being detained was because he was a *métis*, Cissé was arrested for treason by local security forces and sent to Conakry's Camp Boiro. In a rare show of public protest, leaders of Kindia's women's party branch organized what security forces called an "anti-popular" march in support of their detained Governor, claiming that he had kept prices for meat and other goods low and had served the people of Kindia well. Their protest was quickly broken up, though, and a counter-protest in support of Cissé's arrest was organized shortly thereafter.¹²⁷

In the wake of his arrest, Cissé's larger network in the Futa was "exposed." While the ex-governor had served as a schoolmaster in Labé, he had supposedly used materials and funds destined to build a new residential school complex (called the *Cité Révolutionnaire* Kaledou) to support a network of clients, confidants, and most salaciously, concubines. Security reports explicitly linked the corruption to the "fifth column," although exactly how run of the mill patronage was co-opted by neo-colonial forces was never explained.¹²⁸ What emerges instead is a picture in the "sinister" profile of Emile Cissé of what a revolutionary Guinean should *not* be. She/he should not have too many close associates, or let "personal" bias trump revolutionary dedication. She/he should not place too much importance in education, or be overly educated her/himself. She/he should not use the resources of the state for personal benefit. And finally, and most importantly, she/he should not have divided loyalties, especially if she/he were a *métis*.

¹²⁶ On Emile Cissé's role in previous purges, see Camara Kaba 41, *Dans la Guinée de Sékou Touré: cela a bien eu lieu* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998), 78-84; and Alpha-Abdoulaye Diallo, *La vérité du ministre: dix ans dans les geôles de Sékou Touré* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1985), 114. On how Emile Cissé came to be accused of collaboration with the Fifth Column, see Jean-Paul Alata, *Prison d'Afrique* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1983), 198-201.

¹²⁷ Synthèse, SEIS, 18 September 1971, ANG 374W/12.

¹²⁸ Synthèse, SEIS, no. 281/SEIS, 23 September 1971, ANG 374W/13.

The Final Plot

It might have been just a coincidence that the two *métis* men caught up in the fifth column plot had close ties with the Futa Jallon and were close associates of several Fulbe civil servants. Their alleged character flaws, though, aligned closely with the subtext of characteristic markers assigned to ethnic Fulbe by both the public and the Guinean government. With announcement of the 1976 “Fulbe Plot,” Sékou Touré made that link explicit.

The two years that followed the purges of 1971-1972 were relatively quiet, a down swing the Guinean plot cycle. In 1975, however, the government signaled a period of renewed activity. A set of economic reforms announced that year reflected the leadership’s renewed will to closely control the Guinean economy. The May 1975 government creation of public pens in the country’s chief cattle raising areas resulted in, according to government estimates, some 20,000 Guineans from the Futa leaving for Senegal.¹²⁹ The government also severely restricted private commerce. In January 1975, it announced that all private trade was outlawed, and banned weekly markets throughout the country, claiming that it would in part put a stop to the “vagrancy of numerous married women... who desert their conjugal home” in order to do commerce.¹³⁰ In May, the government requisitioned all privately owned trucks in order to transport consumer goods and food into the interior.¹³¹ Furthermore, the government announced that all families in the Futa – and the Futa alone – were required to pay their taxes in 1976 in the form of grain (i.e. fonio, rice, or corn) to stem private trade and temporary migration to Senegal. Agricultural

¹²⁹ Synthèse, MIS-P, no. 084/DGSP, 3 June 1975, ANG 374W/25; Synthèse, MIS-P, no. 088/DGSP, 11 June 1975, ANG 374W/25; Synthèse-Renseignements, MIS-G, no. 85, 26 July ANG 374W/28; Synthèse, MIS-P, no. 081/DGSP, 18 June 1975, ANG 374W/29.

¹³⁰ Synthèse, Ministère Intérieur et Sécurité, Direction des Services Techniques, no. 14, 24 Jan 1975, ANG 374W/24.

¹³¹ Synthèse, MIS-P, no. 071/DGSP, 12 May 1975, ANG 374W/25.

surpluses were and still are today hard to come by in the soil-poor region, and many families only practiced subsistence agriculture. Some attempted to grow food for taxes, spending all day and night planting and eventually hand-milling grain. Others turned to the black market, scrambling to find someone who would sell them surplus flour. A sizeable number, especially youth, decided to simply leave the country.¹³²

The first rumblings of a new plot emerged in 1975. Security forces reported in August that an attempted coup d'état was eminent, warning of a coordinated assault led by disgruntled Guinean exiles from Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Senegal via the Futa Jallon. Administrators in the northern Futa requested that squadrons composed of soldiers "not native to the Futa" be sent as reinforcements, supposedly because Fulbe soldiers might support the invading forces.¹³³ Crimes seemingly unrelated to espionage were swept up in the rapidly developing conspiracy. One man who escaped from jail and then tried to murder a woman – most likely a former paramour – ended up confessing to being part of the fifth column.¹³⁴ A Senegalese "spy" was arrested in Kankan while traveling to visit his uncle in Conakry.¹³⁵ One anonymous letter sent to the President used the head of the Fria economic police's predilection for "getting drunk on every kind of alcoholic beverage" as proof that the often-inebriated administrator was committing the same type of anti-government sabotage "as Emile Cissé did in Kindia and Labé." The President or someone in his office took accusations of implied treason seriously, asking the

¹³² Synthèse-Renseignements, MIS-G, no. 005, 16 January 1976, ANG 374W/32.

¹³³ Synthèse, DIS-P, no. 116/DGSP, 29 August 1975, ANG 374W/27.

¹³⁴ Synthèse-Renseignements, DIS-G, no. 79, 19 July 1975, ANG 374W/28.

¹³⁵ Synthèse-Renseignements, MIS-G, no. 002, 7 January 1976, ANG 374W/32.

region's governor if the named officer did in fact consume alcohol.¹³⁶

A report in December 1975 hinted that the conspiracy spread to the highest rungs of the government. Police suspected Diallo Telli, a former Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity, previously Guinea's ambassador to the United Nations, and at the time the Minister of Justice, of being the mastermind. Although he was not the son of a chief, Diallo was from the Futa Jallon and had attended the École Ponty along with Barry Diawadou and Barry III.¹³⁷ Now, reports claimed, Diallo was selling all of his personal belongings in anticipation of fleeing the country along with a co-conspirator, Souleymane Sy Savané, a Fulbe civil servant assigned to the President's office.¹³⁸ That Diallo Telli had long been mentioned alongside Barry Diawadou and Barry III amongst anti-PDG Fulbe circles as a possible replacement for the President only fueled Sékou Touré's suspicions.¹³⁹ Telli Diallo was arrested on July 18, 1976, and would die from the forced starvation on March 1, 1977. In the intervening months of captivity, his supposed network of conspirators spread to the cover nearly all the Futa Jallon, giving rise to what the government would soon call the "Fulbe Plot."

The "Particular Situation" in the Futa Jallon

Shortly after Diallo Telli's arrest, Sékou Touré delivered a series of speeches on what he called the "particular situation in the Futa Jallon," a set of historical trajectories that had led Fulbe within Guinea to actively or passively support neo-colonial plots against the

¹³⁶ Synthèse-Renseignements, MIS-G, no. 031, 14 April 1976, ANG 374W/32.

¹³⁷ For a biography of Diallo Telli, see Andre Lewin, *Diallo Telli : le tragique destin d'un grand Africain* (Paris: JAPRESS, 1990).

¹³⁸ Synthèse, DIS-P, no. 163/DGSP, 11 December 1975, ANG 374W/31.

¹³⁹ Koenig (AmbaFrance Guinée) to du Murville (MAE Dir. Afr-Lev), "a/s: de la situation intérieure en Guinée," no. 744/AL 27 October 1965, CADC 51QO/46.

government.¹⁴⁰ Touré's use of this term is a subject of debate today within Guinea. For those intellectuals targeted by the "Fulbe plot," his focus on the Futa Jallon as distinct from the rest of Guinea was proof positive of a hidden anti-Fulbe bias Touré harbored since the 1950s. Former PDG activists, on the other hand, claim that Touré was simply mirroring a phrase that the Fulbe intellectuals used themselves to justify their own racism (i.e., that the Futa was "particular," in that it and its Fulbe inhabitants thought themselves superior to the rest of Guinea). In such a line of argumentation, the Fulbe themselves thrust "Fulbe racism" as an analytical device upon the president. Touré's speeches indicate that he did in fact attribute the phrase to Fulbe intellectuals. After providing proper citation, however, Touré adopted and transformed the concept to argue that the Futa Jallon and most importantly the region's elite were plagued by racism. The Futa was different from the rest of Guinea, he argued, in that it stubbornly resisted the modernization that the PDG had enacted in the rest of the nation. In his August 22nd speech, entitled "Bury Fulbe Racism," Touré presents a list of "facts" that had produced the "Particular Situation in the Futa Jallon," culminating in the "Fulbe Plot."

1. The region had fallen into moral decay:

The list of moral faults in the Futa Jallon was long. Alcoholism: "We [Touré] have visited that province far and wide and we have realized that **alcoholism** [emphasis in original] truly threatens the Futa, including Marabouts who fill their tea kettles with beer or wine." Theft: "In Conakry, right now, when ten thieves find themselves before the commissioner or before the court, one counts at least eight natives of the Futa Jallon." And finally, migration: "The Navétanat has always been combated by the PDG... We told [the navétanes], 'Instead of going

¹⁴⁰ All quotations from Touré's speech presented below are from Sékou Touré, "Enterrer le racisme peulh: discours au meeting d'information du Comité Central le 22 août 1976," in Sékou Touré, *Unité Nationale*, Révolution Démocratique Africaine no. 98 (Conakry: Imprimerie Nationale "Patrice Lumumba," 1976).

to Senegal and humiliating the Nation, here is what the People of Guinea have provided you so you can work your own soil.’ Despite that, the navétanat hasn’t stopped a bit.” These misguided miscreants, though, could be saved by the virtuous People: “You must save the thief, the prostitute, the alcoholic, the navétane: it is a duty that will be taken up.” The invocation of migrants was by 1976 a familiar tropes, as the figure of the navétane as a type of anti-citizen became a key component of the PDG government’s public statements almost immediately after independence (see Ch. 5). It was an obvious treason that all in Guinea could easily see.

2. Colonialists had duped Fulbe intellectuals:

“They colluded with the white colonizer and prostituted themselves to him. [The colonizer] inculcated in the Fulbe the idea that he is not Black, and some of them went as far as to search for their origin in Somalia or Ethiopia or some other place, and refused to live in their own era, in their own place, and to understand their own people.”

Fulbe claims of faraway origins predated sustained contact with the French, at least according to local accounts (see Ch. 1). However, Touré points to role of colonial invention in the fashioning of Fulbe alterity through non-native status.¹⁴¹

3. Not only are the Fulbe not from a far away place, they aren’t even the majority of the population in the Futa:

“The vast majority of citizens in the Futa Jallon belong to Diallonké, Sarakolé, Tukolor, Bassari, Koniagui, or Diakanké communities. In the whole of the Futa, the [last names] Souaré, Tounkara, Diaby, Touré, Sow, Doumbouya and Keïta [except for Sow, none of them Fulbe names, and the Sow are commonly of lower status] are the most numerous; the Diallo, Barry, and Bah [last names] constitute a clear minority. We [Touré used the third person throughout the speech to refer to himself] declare this now because this is the social reality of the Futa.”

The non-Fulbe ethnic groups Touré listed were commonly seen as minority communities in the

¹⁴¹ This line of argumentation has since become familiar in African studies. See in particular Mahmood Mamdani, “Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 4 (2001), 651-664.

Futa; he's arguing that they are, in fact, the majority, and that one finds the last names associated with those groups more often than the three associated with elite Fulbe. Furthermore, most of those who do have Fulbe last names simply changed them after Fulbe Muslims overthrew the Jallonke state in the eighteenth century:

“In the past, when the Fulbe established their power in the Futa, all those who belonged to the [existing] intellectual elite, the military elite, the elite of whichever domain, or all those who wanted to become so in the feudal system [meaning the Fulbe state], were ennobled by changing their names to ones that were authentically Fulbe... They insult their own origin.”

Touré continued by claiming that one of the Futa's most renowned Islamic scholars, Thierno Aliou Buuba N'Diyan, was, despite his family's claims, not Fulbe himself, but rather “[of the last name] Doukouré and of the Sarakhollé race.” His argument – that the majority of self-identified Fulbe in the Futa Jallon were in reality not Fulbe at all, but rather recent “converts” – was similar theories French Ethnographers had put forward during the 1910s when the colonial administration were themselves faced with a defiant and rebellious Futa Jallon elite (see Ch. 1). Due to the lack of a record on the sources upon which Touré drew to write his speeches and political treatises – published accounts of his addresses not surprisingly do not include many footnotes – it is impossible to discern whether or not the similarities are examples of echoes, resonances, or simply emerged by happenstance. More evident, though, is that the motivations behind the colonial and post-colonial statements were the same: to undercut all claims of elite legitimacy, specifically those based upon moral and ethnic superiority rooted in the eighteenth-century *jihad*.¹⁴²

¹⁴² Furth argues that in pointing to the Fulbe's “hybrid” past, Touré was attempting to construct a “homogenous” post-colonial Guinean nation, one that folded “the Fulbe” into the Guinean nation. I tend to think that, coupled with his claim that one of the region's leading Islamic scholars was not Fulbe but in fact Sarakhole, Touré's argument was foremost an attack on the legitimacy of the Futa elite. His move, of course, accomplished both goals of unseating a former

4. The French only conquered the Futa Jallon with the collaboration of Fulbe elites, and the Fulbe elites then exploited the Guinean people during colonialism:

“Almamy Bokar Biro was the victim of the traitorous defection of the province of Labé on the one hand and of the destabilizing actions of an internal Fifth Column composed of rivals on the other... And those who betrayed Alpha Yaya,¹⁴³ [and] Gassimou Diallo, [and] those who betrayed Bokar Biro Barry were not able to have descendents possessing dignified behavior, if those [descendents] did not entrust themselves to the PDG, the revolutionary organization capable of extirpating this trait, down to the root and the treachery of their fathers, because there is a historical continuity that brands a mark and an indelible stamp on the person and life of these individuals.”

In the last sentence, what had before been a historical development transformed into an integral trait of the Fulbe elite, inseparable from character and motivation. Suspicion of Fulbe duplicity was a common trope in Guinean politics dating back at least to the French conquest, and featured heavily in pre-colonial inter-elite intrigue in the Futa Jallon (see Ch. 1). The notion that the Fulbe were deceitful gained steam, though, when prominent Fulbe politicians were accused of being manipulated behind the scenes by canton chiefs during the 1950s. Touré added:

“Under the shadow of the occupation forces of colonialism, [the colonial regime] allowed the canton chief to exert his power on the peasantry, abuse their daughters, expel them from their huts, and assign their wives, cattle, and fields to whomever they wanted, and to use the most beautiful of their daughters to pay homage to the cercle commandant, whom they venerated as all-powerful.”

This anti-chief argument, and the (mostly correct) narrative of colonial history it built had a central part of the PDG’s platform since the early 1950s. It had played a central role in the party’s partial “conquest” of the Futa Jallon in the run-up to the 1957 territorial elections (see Chapter 3). And by the 1970s, it had become tied intimately to how the Guinean government saw

elite and constructing a new “modern” one. See Furth, “Marrying the Forbidden Other,” 148-150.

¹⁴³ Touré elides the fact that Alpha Yaya, the Almamy of Labé, had in fact allied with the French against Bokar Biro, and many claimed the Labé ruler’s forces actually killed the Futa Jallon Almamy. See Chapter 1.

and dealt with the Fulbe.

5. Few Fulbe elites joined the PDG during the anti-colonial struggle, and most Fulbe voted

“yes” in the 1958 referendum:

“When you consult, from 1947 to 1959, the lists of the leadership of the section and sub-sections of the PDG, one comes across only Susu, Malinké, or Forestières, or Africans not originally from Guinea. That clearly indicates that there was a general resignation of Fulbe members, and those who held positions [of leadership] from the start, such as comrade Saïfoulaye Diallo and others, were completely isolated [from the Fulbe]...

Also, one must emphasize that in the referendum of September 28, 1958, when all of Guinea waved the “no” ballot in support of independence and dignity, it was, yet again, the Futa that waved the “yes” to shamefully signify: “we want to stay obedient to colonialism!”

Touré’s first claim is mostly correct, although there were other Fulbe politicians, such as Barry III, who were alienated from their families due to progressive politics. Due to a series of events, chief of which was ethnically tinged political violence during the 1950s, those ideologically like-minded Fulbe politicians refused to join the PDG. His second claim is at least partially rooted in truth, although in no Futa *cercle* was the “yes” vote a majority. If anything, the Futa results from the ’58 referendum reflected a pervasive ambivalence towards both a reformed French community and an independent Guinea (see Chapter 3).

6. After independence, Fulbe elites sought to undermine the government from within and

avored only other Fulbe:

“And when Fulbe civil servants are numerous in one administrative office, all of the sudden you have complete paralysis... The majority of them [Fulbe civil servants] went about [their jobs], in the spirit of disorganization, with destruction, with demolition, and with hate towards the other ethnicities, even as far as introducing injustice amongst the youth... Certain [Fulbe] professors went as far as to refuse, to non-Fulbe students, to loan [them] valuable books which they reserved for only for students of their own race.”

