Conversations at the bin Laden Hotel:

Nationalism, Islam, and Urban Life in the Malian Diaspora (Lagos 1960-2010)

By

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I would never have begun this journey without the close friendship and mentoring of Sayon Traoré, my 6'7"*jatigi* in the tiny town of Gonsolo, Mali, where I spent 2003 through 2005 working in the Peace Corps. He made space for me in his own *du* (compound) when I returned for my Master's research during the summer of 2007, and introduced me to his friends in neighboring villages, who became my first informants. Mr. Traoré extended his hospitality again in 2010, when I passed through while conducting my doctoral research. His first wife, Geneba, and brother, Madi, with whom I worked in the fields during my first stay, were instrumental in making me welcome. I owe a heavy debt of gratitude to all the villagers of Gonsolo, who

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Introduction

The Malian trade diaspora in Lagos represented one stream in the late-twentieth-century global flow of peoples across political boundaries, situating this dissertation within the cross-disciplinary body of literature on globalization. A central debate in the field focuses on whether an acceleration in the movement of information, finances, and people across national borders during this period presaged an end to the era of the nation-state.[1] Several scholars have challenged this premise from an economic perspective.[2] My object here, in contrast, is to explore "the ideological basis for the continuing existence of nations."[3] Taking as my point of departure Benedict Anderson's proposition that a population's identity as members of an "imagined community" forms a nation's essence,[4] I use the Malian case study to examine the nature of the connection between international migration and national identity.

Studies of the effects of migration on loyalty toward donor and host nations, in and of themselves, represent nothing new, constituting a central focus of the literature on transnationalism. Many such studies' findings arguably call into question the equating of porous borders with the nation-state's irrelevance, as they abound with examples of late-twentieth-

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[1] For two influential renderings of this narrative, see Saskia Sassen , *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006; and Arjun Appadurai, ed., *Globalization* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2001. I discuss their ideas at greater length, below.

[2] See, e.g., Robert Boyer and Daniel Drache (eds.), States against Markets: The Limits of Globalization, (New York: Routledge, 1996).

[3] Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, "Transnationalism: A New Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration," in *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered*, ed. Schiller et al. (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1992), 7.

[4] Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. (London: New York; Verso, 2006), 5-6.

century diasporas in which distance failed to diminish homeland nationalism.[5] The post-independence Malian trade diaspora in Lagos, however, adds a new dimension to this body of evidence. While previous research has focused almost exclusively on immigrant communities in the global north,[6] my study examines a south-to-south migration, with all of its attendant differences.[7] Whereas labor diasporas represented the predominant type in the global north, the Malian community in Lagos constituted a trade diaspora. More fundamentally, the cultural gulf between host society and migrant community was substantially narrower, as they shared a regional history.[8] The commonalities notably included Islam, introducing a dimension of potential supranational solidarity essentially absent from northern diasporas.

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[5] On the other hand, the relationship in the global north is typically complicated by a simultaneous identification with the host nation. In their seminal 1992 edited volume, Schiller et al. formalized transnationalism as a conceptual framework in the social sciences. While acknowledging the limits of the bounded concept of nation, they recognized the need to explain "the continuing significance of nation-states within these larger global processes." Schiller et al., "Transnationalism," 5, 7. Their definition of the term requires that the immigrants maintain ties to home, and all of the case studies they include conform to this definition. At the same time, however, the editors' analytical framework anticipates multiple loyalties, encompassing both donor and host states. Ibid., 1-2. In contrast, multiple *national* identities remained uncommon among Malians in Nigeria.

[6] Schiller et al., providing the prototype for future scholarship in the field, include mostly case studies of immigrant communities in the U.S. Schiller et al., "Towards a Definition of Transnationalism: Introductory Remarks and Research Questions," in Schiller et al., *Towards a Transnational Perspective*, ix.

[7] Two important studies of late twentieth-century African diasporas find similar homeland connections. Bruce Whitehouse, however, pointedly avoids conflating homeland with nation in West Africans' continued links to place of origin after immigration to Brazzaville. Bruce Whitehouse, *Migrants and Strangers in an African City: Exile, Dignity,Belonging* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012). Lisa Malkki finds the Burundian diaspora in Tanzania divided in its national identity. Malkki shows that that those remaining in refugee camps strengthened their identification with the homeland, while those integrated into the Tanzanian population largely lost their homeland identities and assimilated. We cannot, however, extrapolate Malkki's findings to the economic diasporas that represented the normative global diasporic formation in the late twentieth century. The Burundians Malkki studied were refugees from a violent ethnic civil war. At the time of her study, it was dangerous for the Hutus who composed the diaspora to return. Those who assimilated had little hope for eventual repatriation. Despite their focus on the nation-state, those in the camp represented ethnic nationalists, who merely considered Hutus the only authentic Burundians. Lisa Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[8] Rosina Wiltshire, in an exception to the pattern in *Towards a Transnational Perspective,* examines both regional and supraregional migration from the Caribbean. Her delineation of the economic differences between the two is applicable more generally. "The implications of these transterritorial multiple loyalties are particularly significant because, in the modern era, the loyalties are held to territorial units with vastly unequal economic and political resources such as the Caribbean territories relative to the United States and Canada. Where the migration has been

Nevertheless, the Malians in Lagos, like many of their counterparts in the global north, retained, and even strengthened, identities constructed around their nation-state of origin during the period in which globalization purportedly accelerated. Unlike most northern diasporas, though, the Malian migrant community failed to simultaneously develop a strong identification with the host society, much less the host nation-state. The Malian diaspora in Lagos, thus, complicates the dominant narrative on transnationalism, as its members lacked to some degree the cosmopolitan ethos of other late twentieth-century transmigrants. While Malian Lagosians "take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns…within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously," the identities they developed within these networks, although multifaceted, remained less fluid along the political dimension.[9] Malians in Lagos did not hold "multiple loyalties…towards different sovereign entities" at the national level.[10] A number of factors shaped this outcome. Internally, the diaspora remained focused on the Malian nation-state through a transnational public sphere that mediated between it and its overseas citizens. The Malian government itself maintained direct contact with the diaspora through the community's existing network of civil society organizations. Externally, the Nigerian population of Lagos practiced an exclusionary form of popular nationalism that discouraged assimilation.

Commercial and cultural ties between the territories comprising modern-day Mali and Nigeria date from at least the late fourteenth century, when the *Kano Chronicle* credits the Wangara--Soninke traders originating in the present-day Senegal-Mali border region--with

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to a regional host of relatively equitable size and economic potential the implications of the transterritorial links and multiple loyalties are likely to be different for development potential." Rosina Wiltshire, "Implications of Transnational Migration for Nationalism: The Caribbean Example," in Schiller, et al., *Towards a Transnational Perspective*, 178.

[9] Schiller et al., "Transnationalism," 1-2.

[10] Wiltshire, "Implications," 178.

introducing Islam to Hausaland.[11] Religious leaders from the Western Sahel continued to

influence their Hausa counterparts over the centuries, notably including al-Hajj Umar Tal al-

Futi's introduction of the Tijaniyya order to the Sokoto Caliphate in the 1830s.[12] In the fifteenth

and sixteenth centuries, the Hausa cities had economic ties with the Songhay Empire in present-

day Mali,[13] and strong linguistic evidence suggests that the Hausa concept of money itself

derived from Mande sources.[14] Etymological connections also hint at a direct Mande

introduction of Islam to Yorubaland, as some older sources intriguingly gloss a traditional

Yoruba term for Muslim, *ìmàle*, as "person of Mali."[15] The mid-seventeenth century

Wangarawa Chronicle lists Wangara settlements in Bussa and other towns in the Borgu

confederacy, which bordered Yorubaland on the north. Activities of these Wangara "immigrant

trading communities" during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are well documented. Like

their twentieth-century avatars 250 miles farther south in Lagos, they provided "brokerage

services" by maintaining "a powerful middleman position" in long-distance trade. As trading

communities, they also prefigured the later Malian diaspora in never seeking political authority

in the host society, and remaining "ethnically, culturally and commercially distinct from the

other groups of inhabitants." At the same time, opportunities for cultural exchange presented

themselves in the nineteenth-century Borgu trading hub of Nikki, where "Hausa, Wangara, and

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[11] Spencer Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1962), 130-1. For the full Kano Chronicle, see H.R. Palmer, "The Kano Chronicle", *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, XXXVIII: 58-98.

[12] Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 24.

[13] Paul Lovejoy, "Interregional Monetary Flows in the Precolonial Trade of Nigeria," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (1974): 563-585, 566.

[14] Following Johnson, Lovejoy notes that the "Hausa word for money *kurd'i* or *kud'i*, appears to be of Mande origin and probably is a very ancient borrowing. The proto-Mandekan form for money and silver has been reconstructed as **N-kodi*, with the "N" representing a slight nasalization which could easily be dropped." Ibid., 566, fn 9.

[15] Patrick J. Ryan, *Imàlè: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition* (Missoula: Published by Scholars Press for Harvard Theological Review, 1978), v, 104. Some subsequent scholarship, however, has cast doubt on this etymology.

Yoruba merchants established quarters."[16] Although Mande culture, to the extent it can be

generalized, changed considerably between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries, significant

elements endured. The Wangara of nineteenth-century Borgu shared the ethos of egalitarianism

that Malians of all backgrounds in the homeland expressed at the time of my fieldwork in 2009-

10. In both periods, that moral tenet contributed toward the proclivity for long-distance trade.

Adekunle's analysis of the associated social dynamics parallels my discussion in Chapter 5 of

Malians' motivations in immigrating to, and staying in, the diaspora:

> Men were expected to offer gifts to relations upon stated occasions during the year. The
> wealthier the man, the greater the host of relatives. Gift-giving thus enforced the
> egalitarian ethos of the culture. Consequently, men who were determined to enter
> commerce had best do so <u>outside their own culture area</u>. Long distance traders returned
> home only when they felt able to afford the expected gifts…[17]

In other words, the only way to overcome the local cultural impediments to the accumulation of

wealth was to isolate oneself, at least temporarily, from Mande society at large.

Before the eighteenth century, the Borgu Wangara traded exclusively in extractive

commodities, acting as middlemen "between Bonduku (gold mining) and Gonja (kola nut

producing) on the one hand and the northern Sudan (salt mining) on the other." In the early

eighteenth century, the trading networks expanded in scale and scope to incorporate slaves,

horses, salt, natron, and earthenware from increasingly distant sources. More important, the

indigenous trade networks increased their articulation with European coastal circuits, which

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[16] Julius O. Adekunle, "Borgu and Economic Transformation 1700-1900: The Wangara Factor," *African Economic History*, No. 22 (1994): 1-18, 3, 5, 11. For the full Wangarawa Chronicle, see Muhammad A. Al-Hajj, "A Seventeenth Century Chronicle on the origins and Missionary Activities of the Wangarawa," *Kano Studies*, I, 4 (I968): 8-16.

[17] Adekunle, *Borgu*, 12; emphasis added. Despite my unproblematized discussion, the notion that a coherent set of cultural norms and practices can be associated with a given ethnicity is problematic on several levels. On the other hand, although fluid and flexible, the beliefs and practices that constitute culture are not universal. Since historians of Africa depend largely on past ethnographies to identify particular sets of beliefs and practices, it is difficult to abandon these categories and maintain comparability across time.

supplied imported manufactured goods such as jugs, brass and pewter dishes, and woolen and cotton cloth.[18]

By the late colonial period, traders from the landlocked area that constitutes what is now Mali were travelling to Atlantic ports, including Lagos, to purchase imported manufactured goods directly. These products included items as diverse as auto parts and Dutch "wax" cloth.[19] Following Malian and Nigerian independence in 1960, Malians began settling in Lagos to become purchasing agents for these traders. The Nigerian oil boom and the ratification of the Economic Cooperative Organization of West Africa (ECOWAS) Treaty allowing free movement among most West African nations in the late 1970s prompted a new, larger wave of Malians seeking economic opportunity.[20] The community not only survived Nigeria's 1983 and 1985 mass deportations of foreigners, forcing thousands of Malians to leave the country, but continued to grow apace into the twenty-first century.[21] Recapitulating a deep historical pattern in West Africa, members of the nascent diaspora parlayed their dual knowledge of homeland and host societies into roles as cultural brokers. Residency in Lagos enabled them to learn the city's predominant vehicular languages--English and Yoruba--as well as to familiarize themselves with its diverse markets, including pricing patterns and the local bargaining protocol, known in Yoruba as *na ọjà*.[22] Malian merchants paid their resident compatriots for this instrumental form of cultural literacy.

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[18] Ibid., 8.

[19] François Manchuelle, *Willing Migrants: Soninke Labor Diasporas, 1848-1960* (Athens; London: Ohio University Press; J. Currey Publisher, 1997), 194.

[20] M. Leann Brown, "Nigeria and the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement and Residence," *The Journal of Modern African Studies,* Vol. 27, No. 2 (Jun., 1989): 251-273.

[21] Roger Gravil, "The Nigerian Alien Expulsion Order of 1983," *African Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 337 (Oct., 1985): 523-537

[22] Kayode J. Fakinlede, *Yoruba: Modern Practical Dictionary – Yoruba-English/English-Yoruba*, (New York: Hippocrene Books, Inc., 2003), 604.

The early post-independence Malian immigrants were almost exclusively young men, many originally from rural areas, seeking bridewealth. However, rather than returning permanently to their hometowns and lives as farmers, those who achieved their initial goals travelled back to the homeland only long enough to marry, returning with their brides to the new urban life they had forged in Lagos. The pattern continued, as new generations of Malian youths heard of the commercial opportunities in Lagos. The trend accelerated in the late 1970s and early 1980s, during the Nigerian oil boom. In this way, the Malian settlement expanded over the decades in total population and demographic diversity. As the numbers of agents competing for clients ballooned, newcomers developed novel economic niches, fueling diversification in the kinds of services provided to traders. The latter soon included foreign exchange as well as hostels and eateries serving Malian food, all of which enhanced the Malian character of the community and promoted cohesion around a shared connection with homeland culture.

My disseration in part engages the literature on globalization, particularly that subfield concerned with the relationship between transnationalism and the nation-state. Diasporas represent the kind of transnational populations that many theorists in the field believe "have weakened the exclusive authority, both objective and subjective, of national states over people, their imaginaries, and their sense of belonging."[23] My study suggests such relationships have historically been more nuanced and contingent than such scholars generally acknowledge. As sociologist John Boli writes, "[t]he widespread claim that state sovereignty is in decline reflects and inadequate understanding of the concept of sovereignty," which he situates as "a political

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[23] Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights*, 299. Sassen identifies "disadvantaged low-wage workers, including immigrant communities and households" as "the third emergent global class," formed by "a variety of economic, political, and subjective structures." In Sassen's view, "[t]hese and other globalizing dynamics" have created this weakening. For other discussions of transnational populations as threats to national sovereignty, see James N. Rosenau, *Along the Domestic-Foreign Frontier: Exploring Governance in a Turbulent World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 219-20; and Appadurai , *Globalization*.

theory about the locus of authority in the national polity." In this formulation, "the state derives its sovereignty from the ultimate source of authority, 'the people,' and it exercises that sovereignty on the peoples' behalf."[24] Hence, the citizenry's collective perception of the nation and its relation to the state constitutes sovereignty's essence. Here, the concept dovetails with Anderson's imagined community.[25]

In the case of the Malian diaspora in Lagos, members' identification with the homeland survived multiple challenges over its history. Sources of instability threatened the community's cohesion on three levels with respect to the nation-state. On the subnational level, ethnic and other divisions held the potential for fragmenting the community into autonomous enclaves. At the international level, the group could be assimilated into the host society. At the supranational level, cosmopolitan influences and transnational religious movements threatened to transcend the citizenship differences that defined the diaspora, and displace them as members' primary identities. In the case of the Malian diaspora, the *umma*, the transnational community of Muslims, constituted the most powerful of these external forces, given the large percentage of coreligionists in the host society. While such sub- and supranational forces also acted on the homeland, their effects were more likely to affect its deterritorialized citizens. Members of the diaspora were no longer subject to the immediate pressure of their extended families' and hometown coresidents' opinions that acted as regulating mechanisms to enforce the normative level of nationalism within Mali.[26] Nationality in the diaspora was, thus, more likely to be ambiguous and contested, providing more fertile ground for the planting of transnational ideas.

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[24] John Boli, "Sovereignty from a World Polity Perspective," in *Problematic Sovereignty: Contested Rules and Political Possibilities*, ed. Steven D. Krasner (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 53-72, 70.

[25] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 5-6.

[26] Members of diasporas share to some extent the same internally contradictory relationship to nation-states as Soviet citizens born in one republic—their "territorial nationality," but whose national backgrounds—their "personal nationality," as represented on their official identification documents, were from a different republic. As such,

To investigate the effects of living in the Lagos diaspora on Malian nationalism, I examine life in the community, focusing separately on work (Chapter 1), leisure (Chapter 3), and religion (Chapter 4). I analyze interaction among Malians, other foreigners, and Nigerians in each sphere to determine whether these relations moved Malians toward assimilation, cosmopolitanism, or strengthening internal cohesion. While ethnic, regional, and religious divisions rent the diaspora from the time of its formation in the early 1960s, immediately following independence, the liminal experience of living in the diaspora brought internal factions closer together than in Mali itself. The overall pattern across work, leisure, and religion strengthened divisions between Malians and Nigerians. On the other hand, this split did not give expression to a separatist political movement. The nonactivist marking of identity happened in some instances by government design, in others through the proclivities of the diasporic population, and still others by a combination of the two. These preferences were not the product of inertial adherence to a static vision of tradition, but constantly changed. As I discuss below, both homeland and host society influenced the transformation.

Focusing first on subnational sources of instability, a central factor in the weakening of ethnic identification in the diaspora was the wide diversity of ethnicities represented among Malians in Lagos. This multiethnic demographic profile represented a sharp break with the historical pattern in internal regional trade diasporas.[27] My project is, thus, a departure from

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diasporas bring into focus the tension between these two elements of nationality. Brubaker focuses on just these sorts of anomalous social formations, which "engender a major mismatch between the frontiers of national territories and the spatial distribution of nationalities," as the primary sites of national tension in the post-Soviet nations. Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 33.

[27] Ouidah during the era of the Atlantic Slave Trade represents a possible exception. While several diasporas coexisted there, those that mixed freely represented few internal West African immigrants. The integration of traders from Europe and America with the Dahomean host society (which had subsumed the Hula and Hueda), along with the slave population, was primarily responsible for the cosmopolitan ethos that Robin Law so vividly captures in his historical study of the city. Robin Law, *Ouidah: The Social History of a West African Slaving 'Port', 1727-1892* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004), 73-4. Ouidah's diaspora of Maros--West Africans who returned from

previous research on West African trade diasporas that sought to explain their enduring ethnic homogeneity. The authors of those studies maintained that such exclusive enclaves developed because ethnic networks facilitated long-distance transportation and credit. The seminal work of this type is anthropologist Abner Cohen's historical ethnography of the Hausa trade diaspora in Yorubaland.[28] Although the result of an ethnically homogeneous internal migration, this community shares key elements with that of the Malians in Lagos. The migrations are both primarily rural to urban; the indigenous people in each area of settlement are Yoruba; and the migrants are Muslim traders from the Sahel. Cohen found that members of the diasporic community were "emphasizing and exaggerating their cultural identity and exclusiveness" from the host society as a means of political organizing aimed at retaining their trade monopoly on cattle.[29] In contrast, Malians in Lagos over the entire history of the diaspora from 1960 to 2010 avoided host-country politics and keep a low profile—except when participating as spectators or competitors in sporting events. The trade diaspora in 1960s Ghana studied by J.S. Eades was composed exclusively of Yoruba traders.[30] Eades emphasized the settlement's ethnic homogeneity as the central organizing principle of the community. In contrast, nationality represented the central organizing principle of the Malian diaspora in Lagos. Manchuelle also focused on common ethnicity and religion as the bases for a transnational network that enabled the Soninke to undertake a historical series of labor and trade diasporas that continue into the

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slavery in Brazil--comprised both Hausa and Yoruba, although their formation of a single community was forced through enslavement. Ibid., 180.

[28] Abner Cohen, *Custom & Politics in Urban Africa: A Study of Hausa Migrants In Yoruba Towns* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

[29] Ibid., 1, 22.

[30] J.S. Eades, *Strangers and Traders: Yoruba Migrants, Markets and The State In Northern Ghana* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute, 1993).

present.[31]   These studies and others analyzed West African diasporas primarily through an economic lens, while emphasizing the functional roles played by networks of ethnicity, religion, and kinship. Many of these works further situated colonial and precolonial diasporas within wider systems of global trade.[32]

A number of scholars contributing to the literature on transnationalism and globalization employ similar analytical frameworks, only viewing late-twentieth century diasporas as fundamentally different from their predecessors.[33] They argue that advances in technology over the last decades of the twentieth century have undermined the control of nation-states over the flow of information, goods, capital, and people. A growing body of literature challenges such claims as ahistorical.[34] Other historians have problematized the global hegemony of capitalism by establishing the culturally-specific ways exchange is practiced and perceived.[35]

More recently, anthropologists studying late twentieth century African trade diasporas have refined this widening of the analytical lens to encompass not only multiple sites, but the social networks that connect them.[36] I share this approach, situating the Malian diaspora in Lagos as a node in a wider network connecting the diaspora with the homeland and other

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[31] François Manchuelle, *Willing Migrants.*

[32] See Philip Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); and Claude Meillassoux, *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa: Studies Presented and Discussed at The Tenth International African Seminar at Fourah Bay College, Freetown, December1969* (London, Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, 1969), 197.

[33] See, e.g., Appadurai, *Modernity at Large.*

[34] Frederick Cooper with Rogers Brubaker, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 91-112.

[35] Sharon Hutchinson, *Nuer Dilemmas: Coping with Money, War, and the State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 56-102; and Steven Feierman, "Dissolution of World History," in *Africa and the Disciplines: The Contributions of Research in Africa to the Social Sciences and Humanities*, ed. Robert H. Bates, V.Y. Mudimbe, and Jean O'Barr (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

[36] Janet MacGaffey and Rémy Bazenguissa-Ganga, *Congo-Paris: Transnational Traders On The Margins Of The Law* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000) and Paul Stoller, *Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

diasporic settlements. These previous transnational studies, however, focus on African diasporas in the industrialized global north, in contrast with my focus on "south-to-south" migration. The cultural gulf between host and homeland society for Malians living in, for instance, Spain was far wider than that for Malians living in Nigeria. Differences between diaspora and host society populations, notably education and race, that largely defined the relationship in Spain were minimal and even absent in Nigeria. The substantively different set of social dynamics at the center of the diasporic experience distinguishes my study from those based on south-to-north migrations. While the lines of continuity sketched out above contributed to the nature of the Malian diaspora in Lagos, a particular series of historical events in the region led more directly to its formation.

Historians have long recognized the post-World War II period as a time in which imagined communities in West Africa expanded and took on new meaning, yet they have focused on race and class consciousness as factors animating independence movements, at the expense of other concurrent developments.[37] The most significant of the latter was a shift in the self-imagining of a group of influential West African Muslims, who transferred their focus from membership in exclusive local Sufi enclaves to full engagement with the international *ulama* (community of Islamic scholars). Whereas clerical students had previously travelled to regional centers such as Djenne and Timbuktu to study under Sufi masters, during the 1940s more West Africans began to receive training in Middle East and North Africa, the majority at Cairo's reformist-dominated al-Azhar University. Returning students launched purification movements that challenged the then-prevailing Sufism in Mali[38] and Nigeria.[39] Aided by Abubakar Gumi's

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[37] See, e.g., Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Chapters 11-12.

[38] Lansiné Kaba, *The Wahhabiyya: Islamic Reform and Politics in French West Africa* (Evanston, Ill., Northwestern University Press, 1974), 73-92.

activism and government influence, the movement in Nigeria over the decades reduced Sufis to a

distinct minority. In contrast, reformers in Mali enjoyed only limited success. A number of

historians have contextualized this asymmetry through case studies of key Malian towns that

historicize the heterodox and fluid nature of Islamic practice in twentieth-century Mali.[40] Other

historians have produced studies of Islamic education in Mali and Nigeria[41] that elucidate the

differences in Islamic knowledge production between the two countries.

As discussed above, however, my primary focus in terms of Islam is on the imbrication

of the *umma* and the imagined community of the nation-state. While many scholars have

investigated the relationship of African Islam to the modern secular state,[42] these works focus on

the influence of religion on state institutions. My interest, in contrast, is in examining how

religious identification among the members of a given population interacted with their identities

as citizens. In developing my theoretical framework, I engage, therefore, with the body of

literature on nationalism,[43] especially those works focusing on the role of religion in forging

national identity.[44] I apply this theoretical framework to an exploration of the instrumental

consequences of membership in the transnational *umma* by the citizenry of a secular nation-state.

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[39] Loimeier, *Islamic Reform*.

[40] See Benjamin F. Soares, *Islam And The Prayer Economy: History And Authority in a Malian Town* (Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press, 2005) and Brian Peterson, *Islamization from Below: The Making of Muslim Communities in Rural French Sudan, 1880-1960* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

[41] For Mali: Louis Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power, and Schooling in a West African Muslim Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); for Nigeria: Dahuru Ahmed, "The Modernization of Islamic Education in Nigeria," (PhD-diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1998).

[42] See, e.g., Lamin O. Sanneh, *The Crown and the Turban: Muslims and West African Pluralism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997) and Donal B. Cruise O'Brien, *Symbolic Confrontations: Muslim Imagining the State in Africa* (London : C. Hurst, 2003).

[43] Particularly Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* and Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*.

[44] See, for Nigeria: David D. Laitin, *Hegemony and Culture: Politics and Religious Change among the Yoruba* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) and, for a theoretical framework: Anthony W. Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

In his edited collection, *Globalization*, Arjun Appadurai writes of a "globalization from below," in which marginalized populations undermine the nation-state through their independent movement of "ideas and ideologies, people and goods" without respect to territorial boundaries. He is, in short, "inclined to see globalization as a definite marker of a new crisis for the sovereignty of nation-states."[45] In the same volume, Bayart identifies the 1960s as a watershed moment in transnationalism.[46] And, indeed, ideologies in the form of reformist Islam crossed Mali's border during the period following independence. Islam posed a particular threat to the nation-state because it provided an affective alternative to the organizing principle of the nation. It united believers in an imagined community based on universal principles. Adherents credited its moral framework with underpinning normative societal values and guiding their quotidian behavior. My dissertation shows that their mystical connection to the spiritual was more affective than their feelings of belonging to a community of peers, even those with mythical forbears. Islamic reformist movements, like the Subbanu,[47] which additionally incorporated models for societal organization and governance paralleling those of the nation-state, challenged Mali's sovereignty directly. On the other hand, religion and the nation-state in Mali had the potential to be mutually constitutive.[48] The Malian state attempted to intensify citizens' affective connection to the imagined community through the creation of national myths that mimicked religious frameworks. Beyond that, the state appropriated Islam as a core element of

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[45] Arjun Appadurai, "Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination," in Appadurai, *Globalization*, 3-5.

[46] Jean-Francois Bayart, "The Paradoxical Invention of Economic Modernity," trans. Janet Roitman, in Appadurai, *Globalization*, 306.

[47] The most prominent Islamic reformist movement in post-World War II Mali.

[48] The harnessing of religious feelings to promote national cohesion has a long history, beginning, according to Anthony Marx, even before the nation-state. He writes of early modern Europe's great powers "[t]hat the social bonds of religion could or would be used as the basis of national cohesion is not surprising, for faith was then the most pervasive form of identity among the populace whose loyalty was sought by state rulers…" Marx, *Faith in Nation,* 25.

the nation, central to the national character. Sahelian communities' historical syncretization of "world religions" with pre-existing local spiritual beliefs and practices facilitated the process. Differences between the brand of Islam practiced within Mali's sovereign territory and its foreign counterparts added an element of commonality within the national community, enhancing the population's cohesion. Since the state's borders were not coterminous with a single hybrid, the state adopted the dominant form and promoted its ideas. One of the questions my study seeks to answer is which of these models was dominant over the half century following independence in Mali and Nigeria.

The Malian diaspora in Nigeria represented a social structure in which the answer to this question was clearer than in the comparatively homogeneous population of citizens in the homeland. Historical interaction between Muslims of different nationality—Malians and Nigerians--not separated by state borders provided concrete evidence to assess the power of Islam to transcend citizenship. It presented an opportunity to measure by historical behavior the relative cohesion within the competing imagined communities of the *umma* and the Malian nation-state. Coreligionists who were not compatriots surrounded members of the Malian diaspora in post-independence Lagos. The extent to which Malian Muslims formed meaningful social groupings with their Nigerian counterparts during fifty years of living in the same neighborhoods constituted evidence to assess the transcendent power of Islam. This aspect of my investigation distinguishes it from other diaspora studies, which tend to focus exclusively on tension between the transplanted population's feelings of belonging to their ancestral homeland and forces of assimilation. Here, the bilateral struggle between the host and homeland nation-states was complicated by the additional pull of an overlapping transnational community—the *umma*. Complicating matters further, the local Muslim community was itself fractured into

multiple factions, some transcending the national, others subsumed by it. The local fissures encapsulated those on the global level.

One of the central determinations I endeavor to make is, thus, which of these opposing models the transnational Malian community adopted during this ostensibly seminal period of globalization. Did religion transcend citizenship, incorporating Malians into an *umma* that threatened the relevance of the state, or did the Malian state incorporate Islam into its nationalizing project? Did Malians in the diaspora continue to share the localized beliefs of the homeland religious community, assimilate into the Nigerian *jama'at* (congregation), or adopt the strict scriptural interpretation of global reformist movements? In the latter cases, how did that affect their connection with the homeland? And what is the wider significance of these findings? Over the last two decades of this period, the popular press warned of a global trend toward a brand of political Islam aimed at establishing a worldwide caliphate. Heeding Frederick Cooper's cautions regarding claims of global processes,[49] I use this study to make a detailed examination of a particular instance in which these ostensibly undifferentiated processes operated. I find the inverse of the purported formula in the Malian transnational population. While the global reformist movement with the greatest presence in Lagos had started and remained apolitical over its sixty-year life, the local brand of Islam in Mali changed from apolitical prior to the mid-twentieth century to highly political by the dawn of the twenty-first, albeit within the context of the nation-state.

Other information crossing borders paradoxically held the power to strengthen sovereignty. Athletic competition revivified common visions of the imagined community for those within the nation-state's territory, as well as citizens in the diaspora. Sociologist Alan

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[49] Frederick Cooper, "What Is the Concept of Globalization Good for? An African Historian's Perspective," *African Affairs*, Vol. 100, No. 399 (Apr., 2001): 189-213.

Bairner argues that "sport and globalization have become accomplices in a process whereby the importance of national identity has been ensured despite, or arguably because of, supranationalist tendencies."[50] Globalization of communications and finances unexpectedly aided the national project. As anthropologist John Bale observed of Kenyan's world-class runners' effects on their compatriots, "[g]lobal reality and local experience are…mediated via a national ideology."[51] Although multinational communications corporations created global audiences for sports over the last quarter of the twentieth century, the fan base was not monolithic. Individual fans' local concerns, beliefs, and practices influenced how each understood those productions. Consequently, sports remained an effective medium for promoting nationalism. Anthropological studies of global media events in last quarter of the twentieth century provide a plethora of concrete examples, notably Jackson and Meier's study of "The One-to-One, Challenge of Champions." The "challenge" took place in the Toronto Skydome between Canadian and American sprinters Donovan Bailey and Michael Johnson in 1997, after what the authors describe as three decades of progressively greater globalization of media's sports coverage. The example is of particular interest because Bailey, as a Jamaican who migrated to Canada, represented the African diaspora. "The buildup to the June 1 race," according to the authors, "resembled a World Wrestling Federation or Don King boxing extravaganza. Wherever possible, the media played upon the banter between Bailey and Johnson."[52] The singling out of professional wrestling as the sport exemplifying the kind of media-intensive event that could ignite patriotism parallels my own analysis of the sport here.

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[50] Alan Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 176.

[51] John Bale, "Kenyan Runners in a Global System," in *Anthropology, Sport, and Culture*, ed. Robert R. Sands (Westport, CT & London: Bergin & Garvey, 1999), 74.

[52] Steven Jackson and Klaus Meier, "Hijacking the Hyphenated Signifier: Donovan Bailey and the Politics of Racial and National Identity in Canada" in Sands, *Anthropology, Sport, and Culture*, 174.

Nation-states used sports in "pursuing international rivalries by peaceful means."[53] Athletic contests symbolically mimicked combat, borrowing the power of nationalism's ultimate expression. Sociologist Grant Jarvie explains that sport "provides a form of symbolic action which states the case for the nation itself."[54] "As the athletes compete and their compatriots support their efforts, there exists a bond that can often only be understood with reference to the concept of nationality." Support extends to participation, as "[f]ans riot in some strange attempt to conduct war by other means."[55] Indeed, analyzing the effects of the coverage of "The Challenge of Champions" on the populations of the respective nations, the authors found that the footrace "was invested with considerable emotion and was translated into a duel between Canada and the United States."[56] The Canadian population's reaction to their fellow citizen's victory in "The Challenge of Champions," thus, "was characterized by overzealous nationalism."[57] The example lends credence to Bairner's more general analysis that, "although the process known as globalization has clearly had an impact on them, the relationship between sport, national identity and nationalism remains as strong as ever."[58]

As Bale notes, "national sports systems have become 'totalized' as nations have increasingly sought glory in events like the Olympic Games." Bale situates the beginning of this trend in the 1960s, coincident with Bayart's timeline for the upsurge in transnational

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[53] Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization*, 17.

[54] Grant Jarvie, "Sport, Nationalism, and Cultural Identity," in *The Changing Politics of Sport,* ed. Lincoln Allison (Machester, United Kingdom: Manchester University Press), 58-83, 74; cited in Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization*, 17.

[55] Ibid., 17.

[56] Jackson and Meier, *Hijacking*, 174.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization*, xi.

capitalism.[59] By 1970, then, the international community had established the Games as a global

showcase for nationalism, and Nigeria had a particular need for Olympic glory. With the end of

the Nigerian Civil War in that year, the country desperately sought a means of internal

reunification and of rehabilitation in the international community. The tragedy of the Biafran

population's systematic starvation had left a twin legacy of a deeply alienated internal

subpopulation and world condemnation. The post-war federal government began looking for

ways to improve its international image while providing a common rallying point for a drained

and disillusioned population. Its search coincided with both the run-up to the 1972 Munich

Olympics and the height of the Cold War, when the significance of any international event was

measured by its affect on the balance of U.S.-Soviet power. The symbolic clash between the

reigning global superpowers only enhanced the Games' importance on the world stage. Global

print and electronic media saturated the market with its coverage from the lighting of the

Olympic torch. The sensationalism increased, although in a decidedly more somber tone, when

Palestinian militants took hostage and then executed a group of Israeli athletes. The tragedy

interjected a reminder of the gravity of the political conflicts being symbolically played out in

the stadium. Amid the news coverage, Nigerian officials noted the attention paid to a fellow

small country, East Germany, because of its athletes' dominant performances.

The same year, the Nigerian government, seeking to emulate the German Democratic

Republic's (GDR) path to international prestige as a sporting superpower, contracted with the

communist bloc nation to rebuild its own Olympic sports programs using the East German

template. The goal was to develop and control a powerful sports machine to deploy the symbolic

value in building national feeling. The resulting activities of the Nigerian Institute of Sports

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[59] Bale, *Kenyan Runners in a Global System*, 74.

(NIS) thus represented one of the state's most significant nationalizing strategies. The institute aimed to shape the country's young athletes into symbols of national strength whose success would elicit pride in the preserved nation across all groups within its borders. Resident aliens composed the single such group not included in the state's vision of patriotic cohesion. Nevertheless, as I describe in Chapter 3, this anomalous subpopulation was equally susceptible to the siren call of athletic spectacle. The unexpected prospect of Malian participation in these most Nigerian of projects provided a point of entry into the related theoretical issues.

I focus on two apparently unrelated cultural spheres--religion and sports--as sites for fine-grained examination both because of their importance to Malians in Lagos, and because of their prominence in homeland and host state nationalist discourse. As symbols, the disparate domains shared the ability to heighten citizens' levels of emotional attachment to the imagined community. Religion had "a perceived power as a form of cohesion that states or opponents could attempt to mimic, deploy, or harness."[60] Similarly, "[s]port is frequently a vehicle for the expression of nationalist sentiment" that politicians "harness" for nation building.[61] Describing this process in Africa, with a focus on the spaces in which it occurred, Peter Alegi elaborates on the analogy between sports and religion:

> …independent Africa's stadiums were large modern cathedrals of sport: symbols of modernity and national pride. These stadiums quickly became almost sacred ground for the creation and performance of national identities. The ritualized experience of spectatorship, together with 'the transcendent characteristics of large gatherings and the emotive capacity of sport,' engendered a commonality among fans, practitioners, officials, and the media that extended beyond the stadiums to include radio listeners and, in later years, television viewers as well. African stadiums became extremely valuable public spaces where, as geographer Chris Gaffney put it, 'potentially disaggregated social actors [found] a common symbol, language, history, and purpose.'[62]

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[60] Marx, *Faith in Nation*, 25.

[61] Alan Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization*, xi.

[62] Peter Alegi, *African Soccerscapes: How a Continent Changed the World's Game* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010), 55.

Postcolonial Mali encompassed multiple ethnic groups, each maintaining cohesion through fictive kinship based on exclusive origin myths. This standard nationalizing strategy was, thus, closed to the newly-formed nation-state. Precluded from deploying the perception of primordial blood ties to achieve cohesion, Modibo Keita's inaugural government attempted to "redirect the rising passion of religion to secular passion for the state,"[63] and their feelings of inspiration at athletic contests to build the national community. From his election in 1960, Keita sought to portray his socialist policies as Islamic, representing the government's redistribution of wealth as a form of *zakah*, the giving of alms on a stipulated scale (the equivalent of a voluntary religious tax paid directly to the poor).[64] In 1962, just two years into his presidency, Keita instituted the annual youth arts and sports festival, "La Semaine Nationale de la Jeunesse," a celebration of the nation through artistic and athletic performance.[65]

The formal parallels between Islam and wrestling—especially the participation of the audience, both featuring performances of embodied ritual, account in part for their comparable ability to inspire. Such rites, in secular reincarnations, constituted a deep historical method of infusing loyalty. The repetition of chanted pledges of devotion, accompanied by symbolic bodily motions, all performed simultaneously *en masse*, gave each participant the impression that she was functioning as an integral part of a larger community moving toward a common goal. Sociologist Douglas Marshall notes that entrainment in a group, in itself, results "a sense of bonding and liking (i.e., belonging)." Moreover, he cites findings that "unified movement (i.e.,

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[63] Ibid., 193.

[64] Francis G. Snyder, "The Political Thought of Modibo Keita," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (May, 1967): 79-106, 94.

[65] Mary Jo Arnoldi, "Youth Festivals and Museums: The Cultural Politics of Public Memory in Postcolonial Mali," *Africa Today*, Vol. 52, No. 4, Memory and the Formation of Political Identities in West Africa (Summer, 2006): 55-76, 57.

behavioral entrainment)" creates "rapport and its subsequent sense of belonging." Ritual practice provides a "common means of escaping self-awareness" and "channeling" belonging and belief to the target of "attentional focus."[66] The impression of one's body moving through space in unity with others, especially, conveyed the impression of unified purpose. Indeed, incorporation of rhythmic movement constitutes "the most characteristic and universal feature of positive rites."[67]

From a Foucauldian perspective, such manipulation of "the somatic, the corporeal" represents the "biopolitics" of the "disciplinary state." In Foucault's formulation, "The control of society over individuals is not conducted only through consciousness or ideology, but also in the body and with the body."[68] Consistent with the project of control, the sacred and the athletic correspond in their requirements for obedience and order. In Chapter 2, I quote Nigerian writer A. Bamisaiye, who viewed discipline as the principal building block of nationalism.[69] In his formulation, discipline linked the individual with the nation. An undisciplined person, unable to control his desires, was selfish, forming a community of one. A disciplined person controlled his needs, subverting them to those of society. He acted as part of a larger community; a disciplined society; a nation. Bamisaiye drew parallels to the athlete's self-discipline leading to the national goal of Olympic supremacy. Yet, the idea that fashioning disciplined individuals was the key to forming a successful society originated in religion. As Foucault reminds us regarding

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[66] Douglas A. Marshall, "Behavior, Belonging, and Belief: A Theory of Ritual Practice," *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Nov., 2002): 360-380, 363.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Michel Foucault, "La Naissance de la Medicine Sociale," in *Dits et Écrits* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994): 3:210; cited in Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 27.

[69] *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Wednesday, August 29, 1984, 9, "Of Olympics and nationalism," by A. Bamisaiye.

Christianity, "[f]or centuries, the religious orders had been masters of discipline."[70] The same

was true of their Muslim counterparts, the *turuq* (pl. *tariqa*). Vestiges of Sufi disciplinary

regimes survived in the two Islamic movements I discuss in Chapter 4: The *Tablighi Jama'at* [71]

(the *Tabligh*), a global Islamic reformist movement, and *Ançar Dine,*[72] a regional Islamic

organization based in Mali. Each organization reprised different aspects of the *tariqa*. *Ançar*

Dine's spiritual leader, *Shaykh*[73] Haidara, preached that followers should exercise the self-

discipline to model their personal behavior in accordance with the tenets of Islam. The *Tabligh's*

disciplinary practices, in contrast were closer to those of the Christian orders, specifying in

minute detail the ritual to accompany each task of the day. Nevertheless, the organizations

shared discipline as an organizing principle, and each taught that inculcating it in the individual

would transform society as a whole. Haidara's formulation had even more in common with

Bamisaiye's because his conception of transgressing the rules of conduct included corruption,

and he explicitly extended his disciplinary regime to the personal behavior of government

officials. This interpretation led to Haidera's condemnation of state policy resulting from

corruption. His imagined community, like Bamisaiye's, consisted of the polity of the nation-

state. In contrast, the *Tabligh* sought to convince all Muslims, regardless of citizenship, to

submit to the discipline outlined in the *Qu'ran* and *hadith* (the prophet's teachings, deeds, and

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[70] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth Of The Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 150.

[71] The largest global Islamic proselytizing reform movement in 2010, founded in 1920s India by Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas Kandhalawi, a cleric of the Deobandi school. In this paper, I refer to this organization as "the *Tabligh*" and its members as *Tablighis*.

[72] *Ançar Dine* is a local adaptation of the Arabic *ansar al-din*, literally meaning "helpers of the faith," but often idiomatically glossed "defenders of the faith," and is consequently a common name for Muslim organizations throughout the world. Haidara's Bamako-based organization should not be confused with the militant organization of the same name that took control of Timbuktu and Gao in 2012. Similarly, although many Malians worship at the *Ansar ud-Dine* mosque in the Idumota section of Lagos Island, the affiliated organization is based in Lagos and has no relationship to Haidara's.

[73] Arabic: In Sufism, a spiritual master.

sayings). It eschewed focus on any particular state or its institutions; from its perspective, the

imagined community equated to the *umma*--a homogeneous transnational aggregation of

Muslims. The *Tabligh* taught that governance in accordance with Islamic principles would

emerge organically out of the disciplined lifestyles of its individual devotees.

Methods and Sources

My study draws on oral histories and archival materials collected in Nigeria and Mali

from October 15, 2009 to October 15, 2010, under a Fulbright-Hays--Doctoral Dissertation

Research Abroad Fellowship. During the first six months of this time, I conducted research in

Lagos, Nigeria, followed by three months during which I split my time between Lagos and

Ibadan, with a week-long research trip to Kano. While in Lagos, I spent time in small businesses

and informal, dorm-style hotels where Malians gathered and interacted with Nigerians in the

Idumota, Offin, Agege, Ebule Egba, and Surulere quarters of Lagos. There I interviewed over 70

Malian and Nigerian informants on a wide-ranging set of topics focused on the history of the

Malian community in Lagos.[74] I conversed in Bamanankan[75] and English with Malians, and in

Yoruba and English with Nigerians who interacted with them.[76] I attended Thursday night

prayer and preaching sessions at the Lagos mosque of the *Tabligh Jama'at* organization, and met

with a group of elders there. I interviewed Tablighis of various nationalities regarding the tenets,

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[74] In this dissertation, I have changed the names of all informants, other than public figures, to ensure confidentiality.

[75] (French: Bambara) The dominant local language in Mali. The term derives from the Bamana ethnic group and "kan," meaning "language." Also used as a second or third language by many members of other language groups in Mali.

[76] I explained my research to each potential informant, and asked permission to interview and record him or her. If the individual agreed, I recorded the discussion electronically, or took notes by hand. Unless the conversation had a narrowly-focused purpose, I started with a standard set of core questions on citizenship, religion, ethnicity, work, domestic practices, and leisure; but improvised follow-up questions based on the specific information provided by each participant. I used the contingent questions to follow the most interesting strands of conversation provided to that point. The object was to elicit further discussion regarding subjects on which the interlocutor seemed especially interested in, or knowledgeable about. I used a different set of core questions for the homeland families that focused on diaspora-homeland relations. Finding that many of these informants had themselves spent time in Nigeria, I improvised questions on their own experiences there.

practices, and organization of the Tabligh. A local Malian representative of *Ançar Dine* in Lagos and I discussed the tenets, practices, and international organization of *Ançar*, as well as descriptions of historical visits to Lagos of *Ançar* preachers from Mali. The director of a Nigerian Muslim charity organization and I discussed the perspectives of the Nigerian Muslim community at large on the Tabligh. I met with University of Ibadan professor of urban history Kunle Lawal, and Lagos State University professors of history and Islamic studies Ishaq Akintola and Hakeem Danmole, concerning primary sources for the history of Muslim immigrants in Lagos. They gave me historical publications available only in Nigeria, and put me in contact with officials of several Muslim institutions. I subsequently met several times with senior officials of the Lagos Central Mosque, the Lagos State Muslim Council, and the Ansar ud-Deen Society of Nigeria to discuss the availability of documents, resulting in meeting with, and receiving primary documents from, Professor T.G.O. Gbadamosi, the official historian for all of these organizations.

I investigated government archives and other government institutions in Lagos. The director of the then year-old Lagos State Archives gave me access to his personal document collection, from which I copied state documents and independent publications on subjects related to the Malian diaspora, such as the Maroko demolition and the Lagos Central Mosque charter. At the High Court of Lagos archives, I reviewed court records dating from the 1960s through the 1980s, compiling data providing insight into the social environment in Lagos during that period. I recorded information from the case files that documented conditions in neighborhoods where Malians lived, and interactions between Muslim immigrants and the legal system. I met with the staffs of local government offices in Lagos concerning immigrants, taxes, and other subjects. Most directly relevant to the diaspora, I photographed several years of the historical records of

the High Council of Malians Overseas in Lagos, which acted as the governing body of that

community from the 1970s through the present. The documents included correspondence with

the Malian Embassy in Abuja, members, and Nigerian officials.

In Ibadan from mid-April through mid-July, I interviewed fifteen Malian and other

Francophone immigrants in the city's Sabo quarter, and conducted research at the National

Archives and the Ibadan University Library. In Kano's Kurna quarter, I interviewed ten Malians,

including the first president of the Lagos High Council. I spent the final three months of my

fieldwork in Mali, where I interviewed in Bamanankan 42 family members of Malians in Lagos,

collecting memories of historical interaction between the diaspora and homeland. The

informants lived in 20 different towns in urban and rural areas across Mali (see Map 1, below).
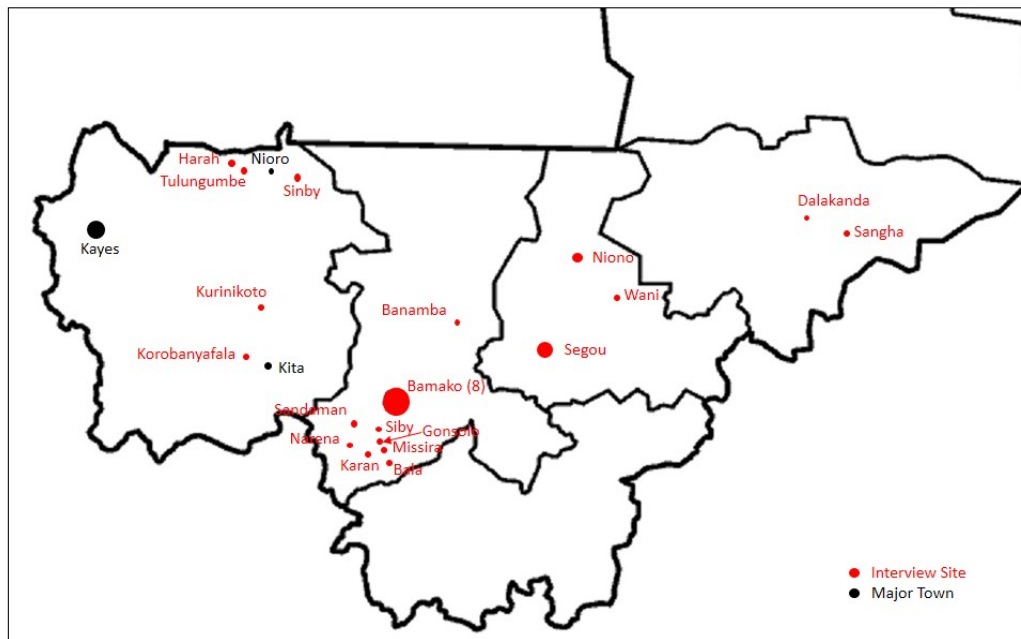
Map 1: Interview Sites in Mali [77]

Between trips to outlying areas, I investigated the availability of relevant documents at government institutions in the capital city of Bamako. I conducted research at the Archives Nationales du Mali, and at the Université de Bamako library. I met with officials at the Bureau of Malians Overseas, and with the Chargé des Études et Perspectives des Migrations under the Délégation Générale des Maliens de l'Extérieur in Bamako, from whom I obtained electronic copies of reports on Malian immigration during the first decade of the twenty-first century. I augmented these sources with thirty interviews I conducted in Mali and Nigeria during research for my Master's thesis in 2007.

The greatest strength of my methodology is its multiplicity of sites and transnational reach, graphically illustrated in Map 1, above. The diaspora itself constituted a local network whose nodes consisted of emigrants from every region of Mali. I mapped each node back onto its origin in the homeland to capture multiple perspectives on common events in the history of each transnational household. In 2005, I originally followed two strands of the transnational network from one Malian village to Lagos and became aware of the larger Malian community there. In 2007, following up on that initial contact, I gathered information separately from homeland and diaspora. Finally, in 2009-10, I interviewed a set of Malian Lagosians, then followed the strand connecting each individual to his homeland *du*, where I interviewed his family. This procedure renders the macro-level theorizing about transnationalism visible on the level of the individual.

In gathering information in Lagos, I was mindful of the advice Abdoulaye Cisse, an elder Songhay marabout, gave to Paul Stoller that "you will never learn about us if you go into peoples' compounds, ask personal questions, and write down the answers." Instead, Cisse

suggested, "[y]ou must learn to sit with people…learn to sit and listen."[78] Consequently, for

every hour of formal interview, I spent an estimated twenty hours in informal discussions with

Malians, Nigerians, and other Africans in Lagos. During my dissertation research, when I was

not visiting an archive or government office, I spent seven or eight hours a day sitting in the

offices of the High Council, forex bureaus, hostels, or markets, where I engaged in casual

conversation with the regular staff, friends, customers, and passersby. In the interest of making

interviews as unintimidating as possible, I only broached the prospect of an interview if my

interlocutor seemed interested in talking further. All of these interactions enhanced my

understanding of the social landscape in which the diaspora operated, at least as it existed at the

end of my study period.

My formal interviews, for their part, were not highly structured. I explained my project

to each new informant and asked permission to record him or her. For those who did not want to

be recorded electronically, I wrote down their responses in real time. Although this practice was

precisely that criticized by Stoller's interlocutor, we should not be "too pious" in accepting the

marabout's generalization uncritically merely because it emanated from an "authentic African

voice."[79] By situating interviews within a longer, more fluid interaction, they were less likely to

elicit the lies Cisse warned against. Similarly, even in more rigid, interrogation-style interviews,

the level of good faith in responding depends to some extent on the informant's particular agenda,

which differs with each individual. In my early 2009 interviews, as with my 2007 informants, I

began with a standard set of questions, but deviated from them to follow intriguing story lines.

After receiving the same answers from different informants to many of the core questions,

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[78] Paul Stoller and Cheyl Olkes, *In Sorcery's Shadow: A Memoir of Apprenticeship among the Songhay of Niger* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 11; cited in Abdullahi A. Ibrahim, "The Birth of the Interview: The Thin and the Fat of It," in Luise White, Stephan F. Miescher, and David William Cohen (ed.), *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 103-124, 109.

[79] Ibid.

notably on interethnic relations, I decided these were not likely to provide a richly textured portrait of the community. Subsequently, I tailored all but the most basic identification questions to the individual's particular circumstances. In doing so, to some extent I sacrificed broad descriptive statistics for a deeper understanding of each individual's life experience.

I purposely did not use a research assistant. Other researchers have abandoned voice recorders and notepads in the interest of producing a more natural interaction, free from associations with police and other official interrogations. I share those goals; however, at least in my particular circumstances, a research assistant would have introduced an artificial barrier between me and my informants that would have been far more destructive of natural sociability than either notebook or voice recorder. Apprehensions regarding parallels to the techniques employed by practitioners in the criminal justice system apply equally to a team of two interrogators, evocative of the classic "good cop/bad cop" tandem. I would find it far more intimidating to have two persons, rather than one, approach me for an interview, not to mention flank me during the interview itself. I had connections to at least two members of the diaspora when I first made contact with the community in 2005. With that entrée, I socialized with members of the community during my initial trip, and so was already friendly with a number of key figures in the community when I first returned to conduct research in 2007. Although the Malians would have been hospitable to anyone, they were particularly pleased that I could talk directly with them in Bamanankan. To interject a third party into the mix would have been not only unnecessary, but off-putting.

Because I made myself a habitué of the principal Malian gathering spots on Lagos Island, I knew the Malians who worked or regularly gathered at those places particularly well, and saw them practically on a daily basis. Consequently, I conducted multiple interviews with each of

them. While a few purchasing agents each gave me three or more recorded, in-depth, hour-plus

interviews, for those working at these locations, who knew my business and had granted

permission to record, I would ask them questions whenever the opportunity presented itself, and

write down their answers in real time. In this way, I was able to clarify to an unusual level of

detail many aspects of these informants' experience in Lagos. Moreover, many of these

"continuous informants" represented not only the community leadership, but its longest-resident

remaining members. The memories of these central figures provided me with a panopticonic

view of the community in each of its past incarnations.

Chapter Outline

In Chapter 1, I present an overview of the origins and history of the diaspora, tracing

changes in the community's demographics, economic structure, and political organization from

1960 through 2010. I describe how these structural factors translated into everyday life. The

chapter examines how the spatial organization of the diaspora in Lagos reflected fissures in the

community based on a combination of factors including religion and ethnicity, while at the same

time representing a coherent whole maintained by informal social networks, as well as a web of

voluntary associations. Chapter 2 addresses the Nigerian government's expulsions of West

African aliens in the 1980s as seminal events that encapsulated the host society's attitudes

toward the West African diaspora. Mixing Malians' first-hand accounts with coverage and

editorials in contemporary Nigerian newspapers, I historicize Nigerian perspectives on West

African aliens from three different sectors: the government, the media, and the street. The

chapter analyzes how the Nigerians' own xenophobia shaped these attitudes, fueled by the

nationalizing strategies of the multiethnic state. I connect the exclusionary nature of Nigerian

nationalism to the discourses of autochthony, or indigeneity, that are enshrined in Nigerian law

on the subnational state level, and are determinative of each resident's access to state resources.

Chapter 3 analyzes the ritual performance of national struggles in the professional wrestling ring and the patriotic audience participation by Malian fans in Lagos as representative of the high level of homeland nationalism in the diaspora. It delves into the organizational structure of both the Nigerian and Malian national sports systems to reveal the pervasive role of the state in shaping national identity. Chapter 4 explores to what extent common membership in the *umma*, the worldwide community of Muslims, transcended the xenophobic discourses described in Chapter 2. It uses the diasporic case study to demonstrate how, rather than the *umma* bridging national differences to create a homogeneous imagined community of believers, in Lagos national differences subsumed Islam to the point where religious differences became national markers. Chapter 5 traces Malians living in Lagos back to their families in Mali, and draws on interviews with family members to document how, despite resistance to cosmopolitan influences in the diaspora, Malians were changed by living in Lagos. It uses these case studies to illustrate how circular and reverse migration transferred new ideas back to the homeland, incrementally altering the norms on which their imagined community was based, in a continuous cultural feedback loop. Finally, in my conclusion, I discuss the complexities and paradoxes that arise from the study. Although the diaspora as a whole retained its distinct character as a Malian enclave from 1960 through 2010, and became active in a revitalized public sphere focused on the Malian nation-state in the 1990s, throughout the five decades following independence, it acted as a conduit through which foreign concepts and practices flowed into Malian society.

Chapter 1

Life in the Diaspora

This chapter provides a historical overview of life in the diaspora, and describes how the community's spatial organization reflected sociocultural differences within the population. The new environment changed the meaning of ethnicity for the Malians living there. Whereas the deepest ethnic rifts continued to divide the Malian community, the changed conditions in the diaspora strengthened the significance of the common citizenship that bridged those gaps. From the first arrivals in the early 1960s, for the Soninke, Malinke, Bamana, and Fulani--groups with deep histories of periodic entente--the intensified daily social interaction among groups in the compressed space of the diaspora reinforced vestiges of positive intergroup sentiment. Ethnicity, however, was not the only source of difference within the diaspora. At least from the arrival of the first Dogon seeking wage labor in the early 1970s, ethnicity's traditional West African corollary, occupation, continued to create distinctions among members of the population, although its association with ethnicity was inconsistent. Neither was occupation isomorphic with class, a term that did not translate well to West African societies in any case. As the first diasporic entrepreneurs emerged in the early 1980s, the more meaningful distinctions in the diaspora corresponded to varying levels of success and scale within a given pastime. Finally, although the diaspora was, with a handful of exceptions, uniformly Muslim, religious differences within the *umma* introduced fissures.

The spatial organization of the diaspora through time reflected these social relationships and how they changed. On the largest scale, the Malian community in Lagos developed

beginning in 1963 as a single node in a wider diasporic settlement based on the urban triangle of

Lagos, Ibadan, and Kano (see Map 2, below).

Map 2: Network of Malian Diasporic Communities in Nigeria[1]

A Malian community had formed in the Kurna quarter of Kano by 1970, and in the Sabo quarter

of Ibadan by 1977. The population was fluid, circulating into and out of the triangle from Mali

and other West African diasporas, as well as among the three nodes. The system formed an

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[1] Source for background map is Islam.ru/en/sites/default files.

active commercial network, with a continuous stream of business transactions maintaining

dynamic linkages among the three communities from the mid-1970s. At any given time from the

1980s on, a substantial number of Malians based in both other nodes were conducting, or

soliciting, business in Lagos and vice versa. During my 2009-10 fieldwork, the interconnectivity

among the nodes was encapsulated by one Malian youth whom I met originally in Lagos through

his uncle, a Kano-based businessman, and then spent time with in Ibadan. He had moved in with

his elder brother in Ibadan after having worked in Kano. Completing the grand cycle, I later

encountered him by chance in his tiny home village in the Kayes region of Mali in the summer of

2010.[2] These intercity connections had not grown up randomly. Abdourahmane Diallo, the first

president of the Lagos High Council of Malians Overseas, despite maintaining a wife and house

in Lagos, had originally settled in Kano in 1971, and maintained two wives and two houses there.

The broader connection was through the dyeing business, which was in high demand in Kano

from 1970 into the early twenty-first century. Malian settlers in Lagos picked up the trade in the

1970s from members of the Guinean diaspora, with whom many shared a Malinke ethnicity. Not

only would dye workers switch locations to follow demand between 1970 and 2010, but Malian

merchants in Kano bought the imported dye directly at the port of Lagos during that period to

avoid middlemen.[3]

By the mid-1970s, Ibadan was attracting Malians because of its status as an international

market for semi-precious stones, as well as for Yoruba antiquities and folk art. Malians in both

Lagos and Kano had settled in Hausa areas in those cities because of their common religion,

Sahelian culture, and trading history. In the mid-1970s, Malians in both places became

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[2] Fieldwork in Nigeria and Mali in 2009-10.

[3] Interview with Abdourahmane Diallo in Kano, Nigeria on March 17, 2010, and fieldwork in Nigeria during 2009-10.

acquainted with the Ibadan trade through coresident Hausas, whose compatriots dominated the trade in Ibadan at that time. In every decade from the 1960s on, virtually all Malians had come to Nigeria with the goal of becoming middlemen in long-distance trade. While most of them were contemplating trade in goods bound for the Malian market, the stones represented a potentially more lucrative commodity. Individual traders from the industrialized countries of Europe, Asia, and the U.S. bought the stones from the mid-70s on. Although Western buyers came to Ibadan, the more lucrative market was in Thailand, where ambitious Malian traders were travelling by the mid-1980s, often eventually settling there themselves, or having a partner settle there. Ibadan-based traders flew out of Lagos, necessitating stays at Malian hotels there on either end of the trip. Smaller merchants came to Lagos to sell stones when demand slumped in Ibadan. These two types of business trips contributed to the constant circulation of Malians between Ibadan and Lagos from 1975 on.[4]

Within Lagos, the diaspora, while in some ways reconfiguring the cultural landscape of the homeland, in other important ways recapitulated it. Most visible in this respect was the complete absence from Lagos of the Tuareg. A few informants told me that a handful of Tuareg had lived in Lagos in the 1970s, but no sign of them remained. As Berber people, living in Mali's desert north and retaining their pastoralist lifestyle, they had historically maintained both cultural and physical distance from the rest of the population. Their grievances at receiving minimal government services led to the insurgencies of the early 1990s, and culminated in the separatist rebellion of 2012.[5] These actions increased the animosity between them and other Malians. Also absent from the diaspora were the Bobo people of Mali's southeast. The Bobo,

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[4] Interviews in Ibadan, Nigeria in 2010 with Kao Coulibaly on June 18, Kauru Bagayogo on June 22, and Modibo Cisse on June 23.

[5] Baz Lecocq and Paul Schrijver, "The War on Terror in a Haze of Dust: Potholes and Pitfalls on the Saharan Front," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol. 25 Issue 1 (Jan. 2007): 141-166; Jean-Paul Azam and Christian Morrisson, *Conflict and Growth in Africa, Vol. 1: The Sahel* (Paris: OECD Publications Service, 1999): 15-16.

who were predominantly Christian, and whose social life centered on drinking millet beer, had developed a culture that contrasted starkly with that of the general Malian populace. The group was also closely linked with Burkina Faso, whose border bisected the population.[6] Although other Malians viewed them with benign amusement rather than animosity, a lack of integration in the homeland remained and was reflected in emigration patterns.

Other groups recreated the cultural geography of the homeland in more specific ways. Just as the Dogon had developed over the last century a separate *Pays Dogon*, or Dogon Country, along the Bandiagara Escarpment in the Mopti Region of Mali, they carved out a Dogon enclave in post-independence Lagos. In the early 1970s, they began congregating in a single neighborhood, Agege, separated from other concentrations of Malians in the city (see Map 3, on the following page). Even in 2010, only a handful of Dogon lived in those other enclaves, and only a tiny percentage of non-Dogon Malians, predominantly Songhay and other peoples from the Mopti Region, lived in Agege. The Dogon community was so isolated from the rest of the Malian diaspora that it only learned of the latter's existence through a Nigerian radio broadcast in 1979.[7] Similarly, while a large number of Fulani over the centuries switched from herding to farming, settled in Mande villages in the Sahel, and intermarried with Bamana and other Mande peoples, those who remained herders maintained a physical and cultural separation from other Malian groups, even when herding the latter's cattle. The same was true in Lagos, where in 1963 the first Malian was Fulani, and a large number of Fulani were completely integrated with other Malians in each successive decade, but those still connected to the livestock trade lived in

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[6] Fieldwork in Mali in 2007 and 2010.

[7] Interviews in 2010 with Abdoulay Kassogue and Dogon elders in Agege on January 10; and Adama Giptele in Idumota on March 21.

Ayetoro, a town approximately 25 miles northwest of Abeokuta and around 75 miles north-northwest of Lagos.[8]
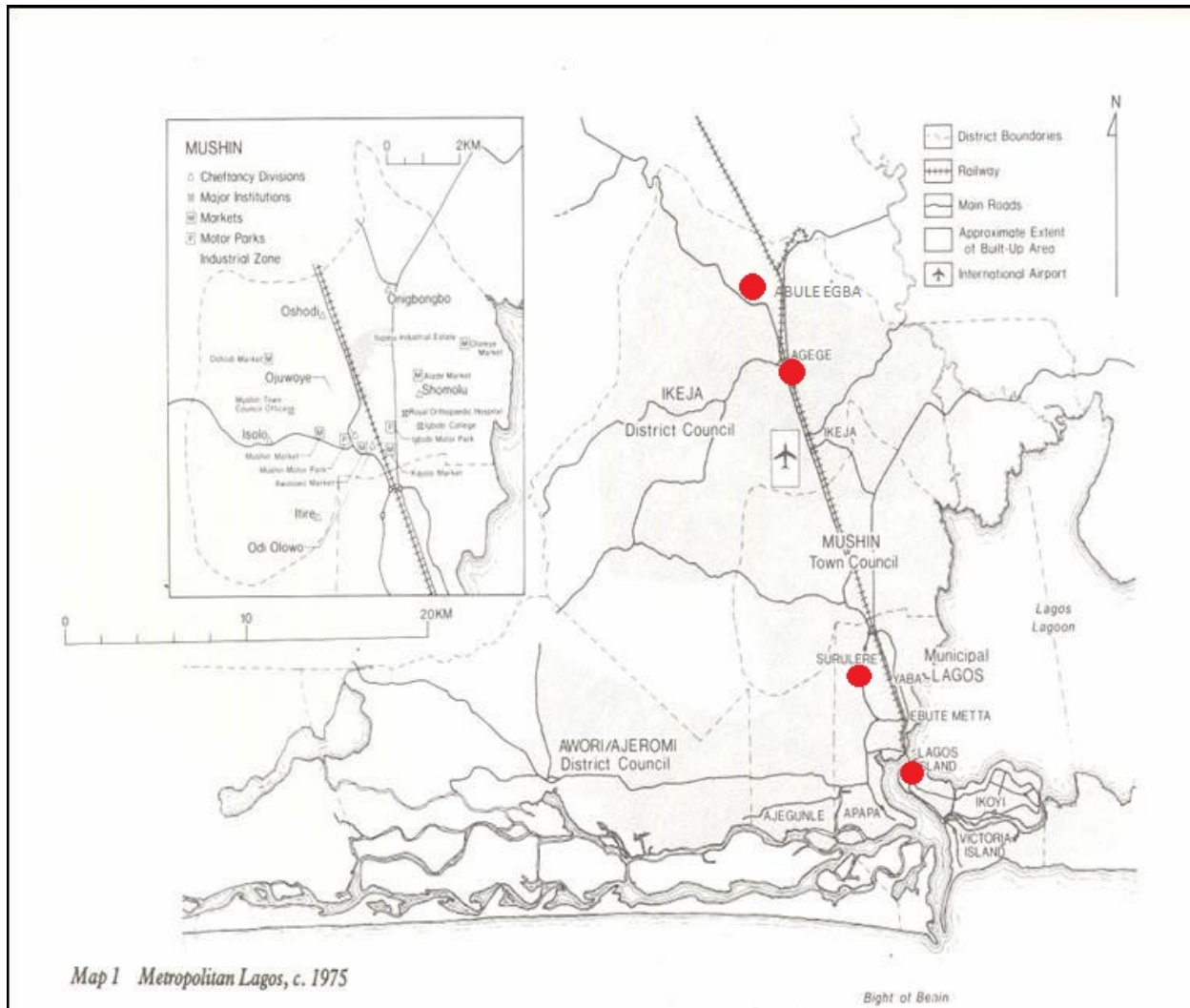
Map 3: Malian Enclaves in Metropolitan Lagos [9]

In contrast to the spatial separation of the Fulani herding community, which reiterated a historical bifurcation, by the early 1970s, business opportunities also created spatial separations

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[8] Interview with Lassana Cisse in Idumota, Lagos Island on January 5, 2010; and fieldwork in Lagos 2007 and 2009-10.

[9] Source for background map is Sandra T. Barnes, *Patrons and Power: Creating a Political Community in Metropolitan Lagos* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), Map 1: Metropolitan Lagos c. 1975, 12.

within ethnic groups that reflected a new occupational differentiation. This development is intriguing from a historical perspective because, as discussed above, occupational differentiation was one of the principal sources of Sahelian ethnogenesis. Beginning in 1994, with the arrival of a Malian ice cream company, the neighborhood of Ebule Egba became an important example of this occupational divide. The neighborhood was on the far north side of mainland Lagos, over an hour's drive from Lagos Island, just off the road to Ibadan. A large number of Malians, predominantly Soninke, lived and worked there. In contrast to their ethnic counterparts on Lagos Island, few were middlemen in long-distance trade, working instead in a variety of jobs catering to local consumers.[10]

In the 1960s and subsequent decades, the primary concentration of Malians in Lagos was located in the trading center of Idumota on Lagos Island—the historical core of the city (see Map 4, on the following page). More ethnically diverse than its counterparts scattered throughout the metropolitan area, by the 1980s, the Malian population of Idumota was representative of the most populous area of Mali, lying south of the Niger River and west of Mopti. As in that homeland territory, persons identifying as Bamana, Soninke, Malinke, and Fulani were heavily represented in Idumota, where Malians of all ethnicities lived in the same apartment buildings and "lodges," worked for the same companies, and invested in the same businesses. Hailing predominantly from the Koulikoro, Kayes, and Segou Regions of Mali, they ate meals, watched television, played soccer, and prayed together. In Idumota, as in Bamako, the *lingua franca* among Malians was Bamanankan from 1963.[11] The language choice explains to some extent why so few Dogon moved into this central settlement, even after discovering it in 1979.

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[10] Interviews in 2010 with Haruna Ali in Ebule Egba on April 20; and Adama Giptele in Idumota, Lagos Island on March 21, 2010.

[11] Interview with Lassana Cisse at the offices of the High Council in Offin, Lagos Island on February 20, 2010; and fieldwork in Lagos in 2007 and 2009-10.

Although multilingual, most Dogon in Lagos spoke Hausa and, perhaps, Yoruba, but not

Bamanankan.[12]
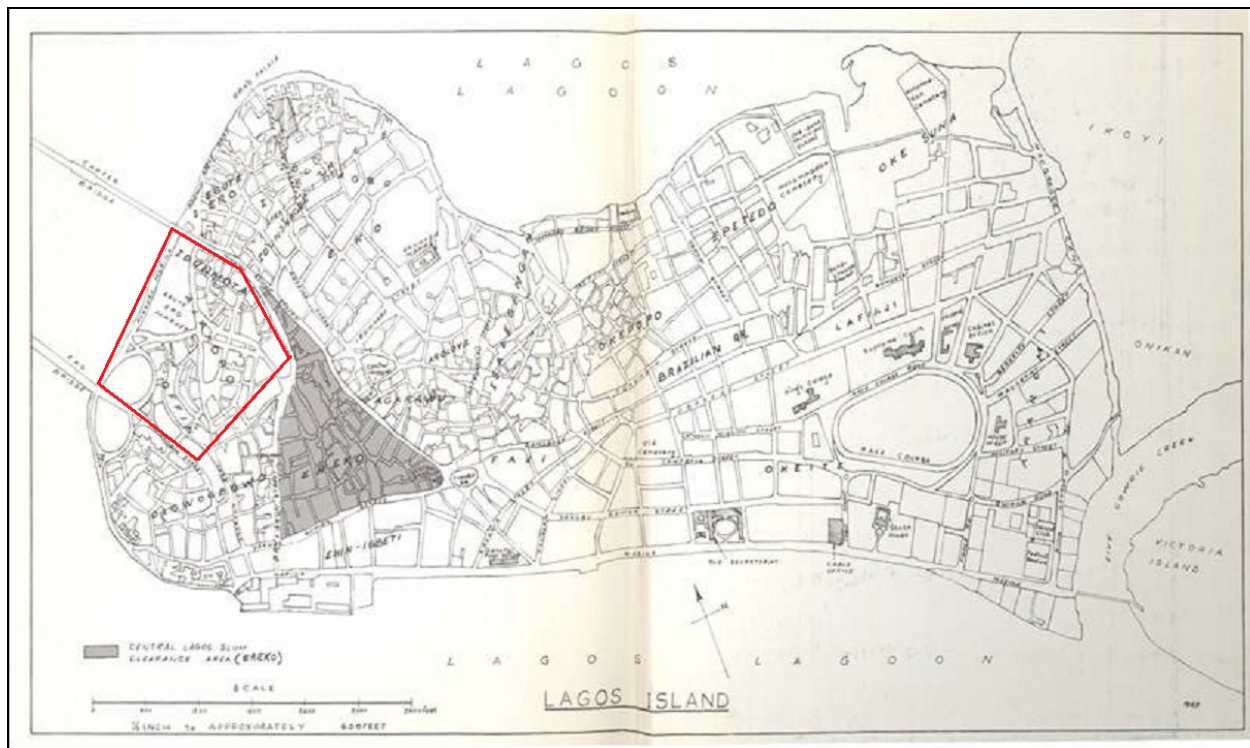
Map 4: The Idumota and Offin Neighborhoods on Lagos Island[13]

Many of the longer-term residents of Lagos lived in the Surulere quarter, on the nearby

mainland (see Map 3, page 37), but worked in Idumota. Malians initially located in the latter

area because it was home to the major import companies in the 1960s and 70s, and the Malians

were there primarily to purchase imports and transport them to Mali. Over the ensuing decades,

the government built a number of new market areas on the mainland along Badagry Road toward

Benin, where it relocated most sellers of certain designated imported commodities, such as car

parts. In the early twenty-first century, the relocation overtook homegrown commerce, including

[12] Interviews with Ibrahim Toloba at the Ebute Ero Motor Park, Lagos Island on December 31, 2009; with Abdoulay Kassogue and the Dogon Council in Agege, Lagos on March 21, 2010; and fieldwork in Lagos in 2007 and 2009-10.

[13] Source for background map: Pauline Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change: The Politics of Lagos, 1917-1967* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1974), frontispiece.

some of the Nollywood distributors, who relocated from their original home in Idumota to Alakoro toward Badagry. Nevertheless, Idumota remained into the first decade of the twenty-first century a major retail market for many import goods, with stalls lining virtually every inch of most streets, and more-established retailers purveying goods in and between the buildings of the government-built Ebute Ero Market.[14]

Lagos Island acted as the hub of the Lagos diaspora for several reasons. First, it was the earliest and the single largest concentration of Malians in the area. Consequently, it was the point of departure for passenger traffic to Mali. This consisted primarily of "bush taxis," which left from the Ebute Ero market and dropped passengers at the Malian bus companies in Cotonou, waiting for the travelers to clear immigration at the Benin border. In later years, higher-priced buses also left directly from the Marina section of Lagos Island for Mali by way of Burkina Faso. Malians from the mainland crossed the bridges to the island to catch transport and to convert currency at one of the Malian bureaus before and after trips to Mali. Since products were cheaper on the island than on the mainland, Malians also often came over to shop. When they did, they invariably dropped by one of the Malian businesses, which doubled as informal gathering spots. Most significantly, Lagos Island was the site of the primary diasporic community organization. Until 1978, the organization comprised an informal institution, after which the Malian government formalized it into The High Council of Malians Overseas.[15]

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[14] Interviews in Idumota, Lagos Island with Ibrahim Toloba on December 32, 2009 and with Amadu Camara on February 16, 2010; and fieldwork in Lagos in 2007 and 2009-10.

[15] Interviews in Idumota, Lagos Island in 2007 with Lassana Cisse on July 19; with Amadu Dembélé on July 30; and fieldwork in Lagos in 2007 and 2009-10.

Ethnicity in Malian Society and West African Diasporas

Ethnicity, although "merely a state of consciousness,"[16] constituted a core component of

Malian identity in the postindependence era. To understand the role ethnicity played in Malian

society during this period, whether homeland or diaspora, requires some historical context.

While Africans themselves developed the terms that became ethnonyms, French colonial

evolutionary theories of physical anthropology and civilization transformed these terms' original

meanings. The French, in turn, passed their interpretations back to Africans in colonial schools,

and reified them through differential treatment based on ethnicity. By independence, Malians

had absorbed the fundamental colonial view of ethnicity as representing bounded descent groups,

each sharing a genetically-determined set of common cultural traits.