Accusations of favoritism were heaped upon Barry Diawadou in particular. Many PDG activists

claim that while Minister of Education, the Fulbe politician gave scholarship to study abroad only to Fulbe students, forcing their Malinké, Susu, and Forestière counterparts to end their academic careers and thus decreasing the number of qualified applicants for civil service positions amongst the three ethnic groups.

For Touré, the road forward was clear:

“Because it is racism that is used to submit the country to the mercy of neo-colonialism imperialism, we must do everything to root it out... instead of being ashamed, [the Fulbe racists] still want to destroy our independence. That must never happen again, and if need be all of Guinea will rise up again, blade, hammer, and rifle in their hands, to bury them; Guinea will assume its responsibilities. It is a declaration of war! They want a race war? Well, as for us, we’re ready; we agree, and we will annihilate them immediately, not through a race war, but rather through a war of radical revolution.”

Touré’s speech was more than two hundred years in the making. It constructed a historical narrative stretching back to the eighteenth-century Fulbe jihad that explained why, by the 1970s, the Fulbe in the Futa Jallon constituted a fragment within the Guinean nation in need of seemingly violent rehabilitation. Finally, as a speech given to a crowd, broadcast over the radio, and published as part of a book, it brought to the public the accused secret maneuvering of Fulbe elites. It broke down the distinction between public fealty and private treason, laying bare the history that had produced a set of characteristics (“the brand”, “the indelible stamp”) associated with one ethnic group in particular. What had before been the product of a set of unfortunate historical developments now became an essential part of the Fulbe identity. These characteristics were identical to those of the fifth column. Therefore, the only logical conclusion was that all those who identified themselves as “Fulbe” were either denying their true non-Fulbe heritage or in truth anti-citizens devoted to the fall of the Guinean government. Finally, and most importantly, it created an opening through which talking about ethnic characteristics and linking those traits with political action became a public discussion. None of the arguments Touré made

were new, in the sense that they had all been part of the Guinean political vocabulary for decades. It was, though, the ethnic equivalent of when “...and all the leaves on the trees fell” at the Foulaya conference. Suspicions that many within Guinea had long suspected were manifested, obviously, for all to witness.

In the wake of the “Fulbe plot,” the Government moved to weaken Fulbe elites. Fulbe civil servants were dismissed from their posts. Fulbe students were denied scholarships to study overseas until, Touré demanded, all exiled Fulbe students returned to Guinea.¹⁴⁴ Saïfoulaye Diallo immediately went on the radio and gave a series of statements denouncing Fulbe racism, pledging to root out any of his “brothers” in the service of the Fifth column.¹⁴⁵ Tiala Gobaye Mountaye claims that there was competition between highly placed Fulbe politicians to denounce the Fulbe racists in the most visible manner:

There was this schmuck [fr. *couillon*] from Labé, Mouctar Donghol, a member of the BPN, Minister of Transportation at the time, I think. He got in his car and came to have a meeting in a cinema here in Labé, to talk about the Fulbe and Fulbe racism. I was there, and I said, ‘oooohh, he’s forgotten where he’s from. He’s lost.’ When he did that, the marabouts took their books, their quills, and their water, and cursed him!¹⁴⁶ He couldn’t come [to the Futa] any longer. He married a Susu woman, and he died and was buried in Conakry. He never again had the opportunity to return. All because he came to talk about Fulbe racism right here in the Futa! Saïfoulaye, who was smart, talked on the radio in Conakry [and thus couldn’t be cursed].¹⁴⁷

Thus, while political expediency required demonstrating loyalty to the government, Mountaye

¹⁴⁴ Touré, “Enterrer,” 202.

¹⁴⁵ Lewin, *Ahmed Sékou Touré*, VI, 248.

¹⁴⁶ Koranic schools often teach using a wooden board and a water-soluble ink that can be easily washed off using water. Religious scholars and leaders, popularly known as *Marabouts*, will often also write a verse from the Koran on the board, wash it and collect the water, and through ingesting or bathing in the water bless (or, in the case above, curse) an individual.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Tiala Gobaye Mountaye.

suggests that there was a spiritual price to pay for renouncing one's roots.

The Age of Plots would come to a close less than one year later. On August 27th, 1977, groups of women and youth in Conakry – who had been integral to the PDG's rise in Guinea and the Futa Jallon during the 1950s – rallied and rioted against what they considered to be arbitrary seizures of merchandise by the country's Economic Police. Shortly thereafter, the PDG government opened Guinea up to foreign trade and de-centralized the economy. He reestablished diplomatic relations with the French government, and began to more openly welcome outside investment outside the closely confined mining sector. The era of social revolution, it seemed, came to an end with a relative whimper when compared to the other formative events in its early existence: the 1958 referendum and the 1964 Loi Cadre.

The speech's effects are murkier than the Guinean government's hasty 1977 about-face. Unlike in Rwanda, where Hutu political leaders and their surrogates may have deployed a more radical vocabulary but still employed a similar logic, the ethnic language contained in Touré's speech did not precipitate widespread anti-Fulbe violence. Furthermore, state imprisonment was contained to a small cadre of Fulbe elites, whose number in Guinea by 1976 had already been drastically culled either due to exile or execution. Perhaps the potential violent ripples that emanated from Touré's announcement of the "Fulbe plot" were blocked by the 1977 protests and subsequent reforms. Another possible explanation is that Guineans simply did not pay much mind to Touré's speech, as the president was given to hours-long tirades that often defied both structure and logic. After all, the defining characteristic of the PDG regime's pronouncements was, as Mike McGovern argues, "empty speech," or political rhetoric completely divorced from political action or policy.

Perhaps, then, it is the speech's meticulous, historically rich, and structured argument that

set it apart from other examples of PDG rhetoric. In articulating the “particular situation,” Touré presented his audience with a revisionist history of the Fulbe, the Futa Jallon, and both’s position within a first colonial and then post-colonial Guinea. Touré drew from familiar tropes and “truths” about the Fulbe to construct a compelling argument for why the Fulbe were a fragment of the Guinean nation and in need of either radical reeducation or repression. In other words, and in line with many other effective politicians, Touré took what the Guinean people already “knew” and bent those ideas to the political ends of the PDG regime. The effect of this type of rhetorical and political work was not imminently present, as most Guineans had more pressing concerns tied to near famine to worry about. Yet, having presented the corpus of disparaging characterizations lobbed against the Fulbe in one nicely packaged narrative, Touré’s speech became a resource upon which later generations of Guinean politicians drew in order to construct their own narratives of Guinea’s past, which in turn served their present political concerns.

Perhaps the most important effect of Touré’s 1976 speech has been this longer, subtler contribution to Guinea’s political culture. PDG sympathizers and/or Fulbe critics point to “Fulbe plot” as proof positive of a wide-ranging ethnic plot to undermine the socialist revolution and Guinea’s independence. For their part, the “Fulbe plot” has become an important component of Fulbe narratives of particular victimhood during the First Republic. Notably, though, the 1976 speech was the first time that in public and over the radio, ethnicity erupted into the visible realm of politics. Fulbe and PDG politicians of the 1950s danced – with varying degrees of dexterity – around the politicization of ethnic identification, especially during moments of violence and urban unrest. With the “Fulbe plot” and the “particular situation,” though, that historical trajectory had come to fruition. One could no longer deny or ignore the Fulbe fragment of the Guinean nation. It was present for all to see.

Ethnicity and Conflict in Post-colonial Guinea

The “Particular situation” and the marriage of politics and ethnic identification from which it sprung was the result of a series of events and trajectories, both planned and unexpected, that became entangled with one another in the decades before 1976. The PDG-led government were faced with a series of severe problems almost immediately after Guinean gained its independence, none less important than stabilizing the national economy in the context of uncertainty. The 1964 Loi Cadre was the result of a six-year experimentation with policies meant to limit inflation and ensure supply chains. Perhaps more importantly, it was also a means of political control, as in the nascent First Republic merchants and the wealth they amassed posed a real threat to a president who was, by 1960, under siege. Struggles over the form of the Guinea post-colony played out throughout the newly independent nation, but were most active – and central to the formation of the Guinean state and nation itself – in the “resistant” Futa Jallon.

The series of PDG reforms enacted in the Futa Jallon had a firm basis in the party’s ideology and echoed some of its main demands during decolonization. But the social groups mobilized through the party structure – women, youth, former slaves – in crucial socio-economic domains in the Futa – Islam, land ownership, and local political administration – were more often used as a means to undermine the region’s elite than as an uplifting project in and of itself. Thus, it is easy to understand why, by 1977, these crucial groups had become disillusioned with the PDG, with women and youth marching on the Presidential Palace and rural communities fleeing *en masse* to neighboring Senegal. The end result of reform was that, by the 1970s, the PDG had alienated large portions of Futa Jallon society. Rather than being seen as reformists dedicated to improving Guinea’s society and economy, Fulbe in the Futa came to see the post-colonial government as yet another political structure determined to sap the region’s economic

surpluses. That the government outwardly spurned many of the central religious and cultural markers of “Fulbeness” – now open to larger portion of Futa society thanks to the PDG’s own reforms – further marked the political overlords in Conakry as unwelcome interlopers.

Mutual distrust between segments of Fulbe society and the PDG government, however, was not enough to crystallize the popular connection between ethnic identification and ideas of political community. For that to happen, more abstract ideas about who was and was not a Guinean citizen had to emerge, and those ideas had to be associated with markers of ethnic identification. Such a double process resulted from the “permanent plot” and its culmination with the “Fulbe plot” of 1976. Sékou Touré’s key move in announcing the series of plots was to link their development with a private world of political maneuvering. Ideas about hidden motives and secret practices, especially those associated with the practice of Islam in Guinea, were an elemental part of Guinean politics. Guinea, or West Africa in general, isn’t alone in developing ideas about a hidden world of politics. In Guinea, though, and especially with regards to the Fulbe elite, hidden explanations relied heavily upon purportedly fundamental traits of ethnic groups, from pre-colonial ideas about social hierarchies, to French ideas about Alpha Yaya’s “revolt” in 1905 and 1911, explanations of political violence in the 1950s, and the seemingly pervasive presence of the foreign “fifth column” in the 1960s and ‘70s. Similar to other contestations about belonging that unfolded throughout post-colonial Africa,¹⁴⁸ Touré was

¹⁴⁸ Parallel examples are myriad. For Zanzibar, see Jonathon Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011). For Northern Mali, see Bruce S. Hall, *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa, 1600-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); and Jean Sebastian Lecocq, *Disputed Deserts: Decolonisation, Competing Nationalisms and Tuareg Rebellions in Northern Mali* (Boston: Brill, 2010). For Tanzania, and especially Dar es Salaam, see James Brennan, *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2013). And for the Great Lakes region, see most notably Jean-Pierre Chrétien, “Hutu et Tutsi au Rwanda et au Burundi,” in Jean-Loup Amselle and Elikia M’Bokolo, eds. *Au coeur de l’ethnie:*

engaging in a public debate which drew upon a variety of sources: local and colonial, new and old, hidden and visible. The practical and ideological battles that played out in the Futa came to define the post-colonial Guinean state, and ultimately were central to the linking of ethnicity and politics in post-colonial Guinea. Most importantly, in the “anti-ethnic” First Republic, “the Fulbe” as a rhetorical device came to represent the “ethnic,” and therefore the “anti-national.” In PDG rhetoric, “ethnicity” and “the nation” were diametrically opposed. In use, though, both belonged to similar modes of thought that sorted who did and did not belong, either within Futa social hierarchies or in the post-colonial Guinean nation.¹⁴⁹

The PDG government’s linking of economic and political crises with progressively larger and less plausible plots afforded the party, at least for a time, the political stability it so desperately desired. However, when the accused neo-colonial traitors eventually included a plurality of Guinea’s population, either through active treason or passive conspiracy, the plot as political device – and increasingly the institutions of state repression – collapsed under the weight of their own enormity. The age of plots and purges may have ended in 1977. The “Particular Situation,” however, ended up being one of the few lasting legacies of Guinea’s experiment in creating an African socialist revolutionary state. What started out as a project aimed specifically at the Futa Jallon became a larger discussion about the role of ethnic community in Guinean politics.

The language and logic deployed by Sékou Touré, and more broadly within Guinean political culture, was specific and represented a particular legacy and mobilization of history.

Ethnies, tribalisme, et état en Afrique (Paris: La Découverte, 1985); René Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

¹⁴⁹ Glassman, *War of Words*, 302-303; Brennan, *Taiifa*, 3.

Stepping for a moment outside the particular case of Guinea, though, one can identify several similarities with other post-colonial West African states. From the perspective of the state, the PDG government's tactics – including its assault on the chieftaincy – mirrored similar developments in its neighbor to the north, Mali, at least until the 1968 coup d'état that toppled the Modibo Keita regime.¹⁵⁰ In Touré's capturing and then systematic elimination of rival parties and politicians one sees reflections with Leopold Sedar Senghor's hounding of Mamadou Dia and the *Parti Africain de l'Indépendance*. Considering the fate of Fulbe politicians such as Barry Diawadou and Ibrahima Barry III – and, as we'll see in the next chapter, the cadre of opposition members who chose exile – one is reminded of the fall and eventual resistance of Niger's Sawaba, armed intervention and all.¹⁵¹ To return one of the key questions that has driven Guinean historiography – namely, what made Guinea different? – despite having temporarily diverged from other former French colonies in West Africa by voting “no” in the 1958 referendum, what occurred in Guinea from independence to the mid-1970s reflected larger trends in the area. The PDG might have been more audacious in pushing for immediate independence and eventually targeting such a large portion of Guinea's population. The strategy it used and ideology it deployed, however, was unfortunately common.

¹⁵⁰ See Gregory Mann, *From Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel: The Road to Nongovernmentality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

¹⁵¹ See Klaas van Walraven, *The Yearning for Relief: A History of the Sawaba Movement in Niger* (Boston: Brill, 2013).

Chapter Five

Neither Home nor Abroad: Fulbe Migrants and Exiles, 1958-1984

Mobility has played a central role in the history of the Futa Jallon. Successive waves of Pular-speaking migrants contributed to the rise of the pre-colonial Islamic state, and the region's scholars became an important participants in West African circuits of religious knowledge. For much of the 18th and 19th centuries, the Futa Jallon occupied a node in a West African system of trade and migration that made the region an attractive target for European commerce and then conquest by the late 19th century. During the 1930s, the region's closer integration into the colonial economy strengthened already existing waves of seasonal agricultural migration from the Futa Jallon, cresting in the early 1950s with more than 30,000 young Fulbe men working in Senegal's peanut fields each rainy season. Finally, counter to popular portrayals of Guinea as a "closed" country, tens of thousands of young Guineans from the Futa Jallon continued to cross new national borders following independence, primarily to Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire. Reflecting the larger horizons of Fulbe migration, imaginings of "abroad" have been central to how the Fulbe have thought about themselves as comprising regional and trans-national communities. In turn, Fulbe mobility has shaped how others have thought of them either as members of pre-colonial states, French colonies, or post-colonial nation-states

This chapter builds upon this rich history to explore the development of trans-national Fulbe networks after independence, and how migration and exile shaped Fulbe ideas about where they belonged in an emerging post-colonial order. It also examines the ways in which Fulbe migration figured in discourses surrounding Guinean citizenship in the wake of 1958. Despite his articulation of a vivid pan-African imaginary, Sékou Touré argued that the Fulbe abroad were building the wrong sorts of trans-national communities, ones that undermined African

sovereignty rather than securing its survival. Fulbe exiles and migrants were not much more welcome in their host communities; either due to ambiguous legal status, the problems they provoked for foreign governments when dealing with the Guinean state, or simply due to the local politics of xenophobia, these economic and political refugees often lived under the threat of forcible repatriation, and therefore imminent demise. What emerges from this period is a picture of a trans-national network comprised of exiles and migrants who were, to varying degrees, neither “at home” nor “abroad,” instead forging an interstitial community in an independent West Africa comprised of nation-states.

I argue that following independence trans-national networks became increasingly important resource for Fulbe self-preservation and self-imaginings following. As their position became gradually more threatened and marginalized under the First Republic, many Fulbe of both elite and non-elite status turned to exile and migration to form alternative ideas of political community and economic strategy. Different groups went about securing their positions in different ways – exiles relied upon elite political networks tied to a fading imperial imaginary to find jobs, fund opposition movements, and launch rhetorical and actual assaults against the Touré regime, while the much larger group of migrants relied upon economic power, building trade networks and establishing near monopolies on niches within foreign economies. As repression became more acute during the First Republic, though, both came to see themselves as constituting trans-national communities, although the scope and content of those networks diverged.

A focus on networks of Fulbe exiles and migrants opens up other avenues of historical analysis. The Fulbe – as both ethnic minorities in most of the countries in which they live and as

migrants – have often been placed at the margins of the post-colonial nation.¹ Yet, most notably in Guinea, the Fulbe were at the center of debates about citizenship and belonging in the decades following independence. This seeming contradiction takes on new meaning, however, when the history of post-colonial debates about Fulbe belonging and citizenship in African nations are placed within wider contexts. Such a conceptual move is not unprecedented. Scholars have undertaken significant work on fluid contestations of citizenship and political subjectivities within the framework of empire.² Far from developing into hermetically sealed national debates, governments and groups continued to engage in discourses of citizenship and belonging in supra- and trans-national contexts after independence. Rather, national debates about rights – both legal and social – unfolded within the context of a history of regional migration stretching back to before European colonization. As a dispersed and mobile population, Fulbe became one of the more visible representations of the wider horizons of citizenship following independence.

The post-colonial history of Futa Jallon Fulbe migrants offers fertile ground to examine the history of a post-colonial trans-national network and its position within the political histories of several African nation-states. As some 1/3 of Guinea's total population lived abroad by the 1970s, a comprehensive study of the Guinean diaspora is beyond the scope of this chapter. The histories presented below focus instead on one important axis of the Futa Fulbe diaspora that linked and continues to link Senegal with the Central and Northern Futa Jallon. The choice of a narrower scope of analysis is not coincidental. Fulbe from what is considered the “heart” of the

¹ For Mali, see Mirjam de Bruijn and Han van Dijk, *Arid Ways: Cultural Understandings of Insecurity in Fulbe Society, Central Mali* (Amsterdam: Thela Publishers, 1995), 90-97; For Guinea, Nigeria, and Cameroon, see Victor Azarya, *Aristocrats Facing Change: The Fulbe in Guinea, Nigeria, and Cameroon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

² See in particular Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

Futa Jallon (although not the pre-colonial political capital) have migrated north to what became the colony and later nation-state of Senegal since at least the nineteenth century. The areas these migrants left became the central areas of anti-PDG discontent following independence. Lastly, one specific form of mobility, namely seasonal agricultural migration from the Central Futa to Senegal called the *navétanat*, became central to state-dominated discourses about belonging and citizenship and post-colonial Guinea. Senegal has not been the only destination for Futa Fulbe migrants; it was and still is, though, the most numerically and historically significant.

The organization of this chapter reflects post-colonial trajectories of Futa Jallon Fulbe exiles and migrants. I begin with an examination of the reasons why individuals hailing from or with roots in the Futa Jallon left their home communities, and point to the different circumstances of departure for exiles and migrants. Reflecting the internal division of the Futa trans-national Fulbe community, I then consider how exiles and migrants sought to define their positions abroad – as opposition members, students, and veterans, on the one hand, and as tailors, *charbonniers* (charcoal makers), and fruit vendors on the other. This section also examines how they attempted to effect change within Guinea and/or maintain connections with their families in the Futa Jallon. The second part of the chapter then moves onto debates within Guinea and Senegal about the belonging and citizenship of the Fulbe, a state-dominated discourse in which the mobility of Fulbe and their large numbers in Senegal played a central role.

Departures

Exiles

For an elite sliver of Guinea's population, the short-term effect of Guinea's transformation into a nation-state was especially traumatic. Independence meant the severing of imperial circuits within which Guineans could move to make use of professional or educational

opportunities. One of the chief ways that young Guineans had left their territory of birth was through a set of schools created to train future civil servants. The French colonial administration had invested little in Guinea's education system, relying on religious schools to do much of the primary instruction in the interior. Officials in Conakry established a small network of teacher training schools only following the end of the Second World War, but these offered limited education to a small number of Guineans.³ Guinea's sole secondary school up to independence, the *École Georges Poiret*, focused on technical training and was geared towards producing low-level civil servants such as telegraph technicians.⁴ Therefore, those students wishing to pursue a "classical" education or wanting to move up to the higher ranks of the civil service looked elsewhere, notably to the *École William Ponty* outside of Dakar, Senegal. Dozens of young Guineans, mostly the sons of colonial chiefs or notable merchants, eventually made their way to the *École Ponty* starting in the 1930s. In fact, most of Guinea's post-WWII political elite were "*pontins*," as graduates of the Dakar school were known.

Independence marked a drastic reorganization of the educational system within Guinea. As many of the secondary teachers in Guinea were French and were paid by the French state, the lion's share of the country's educators departed along with the French government. Faced with limited resources and few qualified teachers, the post-colonial PDG-led government decided to invest heavily in rural education. The choice was both ideological and practical. Party ideology placed the heart of the Guinean nation in the country's rural population, and much of the party's rise in the interior relied upon promises to extend to the wider public the benefits of education

³ Reflecting the poor state of Guinea's education system, the illiteracy rate was 85% of the territory's 3.3 million inhabitants in the 1958. For an overview of the failure of colonial schools and the problems faced by the independent state, see Claude Rivière, "Les investissements éducatifs en République de Guinée," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 5, no. 20 (1965), 618-635.

⁴ Sékou Touré, Guinea's first president and former telegraph clerk, was a graduate.

that had under colonial rule been restricted to a small elite. While the Guinean government opened a series of high schools in most of the country's major cities, it did not establish a university until 1963. Even then, one former student told me, the level of instruction was low and political influence high.⁵ Opportunities to study abroad were similarly limited. The French government ended support for Guinean students wishing to study in Senegal. The Guinean government offered some scholarships for study abroad, but rumors of political and ethnic favoritism clouded the program throughout its short existence.⁶ In response, students who before might have continued their studies at Ponty to eventually return to Guinea as civil servants responded by opting out of Guinean system altogether. In the months following Guinean independence, 82 young men chose to pack up and travel to Senegal, clandestinely and under the cover of night, in order to continue their studies at the University of Dakar.⁷ Their departure was, at least at the time, definitive; to leave Guinea and forsake the nation-building project was an act of betrayal to the state, especially when one's destination was "neo-colonial" Senghor-led Senegal.

Other elites, especially former opposition members, fled Guinea out of fear of political repression. The list of exiles included rival trade unionists such as David Soumah, the *Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens* (CFTC) Guinean branch head and rival to

⁵ Interview with Barry Bago, Dakar, Senegal, 2 July 2012.

⁶ Those who argued that the mostly Malinké allies of President Touré were awarded scholarships pointed to political favoritism; those that argued that Fulbe benefitted disproportionately pointed to the Minister of Education, Barry Diawadou, and his purported "racism." Interview with Sidiki Kobélé Kéïta, Conakry, Guinea, 8 February 2013.

⁷ Interview with Barry Bago. Dakar, Senegal, 2 July 2012.

Confédération Générale des Travailleurs Africains (CGTA) leader Sékou Touré.⁸ Soumah made clear in public statements that his departure was a firm rebuke to Touré's Guinea, and a mere six months after independence had already laid the groundwork for an opposition in exile centered in Dakar.⁹ Other exiles came from the highest ranks of the government. Fearing arrest after falling out of favor with Touré and his allies, Camara Faraban, a former a Minister of Education, ambassador, and member of the powerful *Bureau Politique National* (BPN), fled Conakry for Paris in April 1959.¹⁰ In response, the Guinean government claimed that Camara was working for French Intelligence services – he did eventually find a post in the French civil service, although one similar to his previous post as a colonial labor inspector – and threatened to expel forty French nationals living in Guinea.¹¹ Although neither exile had roots in the ethnic Fulbe-dominated Futa Jallon region, Sékou Touré claimed in a speech that both were involved in a

⁸ The Catholic church-aligned CFTC and the Communist Party-Aligned (until 1952) *Confédération Générale du Travail* (later CGTA after the African branches broke with their metropole counterparts in 1955) had competed to represent Conakry's workers since the late 1940s. Soumah left Guinea for Senegal following the political violence of May 1958, which saw running battles between rival groups of PDG and opposition supporters in Conakry, the latter receiving the brunt of the beatings. For a CGT-centric history of unions in Guinea, see Morgenthau 226-231; For early cooperation between the CFTC and CGT, and Soumah and Touré, see Elizabeth Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea* (New York: Heinemann, 2005), 79-80; For Touré's consolidation of control of trade unions in Guinea on the eve of independence, and Soumah's growing discontent with what he believed to be looming dominance of political parties in the unions, see Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The labor question in French and British Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 417-419. For Soumah's departure, see Victor T. Le Vine, *Politics in Francophone Africa*, (Boulder, CO.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 222-223.

⁹ Bureau d'Études d'Outre-Mer, Note de Renseignements "République de Guinée – Opposition" no. 415/B.E. 6 March 1959, CADC 51QO/6.

¹⁰ Duvauchelle to Afrique/Levant MAE, tel. no. 224/225, 15 April 1959, CADC 51QO/6.

¹¹ Ibid; Administrateur Général des Services du MFOM to MAE, "Situation de M. Camara Faraban..." no. 11/IGT, 19 April 1959, CADC 51QO/6.

French plot unfolding in Dakar to overthrow the Guinean government with the help of disloyal elements within the Futa.¹²

For others, the choice at hand dealt more with negotiating a possible return. Thousands of individuals from the territory of Guinea had worked within various parts of the French government before independence. Some civil servants, like Diallo Telli, future Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity and one of the few Guineans at the time to hold a law degree, decided to return to aid the understaffed independent government. The vast majority of Guineans in the French government, though, served in the armed forces. Although enrollment had fallen from its Second World War peak, some 15,000 Guinean soldiers in the French Army were still stationed outside of Guinea at the time of independence. According to French reports, a majority of soldiers was in favor of Guinea's continued membership in the French community, and most believed that Guinea's voters would fall in line with the rest of the former French colonies in West Africa by supporting the proposed constitution in the 1958 referendum. These soldiers were caught by surprise, then, when some 97% of Guineans voted for immediate and total independence. Writing to French President De Gaulle on the eve of Guinea's official and irrevocable proclamation of independence, one Guinean officer stationed in Biskra (Algeria) refused to recognize his homeland's new status apart from the French community:

Since MEDINE, FACHODA, MAROC, VERDUN, CHEMIN DES DAMES, DARDANELLES, BIBANE, '39-'45, INDOCHINE and up to A.F.N. [French North Africa] [all French conflicts in which African soldiers participated], the loyalty of Africans has been beyond reproach. All of [our] freely offered sacrifices during these periods are concrete evidence of a guarantee and of [Guinea's] sound development within the [French] community... All African soldiers solemnly condemn the inconsiderate actions of Monsieur Sékou Touré, who drove the Guinean people to a "no" vote in the referendum. We all know that the Guinean people, intentionally misinformed and living under an obvious dictatorship, voted against the constitution. It must be underlined [however] that

¹² Hure to A/L MAE, tel. no. 291, 5 May 1959, CADC 51QO/6.

this decision was forced.¹³

The soldier's letter presented a rosy picture of Guineans' participation in the French armed forces – especially with regards to the less-than-voluntary recruitment practices that existed up to and through the Second World War – but he argued that the “blood debt” African soldiers paid in conflicts reflected their dedication to a reformed French state.¹⁴ Breaking the bonds that linked Guineans to the French state – which, as we'll see, were forged not only through the symbolism of “blood debts” but also by actual debts owed to retired soldiers through pensions – was not as clear-cut as holding an election and signing a declaration.

Despite some misgivings, the majority of Guinean soldiers decided to return home. Yet concerns amongst some, especially those of higher rank, still persisted. One French officer reported that the soldiers feared that if they were to refuse to go back to Guinea they would be labeled as traitors by the government and their families would face reprisals.¹⁵ Some chose to remain in the French Army or in some cases to be discharged but settle either in Dakar or Paris. One Guinean former non-commissioned officer told me that his decision was easy. He did not join the PDG in the 1950s, siding with the opposition DSG before independence. Furthermore, the rupture in relations between Guinea and France after the 1958 referendum meant that he could not receive a pension if he returned. He decided to stay in Dakar, took a position as a

¹³ Le Capitaine Daukoure, Officier chargé du soutien moral du 24^e R.I.M. to Monsieur le Président du Gouvernement (Voie hiérarchique), 1 October 1958, CADC 51QO/8.

¹⁴ On the “blood debt” and France's post-colonial default on it, see Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 183-208.

¹⁵ Note à l'attention de Monsieur le Vice-Amiral, Chef de l'État-Major de la Défense Nationale, “Options des Militaires Guinéens,” no. 2248 MA/CAB/EMP/5, 21 October 1958, CADC 51QO/33. One soldier who did return to collect his family was promptly arrested by the Guinean government. See Mann, *Native Sons*, 141-142.

surveillant at the Lycée Delafosse, and would later join a series of opposition parties whose primary goal was the overthrow of the PDG regime.¹⁶

Indeed, in addition to fears of a growing “dictatorship” in Guinea, pensions were the main area of concern for most Guinean former soldiers. Those living abroad did not have to worry, at least in the short term; the French government maintained their status as citizens of the French Community into 1960, and made sure that they continued to receive payments after they had assumed citizenship in their new host communities.¹⁷ The majority of soldiers who returned to Guinea, on the other hand, could not count on French support. Following independence, the French government ceased direct payments to veterans within Guinea, instead handing the funds earmarked for pensions over to the Guinean Armed Forces with the expectation that their Guinean counterparts would ensure their payment to the beneficiaries. In 1962, though, the French Army command received reports that most veterans had not been receiving their pensions since 1959 and others’ had been subject to a 5% tax.¹⁸ As a result, the French government began to consider suspending payments to the Guinean government altogether. By the next year, the France’s decision to cut its veterans in Guinea free was made clear. French officers posted to former recruitment centers in Guinea and Mali burned the personnel files of former soldiers, which severely hampered the latter’s attempts to establish their rights to pensions.¹⁹

In 1962, the French government also began to discharge soldiers who had decided to

¹⁶ Interview with Abdoulaye Sow, Dakar, 7 April 2012.

¹⁷ Ministre de l’Intérieur to MAE, “Conditions de séjour en France de ressortissants Guinéens,” no. 242/B73A 19 April 1959, CADC 51QO/33.

¹⁸ Ministre des Armées to Ministre des Finances et des Affaires Économiques, “Paiement des prestations dues aux anciens militaires guinéens ou à leurs familles residents en Guinée,” no. 525/MA/CM/S, 19 November 1962 CADC 51QO/41.

¹⁹ Mann, *Native Sons*, 143.

remain in the French army with the aim of eventual repatriation to Guinea. The second part of the plan was never put into action. Guinean soldiers feared that their pensions, paid in full once they left the armed forces, would be seized by the Guinean Government upon arrival.²⁰ Sékou Touré did not want the soldiers to return either; perhaps fearing the same fate as his Togolese counterpart, Sylvanus Olympio, who was assassinated during a January 1963 coup d'état, the Guinean Government refused to accept the more than 250 discharged Guinean veterans and their families.²¹ In 1965, the Guinean government made a second effort to repatriate Guinean veterans living in Dakar, perhaps as a means to stifle the exiled opposition. Negotiations between the Guinean, French, and Senegalese governments failed, however, when the soldiers asked for an assurance from the French government that they would not be punished upon their return to Guinea. Even if making such a guarantee was possible, the French officials had little political will to do so. Any possibility of return was foreclosed later that year when the Guinean government accused French intelligence services of supporting a plot to overthrow the PDG government and France removed its ambassador in Conakry. The dispute had more severe ramifications for veterans in Guinea; following a break in diplomatic relations, all pension payments by the French government were halted.²²

In its decision to marginalize veterans within Guinea and refuse the repatriation of those

²⁰ Le Général de Division Lhermite to Ambassadeur de France à Conakry, no. 2.708/2/TS, 6 November 1962, CADC 51QO/41.

²¹ Jean-Louis Pons, Ambassadeur de France en Guinée to MAE, no. 65/AL, 23 January 1963, CADC 51QO/41; Ministre des Armées to MAE, "Libération de militaires guinéens en service dans les forces armées françaises," no. 907/MA/CM/S 31 January 1963, CADC 51QO/41; Gregory Mann, *Native Sons*, 141-142.

²² Colonel Griffet, Conseiller Militaire, AmbaFrance au Sénégal, "Eventuel rapatriement de Guinéens retraités au Sénégal," no. 3319 CONSMIL/SEN.2.S., 13 October 1965, CADN 184PO/564; Diplomatie Paris to AmbaFrance Dakar, Tel. no. 3319, 13 October 1964, CADN 184PO/564.

still abroad, the PDG government's policies diverged from other former French colonies, notably Mali. There, Madeira Keita, the Minister of the Interior, used France's default on pensions to critique the neo-colonial policy of the former metropole. Furthermore, rather than seizing the payments veterans did receive, the Malian government welcomed the infusion of cash these payments made into the national economy.²³ Perhaps, given the dramatic break of 1958 and the France-encouraged turmoil that followed, Touré was wary of any connection to the former metropole, regardless of whether or not it could be used for his advantage in international affairs. After a series of coups d'état unfolded in Africa during the 1960s, the Guinean leader most likely thought the marginalization of the military and veterans more valuable than their incorporation into the national community and economy. Whatever his motive, Touré was clear that he did not wish to court the favor of veterans, either at home or abroad.

Thus, for a small group of exiles deemed dangerous by the Guinean government, 1958 represented an important rupture. Their choice to either flee Guinea or remain abroad marked them as traitors to their nation. As both educated and familiar with French political and state networks, the French press often seized upon these exiles stories to show the ugly underbelly of what others had described as Guinea's triumphant march of African nationalism. As Guinea increasingly closed itself to outside observers over the course of the 1960s, their words would come to determine how those in the West came to see what they believed to be an increasingly repressive and paranoid state. Thus, in both veterans' lives and the international press's imaginary, the Guinea became a "closed state."

Migrants

²³ Mann, *Native Sons*, 189-190.