The overarching ethnic classification "Mande" originally designated a region

encompassing northern Guinea and south-central Mali. Prior to colonization, the Mande people

comprised three economically-defined groups: farmers (sing. *hòròn*, pl. -*w*), specialized

professionals (*nyamakala* -*w*), and slaves. The Mande distinguished between first- and

subsequent-generation slaves (*jon* -*w* and *woloso* -*w*, respectively). Historians of West Africa

tentatively trace all of the foregoing social distinctions to the thirteenth-century founding of the

Mali Empire. The different categories comprised different clans, a few of which emerged from

the *hòrònw* as "noble," based on their historical leadership roles. The original rulers of the

Malian and Segovian Empires, the Keitas and Coulibalys, respectively, garnered the widest

recognition in that context. Clan clusters "own the rights to the arcane spiritual and

technological services" provided by each *nyamakala* profession—smith (*numu* –*w*), bard (*jeli* –

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[16] Jean-Francois Bayart, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity*, trans. Steven Rendall et al. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 22.

w), and leather-worker (*garanke –w*).[17] Wives of *numuw*, or of *jeliw* in some places, specialized

in pottery. Historians typically categorize the *nyamakalaw,* which in aggregate comprise an

estimated five percent of the Mande population, as castes.[18] *Nyamakalaw* consider themselves

separate races, and most other Mande concur.[19] Each of the three professions is hereditary and

endogamous, enforced internally and externally. The continuation of the taboo on intermarriage

into the twenty-first century hints at the fundamental difference between caste and ethnicity, as

taboos on intermarriage between most ethnic groups loosened considerably over the same

period.[20]

The precolonial groupings that the French transformed represented a variety of categories.

Terms for, and stereotypes of, ethnic groups centered in the area of Mali south of the Niger River

largely derived from groups north of the Niger, reflecting what Perinbam calls the "northern

paradigm, a mainly northern and Islamized construct that analogized southern families as the

'animist' Other." The Arabized Fulbe and Soninke acted as the primary translators for Arab

geographers prior to the seventeenth century, by that time resulting in the widespread use of

Fulfulde ethnonyms in Timbuktu. Among those later adopted by the French include the terms

"Wangara," "Mali," "Bambara," and "Malinke," the latter calling themselves "Bamana" and

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[17] Patick R. McNaughton, *The Mande Blacksmiths: Knowledge, Power, and Art in West Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 3.

[18] Estimates are specifically for the Bamana and Soninke populations, respectively, from M. Diop, *Histoire des Classes Sociales dans l'Africque de l'Ouest* (*Le Mali)* (Paris: Maspero, 1971), 47; Eric Pollet and Grace Winter, *La Societe Soninke* (Bruxelle: Éditions de l'Institut de Sociologie, Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1972), 218; both cited in Tal Tamari, "The Development of Caste Systems in West Africa," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (1991): 221-250, 224, fn 6.

[19] McNaughton, *The Mande Blacksmiths*, 3. McNaughton's *nyamakala* informants characterized their groups as both "nation" and *siw*--which he glosses as "race." The Mande term is probably somewhat ambiguous, as *siya* in *Bamanankan* is alternatively glossed as race, nation, tribe, or ethnic group. Nevertheless, the strength of the taboo and of beliefs about *nyamankalaw's* supernatural powers militate for the latter translation.

[20] The change remained incomplete and uneven, with some taboos retaining their power, notably between Dogon and Bozo.

"Mandinga," respectively.[21]   The history of the term "Bamana," alternatively rendered

"Banmana," and in French usage "Bambara," is intimately connected with the introduction of

Islam to West Africa, as it referred to the autochthonous peasants who retained indigenous

spiritual beliefs, in contrast with the conquering Muslims or the ruling classes who converted.

But, as "the term designated all the groups negatively defined by their relation to the dominant

classes," its meaning incorporated class, occupation, place of origin, and somatic characteristics.

Thus, Bamana designated not only pagan, but slave, autochthonous agriculturalist, and black—in

contrast to Muslim "whites," variously Arabs, Berbers, or Fula. Nevertheless, those to whom the

moniker was applied remained an amorphous subpopulation with "undetermined contours" until

amateur colonial physical anthropologists transformed it into a biologically-determined

"aboriginal" race. Adopting the Fulani's origin myth of migration from Egypt, the colonial

formulation held that the Fulani mixed with the Bambara to create the Markha (currently

understood as Soninke living in the Niger Bend)--all distinct "races." Later ethnographers

reconfigured these categories as ethnic groups, compiling dictionaries and proverb collections in

the corresponding languages to reify them.[22]

Other ethnonyms applied to populations south of the Niger similarly denoted both

profession and religion, the latter in some cases through the referenced group's supposed affinity

for *dolo*, or millet beer. (Allegations of this practice retained their potency as a jocular insult

among Malians into the twenty-first century.) According to the *Tarikh al-Fattash*, the Malinke

(southerner) and Wangara (northern Soninke) were of the same origin, but Malinke connoted a

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[21] B. Marie Perinbam, *Family Identity and the State in the Bamako Kafu, c. 1800-c. 1900* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 97, 110. The ethnonym "Maninka," literally "Mani people," that many anthropologists prefer derives from the precolonial town of "Mani," which produced a number of prominent families in Segou.

[22] Jean-Loup Amselle, *Mestizo Logics: Anthropology of Identity in Africa and Elsewhere*, trans. Claudia Royal (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 50.

beer-drinking warrior, while the Wangara (abstainer) connoted a long-distance trader.[23] "Dyula,

or "jula" was the Bamana term for trader, but later took on a secondary meaning designating the

particular group of traders who settled in Cote d'Ivoire, and later their descendents.[24] This group

began using the term to differentiate themselves from the host society, applying it to their

language as well. The French subsequently adopted from the Dyula the ethnonym "Senufo"

meaning "those who speak (*fo*) Senu—a corrupted version of "Siena-re," the Senufo's word for

their own language. Paradoxically, the Dyula more often called the Senufo "Banmana,"

denoting paganism, but both terms also retained their occupational senses.[25] Note, also, the

occupational element incorporated into the distinction between Bamana and the Sahelian whites,

which, along with language, formed the primary marker distinguishing the Fula, whose range of

skin color overlapped with the Bamana. Colonial taxonomies categorized Fula, like the other

Sahelian whites, as pastoralists; Bamana as agriculturalists. On the other hand, records of

economic and even military cooperation between factions within these two groups dates to Ibn

Battuta's fourteenth-century account of the region. As Spear and Waller point out in their

volume on Maasai pastoralist identity, such economic specialization can be constitutive of

symbiotic relations that create broader commonalities. In reconciling economically-based ethnic

differentiation with "high degrees of cultural homogeneity across different ethnic groups," the

authors argue that "the vagaries of pastoral economy" left pastoralists dependent on farmers to

"supplement their diet" and provide other assistance. "Such exchanges," they suggest, "took

place within established cultural modes that incorporated different peoples into common social

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[23] Perinbam, *Family Identity*, 108.

[24] Interview with Allesane Traoré in Idumota, Lagos Island on December 16, 2009.

[25] Robert Launay, *Traders without Trade: Responses to Change in Two Dyula Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 17.

institutions."[26] The long history of similar exchanges in the West African Sahel, I argue, has

created an analogous shared set of socio-cultural understandings.

Beyond trade-based commonalities, the peoples of the Western Sudan, including the

Mande, Fula, Songhai, Mosse, and Wolof, developed a tradition in the form of the *senenkunya*

ritual relationship ("joking cousins") that fit the colonially-derived ethnicities into local norms of

social interaction.[27] Gregory Mann, following Bird, observes that "such a practice would hardly

be necessary in insulated societies, and it testifies to a high degree of mobility and cultural

exchange" among groups in the area.[28] A *senenkunya* constituted an eternal contract between

two clans or ethnic groups, passed on from one generation to the next. Although, according to

some scholars, parties could initiate *senenkunyaw* through an exchange of blood, groups in

postindependence Mali modelled many of the most widely recognized *senenkuyaw* on their

perception of relations between their ancestors at the time of Sundiata, founder of the Mali

Empire. Malians based these perceptions on their interpretations of various events and

relationships depicted in *The Epic of Sundiata*, as related by griots (*jeliw*).[29] A *senenkunya*

obligated the parties to mutual assistance, including the exchange of services, and prohibited

killing or injuring members of the other party, which could involve proscribing war between

previous enemies. Some *senenkunyaw* prohibited intermarriage, or incorporated power relations

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[26] Thomas Spear and Richard Waller, ed., *Being Masaai: Ethnicity & Identity in East Africa* (London: James Curry Ltd., 1993), 2, 4.

[27] McNaughton, *Mande Blacksmiths*, 10; Perinbam, *Family Identity*, 165.

[28] Gregory Mann, "What's in an Alias? Family Names, Individual Histories, and Historical Method in the Western Sudan," *History in Africa*, Vol. 29 (2002): 309-320, 311.

[29] Nicholas S. Hopkins, "Maninka Social Organization," in *Papers on the Manding*, ed. Carleton T. Hodge, (Bloomington: Indiana University Publications, 1971), 99-128, 101. For a transcription of one jeli's performance of the epic in the 1960s, see Djibril Tamsir Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*, trans. G.D. Pickett (Harlow: Longman, 1994); regarding blood exchange, see Tamari, *The Development of Caste Systems*, 239.

by designating the parties as "junior" and "senior" brothers.[30] The most visible manifestation of *senenkunya* was the assignment of clan pairs as "joking cousins," a system that crossed ethnic boundaries. The innovation provided an overarching framework ordering the interactions between clans and between ethnic groups based on invented historical pacts and origin myths connecting them. Thus, while most Malians' identities were strongly connected to ethnicities crystallized by the French, the discourse that framed the meaning of these identities within the larger society was distinctly Sahelian. The social framework in which ethnicity operated was especially relevant in the Lagos diaspora because Malians from different backgrounds interacted frequently and in close quarters. Ethnicity was a constant topic of conversation, and *senenkunya* continuously deployed.

By reintroducing lines of communication and commonality, these understood links acted to break down the artificially rigid and impermeable boundaries between groups imposed by the French. Although primarily applied to clans, these alliances paired some ethnic groups directly, and affected all interethnic relations indirectly because they applied to pairs of clans in different groups. In effect, then, this system of links mediated relations among ethnic groups. Beyond proscribing violence, it promoted ongoing communication across ethnic boundaries and provided a standard framework within which to do so. The relatively low level of conflict among ethnic groups practicing *senenkunya* suggests its effectiveness. It is significant to note that the Tuareg, who led armed insurgencies in the 1990s and 2012, did not share this tradition. In their 2010 study of voting patterns in Mali, Dunning and Harrison present evidence that *senenkunya*, or "cousinage" in their translation, was a major factor in the weak effect of ethnicity on voting

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[30] Tamari, *The Development of Caste Systems*, 239; Tamari suggests that castes may have grown out of *senenkunya* incorporating power differentials; Perinbam, *Family Identity*, 164.

decisions in Mali. They find that "cousinage alliances counteract the negative impact of ethnic differences on candidate evaluations."[31]

The role of ethnicity is central to placing the Malian community in Lagos into its wider historical context, and to engagement with the scholarly literature on regional trade diasporas. Whereas the Malian trade diaspora was multiethnic from its inception in the 1960s, with one exception, all other previous and contemporaneous West African diasporas were ethnically homogeneous. The anomalous nature of the Malian diaspora's composition has wider significance and warrants a brief discussion of the comparable studies. I hasten to add that my choice of a national category of analysis did not teleologically produce this composition, rather the composition dictated the choice. I had originally set out to study a Malinke diaspora, based on my initial contacts, but the facts on the ground in Lagos made it clear that such a narrow focus would artificially separate out a fully integrated part of a cohesive community organized around nationality. A close examination of the other West African diasporas of the time suggests that a number of factors particular to their respective situations resulted in a single ethnic group conducting the trade from a socially segregated community. A set of factors common to all these recent diasporas, as well as their predecessors, comprised the difficulties of long-distance transportation and communication, and the related problem of trust and credit. The later date at which the subject diaspora originated meant that, in contrast, it could structure itself based on the improved transportation, communication, and financial conditions and technologies of the 1960s that solved the earlier problems more directly. Although overlapping in time, the structures of contemporaneous diasporas had been set when the manpower and trustworthiness of an extended kin group constituted the best solution to these problems. Once these logistical superstructures

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[31] Thad Dunning and Lauren Harrison, "Cross-Cutting Cleavages and Ethnic Voting: An Experimental Study of Cousinage in Mali," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 104, No. 1 (February 2010): 21-39, 22.

were deployed, they resisted dismantling, leaving the other diasporas ossified in an outmoded system.

The earliest West African trade diasporas were those of the "Wangara," denoting Maraka (sing. Marka) and Diakhanke traders whose home area was the inland Sahel. The Portuguese recorded Wangara enclaves on the Senegambian coast and at Elmina on the Gold Coast in the sixteenth century. Turning to extant groups, the Dyula, although settled in Ivoirian territory before the arrival of the French, as late as the 1950s maintained a degree of separation from their Senufo neighbors and retained a monopoly on their particular style of handwoven cloth. After World War I, some of these Dyula made a second migration to the south, where they established permanent ethnic settlements to work as agents in the kola trade. Dyula weavers set up their looms there and traded cloth for kola.[32] The Dyula thus set a general template for their Malian cousins a few decades later, who similarly immigrated to Lagos to become agents, but also secured work as tailors due to Nigerian demand for Malian designs.[33]

Other regional diasporas were contemporaneous with, and economically similar to, the Malian diaspora, yet, like the Dyula, were organized around common ethnicity. Just as the first members of the Malian diaspora were arriving in Nigeria, Abner Cohen was conducting his influential study of Hausa migrant traders living in the Sabo section of Ibadan.[34] Despite being an internal migration, the Hausa in Ibadan shared a number of salient characteristics with the Malians in nearby Lagos. Both communities comprised northern Sahelian Muslims who started communities in Yoruba host societies to engage in long-distance trade between the diaspora and homeland. Both were also in major urban centers that acted as nodes in more extensive trade

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[32] Launay, *Traders without Trade*, on Wangara, 1-2, on Dyula, 81.

[33] Interviews in Lagos in 2010 with Issa Tambura on March 7, and Moussa Diallo on February 11; and fieldwork in Lagos 2007 and 2009-10.

[34] Abner Cohen, *Custom and Politics*, Preface, xxv.

networks comprising communities in other Nigerian cities. Significantly, the two networks

overlapped in Ibadan, where, like Cohen, I did fieldwork in Sabo. The quarter was originally a

zongo—an area designated by municipal governments in the south as mandatory Hausa ghettos.

The city appointed a prominent Hausa landlord as *Sarkin Hausawa* to be responsible for all

zongo residents, and to be the official liaison with the municipal government.[35] However,

nationalist movements and postwar constitutional reforms spawned the Nigerian Federal politics

of the 1950s, featuring national political parties that sought to recruit from all ethnic groups, and

associated "tribalism" with the colonial regime. These politics influenced the Ibadan Local

Authorities, which stopped supporting "tribal areas" like *zongos*, in 1952.[36] In the same year,

Sabo residents shifted their observance of Friday midday prayer from the Yoruba Ibadan Central

Mosque to the Sabo Central Mosque. The move to ritual autonomy capped off the community's

virtually wholesale conversion in under two years from largely nonobservant Sunni Islam to

strict Tijaniyya practice. In Cohen's analysis, when Sabo lost its status as Ibadan's *zongo*, the

Hausa lost the political organization and cohesion necessary to preserve their monopoly over the

cattle and kola nut trade, the community's *raison d'être*. He sees the mass conversion as a

means of revitalizing the trading community's exclusivity and power. The corresponding

network of Tijaniyya mallams—Islamic teachers—formed the core of a new political

organization. Thus, the community reorganized around shared religious observance. Despite

continuing to represent itself in ethnic terms, Islamic purity constituted the community's new

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[35] Ibid., 9.

[36] Ibid., 12-13.

defining principle.[37] As I discuss in Chapter 5, Malians in Lagos similarly incorporated Sufi

Islam as an element of political identity.

Cohen makes clear that the connection between ethnicity and trade in the case of the

Hausa cattle and kola commerce was the product of specific "preindustrial conditions" of the

time within that trade sector, which presented particular technical problems that vertical control

by a single ethnic group could solve.[38] Despite being contemporaneous, the Malian trade from

Nigeria was decidedly not preindustrial. In its earliest incarnation, Malians transported trade

goods—mostly manufactured products like car parts—by plane. In comparison, the Hausa

generally moved their cattle on the hoof, despite a rail connection.

Whereas the Hausa migrants shared a Yoruba host society with the Malians, the Yoruba

themselves formed an extensive regional trade diaspora that overlapped in time with its Malian

counterpart. Although the Yoruba diaspora in Ghana developed before World War I,

anthropologist J.S. Eades conducted a study of the vast network immediately before its

dissolution in 1969, when the Ghanaian government expelled all aliens lacking proper

documents. In another nice bit of symmetry, both my and Eades's studies focus on Lagosians, as

the Ghanaians applied that label indiscriminately to all Yoruba migrants. The Yoruba operated

stalls in markets throughout the country, from Accra to small rural towns in the north. Eades

conducted his fieldwork in the northern town of Tamale, where Yoruba comprised a third of the

traders. Like both the Hausa and Malian diasporas, the community in Tamale formed part of a

wider network of Yoruba trading communities throughout Ghana. Through chain migration, the

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[37] Ibid., move to Sabo Central Mosque, 153; wholesale conversion, 150; Hausa exclusiveness threatened by end of Indirect Rule, 162-3; conversion to maintain distinctiveness, 161; mallams as principal channel of political communication, 165; Islamic purity, 156.

[38] Ibid., 20.

Yoruba in each town comprised at most a handful of groups, each predominantly kin from the same town in Nigeria.

The similarities between Yoruba and Malian diasporas in many features are striking. The migrants remained connected to their hometowns and, analogous to the Malians, "the eventual aim of nearly all the migrants was to retire to Nigeria, after having built a house there, to assume the responsibilities of age in their own descent group."[39] The Yoruba in Ghana were highly opportunistic and flexible in selecting commodities to trade, notably including goods they imported themselves, goods imported by international corporations, and locally sourced items. However, traditional Yoruba cloth, *aşo oke*, was the most important commodity traded in the Ghanaian diaspora until the 1950s, and in this commodity the Yoruba, like the Hausa, maintained vertically-integrated operations. Despite the similarity in economic structure, the ethnic-specific manufacture highlights the different set of factors that led to the ethnic bases of the two diasporas. The Yoruba migrants constituted a chain diaspora that came about as a result of the need to rapidly mobilize a large labor force. In the early twentieth century, mobilization occurred under the same "preindustrial conditions" as the Hausa trade. Head-porters were needed to transport the *aşo oke* from the coast to northern Ghana. "The labor of junior relatives was an effective solution to the problem of transport where roads were poor and wheeled transport was at first non-existent." In subsequent periods, senior traders drew from the same labor pool to bicycle goods to outlying markets.[40] Although both Yoruba and Hausa diasporas were ethnically exclusive, the roles ethnicity played differed. Whereas the Hausa mobilized around common ethnicity to exclude others from their trade, the Yoruba merely had "better

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[39] Eades, *Strangers and Traders*, 64.

[40] Ibid., 177-8.

access to capital, labour and information than members of other ethnic groups."[41] Rather than

sharing a common religion that reinforced ethnic solidarity, the Yoruba--even within single

towns in Ghana--split into Christian and Muslim factions. Moreover, whereas Islam in the

Hausa diaspora became a means of reducing interaction with the host society, it reinforced

instrumental links between Yoruba and Ghanaian coreligionists. Despite these myriad

differences, however, what these diasporas had in common was that their respective ethnic

exclusivity was a product of the particular characteristics of their respective markets. The

markets in which the Malians were operating bore no resemblance to those of the Ghanaian

Yoruba, the principal difference being that the Yoruba in Ghana were selling goods to the host

society, while the Malians in Lagos were overwhelmingly buying goods from the host society for

export. The Malians transported commodities only between major urban centers; they were

generally not involved in diffusing products out to smaller settlements. More important, the

diaspora in Lagos was not a legacy of preindustrial trade. Prior to the advent of air transport,

there was little direct trade in manufactured goods between Lagos and Mali. The rudimentary

road system between the two capitals at that time made commercial transport somewhat

impractical. Traders transported imported goods from Dakar, primarily on the Dakar-Niger

Railway, and from Abidjan.

　　　The Yoruba were not the only outsiders to start filtering into the Gold Coast at the turn of

the twentieth century. The Mossi emigration from what became Upper Volta also began at that

time, and grew into an extensive network of diasporic communities that, like its Yoruba

counterpart, survived intact into the independence era. Enid Schildkrout's mid-1960s study of

this immigrant population encompasses both labor and trade diasporas, in both rural and urban

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[41] Ibid., 172.

settings. Nevertheless, her primary focus, like Cohen, is a Hausa-dominated *zongo*, in this case

that in Kumasi, the primary trade hub for central Ghana. This diasporic community's

participation in trade, however, differed from that of the Ibadan Hausa because "no ethnic group

within the *zongo* has ever been able to attain a monopoly of any sphere of trade."[42]

The role of ethnicity in the Mossi diaspora is somewhat ambiguous, and falls somewhere

between ethnicity's central place in the Hausa and Yoruba diasporas, and its minor function as a

divisive force within the Malian diaspora. The ambiguity derives from the situational nature of

identity in the context of nested groups, as the Mossi community was contained within the *zongo*.

Whereas Nigerian towns originally established such neighborhoods exclusively for the Hausa,

"the distinction between northerners and the Asante has always overshadowed cultural

differences between immigrants" in Ghana. Hence, in Kumasi, "[f]rom its inception the *zongo*

has been ethnically heterogeneous."[43] While the Mossi retained their ethnic identity, over time,

they increasingly assimilated culturally and politically into the larger diaspora. Inverting its role

in Ibadan, Islam acted as the "explicit integrative ideology."[44] I argue that Islam played a similar,

if more implicit, role among Malians in Lagos. Thus, the Kumasi *zongo* anticipated the Malian

community in Lagos in its ethnic heterogeneity and, to some extent, its principle of cohesion.

The two diasporas nevertheless contrasted in that the Kumasi *zongo* comprised strangers from all

colonies—and later nations, whereas the Lagos diaspora comprised strangers from a single

nation. Zongo residents' primary identification, however, began to shift with Ghana's

independence in 1957, introducing the dichotomy between citizens and aliens into the stranger

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[42] Enid Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo: The Transformation of Ethnic Identities in Ghana* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 16.

[43] Ibid., 265.

[44] Nevertheless, as Schildkrout points out, [i]n admitting the principle of unilineal descent, the ideology of Islam accepts ascription into ethnic communities." Ibid., 269.

community. Schildkrout explicitly links the consequent possibility of deportation with *zongo* aliens' formation of national associations, offering "protection by giving rights to citizenship outside Ghana."[45] Thus, the legal establishment of the state immediately affected patterns of association on the ground. State formation forced new identities onto citizens and aliens alike that provided new points of commonality. Regardless of whether "Ghana" was an artificial construct or not, these new identities brought with them enormous practical repercussions. The nation-state reified itself through enforcing its borders, implicit in which was enforcing the distinction between citizen and alien. Inverting Anderson's formula, the hitherto cohesive community of the zongo began dividing into imagined enclaves based on that distinction in advance of any government nationalizing strategies.

When Upper Volta won independence in 1960, the new country's consulate in Accra organized the Mossi and other Voltaic expatriate groups into the Upper Volta Union (UVU), and sought to "discourage all manifestations of 'tribalism.'"[46] Similarly, the Malian government took an active hand in promoting unity across ethnic lines among its citizens in Nigeria, most visibly in the first phrase of its tripartite national motto: *Un peuple, un but, une foi* (one people, one goal, one faith).

In some ways, the Malian diaspora represented a merging of its ethnic forbears. Many of the ethnic groups represented in the community, notably the Malinke and Soninke, had long histories of trade and labor diasporas. Thus, Manchuelle's study of Soninke labor diasporas, which leaves off at independence, provides not only a comparable case study, but a direct antecedent of the Malian diaspora in postindependence Lagos. Significantly, the city figures into the Soninke's "reversion" to trade in the Belgian and French Congos. Although those diasporas

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[45] Ibid., 271.

[46] Ibid., 219.

began at the turn of the nineteenth century, around two thousand Soninke lived in Zaire's urban

centers during the 1960s. Kinshasa- and Brazzaville-based Soninke traders traveled to Lagos to

buy low-priced indigenous Yoruba cloth and imported Dutch wax cloth, which were in high

demand in the Congos.[47] These trade diasporas intersected with their Malian counterpart, as

Malian and other Francophone traders from Kinshasa and Brazzaville represented one of the

largest contingents staying at Malian hotels and hiring Malian agents during the heyday of the

Malian diaspora in Lagos. Note that northeastern Mali, including the urban centers of Nioro du

Sahel and Kayes, is part of the homeland for Manchuelle's diaspora.[48] Moreover, while

Manchuelle uses ethnicity as his category of analysis, he cautions that "the ethnic boundaries of

this migration were and remain fluid: Islamic and merchant networks linked Soninke, Jaxanke,

and Mande in precolonial times, and clan ties often extend to other ethnic groups."[49] Like the

Mossi in Kumasi, the Soninke in Kinshasa were part of a wider West African Muslim migrant

community that included a large contingent of Hausa, and "whose identity centered around

Islam." The same was true in Brazzaville. Anticipating the Malian community in Lagos, the

Kinshasa Soninke "believed" that the migration began with a single identifiable personage.[50]

The Soninke diasporas prefigured many characteristics of their Malian "descendant." The

chambre, a "fundamental institution of Soninke migration," combined the functions of several

core Malian institutions in Lagos. Like the hostels I discuss below, it "provided cheap

communal housing and food," as well as a place to meet and swap hometown news or exchange

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[47] Manchuelle, *Willing Migrants*, 194-5.

[48] Ibid., map frontispiece; note shaded area in Mali.

[49] Ibid., 221.

[50] Ibid., 195.

information about employment opportunities. Like the Malian associations, it "provided support

for the unemployed, but also an emergency fund for illness and repatriation" to the homeland.[51]

Occupational Specialization in Intraregional Trade

Malians started coming to the commercial center of the city in 1963 specifically because

they sought work in trade between Nigeria and Mali; hence, the purchasing agent represented the

quintessential vocation of the Malian trade diaspora. The agent was responsible for coordinating

the complete range of services necessary to make the trader's purchase, as well as to ensure that

the purchased goods arrived intact at their destination. Malians in Lagos began specializing in

providing each of these support services. This commercial focus led to the development and

proliferation within the Malian community on Lagos Island of four types of business that were

necessary to support this intraregional trade: informal foreign exchange bureaus; lodges, or

dorm-style hostels; transport companies; and freight forwarders.[52] Such businesses were not

commonly integral parts of other Malian communities in either Lagos or the larger Malian

diasporic network because their occupational focus was not Mali-bound trade. I examine the

social dynamics surrounding each of these business types below.[53]

Traders expected agents to provide post-purchase services. Following the completion of

the transaction, the agent arranged for the goods to be transported from point of purchase to a

shipping agent or freight forwarder. Shipping agents repackaged the goods so that they were not

damaged or dispersed during shipping, and then arranged for them to be shipped to Mali or

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[51] Ibid., 215.

[52] Interviews in Idumota, Lagos Island with Amadu Dembélé on July 7, 2010; and Ibrahim Toloba on December 23, 2009.

[53] Interviews in Idumota during 2007 with Lassana Cisse on August 14 and Wakari Bagayogo on August 14; and field during 2007 and 2009-10.

numerous other cities where Malians lived.[54] In the 1960s and 70s, most of these goods were

shipped by airfreight for several reasons. Even as recently as the late 1980s, no major road

connected the West African coastal road to the Dakar-Burkina-Algeria road. The portion of the

overland route from Lomé through Ouagadougou consisted of minor arteries.[55] Overland

transport was thus difficult, time consuming, and expensive. In contrast, to meet the demand for

distributing imported goods from the port to major inland markets, Lagos during that period

boasted a robust airfreight market, with multiple carriers offering connections throughout West

and Central Africa by the 1980s. Nigerian Airlines itself had thirty planes in 1983.[56] Malians

started several different firms providing freight forwarding services, each with offices in

downtown Idumota. Malian purchasing agents arranged to have goods transported to these

offices by hiring vans, if the goods were either not in Idumota or could not be carried, or by

donitakelew (head-porters), otherwise. At the shipping agents' offices, Malian youths doing

piecework "tied" shipments. "Tying" involved removing individual goods from their original

packaging, taping and tying them into bundles, placing the bundles into rice bags in stable

arrangements, banding the rice bags with twine to avoid shifting, and sewing them shut.

Shipping agents hired taxis to bring the goods to the airport, where they placed them on flights to

their clients' home bases. In the 1960s and 70s, Malian shipping agents chartered flights to

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[54] Interview with Amadu Dembélé in Idumota on July 31, 2007; and fieldwork in 2007 and 2009-10.

[55] Julius Emeka Okolo, "Obstacles to Increased Intra-Ecowas Trade," *International Journal*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Winter, 1988/1989): 171-21, 191, 194.

[56] UTA, Air Sebena, Air Afrique, Ethiopia Air, Air Gabon, Air Mali, Air Guinea, Air Burkina, Cameroun Air, Nigeria Airways, Kabo, Intercontinental, and Ghana Airways all maintained regularly scheduled flights. Interview with Modibo Coulibaly at Ebute Ero Market, Lagos Island on April 2, 2010; and *The Daily Times* (Lagos, Nigeria), January 22, 1983, 1; January 26, 1983, 3; and February 3, 1983, 5. Only Ethiopia Air and UTA--by then subsumed by Air France--were still operating in the early twenty-first century.

Bamako on a regular basis. In a counterintuitive progression, however, in 1990, trucks began

displacing airfreight as the dominant mode of transport between the diaspora and homeland.[57]

From 1979 through 1983, traders could only ship goods out of Lagos by road in small

trucks, which would unload the shipments at Igolo, on the border near Cotonou. At Igolo, the

trader would have to look for one of the seven-to-ten-ton trucks available to transport the

shipment the remaining way on the single route through Lomé and Upper Volta to Mali. Direct

transport became available in 1983, when Malians Seydou Diagne, Tiemoko Wandi Traoré, and

Bakori Diabate each started trucking companies, leasing space at the Ebute Ero Motor Park in

Idumota between Bridge Street and Lagos Harbor, on the Western shore of Lagos Island.

Diagne handled goods moving to Koutiala and Sikasso, Traoré took shipments to Bamako and

Sikasso, while Diabate served only Bamako. All three companies rented trucks from Ghana

through Diabate's contacts there. Only these companies transported goods overland to Mali at

that time, and they shipped exclusively to Mali. Each destination country was served only by

companies run by its own citizens.[58] Nevertheless, the bulk of shipments continued to move out

of Lagos by plane for the remainder of the decade. By 1990, though, increases in the price of

airfreight and in the quality of the road system connecting Lagos and Mali finally worked in

tandem to displace air with overland transport as the dominant mode. Trucks diverted freight

from the airlines, eventually driving most out of business. With the increased freight volume, the

trucking companies paid young Malian men on a piece-work basis to tie shipments onsite. In the

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[57] Interviews in Idumota, Lagos Island with Ibrahim Toloba on December 23, 2009 and Amadu Dembélé on July 7, 2010.

[58] Interview with Lassana Cisse at the offices of the High Council, Offin, Lagos Island, on July 19, 2007.

evening, and between jobs, the youths transformed the tiny leased plots into spaces for socializing.[59]

From Seku's Parlor to Abdourahmane's Office: Leadership, Community Organizations, and Governance in the Diaspora

Prior to 1979, no formal organization in Lagos represented the greater Malian community in interactions with Nigerian authorities, on the one hand, and the Malian government, on the other. Seku Sidibe, the consensus community leader, called community meetings when issues arose. Starting in 1978, these meetings took place at his house on Apapa Road in the Oyingbo section of the mainland, just across the Eko Bridge. Sidibe personally took action to solve community problems, which often involved intervening at the police station. He also acted as the conduit through which all communications with the Malian Embassy in Ghana passed. It was in Sidibe's home that the Malian ambassador to Ghana stayed on his initial trip to Lagos.[60]

The trip, which took place in 1979, marked a watershed moment in the history of the diaspora, when twenty-five local leaders met with the ambassador at Sidibe's house to discuss the community's problems. During his stay, the ambassador oversaw the creation of the Malian Committee and the election of Abdourahmane Diallo as its first president. He also oversaw the first absentee voting in Lagos for a presidential election in Mali, supplying ballots, which consisted of pictures of each candidate so that illiterate citizens could participate.[61] Underlining

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[59] Interviews in Idumota, Lagos Island with Seydou Barry on February 2, 2010; and with Modibo Coulibaly on February 3, 2010.

[60] Interview with Lassana Cisse in Idumota, Lagos Island on March 25, 2010; and with Talibe Sidibe in Surulere, Lagos on July 16, 2010.

[61] Interviews in Agege, Lagos on January 10, 2010 with Abdoulay Kassogue, Musa Bathily, and Suleiman Giptele; and separately with Amadu Coulibaly. Although the communities have remained largely self-contained social enclaves into the twenty-first century, there were a number of individuals from the Dogon community who maintained a regular presence in the Idumota community, in addition to the formal representation on Malian governing bodies. These Dogon intermediaries were primarily small-scale exporters who purchased goods in Idumota and used one of the Malian freight forwarders to prepare and transport them to Mali.

the official nature of this act, Nigerian immigration officers witnessed the election in their

official capacities. After the election, some Dogon in Agege heard a Nigerian radio broadcast in

which a reporter interviewed Diallo in Hausa at the Bristol Hotel. The event marked another

turning point, as it represented the moment the Dogon community became aware of the greater

Malian diaspora in Lagos. Nevertheless, the Dogon continued to contact the Ghanaian Embassy

directly until 1984. The Malian Committee was the first organization designed to represent the

interests of all members of the diaspora in dealing with their government. By 1983, it had

incorporated into its structure the existing voluntary region-based associations representing

members of the diaspora from Segou, Kita, Nioro, and Kayes, which each began sending two

representatives to committee meetings. The Dogon association started participating the

following year. The Committee's primary function was to act as a liaison between the diaspora

and the Malian government, as represented by the Malian Embassy in Ghana. Diallo, as

president, communicated directly with the ambassador regarding government business. Most

communication involved procuring documentation for individual citizens. The ambassador sent

Diallo completed passports, temporary travel papers, or other identification documentation in the

specific individual's name.[62]

    The relationship, however, went beyond such bureaucratic tasks. When the diaspora

faced problems that he could not solve, Diallo contacted the ambassador to Ghana, who on

several occasions met in Lagos with the Nigerian Minister for Foreign Affairs on such matters.

These problems typically involved Nigerians committing criminal acts against Malians, which

resulted in the ambassador accompanying a delegation of Malian residents to the police station to

demand an investigation. When, for example, a Nigerian killed a Malian in the early 1980s, the

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[62] Interview with Abdourahmane Diallo in Kano, Nigeria on March 17, 2010. Abdourahmane Diallo ran a warifali bureau, and initially lived on Eriko St. [in Idumota], but later moved to Apapa Road, like Seku Ba. Interview with Lamine Kante in Idumota, Lagos Island on January 27, 2009.

ambassador spent three days in Lagos to ensure that the Nigerian authorities were aware of the government of Mali's concerns. The killer went to prison, a testament to the efficacy of these diplomatic interventions.[63]

From its founding in 1979, the High Council of Malians Overseas acted as a *de facto* consulate, providing assistance of all kinds to local Malian residents. The services its officers proffered to fellow citizens, whether permanent members of the community, transients, or new arrivals, comprised everything from providing official Malian government travel documents to getting the subject out of jail. In fact, the most widely known and respected member of the High Council in the community was not the president, who was often sojourning in Mali, but the Consul for Conflict Resolution, who acted as the council's "fixer." He knew most of the local police, bureaucrats, and politicians personally, and was extremely adept at gaining the release of his compatriots from incarceration—a skill he had more occasion to demonstrate than might be supposed. Beyond such liaison functions, the Council served as an umbrella group for all private Malian voluntary associations in the metropolitan area. As such, it functioned as a meta-association, focusing on the same missions and raising revenue to implement them in the same way as most voluntary associations. The council helped Malians in need with medical bills, funeral bills, repatriation of both living and dead Malians, and sustenance on some occasions. It collected modest dues from its members at its monthly meetings. Its members were the representatives of more exclusive voluntary associations, basing membership on origin region or ethnicity.[64]

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[63] Interview with Lassana Cisse in Idumota, Lagos Island on July 19, 2007.

[64] Interview with Abesina Dabo in Idumota, Lagos Island on February 9, 2010; and with Ibrahim Toloba in Ebute-Ero, Lagos Island, on January 7, 2010; and fieldwork in Lagos in 2007 and 2009-10.

In 2002, the Ministry of Malians Overseas conducted absentee voting for another presidential election, which was highly successful in revitalizing ties both between the diaspora and homeland and among the various enclaves within the Lagos diaspora. The High Council's well-respected Secretary for Conflict Resolution, Tiemoko Coulibaly, visited Agege to prepare the Dogon community for the election. Each member, including children, filled out voter information forms sent from Mali, which the council then sent back. The candidates in Bamako sent campaign materials to their representatives in Idumota, who passed a portion along to their contacts in Agege. Party operatives distributed free T-shirts, posters, and calendars in the Dogon community. On the Saturday designated for absentee voting, Secretary Coulibaly returned with a ballot box, an illustrated list of candidates, and ballot papers. Local representatives of all parties passed out instructions prior to the voting. A canopy covered the portion of the street where people stood in line to vote between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Two Nigerian immigration officers and one policeman sat near the ballot box to verify that only Malians were voting. Each voter imprinted her fingerprint next to the face of the candidate of her choice and placed the ballot paper into a glass ballot box measuring a foot and a half tall and two feet square. The well-organized logistics and elaborate provisions for absentee voting indicated the importance the Malian government attached to these civic rituals. The high turnout attested to the success of the event in generating interest in homeland politics among members of the diaspora. More fundamentally, these interventions in the lives of Malians in Lagos illustrated the state's active role in maintaining a robust relationship between diaspora and homeland.[65]

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[65] Interview with Abdoulay Kassogue, Musa Bathily, and Suleiman Giptele in Agege, Lagos on January 10, 2010.