For another, much larger group departing Guinea, independence marked a change but not a drastic departure. The Futa Jallon had for centuries occupied the center of regional networks of migration.²⁴ The region's integration into the colonial economy spurred increased numbers of circular migration, most notably tied to agricultural work in Senegal's peanut fields. By the 1950s, these *navétanes* from the Futa Jallon constituted a plurality of all seasonal agricultural workers in Senegal, with 50,000 from the Futa Jallon participating in 1950 growing season.²⁵ Migration to Senegal, especially for young men of slave status, was therefore a common and possibly profitable practice.

It was at the height of this particular migration practice during the 1950s that patterns began to shift. Rather than returning home to the Futa Jallon during the dry season, Futa Jallon *navétanes* started to move to Dakar to work as laborers, cooks, or domestic servants. Guineans had already formed a sizeable community in the AOF capital by at least the late 1920s. French administrators began to notice the large numbers of Guineans in the city starting in the late 1940s. One administrator writing in 1947 remarked that – with a little hyperbole – “In Dakar, currently, there are as many Guineans as there are Senegalese.”²⁶ Rural to rural Fulbe migration flows were gradually bent towards urban spaces, reflecting the perception that cities provided opportunity and a chance to change one's social and economic condition. A wave of political violence in Conakry in 1957 pushed Fulbe migrants to leave the Guinean capital, and many chose to move to Dakar. The elimination of the chieftaincy the same year and the more gradual unraveling of bonds between former masters and slaves afforded greater freedom of movement

²⁴ See Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 95-98.

²⁵ Territoire de Sénégal, Rapport Économique, Année 1950, ANS 2G50/53.

²⁶ P. René, “Nomades Guinéens,” *La Guinée Française* 25 June 1947, ANS 17G/421.

for previously marginalized groups. The failure of post-independence economic reforms (and, some argued, deliberate sabotage by the French government) caused even more Guineans to leave for Senegal, the majority of whom decided to settle in Dakar. Finally, the continued degradation of soil in the Futa meant that agricultural work paid progressively fewer dividends, leading many rural families on the high plateau to send working-age men to seek employment either in the Senegalese peanut fields or former AOF capital.²⁷

As numbers of immigrants grew over the course of the 1950s, the fully formed Guinean Fulbe community in Dakar began to take shape. A colonial report from the early 1950s remarked that the largest numbers of Guineans in Dakar had roots in the Futa Jallon or self-identified as Fulbe, although it did not list any exact numbers. While in Dakar, the majority of Guineans worked as domestic workers, although a small cadre earned a living as traders, specifically of fruit. Most migrants stayed in Dakar only temporarily, often during the dry season when agricultural demands in the Futa Jallon and throughout West Africa were low, before returning to the Futa Jallon during the May to September rainy growing season. Housing in Senegalese capital was also linked to the Futa. Unmarried young men from the same village or *canton* lived together in a room or small apartment, which constituted an informal mutual aid organizations based upon kinship and/or common geographical roots.²⁸

The PDG government's policies had several important effects on migration flows between the two territories after Guinean independence in 1958. Coming and going from Guinea was more complicated for the thousands of temporary migrants who constituted the majority of the Guinean community in Dakar, as the border between Guinea and Senegal wasn't nearly as

²⁷ Papa Ibrahima Diallo, *Les Guinéens de Dakar: migration et intégration en Afrique de l'Ouest* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009), 45-46.

²⁸ "Les Guinéens à Dakar," 1953 (?), ANS 17G/534.

porous after 1958 as it had been before. Shortly after independence, the PDG-led government emphasized controlling Guinea's international borders. Part of the reasoning behind this policy was symbolic; one of the justifications the French government gave for refusing to recognize an independent Guinea was that the Guinean government could not control its borders, and therefore failed one of the basic tasks of a sovereign state.²⁹ Therefore, sealing the border became a means for the Guinean government to prove that it was building a modern nation-state. As the '60s wore on and Touré's rhetoric against Senghor became more vehement, the Senegalese border began to serve as a symbolic frontline against the neo-colonial threat to the Guinean socialist revolution.

The most obvious danger the border posed to the stability of the Guinean government was the high volume of clandestine migration and black market trade that moved between the two countries. During the early 1960s, Guinea was plagued by rampant inflation and periodic shortages of basic goods. The government tried to combat inflation by instituting price controls. The policy failed, however, because Guinean traders simply bought goods at the lower state-mandated price in Guinea and sold them at a much higher price in neighboring countries, pocketing the profit while causing mass shortages in Guinea. The Government responded by closely controlling internal trade and setting up a series of state-run shops to ensure the supply chain in the Guinean interior. Again, the government reforms ran into significant problems. State run enterprises proved largely ineffective at transporting consumer goods and foods. Government reports at the time describe metric tons of basic grains rotting in Conakry warehouses while waiting to be taken into the interior (see Chapter Four).

The Guinean government decided to redouble its efforts to control the border and the

²⁹ MAE, "Situation internationale de la Guinée, reconnaissance et envois de delegations par différents états étrangers, drapeau guinéen," December 1958, CADC 51QO/4.

national economy with the 1964 Loi Cadre economic reforms. Smuggling became a capital crime, and the number of officially sanctioned merchants was culled drastically. The government also stepped up patrols along the border to stop migrants and smugglers. As the numbers of border guards was low in Guinea – yet another legacy of poor training during the colonial era – the government drafted local PDG paramilitary youth wings to patrol the borders and markets in the interior in order to stifle black-market trade. The policies, again, were only partially effective. For a time arrests increased, but for the most part migrants and traders were still able to cross the border *en brousse*. There were symbolic arrests of clandestine migrants and smugglers to discourage the others, especially after a supposed neo-colonial plot to overthrow the government was announced, and for a time after the 1970 Conakry invasion, crossing the border was nearly impossible.³⁰ Based on Guinean security reports, though, for the much of the First Republic the greatest risk most clandestine migrants apprehended near the border faced was losing the money or goods they were bringing back to their families in the Futa Jallon. A few groups of migrants were temporarily detained, but the standard punishment was repatriation to their home communities. The punishment for smugglers was more severe, but by the 1970s they had become adept at disappearing into the countryside when confronted by border guards, losing some merchandise but preserving their freedom. There were significant risks associated with crossing the border. But the task was not impossible, nor even uncommon.

The diverging types of departures taken by different groups of Guineans before and after independence underscore the need for greater precision when discussing Guinea and its borders under the First Republic. The Guinean government was not alone in attempting to control and even stem emigration; indeed, several of its neighbors, including Senegal and Mali, enacted

³⁰ Interview with Mohammad Diallo, Dakar, 26 June 2012.

similar restrictions in order to, as Mann writes, “recognize migrants as ‘theirs.’”³¹ However, the Guinean government was the most eager to project an image of controlling its borders and dissuading those who might be tempted to cross them. Perhaps this is the reason why popular depictions of the country have emphasized progressively stricter controls over the flow of persons, goods, and information across the border following independence. Images of an “isolated” Guinea had by the late 1960s become a way for journalists, diplomats, and exiles outside Guinea to draw attention to the increasingly dictatorial tendencies of the Touré regime. But was Guinea a “closed country” during the First Republic? For some parts of the Guinean diaspora and international community – exiles, “fugitive” students, and opposition members, or the only Guinean sources on First-Republic Guinea available to the foreign press – the answer is “yes.” Return would have meant almost certain death. It’s no wonder, then, that for the vast majority of people outside, Guinea seemed like an impenetrable fortress in the mold of other autocratic states of the time.

For the vast majority of individuals who crossed and re-crossed the border between Guinea and Senegal, though, government attempts to restrict migration were uneven and at times ambivalent. This is not to argue that the Touré regime did not display increasingly insular and anti-democratic tendencies as the glow of independence faded; segments of the government certainly attempted to strictly control what and who passed through the national borders, although given the reported active participation of many high-level civil servants in regional black market trade it’s important to note that those wishing for a closed border might have been a

³¹ Gregory Mann, *From Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel: The Road to Nongovernmentality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 135-145.

minority.³² Rather, a more detailed history of mobility across the border demonstrates that control of the border was more importantly used as a rhetorical and ideological tool rather than as an attempt to be in complete command of the Guinean economy, especially following the failed experiment of centralized control during the mid-1960s.

Home and Abroad

Opposition Members, Students, and Veterans

Actual and purported connections between the Futa Jallon and abroad became central to Guinean political discourse as the First Republic dragged on. In government rhetoric, certain figures within exile networks came to signify the Guinean community abroad as a whole. One of the most prominent of these types, at least in the speeches and writings of Sékou Touré, was that of exiled opposition member. For these most visible parts of the foreign Guinea community, “home” and “abroad” were muddled and complex ideas. Unlike some Guinean veterans and civil servants, they did not decide to build a permanent “home” – meaning a sense of belonging in addition to a practical domicile – while abroad. In fact, their public personas were dedicated to a future return in order to rebuild Guinea after Touré’s era had passed. Yet their connection with imagined “homes” in Guinea was severed after independence; in the intermediate time frame they had little hope for return without prison and possible execution, and their communication with their families in Guinea was infrequent and sparse.

Along with Paris and Abidjan, Dakar became one of the central poles of activity for political exiles, especially for those with connections to the Futa. The choice of the Senegalese capital as a base of operations made sense. The relationship between Guinea and Senegal had been complicated in the aftermath of former’s declaration of independence, and during early

³² Sékou Touré, Présidence de la République, Conakry, Circulaire no. 24/PRG, 7 August 1961, Archives Regionale de Labé (ARL); QS, MDNS, 1 June 1965, ANG 374W/2.

1961 broke out into outright hostility shortly after Guinea left the Franc zone. On April 21st, the Guinean government claimed that the French Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionnage (SDECE) had worked with the Senegalese and Ivorian governments to arm opposition members in anticipation of an invasion to topple the Touré regime.³³ External forces were supposedly working with a ring of religious leaders, former colonial chiefs, and merchants in the Fulbe-dominated Futa Jallon, all of whom were sympathetic to the French and had been paid significant sums to participate. Unlike subsequent plot attempts, which were often denounced by governments outside Guinea, the 1960 plot seemed to have been a real threat to Guinea; Senghor's Senegalese government corroborated Guinean reports that arm depots had been established along the Senegalese side of the Guinean border, and for a moment opposition members feared that their largely unimpeded activity in the Senegalese capital would be sharply curtailed.

Despite the Senegalese government's contention that it had played no role in the plot, the Guinean government painted Senghor as De Gaulle's puppet and an integral cog in the neo-colonial plot to overthrow the PDG government. Whereas before the Senegalese government had been ambivalent to Guinean opposition members, it now had little incentive to control activities aimed at overthrowing the Guinean government. Thus, the conflict between Senegal and Guinea opened a space for exiled opposition members to engage in explicitly political activity. Prior to Guinea's independence in 1958, there existed only one political group within the Guinean community in Dakar: Solidarité Guinéenne, a non-partisan organization meant to represent the political interests of the Guinean community. Growing political division in Guinea created a

³³ Sidiki Kobélé Kéïta, *Des Complots contre la Guinée de Sékou Touré (1958-1984)*, (Conakry: SOGUIDIP, 2002), 62-70; "Un 'complot' vite liquidé: M Sékou Touré met en prison trois de ses ministres," *Combat* 22 April 1960, ANS Fonds de la Vice Présidence, carton no. 141; Mamadou Dia to Sékou Touré, 30 May 1960 ANS, Fonds du Fédération du Mali, carton no. 26.

schism within the group, with the two sides breaking down between those who supported the PDG and those aligned against it. Divisions within Solidarité were reflected by the different alliances the two competing camps formed with Senegalese political parties; pro-PDG members joined the opposition Mouvement Populaire Sénégalais while those aligned against Touré joined Senghor's Union Progressiste Sénégalaise. Following independence, the two groups withdrew from direct involvement with Senegalese parties. PDG sympathizers created the Union Fraternelle Guinéenne (UFG), ostensibly apolitical but in fact supported by the Guinean embassy, while opposition members took over what remained of Solidarité.³⁴ Senghor banned the UFG following the 1960 plot scandal, but allowed the opposition-controlled Solidarité to continue its activities. In return, Touré welcomed exiled leaders of the Parti Africain d'Indépendance, a communist-aligned group outlawed by the Senegalese government, the same year.³⁵ While the Guinean embassy was able to shift tactics, establishing semi-clandestine PDG *comités de base* in Dakar and throughout Senegal, the new policy of the Senegalese government, however, was clear; Guinean opposition activity would be tolerated, if not actively supported, while those openly allied with Touré would be "invited" to return to their home country.

The complicated position of Guinean exiles was encapsulated by the experiences of the aforementioned students who fled Guinea in the wake of 1958. The young men were exiles the moment they left Guinean soil, due to the Guinean government's contention that unsanctioned migration was a form of treason. One former student said that the group of Guineans came to be known as *les fugitives*, or "the runaways." Some of them had relatives in Dakar who could help, but others who did not were not able to receive any scholarships due to their irregular status.

³⁴ Diallo, *Les Guinéens de Dakar*, 132-133.

³⁵ André Lewin, *Ahmed Sékou Touré 1922-1984: président de la Guinée de 1958 à 1984*, v. 4, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009), 10-11.

With the help of a Senegalese students' organization they were able to convince the rector of the University of Dakar to give the Guinean students tuition, housing, and dining vouchers. In 1963, their prospects improved when the French government offered scholarships to the Guinean students in Dakar. The French proposal, though, came with one stipulation: the students had to secure permission from the Guinean government. According to one former student, the Guinean government refused, claiming that "the only real Guineans are in Guinea." By 1965, about 250 Guinean students had made their way through Dakar to French universities, but their footing was not on solid ground. The Guinean government continued to refuse to recognize the students' status as Guinean citizens, and thus denied them passports, making the procurement of official documents like visas difficult.³⁶

Much like the students, opposition members' main concern was solidifying their ambiguous position abroad. The easiest path towards both formal recognition and material support was the formation of a unified political group that could lobby foreign governments. It took until 1966, however, for exiles to make an attempt to unify the myriad opposition groups. In April 1966, Solidarité Guinéenne – recently rechristened the Regroupement des Guinéens au Sénégal (RGS) – joined a newly organized opposition umbrella organization named the Front de Libération Nationale de la Guinée (FLNG). Shortly after its establishment in Abidjan in March 1966, the FLNG had spread rapidly to Liberia, Haute Volta, Sierra Leone, Niger, and finally to France, where leaders set up a central office.³⁷ The FLNG's list of accusations against the PDG

³⁶ Interview with Barry Bago, Dakar, 2 July 2012.

³⁷ Perhaps reflecting the group's loose structure, sources don't agree on the actual name of this opposition organization. Claude Rivière, author of one of the few studies on post-colonial Guinea, lists the group as the "Front National de Libération de la Guinée" (FNLG). Rivière, *Guinea: Mobilization of a People*, 129. Lewin also uses FNLG, See *Ahmed Sékou Touré*, v. 4, 22, as does D. Bach "L'insertion ivoirienne dans les rapports internationaux," in *État et*

echoed earlier ones made by opposition groups: the government had ruined the Guinean economy; forced the population to participate in political activities like mass meetings; exiled any who dared oppose the government; and over all “transformed [the Guinean people] into a slave force ready to serve.”³⁸ Although the group purported to represent all oppressed Guineans, the groups leadership drew from exclusively Guinea’s exiled elite; the FLNG’s board was comprised of well-educated civil servants, including a professor of history (Ibrahima Kaké), two doctors, three economists or accountants, and Siradiou Diallo, a recent college graduate and future *Jeune Afrique* editor in chief.³⁹ The FLNG’s leadership used connections within foreign governments and French political parties to secure support for their movement. In Côte d’Ivoire, for instance, the group was welcomed and funded by President Felix Houphouët-Boigny. Yet most governments that would seemingly be predisposed to support opposition’s cause approached the group with apprehension. In Senegal and France, both countries with hostile relationships with the Guinean government, the FLNG was only tolerated and told to not become

Bourgeoisie en Côte d’Ivoire, edited by Y.-A. Fauré and J.-P. Medard (Paris: Karthala, 1984). On the other hand, Diallo and MacDonald use FLNG. See Mamadou Dindé Diallo, “Un Siècle de Journaux en Guinée: histoire de la presse écrite de la période coloniale a nos jours,” (Thèse de doctorat, Université Toulouse 2 Le Mirail, 2013), 174; and Mairi Stewart MacDonald, “The Challenge of Guinean Independence, 1958-1971,” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2009). Thomas O’Toole and Ibrahima Bah-Lalya use both FNLG and “Front pour la Libération Nationale de Guinée” in their *Historical Dictionary of Guinea* (Lanham, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1995) to describe the same organization. Archival sources, specifically those from the archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, use FLNG, which is the name I adopt in this text.

³⁸ La Section Européenne de FLNG, “Tous les patriotes guinéens doivent de regrouper...” in CADN 1PO/1/40.

³⁹ Ibid.

too zealous in its activities.⁴⁰

The members of the FLNG were unified by one goal: the end of the PDG regime and the eventual return of Guinea's exiled "elite." However, consensus on the means through which regime change would be accomplished – not to mention the ideological position from which FLNG members critiqued the Touré regime and imagined a reconstructed post-PDG Guinea – was elusive. The group leadership ranged from David Soumah, the conservative Christian trade unionist mentioned above and the head of the Dakar branch of the FLNG, to a young Alpha Condé, president of the radical FEANF (Fédération des Étudiants d'Afrique Noire en France) during the 1970s, future President of Guinea elected in 2010, and in 1973, according to French intelligence services, a strident pro-Maoist who critiqued the PDG from the left, arguing that Touré and his allies were corrupt from their "complicity with capitalism."⁴¹ Such ideological diversity – or incoherence, some argued – prevented the FLNG from being taken as an effective and serious political movement, a characterization the group would attempt to overcome for much of its existence.

In fact, for the vast majority of the organization's existence, the FLNG was content with securing the position of exiles rather than bringing about regime change in Guinea through direct means. The one very notable exception was the organization's participation in the November 1970 Portuguese-backed assault on Conakry, perhaps an attempt to display the group's opposition *bona fides*. The daylong attack, during which around 300 mercenaries, Portuguese

⁴⁰ Ibrahima Baba Kaké, *Sékou Touré; le héros et le tyran* (Paris: Jeune Afrique Livres, 1987), 133; Victor D. Du Bois, *The Rise of an Opposition to Sékou Touré* West Africa Series v. 9, no. 4, 4-10.

⁴¹ Prefet, Direction du Service du Cooperation Technique Internationale de Police (DSCTIP) to Foccart, "Note concernant le Front de libération de la Guinée," no. 114, 9 February 1973, ANF AG/5(FPU)/1366.

Special Forces, and a contingent of FLNG fighters invaded Conakry and controlled strategic points in the capital for nearly a day, continues to be shrouded in mystery. PDG supporters both at the time and since have argued that the assault represented no less than a neo-colonial attempt to overthrow the “revolutionary” Touré regime. Their claims were bolstered by the fact that, counter to pronouncements of non-involvement from Lisbon, it soon became clear that the Portuguese government had funded the attack. The colonial power’s motives were obvious. For years, the PDG government in Guinea had both harbored and actively supported the Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC, or African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde), an organization headed by Amílcar Cabral dedicated to armed struggle against Portuguese colonial rule in West Africa. During numerous raids into Guinea Bissau staged from Guinea, PAIGC soldiers had captured some 23 Portuguese soldiers, who were held in prisons in Conakry. The Portuguese government’s bankrolling of the Nov. 22 assault, therefore, was most likely motivated by the desire to free those prisoners and, if possible, to assassinate Cabral and other prominent PAIGC leaders living in Conakry. They succeeded in the former goal but failed in the latter.⁴²

The FLNG’s participation in the attack seems to have been an attempt to piggyback on the specific Portuguese goals in order to overthrow the Guinean government during the chaos unleashed by the invasion. Their general strategy depended upon a small group of trained guerillas assaulting Conakry from the boats stationed off the coast, seizing the Guinean government’s radio and television broadcasting buildings, and assassinating Touré and his allies. Their surgical strike would be combined with a more general invasion from Guinea Bissau into

⁴² Bulletin Particulier de Renseignement No. 11.101, Secrétariat Général de la Défense Nationale, 27 Nov 1970, ANF AG/5(FPU)/2373; Bulletin Particulier de Renseignement, no. 11.126, Secrétariat Général de la Défense Nationale, 4 Dec 1970 ANF AG/5(FPU)/2373.

the northern Futa Jallon, an area the opposition members thought ripe for rebellion against the PDG. Finally, and crucially for the overall goal of regime change, the FLNG leaders counted upon a mass revolt against the Touré regime once the FLNG forces had proven that Touré and his security forces were vulnerable. The assault showed the Guinean Army to be ineffective and disorganized – it took more than 24 hours for reinforcements to arrive in Conakry from Kindia, due in no small part to the government’s decision to garrison them far from the capital for fear of a military coup d’état – yet no public uprising came to pass. Some civil servants and mid-level politicians used the opportunity to turn against the government, but once it was clear that the FLNG’s wider goals had failed, those who rose up within Guinea to oppose the regime either fled the country, were captured, or ended up dead.⁴³

The “neo-colonialist” invasion provided a unique opportunity for Touré’s government. After the immediate threat was over, the PDG used the attack as a means to improve their position internationally and consolidate control domestically. Touré and his allies within the government had used a series of purported plots during the 1960s to eliminate enemies and rivals. These plots had mostly been approached with a healthy dose of skepticism by foreign governments and intelligence services. With the 1970 assault, however, Touré had visible proof that at least one colonial power had moved to overthrow his regime with the help of a “fifth column” within Guinea. The fact that the FLNG had worked closely with the Portuguese – despite the opposition organization’s obviously false statements that they alone funded and led the assault – only discredited the movement even more, drawing into stark relief the seemingly

⁴³ Etienne Burin des Roziers, Ambassadeur de France en Italie to Ministre le MAE, “a.s. Situation en Guinée,” no. 33/AL, 15 Dec. 1970, CADN 163PO/1/38.

dubious claim that FLNG leaders were dedicated to democracy and liberty for all Africans.⁴⁴

On both a tactical and psychological level, the FLNG's assault was a disaster. Mass defections from the FNLG followed in its wake, and by mid-1971 the group was effectively defunct.⁴⁵ In fact, after a brief moment of doubt during the invasion – Touré supposedly cowered in his office in the Presidential Palace convinced that his end was near – the PDG regime and Guinean president were stronger than ever. Meant to usher in the revival of the Guinean democracy snuffed out shortly after independence, the FLNG and Portuguese assault in fact initiated a wave of intense repression, and the six years following the failed invasion witnessed thousands of arrests and summary executions eventually culminating in the 1976 Fulbe plot.

In the wake of the failed assault, foreign heads of state – chief among them Leopold Sedar Senghor – quickly turned against the movement. Counter to Guinean claims that the Senegalese government offered full-throated support for the FLNG, Senghor implemented tight restrictions on the political actions of exiled opposition, and in early 1971 rounded up politically active Guineans in Dakar and deported them to France.⁴⁶ France did not welcome the exiles with open arms; while the government offered asylum to many opposition members, they were quick to remind them that the benefits of asylum came with the responsibility to practice a certain amount of “reserve” in public statements and writings.⁴⁷ For both governments, the possibility of rapprochement with the Guinean government combined with international outrage over the

⁴⁴ Rapport, Prefecture de Police (Paris), 10 December 1970, ANF AG5(FPU)/1257.

⁴⁵ Rapport, Prefecture de Police (Paris), 2 August 1971, ANF AG5(FPU)/1257.

⁴⁶ SISYPHE, “Relations sénégal-guinéennes – Expulsions de ressortissants guinéens et français d’origine guinéenne,” no. 545, 24 March 1971, CADN 148PO/1/565.

⁴⁷ Rapport, MAE, Dir. des Affaires Africaines et Malgaches, “a/s relations avec la Guinée” 6 December 1974, CADN 184PO/1/564.

invasion outweighed the increasingly unlikely possibility that the opposition would be able to bring about any type of regime change.

The FLNG was never able to recover from their disastrous expedition in Guinea. David Soumah, the leader of the Senegal FLNG branch, soon wound up in jail. While the Portuguese had bankrolled some of the 1970 invasion, they had not offered funds to train the FNLG members. To make up the difference in material support, Soumah embezzled some 50 million FCFA from a housing development corporation he headed to underwrite the invasion, had been caught, and then was ordered by Senegalese courts to remain in jail until he could repay the organization for the funds he owed.⁴⁸ Although the FNLG continued on in name, it slowly faded within the opposition community in exile. For the moment, the dream of uniting the Guinean exiled opposition was dormant.

It took another year for another movement to occupy the empty space left by the FLNG's implosion. Siradiou Diallo, part of the FLNG's Paris branch leadership, used the organization's dissolution to create his own organization of exiled opposition members, the Regroupement des Guinéens de l'Extérieur (RGE). The RGE grew out of an organization called the Regroupement des Guinéens en France created by Diallo in 1969, a group that, according to its leadership, was non-political and meant to serve as a mutual aid group and a "forum for discussion."⁴⁹ Following the FLNG's failure, Diallo remodeled the RGE into an umbrella opposition organization in the mold of its more intervention-oriented predecessor and made early moves to constitute a

⁴⁸ Prefet, Direction du Service de Coopération Technique Internationale de Police to Foccart "Note concernant les activités au Sénégal des associations de Guinéens hostiles au régime du Président Sékou Touré", 19 April 1974, ANF AG5(FPU)/1359.

⁴⁹ Rapport, Prefecture de Police (Paris), 9 October 1970 ANF AG5(FPU)/1257.

government in exile.⁵⁰

The RGE also turned to more frequently highlighting political and economic repression within Guinea. Many of the organization's early critiques appeared in a monthly journal, *Guinée: Nouvelles Perspectives*, published starting in 1972. Diallo sought use the organization's organ to influence politicians, sending copies to prominent heads of states and politicians free of cost to "raise awareness" of the plight of Guineans both inside and in exile.⁵¹ The magazine also positioned itself as a window onto the "closed" "totalitarian" Guinea. One of the recurring themes was a series of anonymous letters from "inside Guinea" published in the journal listing the country's slow descent into dysfunction and despair. One letter claimed that the PDG's supposed requirement that all Guineans to celebrate "Gowon, Ahidjo, Boumédiène, and Mobutu" (the heads of Nigeria, Cameroon, Algeria, and Zaire, respectively)" was reflective of Touré's abandonment of ideals in favor of the naked pursuit of power.⁵² Another article focused on the plight of medical doctors, noting that of the fifty that were in Guinea at the moment of independence, only ten remained in 1972 and some twenty had been jailed in Camp Boiro after the 1970 Conakry assault.⁵³

As the 1970s wore on, those aligned against the Touré regime began to focus more on the network of prisons filled with supposed enemies of the state. By the late 1970s, some of the loudest critics of the Touré regime included Amnesty International and Nadine Barry, a French-born spouse of an imprisoned Guinean civil servant who created an association for family

⁵⁰ Rapport, Prefecture de Police (Paris), 2 August 1971, ANF AG5(FPU)/1257.

⁵¹ Rapport, Prefecture de Police (Paris), 7 November 1972 ANF AG5(FPU)/1257.

⁵² Anonymous, "Lettre de Guinée," *Guinée: Nouvelles Perspectives* no. 22 (August, 1972), BNF.

⁵³ La Rédaction, "La Santé Publique dans la Guinée de Sékou Touré en 1972," *Guinée: Nouvelles Perspectives* no. 23 (Septembre-October-November 1972), BNF.

members of political prisoners in Guinea. These groups, however, made few inroads within foreign governments. Senghor continued to discourage and overtly political activity, at one point threatening to deport RGE leaders in Senegal back to Guinea.⁵⁴ Despite sending numerous letters well into the 1980s imploring the French government to find out if her husband was still alive, Nadine Barry made little headway pushing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to clarify the situation of political prisoners in Guinea, including her husband.⁵⁵ While there was a rapprochement between the Guinean government and its erstwhile enemies in Paris, Dakar, and Abidjan in 1977, Touré and his advisors continued to resist any possible return for the opposition in exile. Furthermore, the RGE had not been particularly effective in uniting the Guinean opposition, and throughout the 1970s rival groups would emerge and disappear like comets across the night sky of exile. Although the opposition in exile seized upon an increasingly problematic image of Sékou Touré against which to organize, they were in reality no more organized in 1980 than in 1960.

An analysis of the post-colonial trajectory of the Guinean exile in opposition points to several conclusions. First, opposition to Touré moved from armed struggle to shedding light on political prisoner and abuses of power within Guinea. This development reflected both practical and ideological shifts. The FLNG invasion had failed, and indeed had caused significant

⁵⁴ SISYPHE, “Sénégal – Guinée – Activités de l’opposition guinéenne,” 1 March 1974, CADN 148PO/1/565.

⁵⁵ Barry’s husband had been executed on the outskirts of a small village outside Kankan in 1976. Her search for her husband’s remains is recounted in the 2009 documentary *Aujourd’hui encore, je t’espérais toujours* (dir. Catherine Veaux-Logeat). Nadine Barry, Présidente, Association des Familles Françaises de Prisonniers Politiques en Guinée (AFFPPG) to Yvon Omnès, Amb. Fran. en Guinée, 4 November 1980, CADN 163PO/39; Barry to Martin Kirsch, Conseiller à la Présidence pour les affaires africaines, 30 September 1980, CADN 163PO/39; Barry to Omnès, 17 September 1980, CADN 163PO/39; Barry to François Sheer, Directeur de Cabinet du Ministre des Relations Extérieures (France), 9 September 1982, CADN 163PO/39; Barry to Claude Cheysson, Ministre des Relations Extérieures, 6 April 1982, CADN 163PO/39.

blowback. It became increasingly clear to men like Siradiou Diallo that similar assaults would only give rise to more accusations of neo-colonial collaboration and further undermine his movement. Ideologically, the 1970s also witnessed a progressive shift towards the language of human rights.⁵⁶ In the case of Guinea and other totalitarian regimes, political prisoners became a key means through which one could critique these types of political systems. Those opposed to Touré's regime, in particular Nadine Barry but also the RGE leadership, lobbied foreign leaders and international organizations to undermine the Guinean governments' international standing or, in the case of the former, to simply find out the whereabouts of their loved ones.

Second, the exiled opposition members were just as concerned with clarifying their ambiguous place in international networks – getting passports, establishing residency, making an income, etc. – as with armed struggle against the Guinean government. Most exiles remained passionately dedicated to their opposition to the Touré regime, but the concerns of daily life for exiles often trumped the fervor of convictions. Exiles had to secure papers, search for jobs and houses, and try to find a way to bring any family members still in Guinea abroad to meet them. They remained steadfast in their critiques of the Touré regime. Ambiguous legal status and unsure financial standing, though, often trumped their desire to effect regime change within Guinea. Sometimes, life just got in the way of political action.

Tailors, Charbonniers, and Fruit Vendors

⁵⁶ On the growing ubiquity of the discourse of human rights in the decade following 1968, see Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2010). Burke and Simpson, though, locate the development of such a discourse in the contested politics of decolonization. See Bradley R. Simpson, "Self-Determination, Human Rights, and the End of Empire in the 1970s," *Humanity* 4, no. 2 (Summer 2013), 239-260; and Roland Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

Although the exiled opposition garnered the lion's share of attention from the Guinean and Senegalese governments, the much more numerically significant community of Futa Fulbe laborers structured the Guinean community in Dakar. These temporary or permanent migrants maintained the strongest ties between the Senegalese capital and the Guinean high plateau. And as the 1970s wore on, their prominence within Guinean political discourse would increasingly reflect their influence both "at home" and "abroad."

By 1974, researchers and the Senegalese government estimated that Guineans in Dakar numbered more than 70,000 and in Senegal as a whole more than 300,000.⁵⁷ Of those Guineans living in Dakar, around 75% came from the Futa Jallon, and the majority were men, although in a more equal proportion to women than in the 1950s. Slightly more than half of the Guinean migrants in Dakar were temporary, meaning that they anticipated staying in the city for only between one month and one year, although the majority eventually stayed in Dakar between four and five years. Of the other half of "settled" migrants, most (56.5%) had migrated more than ten years before. The two groups of migrants, temporary and settled, had some similarities: for most this was their first time coming to Dakar, but a significant minority reported multiple trips between the Senegalese capital and the Futa Jallon. Furthermore, the vast majority (90%) was in Senegal without official papers.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ The number for Guineans in Dakar is based upon Papa Ibrahima Diallo's research. For Senegal in general it is based upon estimations from Senegalese government officials collected by Diallo. The much larger number of Guineans living in Senegal outside of Dakar is most likely based upon the large numbers of Fulbe herders and farmers that fled the Futa Jallon during the 1970s due to increasing government quotas and settled in Southern Senegal, specifically in the Kédougou region. See Diallo, *Les Guinéens de Dakar*, 29-30; and Papa Ibrahima Diallo, "L'Immigration des Guinéens à Dakar Problèmes d'intégration d'une minorité étrangère" (PhD Diss., Department of Sociology, Université des Sciences et Techniques de Lille, 1974), 28-29.

⁵⁸ Diallo, *Les Guinéens de Dakar*, 56-57.

The list of Guineans' occupations in Dakar remained largely the same as their 1950s predecessors, although there were important shifts in the numbers of Fulbe workers in each profession. Totals of domestic workers declined significantly, from "the majority" to 15%. Merchants – ranging from smugglers to market stall owners and street vendors – constituted a little more than 25% of the total workers, followed by "students, the unemployed, and others" at 24% and "independent" or salaried laborers, both around 18%. Those engaged in commerce tended to concentrate in the areas of fruit selling – some 60% of all fruit vendors in Dakar's markets were Futa Jallon Fulbe – which relied upon trade routes connecting Dakar to Gaoual and Labé for merchandise; meat butchering, of which 60% were Futa Fulbe; and charcoal making and selling, of which 95% were Futa Fulbe.⁵⁹ The last two professions dominated by Fulbe laborers demonstrate the prominence of slave-status migrants in Dakar. Few free Fulbe – or high status Senegalese, for that matter – would voluntarily decide to be a butcher or charcoal maker. Futa Fulbe of slave status, therefore, decided to exploit an opening in the local economy, although to varying degrees of success.

What emerges is a familiar picture of labor migration that occurred throughout the world during the twentieth century.⁶⁰ Most early migrants, almost uniformly male, were neither the poorest nor the richest. They made the decision to leave based upon a combination of "push" (i.e. taxes or exactions) and "pull" (i.e. opportunity) factors. As the Guinean community in Dakar grew, numbers of women migrants increased. The larger community eventually became self-sustaining, decreasing the viscosity for other migrants from the Futa Jallon to come to Dakar, as the decision to make the long and sometimes dangerous trek from Labé to Dakar was made

⁵⁹ Ibid, 61-70.