Coming into the Country: Life on the Street and Elsewhere

The modern diaspora developed in a more haphazard way than its historical antecedents in West Africa, depending less on chain migration. Many Malians who ended up living in Lagos had initially migrated for economic reasons to ports in one of the coastal countries adjacent to Mali: Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, or Togo. When those markets went into economic downturns, Malians sought new opportunities farther afield, often based on first- or second-hand information gleaned from Malians passing through their communities. All of these factors contributed to the diversity of Lagos diaspora, which exceeded that of previous such settlements.[66]

Several factors exacerbated the impromptu nature of the community. Nigeria's systems of customs and immigration control, both formal and informal, tended to trap Malians in Lagos who had been intending to travel on to other destinations. We can get some idea of the difficulties immigrants faced in earlier years by examining the border conditions as they existed in 2005, when I first travelled through the area. At Seme, the southernmost border post between Benin and Nigeria, <u>after</u> being cleared by customs and immigration, immigrants during my fieldwork faced a 200-meter gauntlet of roadblocks every ten meters or so, each manned by a different government agency demanding fees of one sort or another. Even after running this gauntlet, numerous other roadblocks—of various levels of legitimacy--dotted the road into Lagos, most manned by armed guards who inspected the travellers' papers, and demanded penalty fees for alleged technical errors. Consequently, many Malians arrived in Lagos with funds depleted beyond their expectations. Considering that most emigrants were relocating because they had

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[66] Interviews with Mamdu Sidibe in Idumota, Lagos Island on January 30, 2010; and with Magan Keita in Idumota, Lagos Island on March 15, 2010. The information that Malians received from passing travelers tended to be unduly optimistic, as returning migrants were reluctant to admit they had little to show for their years abroad. As a result, relocating Malians were naive regarding the costs they would incur crossing borders, including both customs duties and bribes.

been unable to accumulate sufficient wealth in their previous location, such unexpected expenses were often enough to curtail travel on to their final destination.[67]

Even when the new arrivals had the means to continue on, they often did not because Malians residing in Lagos often offered new, less promising, information about their destinations. For example, men who had originally intended to settle in Gabon during the early 1980s learned that overland travel was extremely challenging; others who had originally planned on opening *butikis* (stores) in Congo-Brazzaville after 1997 learned that Malian stores had recently been ransacked. Many of these migrants were from small towns, and therefore not familiar with the requirements for navigating customs outside of West Africa. Naiveté also aborted many plans for working in Europe and even North Africa. I heard a number of stories in which a Malian was allowed to fly to France, but then was turned away at de Gaulle Airport and sent back on the next flight. Many other Malians paid intermediaries to obtain plane tickets and visas that never materialized. In combination, these contingencies contributed to a substantial subpopulation of stranded *aventuriers*, who had not planned on living and working in Lagos. The accidental immigrants often began their stays on the street.

In the 1960s, virtually all Malian immigrants to Lagos were single men. The pattern continued in the 1970s, although marriage with Nigerian women became more common. The 1980s saw an increase in the number of married men in the diaspora, but from 1981 through 1984 most left their wives in Mali because of increased anti-foreigner violence. During that interval, the local gangs known as "Area Boys" beat Malians "for nothing," simply because they "didn't want foreigners" in Nigeria.[68] The precise period that informants cited for the increase in

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[67] Interview with Dauda Berthe in Idumota, Lagos Island on April 23, 2010; and fieldwork in Seme and Lagos, Nigeria during 2007 and 2009-10.

[68] Interview with Lassana Keita in Idumota, Lagos Island on February 19, 2010.

such incidents coincided with the collapse of the world market for oil, and with it the Nigerian economy. As I explore more fully in the following chapter, such street-level action against foreigners reflected a society-wide anti-immigrant sentiment that the government fomented through the popular press. The public relations campaign amounted to scapegoating, as the government sought to redirect blame for the economic disaster. Although unmarried males remained in the majority even into the twenty-first century, the number of married men, women, and families in the diaspora increased after the 1980s. Before 1973, when Seku Sidibe opened the first Malian hostel in Lagos, if the newly-arrived knew somebody already living in the city, they typically stayed with that person, usually in a one-room apartment on an upper floor of a multi-story building with intermittent electricity and without running water. Many immigrants, however, had no local contacts. Those who came alone, or with one or two friends, lived on the streets, along with immigrants from other countries and other parts of Nigeria.

A significant percentage of Malians arriving in Idumota in all periods experienced life on the street, with some unable to afford an apartment for years after they arrived. By drawing on the accounts of a number of such immigrants who arrived during the late 1980s and early 1990s, we can develop a detailed picture of the typical street lifestyle during that period.[69] I witnessed the same pattern during my fieldwork, nearly two decades later, despite the drying up of public pipe stands to supply water. All of these marginalized newcomers followed a similar daily routine, waiting until the shops closed at day's end, and then occupying storefronts for the night. Shops in Idumota of the time typically had wooden tables that migrants used as beds, and awnings that protected them from the rain. For the first few days, new arrivals bought prepared

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[69] Informants contributing to this portrait included Magan Traoré, who arrived in 1987 (interviewed in Idumota, Lagos Island, on March 15, 2010); Bakari Diarra, 1988 (interviewed in Idumota, Lagos Island, on February 12, 2010); Tiemoko Diarra, 1989 (interviewed in Idumota, Lagos Island, on May 3, 2010); Nama Keita, 1990 (inerviewed in Idumota, Lagos Island, on March 6, 2010 ; Ali Diarra, 1991 (interviewed at the High Council, Offin, on January 17, 2010); and Khalifa Diarra, 1994.

food from one of the street vendors for the evening meal. After that, most men purchased a small charcoal stove, a pot, and a few utensils to cook *àmàlà* (yam pudding) or rice. Often, a group of men who slept on adjacent stoops shared the expense, each man owning a single piece of the culinary ensemble. Malians tended to form such impromptu groups with immigrants from other Francophone countries because of their common language. The group jointly bought ingredients and ate supper together, transforming a furtive act of survival into a convivial occasion for conversation. In addition to cooking paraphernalia, each Malian typically owned a prayer mat, woven from strips cut from rice bags, which doubled as a sleeping mat. Migrants also disassembled cardboard boxes to use as mattresses. Until 2002, when the main pipeline bringing water onto Lagos Island from the mainland broke, there were public pipe stands where one could fill buckets of water in many locations throughout the island. Street dwellers brought water back from these stands to cook and wash with.[70]

Each working day, the men woke at dawn, rolled up their mats, and tossed all their belongings onto the top of the stores' awnings, before the shopkeepers arrived for the day. Most Malians living on the street bought a small bowl of *àmàlà,* a Yoruba staple*,* from one of the street vendors for breakfast, and then started work. For newcomers on the street, this usually meant *donita*--carrying market goods. This was "piecework," meaning that the worker was paid for each piece carried. The porter, or *donitakela*, carried goods on a one-inch-thick plank, about a yard long and a foot wide, with one-by-one-inch strips nailed across each end. He placed this plank on his head, cushioned by a piece of cloth arranged in a circle. Whomever was shipping the goods, often a truck driver, stacked as many units as could reasonably be balanced on the plank, and the *donitakela* carried them to a shop, usually located within a several-block radius.

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[70] Interviews with Khalifa Diarra in Idumota, Lagos Island on July 18, 2007; Issa Tambura in Idumota, Lagos Island on April 4, 2010; Nama Keita in Idumota, Lagos Island on March 6, 2010; and Tiemoko Diarra in Idumota, Lagos Island on April 11, 2010.

For those unable to find such work, market committees or informal groups of shopkeepers paid other Malians on an *ad-hoc* basis to keep the streets clean, using a traditional broom of twigs to sweep trash, garbage, and debris into a large woven basket. A few Malians were able to obtain higher-paying jobs as day-laborers on a construction sites.[71]

If a Malian expected to live on the streets in the same area for a more than a few nights, he would usually get to know the proprietor of the shop that he was planning to sleep in front of, and ask his permission to stay there. The request was typically granted because the presence of a person in front of the shop at night discouraged theft. The Malians benefitted from the shopkeeper knowing who they were, and whose belongings were on the awnings. In the latter regard, informants uniformly agreed that it was extremely rare that anyone molested this unattended property during the day.[72]

Some immigrants found novel ways to live without paying rent. One Malian who was a skilled mason, was able to live from 1984 through 1989 in the partially-completed buildings he was working on. Starting as a day laborer on a project in Idumota, he was able to continue working for the same firm over a number of years, eventually earning the trust of the Yoruba owner. As a result, he had the run of whatever site the firm was working on, and could sleep and store his belongings there.[73]

Whether living on the street or in a friend or relative's apartment, the immediate goal of all Malian newcomers in Lagos was to earn enough to rent their own apartments. Some were able to find higher-paying work for going concerns, but most became small entrepreneurs. Migrants accumulated capital by setting aside tiny amounts of cash each day. When the cache

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[71] Interviews with Ali Diarra in Idumota, Lagos Island on March 29, 2010; and Mamadu Sidibe in Idumota, Lagos Island on January 30, 2010.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Interview with Lassana Keita in Idumota, Lagos Island on February 19, 2010

was sufficient, migrants bought a small inventory of inexpensive consumables and/or consumer goods, which they sold for a modest markup on the street. The goods typically included penny-candy; cigarettes; cookies; AA and AAA batteries; three-ounce boxes of loose tea; and single-serving packets of coffee, cocoa, and powdered milk. Street trading usually involved setting up a makeshift table at a given location on given days of the week. Selecting a location required balancing the level of competition, the amount of pedestrian traffic, and the rental price for the space. If a Malian set up a table on the street in front of any privately-owned building, the proprietors of the shops or the adjacent tables, or the residents, would charge him for using that space. Even if he set up his table in front of a government building or a vacant lot, Area Boys would be likely to charge him, as a stranger, for using what they considered "their" territory.[74]

Other Malians worked as tailors, or took up *fini gala*, or "tie-dying" clothes. The dyer bought raw cloth at a low price, tie-dyed it, and sold it for a higher price. Guineans, who were heavily involved in the business, and often lived in immigrant neighborhoods alongside Malians, taught this skill to their Malian neighbors. One such neighborhood was the informal settlement on Maroko Beach, memorialized in Wole Soyinka's *Beatification of Area Boy*.[75] In addition to low rents, Maroko provided access to open space on the beach, where one could dye and dry the cloth. The dyer transported the finished products across town to Idumota, where he sold them at a markup. A significant number of the earliest Malian settlers lived in Maroko until 1990, when it was demolished. The ostensible reason for the action was that the site was subject to severe flooding, but the tract ended up as a development of mansions for the ultra-rich.[76]

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[74] Interviews with Abesina Dabo in Idumota, Lagos Island on December 15, 2009; and Allesane Traoré in Idumota, Lagos Island on December 16, 2009.

[75] Wole Soyinka, *Beatification of Area Boy: A Lagosian Kaleidoscope* (London: Methuen Drama, 1995).

[76] Interviews with Seku Cisse in Idumota, Lagos Island on January 17, 2010; and Seydou Barry in Idumota, Lagos Island on February 8, 2010.

In the mid-1990s, the arrival of a Malian entrepreneur expanded the number of work options open to newly-arrived Malian youths. This development highlights a parallel course of Malian transnationalism that is more akin to the Western model of the multinational corporation than the individual search for bridewealth. In the 1970s, Ibrahima Touré started the BTM El Hadji Ibrahima Touré Ice Cream Company in Mali's capital, Bamako. The business manufactured ice cream and sold cones throughout the city from push-carts. In the 1980s, Touré expanded his operations to Senegal, Mauritania, Benin, and other countries, leaving an onsite manager—usually one of his sons--in each country to oversee local operations. In 1994, Touré made a trip to Lagos to start a branch in the Ebute Metta quarter. To expedite equipment fabrication, he transferred into Lagos his primary mechanic to assemble pushcarts manufactured in Europe. Abesina Dabo, a long-term resident of Lagos and forex operator, initially recruited the vendors (*karimutigiw*)--young men to push the carts and sell the cones.[77] Unskilled labor, thus, constituted a population in which the Western modernity of the multinational corporation intersected with the traditional individual search for bridewealth. The company targeted young Malian newcomers who had no job prospects and no place to stay. Touré held out to them the opportunity to obtain both. He allowed employees to sleep in the company compound, which enclosed a 70-by-70-yard open area, to accommodate the fleet of carts. The compound became the employees' home, where they cooked, washed, and prayed. [78]

The Touré Ice Cream Company structured compensation in a manner more consistent with local Malian business practices than with Western profit maximization. The scheme was designed to provide the company with a uniform revenue stream at a predetermined level, based

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[77] Interview with Abesina Dabo and Allesane Traoré in Idumota, Lagos Island on December 16, 2009.

[78] Interviews with vendors inside the Ibrahima Touré Company compound in Oyingbo, Lagos on April 24, 2010; and with Nuhu Sissoko, other vendors, and the branch director inside the Ibrahima Touré Company compound in Ebule Egba, Lagos on April 26, 2010.

on preconceived notions of fairness, rather than allowing the market to determine the level of

sales. The company allocated each vendor a given number of cones and a corresponding amount

of ice cream, requiring the operator to return revenues equal to the sales of 2/3 of the allocation.

The vendor was entitled to keep the revenues from selling any cones above that amount.

Although the arrangement guaranteed the employer a stable revenue stream provided the market

could bear it, it did not allow the company to benefit from the operator's incentive to increase his

own revenues. The advantage of the arrangement was that the often-innumerate vendors could

more easily understand and count a single aggregate total than a division of revenue per unit.

In 1999, The Touré Company opened a branch in Abule Egba, which became the core of

another Malian enclave on the mainland some five miles north of Agege. As a retail sales

operation with a mobile delivery system, the ice cream pushcart model was perfectly suited to

overcoming the territorial-based resistance to strangers selling in Nigerian markets. The vendors

were constantly in-transit, and customers flagged them down, so they could not easily be targeted

for misappropriating local land to make money. The carts were equipped with a simple push-

button-activated digital looped sound system, like those in children's toys, which repeated the

chorus of a familiar Western children's song in synthesized carnival style to attract the attention

of potential customers. The company assigned each vendor to an expansive sales area, which the

operators would sometimes extend even farther. On several occasions, I encountered Touré carts

on Lagos Island that the operator had pushed several miles across the bridge from the Ebute

Metta compound.[79]

With the limited per-unit markup on ice cream, the Touré Company depended on a wide

distribution network to generate significant aggregate profit. It had no interest in artificially

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[79] Ibid., and fieldwork on Lagos Island during 2009-10.

shrinking its labor pool. On the other hand, as a Malian operation that hired by word of mouth, the natural pool of recruits that the company could reach was drawn from the immigrant community in general, and the Malian enclaves in particular. Thus, in contrast to that in Agege, the community that grew up around the Touré Company, while predominantly Malian, was multiethnic.

Nevertheless, although the company recruited solely on the basis of economic factors, it was not ideologically neutral. Ibrahim Touré belonged to the Wahhabiyya, a reformist sect, and the culture within his company reflected his affiliation. The employees prayed en masse in the compounds following Wahhabiyya prescriptions for prayer. Afterwards, they discussed religion together.[80] Thus, while the company did not recruit on the basis of religion, many of the employees either entered as, or converted to, Wahhabism. Consequently, the Abule Egba enclave developed into a more homogeneous community in terms of religion, rather than ethnicity. The specific commercial and religious mission of the community shaped a different way of life. In contrast to workers in the other Malian settlements, all Touré Company vendors were required work on Sundays.[81] Vendor informants presented this as part of a weekly schedule designed to take advantage of potential customers' consumption patterns. The leisure time on Sundays lent itself to higher levels of ice cream consumption. Nevertheless, it may be no coincidence that the sales directive also precluded a strict Muslim entrepreneur's employees from observing, however unconsciously, a major tenet of the Christian religion. Thus, the alternative lifestyle that Touré offered to his youthful employees featured a prominent element of religious observance, and a certain level of internal pressure to move toward a more conservative brand of Islamic observance.

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[80] Interview with ice cream vendor Nuha Sissoko in Ebule-Egba, Lagos on April 26, 2010.

[81] Ibid.

Lafinye, Tulunke[82,] and Sali[83]: Leisure and Worship in the Diaspora

Friday, throughout the diaspora, as in the homeland, was the day of communal worship, when Malians prayed at one of the "Friday mosques."[84] But, whereas in Mali many did not return to work after Friday prayer, this pattern proved less common in the diaspora. Outside the oases of frozen Wahabbi confections in Ebute Metta and Abule Egba, Muslims and Christians alike in Nigeria instead took Sunday off, following the work pattern set throughout West Africa over the decades under colonial rule. In the 1960s and '70s, the young men who made up the bulk of the diasporic population spent Sundays doing laundry and socializing. The former activity represented a significant change from masculine roles in Mali, which strictly excluded washing clothes. Social enforcement of the rule in Mali was strong. Malians from most backgrounds treated men who washed clothes as objects of derision. On the other hand, without either wives or the money to pay washerwomen, the men had no alternative. On most Sundays, Malians travelled to friends' houses to drink tea, talk, and listen to African soccer on the radio. European games were not yet broadcast in West Africa.[85]

By 1980, many of the young men in the diaspora were also using Sundays to play soccer themselves. Here, again, cultural differences emerged. While Touré Company work schedules precluded much of the migrant population in Ebute Metta and Abule Egba from participation, the Dogon population of Agege was not interested in playing. The Dogons' absence from the pitch was another contrast with their countrymen across the bridge. In 1980, and later periods, most young Malian men living on Lagos Island played football on Saturdays and Sundays. They

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[82] Rest and play (Bamanankan).

[83] Prayer (Bamanankan).

[84] The Lagos *jama'at* designates only a few of the largest mosques in the city as appropriate for Friday prayer. All other mosques are closed during the mid-day prayer.

[85] Interviews with Ibrahim Toloba in Ebute Ero, Lagos Island, on December 23, 2009; and with Abesina Dabo in Idumota, Lagos Island on December 15, 2009.

played on a sandy field in "Seliko under bridge," a plot of undeveloped government land lying

partially under one of the traffic ramps to the Third Mainland Bridge. These were not "pick-up"

games, but matches between established sides. The participants organized teams by country,

with sides from Mali, Guinea-Conakry, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Togo, and Burkina.[86] A

"chairman," who was a relatively wealthy immigrant businessman, acted as the sponsor of each

team, sometimes buying the members shirts. The players were responsible for their own

footgear. About half of the players owned cleats—a surprisingly high percentage given the low

average income of the players. In the early 1980s, Yoruba teams did not play with immigrant

teams. Francophone immigrants went out to watch their compatriots' games, and vendors sold

food and drinks.[87] By 1989, though, attitudes had changed. Yoruba teams were playing

immigrant teams, and even participating in tournaments. The chairmen organized tournaments

on an *ad hoc* basis. When an individual chairman had some extra disposable income, he

purchased a trophy, and called the other teams to announce a tournament. All informants

remembered the games as friendly, even when immigrants and Nigerians competed. The

spectators also maintained an amicability that was undoubtedly facilitated by the presence of so

many nondrinking Muslims. Three Malian teams were active in this later period, including

Benkadi and *Tout Puissant*, which played each other in the 1991 finals.[88] From 1991 to 1993, the

Francophone teams sometimes switched from the sandy Seliko field to the better dirt field under

Carter Bridge. They paid Area Boys to play on the latter, despite paying for a permit from the

Adeneji Police Station, whose employees had cleared the brush off the plot.[89]

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[86] Interviews with Ibrahim Toloba at Ebute Ero, Lagos Island on January 2, 2010; and with Madu Traoré in Idumota, Lagos Island on February 11, 2010.

[87] Interview with Modibo Coulibaly in Idumota, Lagos Island, on January 1, 2010.

[88] Interview with Tiemoko Diarra in Idumota, Lagos Island on May 25, 2010.

[89] Interiview with Amadu Dembélé in Idumota, Lagos Island on July 7, 2010.

Malians participated in a number of other leisure activities in the early decades of the diaspora. In the 1960s and 70s, prior to the advent of videocassettes, and even through the 1980s, Malians frequently attended movies in theaters. Since alternative media for viewing video had not yet become well established, cinemas abounded throughout the city, in comparison with twenty-first century Lagos. Since, at that time, the Nigerian film industry was making literally only a handful of films a year, and Nollywood nonexistent, the cinemas prior to the 1990s showed Indian and Chinese films dubbed in Yoruba and Hausa. A typical price of admission in 1976 was from 1 Naira to 150 Kobo.[90] By comparison, one informant recalled that he could eat all day in 1981 on 5 kobo.[91]

More controversial were other games that some Malians played on Sundays. The most common of these were draughts, a game similar to checkers, and card games, such as "32" and poker. On Lagos Island, Malians went so far as to "gamble" on poker using chips, without "dropping" money. While the latter activity was skirting the edges of Islamic propriety, it was draughts that local Islamic scholars considered forbidden in the *Sunna* (the traditions of the prophet, as set forth in the *Qu'ran* and *hadith*). Nevertheless, many in the diaspora took the attitude that "We'll close our eyes and play."[92] This privileging of local practices over theological doctrine was broadly representative of Sahelian culture. Tolerance of others' practices was a related Sahelian value, encapsulated in an informant's observation that "Dogon mind [their] own business regarding habits."[93] The Dogon were no different from their reputed cousins, the Malinke, in this respect.

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[90] Interview with Magan Troure at Ebute Ero, Lagos Island, on February 19, 2010.

[91] Interview with Lassana Keita in Idumota, Lagos Island on February 19, 2010.

[92] Interview with Abdoulay Kassogue on January 10, 2010.

[93] Ibid.

Nevertheless, the cornucopia of pleasure-oriented leisure activities available in the cosmopolitan center of Lagos stretched the boundaries of this moral flexibility. In the male- and youth-dominated atmosphere of the early diaspora, where insulation from Nigerian society was minimal, a few Malian men made forays into the club scene. A number of older informants recounted going to dance clubs in their youth, revelations that they always confided in a conspiratorial tone. Some stressed that they had not drunk alcohol, and were there strictly to dance. Others confessed to drinking as well, but everyone seemed to have approached these sorties as if they were on undercover missions. It was clear that behavior of this kind transgressed societal norms for Malians of all backgrounds in Lagos. On the other hand, such habits were not limited to hidden spaces. Before 1973, when the Kosoko hotel opened, a few Malians drank alcohol regularly outside at least one of the Yoruba-owned hotels. Some informants fondly recalled excursions to the beach for picnics in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Mixed groups of Malian and Yoruba men and Yoruba women filled several *danfos* headed down to "CMS." Named in colonial times for the Church Missionary Society complex, still extant in the twenty-first century, this was a quarter toward the Eastern tip of Lagos Island.[94] At that time, a ferry operated between Lagos Island and Victoria Island. The party would pay 1.5 N each to go to Lekki, Bar Beach, or Maroko Beach, where they would sit and eat rice and sauce, put cassettes in the radio, and dance to Jimmy Cliff and Bob Marley, "Mike" (aka Michael) Jackson and Madonna.[95]

Notwithstanding these accounts, such sybaritic behavior was the decided exception, even in the community's early days of the 1960s. On the other side of the ledger, virtually all Muslims

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[94] Fieldwork in Lagos, Nigeria in 2009-10.

[95] Interviews with Amadu Dembélé in Idumota, Lagos Island on July 7, 2010; and with Mahmoud Sidibe in Niarela, Bamako, Mali on August 7, 2010.

in the early diaspora—which meant virtually the entire diasporic population—faithfully observed the five pillars of Islam. The most important of these in ritual terms was praying five times a day, which most Malians in the diaspora practiced unerringly. Because, in the 1960s, nearly half of the general Lagosian population was Muslim, Malians could pray in the market and other public places, without attracting attention. Even surrounded by secular activity, prayer could be a private, individual ritual. The more formal setting of the mosque, in contrast, imposed local institutional frameworks and communal understandings that Malians found unfamiliar. The feeling of alienation was particularly high for the mid-day Friday prayer, when imams preached to the *jama'at* in Yoruba. Many in the early diaspora had not gained sufficient proficiency in Yoruba to follow the sermons, leading to confusion and apprehension. As a result, some Malians stayed away from mosques, especially during the Friday prayer, for years after first arriving. This behavior was a serious departure from a common regional interpretation of Islamic doctrine, which emphasized the desirability of sharing with as many fellow supplicants as possible the experience of praising Allah for Friday's mid-day prayer. Most believed that the amount of *baraka*, or divine blessing, that one received increased in direct proportion to the number of worshippers praying together. In contrast to their Agege compatriots, no Malians on Lagos Island that I knew of ever rose to become active in mosque governance, or even established strong ties within any *jama'at*. Their lack of meaningful participation beyond the observance of *sali* was dramatically demonstrated when high officials of the Lagos Central Mosque, where a large percentage of Malians had attended Friday prayers for decades, were adamant in insisting there were no Malian members in their *jama'at*. I discuss these issues and the larger relationship between Malian and Nigerian Muslims more fully in Chapter 3.[96]

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[96] Interview with Lassana Keita in Idumota, Lagos Island on February 19, 2010; and Magan Traoré in Idumota, Lagos Island on January 24, 2010.

The White House Spawned the bin Laden: Hotels as Microcultures

The term "hotel" in the context of the Malian diaspora in Lagos designated something

more akin to a hostel. At any given time, each of the hotels frequented by Malians had a distinct

"culture," reflecting the interests, beliefs, and practices of their respective owners. In the

diaspora the cultural differences corresponded to religious and political worldviews. The

clientele of the hotels formed distinct groups self-selected based on the worldview to which its

members were most attuned. In later years, the diaspora on Lagos Island divided itself into
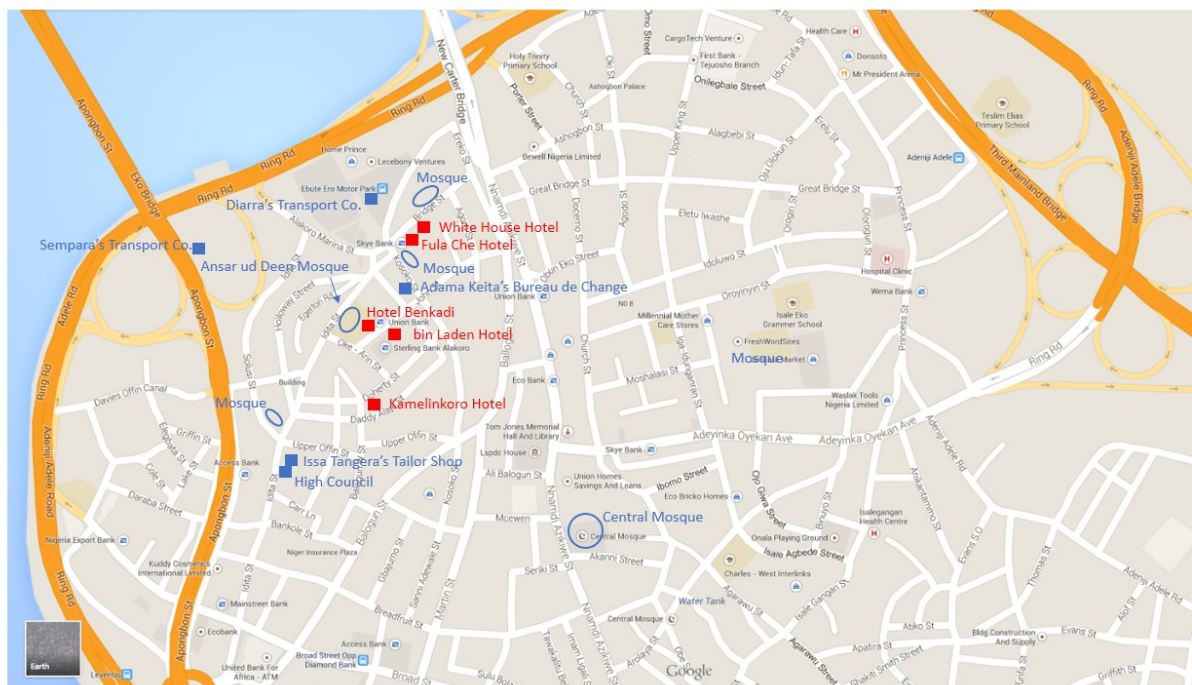
Map 5: Malian Hotels on Lagos Island [97]

groups corresponding to the five principal Malian hotels: *The White House, the bin Laden,*

Benkadi, the Fula Che and *Kamalenyoro*.[98]

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[97] Source for background map: screen capture of Google Maps search on "Lagos Island" @ 3x zoom.

[98] To provide some background on the three Bamanankan hotel names: *Benkadi* means "agreement is good," the *Fula C*he--"Fula man"--Hotel is an informal name based on the ethnicity of its proprieter, Amadu Dembélé; *Kamalenyoro*, "young man's place," is also an informal name based on the demographic profile of its clientele. Fieldwork in Idumota, Lagos Island during 2007 and 2009-10. An Ivoirian jointly owned the *Benkadi*, suggesting

Despite the fact that Malian business in Idumota centered around the provision of services to traders based in Mali and other African countries, until the early 1970s, no Malians provided the principal service of this type-- lodging. The income generated by most purchasing agents proved insufficient to support the necessary initial investment, including a year's rent in advance. The same held true for small-scale forex operations. The consistent volume provided by a major bureau with a permanent dedicated office space catering to both Nigerians and Malians, however, was a different matter. By the early 1970s, Sidibe, now married to his retired Nigerian partner's daughter, was able to finance other projects.[99]

In 1973, Sidibe became the first Malian *wotelitigi,* or hotelier, opening a hostel on the second and third floors of 44 Kosoko Street, with a *dumenikeyoro*, or Malian restaurant, on the first floor. Guests at the hostel could change currency at Sidibe's forex bureau, and eat onsite. As the sole Malian-controlled lodgings in Lagos, Sidibe's hotel immediately became the preferred destination not only for Malian traders, but for their counterparts from other Francophone countries. Moreover, the former included not only Malians based in Mali, but those based in other countries throughout West and West-Central Africa.[100] In the 1960s and '70s, Lagos acted as the primary market in both regions for a wide spectrum of imported manufactured products, ranging from auto parts to plastic dinnerware. Beyond Sidibe's low prices and lenient credit policies, the hostel provided an island of Malian society where traders could speak Bamanankan or French, eat Bamana food, and listen to Francophone radio.

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an allusion to the Mande hunters' association of that name which "was linked with northern opponents of the ruling party" in the Ivoirian civil war that began in 2002. Melissa Leach, "Introduction to Special Issue: Security, Socioecology, Polity: Mande Hunters, Civil Society, and Nation-States in Contemporary West Africa," *Africa Today*, Vol. 50, No. 4, Mande Hunters, Civil Society and the State (Summer, 2004): vii-xvi.

[99] Interview with Ibrahim Sidibe in Idumota, Lagos Island on July 25, 2010.

[100] Interviews with Lamine Kante in Idumota, Lagos Island on March 28, 2010; and Mahmoud Sidibe in Nairela, Bamako, Mali on August 7, 2010.

Moreover, the Radio Traittoire transmitted through the network of Francophone traders provided

a higher disincentive to theft. Sidibe later opened a second hostel, the Djangara, in another area

of Lagos Island, which had more amenities than the Kosoko, including air conditioning in some

of the rooms, and one bed per room. He managed the Djangara, and left his younger brother,

confusingly known as "Sekuba," or "Big Seku," in charge of the Kosoko Hotel.[101]

The advent of Malian-owned hostels in Lagos transformed both living conditions and

business practices in the diaspora. The Nigerian-owned hotels where visiting Francophone

traders had previously stayed had afforded little opportunity to interact with the diasporic

community. Sidibe's hostel, in contrast, provided an environment in which local Malian

residents were comfortable spending time. When not out conducting business, traders and agents

sat in these gathering spots, drinking tea and talking. Hotels constituted a new venue for social

interaction that not only enhanced communication between diaspora and homeland but widened

opportunities for forging business relationships. Now, rather than relying solely on relationships

consummated prior to emigrating, agents spent time at Sidibe's hostel, where they had the

possibility of recruiting new clients.[102] In terms of living conditions, the low cost and lenient

credit conditions of Sidibe's hotel, in comparison with its Nigerian counterparts, made it a

realistic possibility for long-term stays. As such, it provided an alternative to renting for Malians

who either could not accumulate sufficient capital to pay the six-months-to-a-year's rent that

virtually all landlords in Lagos required in advance, preferred to send that money home, or

planned to use it as capital for business ventures.[103]

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[101] Interviews with Ibrahim Toloba at Ebute Ero, Lagos Island, on December 23, 2009; and Allesane Traoré in Idumota, Lagos Island, on December 16, 2009.

[102] Interviews with Lassana Cisse in Idumota, Lagos Island, on March 25, 2010; and Ibrahim Sidibe on July 26, 2010.

[103] Interview with Magan Traoré in Idumota, Lagos Island, on January 24, 2010.

Malians often heard of Sidibe and his *woteli* before even leaving for Lagos from Mali or a third country. Sidibe rapidly gained a reputation among Malian traders and fortune-seekers for being a *mogo ŋuman*, a benevolent man. This reputation was well deserved. Sidibe regularly allowed indigent travellers to sleep in the hallways or on the balcony of the hostel without payment. Others stayed in his house. Beyond this immediate relief, he gave novices money, as well as advice. His counsel was not confined to local knowledge. After evaluating newcomers' larger plans, he often convinced travellers to change them, sometimes providing the means for doing so. Because of the constant influx of traders from all over West and west-central Africa, Sidibe had current and accurate information on the economic landscape throughout the region, and could provide migrants with the first realistic picture they probably had of the prospects at their destinations. At any given time, many Malians were headed to places where outlooks were dim. Sidibe was often successful in redirecting the young man to whatever destination was most promising given his specific situation. In some cases, this required an immediate return to the migrant's departure point, often financed by Sidibe himself.[104]

The 1980s comprised a period in which the cultural practices of the diaspora had not yet been significantly changed by the Nigerian environment, but in which a sufficient number of immigrants were present to support Malian establishments. Members of the diaspora during that period typically retained their homeland attire, which for many men meant the *boubou,* an ankle-length robe. Entrepreneurs began opening restaurants featuring the traditional staple *to*, a pudding made from either millet (*nyo*) or corn (*kabba*). These restaurants served both, in

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[104] Interviews with Lamine Kante in Idumota, Lagos Island on December 20, 2009; Lassane Cisse in Idumota, Lagos Island, on March 23, 2010; and Ibrahim Sidibe in Idumota, Lagos Island, on July 25, 2010.

addition to rice or couscous with traditional Malian sauces, such as *tiga diga na* (peanut sauce) and *jabba ji* (onions and tomato). Sidibe, thus, never enjoyed a monopoly on *dumenikeyorow*.[105]

In 1983, another Malian hostel joined Sidibe's in Idumota. A Malian woman, remembered only as "Nana," appeared on the scene to open a hostel on John Street, just blocks from Sidibe's Kosoko Street location. Her husband, a Malian trader based in Zaire, provided the start-up capital.[106] The presence of a woman playing a prominent role in the diaspora was representative of the slow transformation from the almost exclusively male demographic profile of the early diaspora. Nevertheless, the level of continued male dominance is indicated by the erasure from collective memory of this hotelier's *jamu*, or family name. She, alone among the historically prominent members of the diaspora, is remembered only by her *togo*, or first name. Malians were more likely to forget someone's *togo* than their *jamu* because the latter transmitted important social information. In Mali, one's *jamu* must be known to engage in a number of common social rituals, notably *senenkyum*.

Neither did Sidibe's exclusive status in the Malian community as a forex provider last for long. By 1984, four different Malian forex operations run by Modiba and Mamadu Traoré, Bedi Ba, Modibo Kone, and Dambe Diakouraka had joined Sidibe's in Idumota.[107] In the same year, Malians working for a Yoruba construction firm helped build a four-story reinforced concrete

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[105] Interview with Issa Tambura in Idumota, Lagos Island, on April 12, 2010; and Dauda Berthe in Idumota, Lagos Island, on April 13, 2010.

[106] Interview with Issa Tambura in Idumota, Lagos Island, on April 12, 2010; and interview with Modibo Coulibaly in Idumota, Lagos Island, on Janurary 2, 2010.

[107] Interview with Amaroa Diarra in Idumota, Lagos Island on April 13, 2010; and interview with Allesane Traoré in Idumota, Lagos Island on

building at 16 Bridge Street in Idumota,[108] where Amadu Dembélé, an established

businessperson in the diaspora, moved his forex operation two years later.[109]

Grocery Bags of Naira: The Risks and Rewards of Rooftop Arbitrage

One of the crucial steps in export trade was foreign currency conversion, commonly

referred to in English as foreign exchange (or "forex") and in Bamanankan as *warifalen*. The

Francophone countries of West Africa, including Mali, used a common currency, the CFA

(*Communauté Financière Africaine*) Franc, which was pegged to its French forbear until 1999

and the Euro thereafter.[110] Nigeria did not allow Naira out of the country, forcing Malian traders

to convert their CFA to Naira only after their arrival in Lagos. As Sara Berry notes, "[t]he

existence of multiple currencies also provided opportunities for foreign merchants, as well as

local traders…, to profit from arbitrage and manipulation of exchange rates."[111] Agents

generally could not maintain cash reserves sufficient to change the large amounts of CFA

involved in the average Malian "buy" in Lagos. Rather than patronize the official forex bureaus,

where the exchange rates were based on the higher official value of the Naira, in the 1960s and

early 1970s, agents brought Malian traders to the informal Nigerian-owned forex operations that

dotted Idumota, then the primary location of markets for imported goods. Beginning in the

1980s, individual Malians started accumulating sufficient capital to specialize in forex, and even

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[108] Interview with Lassana Keita in Idumota, Lagos Island on February 19, 2010.

[109] Interview with Amadu Dembélé in Idumota, Lagos Island on July 7, 2010.

[110] The CFA Franc Zone was created in 1945; the parity was 1 FF = 50 CFA 1946-1994, then 1 FF = 100 CFA 1994-1999, after which the CFA was pegged to the Euro.

[111] Sara S. Berry, "Stable Prices, Unstable Values: Some Thoughts on Monetization and the Meaning of Transactions in West African Economies," in *Money Matters: Instability, Values and Social Payments in the Modern History of West African Communities*, ed. Jane I., Guyer (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995), 301.

start their own informal bureaus.[112] In this section, I recount the stories of three of these

informal Malian foreign exchange operations and their respective relations with Nigerians. The

diversity among their experiences is representative of relationships among Malians and

Nigerians in Lagos, more generally.