⁶⁰ See, for instance, José Moya, *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

easier when one knew a cousin living near Sandaga Market who could provide temporary housing and perhaps even some work upon arrival. A larger and more varied Guinean community, however, did not mean that migrants turned attention away from their links with the Futa Jallon. Most of the young migrants thought their stay in Dakar would only be temporary, and many went back to the Futa, if only for an extended visit. Overall, while abroad nearly every Guinean migrant maintained connections with “home,” meaning the physical and familial space of the Futa Jallon – even those who chose to build new homes in Dakar.

The material and imaginary connections that provided structure for the transnational community centered on the Futa Jallon proved to be an integral part of the post-colonial experience of Guinean Fulbe. Many Futa Fulbe migrants maintained connections with their families by sending remittances back home. Material support often took the form of consumer products, as economic reforms under the First Republic caused severe shortages for even the most basic goods such as shoes and soap. One Guinean migrant, a tailor named Mohammed Diallo who works near the Sandaga market in Dakar, said that he would send goods, including sacks of rice, back to his parents in Bantignel, either carrying the packages himself or sending with an acquaintance returning to his home village. Diallo also recalled that it was normal for migrants to undertake an extended stay back in Guinea every couple years. Often times these trips back home would have to be delayed by a crackdown on clandestine migration by the Guinean government, usually after a plot attempt had been announced by the state media. But passages across the border were never fully out of the question for those not specifically engaged in political activity.⁶¹

⁶¹ Interview with Mohammed Diallo, Dakar, 2 July 2012.

In fact, most Guineans in Senegal were explicitly apolitical, or at least staked ambiguous positions towards the Guinean government in public. Of the main opposition groups in Dakar, those in leadership positions were nearly exclusively elites either through education or birth who had chosen exile. While some migrants were active in political organizations, just as many chose to focus on economic activities. Or, as Mohammad Diallo told me: “we didn’t get mixed up in all that stuff [opposition groups]. We were more concerned with making money and helping out our families.”⁶² Indeed, most of the associations in which migrants participated focused on the difficulties associated with living hundreds of kilometers away from one’s family, often under less than legal status. Each village in Guinea had a connected *bolönda*, or mutual aid organization, whose main functions were the repatriation of the sick or deceased, welcoming notable Guineans passing through the city, and the regulation of civil disputes. The smaller village-based organizations were grouped into four larger associations, reflecting the four ethno-regional divisions of Guinea (Basse Côte, Futa Jallon, Haute Guinée, Forest Region). In turn, the four associations were governed by a larger group called the *Amicale des Guinéens*, which mediated between ethnic communities and lobbied the Dakar government on issues of concern within the Guinean community.⁶³ These groups were not apolitical, in the sense that they mediated between individual members within the Guinean community, on the one hand, and between the large Guinean community and the Senegalese government on the other. They were, however, much more focused on the daily concerns of Guinean migrants rather than precipitating

⁶² Interview with Mohammed Diallo, Dakar, 25 June 2012; Leaders within the Senegalese RGE branch echoed similar sentiments, stating that most Guineans in Dakar are concerned with making money and providing for their families rather than joining the opposition, a task made even more difficult as “it [was] hard to find a job as a Guinean in Dakar [after the invasion].” Rapport, Prefecture de Police (Paris), 2 Jan 1973, ANF AG/5(FPU)/1366.

⁶³ “Les Guinéens à Dakar,” 1953 (?), ANS 17G/534; Diallo, *Les Guinéens de Dakar*, 137-141.

change within Guinea, a strong contrast – at least in rhetoric – to the exile-led political organizations.

Guinean Exiles, Migrants, and Belonging in Senegal

That most migrants chose to remain distanced from Guinean political parties while living in Senegal was not coincidental, as there were several disincentives associated with open political activity in Senghor's Senegal. Some former exiles today, looking back on their years of political activism against the PDG while in Dakar, have remarked that Senghor aided Guineans who had chosen to flee their home country. One leader within Siradiou Diallo's RGE explained that it was only natural that the Senegalese president support those aligned against the PDG regime, as the Guinean and Senegalese states had a long-running feud dating back to at least 1960. Furthermore, the former opposition member remarked, helping out the Guineans in need was simply part of Senghor's nature, as "being catholic, Senghor was a natural humanitarian."⁶⁴ Discussions within the Senegalese government about what to do with the increasing influx of exiles and migrants, however, shows that the position of Guineans in Dakar was much more precarious. Senghor faced a vocal and active political opposition, culminating in the 1968 student protests in Dakar that temporarily closed down the University of Dakar.⁶⁵ When presented with turmoil in the capital, the Senegalese government attempted to tamp down Guinean political groups, many of whose members had been students at the University themselves. While Senghor sought to rein in pro-Touré leftist Guinean groups in particular, opposition groups were also told to curtail their activities. The government's attempts to control

⁶⁴ Interview with Barry Bago.

⁶⁵ See Abdoulaye Bathily, *Mai 1968 à Dakar: ou, La révolte universitaire et le démocratie* (Paris: Editions Chaka, 1992); Françoise Blum, "Sénégal 1968 : Révolte Étudiante Et Grève Générale," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 59, no. 2 (2012), 144-177; and Matthew Swagler, Dissertation Forthcoming, Columbia University.

– or even eliminate – the Guinean community in Dakar weren't limited to the politically active. Senegalese security forces also conducted sweeps in the Senegalese capital targeted at Guinean migrants, most notably in 1967, when Senghor, complaining of Dakar being “invaded” by the unemployed, sent police to local markets to round up Guinean “non-authorized sellers,” placing some 150 Guineans in a truck headed towards the Guinean border.⁶⁶

The failed 1970 Conakry Invasion drastically shifted the Senegalese government's policy towards the Guinean community in Senegal. In the weeks following the attack, the Guinean government accused its Senegalese counterpart of working with the widely despised Portuguese government. In response, the Senegalese government made moves to expel leaders of the Guinean opposition, arresting several leaders and threatening with deportation.⁶⁷ Pro-Touré activists were not spared either; according to reports from the French Embassy in Dakar, Senegalese security forces went through Guinean neighborhoods picking up any suspected of actively supporting the PDG.⁶⁸ Although Senghor had previously tolerated Guinean political groups as long as they did not participate in Senegalese politics, after the invasion – and the international scandal it precipitated – political action was largely cut off for Guinean exiles.

The Senegalese government dealt with other ripples from the failed 1970 invasion. Waves of purges within Guinea followed the attack, causing thousands of Guineans to flee the country. Many “refugees” chose to migrate to Senegal. As implied by my use of quotation marks, the status of those who fled Guinea during the purges was unclear, and both the Senegalese government and the UN debated their rights under international law. While in 1971

⁶⁶ Telegram, AmbaFrance au Sénégal to Dip. Paris, 25 August 1967, CADN 184PO/565.

⁶⁷ SISYPHE, “Relations sénégal-guinéennes – Expulsions de ressortissants guinéens et français d'origine guinéenne,” no. 545, 24 March 1971, CADN 184PO/565.

⁶⁸ SISYPHE, “Expulsion de guinéens,” no. 173, 1 February 1971, CADN 184PO/565.

the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) wavered over whether or not to apply refugee status to Guineans living in Senegal, the Senegalese government's position was clear: it resisted any attempts to accord special status to the nearly 300,000 expatriate Guineans, hoping to avoid the obligations connected to UN recognition.⁶⁹ A later wave of Guineans fleeing towards Senegal four years later only confirmed the Senegalese government's hostility towards Guinean refugees. Following reforms to cattle ownership within Guinea in 1975, whole villages in the northern Futa Jallon resettled in Southern Senegal.⁷⁰ The Senegalese Government gave orders to its civil servants and security forces to drive the Guineans back, as they believed the Guinean refugees to be security and disease risks. Dakar's attempts to stem a growing tide, however, were largely futile; local civil servants in Kédougou, presented with the what they hoped would be a jolt to the backwater region's economy from the refugees extensive herds, ignored Dakar's orders.⁷¹

Thus, the Guinean community's position within post-colonial Senegal was marked by both danger and ambiguity. For a select few opposition members, a sort of uneasy status could be secured as long as their activity did not substantially threaten regional and international relations. When it did, though, opposition leaders faced the possibility of deportation. The status of the majority of Guineans living in Senegal – namely those who had migrated looking for economic opportunity – was much more ambiguous. Guinean migrants dealt with inconsistent and at times contradictory policies, the threat of seemingly arbitrary deportation, and an ambiguous legal

⁶⁹ B. Desmazières, to Amb. De France au Sénégal, "a/s: Expulsion des Guinéens," no. 41, 2 March 1971, CADN 184PO/565.

⁷⁰ See Chapter 4.

⁷¹ SISYPHE, "Activités d'agents guinéens au Sénégal," no. 932, 1 October 1976, CADN 184PO/565.

status. For both the Guineans and the Senegalese government alike, it seems, the room for maneuver afforded by the non-recognized condition of Guinean migrants and refugees was more important than legal clarity.

Fulbe Migrants, Exiles, and Citizenship in Guinea

While the position of the Guinean community in Senegal continued to be ambiguous, the 1970 Conakry invasion calcified an already antagonistic relationship between Fulbe migrants and the Guinean Government. As purges intensified, the PDG-led government thrust the Guinean community abroad into the center of public discourses about citizenship within Guinea. Fulbe migrants, especially those falling under the increasingly nebulous category of *navétanes*, became prime examples of corrupted citizens or, in Touré's strongest rhetoric, foot soldiers for anti-national forces.

For Sékou Touré, political exiles were easy to locate in public discourse. Their active opposition to the Guinean state and the PDG regime clearly marked men like Siradiou Diallo and David Soumah as enemies of the state and, according to PDG ideology, the Guinean nation and people by transitive relation. Yet the PDG leadership also downplayed the exiles' influence within Guinea. In both the government-written White Paper investigating the 1970 Conakry invasion and in subsequent speeches, the Guinean president made clear that exiled opposition members were simply the purchased puppets of neo-colonial forces.⁷² Public statements on the internal "fifth column" – a supposed network of corrupt civil servants, merchants, and politicians working from within to overthrow the PDG regime and with extensive contacts with outside groups – similarly emphasized payments from French or American intelligence sources as the

⁷² See the *Livre Blanc sur l'agression portugaise contre la République de Guinée* (Conakry: Imprimerie Nationale Patrice Lumumba, 1971).

main motivation for treason.⁷³ Thus, while the exiled opposition served as a means to accuse domestic rivals or enemies of being traitors through association, Touré and other PDG leaders were also careful not to overstate the importance of groups like the FNLG or RGE.

The PDG's castigation of migrants, however, became much more prominent following the failed invasion. While clandestine migration to neighboring countries had concerned the PDG leadership since independence, the Guinean state had neither the means nor the desire to completely stem the tide of Guineans leaving to work in neighboring countries during the 1960s. During the same period, migration became increasingly important for the basic survival of many Guinean families. Beginning shortly after independence, Guinea had been in a state of nearly constant economic crisis, ranging from temporary shortages of consumer goods to, at times, limited famine. By the 1970s, it was clear that the state's attempts to reform the economy through centralized control had failed. Agricultural and industrial production within Guinea decreased steadily after the early 1960s. Most importantly for public perceptions of the PDG-dominated state, the standard of living for the average Guinean had drastically deteriorated since 1964.⁷⁴ In response, families turned to labor migration as a means to diversify sources of revenue, providing outside material support during lean times. The arrival of a relative who had spent time abroad often coincided with an influx of items rarely found within official channels in Guinea, or in other times might mean a sack of rice not available otherwise. Foreign migration, therefore, functioned as an important safety valve for an ailing Guinean economy, a role the Guinean government must have recognized.

⁷³ See Chapter 4.

⁷⁴ See Chapter 4.

As government purges gradually expanded their reach, however, trans-national connections became a double-edged sword. A traveling relative could be arrested and detained at the border. Receiving commercial goods or money from a relative abroad could mark someone as a member of a “fifth column” network. Finally, connections abroad could conceivably limit one’s ability to rise within the political hierarchy of the PDG, which by the late 1960s was the only licit avenue for social and economic betterment. At the same time, these sorts of limitations might have ended up being a blessing, as the victims of the purges were more often from the upper echelons of the party leadership and civil servant corps

The 1970 Conakry invasion changed the calculus for migrants and their families. Following the international outcry against the Portuguese government, Sékou Touré and his inner circle had the political capital necessary to act with near impunity. The post-invasion purges eliminated political rivals, ranging from former political rivals to longtime Touré allies. For a time, state repression largely focused on political elites. In 1975, however, the PDG government turned its gaze towards merchants and clandestine trade. In January, Sékou Touré declared that the emphasis of the party and the people that year would be to eliminate what he called “Cheytane [Satan] ’75,” or one particularly resilient enemy of the Guinean nation: the merchants. The government soon announced new, tighter restrictions on commerce combined with greater enforcement and more significant sentences for economic crimes.⁷⁵ As economic activity and smuggling was not limited to one region of Guinea, the fight against the exploiter of the people would unfold throughout Guinean territory. Due to strong economic ties between

⁷⁵ See Lewin, *Sékou Touré VI*, 89-98; Alpha Mohamed Sow, “Conflits ethniques dans un état révolutionnaire. Le cas Guinéen,” in *Les ethnies ont une histoire*, edited by Jean-Pierre Chrétien and Gérard Pruniers (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1989), 388.

Fulbe communities in Guinea and Senegal, however, merchants in the Northern Futa Jallon in particular felt the brunt of the government's new emphasis on stamping out private commerce.

The following year, the PDG's began to place emphasis to eliminating the "anti-national" traits of Futa Jallon society, and highlighted the crimes of Fulbe migrants in particular. The PDG's rhetorical shift was presaged by a change in the topics of emphasis and language within the Guinean security apparatus. Following the 1970 invasion of Conakry, daily security reports given to the President signaled a new focus on re-securing Guinea's borders. The new emphasis resulted in more arrests of clandestine migrants attempting to cross the Senegalese border, as this was where, Touré claimed, part of the attack had originated. Just as notable, though, was the fact nearly all individuals detained for illegally crossing Guinean border – whether or not those borders were with Senegal – began to be referred to as *navétanes*.⁷⁶ That term, previously applied to seasonal agricultural workers who worked in Senegal's peanut fields, was commonly associated with the Fulbe, as the vast majority of *navétanes* before independence hailed from the Futa Jallon. Thus, within the internal logic of the PDG security apparatus, the problem of migration became tied to a single ethnic group. That this ethnic group's elites had long been suspected of organizing a series of plots meant to overthrow the PDG only reinforced the belief that the core of Futa Jallon society was corrupted. Treason through migration simply demonstrated that the rot had spread to the Fulbe community as a whole.

Increased scrutiny of the *navétanes* and the families they left behind in Guinea was reflected in public rhetoric. In one political meeting in Labé, local officials warned that some

⁷⁶ Synthèse, SEIS, no. 276SEIS, 18 September 1971, ANG 374W/13; Synthèse Hebdomadaire, SEIS, no. 10/SEIS/DSE, 17 to 23 September 1971, ANG 374W/6; Synthèse, SEIS, no. 088SC, 17 April 1971, ANG 374W/14; Synthèse, SEIS, no. 089SC, 18 April 1971, ANG 374W/14; Synthèse, SEIS, no. 223SEIS, 3 October 1971, ANG 374W/16; Synthèse-Renseignements, MIS-G, no. 003, 8 January 1976, ANG 374W/32;

wives in the Futa Jallon had “adopted the traitorous ideas” of their migrant husbands, implying both that the act of mobility was an act against the nation itself and that treason could be contagious.⁷⁷ Another public conference dedicated to the “problem of the *navétanat* in Middle Guinea [the Futa Jallon]” counseled the wives of migrants to remarry. Although some women in attendance expressed concern that they would lose access to their husband’s fields if they opted for divorce, the civil servant facilitating the meeting warned that “all *navétanes* are mercenaries” and that the Senegalese government was paying Guinean migrants to make sure “they never return.”⁷⁸ The *navétanes*’ break from the Guinean nation was, therefore, was both complete and irrevocable.

For the first half of the 1970s, government accusations only hinted at assumed connections between treason and ethnic identification, leaving the public draw their own conclusions. The “Fulbe plot” of 1976, however, signaled a shift in PDG strategy, one that publically outlined the supposed crimes of the Fulbe. In his speeches on the “particular situation,” Sékou Touré diagnosed a more general disease within the Futa Jallon, and Fulbe trans-national networks became the means through which Touré was able to expand what had before been a corruption within the Futa’s elite to Fulbe society as a whole. Fulbe migrants and traders were greedy, he claimed, more interested in making money abroad than staying home and building Guinea through hard work. The Guinean government tried to entice migrants to stay by providing seed and soil for communities in the Futa Jallon. Yet, Touré lamented, the *navétanat* had continued. Therefore, he argued, the thousands of young men and women who left the

⁷⁷ Synthèse, SEIS, no. 212SC, 6 July 1971, ANG 374W/9.

⁷⁸ Synthèse, SEIS, no. 274SEIS, 16 September 1971 ANG 374W/12.

plateau for Senegal signaled a more general moral decay, whose symptoms included rampant alcoholism, prostitution, and theft in addition to migration.⁷⁹

Touré's grouping of migration – and specifically the *navétanat* – with other forms of moral failing was an effective means of marshalling evidence to support his identification of a supposed “Fulbe plot.” Drinking alcohol in public was and still is not acceptable in the conservative Futa Jallon. Prostitution was strongly frowned upon by the Guinean government, and therefore tended to be conducted in private (or, according to many, had disappeared almost entirely after independence).⁸⁰ Likewise, as it was punishable by death under the First Republic, theft largely disappeared, at least according to one former PDG official.⁸¹ These crimes, therefore, were not present in the public domain, and when committed were done so behind closed doors.

Migration, however, was still a semi-public transgression. As both the ability and will of the government to stop clandestine border crossing was questionable, crackdowns on migration were infrequent and largely symbolic for much of the First Republic. When Touré and other PDG leaders wanted to make a public gesture to improve the Guinean economy or to show that they closely controlled Guinea's borders in the wake of another supposed plot attempt, they would arrest a group of migrants. At the local level, however, migration abroad functioned much as it had before independence. Most communities in Guinea, and especially the Futa Jallon, were home to young men and women who periodically left for neighboring countries and eventually

⁷⁹ Sékou Touré, “Enterrer le racisme peulh: discours au meeting d’information du Comité Central le 22 août 1976,” in Sékou Touré, *Unité Nationale, Révolution Démocratique Africaine* no. 98 (Conakry: Imprimerie Nationale “Patrice Lumumba,” 1976).

⁸⁰ Michael McGovern, *Unmasking the State: Making Guinea Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 148.

⁸¹ Interview with Mamadou Sanassi Keïta, Conakry, 10 March 2013.

provided for their families during lean times. When confronted with migrants returning with commercial goods unavailable in Guinea, officials in these villages and towns simply turned a blind eye, often after taking a cut for themselves.⁸² Thus, clandestine migration was still an illegal practice, one that vaguely represented some type of moral fault, yet one that was also much more visible than its more lascivious counterparts. Either through choice or through a lack of means, the PDG leadership had allowed the practice to continue after it was explicitly banned. At the same time, during the 1970s the government linked the general act of illegal migration with a particular form of seasonal migration closely associated with the Futa Jallon in public meetings and published reports. As such, when Sékou Touré decided to turn against the Fulbe as a whole, he had a visible and powerful tool for incrimination at his disposal.

An appraisal of how Touré and the Fulbe alike used migration to situate themselves and others elucidates one of the ways in which trans-national networks entered into and interacted with post-colonial discourses on nationality and citizenship. Early studies that examined trans-national migrant networks either posited an antagonistic relationship between these networks and that nation-state, or in some cases saw no effective relationship at all.⁸³ Other scholars have considered trans-national networks as net positives for national communities, pointing to both the ways in which states have used these networks to extend either political influence and

⁸² Synthèse, SEIS, no. 59SEIS, 5 March 1971, ANG 374W/7; Synthèse, SEIS, no. 244/SEIS, 11 August 1972, ANG 374W/16.

⁸³ For the former, see Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Langhorne, PA: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1994); and for the latter, see Douglas Massey, "Why Does Migration Occur? A Theoretical Synthesis," in Charles Hirschman, Philip Kasinitz, and Josh DeWind, eds., *The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1999), among many other works.

identify possible economic resources while also examining how migrants have used groundings in multiple state systems to diversify opportunity and mitigate risk.⁸⁴

The central question these two scholarly approaches attempt to answer – namely, the inherent implications supra-nation networks carry for post-imperial nationalism – partially misses the role trans-nationality plays in discourses about citizenship and belonging. The history of regional and international Fulbe networks during the First Republic offers an alternative approach to conceptualizing the relationship between migration and the nation-state, one that recognizes that mobility and the trans-national networks that emerge from the act of migration creates are tools used by individuals, groups, and the state to both construct and demarcate communities. In the years immediately after independence, several states in West Africa chose a path similar to that of the PDG, namely to discourage migration and cast migrants as malcontents or, at worst, anti-national traitors.⁸⁵ More recently, migration has acted as a source states have drawn upon to re-imagine the expanded boundaries of the state or to support national economies.⁸⁶ In both periods, though, trans-national networks held no inherent implications for the construction of national identities other than those assigned to these communities by the state and public themselves. In sum, much like the concepts of “ethnicity,” “race,” and “the nation,”

⁸⁴ Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: the Cultural Logics of Transnationality*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

⁸⁵ Specifically, Modibo Keita’s Mali. See Daouda Gary-Toukara, “Quand les migrants demandent la route, Modibo Keita rétorque: ‘Retournez à la terre!’ Les Baragnini et la desertion du ‘Chantier National’ (1958-1968)” *Mande Studies* 5 (2003); and Mann, *From Empires to NGOs*, 121-161.

⁸⁶ The Senegalese Government, for instance, has actively supported migrants abroad and sees them as an important part of the development of the national economy. See Marie Angélique Diatta and Ndiaga Mbow, “Releasing the Development Potential of Return Migration: The Case of Senegal,” *International Migration* 37, no. 1 (1999), 243-266.

migration has been used in Guinea and elsewhere as a way to mark difference and extend inclusion, determining its most basic level those who belong and those who do not.

Conclusion

The worlds of Guinean exiles and migrants existed in related but separate realms. Much of what divided the two groups had to do with politics; explicit opposition to Sékou Touré and the PDG determined in large part how one interacted with both host and home governments. Furthermore, social status and education in the two groups were on the whole different (although exceptions did exist), in effect recreating in an altered form many of the hierarchical divisions that existed in the Futa Jallon. Much of the gulf between the two sets of Fulbe abroad, though, had to do with different ways to build community. Exiles, veterans, and students could count on previously existing although sometimes fading networks comprised of universities, civil service institutions, a tradition of political exile within the Francophone world, and connections with French parties to help structure life in exile and secure basic needs. Most migrants, however, relied upon previous arrivers and an established Guinean community that had since the 1950s preferred to remain outside the limelight in Senegal. Their families in the Futa Jallon and elsewhere relied upon remittances to fulfill even their most basic needs, especially during the protracted economic crises that followed the 1964 Loi Cadre. Over time, the relationship between Guinean migrants and host and home governments would become more similar to those exiles had experience almost immediate after independence, a trend that accelerated after the 1970 invasion of Conakry. But for the most part, these two worlds' orbits passed each other only rarely. In the end, the gulf between the two determined the opposition's failure just as much as exiles' failure to gain full support from foreign governments or internal fighting.

The “Fulbe Plot” of 1976 temporarily pushed the worlds of exiles and migrants closer to one another. Shortly after Touré’s August 1976 articulation of the “particular situation” in the Futa, the PDG government moved to eliminate private commerce. The shift towards strict enforcement was not surprising, given Touré’s emphasis on the moral failings of labor migrants and smugglers. In fact, it was in large part the PDG’s renewed interest in controlling commerce – and not only the fact that the government had declared nearly 40% of the nation’s population traitors – that brought to a close the especially violent period of state repression. Increased inspections and seizures by Guinea’s economic police further strained an already distressed national economy. Raids on unlicensed market vendors in particular made the daily procurement of even the most basic goods – including even staples – increasingly difficult.

The loosening of economic restrictions and opening of the borders with Senegal and Côte d’Ivoire following the 1977 market women’s revolt allowed Guinean migrants living abroad to more easily return back home when they wished. Exiles, on the other hand, would have to wait another seven years before the PDG regime fell. While by then the First Republic lay in the dustbin of regimes past, the PDG’s increasingly antagonistic relationship with expatriate Guinean communities – and especially those with roots in the Futa Jallon – continued to shape the ways in people both within and outside Guinea thought of themselves as citizens of a post-colonial African nation. Those migrants and exiles who eventually chose to return, as well Guineans as a whole, would have to deal with these complicated ripples that emanated from the departed First Republic.

Epilogue

Returning to a Post-Socialist Guinea

On March 26, 1984, Sékou Touré died on a surgery table in Cleveland, Ohio, after having been evacuated while on a state visit to Saudi Arabia due to heart problems. Eight days later, a military coup brought an end to the PDG's rule before Touré's successor could be named. As they had on September 28, 1958, Guinean exiles faced a choice: would they remain abroad, where they had built lives and raised families? Or would they return to Guinea in order to, as a group of scholars asked, "help rebuild their nation?"¹

Those who chose to return found a different Conakry than the one they had left behind. If they had left Guinea during the years immediately following independence, returnees had likely never seen in person what is perhaps Guinea's most imposing building: the Palais du Peuple, which serves as a meeting hall and as home to the National Assembly. Constructed by the Chinese Government in 1967 – notably, just months before the PDG government would call for its own Mao-like "Socialist Cultural Revolution" – the building dominates the thin isthmus that links the downtown island of Tumbo to the suburban peninsula. The Palace was also the site where in 1976 Touré announced the discovery of the "Fulbe plot" in a speech that figures in the beginning of this dissertation. For those exiles who had fled following the start of government purges in 1968, the impressive Palais des Nations, which is situated along the coast downtown, would have been a new addition. A large assembly hall surrounded by more than 50 associated villas, the complex was designed by a team of Moroccan architects, constructed in the late 1970s,

¹ A. O. Bah, B. Keita, and B. Lootvoet, "Les Guinéens de l'extérieur: rentrer au pays?" *Politique Africaine* no. 36 "Guinée, l'après-Sékou Touré" (1989), 22-37.

and was intended by Touré to host a May 1984 meeting of the Organization of African Unity.² Touré's death prevented the complex from serving its intended purpose, and following the Second Republic's neo-liberal reforms, the villas served as headquarters for various international NGOs until a 1998 bombardment by a group of mutineer soldiers made the complex uninhabitable. Thus, after 1984 Sékou Touré might have been dead and buried, although exactly where his body rests is the subject of considerable rumor.³ But the architectural symbols of both his power, vision for an independent Africa, and ultimate failure continued on, in varying states of repair, for all to see.

Not all changes to Conakry's geography were plainly visible. In her article on migrants' *imaginaires* of three African cities, Dominique Malaquais writes of the "architectural rumor" present in many capitals on the continent. Laying (often literally) below visible buildings, Malaquais argues, are a set of "edifices that exist only (or mostly) as rumor."⁴ Regularly associated with violent state repression, these obscured architectures often come in the form of secret jails or torture chambers hidden under, for instance, the Kinshasa stadium that hosted the

² "Palais des Nations" in *Historical Dictionary of Guinea*, edited by Mohamed Saliou Camara, Thomas O'Toole, and Janice E. Baker (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 233.

³ Touré's tomb is located on the grounds of Conakry's Grand Mosque. In the years since the president's death, though, many within Guinea have speculated that Touré had been buried in Morocco, as the Guinean leader was close to the King of Morocco, or in Mecca near the tomb of the Prophet. The uncertainty of Touré's resting place, according to one of Manthia Diawara's interlocutors, was so that his enemies could not tamper with his body in order to prevent what some speculated was the departed president's resurrection. The grave's location in Mecca was due to, again according to Diawara's taxi driver, so that Touré would "put a distance between himself and all the evil in Guinea, and face God in a holier country." See Manthia Diawara, *In Search of Africa* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 29-30.

⁴ Dominique Malaquais, "Douala/Johannesburg/New York: Cityscapes Imagined," in *Cities in Contemporary Africa*, edited by Martin J. Murray and Garth A. Myers (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 41

famous 1974 “Rumble in the Jungle.”⁵ In Conakry, the site of these types of rooms was never in doubt – by the late 1960s, Camp Boiro had already gained a reputation both inside and outside Guinea – but its internal shape and functioning were still obscured. Camp Boiro functioned as a sort of black box. “Traitors to the nation” were taken in, and spectacular confessions came out, but what went on in the prison’s cells and interrogation rooms was largely up for speculation. Even after the publication of numerous former detainee’s memoirs – in Guinea, often referred to as a group as the “literature of suffering” – stories of torture in Boiro are still contested, said to be exaggerations and political ploys rather than reflections of historical facts.⁶ By now, the buildings in Camp Boiro that held political prisoners both before and after Touré’s regime have been torn down. But the shadows of the structures contained within those departed buildings, I believe, are still perceptible to anyone who passes the camp’s gates while traveling along the Route de Donka.

Other sites in Conakry mark where the realm of rumor and intrigue burst into the open, often with violent results. In his memoir *In Search of Africa*, Manthia Diawara, himself an exile, writes of his return in 1996 to his childhood hometown of Conakry. While searching for one of his *collège* (middle school) friends, Diawara’s taxi driver, Cémoko, drives him along the isthmus that connects the peninsula and Tumbo:

Cémoko said that even though Conakry was a very long city, it was not wide enough – especially toward the neck, which was so narrow it could accommodate only two roads, one to and the other from downtown. At the end of the neck, before the road divided into several arteries that served the downtown area, we came to the Bridge of November 8, 1970, also known as the Hanging Bridge because some former ministers of Sékou Touré’s government... had been hanged

⁵ Malaquais, “Cityscapes Imagined,” 42.

⁶ See Alexis Arieff and Mike McGovern, “‘History is Stubborn’: Talk about Truth, Justice, and National Reconciliation in the Republic of Guinea,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55, no. 1 (2013), 205-207.

there in the presence of a large and excited crowd.

Near the bridge was the Palais du Peuple (People's Palace), famous for being the site of Sékou Touré's long and eloquent speeches against colonialism and imperialism. It was also where he had read out the many names of people accused of treason and crimes against the state: people considered "enemies of the nation," members of the "fifth column"... Cémoko said that people were always afraid whenever Sékou Touré had entered the Palais du Peuple, because anybody could fall from grace to disgrace, from a ministerial residence to the cells of the infamous Camp Boiro.⁷

Those two structures, at Conakry's strategic choke point, were key sites of turmoil following the 1970 Portuguese-backed invasion, when, according to Touré, Guinea was under siege by neo-colonial forces. The Palais was later renovated after a fire, and the Hanging Bridge was torn down and replaced in 2013 with a new interchange. They remain, however, visible representations of the important role the "plot" has played in Guinean politics, a discourse that is alive and well still today.⁸

Guinean politics has continued to be marked with other legacies, ones that are not linked only to the PDG government and some with roots before the party's 1950s rise. Lansana Conté, who had led the military coup d'état that overthrew the PDG government and shortly thereafter named himself president, may have changed Guinea's economic policy, but his political tactics largely continued what had existed under the previous regime. Conté's government banned all political organizations outside the ruling *Comité Militaire de Redressement National*, and after an attempted coup d'état in 1985, jailed and executed former Touré allies, especially those who

⁷ Diawara, *In Search of Africa*, 21-22.

⁸ For just a few recent examples, see John Straussberger, "Ebola and Political Narratives in Guinea," *The Africa Collective*, 13 August 2014, <<http://theafricacollective.com/2014/08/13/ebola-and-political-narratives-in-guinea/>>, (14 March 2015); and Sarifou Barry, "Affaire de 19 Juillet: "ils ont eu peur de Cellou Dalein Diallo," affirme un des accusés," *GuinéeNews* 21 January 2013, <http://www.guineenews.org/detail_article.asp?num=2013121171035> (23 January 2013).

were identified as ethnic Maninka. Due in part to international pressure and the complaints of the Guinean opposition, Conté initiated a shift to multi-party politics in the early 1990s, only the second such period in Guinea's history. Several former exiles had returned following the 1984 coup d'état. This new political opening allowed them to craft their own official political movements. One such aspiring party leader was Siradiou Diallo who, along with other mostly Fulbe opposition figures, formed the *Parti Guinéen du Progrès* (PGP). Less than a year later, Diallo would leave the PGP to found his own party, the *Parti du Renouveau et du Progrès*. Diallo's break could have simply reflected the multiplication of parties after 1991, a development that Mohammed Saliou Camara has argued was by government design.⁹ I heard rumors that complicated that narrative, however, especially from those who were close to Diallo while he was in exile. According to this alternate explanation, Diallo's leaving the PGP had to do with the continued salience of Fulbe social hierarchies. During a debate over who should become the party's head, another party leader who hailed from one of the Futa Jallon's most prominent families told Diallo that he could not become the party's Secretary General because he was from one of the "lesser" aristocratic Fulbe families. To paraphrase from the various tales I heard: "Your ancestors carried the flag into battle," the man had supposedly said; "You do not have the right to sit on the skin of authority."

The ways in which parties organized themselves in the 1990s, and again after 2010, displays another lasting feature that emerged during Guinea's first period of multi-party politics: the ethno-regional party. Siradiou Diallo's PGP and PRP had never been explicitly Fulbe parties. They did, however, draw from networks of Fulbe exiles and leaders to build their parties and

⁹ According to Camara, Conté anticipated and encouraged the proliferation of "each man his own party" phenomenon during the 1990s as a means of divide and rule. See Mohamed Saliou Camara, *His Master's Voice: Mass Communication and Single Party Politics in Guinea under Sékou Touré* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2005), 195-197.

marshal support. Just as importantly, both were considered by the public to be Fulbe-led organizations, naturally reflecting the interests of the Futa Jallon. During the most recent period of multi-party politics, Cellou Dalein Diallo and other prominent politicians established the *Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée* (UFDG) in opposition to Alpha Condé, who was elected president in a contested 2010 vote and had previously been part of the exiled opposition to both Sékou Touré and Lansana Conté. Although he hails from a prominent Futa Jallon family, Dalein Diallo has not publically situated himself as the political leader of the Futa Jallon, a role Barry Diawadou and Almany Sory Dara Barry, for example, eagerly embraced. And like the BAG, DSG, PRA, PGP, and PRP, Dalein Diallo's party rejected claims that it exclusively represents either the Fulbe or the Futa. Yet all of these political organizations depended upon political, social, and economic networks with strong roots in the central plateau, and Guineans outside the Futa considered both parties to represent the interests of the Fulbe. "It's our turn," many Fulbe often told me (and others).¹⁰ And the UFDG, many Fulbe believe, represents the best chance to ensure one of their own becomes president.