Malian long-distance trade in Lagos comprised five occupations: trader, agent, forex

operator, freight forwarder, and transporter. In terms of relations between Malians and Nigerians,

workers in the latter two occupations dealt primarily with fellow citizens. Agents mediated

transactions between individual Malian traders and Nigerian merchants. Forex operators,

particularly those who maintained places of business—bureaus--experienced the most intense,

prolonged, and meaningful interactions with Nigerians. This resulted from a combination of

these businesses' client bases and mode of operations. Malians constituted a minority of the

Malian forex bureaus' clients. Nigerian merchants, the majority Yoruba market women, shuttled

back and forth across the border with Francophone Benin, where they purchased much of their

merchandise with CFA. Before these buying trips, they needed to convert their Naira to CFA.

Since the Malian bureaus serviced a constant influx of clients from the *Communauté financière*

d'Afrique, they were virtually guaranteed a relatively large and continuous supply of CFA,

without paying the official exchange rate. Nigerian traders, embarking on regular monthly, even

weekly, buying trips, did not have time to check the availability of CFA at numerous bureaus

before each sortie. Consequently, Malian bureaus became their regular forex stops, despite not

always offering the best exchange rates.[113] Moreover, clients—Malian and Nigerian--often had

to wait as long as several hours to complete a transaction, either because other clients were there

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[112] Interviews with Amadu Dembélé in Idumota, Lagos Island, on July 7, 2010; and Amadu Coulibaly in Agege, Lagos, on January 10, 2010.

[113] Interviews with Onapeju Afoloji in Idumota, Lagos Island, on August 15, 2007; and Arama Onafawode in Idumota, Lagos Island on January 12, 2010.

before them, or because they were waiting for the forex operator to verify that an offsite partner

would extend them credit. The result was that forex bureaus became vibrant multicultural,

international gathering spots. Yoruba market women, Igbo film-makers, Nigerien currency

smugglers, Ivoirian traders, and Senegalese semi-precious stone dealers shared space with

Nigerian bank representatives, Malian traders waiting to have hundreds of thousands of CFA

deposited on their behalf in Bamako, and Malian 17-year olds just arriving on their first trip out

of the country. The regular Nigerian customers spent so much time at their local Malian forex

bureau that they developed a familiarity with the employees and the regular Malian hangers-on,

who would help count currency for large transactions. Some Nigerian market women felt so

comfortable with the relationship that they demanded the proprietor supply them with food while

they waited. As friendly as they were, however, the interactions constituted business

relationships, which rarely extended into the participants' social lives.[114]

The bureaus were businesses, and the Malians' purpose in establishing them was to

accumulate wealth, thus the economic value of these relationships was their most important

aspect to the Malian entrepreneurs. This approach highlights the fact that the interactions we

have examined thus far are only one of several economic relationships between these operators

and Nigerians. While the bureaus' transactions with their customers resulted in a transfer of

revenue from Nigerians to Malians, their interactions with other groups of Nigerians resulted in a

reverse transfer. Operating in the gray area of the informal economy allowed the bureaus to

elude government levies, but they were less successful in evading illegal actors attracted by the

large amounts of currency on their premises. To develop a complete picture of the relationship

between Malians and Nigerians surrounding forex operations requires that we examine these

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[114] Fieldwork in Idumota, Lagos Island, during 2007 and 2009-10.

unwelcome interactions as well. The unethical and sometimes violent appropriations of the bureaus' revenues contributed heavily to the shaping of Malians' views of Nigeria and Nigerians. It was precisely these instances of Nigerians taking advantage of Malian bureaus, rather than the convivial relationships with customers, that distinguished conducting business in Nigeria from its less adversarial equivalent in the homeland. The sensational nature of these accounts reflects the enormous impact the related actions had on the bureaus. Because most currency on the premises was the property of clients, successful larceny not only put bureaus out of business, but obligated the proprietor to repay a usually insurmountable amount of debt, in turn, placing his life in danger. The most successful forex operations were merely clearinghouses, balancing clients converting Naira to CFA with their opposites.

The first Malian to operate a forex bureau in Lagos was Seku Sidibe, by all accounts one of the two most influential figures of the post-Independence Malian trade diaspora in Lagos. The evolution of Malian involvement in these operations is illustrated by his personal history. Sidibe's experience in the forex industry represents an instance in which business relationships between Malians and Nigerians <u>did</u> extend into their social lives. His professional and personal relationships with Nigerians were so closely intertwined that I recount them as one. Sources differ as to the date—or even the decade—of his initial arrival in Lagos. According to Ibrahim Sidibe, his second son, around 1988 Sidibe himself claimed that he had been in Nigeria for 40 years, which would place his arrival in the late 1940s, well before independence.[115] In contrast, Abdourahmane Diallo, another major figure in the early Malian community, while acknowledging that Sidibe made such claims, discounted them as hyperbole.[116] Nevertheless, it was generally agreed within the community that Sidibe was well-established in Lagos by the

[115] Interview with Ibrahim Sidibe, 26 July 2010 at 14 John St., Idumota, Lagos Island, Lagos, Nigeria.

[116] Interview with Abdourahmane Diallo, 16 March 2010, Kano, Nigeria.

1960s. When Sidibe first arrived, he began working as a tailor, a common trade for Malians in

Lagos.[117] Demand was boosted by the many Nigerian women who went to Malians to tailor

bazan based on the latters' prominence in the trade. On the other hand, the primary attraction of

Lagos was not the consumer market, but the imported goods available through the port, and

Sidibe, like virtually all Malians in the diaspora, began augmenting his income on an *ad hoc*

basis as a purchasing agent.

Sidibe, working occasionally as an agent in the 1960s, began taking his clients to one of

these bureaus run by Ousman Sanusi, a Nigerian who shared his Fula background. At the time,

most of the demand for foreign exchange came from Burkinabes, Ivoiriennes, and other

Francophone merchants, an increasing number of whom were represented by Sidibe, who had

developed a reputation as an honest and effective mediator. Impressed with both Sidibe's

integrity and his client base, as well as recognizing the advantages of having a Francophone staff

member on site, Sanusi brought Sidibe into the operation. Upon joining the forex bureau, Sidibe

ceased all other business activities. Eventually, Sanusi ceded control of day-to-day operations to

Sidibe, setting the precedent for Malian-run forex operations that soon became the primary

providers of such services to Malians and other Francophone traders. Perhaps to ensure against

Sidibe absconding with the business's proceeds, Sanusi pressured him to marry his daughter,

which he did. Irrespective of the particular motivation behind this matrimonial tie, it resulted in

genuine cultural hybridization. Sidibe's Nigerian wife, for instance, learned to cook Malian food,

while his Malian wife learned to speak Yoruba. And, although the children of his Malian wife

learned Soninke first, they learned Yoruba second—before either Bamanankan or English.

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[117] Interview with Ibrahim Sidibe, 26 July 2010 at 14 John St., Idumota, Lagos Island, Lagos, Nigeria.

Moreover, the next generation's knowledge of Yoruba was instrumental in enabling it to gain an even deeper understanding of Nigerian culture.[118]

There were few children among that first wave of settlers, especially on the mainland. As a result, even Sidibe's children by his Malian wife had no regular Malian friends. They spent all of their time both in school and on the street among Yoruba and Igbo friends, with whom they maintained ties into adulthood. Yet, at the same time, this creole generation purposefully maintained its Malian identity. On school forms, for instance, Malians consistently categorized themselves as "foreigner," and anyone in Sidibe's neighborhood looking for his house would merely have to ask for *ilé Mali*--Yoruba for "Malian house." Moreover, Ibrahim Sidibe identified himself in interviews as "completely Malian," explaining that, despite growing up in Nigeria, "It depends on the heart. My heart is in Mali. It will always be in Mali."[119] Nevertheless, the Lagos-born Sidibe continued to reside in Nigeria, and had no plans to relocate to his homeland. Instead, he planned to travel to other countries offering greater economic opportunity to, as he put it, meet his needs and find "tranquility." This peripatetic vision is quintessentially diasporan—and in fact Malian--in its embrace of extraterritoriality, its proposition that one's needs will be met in foreign lands, and its acceptance of resettlement ("there's no problem [if] you want to sit there"). Sidibe, though, was not reflecting on the diaspora within Nigeria, but on a potential "second-generation" diaspora in yet another host society, perpetuating Mali's ongoing history of worldwide diaspora.[120]

The legacy of forging close long-term cross-cultural ties out of commercial relationships was itself short-lived. Nigerian-Malian business partnerships themselves remained rare, but

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[118] Interview with Ibrahim Sidibe in Idumota, Lagos Island, on July 25, 2010.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid.

relationships between Malian forex owners and their customers from later periods provide

counterexamples.[121] Amadu Dembélé was one of the many Malians who followed Sidibe into

the forex business, with quite different results in terms of relationships across nationalities.

Dembélé built his operation into a powerhouse doing thousands of dollars-worth of business

daily. After several years of operation, he had forged strong ties with a pair of Igbo businessmen

through scores of exchanges, when one day they asked him to accept a check in exchange for 70

thousand dollars-worth of CFA. Based on their long, flawless record of transactions, he accepted

the check in the late afternoon, which the bank did not honor the following morning. Not only

did this end his business, it left him scrambling for years to pay back the customers whose

money he had paid to the Igbo "419ers."[122]

Fraud was not the only way Nigerians created a hostile environment for Malian business

in Lagos. Drissa Traoré's bureau, the largest of the "third generation" of Malian-owned forex

operations, was the victim of multiple armed robberies in 2009 that were launched from two

different sectors of Nigerian society, and at least one of which was ultimately supported by the

municipal government. The first robbery, which took place in November 2009, was committed

by four Igbo youths who had not previously done business with Traoré. They posed as

customers, but were clearly unfamiliar with the protocol. At the time, there was no security of

any kind, even a locked door. Any person on the street who knew about the office could walk up

the three flights of stairs to the roof and enter the crudely-built penthouse where cash exchanges

were taking place.[123]

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[121] On lack of cross-cultural business partnerships: Interview with Lassana Cisse at the High Council, Offin, Lagos Island, on March 11, 2010.

[122] Interview withi Amadu Dembélé on 11 November 2009 at 16 Bridge St., Idumota, Lagos Island, Lagos, Nigeria. "419" was local slang for "scam," based on the section number in the Nigerian criminal code dealing with fraud.

[123] I witnessed the robbery, and spent many hours at Traoré's bureau on a daily basis during 2009-10, and in the summer of 2007.

This casual arrangement had remained unproblematic as late as 2007, when Traoré 's non-Malian customers were almost exclusively Yoruba market women.[124] In the intervening years, however, his client base had ballooned and diversified to include a large contingent of Igbo men and youths in various lines of work. The operation was visible enough to warrant courtesy calls from the representative of a major Nigerian bank. The robbers used a homemade two-barreled handgun, still muddy from being buried in a cache between robberies.[125] Despite pistol-whipping one customer and threatening to shoot Traoré for stalling, the robbers did not seriously injure anyone. Moreover, other Nigerians worked together with the Malians to capture the robbers before they escaped. Although the robbers had locked the Malians inside their office, two of Traoré's assistants, clearly benefitting from adrenaline surges, rather miraculously ripped the security latticework of half-inch rebar window bars out of the solid concrete walls. The bureau staff members immediately jumped through the window, ran out to the edge of the roof and shouted in Yoruba "*olè, olè, olè*!" ("thief, thief, thief") to alert the Yoruba traders lining the packed street below that thieves were escaping.[126]

In societies in which the loss of one's inventory can spell starvation, traders view petty theft as a capital crime. As described previously, Bridge Street was lined with Yoruba traders who did business out on their stoops. Hearing the Malians' cry, scores of shopkeepers seized the thieves and beat them into submission with chairs and anything else that was at hand. Such situations in both Mali and Nigeria frequently ended on the spot in deadly vigilante justice, as trust in the authorities to administer justice remained low. As foreigners, however, the Malians were fearful of taking the law into their own hands. Having retrieved their money, they

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[124] Fieldwork in Lagos, Nigeria during 2007.

[125] Small-time criminals took special care in concealing their weapons between robberies because they faced the death penalty if convicted of committing a crime with a gun.

[126] I witnessed all of these events.

accompanied the robbers to the local police station, where they saw them put behind bars. Returning the next day to fill out official paperwork, the police told the Malians that the "suspects" had been released. Sources higher up in the force later told the Malians that the robbers' Igbo "big-man" had bribed the local police to release them.[127]

Despite running an illegal forex bureau, which was not known to the police, most of the involved Malians were residing in Lagos legally, complete with current residential cards. In addition, the High Council was in daily communication with the Malian embassy in Abuja. Consul for Conflict Resolution Teimoko Coulibaly, popularly known as "Coulibaly-Bilen," (Red Coulibably) for his light complexion, called the embassy and requested that it send a letter of protest to the Lagos Chief of Police. The embassy did so, prompting the chief to convene a meeting with Coulibaly and several other officers of the council. The chief promised that he would present an ultimatum to the involved station: if the station failed to re-arrest the robbers within a week, all eight officers responsible for guarding the suspects would themselves be sent to prison. Despite the strong rhetoric, however, the chief inflicted no punishment, despite the station's failure to comply with the order. On the contrary, Traoré's bureau was robbed at gunpoint yet again; this time by the police themselves.[128]

By the time of the second robbery, Traoré had instituted some minimal security measures, consisting of locking the gate to the third-floor staircase. In principle, a doorman standing behind the gate would unlock it only for known regular customers. Moreover, when the total cash on hand exceeded a certain level, the bulk would be discreetly transferred down to the third floor hotel. In contravention of these protocols, the doorman let in a woman who claimed she

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[127] Interview with Lassana Cisse at the High Council, Offin, Lagos Island, on December 28, 2009; and fieldwork on Lagos Island, Lagos, Nigeria, during 2009-10.

[128] Interview with Oumar Touré in Idumota, Lagos Island, on May 6, 2010; and informal conversations with Teimoko Coulibaly in December 2009.

knew Traoré, then later her accomplice, who ostensibly had the missing amount, when she claimed her money was "not complete." In contrast to their predecessors' zip gun, these robbers brandished a factory-made pistol. Because of strictly-enforced restrictions on commercial gun sales; only the police, military, and the most powerful criminal groups owned such weapons. The duo inflicted greater damage than the previous group as well, brutally pistol-whipping several of the staff, who had open wounds on their faces for weeks afterward. This time, a large number of Nigerian customers were in the penthouse, and the robbers took money and valuables directly from them in addition to the house cash.[129]

Again, though, quick and decisive action by the Malians thwarted the robbers' escape. Tiemoko Diarra, one of Traoré's longtime assistants, had been out depositing cash in the bank when the robbery started. He had returned in the middle of it, but heard what was going on before emerging from the staircase. Quickly running downstairs, he locked the gate at the bottom of the ground floor staircase, preventing the robbers from leaving the building, and— somewhat ironically—ran and got the police. This time, the suspects remained in jail at least long enough for them to be identified, the male of the pair found to be a police officer. Although officers are not normally allowed to carry their firearms when off-duty in Lagos, the suspect had filed for and received a special dispensation for the day of the robbery. This second robbery brought a more strongly worded missive from the Malian embassy to the chief of police warning of intervention at higher levels if the police department did not increase protection for Malian businesses. Again, the police chief called meetings with the High Council officials and assured

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[129] Interview with Oumar Touré in Idumota, Lagos Island, on May 6, 2010; and informal conversations with Tiemoko Diarra in May, 2010.

them that the perpetrators would be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. At the time of writing, the ensuing legal case was still pending.[130]

While Nigerian criminal groups and corrupt public servants targeted Malian businesses in coordinated assaults, juvenile delinquents known as Area Boys harassed individual Malians on the streets in sometimes brutal *ad hoc* attacks. In 2010 alone, gang members used broken bottles to attack Malians on two separate occasions, stabbing a tailor in the neck and a youth in the side, requiring hospitalization. In contrast to the perpetrators of more organized crime, such street-level offenders appeared more likely to make it to court if apprehended. Malian eyewitnesses, for example, later recognized the tailor's attacker and called the police to arrest him.[131] This apparent faith in the Lagos police would itself seem misplaced given their actions in the forex robberies recounted above. Malians explained, however, that the level of integrity varied by neighborhood station. High Council officials also reported that once such criminal cases involving low-level offenders were brought to court, they were generally adjudicated fairly. On same day that Traoré was assaulted, for instance, Consul Coulibaly was in court to witness the sentencing of the tailor's attacker to one year's imprisonment.[132]

Pays Dogon East: The Linguistic Split

In 1976, the first Malians of the Dogon ethnic group began arriving in Lagos in search of work. The Dogon were not emigrating directly from Mali, but from Ghana, where most of them had settled many years before, after leaving the Bandiagara Escarpment of eastern Mali. They were not coming to Lagos to trade, but to escape the economic downturn in Ghana, and secure

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[130] Ibid.

[131] Interviews with Teimoko Coulibaly at the High Council, Offin, Lagos Island on March 25, 2010; and Demba Traoré in Offin, Lagos Island, on March 25, 2010.

[132] Informal conversations with Tiemoko Coulibaly at the High Council, Offin, Lagos Island, in May, 2010.

permanent wage labor. Although the Dogon immigrated individually, the aggregate result was to transplant the core of the Dogon community in Ghana to Lagos. The newest contingent of Malians in the city was unaware of the existence of the Lagos Island enclave, and settled in Agege, on the mainland.[133] On the other hand, these migrants did not choose their destination at random. Like the other Malians who settled in Lagos, these émigré Dogon were virtually all Muslim. Ethnographies of the time provide a clear picture of the contemporary immigrant communities in Ghanaian cities, of which the Agege Dogon had previously been a part. During that period, local governments required all "strangers," particularly Muslim immigrants from the north, to settle exclusively in *zongos*, in this context spaces set aside to segregate immigrant communities. As the first settlers, and the largest population segment, the Hausa dominated the Ghanaian *zongos*. The local Ghanaian government recognized the Hausa's leaders as the official government there, and Hausa was the *lingua franca* of the enclave.[134] The Dogon who later settled in Lagos, must, therefore, not only have lived in the *zongo*, but have known many Hausa people there. Hence, it is no surprise that the Dogon coming to Lagos were heading specifically for Agege, which was home to a large Hausa community, as well as one of the most historically significant madrassas in the city.

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[133] Interviews with Abdoulay Kassogue, Moussa Bathily, Sulieman Giptele, and Ali Dolo in Agege, Lagos on January 10, 2010; and Ali Dolo in Agege, Lagos on August 1, 2007.

[134] For contemporaneous practices in southern Ghanaian *zongos*, see Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo;* ghettoization of northern Muslims in the *zongo* and government recognition of Hausa as official representatives, 268; Hausa as *zongo's* lingua franca, 111-12; for practices in the Accra *zongo* itself, although in earlier periods, see Deborah Pellow, "The Power of Space in the Evolution of an Accra Zongo," *Ethnohistory,* Vol. 38, No. 4 (Autumn, 1991): 414-450, ghettoization of Muslims in the *zongo*, 422; government recognition of Hausa as official representatives, 438; Hausa as *zongo's lingua franca*, 429. In her 1991 article, Pellow identifies one of the ethnic groups present in the Accra *zongo* as "the Wangara" (435), a term originally referring to Maraka and Diakhanke traders of the Soninke Empire. (In current Bamanankan, "Maraka" (sing. Marka) simply means "Soninke." Charles Bailleul, *Online Bambara-French-English Lexicon*, www.bambara.org.) This group would probably have included Soninke from what became Northeast Mali. In a later article covering the Accra *zongo* into 2001, Pellow identifies a "large number of Malians" living in one section of the *zongo*. These residents were clearly not newcomers, as the nearby "Timbuktoo Mosque" is named in their honor. Deborah Pellow, "Cultural Differences and Urban Spatial Forms: Elements of Boundedness in an Accra Community," *American Anthropologist,* New Series, Vol. 103, No. 1 (Mar., 2001): 59-75, 70.

The transnational Hausa community was not the only relevant link between Ghana and Nigeria. At the time the Dogon people settled in Agege, no Malian Embassy existed in Nigeria. The embassy in Ghana held responsibility for assisting Malian citizens in Nigeria, as well as in several other countries. The Dogon population continued its direct relationship with the Embassy in Accra as if it had never left.[135] This situation, arguably, had a significant impact on the subsequent development of the Malian diaspora in Lagos. In particular, it may have prolonged the isolation of the Dogon community from the established Idumota enclave, which maintained its own parallel line of communication with Accra. Whether as a result of this isolation, or characteristics of the group that settled there, the Agege community developed into a society that differed in almost every respect from its Idumota counterpart. Although the motivation for both groups to migrate was economic, their respective strategies for capital accumulation diverged. As a result, the principal difference between the two settlements was in economic structure.

The Dogon were largely successful, at least in the early years, in procuring the wage labor they sought, many becoming guards or night watchmen for relatively large companies or, occasionally, government agencies. Here, again, we see the probable influence of Hausa neighbors, as these were jobs commonly taken by Hausa immigrants in Lagos. In the absence of Idumota's focus on exports, Agege failed to develop the constellation of occupations that grew up on the island to provide services to traders. Dogon immigrants rarely, if ever at this juncture, worked as purchasing or cargo agents. Neither did they conduct foreign exchange, or provide

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[135] Interviews with Amadu Coulibaly in Agege, Lagos, on January 10, 2010; and Ibrahim Toloba at Ebute Ero Motor Park, Lagos Island, on December 31, 2009.

transport. Entrepreneurs, instead, started *butikis* (small shops). Others operated open-air eateries, or became *cafetigis*, serving coffee and tea from a table on the street.[136]

The different economic landscape imprinted itself on the spatial environment. In contrast to its counterpart in Idumota, business in the Dogon community did not revolve around visiting traders, hence no hostels opened there. As a result, a vacant lot acted as the gathering place for the community. The Dogon clustered around Ipaye Street, a 200-meter-long cul-de-sac. Soon after its formation, the community began socializing in the yard of a house rented by Malians at the end of the cul-de-sac. A Yoruba family maintained a public bath on the grounds, where Malians could pay to use showers and toilets.[137] These conveniences made the area a natural crossroads for the Malians who lacked access to water in their rented spaces. With the landlords' permission, the Malians used found materials to erect a shack for a "minerals" (soft drink) vendor, and two *togunas*, or Dogon shelters, each housing long wooden plank tables and benches. One of these *togunas* was a public sitting place, the other a restaurant. The restaurant served both Dogon and Ghanaian cuisine. During their sojourn in Ghana, and in a sharp departure from the Malian norm of boiling, the Lagosian Dogon had adopted the Ghanaians' style of grilling lamb, goat, and beef. The one-meter-diameter grill was the first thing a visitor saw upon entering the compound, facilitating sales to outsiders. According to one prominent informant, people came from all over Lagos to purchase the grilled meat. The property at the end of the cul-de-sac had served as the community's primary gathering spot from 1976, but its importance

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[136] Interviews with Adama Giptele in Agege, Lagos on March 21, 2010; and Seku Diakite at High Council in Offin, Lagos Island, on December 5, 2009.

[137] Interview with Adama Giptele in Agege, Lagos on March 21, 2010.

increased in 2006 when the house on the property collapsed. The Malians continued renting the plot, which, at about 50-by-50 meters, they transformed into an impromptu town square.[138]

The way the Yoruba and Hausa had used the space prior to the Dogons' presence also shaped the type of entrepreneurship the newcomers could engage in. Whereas virtually all streets in Idumota doubled as market streets, continuously lined with Yoruba-owned shops and tables, Ipaye Street in Agege represented a noncommercial thoroughfare. Thus, unlike their counterparts on Lagos Island, the Yoruba landlords in Agege were willing to rent street-front space for shops to Malians. Malians in Idumota often complained that the Yoruba landlords and market councils did not like foreigners competing with them as traders, and refused to rent them space to do so. Many Malians who worked as purchasing agents would have preferred to be *"commerçants"* had they not been shut out. The tiny Malian-run *butiki* flanking the gathering spot presented a sharp contrast with the complete absence of Malian shops in Idumota.[139]

The Malians in Agege generally shared houses or compounds with their Yoruba landlords, rather than living in apartment buildings. As a community, they were, consequently, more socially integrated with their Yoruba neighbors. This was especially true in the religious sphere. When the Malians arrived on Ipaye Street, they found a mud-walled mosque in the center of the neighborhood. The first Dogon in Agege lived next door to the mosque, and rented from the mosque's landlord, a connection that provided the Malians with an immediate entrée into the *jama'at*. Additionally, in contrast to the capacious Friday mosques frequented by Malians on Lagos Island, this was not a venue that allowed for anonymity. With a capacity of around 150 worshippers, all from the immediate neighborhood, the mosque forced intimacy. Thus, in

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[138] Interviews with Abdoulay Kassogue, Moussa Bathily, Sulieman Giptele, and Ali Dolo in Agege, Lagos on January 10, 2010; Ali Dolo in Agege on August 1, 2007; and Adama Giptele in Agege, Lagos on March 21, 2010; and fieldwork in Agege, Lagos during 2007 and 2009-10.

[139] Interview with Seku Diakite at High Council in Offin, Lagos Island, on December 5, 2009; and fieldwork in Agege, Lagos during 2007 and 2009-10.

contrast to their island compatriots, the Malian members of the *jama'at* knew the imam and the other leaders of the mosque, and participated in decision-making and fundraising there. Enhancing the relationship between the two communities in the religious sphere, Malians sent their children to the nearby *madrassa*, or Koranic school, on weekday afternoons, and on Saturday and Sunday mornings.[140]

Although widespread intergroup conflict between Yoruba and Dogon never occurred, Yoruba Area Boys frequently targeted Dogon people in the late 1970s. Groups of young men demanded money from Dogon carrying loads at night, beating and robbing them. The relationship between autochthons and strangers gradually grew closer over the years, as living in close quarters inevitably lead to shared domestic activities, such as eating and watching football on television together. Moreover, by the twenty-first century, few Area Boys remained active in the Dogon neighborhood.[141]

Strangely enough, while the Dogon were closer to the Yoruba as a community than the other Malian enclaves, they practiced less intermarriage with them. This difference in matrimonial choice was most pronounced in the 1970s and 80s, which appears to be a natural outcome of the different demographic profiles of the two settlements at that time. As noted previously, the majority of Dogon men had made their initial migration in search of bridewealth years before, and had already established families in Ghana. Yet they did not have sufficient funds for additional wives upon arrival in Lagos, as they were relocating to escape economic hardship. In contrast, the early Malian settlers in Idumota were almost all young men in search of bridewealth. Moreover, travel back to Mali was far more expensive, time-consuming, and

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[140] Interviews with Abdoulay Kassogue, Moussa Bathily, Sulieman Giptele, and Ali Dolo in Agege, Lagos on January 10, 2010; Ali Dolo in Agege on August 1, 2007; and Adama Giptele in Agege, Lagos on March 21, 2010; and fieldwork in Agege, Lagos during 2007 and 2009-10.

[141] Interview with Adama Giptele in Agege, Lagos on March 21, 2010.

arduous prior to the road improvement projects begun in the mid-1980s. The early settlers could thus marry substantially earlier if they chose a partner in Nigeria, an alternative that relatively many opted for. This group included many of the men who later became the most influential members of the diaspora. The two most important leaders in the early diaspora, Sekou Sidibe and Abdourahmane Diallo, both married Yoruba women, as did Secrétaire aux Conflits Tiemoko Coulibaly, Secrétaire à l'Organisation, Amadou Kante, and Secrétaire Général Chargé de l'Administration, Moussa Diarra. Marriages across the boundaries of citizenship and ethnicity continued into the twenty-first century, but became less common after the infrastructure improvements begun in the mid-1980s made land transport to Mali more routine.[142]

While the Malian enclave in Agege diverged from that on Lagos Island in occupational profile and economic structure, it also undeniably represented an intentional community constructed around ethnic solidarity. The few Malians of other backgrounds in the community, primarily Bozo and Bamana, were integrated into the community under a certain outsider status. When the High Council of Malians Overseas convened on Lagos Island, for example, it was the Dogon Committee, and not an inclusive Agege committee, that sent representatives to the citywide meeting. Dogon leaders did not allow the handful of Bamana residents in Agege to join the Dogon Committee, forcing the Bamana to send a separate delegation. This ethnic-consciousness contrasted sharply with the ethos of the broader diaspora, and with most Malian neighborhoods in Lagos, which featured a high degree of ethnic diversity both in settlement patterns and political organization. Abule Egba, a neighborhood farther inland on the mainland,

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[142] For Dogon intermarriage, interview with Adama Giptele in Agege, Lagos on March 21, 2010. for Idumota intermarriage, interviews with Lassana Cisse at the High Council in Offin, Lagos Island on March 25, 2010; and Lamine Kante at the High Council in Offin, Lagos Island on March 5, 2010.

met this description, and the Malian enclave's history shows a different side of Malian migration.[143]

Conclusion

Malians migrated to Lagos for economic opportunities, which largely shaped the social landscape of the diaspora as it changed through time. Although a combination of factors contributed to the spatial distribution of the population, occupational specialization influenced settlement patterns more than other considerations. From an early core of settlers on Lagos Island concentrating on long-distance trade, the diaspora expanded to include multiple enclaves scattered throughout the city's mainland sections. While persons of a single ethnicity dominated two of these communities, a predominant occupation also distinguished each from other neighborhoods. The diaspora's multiethnic composition overshadowed the instances of ethnic segregation, and marked a regional watershed in the form's evolution. Departing from the established historical pattern in West Africa, nationality replaced ethnicity as the organizing principle of a diaspora.

The Malian community in Lagos represented one of the few internal multiethnic trade diasporas in West African history. Equally important, it maintained cohesion around a national, rather than ethnic, identity. The diaspora achieved solidarity through a combination of forced integration and government intervention. Several independent factors imposed interethnic mixing. Scarcity and concomitant high rents compelled immigrants to share space more prolifically than in Mali. The population's fluid composition militated against hostels excluding any ethnicity, resulting in persons of various backgrounds living and socializing together more intimately than before. Nigerians treated Malians as a single group socially and legally, which

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[143] Interveiw Amadu Coulibaly in Agege, Lagos on January 10, 2010.

lent their citizenship greater instrumental significance than their ethnicity. Conversely, with only Fulani having Nigerian counterparts, most Malians' ethnic identities were emptied of significance outside the diaspora. Centrifugal forces from within the community complemented the external pressure. Regional associations incorporated immigrants of diverse ethnicity into a common enterprise of mutual support. The Malian government knitted these and other community associations together under a single umbrella organization, uniting the diaspora as a national entity.

Chapter 2

Alien Expulsions: Reframing Diaspora-Host Society Relations

While scholars of Nigeria generally focus on the role of ethnic conflict in undermining

the nation-state from within, historically Nigerians of all ethnicities simultaneously exhibited a

high degree of chauvinism in their interaction with resident aliens. Nationalism centered on the

newly-independent state manifested itself in exclusionary rhetoric and action. These xenophobic

attitudes and practices, in turn, strengthened each targeted expatriate population's awareness of

its common national identity, concomitantly weakening ethnic boundaries dividing each enclave.

By examining anti-immigrant sentiment in Nigeria through the lens of autochthony, I seek to

situate the interaction between Malian diaspora and Nigerian host society within a broader

historical pattern of social relations. In doing so, I trace Nigerian state and national press

attempts to develop cohesion within the general population though deploying xenophobic

discourse centered on the exclusion of aliens based on their lack of autochthony. This discourse

culminated in the Nigerian government's official deportation of aliens in 1983 and 1985, the

ultimate act of excluding aliens, or in the terminology of autochthony, "allogènes."

In their influential article identifying autochthony as the new basis for belonging to the

postcolonial nation-state, Jean and John Comaroff date the advent of this phenomenon precisely

to 1989, linking it to the "unprecedented wave of demands for democracy" initiated in that year.[1]

More fundamentally, the Comaroffs view the transformation in national perception as an

earmark of the "second epoch in the genealogy of postcolonial states." In this era, the global

capitalist system reconfigured the "old international order" into a geography delineated by

"transnational identities, <u>diasporic connections</u>, ecological disasters, and the mobility of human

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[1] Jean-Francois Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (New York: Longman, 1993), x.

populations."[2] The particular case study they invoke is that of the *Makwerekwere* in South

Africa following the relaxation of controls over immigrant labor. The South African population

viewed these foreign workers as "'economic vultures,' who usurp jobs and resources, who foster

crime, prostitution and disease."[3] The South African state mobilized in widely reported raids to

deport illegal aliens. But, as I show below, in its essential elements, the South African

circumstances recapitulated those in Nigeria a full seven years earlier. In that antecedent, the

ECOWAS agreement had relaxed controls on labor migration from other West African countries,

and the oil boom of the late 1970s had attracted a massive wave of immigrants. Their work was

ultimately tied to the global capitalist system through the export of oil or—in the case of most

Malians—the purchase of European imports. As in the later South Africa pattern, foreigners

were "the object of consternation and contestation across the new nation, from politicians and

their parties, through the media."[4] While the Comaroffs distinguish earlier uses of the term

"alien" in African law from those after 1989 as referencing Europeans, that was clearly not the

case in the Nigerian expulsions.

The Comaroffs argue that, "especially after 1989," there was an "explosion of identity

politics" that reconfigured the way citizens imagined the nation. "[H]omogeneity as a 'national

fantasy'" gave way to individuals situationally identifying with the nation-state. The authors'

language emphasizes their claim of an epochal turn. "Imagining the nation rarely presumes a

deep horizontal fraternity any more." Providing a concrete illustration, they note that "even

countries long known for their lack of diversity—Botswana for example—are now sites of

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[2] Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, "Naturing the Nation: Aliens, Apocalypse and the Postcolonial State*," Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 3, Special Issue for Shula Marks (Sep., 2001): 627-6, 632-3; emphasis supplied.

[3] Ibid., 646.

[4] Idib., 647.

identity struggles."[5] But what of nations long known for their diversity, like Nigeria? The

validity of the Comaroff's periodization would seem to depend on an implicit assumption that

identity politics based on ethnicity alone were insufficient to disturb the "fantasy of

homogeneity" and render national identity situational. The subnational ethnic conflict that

emerged in several African states before the first decade of independence was out contradicts

that notion. The Nigerian civil war that raged from 1966 through 1970 provided perhaps the

prime example of the latter. Any fantasies of homogeneity entertained before that conflict surely

did not survive it.

The civil war highlights a second thread of my argument about autochthony—that such

ethnic conflict in Nigeria was related to a belief in autochthonous rights.[6] Here I agree with the

Comaroffs, who acknowledge that autochthony "is implicit in many forms of identity."[7] Fearon

and Laitin provide corroborating data in their review of ethnic civil wars worldwide since 1945.

In nearly a third of their sample, conflict developed between a regional ethnic group that

"considers itself to be the indigenous "sons of the soil" and recent migrants from other parts of

the country."[8] While this was not precisely the case in Nigeria, the Igbo considered themselves

to be the indigenes of Biafra and, in their attempt to secede, demonstrated the belief that this

status conferred the right to control the land. Moreover, they sought to make the territory a

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[5] Ibid., 634, emphasis added.

[6] These local events reflected a wider historical relationship between discourses of autochthony and ethnicity that circulated throughout postindependence Africa. The imbrication of autochthonous and ethnic mythologies in the Great Lakes Region underlay the long history of conflict between Hutu and Tutsi that culminated in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Colonial influence on these ideas was visible there, as Belgian administrators empowered the Tutsi because of their perceived racial superiority, which they associated with origins in North Africa. After World War II, the Hutu seized on these ostensibly foreign origins to paint the Tutsi as outsiders exploiting the indigenous Hutu and their resources. Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), intertwining of racial ideology with origin myths, 5-9; demonization of the Tutsi as "quasi-foreigners," 151.

[7] Ibid., 635.

[8] James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Sons of the Soil, Migrants, and Civil War," *World Development* Vol. 39, No. 2, (February 2011): 199–211, 199.

nation-state on that basis. The Igbo were not alone in their self-definition as indigenes of a

Nigerian region. The Yoruba considered themselves *àwọn ọmọ ibíl`ẹ*, or sons of the soil, in

Southwestern Nigeria's Yorubaland, and the Hausa saw themselves as the indigenes of the North.

Fearon and Laitin cite the 1966 anti-Igbo riots in Northern Nigeria as fitting the dominant

autochthon versus immigrant pattern they find.[9]

In Nigeria, as in much of West Africa, however, the association of autochthony with

territorial sovereignty and the exclusion of allogènes has multiple local histories having little to

do with the global capitalist system, as they often predate colonialism. In tracing the historical

changes in who was defined as a stranger in the Yoruba city of Ibadan, Falola points out that

"there were restrictions and discriminations against the strangers before the 1890s, and a

vigorous attempt either to expel them, or restrict the opportunities open to them, in the 1890s."[10]

During the colonial period, the politics of indirect rule reinforced these ideas by linking

autochthony to political power within the colonial system. Laitin quantified the resulting

importance of place relative to ethnicity with his findings that Yoruba in the twentieth century

identified more strongly with city of origin than with their ethnicity.[11] In challenging the

primacy of ethnic identity, both Laitin and Bayart point to the 1954 elections in which the

Yoruba vote split between Oyo and Ijebu factions, the former voting as a bloc for the Igbo-

dominated National Council of of Nigeria and the Cameroons, the latter for the supposedly

Yoruba party, the Action Group.[12] A discourse of autochthonous rights also consistently ran

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[9] Ibid., 209 fn 3.

[10] Toyin Falola, "From Hospitality to Hostility: Ibadan and Strangers, 1830-1904," in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (1985): 51-68.

[11] David D. Laitin, *Hegemony and Culture*, 125. "When asked to divide the population according to the greatest differences among the people, Yorubas answer largely in terms of ancestral cities."

[12] Ibid., 121; and Bayart, *The State in Africa*, 53.

through the history of ostensibly religion-based intergroup violence in the North.[13] And, conversely, faith-based intergroup violence was virtually unknown in the Southwest, despite an approximately even split between Christians and Muslims in Yorubaland.

These ideologies of autochthony were operationalized at the national level by state strategies of nation-building. The decolonization of West Africa in the late 1950s and early 1960s gave rise to a political landscape of what Anthony Marx calls "nationalizing states"-- existing territorial states, each seeking to create cohesion among multiple "nations" within its borders. While Marx sought to explain the early modern foundations of nationalism and focused on religious exclusion, his broad theoretical framework can be adapted to the modern postcolony. As Marx shows, premodern governments promoted cohesion among the general populace by labeling a particular subpopulation as alien, and fomenting violent means to exclude that group from the body politic.[14] In the modern era, diasporas, as communities of foreign origin within a state's territory, provided the ideal foil for such targeting. But, while this violence was the host societies' nationalizing tool, it simultaneously created an opposing cohesion within the diasporic community.

This chapter draws on oral histories and contemporary press accounts to place the interaction between Nigerians and the Malian diasporic community into historical context, and to explore how the adversarial nature of that relationship affected social dynamics within the diaspora and its homeland, as well as in the Nigerian host society. In seeking to identify the factors that contributed to the antagonistic relationship between the Nigerian and Malian communities, I explore the role of the "nationalizing state" in creating an atmosphere of

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[13]Johannes Harnischfeger, "Sharia and Control over Territory: Conflicts between 'Settlers' and 'Indigenes' in Nigeria," *African Affairs*, Vol. 103, No. 412 (Jul., 2004): 431-452.

[14] Marx, *Faith in Nation,* 18, 21-5*;* Marx's case studies, in fact, include examples of diasporas (e.g. the Jewish population in pre-Modern Spain) as populations targeted for exclusion (Ibid.*,* 80-3).

xenophobia through its programs, policies, and official discourse. In examining discourse, I incorporate Anderson's ideas regarding the role of the vernacular press, in particular newspapers, in promoting a feeling of community across a population sharing a common language.[15] I draw on contemporary editorials published in major English-language newspapers in Lagos to demonstrate the role of the press in creating a unifying ideology of citizenship for Nigerians, while simultaneously demonizing aliens, and identifying them as the cause of the major economic problems plaguing Nigeria.

On the policy level, the chapter draws on first-hand accounts of Malian informants to document the violent displacements attending the government's expulsion of foreigners in 1983 and 1985. The expulsions, coming some twenty years after the arrival of the first Malian immigrants, restructured not only the demographics of the community, but its relations with the host society. It produced upheaval in the local Malian population, reducing its numbers and changing its composition. More important, government leaders and the national press portrayed events leading up to each expulsion in a negative light that helped shaped Nigerian public opinion toward resident aliens. Popular attitudes toward foreigners, in turn, formed the social context within which Nigerians and Malians constructed relationships in Lagos during the 1980s. Conflicting memories of the events during this period of social upheaval, and of the discourse that surrounded them, continued to influence these relationships into the following decades.

The Nigerian Muslim establishment joined the government and press in demonizing Muslim aliens. The religious elites' durability as a source of animus against immigrants exceeded its societal partners'. While the economy rebounded in later periods, weakening economic resentment, theological differences only widened. Neither expulsions nor economic

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[15] Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 44. English, despite its status as a secondary language in Nigeria, constitutes this medium there.

recovery curtailed religious leaders' public pronouncements regarding their foreign coreligionists' deviances from orthodoxy. The resulting subversion of bonds between fellow members of the *umma* was more than an abstract concept; Malians in Lagos interacted principally with the Yoruba, half whom were Muslim.

The purpose of this chapter is multifold. First, it provides the broader historical context for the Malian diaspora in Nigeria during the 1980s. It examines the public discourse in Nigeria at that time concerning West African aliens in general, and West African Muslim aliens in particular, both groups including the Malian diaspora. Public discourse in Nigeria's popular press was important, first, because it reflected the attitudes of Nigerian society's powerful educated elite and, second, because it influenced its wide readership.[16] As J.S. Eades observes of the 1969 alien expulsions from Ghana, "[w]hatever individual actors feel about the people with whom they come into contact based on their own experience, it is always open to powerful individuals or the state to define the content of the ethnic stereotypes."[17] To foreground discourse outside state control, I use *The Guardian*, an independently-owned newspaper published in Lagos, as my principal source. The independent press, nevertheless, reported official government positions, allowing us to trace both strands of dialogue. The Nigerian government, the press, and the reading public comprised in large part the host society within which the Malian diaspora operated. Members of the community interacted on a daily basis with Nigerians in situations involving everything from business transactions to prayer. Malians depended on Nigerians for their housing, food, and income. Nigerians' attitude toward Malians as Muslim West African aliens affected whether and how they conducted these transactions and

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[16] Effective readership in Nigeria exceeds official circulation figures by a wide margin due to sharing and persons reading out loud to illiterate friends and family members.

[17] Eades, *Strangers and Traders*, 174.

provided these services. If Nigerians viewed immigrants as unethical interlopers engaged in activity destroying the nation, they would be more inclined to act in bad faith in their dealings with Malians. As I discuss below, that was precisely the image of West African immigrants circulating in Nigerian public discourse during the early-to-mid-1980s. And, as Chapter 1 describes, Nigerians took advantage of Malians in substantive ways.

The expulsions are equally important as historical events that shaped Malians' attitudes toward Nigerian society and, thereby, their relationships with Nigerians. We can only understand the visceral views of Nigeria recorded in Chapter 5 if we examine Malians' personal experiences as targets of Nigerian xenophobia. It was not the rhetoric of exclusion, but the acts it inspired that explain the depth of feeling those comments reveal. I, therefore, recount in detail representative accounts of expulsion, from both Nigerian and Malian perspectives. Beyond their heightened affect, specific aspects of these accounts reveal inconsistencies between government immigration policy and its implementation.

In the following section, I provide the historical context for the initial 1983 expulsion, and identify the factors that precipitated it. I trace the relevant events leading up to the expulsion order, along with the government and press discourse surrounding these events. Even ignoring the expulsions, these events influenced Malians' lives in the diaspora. Some lost jobs in the economic downturn; most lost business; all were subject to discrimination, as many Nigerians unfairly associated them with violent Islamic separatists.

The Economic Background

The Nigerian expulsions took place within a longer history of alien ejections in West Africa, some sending Nigerians home from their own diasporas. In common with those earlier instances, the 1983 Nigerian economy was mired in deep recession. As in many of the previous

expulsions, the government actively exacerbated the xenophobia by portraying aliens as intentionally undermining the economy. It is important to analyze the form these efforts took in the press because it distinguished the Nigerian deportation order from its predecessors. Not content with attributing to aliens the morally neutral displacement of Nigerians from jobs, the government, assisted by the press, focused on aliens in the grey economy. Ignoring the worldwide recession and its own counterproductive policies, the government identified the comparatively minor effects of smuggling and illegal foreign exchange as the primary causes of the economic downturn.

The federal regime's propaganda campaign culminated on January 17, 1983, when Nigerian Federal Minister of Internal Affairs Alhaji Ali Baba appeared on state television to announce that the government was giving all foreigners living or working in the country illegally fourteen days to leave. In briefing journalists, government representatives claimed that thousands of emigrants from other West African nations were currently employed in the Nigerian private sector, without the written consent of the Director of Immigration. As such, according to Baba, these aliens were out of compliance with the 1963 Immigration Act. The Minister warned that, following the expiration of the deadline, the immigration service would search all homes and businesses for noncomplying aliens. State immigration offices would register both legal and illegal aliens, with the latter banned from re-entering Nigeria.[18]

Thus, seven months before scheduled national elections, President Shagari gave an estimated 1.5 million African expatriates two weeks to leave Nigeria. This action followed a pattern in West Africa that stretched back to before independence.[19] Nigerian expatriates had,

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[18] Brown, *Nigeria and the Ecowas Protocol*, 251-73.

[19] Historical expulsions include Ghana (1969); Sierra Leone (1968); Ivory Coast (1958, 1964); Chad (1979); Equatorial Guinea (1974); Senegal (1967);Cameroon (1967);Guinea (1968); and Liberia (1983). In the late 1950s, Ivory Coast expelled more than 1,000 migrants of Togo and Benin origin; Chad had also expelled illegal migrants

themselves, been the targets of Cameroon's 1967 and Ghana's 1969 expulsions. Although the memory of the latter action undoubtedly played a part in Nigeria's own expulsions of the 1980s, more important were the contemporary economic downturns, and the popular belief that resident aliens from both Francophone and Anglophone West Africa had caused these problems through "economic sabotage." This chapter examines the wider historical context in which these expulsions occurred, as well as how these actions affected the Malian diaspora.

The Nigerian oil boom of late 1970s fueled a major expansion in all sectors of the economy that increased demand, thus driving up wages for both skilled and unskilled labor. These "pull" factors combined with equally compelling "push" factors, notably economic downturns in other West African countries. The 1975 formation of ECOWAS and the 1980 ratification of the Protocol on Free Movements reduced regulatory barriers to labor migration. The result was a massive influx of foreign labor into Nigeria, including a new wave of Malians. As early as 1980, however, oil revenue was declining rapidly, and employment along with it. In March 1982, foreign cash reserves dropped to an amount sufficient for only a single month of import expenditures. At year's end, imports were absorbing a crippling 80 percent of federal revenue, despite austerity measures that had reduced imports by 20 percent. The balance of payments fell to a deficit of 1.5 billion Naira (N), and inflation exceeded 25 percent. In addition, austerity measures meant that manufacturing and construction companies could not import sufficient raw materials and spare parts, which further reduced manufacturing output and construction activity. The contraction necessitated layoffs, increasing the unemployment rate to

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from Benin. In the mid-1960s, Ivory Coast expelled 16,000 Beninoise; Senegal expelled Guineans; Cameroon expelled 800 Nigerians; Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ivory Coast expelled Ghanaian fishermen. Late in 1969, the enforcement of the Compliance Order in Ghana (which requested all aliens to obtain residence permits, if they did not possess one within two weeks or leave the country) resulted in an estimated 500,000 deportees, primarily Nigerians, Nigeriens and Voltaics. In December 1982, Sierra Leone expelled members of the Fula community, and in September, Ghana closed borders with Togo. Margaret Peil, "The Expulsion of West African Aliens," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Aug., 1971): 205-229.

20 percent. The Nigerian government froze its employment, even as private employers reduced payrolls.[20]

Following well-established historical patterns in West Africa and throughout the world, Nigerian newspapers both reflected and fueled a popular belief that resident aliens were exacerbating, if not causing, the economic downturn. The Nigerian press accused aliens not only of taking jobs from Nigerians, but of actively engaging in illegal activities, notably currency trafficking. Economists writing opinion pieces in *The Guardian* identified smuggling and illegal currency trafficking as major factors in undermining the Nigerian economy. Politicians cited the large population of "non-nationals" as a threat to national security. One final incident suggested to an alarmed populace that the economic threat had a political element. In early January 1983, just two weeks before Ali Baba's announcement, illegal aliens attacked Vice President Alex Ekwueme's house in Lagos.[21] Beyond the proximity of the assault to the federal bureaucracy, the fact that its target was a known individual personalized the perceived danger for the ruling elite.

As I discuss in the following section, by the time the Ekwueme incident occurred, the press had already identified Muslims as the specific subpopulation of immigrants responsible for fomenting violence and defying the government. Nigerian Muslims held no sympathy for their coreligionists, whom they viewed as apostate. The press promoted this perception through its sensationalist reporting of immigrant sects' idiosyncratic beliefs.

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[20] Olajide Aluko, "Expulsion of Illegal Aliens from Nigeria: A Study in Nigeria's Decision-Making," *African Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 337 (Oct., 1985): 539-560, 551-2.

[21] Ibid., 550.

Fear of Muslim Immigrants as a Contributing Factor

On February 10, 1983, Nigerian External Affairs Minister Ishaya Audu, in Dar es Salaam en route to a meeting of the OAU Liberation Committee, outlined the Shagiri administration's official reasons for promulgating the expulsion order. The illegal immigrants, said Audu, "constituted political and security risks to the country." He described the deportees as "unemployed or unskilled workers linked with religious riots and violent banditry."[22] Who were these unemployed aliens and what "religious riots" was Audu referring to? From 1980 through 1982, a fringe sect of Mahdist Muslims, known as the Maitatsine, instigated a series of violent antigovernment riots that threatened to destabilize Northern Nigeria. The sect took its name from its Cameroonian leader, Muhammed Marwa, who became known as "Maitatsine." Close to a third of his several thousand followers, like him, were immigrants, almost all of them poor and in the country illegally.[23] In 1980 alone, their rioting killed over 4,000 persons, including scores of police, who were the original targets of the violence. The press widely reported these events, including details about the implicated sect. The Minister of Internal Affairs attributed the "wanton destruction of property and lives"[24] in three of the largest cities in Northern Nigeria to the influx of foreigners. The Maitatsine movement directly challenged the government. It attacked and defeated police in two pitched battles, killing scores. The federal government had to send in army and airforce troops to finally defeat them. These events added an element of fear to the expulsion equation, and singled out Muslim foreigners as targets for heightened scrutiny.

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[22] *The Daily Times* (Lagos, Nigeria), February 11, 1983, 9, "Why Illegal Aliens Were Expelled – Audu."

[23] For example, of 449 Maitatsine followers later imprisoned in Kano, 135 were from Niger. See Elizabeth Isichei, "The Maitatsine Risings in Nigeria 1980-85: A Revolt of the Disinherited*," Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 17, Fasc. 3 (Oct., 1987): 194-208, 197.

[24] *West Africa*, 31 January 1983, 245, cited in Brown, *Nigeria and the Ecowas Protocol*.

Consequently, the government and the population at large focused suspicion on this subgroup of resident aliens, which included Malians.

The government, after holding Maitatsine followers accused in the incident for over two years, released the last 923 of them on October 1, 1982. Of those released, 223 were foreigners, who were deported. Only weeks later, police arrests of 16 sect members near Maiduguri provoked several days of fighting, resulting in 3,350 killed, including nine police officers. Four days later, police investigating Maitatsine regrouping outside Kaduna sparked yet another rampage.[25] Significantly, aliens were still participating in the later Maitatsine actions. The government later deported 54 aliens arrested during the October riots, including three Malians.[26] The Nigerian media portrayed the religious violence as only the most visible front within a wider culture of violence and immorality introduced by the waves of illegal immigrants. Stories related in the Nigerian press accused aliens of responsibility for an increase in robbery as well as patronizing brothels "[a]ll over the place."[27]

Independent of the concerns over the political threat posed by Muslim foreigners was a purely theological divide between establishment Nigerian Muslims and their foreign coreligionists. Members of the former group, led by Alhaji Abubakar Gummi, were university-educated reformists. Members of the latter group, epitomized by Maitatsine, were either autodidacts, or products of local Koranic schools, and practiced a syncretic, mystical brand of Islam. The fact that Maitatsine's eldest son's name was Tijani, evoking the founder of the Tijaniyya sect, hints at a link to wider Sufi traditions. The Nigerian Islamic establishment took a condescending view of the masses of Muslim immigrants and their "peasant intellectual" leaders.

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[25] The following day, Muslim students not connected with Maitatsine attacked Christian churches and other targets in Kano, killing three.

[26] As reported in the *New Nigerian*, 28 January 1983, 1, cited in Brown, *Nigeria and the Ecowas Protocol*, 265.

[27] *The Daily Times* (Lagos, Nigeria), December 3, 1983, 3, "Deportation of Aliens."

The animus was encapsulated in Gummi's dismissive description of Maitatsine as merely one of many "one-track minded mallams versed only in the recitation of the *Q'uran* by heart, and not fully comprehending what it contained."[28]

In the following section I explore in detail the results of this indifference toward fellow believers as the government ordered them across the borders. The Interior Minister—a Muslim himself--was willing to imperil the lives of hundreds of thousands of resident aliens, including thousands of coreligionists, in order to increase the federal regime's popularity.   His hasty announcement of an instantaneous, simplistic solution to the country's economic problems was designed to communicate bold, incisive decisionmaking. The human rights disaster that was a predictable outcome of the Nigerian government's mass deportations formed its more concrete and lasting legacy. The following account captures the brutal conditions endured by the majority of deportees, while illustrating the order's erratic implementation, and the range of experience within the diaspora.

A Malian's First-Hand Account

While some Malians escaped deportation, many were caught up in the mass exodus. Each Malian's personal experience of displacement reshaped his view of the host society, coloring future interactions with Nigerian individuals and institutions alike. Abdullai Maiga spoke with me in 2010 about the 1983 expulsion. At the time I interviewed him, Maiga was the President of the Malian Committee in Ibadan, a city of around a million inhabitants at the time of the expulsions, approximately 70 miles north of Lagos. Maiga's personal experience illustrates the uneven incidence of the order on Malians living in Nigeria at the time. Although he was able to remain in Ibadan, his brother experienced the torturous three-day wait at the Benin border, and

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[28] Isichei, *Maitatsine Risings*, 195.

was eventually bused to back to Mali. Maiga's interaction with the immigration authorities is also instructive because it reveals how poorly rank-and-file immigration officials hewed to the provisions of the ECOWAS agreement, and to Nigerian immigration law. The inconsistencies revealed in the account contributed to Malians' distrust of Nigerian authorities, and to their views of Nigerian society as anti-immigrant.

> Maiga recalled that the government announced the expulsion order on radio and television, warning that the authorities would search house-by-house for undocumented aliens. Any landlord who was renting to "strangers" would "face the law." One morning following these broadcasts, Maiga's landlord arrived at his door asking whether he had heard them. Although he showed his landlord his passport with an unexpired three-month stamp, the landlord wanted him to obtain an official opinion on his eligibility for deportation from the Ministry of Immigration. After ignoring this request for several days, Maiga was awakened from an afternoon nap by an immigration officer at his door, demanding documentation. He called his landlord, who arrived to hear the officer agree that the Malian was "not the type of people" the government was looking for.[29]

The pattern that emerges above indicates that officers based their decisions on personal preference rather than law. If the procedure applied by this officer was representative of how the immigration service carried out the government's policy generally, it reveals a gap between policy and implementation. While official government policy required immigrants to "regularize" their stay through their embassy by the deadline or leave, there was no discussion of regularization in Maiga's case. On the contrary, a valid passport with a current 90-day visa stamp was sufficient, despite the fact that he held a long-term lease with his landlord, evidence of intent to overstay that visa.

But Maiga's account also provides information about those whom the authorities did expel. He went on to describe a large-scale government-coordinated transportation operation

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[29] Interview with Abdullai Maiga in Sabon Gari, Ibadan, Nigeria on June 23, 2010.

centered in the Muslim section of the city, forcing a mass exodus of aliens from those

neighborhoods back to their countries of origin.

> As the deadline for leaving the country neared in Ibadan, trailers were lined up between the Sabo mosque and the soccer stadium around the clock. Immigration officers were on the scene announcing that anyone without the necessary papers should enter the trailers headed out of the country, and should not return to Nigeria. Crowds of illegal aliens— men and women—paid their 60-70 Naira apiece and climbed onto the trailers, which left day and night. Passing motorists shouted at the deportees, "Traitors, traitors, traitors! Foolish people!" Maiga found the scene "very pitiful."[30]

The above portrayal, including the fleet of buses and heavy presence of immigration

officers in the Muslim Sabo quarter, provides a counterweight to the impression given by much

of the contemporaneous press coverage that deportations from such communities were

essentially collateral damage from the expulsion of Ghanaians. While the government singled

out the latter because of their heavy representation in teaching and other high-skill government

positions, job displacement, as we have seen, did not comprise the sole motivation for the

expulsion. Recalling the press's depiction of migrants as sabotaging the nation through currency

trafficking, it is significant that the onlookers used the term "traitor." With its connotation of

betraying the nation-state, the slur suggested that the media narrative had gained traction in the

general population.

The migrants were embarking on what would prove to be a harrowing journey. Maiga

witnessed the horrific conditions that the deportees experienced after arriving at the border. His

emotional response to the memory of these events exemplifies the permanent impression they

left even on members of the diaspora who escaped deportation.

> Given the massive numbers being deported, Maiga was concerned for his half brother, who was living in what is now Edo State. Unable to reach him through go-betweens,

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[30] Ibid.

Maiga travelled to Edo, where he was told his brother had been "caught" two days before. He continued to the border, where he was confronted with what he described as a horrifying scene. Although Nigeria had opened its border to expel illegal aliens, Benin had refused to open its border, leaving the deportees stranded between the two countries' respective immigration checkpoints. President of Benin Mathieu Kérékou did not want a flood of refugees transiting through his country. He demanded that, if Nigeria insisted on expulsion, it should be handled by ECOWAS, and the deportees be taken directly from Nigeria to their appropriate destination country. The result was that hundreds of thousands of deportees were trapped in the narrow space between checkpoints without food, water, or sanitation. Three days passed until the Nigerian authorities dropped bread into the crowds from helicopters. Even then, there was no water at the border post Maiga saw. As I spoke with him years later the Malian, a massive, bearded man, repeated the word "terrible" in an anguished tone to express the extremity of the situation. He observed many dead. He described a pregnant woman who gave birth, but had no water to bathe the newborn. The baby died, and someone took it from the mother and buried it. When the border was finally reopened, the French sent "three or four" vehicles to evacuate the Malians and Burkinabe. Maiga saw his brother leaving in one of the French-supplied buses.[31]

Significantly, the précis of the political causes of the situation emerged from the informant's memory. Despite their typically limited education, Malians in the diaspora read or heard the stories carried in the newspapers and other media. They were aware, not only of the public discourse surrounding their presence in Nigeria, and the government's xenophobic policies, but of the wider regional politics at play. As Maiga demonstrates below, those in the diaspora further understood the historical context of their forced relocation.

Maiga witnessed the expulsion of Nigerien Hausa and Beninois Yoruba, despite their ethnic ties to large Nigerian subpopulations. He expressed no pity for the Nigerien Hausa, who considered themselves Nigerian citizens, and who taunted the other deportees. In contrast, he described Nigerian Yoruba women crying as they sold property for their Beninois husbands before leaving the country. Many Beninois had lived in Nigeria for decades, putting down roots and amassing property. As Maiga pointed out, Nigeria had adopted the same system as 1960s Ghana, which had done the same thing to the Yoruba who had lived there for thirty years. That historical expulsion had a devastating effect on the Ghanaian economy. The same was true in Nigeria. The Nigerian Yoruba landlords

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[31] Ibid.

were not happy as they lost a large percentage of their incomes along with their alien tenants. Maiga recounted how fellow Nigerian tenants invited Malians to their rural hometowns, where they would ostensibly be free from immigration sweeps. Few, if any, Malians accepted these invitations.[32]

The above observations illuminate the relative importance of nationality with respect to ethnicity in this context from both Nigerian and Malian perspectives. The Nigerian immigration officers deported Beninois and Nigeriens alike, despite many sharing the deportees' Yoruba and Hausa ethnicities, respectively. The fact that ethnic solidarity failed to transcend citizenship to prevent deportation is especially significant, given the role of personal preference that otherwise marked the action. Similarly, from the Malian perspective, nationality distinguished hostile from sympathetic Hausa. The antipathy between Nigeriens and Malians in this context complicates the normative narrative of solidarity among citizens from Francophone countries that Whitehouse finds a more instrumental tie than shared nationality. The informant's hostility toward the Nigerien Hausa is also significant because Malians in Ibadan and Kano were integrated into indigenous Hausa communities to the point where intermarriage was fairly common.

Even resident aliens who initially evaded the authorities experienced an extended period of harrassment at the hands of the immigration service.

Following the expulsion deadline, the depleted Malian community called a meeting to prepare for the coming "mop-up" operation. Within days, the immigration service checked house-to-house for illegal aliens in immigration Zone F, which included Sabo. They arrested Magan Traoré, the President of Malian Committee in Ibadan, and detained him at the Secretariat. Immigration released him when his Yoruba in-laws arrived and pled his case. Others were not as lucky. The deputy controller of the local immigration service improperly used the illegal aliens caught in the sweep as unpaid labor on his own farm. Some of these workers were Gambians, and their compatriots who were in the

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[32] Ibid.

country legally contacted their embassy about the practice. In response, the Lagos-based Gambian High Commissioner showed up at the Ibadan Secretariat and asked to see the Gambians that were being held for immigration violations. When the deputy controller could not produce them, his scheme was revealed, and the Gambians repatriated.[33]

In the above final section of Maiga's account, we see the two extremes resulting from immigration officers' disregard for the provisions of the law. The lack of rigor allowed Traoré--like Maiga himself--to escape deportation. In contrast, the high official's brazen conscription of deportees into slave labor on his personal farm demonstrates the lack of any guarantee to resident aliens of protection under Nigerian law. Although Maiga did not explicitly identify any of these conscripts as Malian, his recounting of the story indicates that Malians knew of this and other instances in which high officials manipulated the law to take advantage of immigrants. The realization further poisoned future relations between Malians and Nigerians in positions of authority.

What, then, was the immediate effect of the expulsions on the diaspora? In Ibadan, the government deported over half of the resident Malians, leaving only about 70 Malians in the city. Some of the deportees settled in other countries, such as Togo and Burkina Faso. The action effected a similar reduction in the population of the Lagos diaspora. The local Malian Committee hired nine buses to transport members of the community lacking proper documentation back to Mali. Based on the standard 62-seat capacity of buses of that vintage operating in Lagos, this provides a base estimate of 558 Malians deported, out of an estimated total of a thousand, deported from the metropolitan area. The President of the Malian Committee, Abdourahmane Diallo, did not, himself, have proper documentation.[34] Despite owning a house

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[33] Ibid.

[34] This is not surprising, as the government's order categorized aliens as illegal unless they had "regularized" their residency through their embassy. Mali would not have an embassy in Nigeria until 1986. Before that, the embassy of Mali in Ghana handled issues involving Malians in Nigeria and several other West African countries. To obtain

in Lagos, Diallo, along with many of his compatriots, left the country. He was not, however, on one of the buses, because he relocated to Niger. Like many other Malians in the diaspora, Diallo had not migrated from Mali directly to Nigeria, but had initially settled in Niger's capital Niamey, where he had been a long-distance trader in cement for five years. Consequently, he knew the city and its markets. Although he left Lagos as a forex trader, in Niamey, he reverted to this earlier trade. He immediately hired a truck, made the 700-mile drive to Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire where he purchased 600 50-kilo bags of cement, and returned to Niamey. He was able to sell the entire 30 tons in landlocked Niger within a month for a substantial markup. He repeated these trading trips every one to two months continuously for the next four years. Once a year, he slipped across the Nigerian border to collect the rent from the tenants occupying his house in Lagos. He only returned to Lagos in 1987 at the behest of the collective Lagos diaspora, who sent him a letter urging him to return to reclaim the mantle of president.[35]

Although the effects of the 1983 expulsions on relations between the host society and diaspora were long-lasting, their effects on the size of the immigrant community were not. Other Malians had returned much earlier than Diallo. Unlike the Nigerians expelled from Ghana years before, Malians began returning to Nigeria after only a few months, and trickled back over the next year. Three months after the initial order, newspapers began reporting the return of deported aliens.[36] The ineffectual expulsion may have played a role in the ensuing political

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official documentation for each Malian residing in Nigeria required sending the individual's identification papers to Ghana, waiting for them to be processed, and then sent back. Two weeks was not sufficient time for regularizing a single individual, much less the entire diaspora.

[35] Interview with Abdourahmane Diallo in Kurna, Kano, Nigeria on March 17, 2010.

[36] Such information on the 1983 deportations was included in news stories during the 1985 expulsions to provide context, this particular discussion printed in *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Vol. 2, No. 693, Saturday, May 11, 1985, 7, "Farewell to our expelled brothers and sisters," by Akin Ogunrinde.

events. In the following section, I discuss these incidents, focusing on the new military government's public relations campaign and its relation to resident aliens.

Military Government and Its Metaphors: Corruption as Indiscipline, Reform as War, and Nations as Killers

In this section, I analyze how government publicity campaigns interacted with the press to link the 1983 and 1985 expulsions, transforming an economic recession, through journalistic alchemy, into xenophobia. In a parallel feat of misdirection, the government, aided by the press, convinced the Nigerian public to focus exclusively on alien villains in the current recession, ignoring the failure of the initial expulsion to improve the economy, disproving foreign culpability. The mass exodus of a half million foreign workers had not ameliorated the conditions that had precipitated their deportation. Public discourse, as reflected in the newspapers, continued in much the same vein as before the expulsions, only at a heightened level of anti-immigrant fervor. Sensational stories depicting aliens as immoral and criminal proliferated.

The new military government, attempting to apply the army's organizing principle to society at large, reframed the nation's problems as different manifestations of "indiscipline." The regime connected corruption to lack of patriotism under this rubric. It further identified corruption, in the form of unofficial currency trading and smuggling, as the primary cause of Nigeria's economic problems. The government, in turn, linked the informal economy with foreigners. In this narrative, unpatriotic citizens formed partnerships with aliens to siphon money out of Nigeria. The events leading up to this transformation began on the last day of 1983, a mere eight months after President Shagiri signed the initial expulsion order, when a

military coup ended the Second Republic and, with it, his presidency.[37] Nevertheless, federal government actions aimed at preventing foreign nationals from participating in economic activity within Nigeria did not end.

The Nigerian press acted as a mouthpiece for the government's scapegoating of foreign powers and their agents within Nigeria, conveying the government's version of events to the reading public. At the same time, the press exerted pressure on the government to take an even harder-line approach by abandoning all regional cooperation, and acting directly against the perceived agents of economic destruction in their midst. These mutually reinforcing trends culminated on April 15, 1985 with Internal Affairs Minister Major General Mohammed Magoro's announcement that all illegal aliens residing in Nigeria were being expelled, and were required to quit the country within 25 days. Thus, despite the military government's condemnation of Shagari's policies, it faithfully emulated his handling of alien expulsions, learning nothing from its disastrous effects in terms of both human strife and international opprobrium. As in 1983, the narrow window for action provided insufficient time for either the government or illegal aliens to properly prepare for an orderly transition. In addition, what plans the government did make were ill-conceived. The government prepared for a migration of the fictional population of resident aliens that it had created in its own propaganda. In this fantasy world, aliens had become wealthy through illegal trafficking, and so could simply jet off to their respective countries of origin. Consequently, the government concentrated on expanding airport capacity, making no attempt to increase the availability of the ground transportation that most real expatriates actually needed. When the scheduling of scarce ground transport was combined with the lengthy process of packing up households and selling nonportable belongings, tens of

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[37] Aluko, *Expulsion*, 539.

thousands of immigrants were still in the process of settling their affairs as the deadline approached.

Despite the 1983 deportations, the recession continued, and the new administration took steps to reverse the trend. Focusing on the country's trade deficit, the regime attempted to staunch the flow of revenue out of the country by tightening import restrictions. But, rather than ameliorating Nigeria's economic problems, the administration's interventions only exacerbated them. By August 1984, the country was experiencing a bread shortage, sending prices in Lagos up by over 60 percent, from 60 kobo[38] to N1 per loaf, in a single month.[39] Four months later, *The Guardian* quoted retailers predicting there would be no Christmas sales because there was nothing to sell.[40] Moreover, even had there been more to sell, it may have been difficult to find a buyer, as over 250,000 Nigerian workers in the formal economy lost jobs in 1984. Reporting of the figure in the press affected public perception of the economic downturn beyond those directly affected.[41]

Searching for a plausible explanation for the country's continued economic woes, despite the removal of the assumed culprits, the press initially suggested that significant pockets of illegal aliens had evaded the roundup. On September 13, 1984, for example, *The Guardian* reported that a village near the Lagos suburb of Satellite Town desperately sought the assistance of the Lagos police in overthrowing the foreign "bandits" who had taken control of the area. According to city officials, fifty percent of the town's residents were illegal immigrants from

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[38] 1 Naira = 100 Kobo

[39] *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Vol. 2, No. 440, 1, Thursday, August 30, 1984, "Ceiling order on flour output blamed for bread scarcity," by Dupe Stogert.

[40] *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Monday, December 3, 1984, Bleak Xmas predicted as no goods to sell in shops," by Toyin Ajao. The traders blamed the shortage on import bans, implicitly portrayed in the December 5 article as necessitated by the illegal activities of resident aliens.

[41] *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Sunday, December 30, 1984, "266,593 workers lose jobs in 1984," by Victor Alozie and Soji Omotunde.

West African nations who, instead of leaving the country after Shagari's 1983 expulsion order, had slipped into the lightly patrolled town from higher-profile urban areas.[42] On the other hand, residents in Lagos proper reported a continued foreign presence in the guard industry that, according to one letter to the editor, explained the prevalence of armed robberies in the city.[43]

Perhaps recognizing the inadequacy of scattered pockets of aliens to explain the continued nationwide recession, the press devised a new economic hypothesis that preserved the central place of foreign intrigue. Following this line of reasoning, with the aliens based back in their countries of origin, they now operated in partnerships with unscrupulous Nigerian citizens. According to a December 5, 1984 article in *The Guardian*, currency trafficking continued to thrive due to the presence in Nigeria of "foreign rogues," who collaborated with "unpatriotic Nigerians" to circumvent financial laws. The author explained that "economic saboteurs and kleptomaniacs" in a country having strong economic security (implicitly Nigeria) could migrate to weaker states without "stringent or clear cut economic policy" and continue their "nefarious operations" with the collaboration of indigenes.[44]

The new hypothesis suggested that institutions within neighboring states shared some culpability in the alleged illegal activity, and the focus on state actors ultimately implicated Mali. The suggestion coalesced into open skepticism in the press regarding cooperative agreements with neighboring states, including the anti-smuggling *Mutual Investigation and Cooperation Agreement*, and even the ECOWAS treaty. The press intimated that low-level customs officials

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[42] *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Friday, September 14, 1984, 3, "Villagers seek police protection."

[43] *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Wednesday, October 31, 1984, 8, "Hiring of aliens by security organizations," letter to the editor from A.O. Ajayi, Lagos.

[44] *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Wednesday December 5, 1984, "Pragmatic steps against foreign exchange violators (1)," by Johnson Ibe. The following week's *Guardian* carried a story that provided a concrete example of the new model. In that article, the author described how the government was able to "parade" before journalists in the Aba suburb of Lagos a complete trafficking cell, including both Nigerians and foreigners, caught with 11,000 Lira, along with guns and ammunition. *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Tuesday, December 11, 1984, 3, "Police smash currency syndicate in Aba," by Victor Alozie.

in neighboring countries were complicit in smuggling. It further reasoned that because smuggling was overwhelmingly in a single direction and "appears to have become a crucial survival input" for the receiving nations (Nigeria's treaty partners), it would be unrealistic to expect the governments of those countries to be enthusiastic about stopping the traffic.[45] *The Guardian* fixed blame on one particular group of countries, declaring that "much of the illegal trafficking in the naira has to do with our franco-phone (sic) African neighbours,"[46] ostensibly due to their ties to Western monetary systems. The newspaper concluded hyperbolically that "[i]t is our African neighbors who are killing Nigeria."[47]   Thus, in 1984, Nigerian newspapers were attempting to deflect the population's anger over the economic recession from the Nigerian government onto West African Francophone countries—like Mali--and their citizens conducting business in Nigeria. In late October, the newspapers ran a story that specifically associated Malians with corruption and siphoning off of Nigerian wealth. Officials in Burkina Faso had arrested a Malian--Mohammad Diawara, an ECOWAS official, for embezzling 6.4 million CFA from the organization. Diawara's act was particularly brazen, as he committed it immediately after appearing before the gathered heads of state at the organization's annual conference.[48] The amount represented dues paid by all ECOWAS members, including Nigeria. Thus, the action encapsulated the wider narrative depicting treaty organizations as corrupt and Francophone members as actively engaged in graft.

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[45] The press's dim view of economic cooperation with its neighbors extended to ECOWAS, which regulated all regional trade. *The Guardian* published a scathing expose of the organization, citing its poor performance, failure to ratify five key protocols, and a 90 percent funding shortfall. *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Saturday, November 24, 1984, "ECOWAS: Tall ambitions, poor performance."

[46] *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Sunday, September 2, 1984, 6, "Managing the naira from the motor-park (4), by Ashikiwe Adioné-Egom.

[47] Ibid. Perhaps not coincidentally, during the same period, the newspapers carried series of articles debating the desirability of IMF loans to save the "battered economy." *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Friday, August 10, 1984, 9 "So the IMF is still to come?" by Sonny Asuellmen.

[48] *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Friday, November 2, 1984, 5, "Club boss to be tried in Burkina Faso."

The xenophobia in the press reflected the new military government's nation-building campaign, the "War against Indiscipline," which linked anticorruption with nationalism. In late summer of 1984, Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, Brigadier Tunde Idiagbon had launched the third phase of the campaign, with the theme of "Nationalism and Patriotism." He outlined the duty of every Nigerian to display the national flag at home and work.[49] As the campaign's title makes clear, the government viewed identity formation through a martial lens, interpreting it as a problem soluble by concerted action achieved through discipline. The military governors were quick to apply such methods. By September 19, Governor Salaudeen Latinwo of Kwara State was ordering twelve local government workers to write out the national anthem one hundred times each, after they were unable to sing the words at an official ceremony. Extending the project of nation-building through symbolic discourse, the governor further pronounced that, effective October 1 1984, all vehicles on Kwara roads must exhibit "emblems depicting love for the country." Moreover, he directed that all nurses, schoolchildren, and uniformed workers should wear similar emblems featuring slogans such as "I love Nigeria," the streamlined "Am proud of Nigeria," or the rousing "Nigeria is my country."[50] A week later, apparently sensing a lack of compliance, Latimwo threatened to close any public or private establishment not flying a national flag.[51]

The government, however, meant this symbolic manifestation of patriotism as only the final phase in a transformation of the national culture that it hoped it had initiated in the war's earlier phases. In those campaigns, the government had defined indiscipline in terms of specific

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[49] *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Wednesday, August 29, 1984, "Nigeria to hounour Olympic Heroes: Idiagbon launches 3rd phase of War Against Indiscipline," from Greg Obong-Oshose, Jos.

[50] *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Wednesday, September 19, 1984, 2, "12 workers ordered to write national anthem 100 times."

[51] *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Vol. 2, No. 468, Friday, September 21, 1984, 1, "Deadline to hoist national flag in Kwara expires today."

behaviors that harmed the nation, foremost among them currency trafficking. The national

newspapers duly reconfigured patriotism into xenophobia by placing the blame for such

trafficking not on the trade imbalance with industrialized nations, but, implausibly, on its new

ECOWAS partners. In the following section I explore how the government incorporated sports

into this formula, and why.

Discipline, Sports, and Patriotism

   The government's roll-out of its initiative promoting the deployment of patriotic symbols

and practices under the rubric of the "War Against Indiscipline" seems incongruous outside the

historical context. At the time, however, the connection between discipline and patriotism was

clear. Promotion of patriotism was the last of the campaign's three phases. The initial phase,

announced in the national capital several months before, "discouraged disorder," promoting

queuing for services, including at post offices, bus stops, and "canteens." The second phase,

"work ethics," discouraged "laziness or truancy at work."[52] The military government viewed the

citizenry's deficient patriotism, similarly, as resulting from its lack of discipline in observing the

quotidian duties of citizenship. To remedy the situation, it enforced the uniform display of

national symbols, and the daily reciting of the national pledge and singing of the national anthem.