Some fractures are not contained to the borders of Guinea. According to Manthia Diawara, a deep divide existed between Guineans in Guinea and the newly returned exiles. "The return of Guineans from exile also coincided with an influx of French diplomats, businessmen, and professionals, who took the jobs of those Guineans who were deemed loyal to Sékou Touré," Diawara writes. "Guineans at home thus considered the returnees no better than the foreigners and imposters whose only desire was to exploit the country." Time has not healed this rift. During the 2010 presidential elections, there was rampant speculation over which wealthy expatriate Guinean businessmen (and their French allies, some claimed) were backing which

¹⁰ See Arieff and McGovern, "History is Stubborn," 202-203.

candidates. The implication in many accusations was that the expatriate community used money to unduly influence Guinea's internal politics. In the extended run-up to the round of legislative elections in 2013, a controversy emerged over whether or not Guineans living abroad would be allowed to vote. Citing potential fraud and real logistical problems, Alpha Condé resisted opposition demands that polling stations be set up abroad, most likely because the majority of overseas Guineans are Fulbe, and therefore would support Condé's rival, Cellou Dalein Diallo. Others within Guinea made less politically calculating arguments against including the overseas vote; one man told me that "they [Guineans living abroad] build big houses here [in Guinea], but they never live in them. They don't care about Guinea." The era of a "closed" Guinea might have itself come to a close, but the mark of non-belonging assigned to those with significant connections abroad persists.

The most pervasive divides within Guinea linked to the subject of this dissertation – or, at least, the ones that were the obvious to me while I was conducting research in Guinea during 2013 – are more local and outside the realm of high politics. While in the capital, I stayed in the Taouyah neighborhood, an area I knew well from my days as a Peace Corps volunteer. During the work week, I would take a shared taxi from that neighborhood, about 2 miles up the peninsula, down to the National Archives, which is next to what used to be the central train station in Tumbo. I'd spend my days in the archives reading about street battles between rival political parties during the 1950s, and the repression of open conflict along ethnic lines that followed independence. One day when returning from the archives, the taxi I was in stopped at the Hamdallaye roundabout, a half of a mile from where I lived. As the car was continuing on to the Kipé neighborhood by way of the Route de Taouyah, along which the troubles supposedly originated, everyone in the car got out. There were riots up ahead, we were told, and no one

could pass until gendarmes had secured the area. Few of the people delayed at Hamdallaye, I imagine, were surprised. By this point, a weekly cycle had developed over the months I had spent in Conakry. Claiming the government was attempting to steal the election, the opposition – led by Cellou Dalein Diallo and his UFDG – would call for an anti-government march early in the week. Security forces would then attack the protesters, killing one or two young men, and by Friday riots and conflicts would engulf whole neighborhoods of Conakry.

Some people were forging ahead on foot and, being tired and hungry, I joined them. After about 200 meters, though, everyone stopped near the Taouyah market. On one side of the road stood young supporters of the opposition, and on the other equally youthful supporters of the government, and the two groups were throwing stones at one another. All of the opposition activists shouted in Pular, and their rivals across the way responded in Malinké, the mother tongue of ethnic Maninka and also that of Alpha Condé. I stood with a group of fellow onlookers discussing which neighborhoods were “too hot” at the moment, and we got to talking about how the families of these two groups had lived in the same neighborhood for decades. Recently, though, things had become more divided. Protests, followed by government crackdowns, followed by yet more protests had opened old wounds. The city was now divided between Fulbe-dominated neighborhoods and market stalls, on the one hand, and everywhere and everyone else on the other. Some people even speculated that the rolling blackouts in Conakry were targeted towards Fulbe neighborhoods in particular. After some good conversation and political rumor sharing, security forces arrived and scattered the rioters and onlookers with tear gas, and I went home to cook dinner.

Later on, I reflected on the journey I had taken that afternoon. I started at the National Archives, not too far from the President’s residence in the Palais Sékhoutouréya – not built until

1998 but named after Guinea's "founding father" – and the Palais des Nations. I had hopped in a shared taxi near the Marché du Niger, passed by the Palais du Peuple, and gone under and then over the "hanging" Bridge of November 8. Along the Route de Donka, I had looked to my left and seen the gates at the entrance of Camp Boiro. And once arriving at Taouyah, a neighborhood in which ethnic Fulbe were prominent, I had seen the same types of street battles peripheral to political parties – as well associated government crackdowns – that had occurred during 1956 and 1958. These buildings – or hidden architectures, sites, legacies, features, fractures, and divides – do not doom Guinea to a dystopian future. They are, however, salient to any understanding of how the past still informs the way people think of themselves as constituting a political community, be it as an inhabitant of a former *runde* in the Futa Jallon, as a member of the Fulbe elite, as citizens of Guinea, or as part of the larger Guinean diaspora. Sékou Touré – as both a man and a set of symbols – might be dead,¹¹ and the "particular situation" solved, or at least faded into the background. Those two components – the man and the divergence he articulated – still inflect Guinean politics today, and can be seen or sensed on any trip, however convoluted and delayed by traffic, one takes through the Guinean capital.

¹¹ See Mike McGovern, "Janvier 2007 – Sékou Touré est Mort," *Politique Africaine* 127 (2007), 125-145.

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All interviews listed below were conducted by the author. All were conducted in French between 2012 and 2013, although some portions of conversations were in Pular.

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Appendix I: Voters in Guinean Elections, 1945-1958

Table 1: Registered Voters (RV) and Voting in Guinea, 1945-1957

Election Dates	Registered Voters	Voting	RV% of Population
21 Oct. 1945	1,944*	1,418*	6.18
2 Jun. 1946	22,522*	18,492*	
10 Nov. 1946	131,309	96,099	
17 Jun. 1951	393,628	224,182	
2 Jan. 1956	976,662	569,319	
31 Mar. 1957	1,376,048	c. 765,000	55.24

*Second College Voters

From: Ruth S. Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1964); and J. R. de Benoist, *l'Afrique Occidentale Française de 1944 à 1960* (Dakar: Nouvelles Éditions Africaines, 1982)

Table 2: Voters by Region in Two Elections, 1956 and 1958

	2 Jan. 1956	18 May. 1958
Basse Côte	141,360	162,614
Futa Jallon	259,191	234,985
Haute Guinée	55,587	170,469
Région Forestière	105,809	217,907

From: Sidiki Kobélé Kéïta, *Les élections en Guinée Française (1945-1958)* (Paris: Anibwe, 2011)

Appendix II: The Futa Jallon, Guinea, and Fulbe in West Africa

Figure 1: The Futa Jallon



Figure 2: Fulbe Regions in West Africa

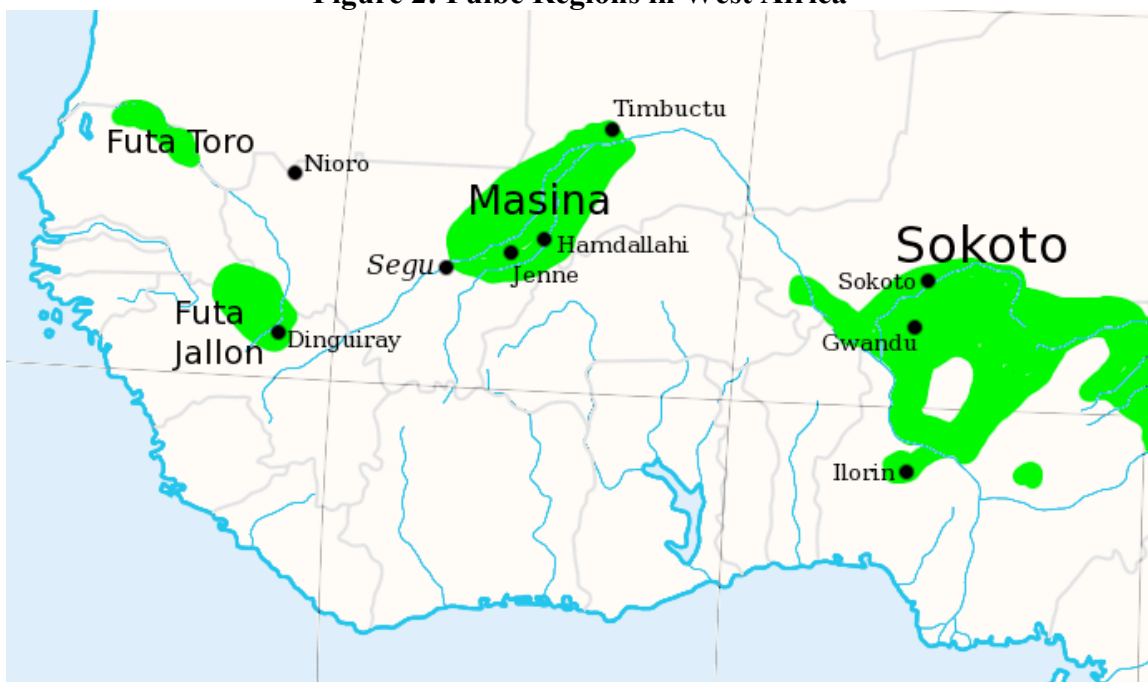


Figure 3: Population Density and Major Ethnic Groups in Guinea

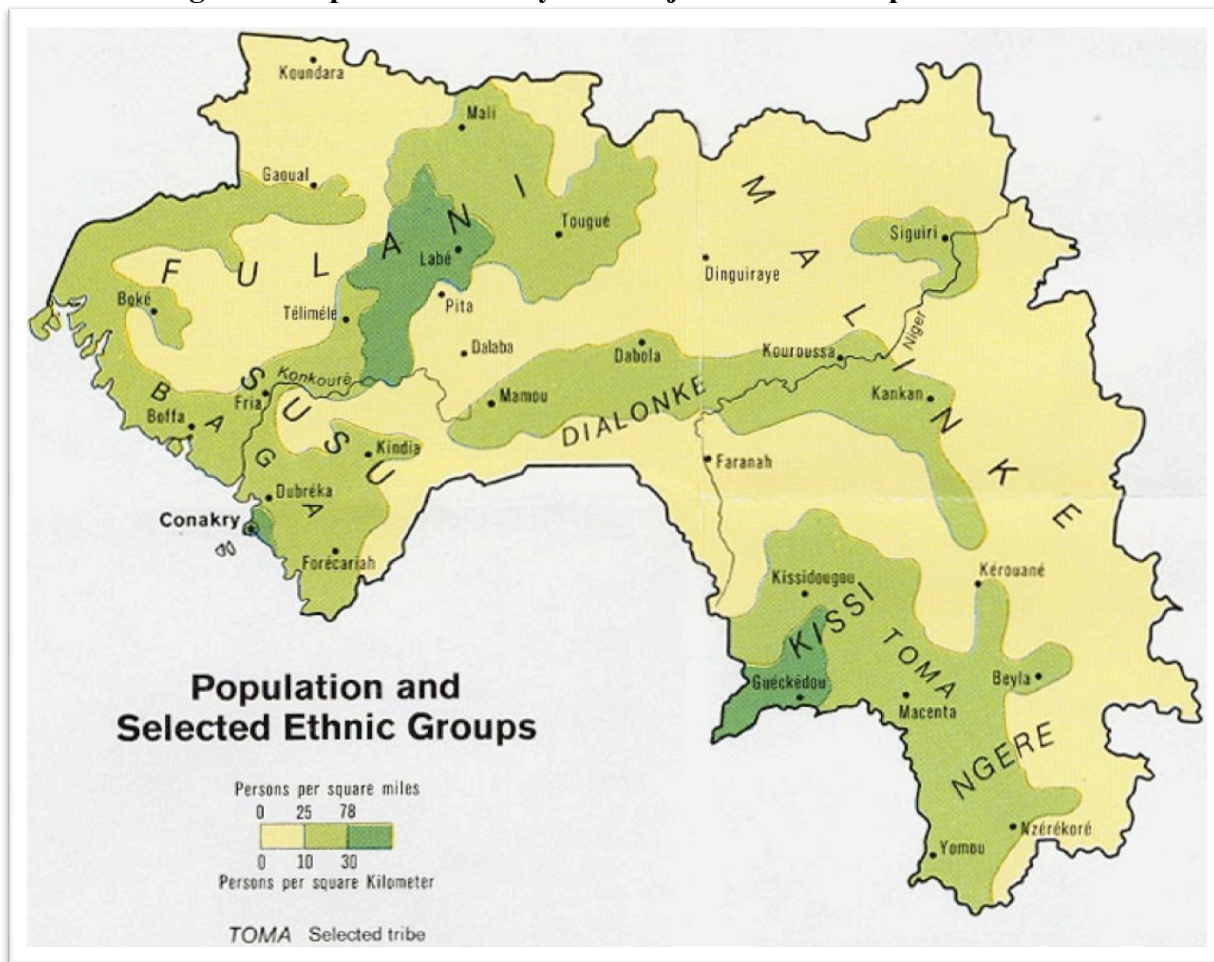
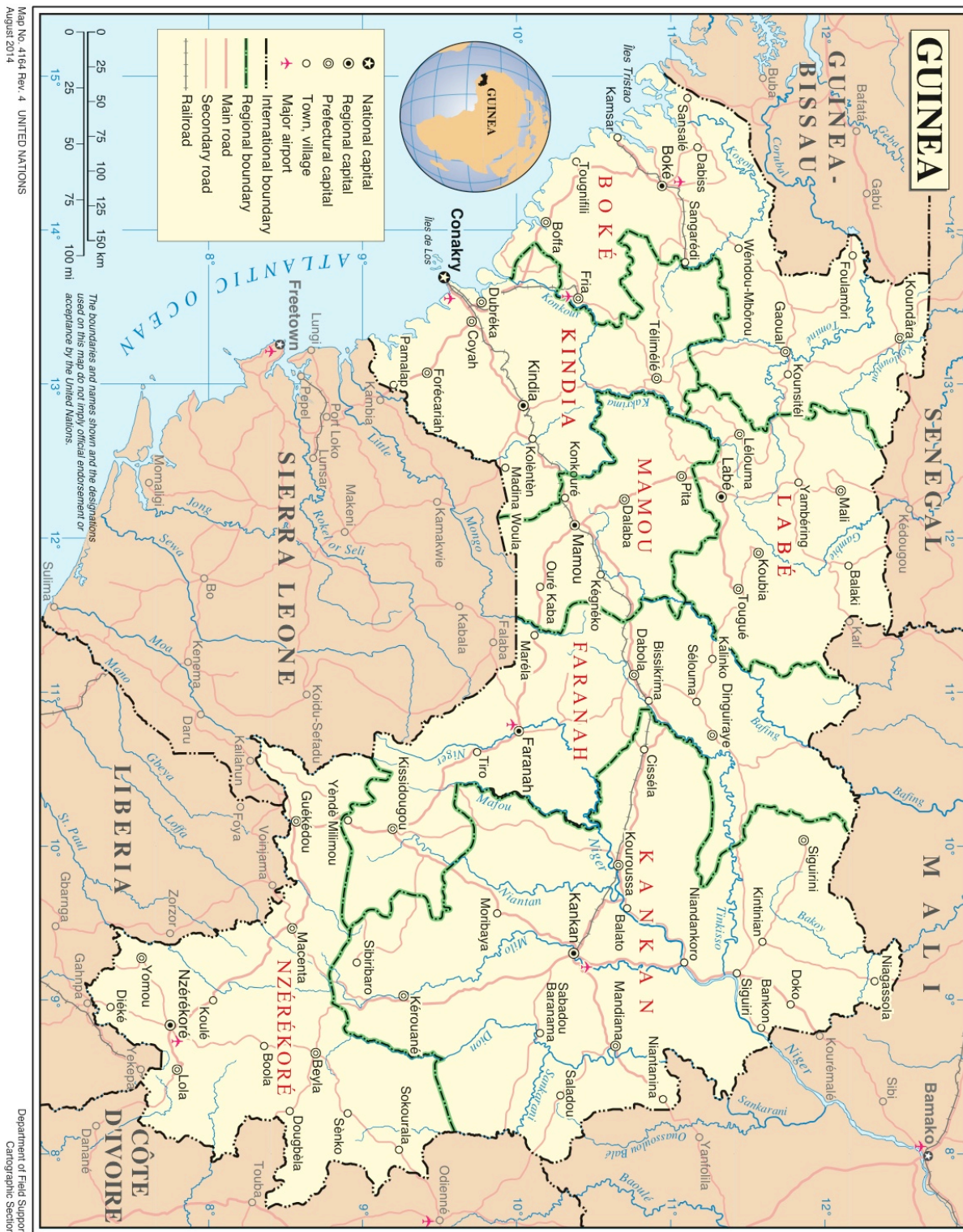


Figure 4: Administrative Map of Guinea (2010)



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Cartographic Section