Beyond such rituals of loyalty, however, the government incorporated into its campaign popular

heroes who embodied the link between discipline and patriotic duty. Analyzing the just-

completed 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, a self-critical commentary in the Guardian explained

the connection from the government's perspective.

   Nigeria is the biggest black man's country. This should be his reference point. The
   prowess displayed at the last Olympics by all these [Western] blacks is the handiwork of

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[52] *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Wednesday, August 29, 1984, "Nigeria to hounour Olympic Heroes: Idiagbon
launches 3rd phase of War Against Indiscipline," from Greg Obong-Oshose, Jos.

other more disciplined societies. You need discipline and nationalism. There is nothing like the Olympic ideal which is the weak man's refuge. The strong have taken over to herald the coming of technological nations and of disciplined, highly motivated athletes.

We have to do the same thing by starting now, not in May 1988.

For the Nigerian athletes who collected two medals this year, I congratulate them. They have achieved a great deal despite all the disadvantages of coming from an undisciplined society, a corrupt one, and a country where the nation is the individual, selfish, bloated, and arrogant.

Until there is no individual but a nation, disciplined, proud in its own creation, honest, hardworking, giving praise where it is due, striving for excellence without short-cuts, there will be no more medals. The Olympics is for the nation, the strong and the well organized (sic). It is not a jamboree...[53]

The commentator's unquestioning acceptance of the nation-state as a meaningful

institution, and of the Olympics as an objective measure of national strength was representative

of the attitudes of many Nigerians at the time, including the leaders of the military government,

as its campaign demonstrated. Within that conceptual framework, the excerpt identifies

discipline as the process through which the individual and society strengthen each other. In the

commentator's view, self-discipline alone is insufficient, even for individual success, which he

posits is rare outside a disciplined society. Personal success is only achieved consistently when

disciplined individuals are "well organized" (sic), so that there is *group* discipline. The

commentator draws on the African metaphor of eating as power to illustrate the point that the

disciplined individual is implicitly unselfish, limiting himself to only his fair share. In the

commentator's formulation, the highest form of discipline is abnegation of self in favor of the

nation. And, as undisciplined eating demonstrates that selfishness is ultimately self-destructive,

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[53] *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Wednesday, August 29, 1984, 9, "Of Olympics and nationalism," by A. Bamisaiye.

self-abnegation will, paradoxically, benefit individuals through the enhanced common wealth of the nation more than self-aggrandizement.

It is unlikely that the government's incorporation of Olympians into its campaign evoked these precise sentiments in the minds of average citizens. Nevertheless, Olympic sports provided a clear link between discipline and patriotism. The one context in which nearly all Nigerians of the time transcended regional, ethnic, religious, and other divisions; and united behind the nation-state was while watching international sports competitions. Nigerians at all levels of society in the mid-1980s exhibited a high degree of xenophobia in supporting the nation's athletes against foreign competitors. Moreover, Olympians were the poster children for discipline, practicing for four years in obscurity doing repetitive exercises to build their musculature, and endlessly practicing rudiments to hone their skills.

Rather than an isolated development, the military government's deployment of sports in its WAI campaign represented just the latest initiative in the continuous institutional involvement of the Nigerian government in sports. The incorporation of sports in information campaigns was facilitated by the fact that sports and information were both within the portfolio of a single ministry. The Buhari government at both federal and state levels operated ministries of "Information, Social Welfare, Youth, Sports, and Culture." These ministries in general, and sports in particular, played central roles in the War Against Indiscipline. The relationship was visible in the design not only of the associated public relations campaign, but of the news coverage of that campaign. In a prime example, the layout of *The Guardian's* story on the launching of WAI's third phase symbolically communicated the importance of sports in that initiative. The first line of the headline, printed in 16-point type, announced "Idiagbon launches 3rd phase of War Against (sic) Indiscipline." The second line of the headline, printed in 34-point

type—nearly doubled in size--blared "Nigeria to honour Olympic heroes." Other than fighting

in a literal war, competition in the Olympics represented the most visible demonstration of

patriotism on the modern world stage, making it a natural choice as the principal symbol in a

campaign for patriotism. Less typical was the way the campaign sought to inscribe the abstract

ethos of patriotism onto the physical territory of the nation through the power of naming. The

government announced that "[a] famous street will be named after every Nigerian sportsman or

woman who wins an Olympic medal," which the newspaper portrayed as "a fresh move to turn

Nigerians into patriots." Streets named for sports figures embodied the permanence of the

relationship between citizen and the land, while emphasizing the mutually-constitutive nature of

the soil (the road), patriotism (Olympic heroism), and nationhood. The campaign went further in

its implicit messaging, employing a hierarchical system of rewards to set up a correspondence

between levels of "heroism" and levels of government. In addition to the implicit promise that a

nationally-famous street would be named for each gold medalist, the article reported that "[a]

silver medalist will have a prominent street named after him in the capital of his state of origin;

and "[a] bronze medalist will have a prominent street named after him in the headquarters of his

local government area."[54] The system remained consistent with the principle of exclusive

autochthonous rights to the soil, but each successive level of Olympic triumph corresponded to a

more expansive definition of place of origin. The WAI, thus, promoted the idea that the

strongest patriotism transcended parochial loyalties to bring glory to the nation-state.

Nevertheless, the federal government implemented its policies through the various state

and local governments. Consequently, much of the interaction between the authorities and the

populace, including rank-and-file government workers, involved the state-level ministries. The

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[54] Obong-Oshose, *Olympic Heroes*.

Kwara State Ministry of Information, Social Welfare, Youths Sports, and Culture; for example,

issued directives on the use of the national flag in that state.[55] As integral parts of the military

regime, these ministries followed the same formulae as their federal superiors in rolling out the

WAI, enlisting regionally-celebrated athletes in their respective campaigns. In Cross River State,

for example, Commonwealth weight lifting champion Oliver Orok and members of the Rovers

Football Club, "were among the indigenes of the state decorated by Governor Archibong for

their patriotism" during September 1984.[56]

The Nigerian state's promotion of athletic prowess went well beyond public hagiography.

As I discuss in the following chapter, by the time of the 1984 WAI campaign, the government, at

all levels, had already developed a massive state sports bureaucracy and infrastructure. Not

content to advocate for discipline, its public relations campaign paralleled more substantive

programs to develop world class athletes for use in future propaganda. As military leaders, the

ruling junta possessed expertise in the practical application of discipline, and transplanted

lessons from parade ground to soccer pitch. The athlete, who—in his highest incarnation--

battled for supremacy over opponents representing other nations, embodied the civilian

counterpart to the soldier. To mold an effective citizen participant in either undertaking required

the paradoxical mode of training that built up the body, yet inculcated a single-minded devotion

to the nation that would allow the perfected physique's sacrifice. The athlete who "played hurt"

and "left it on the field" symbolically recapitulated the more thoroughgoing sacrifice of the

combatant. The WAI represented the same program on the societal level. It inculcated devotion

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[55] *The Guardian*, "Deadline to hoist national flag."

[56] *The Guardian* (Lagos, Nigeria), Friday, September 21, 1984, 2, "Archibong pledges reward for patriotism."

to the state through repetitious patriotic ritual, while training the populace for effective action with its campaign to stop corruption, fraud, and self-interested, individual behavior.

Conclusion

The 1983 and 1985 expulsions, while having far-reaching repercussions as events, have more significance for the Malian diaspora as reflections of the long-term attitudes of Nigerians toward resident aliens. As we have seen, Nigerians—even coreligionists—held negative opinions of Muslim aliens because of their perceived association with both criminal and intergroup violence. When this animus was combined the government's identification of Francophone countries as the principal culprits in undermining Nigeria's economy, Malians, falling in the intersection of all three vilified groups, felt the incidence of xenophobia more actuely than other foreign populations. For those members of the diaspora who remained in-country after each expulsion, or who arrived in subsequent years, these conceptions of Malians' character and societal impact would continue to shape their experiences in Nigeria for decades into the future. While the economic sources for such adversarial attitudes have been thoroughly analyzed in past histories, political and theological motivations have received less attention. The Buhari government's efforts at nation-building, while clumsy and ill-conceived overall, appear to have been somewhat effective at painting currency trafficking as unpatriotic. Considering the large number of Malians involved in this business, they earned a position of particular opprobrium in the popular Nigerian imagination.

Chapter 3

Scorpions Jumping Like Leopards:
Sport as a Site of Contested National Identification

The wrestlers need politicians. Need the government. While the government need wrestlers.[1]
- Prince Hameed Olanrewaju Mohammed
Nigerian Wrestling Federation

The previous chapter described how the military regime of the mid-1980s assigned sports

a central role in its nationalizing strategies. The government, however, did not merely

appropriate successful athletes in its propaganda, it was actively involved in creating them.

Government athletic training programs constituted the machinery for fabricating the ideal citizen.

Here, the state instilled the discipline that shaped the nation's champions. In this chapter, I

investigate the anomalous situation in which those the government portrayed as the greatest

sources of societal indiscipline entered this program. In doing so, I trace the history of several

members of the diaspora as they trained and performed in a sports program controlled by the

Nigerian government. Their experiences demonstrate the limitations of state power to force

assimilation, and those of sports in creating a sense of belonging. Despite submitting to a state-

sanctioned regime of discipline, and building the camaraderie of the gym, Malians athletes

maintained their connection to the homeland. They joined Nigerian wrestling clubs, but resisted

the clubs' attempts to control their matches, and displayed their homeland national identity

through their choice of ring names and embodied performance in the ring.

The Nigerian government constructed an extensive bureaucracy to develop world-class

athletes through the application of scientific training techniques. As the focus of the program

segued from Olympic to professional wrestling, the system took on the responsibility of

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[1] Interview with Prince Hameed Olanrewaju Mohammed, Nigerian Wrestling Federation, Initiator and Coordinator of the BRF in *Bambikiller – The Nigerian Trailer of the BRF Wrestling Championship* by eyeinthesky0815.

maintaining professional standards. The state—through its licensed instructors—brought trainees up to these standards by enforcing a daily regimen of bodily discipline in the National Institute of Sports ("NIS") training facility. The system of standardized exercises constituted a part of the officially-sanctioned body of knowledge that defined the profession of wrestling in Nigeria. Only after mastering it could a trainee aspire to become a professional wrestler, an identity that only a government-licensed federation could confer through awarding an identification card.

The government's appropriation of sports heroes in its propaganda operated on two levels. Symbolically, successful international athletes represented the superiority of Nigeria over rival nations, generating patriotic fervor in the general population during their public performances. More fundamentally, athletes embodied the government's formula for strengthening the nation through individual discipline. In the following sections, I investigate both aspects of the Nigerian wrestling system, with a focus on their significance for Malian wrestlers. I start with the public personae of the athletes, then analyze their performances, describe their training, and finally historicize the role of both host and homeland governments in shaping these processes.

The Politics of Ring Names

In the patterns of naming for the Nigerian professional wrestling ring in the late-twentieth/early twenty-first century, names rarely referenced an ethnic group or region of origin. Even names assumed by foreign wrestlers were typically unrelated to their country of origin. Of the two wrestlers from Democratic Republic of Congo whom I interviewed, for example, one wrestled under his real name and the other used an appellation—"USA Big"—that referenced a country not his own. The only two exceptions were the ring names of wrestlers from Mali: "The Scorpion of Mali" and "The Lion of Mali." The wrestlers themselves chose the names, which

reflected their unambiguous national identification, not only by referencing the state directly, but through the accompanying iconography. "The Lion of Mali" was a popular title for Sundiata, the legendary thirteenth-century founder of the Malian Empire.[2] Scorpions were ubiquitous in Mali and associated with the ability to master evil in certain Sufi traditions,[3] the predominant form of Islam through the colonial period in the territory that became Mali.

Comparing these ring names to those of their Nigerian counterparts illustrates in specific terms the difference in naming conventions, as Nigerian wrestlers "The Red Scorpion" and "The Lion Man" did not include their states of origin. The iconography of Nigerian professional wrestling names was more concerned with the ability of the wrestler. The symbol that Nigerian professional wrestlers incorporated in their ring names most often was that of iron, forming names such as "Iron Mike," and "Iron Man." The local significance of this pattern went beyond the Western association with strength. Most professional wrestlers in Lagos during the late-twentieth/early twenty-first century were Igbo. Among certain Igbo subgroups during that period, traditional wrestlers in the highest age grade, who were "considered to be the finest competitors of all," wore *ikpo,* or iron bells.[4] Having passed into adulthood, the Igbo wrestler thus deployed this sign to emphasize his individual character as an elite competitor, rather than to connote any collective identity. The disparity in naming conventions between Malian and other professional wrestlers in Lagos makes it clear that the Malians purposely chose names to make

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[2] This derives most directly from Ibn-Kaldun who identified Sundiata as Mari-Djata, roughly translated as the Lion prince, from the Arabic "amir," (Mari), the designation for the son of a Sultan, and the Malinke "djata," variously spelled jata, diata, meaning "lion." See Nehemia Levtzion, "The Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Kings of Mali," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (1963): 341-353, 343, note 18.

[3] See Jürgen Wasim Frembgen, "The Scorpion in Muslim Folklore," *Asian Folklore Studies*, Vol. 63, No. 1 (2004): 95-123, 95. In Dogon folklore, the scorpion is "viewed as the creature into which a clitoris changes after a girl is circumcised." Marcel Griaule, *Conversations with Ogotemmêli* (London: Oxford University Press), 41, 126; cited in Fisher H. Nesmith, Jr., "Dogon Bronzes," *African Arts*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Feb., 1979): 20-26, 24. Elsewhere in West Africa, the scorpion is a symbol of death. Ibid., 24.

[4] Simon Ottenberg, *Boyhood Rituals in an African Society: An Interpretation* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989), 85.

patriotic declarations of their foreign identities, while establishing independence from the

Nigerian system and its rules.

Wrestling as Performance: Matches between Malians and Nigerians at National Stadium

Cultural theorists have recognized the participatory role of audiences in professional

wrestling, viewing "the production of meaning in wrestling as a collaboration between the

wrestlers and the spectators."[5] A number of scholars argue that ethnicity is the key aspect of this

collaboration, observing that spectators identify with those wrestlers "coded most closely to their

ethnic self-image."[6] These critics, further, link ethnic coding to nationality, maintaining that, in

American professional wrestling, the audience sided with participants they perceived as

"ethnically American."[7] The "subtext of a battle between self and Other"[8] in which the audience

is an active participant was discernible in the Yoruba masques that developed in the mid-

eighteenth century. Performances divided mortal characters into strangers, who violated social

taboos, and human nonstrangers.[9] The same subtext remained evident in the wrestling matches

of early twenty-first century Nigeria.

The widespread availability of videotapes, and concomitant decline of cinemas

throughout Nigeria that famously fueled the creation of Nollywood in the early 1990s also

helped popularize American professional wrestling. Nigerians started to view tapes of the

televised World Wrestling Federation (WWF) championships in both private and public venues,

notably on buses during long-distance trips. With the wide variety of Western entertainment that

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[5] Heather Levi, "Sport and Melodrama: The Case of Mexican Professional Wrestling," *Social Text*, No. 50, The Politics of Sport (Spring, 1997): 57-68, 58.

[6] Ibid., 58.

[7] Ibid., 59.

[8] Ibid., 59.

[9] Joel Adedeji, "Traditional Yoruba Theater," *African Arts*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Autumn, 1969): 60-63, 61.

became available at the time in that format, the fact that this particular form resonated with Nigerians initially appears disconnected to any larger trend. A comparative critical analysis of Nollywood and professional wrestling videos, however, suggests something beyond a random concurrence. From a Western academic perspective, Nollywood productions and professional wrestling alike employed formulaic plotlines revolving around two-dimensional heroes and villains who egregiously overacted.

Although Western cultural theorists used the power of naming to portray Nigerian video production as derivative of the American film industry, the productions themselves belied this notion. Nollywood directors rejected the naturalistic acting then current in American film in favor of the melodramatic style that Nigerian audiences found more legible and affecting. Nigerian cinema refracted real fears in "the vivid, brightly imagined world of melodrama where the struggle for everyday survival is depicted in extravagant, fantastic form."[10] The actors and directors did not necessarily design these techniques to imitate nature; their functions were, rather, to signify emotion and "compress politics, wider social conflict, and material inequities into relations between people."[11] Caricatures and broad signaling have forbears in the Yoruba Masques, which continued into the late twentieth century.[12] In that genre, the actors wore masks carved to provide a caricature of their character. Much information was conveyed through gestures, pantomime, and dance; the integration of dance and drama continued by the influential Yoruba Travelling Theater.[13] Nollywood's treatment of tragic scenes illustrated these

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[10] Brian Larkin, *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 171.

[11] Ibid., 171

[12] Adeneji, *Traditional Yoruba Theater*, 61.

[13] Hubert Ogunde started the theater in 1945 and it migrated to film in the 1990s. See Jonathan Haynes, "Nigerian Cinema: Structural Adjustments," *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 26, No. 3, African Cinema (Autumn, 1995): 97-119, 100.

techniques most clearly. Rather than sobbing quietly for a few moments after betrayal or

rejection, women actors often wailed piteously at the top of their lungs for up to a full minute of

screen time. The actor typically accompanied the performance with an equally hyperbolic

physical display of emotion. Rather than sitting in a slumped position, with head bowed,

characters rolled back and forth on the floor during the protracted wailing. The actors were

employing a shared embodied vocabulary to signify to the audience the depth of emotion.[14]

On the other hand, identifying the dividing lines between symbolic and natural

expressions of emotion is difficult, especially for Westerners commenting on historical African

practices. West Africans in the late twentieth century deployed these signs in "real life" under

certain circumstances. In some regional Muslim subcultures, it was common for women to wail

for hours upon their husbands' deaths.[15] Nevertheless, whether natural or symbolic, Nigerians of

the time shared a vocabulary of emotion that comprised broad physical and vocal expressions.

The cultural context explained the contrasting ways Nigerians adapted American cinema and

wrestling. Whereas Nigerian producers substituted their expressive vocabulary for the barely-

legible signs used in American acting, they adopted the vocabulary of American professional

wrestling with little modification. American professional wrestlers, regardless of the period,

indulged in melodrama both inside and outside the ring. They expressed anger, pain, exertion,

exhaustion, dejection, triumph, and joy with exaggerated bodily movements, facial expressions,

and vocalizations. They played heroes and villains, and presented a formulaic narrative full of

spectacular action scenes. The broad similarities between professional wrestling matches and

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[14] For an example of this type of performance, see the work of Nollywood actor Mercy Johnson in Lancelot
Imasuen's *Emotional Crack*, Part 2 (2003), written by Emem Isong.

[15] Fieldwork in Gonsolo, Région de Koulikoro, Mali in 2003-5.

Nollywood dramas were striking. Nigerian cinema also used "the stark moral polarities of melodrama to explore and interrogate the inequities of everyday life."[16]

Malians largely shared this embodied vocabulary of expression, and responded to it positively. In the mid-1990s, Abdullai Doumbia, a Malian immigrant, saw Congolese wrestler Tyemu Pepe compete in Lagos, approached him about learning the sport, and became one of Pepe's first students. Like Pepe, Doumbia spoke French. Pepe remembered Doumbia as and a good trainee: strong, fast, and obedient. Doumbia "fought" some well-known figures in his more than ten bouts, although never travelled to foreign matches. Later, Doumbia brought his fellow Malians Moussa Dukere and Hamadou Diakite to Pepe, who began teaching the two novices together. Pepe said little about Diakite, but remembered Dukere as a middling student, who would sometimes fail to train because he was too busy. Moreover, he did not always call Pepe beforehand when he couldn't make it. In 1999 Doumbia, who had been working as a purchasing agent for Malians in Congo Brazzaville, relocated there as well, leaving Diakite and fellow agent Dukere to continue the Malian presence.[17]

Pepe and Dukere, like all professional wrestlers and coaches in Nigeria, belonged to a club, which was affiliated with other such organizations under a federation, a private body licensed by the Wrestling Board of Control, a government agency. Even within a single city, several federations, each encompassing numerous clubs, operated. Members paid dues to their clubs, each having its own administration, but often trained together with other clubs. Each club typically had several competitors at each weight class, with one considered the club's champion in that class. When a given federation had a title match, it scheduled elimination rounds among its member clubs for each weight class, leading to the title match between the two semifinalists.

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[16] Larkin, *Signal and Noise*, 171.

[17] Interview with Tyemu Pepe in the NIS building on the National Stadium grounds, July 15, 2010.

The standard match consisted of a single ten-minute round.[18] The federation awarded belts or trophies for championship title fights. Clubs in a given area held local matches, which they promoted together. Lagos State promoted international matches featuring European and American wrestlers.[19]

Pepe provided a brief summary of the Malians' careers. In 1995, Diakite, competing as the Scorpion of Mali, fought Mr. Smoking in Sports Hall, in one of ten bouts. Tickets went for 100 Naira apiece.[20] It was an acrobatic fight; each combatant throwing the other using spectacular moves, including the body slam, the suplex, and the backflip. Later the same year in Sports Hall, Diakite fought Nigerian "Monkey Man" to a draw, in one of seven or eight bouts. Neither was able to pin the other, despite some near falls, and winners were not determined by a point system.[21] Pepe remembered Dukere's first bout as also being in Sports Hall against Iron Boy in 1999. Since that was the novice's initial solo outing, Pepe encouraged him before the match not to be afraid, to take control of himself, and avoid mistakes. The bill that night consisted of bouts in several weight classes, as was typical at the Hall in that era. In Dukere's second contest, he was again beaten in Sports Hall, this time by Iron Saigon in front of a large crowd. As his coach, Pepe had prepared Dukere for his opponent, warning him to watch for the suplex, a move in which the aggressor picked up his opponent and flipped him over his head.[22]

Pepe confirmed that international matches drew larger audiences, and that the promoters always advertised the fact when foreign wrestlers were involved. In 1999, all matches were

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[18] Interview with Peace Power Lee at the NIS Building, National Stadium complex, Surulere, Lagos on July 14, 2010.

[19] Interview with Tyemu Pepe at the NIS Building, National Stadium complex, Surulere, Lagos on July 15, 2010.

[20] At the time of these interviews $1 US was the equivalent of 150 Naira (N150).

[21] Interview with Pepe, July 15, 2010.

[22] Ibid.

advertised on television and radio. For two weeks prior to the event, the promoter paid television stations AIT and NTA to announce the match four times a day, and radio Realpower to run promotions three times daily. The promoter and one or more corporate sponsors, such as Coca-Cola, 7-Up, Nigerian milk company Cowbell, Nigerian Breweries, and others, shared the cost of putting on each match. In one international match in 1999, Diakite and Dukere, billed jointly as the Scorpions of Mali, wrestled Iron Boy and Ironside in a 15-minute tag team match, but were pinned. As in American professional wrestling, each wrestler could tag his partner to substitute in at any time. And, like American pro wrestlers, sometimes all four ended up fighting in the ring simultaneously. The match involved an unusual amount of action; as Pepe put it, "when you're in a tag team match, you must do serious something."[23] For this ferrous-themed match, the advertising drew a Nigerian crowd larger than that the Malians brought out. Nevertheless, according to Dukere, the group of Malians in attendance was actively engaged, carrying Malian flags, playing Malian music, and rooting vociferously for the Scorpions. In Lagos, the Malian community—organized sometimes by community associations and others by the Malian embassy—turned out to support their compatriot wrestlers with patriotic symbols. The Nigerian spectators, likewise, generally rooted for their fellow citizens.

The Malian Sports Bureaucracy and Its Presence in the Diaspora

Here we should pause and consider how a crowd of Malians came to be at this match, a task that requires some historical context. The cultures encompassed within the Malian nation-state have long histories of folk wrestling. Ethnographers in the late nineteenth century observed that wrestling was the "national sport" among the Malinke and Soninke, with intervillage matches held on ritual dates to determine an overall victor. These competitions included

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[23] Ibid.

separate matches for adults, boys, and girls.[24] In Dogon society, the choice of a wrestling site

that was "strategically situated" between the two participating villages emphasized the pattern of

competition between polities.[25] When several of these disparate societies coalesced in nationalist

political movements, they extended the political significance of such contests, actively

promoting sport as a national symbol. The independence movement strategically deployed

sports—or more precisely, a mixture of sports and theater—as weapons in the political battles

leading up to decolonization. In a certain symmetry, as the nation-state emerged, socialist

ideologies reshaped the deep historical relationship between sport and politics in Mali, like that

in Nigeria at a later period.

During the 1950s, the socialist RDA (*Rassemblement Democratique Africaine*) sponsored

sports teams and performing arts troupes among its youth members, which widened its

geographical influence,[26] ultimately enabling it to win the newly-independent country's first

elections. First President Modibo Keita (RDA) formalized these activities in 1962 through the

institution of an annual youth arts and sports festival, *La Semaine Nationale de la Jeunesse*,

which acted as an official site "where the idea of the nation is imagined through performative,

discursive, and material means."[27] Wrestling was notably included among the sports

competitions.[28] Typical of socialist regimes, the Keita administration was not subtle in its

construction of a nexus between nationalism and sports, with sports and performing arts

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[24] Sigrid Paul, "The Wrestling Tradition and Its Social Functions," in *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History*, ed. William J. Baker and James A. Mangan (New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1987): 23-46, 25.

[25] Ibid., 39.

[26] Mary Jo Arnoldi, *Youth Festivals and Museums*, 57.

[27] Ibid., 55.

[28] Ibid., 58.

competitions interspersed with political instruction. Arnoldi summarizes the goals and effects of

these festivals succinctly:

> The sports and arts festivals extended the RDA party's reach throughout the country and
> established a government monopoly over sports and artistic production. State sponsorship
> of sports and the arts was intended to regulate these activities at local, regional, and
> national levels and to bring them squarely into the sphere of the government's socialist
> agenda.[29]

Moreover, by 1967 the Malian government had created a dedicated bureaucracy to

oversee this monopoly in the form of The Ministry of Youth and Sport. At that year's festival,

we see that the Ministry had developed into a multilayered hierarchy, as it assigned the Deputy

High Commissioner for Youth and Sport to address the festival participants. The Deputy

Commissioner, Bengoro Diarra, spoke on the meaning and goal of sports, which was not playing

"sports for sports sake, nor for material gain, but for the nation, in order that they can better arm

themselves intellectually and physically to build the nation"[30]

The military government under Moussa Traoré that ousted Keita in 1968 initially

dismantled the Ministry of Youth and Sports and suspended the youth festivals, but it was a short

hiatus. The government reinstated the festivals on a biennial basis in 1970 as *La Biennale

Artistique, Culturelle et Sportive*, and after a short tenure by the Ministry of Education, it

reconstituted the old ministry as the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture in 1978.

Despite the shift in government philosophy, the continuity of purpose behind the youth festivals

is attested to by the enabling legislation, which set up the festivals to "make a positive

contribution to the nation and to reinforce national unity"[31]. Although the Traoré government

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[29] Ibid., 57.

[30] Ibid., 58.

[31] Ibid., 61.

again discontinued the Beinnale in 1990, President Amadou Toumani Touré reinstated it in 2003.[32]

We now turn to the mechanics employed by the Malian state to project its power over sport production across national borders. The government accomplished this by working through local community groups and associations in the diaspora to keep the diasporic population under its gaze and enforce government norms. The Nigerian Chapter of the High Council of Malians Overseas, which had offices on the edge of the Idumota quarter on Lagos Island, served as the primary point of articulation between the Malian government and the Malian community in Lagos. Although the High Council was a community group, it often acted as an arm of the Malian government, coordinating not only with the Malian Embassy in Abuja, but directly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Malians Overseas in Bamako. The High Council served as a *de facto* consulate, distributing national identification documents, holding absentee voting for Malian presidential elections, and keeping a current list of Malian residents. In 2010, the embassy transformed the council offices into a processing center to conduct a new census. The council sent word to its members throughout the city to send their constituents to the office over a given week, during which embassy technicians used custom computer hardware to photograph each citizen, input her place of origin, family history, and other background information, and combine all of this personal information into a unique digital file. The computer contained its own battery packs, a stand-alone system independent of the Nigerian government's unreliable electrical grid.[33]

The High Council, in turn, articulated with the myriad other Malian associations throughout Lagos, including the Nigerian chapter of Diaspora Actions for Sports and Culture, a

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[32] Ibid., 64.

[33] Observations of the author at 24 Issa Williams St., Alakoro, Lagos Island, during June 2010.

private organization that promoted sporting activities within the diaspora, and the Malian Martial Arts Association of Nigeria, which comprised members active in karate, boxing, and, most notable here, wrestling. Ibrahim Sidibe served as President of both of the above organizations.[34]

Sidibe's connection to Malian governmental institutions had an important historical precedent. His father, Sekou Sidibe, the original settler of the post-independence diaspora in Lagos, served as the unofficial liaison between the diaspora and the Malian government in those early years. That was in the 1960s, before the High Council was formed, and when the Ambassador of Mali in Accra was also responsible for Malian citizens in Nigeria. During that period, the elder Sidibe performed most of the governmental functions later conducted by the High Council, and when communal meetings were called, they took place at Sidibe's home. Despite being born and raised in Nigeria, Ibrahim, Sekou's son, identified himself unambiguously as Malian. Immediately upon being awarded a fourth *dan* (degree) black belt, making him eligible to form his own Tae Kwon Do (Korean karate) club, he resigned from the presidency of his existing Nigerian club, and convened a meeting of all Malian black belts in Nigeria to propose the formation of a Malian Tae Kwon Do club, with himself as president. His colleagues assented, and Sidibe began taking the necessary steps to implement the idea.[35] In interviews, Sidibe said that he took up karate to represent his country in worldwide competition. The lengths to which he went in order to secure official Malian recognition made clear exactly which country he meant.[36]

Not content to remain a part of the Nigerian Federation, Sidibe travelled to Mali to seek membership in the Tae Kwon Do Federation there. He executed a partnership agreement with

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[34] Interview with Ibrahim Sidibe, National Stadium Complex, Surulere, Lagos, NI, July 20, 2010.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

that body, signed by its President and Secretary General, that designated his club as its official affiliate in Nigeria. Sidibe also sought direct and official connections with other Malian institutions. While in Mali, he met with the President of the Diaspora Actions for Sports and Culture organization, Modibo Koné, who authorized him to head the Nigerian chapter. Seeking to forge formal ties with the government, he met with officials from several state agencies, all of whom told him he had to work through the Nigerian chapter of the High Council of Malians Overseas.[37]

Upon his return to Lagos, Sidibe's association competed as a Malian club, and—despite having Nigerian students—took only Malians to competitions. He began conducting group training every Sunday in the National Stadium complex. With the presence of Sidibe's officially-sanctioned club, his compatriot wrestlers remained within the Malian government's figurative field of vision, even while practicing in Nigeria's National Stadium complex. Moreover, in his capacity as President of Diaspora Actions for Sports and Culture, Sidibe worked with the local Malian Youth Association and, on occasion, the embassy, to organize groups of Malians to attend soccer and wrestling matches at the Stadium complex when they featured Malian competitors.[38]

The Nigerian Sports Bureaucracy

The National Stadium, where these soccer and wrestling matches took place, sat along Western Avenue in the Surulere section of Lagos about two miles north of Lagos Island, the historical center of the city. Western Avenue, a heavily travelled four-lane highway, connected Eko Bridge with Ikorudu Road. The bus stop in front of the main gate generated a constant blur

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

of *danfos*[39] dropping and picking up passengers headed out of the city center, who either continued straight ahead toward Ikeja or ran across the highway to wait in front of Tafawa Balewa Stadium for *danfos* heading west down Alhaji Masha Street toward Ikate. On weekdays during my fieldwork, a late-model armored personnel carrier always sat parked at the auxiliary gate, with incongruously delicate-looking red ribbons tied daintily between the massive vehicle and the Stadium complex walls, a scattering of police sitting in chairs nearby. A tableaux of "action in repose," the scene "conveyed an image of government power and authority," offering an example of the "militarized control of space" that, according to geographer Chris Gaffney, is required for the smooth functioning of stadia.[40] On Sunday mornings, though, a visitor could discern no sign of either the carrier or its operators.

The Stadium's main gate consisted of an asphalt driveway that ran 20 meters through an opening in the 5-meter-high perimeter walls to a hand-operated traffic gate, flanked on the right by a whitewashed guardhouse. On Sunday mornings, no guards were in evidence. The space between the gate and the guardhouse was, under dry conditions, just big enough for a visitor to walk through comfortably, but in the rainy season was blocked by a two-inch-deep puddle. Having negotiated gate and puddle, a visitor was confronted by the 1970s-era reinforced concrete stadium looming straight ahead. Another 50 meters down the driveway, about 20 meters from the stadium, the driveway dead-ended into a perpendicular road, and a visitor headed to the weight-training facility would turn left, walk another 70 meters past the Indoor Sport Stadium on the left to a four-story office building. Ignoring the main entrance, chained shut from the inside,

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[39] *Danfo* is the local term for the yellow passenger vans that, although privately owned and operated, constitute much of what serves as public transportation in Lagos. *Danfos* are used vehicles, usually delivery vans, that have been shipped—or more often driven down--to Nigeria from Germany or other European countries. After purchase by local entrepreneurs, local shops refit the vans by installing windows and three to four rows of welded seats, so that the typical *danfo* seats 17.

[40] Chris Gaffney, *Temples of the Earthbound Gods* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 29; cited in Alegi, *African Soccerscapes*, 56.

the visitor would walk around to the left side of the building and enter a single nondescript side door. A man would often be stationed at a table inside the door, but, after a greeting, would not request any identification. After ten meters, the hallway turned left and the left-hand wall became steel bars through which a visitor viewed a cramped 100- by 40-foot weight room equipped with 1950s-era free weights. Anywhere from ten to thirty men would be working out, ranging in age from late-teens to mid-fifties, and in physique from paunchy to cartoon superhero.

This dingy concrete block, redolent of sweat, and lined with a fine sheen of grime built up over four decades by the combined handprints of successive generations of aspiring athletes, served as the locus for the community of professional wrestlers within Lagos. It was a diverse community in terms of ethnic, religious, and even national background, with members hailing from the DRC and Congo-Brazzaville training alongside Igbo and Yoruba, and a handful of Muslims working out with the majority of Christians. There were a few female members as well, but they often trained elsewhere in the city. For many of these athletes, the ritual of exercise had displaced that of worship. Sunday was the universal day of training, and morning was the designated time of service. While the majority of the male Christian population of the city was in church, and the majority of the male Muslim population of the city gathered in front of closed shop fronts to socialize, the male wrestlers were observing rituals of the body. The repetitive genuflection of lifting steel was not the only such observance.

The Stadium was home to the National Institute of Sports or the "NIS," the government agency that trained coaches in each national sport, including soccer, basketball, and wrestling. The drab setting and the prison architecture of the weight room were apropos, given that the institution "was fashioned along the lines of the East Germany Institute of Sports." This choice of models betrayed an extreme view of the individual's embodiment of state ideals, given the

latter's complete control over the bodies of its charges. In 1972, the executive committee of the

Nigerian National Sports Commission established the NIS for "the training of coaches, sports

organizers and other sports functionaries," the latter category in itself evocative of Eastern Bloc

bureaucracy and its sinecures. Seeking to replicate the Olympic success of East Germany (The

German Democratic Republic, or GDR), another state with a relatively small population, Nigeria

signed an agreement with the GDR's training institute, leading to NIS pilot courses at three

centers throughout the county. These courses grew into a government-sanctioned NIS monopoly

over training coaches and sports administrators "to take care of the manpower needs of the

nation," as well as undertaking "scientific research on high performance sports." The

government's role in standardization of practices did not end with these courses, but continued

with its "follow-up/monitoring" to ensure "keeping abreast with modern trends in the ever

changing world of skills, techniques, knowledge and technology." Any practitioner failing to

comply with these techniques could be identified as "a misfit," and "unfit to operate or handle

modern/current structures and processes."[41]

The language of the NIS's official website, with its vision of "manpower for the nation"

and obsession with "scientific research" and "technology" mirrored both the philosophy and

practice of sports training in East Germany at the time of the agreement. In a pamphlet

published one year before the agreement with Nigeria, the GDR stated that its foreign programs

"comprise cooperation in the field of sport science… and…development of physical culture and

sport in the age of the scientific and technological revolution."[42] The GDR's Fifth Gymnastics

and Sports Congress in 1974, moreover, made a direct connection between nationalism and

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[41] http://nisports-ng.org/history.html [source for all direct quotes in the foregoing paragraph]

[42] Ibid., 33.

sports, resolving that "[o]ur goal is to strengthen the socialist homeland."[43] In a 1971

propaganda pamphlet, the GDR not only characterized it sports program as carrying specific

political content, but identified that content with the nation's territory:

> After the defeat of German fascism in 1945, on the territory of what later became the
> German Democratic Republic, a consistently anti-fascist and democratic sports
> movement came into being, from which the German Gymnastics and Sports Federation
> emerged in 1957.[44]

Significantly, the pamphlet singled out Werner Seelenbinder as the foremost exemplar of this

legacy, a figure who bridged the gap between actual and ritual combat as a wrestling champion

and soldier.[45]

Wrestling in Nigerian Culture

The NIS, however, did not apply this East German scientific and technical approach to a

tabula rasa; wrestling had a long history, and held an important place, in the local cultures of

what is now Nigeria. Anthropological studies conducted during the 1960s, on the eve of the

NIS's birth, documented a rural Igbo society that was undergoing massive changes related to

urban labor migration. Nevertheless, at that time Igbo subgroups still divided themselves into

age grades, with each grade associated with certain activities and responsibilities. Members of

the "junior grade," which consisted of adolescents, demonstrated the physical skills and cultural

mastery necessary for grade promotion through participation in performance-based activities

such as singing, dancing, "masked playing," and wrestling. The junior grade was itself divided

into age-sets recruited every two years. The senior age-set within the junior grade worked and

danced together within each village, and participated in wrestling matches with the

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[43] Wolfgang Gitter and Bernhard Wilk, *Fun—Health—Fitness: Physical Culture and Sport in the GDR* (Berlin: Panorama DDR, 1974): 29.

[44] DDR, *German Democratic Republic Sports* (Dresden: Verlag Zeit Im Bild, 1971), 17.

[45] Ibid., 17.

corresponding age-sets in other villages. The junior age-set would also wrestle the senior age-set.
[46] Some Igbo subgroups organized a more complex system of wrestling matches among villages
and even other subgroups, reflecting the greater significance they placed on these contests.

Intervillage matches would often be an integral part of religious festivals, the most
important being the Festival of the New Yam. This festival honored the earth goddess, who was
also the goddess of morality and conduct, and the ancestors. The centrality of wrestling to this
festival is illustrated (although depicted in precolonial times) in Achebe's historical fiction
written during the same period as the previously-cited ethnography. *Things Fall Apart* (1959),
not only begins with a wrestling match that secures for life the protagonist's high status, but later
locates the match within the ritual of the Yam festival.[47] Achebe depicts the Igbo wrestlers as
calmly calculating technicians and tacticians. Okonkwo, the protagonist, is described as being
"as slippery as a fish," while his opponent is "a wily craftsman," hardly the stuff of primitive
bloodsport.[48] This rational approach to the sport among Igbo contestants was observed in the
field thirty years earlier by ethnographer William E. O'Donnell, who stated he had "never seen
the participants lose their temper."[49]

In the decades following independence, many adolescents migrated to urban areas away
from their communities for work and replaced age-sets with Family Unions and Patriotic
Unions.[50] Nevertheless, most Nigerian professional wrestlers whom I interviewed had

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[46] G.I. Jones, "Ibo Age Organization, with Special Reference to the Cross River and North-Eastern Ibo," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland,* Vol. 92, No. 2 (Jul. – Dec., 1962): 191-211, 194.

[47] Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (New York: First Anchor Books, 1994), 39.

[48] Ibid., 3.

[49] William E. O'Donnell, "Religion and Morality among the Ibo of Southern Nigeria, *Primitive Man*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Oct. 1931): 54-60, 58.

[50] Jones, *Igbo Age Organizations*, 205.

participated in such "traditional" wrestling in their home villages before migrating to Lagos. Moreover, most of these wrestlers were Igbo.

Religious festivals in Yoruba culture also incorporated wrestling. Like the Igbo, some Yoruba subgroups as late as the 1920s celebrated a New Yam Festival, *Ọdún Emira*, which featured local wrestling competitions, culminating in the crowning of the annual champion.[51] Certain local festivals imbued highly competitive junior grade wrestling with symbolic political meaning. Apter, for instance, describes the festival of Oroyeye, a local cult in the town of Ayede, near the Niger/Benue confluence.[52] In preparation for the festival, the town's junior age sets— both male and female--divided into two opposing teams labelled "indigenes" (Isaoye) and "strangers" (Odoalu). The former group comprised city quarters settled during the nineteenth century wars, the latter quarters settled by later emigrants from Ikole and Yagba. Each age set wrestled its counterpart on the opposing team, beginning with the junior age-sets and progressing over two weeks to the seniors. Following each match the junior female age-sets sang insulting songs to the wrestler from the opposing side. The texts of these songs reveal the historically political nature of the contest. Apter makes a close textual analysis of one such song, including the following lines.

> "The crown has thumped down,
> Like a bunch of palm kernels."[53]

The excerpt is a reference, first, to Eshubiyi's defeat of Iye and, second, to the deposition of Gabriel Osho by the big men of Odoalu.[54] The individual wrestler's defeat was thus fraught with

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[51] See, e.g., John Pemberton III, "Art and Rituals for Yoruba Sacred Kings," *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1989): 96-111, 174, 105.

[52] Andrew Apter, "Discourse and Its Disclosures: Yoruba Women and the Sanctity of Abuse," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (1998): 68-97.

[53] Ibid., 78.

[54] Ibid., 78.

nationalistic symbolism, recapitulating the historic downfalls of the indigenes. His failure

humiliated his entire team, and by extension, his people. The Isaoye girls' song to the Odoalu

team was equally politically charged.

> Protruding stomach like the *bẹẹmbẹ* drum…
> Odoalu is never united[55]

This imagery is more significant for its disrespectful reference to the *bẹẹmbẹ* drum than its

somatic characterization. The drum symbolized the ritual power of Odoalu's festival of Òrìṣà

Iyagba, particularly its eastern origins. Having defamed the cultural symbols of the immigrants,

the singers went on to question the immigrant group's validity as a political entity. These

Oroyeye wrestling matches, which pitted a team representing indigenes against another

representing strangers was a striking foreshadowing of the tag team matches discussed

previously, pitting the indigenous "Iron Brothers" against the stranger Malians, complete with a

vocal nationalistic cheering section.

Other pan-Yoruba festivals incorporated mock wrestling into their central rituals. The

most widely attended *òrìṣà* festival in the annual cycle of such festivals, for instance, featured a

mock wrestling match between the *ọba* (king) of the town and the `*Awòrò Olóókù*, the priest of

the town's guardian *òrìṣà*. Significantly, the purpose of the festival was "the affirmation of the

town's political unity."[56]

The Hausa, too, have a rich history of folk wrestling. Given the historical conflict

between that group, on the one hand, and the Igbo and Yoruba on the other, Hausa wrestling may

have had more influence on the Malian than on the Nigerian wrestlers in Lagos. As detailed in

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[55] Ibid., 79.

[56] Karin Barber, "How Man Makes God in West Africa: Yoruba Attitudes Towards the 'Orişa'," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (1981): 724-745, 730. For an early local Yoruba festival incorporating mock wrestling see J.D. Clarke, "Three Yoruba Fertility Ceremonies," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britian and Ireland,* Vol. 74, No. 1, 2, (1944): 91-96, 93.

Chapter 2, although the modern Malian diaspora comprised most large cities in Nigeria, the

Malian population circulated relatively freely within a subnetwork comprising Lagos, Ibadan,

and Kano. In Ibadan, the Malian community was concentrated within the Hausa enclave of

Sabon Gari (more commonly referred to as "Sabo"), and was well-integrated with the Hausa

population, sharing Islam, clothing conventions, and other cultural traits. Thus, it would be

surprising if the Malians living there were not familiar with wrestling as practiced by the Hausa

from the same neighborhood.   This is significant because Sabo Hausa, as late as 1990, wrestled

not only with other Hausa communities, but with their Yoruba neighbors. As Salomone notes,

the purpose of these matches was to strengthen the identification of the independent-minded

youth with their respective ethnic groups.

I will refer to this style of folk wrestling as "traditional" wrestling, for consistency with

the Nigerian professional wrestlers' own terminology. In light of the fact that most of the

wrestler informants had participated in traditional wrestling prior to immigrating to Lagos, it is

necessary to consider how this background has influenced Nigerian professional wrestling. First,

in relation to stage management of bouts, we see that there are historical instances of both

competitive wrestling, such as that at the Yam festivals, and simulated competition, such as that

in the *Olóókù* festival. The latter, however, is not the type of wrestling that was done by the

informants, since in those rituals individuals who either held high office or were depicting

religious or historical characters performed as part of the central ceremony. The wrestling in

which the informants participated, in contrast, was that done by adolescents seeking to prove

their physical prowess, which only made sense if the competition was genuine. Achebe gives us

a hint about the style of such wrestling when he describes Okonkwo as "throwing" his

opponent,[57] which distinguishes it from American amateur wrestling, in which opponents are "taken down" using holds, rather than thrown. On the other hand, this does not distinguish Nigerian traditional from American professional wrestling, which also uses throws. In fact, the most salient clue supporting American pro wrestling as a model for its Nigerian counterpart is the fact that an American throw known as the "suplex"[58] was cited by Tyemu Pepe as being performed by one of the Malian wrestlers in a Lagos bout.

Achebe provides a single example of a ring name: "the Cat," and its etymology: his back would never touch the ground.[59] Here, again, we are unable to draw a clear distinction between Nigerian traditional and American professional wrestling. The name, however, does provide some possible evidence of continuity between the former and its professional national counterpart. Although some American professional wrestlers have historically taken animal ring names, these wrestlers were either active in earlier periods (Gorilla Monsoon), or on local circuits (Rhino Power, Red Rooster). It is unlikely that Nigerians have seen these second-tier American wrestlers, yet some Nigerian professional wrestlers—albeit a small minority—took such ring names.

The Training Regime

In light of this background, the scene in the weight room becomes somewhat clearer. The wrestling coaches there, despite most of them having participated in traditional wrestling as adolescents, had been trained in the NIS classrooms upstairs, and had drawn on that theoretical background to develop specific instructional programs for wrestlers. In the 1980s, coaches in

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[57] Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, 3.

[58] For its use in American pro wrestling, see Henry Jenkins III, "Never Trust a Snake: WWF Wrestling as Masculine Melodrama," in *Steel Chair to the Head: The Pleasure and Pain of Professional Wrestling*, ed. Nicholas Sammond (Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 2005), 33-66, 34.

[59] Ibid., 3.

Lagos devised a highly specialized exercise regime designed to hone the bundle of skills they perceived as being required for success in competitive wrestling.   I describe this program below. Lack of funding forced these early innovators to employ inexpensive everyday objects in novel ways to create a balanced exercise plan. The cornerstone of this regime consisted of two variations on "shuttle races."[60]   In the first of these variations, the trainer took 50 stones of 1-3" diameter and divided them into piles of five, which he placed on each of ten steps of a stairway. Then, moving as quickly as possible, the wrestler-trainee ran to the top step, picked up a single rock, and returned it to the ground at the bottom of the steps, repeating until all the stones on the top step were moved, then repeating for each step, until the entire fifty stones were lying in front of the steps. In a related second exercise, an iron bar was set at a certain height, either resting on iron supports, or held by two fellow trainees, and two piles of twenty stones each placed on each side of the bar, i.e., forty stones on each side. Then the wrestler-trainee would pick up a rock from one pile, jump over the bar, exchange the rock for one in a pile on the other side of the bar, and exchange once more until the piles were completely displaced to the other side of the bar, requiring a total of forty jumps over the bar.[61]

Exercises such as the foregoing were combined with weight-lifting to form what the coaches referred to as the "gym" phase of training, aimed at developing a physique suitable for wrestling. The actual skills required for wrestling were taught in the "mat" phase of training, so named because most of this teaching took place on a wrestling mat to prevent injury. The complete training program alternated these two phases, enhanced by three to seven days a week

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[60] Interestingly, these techniques bear a marked resemblance to the "eraser shuttle" that was part of the "U.S. Physical Fitness Program" developed by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports under the Kennedy administration, a cold war era program designed by Federal bureaucrats to improve the fitness of the population. Author's recollection; see, also, www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/Physical-Fitness.aspx.

[61] Interview with Tyemu Pepe, July 15, 2010, NIS Building, National Stadium complex, Surulere, Lagos, NI.

of running, typically for twenty minutes a day. Serious trainees were expected to train every day

of the week either before or after work.[62]

One of the Malian wrestlers, Moussa Dukere, who wrestled under the ring name "The

Mali Scorpion," described some additional aspects of the program, including special dietary

practices, such drinking large amounts of milk. He ate no breakfast before his morning workouts,

which consisted of jumping over a rope, the height of which was steadily increased. Presumably

to increase lung capacity, he performed breathing exercises such as holding his breath for

alternating twenty counts over a three-minute period. He described specific types of lifting not

mentioned by others, including pushing weights with the legs, and "lifting with only the head."

After the morning workout, he spent one hour eating a West African staple, either Yoruba *àmàlà*

or Malian *to*, before meeting his coach at the Stadium at 4:00pm. The coach oversaw him doing

one-leg jumps, before beginning the instruction in "*sport practique*," or mat training. [63]

Like all NIS coaches, Tyemu Pepe developed his own version of the general training plan.

Around 1990, Pepe and fellow wrestler USA Big emigrated from the DRC to Lagos, where Pepe

settled in the Jankara quarter of Lagos Island and established himself as a wrestler and coach.

According to one of his students, Pepe's version of *sport practique* entailed hitting his charges in

the stomach to "toughen them up." This crossing of the boundary between wrestling and boxing

was also reflected in the Nigerian wrestlers' common use of the term "fight" to designate a

wrestling match. Pepe himself described some of the specifics of the "mat" phase of training

introduced previously. The first thing he did with new students was to give them physical

instruction, beginning by working on a stamina program. Then he taught them how to roll—

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[62] Ibid.

[63] Interview with Moussa Dukere, December 12, 2009, No. 12 Bridge St., Idumota, Lagos Island, Lagos, NI.

front rolling, back rolling, and summersaults. Next it was *rastapit*—footwork, and *so an tigre*,[64] or *soliopa*—jumping like a leopard.

The latter imagery takes on specific cultural significance in the context of a Nigerian training regime dominated by Igbo instructors. From precolonial times, Igbo societies incorporated leopard imagery in performing another type of ritualized violence—the war dance. Dancers not only wore leopard caps and leopard cutlass sheaths, but modelled their bodily movements on the animal's "strength, agility, and poise."[65] The embodiment of leopard movements in the repertoire of modern wrestling moves thus alluded in a culturally-specific way to the collective violence of national conflict, an association that gained significance in the later international matches. Reinforcing the political subtext, Igbo societies in the colonial period associated the leopard (*nkwo*) "with leadership and political authority."[66] The secret leopard societies (*ekpe*) that helped centralize political power in many Igbo societies[67] drew on this association to develop a body of specialized ritual knowledge that formed the basis for entrance into the senior rank within each society.[68] This single wrestling move, jumping like a leopard, therefore, encapsulated the broader project of transmitting the body of knowledge that defines the Nigerian professional wrestler, which itself echoes the initiation into the *ekpe* society. More fundamentally, the move encapsulated the act of training the Malian wrestler in a system of

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[64] According to Pratten, "Indigenous words for leopards (*ekpe* in Annang, *ẹkùn* in Yoruba) are commonly translated in Nigerian English as "tiger."" David Pratten, *The Man-Leopard Murders: History and Society in Colonial Nigeria* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 74.

[65] John C. McCall, *Dancing Histories: Heuristic Ethnography with the Ohafia Igbo* (Ann Arbor, MI, The University of Michigan Press, 2000), 68.

[66] Pratten, *The Man-Leopard Murders*, 29. While Pratten cites an "exclusive link" in the case of the Banyang, he also discusses leopards as a "means of acknowledging a chief's authority" among the Annang.

[67] Ibid, 52.

[68] Ibid., 35-6. "This knowledge concerned the secret imitation of a leopard's roar. The distinction between those who had acquired this knowledge, who 'sat on the seat of the founder' (*etie ifum ekpe*), and those who did not, further reinforced the creation of social hierarchies."

praxis in which physical movements had wider cultural significance within Nigerian society.[69]

The instructors effectively enveloped the Malian trainee in a web of Nigerian cultural signs. The wrestler's membership in the wrestling federation was analogous to membership in the *ekpe* society and similar Igbo sodalities, where "the association provided advancement and power" to its members, "yet subjected them to the discipline of the association's rules, which reflected the norms of society at large."[70]

Conclusion

Complicating the dichotomy between private ritual and public performance within the professional wrestling domain, the public performances themselves operated on two registers of meaning. Symbolically, the matches represented embodied agonistic performances of nationalism. The Malian wrestlers evoked triumphalist images of difference through the totemic imagery in their nationalistic ring names. At the same time, these matches took place within the framework of Lagos's professional wrestling establishment. Viewed through the lens of power relations, the conflict in the ring was illusory, as the Malians' defiant nationalism increased profits for the Nigerian wrestling organizations. The Nigerian state and its sanctioned sporting institutions enforced professional standards for all participants, regardless of national origin, in effect imposing a Nigerian identity on the Malians. They became professional wrestlers, as that identity was defined by the Nigerian government. In the case of the Scorpions of Mali, their moniker notwithstanding, they were competing on behalf of their club—run by Nigerians and licensed by the Wrestling Control Board—a Nigerian government agency—against a rival Nigerian club. The Malians' submission to the club's disciplinary regime, and acceptance of

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[69] As a an example of gestural significance, among the Annang Igbo, "high-to-low movements," including stepping and jumping are "central elements" of the ritual repertoire that invoke "the deities' moral sanction." Ibid., 44.

[70] Ibid., 40.

monetary remuneration secured the club affiliation. The two registers of competition that overlapped in the ring encapsulated the larger tension inherent in the diasporic condition. The diasporic community was unique in terms of the relationship between the individual and the state because both host and homeland governments wielded influence over different spheres of each diasporan's life.

When Malians wrestled in Lagos, competing national interests were vying to endow their performance in the ring with disparate meanings. The wrestling clubs required the Malians to wrestle within the structure of the Nigerian sports bureaucracy, encompassing rules regulating their bodily movements, as well as the temporal and spatial context in which they performed those movements. Each bout in which a Malian participated was only one in a series of bouts that together formed a match between the Malian's local Nigerian club and a rival club. The context reinforced the idea that the Malian wrestler was acting as a representative of his club in this larger contest. At the same time, by ensuring the presence of a group of Malian fans in the wrestling arena, Malian institutions recontextualized the Scorpions' bodily movements as an integral part of a collective performance representing the Malian nation.

The ring was the public forum in which the diasporic national duality became visible, but the diasporan was constantly under a dual gaze, with the homeland and the host nation each subjecting him to surveillance through official registration with government institutions, and issuance of mandatory identification documentation. Malians living in Lagos typically possessed Malian voting cards and Nigerian residential registration cards. The Malian professional wrestler also carried the identification card for the wrestling club itself. The wrestling clubs, although nominally private, acted as extensions of the state through its licensing of the clubs based on its regulations, and through its promotion of the clubs' matches. Thus, the clubs'

disciplinary regimes, including daily regimens of exercise and consumption, produced the type of embodied subjects that conformed to state norms for professional competition.

On the other hand, although they joined Nigerian wrestling clubs and submitted to the rigorous training program sanctioned by the NIS, the Malians did not fully cooperate with the Nigerian Wrestling Federation. The Federation required members to wrestle opponents selected by their clubs at times and venues selected by the clubs. In an act of defiance, the Malian wrestlers flouted these requirements, creating conflict with their Nigerian colleagues outside the ring. Several prominent Nigerian wrestlers held low opinions of the Malians, whom they accused of refusing to wrestle when the Nigerian Wrestling Federation directed them to. Despite sharing the Malian's religion, fellow Muslim wrestler Wonderful Sholly was one of their detractors, explaining that the Malians "just did not like it" when the Federation gave them orders.[71] Tony Destroyer, the 2007 Super Heavyweight Champion, was even more emphatic in his disdain for the Malian wrestlers. "The Scorpion of Mali is not a wrestler," he stated unequivocally, "they invited him for fight here more than three, four times in featured showcase." According to Destroyer, Diakite (the original Scorpion) refused to wrestle at these times. He said the same of Dukere, then referring to them collectively, went further, stating, "they don't train," and warning the interviewer "So you don't call his name again."[72] In the Igbo-dominated sodality of the Nigerian Wrestling Federation, the Malian wrestlers had failed to observe the association's rules, suberting Nigerian societal norms. Like their historical counterparts in the *ekpo* society, which meted out justice in precolonial times, members of the Federation were quick to pounce on the violators and eviscerate them, albeit figuratively in this modern echo of past retribution.

[71] Interview with Wonderful Sholly, July 14, 2010, NIS Building, National Stadium complex, Surulere, Lagos, NI.

[72] Interview with Tony Destroyer, July 14, 2010, NIS Building, National Stadium complex, Surulere, Lagos, NI.

Chapter 4

Conversations at the bin Laden Hotel: Nationalism and Islamic Purity

From its inception in the early 1960s, the Malian diaspora in Lagos was overwhelmingly Muslim. Meanwhile, the Malians' Nigerian coreligionists grew from 40 percent of the Lagos population in 1950 to an estimated 50 percent by 2000.[1] This chapter focuses on the relations between the Malian diaspora and Nigerian Muslims in Lagos, and explores to what extent common membership in the *umma*, the worldwide community of Muslims, transcended citizenship differences. Conversely, I examine how disagreements surrounding Islamic doctrine undermined this commonality, even within the diasporic community. The tension between global and local Islam over the last decade was represented in the diaspora by two factions within the community—one associated with the *Tablighi Jama'at* (the *Tabligh*), a global Islamic reformist movement, the other consisting of those sympathetic with the message of *Ançar Dine,* a regional Islamic organization based in Mali. Significantly, *Ançar Dine*'s spiritual leader, *Shaykh* Haidara, advocated for a "Malian Islamic tradition."[2]

For historians of Francophone West Africa, these two factions, one centering on a reformist movement of foreign origin, the other associated with local tradition appears framed by "preoccupations inherited from an earlier period."[3] The French colonial administration of the Western Sudan saw a binary opposition between what it characterized as "traditional" Islam,

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[1] Nigeria Department of Statistics, *Population Census of Lagos – 1950* (Kaduna, Government Printer, 1951), 88, Table 52.

[2] Brian J. Peterson, "Mali 'Islamisation' Tackled: The Other *Ansar Dine*, Popular Islam, and Religious Tolerance," on *African Arguments Online* hosted by the Royal African Society (http://africanarguments.org/2012/04/25/confronting-talibanization-in-mali-the-other-ansar-dine-popular-islam-and-religious-tolerance-brian-j-peterson/), Posted April 25, 2012, Retrieved September 6, 2012.

[3] Louis Brenner, "Constructing Muslim Identities in Mali," in *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Louis Brenner (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1993), 66.

which it associated with Sufism and political noninterference, on the one hand; and "reformist" Islam, which it associated with "Arabistes" and political activism, on the other. Vestiges of this model survive in current depictions of global Islam generated in the popular media, as well as some quarters of the academy.

While I contrast a transnational movement with a West African counterpart, I do so to illuminate one of many choices made by the members of the Malian diaspora and Nigerian Muslims in Lagos. Rather than portraying *Ançar Dine* as typical of Malian or West African Muslim groups, I emphasize its uniqueness within the region. Similarly, I differentiate the *Tabligh* from other transnational Islamic movements. The concept underlying my study is not that there was a static, uniform African Sufi Islam that was resistant to all transnational movements originating elsewhere. It is, rather, that the way the interaction between local and transnational movements transpired was dependent on the particular characteristics of each, and how well they reflected the changing views of the population in question. In the case of the Malian diaspora, these changes played a significant role. Standard Islamic practice in Mali gradually changed over the second half of the twentieth century. Several of the central tenets of local Sufism were displaced as societal norms over that time, notably the "Suwarian tradition" of nonintervention in state politics.[4] Over the same period, new reformist movements originating outside the Arab world gained transnational followings through studied avoidance of conflicts

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[4] The term "Suwarian" refers to fifteenth-century Western Sudanese cleric al-Hajj Salim Suwari, associated with the important early Muslim center of Jagha. In tracing the origins of this tradition, Wilks, writing in the 1960s, "very tentatively" suggests that the "ideal of withdrawal from secular political activity" and "tendency to reject jihad" of the Mande Muslim traders known as Djula "may be" derived from Suwari. Ivor Wilks, "The Transmission of Islamic Learning in the Western Sudan," in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. Jack Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 179. Hunter is stronger in asserting that "most lines of Manding learning" derive from Suwari. Focusing first on a subgroup of Muslim traders concentrated in Senegal and Guinea, he goes on to state, "The Diakhanke learned tradition traces itself back to him, and he is a central figure in the traditions of the Dyula of the Ivory Coast and Ghana as well as the Fulani of Futa Jallon in Guinea." Thomas C. Hunter, "The Jabi Ta'rikhs: Their Significance in West African Islam", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (1976): 435-457, 437, fn. 8.

with local and national governments. These developments converged in the Malian diaspora in turn-of-the-century Lagos, where the global reformists were apolitical and local traditionalists were political activists—inverting the colonial formulation in terms of relation to the state. In the following two sections, I set the stage for these developments by placing reformism into historical context in the homeland and host societies, respectively.

The Shifting Meanings of Reformist Islam in West Africa

The particular beliefs and practices associated with reformism have changed substantially over the course of West African history. Historians apply the term to the nineteenth-century Sufi jihads, which had the ostensible aim of enforcing orthodox Sufi practices, and ending the performance of indigenous rituals by nominally-Muslim local leaders. In the early years of the century, these reformist jihads were led by members of the Qadiriyya[5] *tariqa*[6] in both the Middle Niger (present day Mali) and Sokoto (present-day Nigeria) regions. At mid-century, members of the Tijaniyya[7] led a further jihad in the Middle Niger. But throughout West Africa, Sufis were the reformists of the nineteenth-century. By the mid-twentieth century, in contrast, Sufi orthodoxy had itself become the object of critiques by West African students returning from university in North Africa and the Middle East, where they had been steeped in Salafism.[8] The

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[5] The first Sufi order, founded by Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (d. 1166) in Baghdad. Members of the order, known as *Qadiris*, revere the order's founder as as a *wali*, or saint. Although al-Jilani wrote that "the sign that your will has been merged in the Divine Will is that you seek nothing of yourself or for yourself," Sahelian Qadiri *shayks* in later centuries did not interpret this as an injunction against the accumulation of wealth. Al-Jilani promised to come out from the "Unseen" to the spiritual aid of any disciple who called on him. Cyril Glassé, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1989), 15-16, 321.

[6] Arabic: literally "path," designates a Sufi order, or brotherhood (pl. *turuq*).

[7] A Sufi order founded in Algeria by Abu-l-Abbas Ahmad at-Tijani (d. 1815), who maintained that the Prophet Mohammed ordered him to do so in a daylight vision. Members of the order are known as "Tijanis," who claim that the line of descent (*silsilla*) of their divine blessing (*baraka*) runs directly from the Prophet to al-Tijani rather than through multi-generational links. Glassé, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*, 403.

[8] Salafism is the emulation of the *Salaf as-salihin* ("the pious ancestors")—the original community of the Prophet Mohammed—based on the *Sunna* (Arabic: literally "custom"; the spoken and acted example of the Prophet),

French colonial administration labelled this new wave of reformers "Wahhabis," after the Saudi

Arabian sect of that name, despite the fact that none of the students were members. Historians of

Francophone West Africa view these foreign-educated clerics as constituting another reformist

movement. Thus, Salafists—who opposed Sufism—became the reformists of the mid-twentieth

century. Despite early setbacks, this first wave of "Azharists"[9] initiated a movement that

survived as a tiny minority in Mali into the twenty-first century. Consequently the term

"reformist" has remained semantically stable into the present. Moreover, this meaning is not

specific to West Africa, as scholars of political Islam consider the the *Tabligh*, a global Salafist

organization, to be part of a worldwide reform movement.[10]

Reformist Islam in Post-World War II Mali

Twentieth-century reformists, despite their limited success in attracting followers in Mali,

influenced the practice of Islam there from the 1940s on. Over time, the dissemination of their

ideas precipitated a devolution of power from clerics to the laity, a shift that was reflected in a

gradual change in emphasis from collective to individual practices. The reformists, however,

were unable to completely eliminate two core elements of Sufism—the spiritual hierarchy and

the importance of charismatic leaders in that hierarchy. While the majority of Malians continued

to adhere to Sufi principles, fewer chose to become initiates of a brotherhood.[11] In eschewing

initiation, these Muslims avoided permanent commitments to specific orders, thus eluding the

shaykhs' control.

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through the *hadith*, and the *Qur'an*. For more on the mid-century reformist movement in Mali, see Kaba, *The Wahhabiyya*.

[9] A colloquial term for students of Cairo's al-Azhar University, but loosely applied to all students returning from university in North Africa or the Middle East.

[10] See, e.g., Dale F. Eickelman and James P. Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 51.

[11] Soares, *Islam and the Prayer Economy*, 216-217.

As the attraction of initiation into the Sufi orders began to wane in areas of the Western Sudan toward the end of the colonial era, new Islamic voluntary associations emerged to provide Muslims in urban centers an alternative framework for collective action. These organizations interjected religion into the public sphere, generally focusing on socio-political rather than doctrinal issues. Memberships could thus encompass a wide variety of religious beliefs, including those of different Sufi orders. With their lack of prescriptive beliefs, voluntary associations represented another manifestation of the trend toward transferring control over the personal observance of religion to the individual. A subset of these organizations, including *Ançar Dine*, straddled the public and private spheres by focusing on improving society through promoting individual moral behavior. While these principles were invariably represented as Islamic morals, they coincided with broader societal norms, consistent with the public focus.

Lacking the ability to directly access the *Qu'ran* and *hadith*, the illiterate majority, especially those members living in rural areas, continued to seek mediation from a variety of religious specialists. Prior to the mid-1980s, itinerant Islamic preachers proffered a limited variety of scriptural interpretation. Beginning at that time, audio-cassettes of sermons commodified and expanded the market. By using new media[12] to evaluate a wider set of competing interpretations of Islamic scripture, the illiterate portion of the Malian population implemented the reformist doctrine of individual control over one's religious life to the extent practicable. While they required scholarship of the interpreters, these devotees continued to base their opinions to some extent on the perceived strength of a speaker's mystical power rather than

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[12] Although anachronistic in the global north, for most members of the Malian diaspora, audio- and video-cassettes remained "new media" into the twenty-first century.

wholly on his erudition. That perception, in turn, was based partly on whether the speaker came from a lineage of recognized religious specialists.[13]

These historical changes in the practice of Islam shaped the understandings of their religion that Malians brought with them to the diaspora. As such, they influenced diasporic views of the specific brands of reformism and traditional practice that they encountered in Nigeria. The following section provides the additional historical background that shaped Nigerians' understandings of such movements.

Reformist Islam in Late-Twentieth Century Nigeria: The Rise of *Yan Izala*

The relative success of the *Tabligh* in Nigeria cannot be separated from the influence of domestic reformist organizations. Although the *Tabligh* had been operating in South Asia since 1927, it only became a major presence in Nigeria in the 1990s. By that time, Nigerian reformist movement *Jama'atu Izalat al Bid'a Wa Iqamat al-Sunna* (*"Yan Izala"*)[14] had already used the same media strategy as *Ançar Dine* to spread many of the *Tabligh*'s most controversial teachings by audiocassette. Although *Yan Izala* was a Northern Nigerian movement, it used electronic media, in conjunction with the national influence of reformist leader Abubakar Gumi, to spread its anti-Sufi message throughout the country.

Like the *Tabligh*, *Yan Izala* condemned conspicuous consumption and downplayed social obligations. Similarly, both organizations opposed any "differential basis of power and authority among believers,"[15] although *Yan Izala's* aggressive attacks on the hierarchical Sufi model of

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[13] Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge,* 21.

[14] The *Jama'tu Izalat al Bid'a Wa Iqamat al-Sunna* (Association for the Eradication of Innovation and Establishment of the *Sunna*), popularly known as *Yan Izala*, based on the Hausa translation, was founded in 1978 as an anti-Sufi-movement.

[15] Adeline Masquelier, "Debating Muslims, Disputed Practices: Struggles for the Realization of an Alternative Moral Order in Niger," in *Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa: Critical Perspectives,* ed. Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 234.

shaykhs and saints differed from the *Tabligh's* nonconfrontational tactics. Many *Yan Izala* disciples, like their *Tablighi* counterparts, placed Muslim principles above family. The *Izalas'* divergence from existing societal norms for domestic behavior was striking. They refused not only to eat with nonreformed kin, but to kneel before elders as required in Yoruba and other traditions. In the end, these typically young devotees often left their Sufi fathers' compounds to avoid leading sinful lives.[16] *Yan Izala*, thus, acted as a predecessor for the *Tabligh*, not only introducing reformist concepts to the society as a thinkable alternative set of values, but successfully converting a large percentage of the population to them. These initiatives reduced the level of resistance that the *Tablighis* encountered in proselytizing among Nigerian Muslims.

Islam in the Malian Diaspora: An Overview

In the 1960s and '70s, a significant percentage of Malians in the diaspora were Sufis, predominantly affiliated with the Tijani brotherhood.[17] By the beginning of the twenty-first century, in contrast, it was difficult to find Malians in Lagos who admitted to being Sufi. This finding reflected a larger trend away from Sufi orders in the homeland. After arriving in the city, a large percentage of Malians in Lagos stopped praying in the mosque on Fridays. The reason for the decline in ritual observance was generally that the Malians felt out of place in the Yoruba-dominated mosques, and were unable to follow the sermons, which the Imams delivered in Yoruba or English.[18] Outside the Dogon enclave in the Agege district, few new arrivals knew English[19], and even fewer Yoruba. After gaining some facility with local languages, and

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[16] On the other hand, the *Yan Izala* taught that "one's chief responsibility to care for immediate dependents." Masquelier, *Debating Muslims*, 233.

[17] Interview with Lassana Keita on February 28, 2009 in Idumota, Lagos, Nigeria.

[18] Ibid.

[19] The large majority of Dogon people in Lagos lived in this mainland district, and had previously settled in Ghana after emigrating from Mali. As a result, they had learned English before arriving in Lagos (see Chapter 1).

learning more about the area mosques, they normally resumed attending Friday mosque, accompanied by more experienced Malians. Even then, however, only the Dogon did any socializing with the other worshippers before or after prayers. Nor did Malians become active in the administration or leadership of their mosques, again with the exception of the Dogon.[20]

In 2009, most Malians who worked in the Idumota section of Lagos Island, home to the largest Malian enclave, attended Friday prayers at either the *Ansar ud-Deen*[21] mosque on Issa Williams Street or Lagos Central Mosque on Nnamdi Azikiwe Street.[22] I met several times with representatives of both *Ansar ud-Deen* and the Central Mosque to learn about their respective doctrines and ritual practices, with the objective of gaining a better understanding of the influences on Malian Muslims in local *jama'ats*. I was also interested in exploring the relationship between Malian Muslims and their Nigerian coreligionists in each *jama'at*. My interviews provided strong evidence that the relationship was not close. High officials of the Central Mosque repudiated the idea that Malians ever prayed there, despite my own first-hand knowledge to the contrary. When I explained that I was studying the history of Malian Muslims in Nigeria, the officials' mood turned defensive, and they heatedly denied that Malians had introduced Islam to Nigeria--a claim I had not made.[23] Rather than embracing the historical and continuing relationship between Malian and Nigerian Muslims as a testament to the faith's transnational character, these informants conveyed a xenophobic pride in the independence, and even sovereignty, of a national brand of Islam. Moreover, these were among the most powerful

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[20] Interview with Abdullai Giptele on January 10, 2010 in Agege, Lagos, Nigeria.

[21] This is the Nigerian organization for Muslim education, not *Shaykh* Haidara's Malian organization, hence the different spelling.

[22] Interview with Ibrahim Coulibaly on December 23, 2009 in Idumota, Lagos, Nigeria.

[23] Meeting with the Baba Adinni,and other members of the Executive Council of the Lagos Central Mosque on April 20, 2010, Lagos Island, Lagos, Nigeria.

clerics in Lagos, who settled questions of doctrine on behalf of the collective Lagos *jama'at*, and thereby had a strong influence over understandings of Islam among the local Muslim population.

While the solidarity between Malian and Nigerian Muslims in Lagos generally remained weak throughout the history of the diaspora, religious bonds with the greater Malian *jama'at* were continuously revitalized. Malians in the diaspora remained connected to the homeland in the 1960s and '70s through ongoing circular migration; listening to ORTM,[24] the Malian state radio station; and, to a limited extent, public phone service. In the 1980s, the introduction of audio- and, later, video-cassettes produced in Mali expanded the physical means of transnational communication.[25] The wide availability of cell phones in the twenty-first century enhanced the network dramatically in terms of influence of the diaspora on the homeland. These physical links provided the means by which Malians in the diaspora remained engaged in a public sphere that, despite its transnational reach, remained centered on the nation, in that it mediated between Malian citizens and the Malian state. In this way, members of the diaspora participated in the continual contestation of a Malian public consensus regarding societal values. As the colonial conceptions of *laïcité* faded and were replaced by more fluid understandings, religious beliefs became the subject of this transnational public discourse.

Shaykh Haidara and *Ançar Dine*: Charismatic Reformism

Complicating the religious landscape throughout the transnational community of Malians, the decades between 1980 and 2010 marked a steady rise in the popularity of *Shaykh* Cherif Ousmane Madani Haidara, a charismatic preacher who was the "spiritual leader" of the Bamako-based Muslim organization *Ançar Dine*. Haidara represented a new sort of religious figure

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[24] French: *Office de Radiodiffusion et de Télévision du Mali*

[25] Interview with Lassana Keita on February 28, 2010 in Idumota, Lagos, Nigeria.

combining local understandings and practices with those of modern reformism. Like other

reformists, Haidara emphasized the direct relationship between the individual believer and God,

thus to some extent implicitly undermining the role of Sufi masters. On the other hand, as a

charismatic leader who instructed a "community of true believers," he reprised that role. Rather

than focusing on proper ritual, as other reformists, Haidara made ethical conduct the central tenet

of his movement. Also in the reformist mode, Haidara cited *sura*[26] from the *Qur'an* and

passages from the *hadith*[27] to support his positions. Yet, he downplayed the importance of

Islamic learning, and, although he read Arabic, did not have elite clerical credentials. While

other reformists encouraged the believer to forge an individual relationship with God through

reading the *Qu'ran* and *hadith,* for Haidara, the believer built this relationship through ethical

behavior based on a few fundamental principles.[28]

The lack of emphasis on literacy represented a key difference between Haidara and other

reformists, and provided him with the same instrumental advantage that had been a key factor in

establishing Sufism as the normative form of Islam in West Africa until the mid-twentieth

century. A large percentage of the Malian population, especially in rural areas, remained

illiterate into the second decade of the twenty-first century. Members of the diaspora estimated

that the percentage was higher in Lagos, which is consistent with the high percentage of

diasporans who came from subsistence farming backgrounds.[29] Haidara's successful use of "new

media"—first audio cassettes, then video discs, "retrieved" the Sufi medium of oral transmission,

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[26] Arabic: literally "a row," One of the 114 *Qur'anic* chapters.

[27] Arabic: The body of writings documenting the sayings and actions of the prophet Muhammad.

[28] Interview with Moussa Fade on January 17, 2010 in Idumota, Lagos Island, Lagos; US Embassy Cable 09BAMAKO172, 3/20/ 2009, "In Football Stadium Full of Followers, Rock Star Imam Praises USG; Dorothea Schulz, "'Charisma and Brotherhood' Revisited: Mass-Mediated Forms of Spirituality in Urban Mali," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 33, Fasc. 2, "Religion and the Media" (May, 2003): 146-171.

[28] Ibid., 146

[29] Interview with Fatoumata Keita, May 17, 2010, Idumota, Lagos, Nigeria.

to borrow the language of Marshall McLuhan. But, whereas Sufis emphasized the exclusive nature of their relationship with God, and sought to keep this knowledge secret from the wider society, Haidara called for a public display of faith through proper conduct.

A Malian from the Segou region who started preaching in Ivory Coast in the early 1980s, Haidara began expanding his following through the circulation of sermons in *Bamanankan*[30] on audio cassettes in the mid-1980s. Haidara's followers disseminated these cassettes widely throughout the diaspora, expanding his popularity throughout that population in the process.[31] In 1996, Haidara's Lagos devotees began meeting on the roof of Yacob Traoré's house in Idumota, sometimes listening to Suleiman Diakité or other local lay preachers' sermons. In 1999, a representative of *Ançar Dine* came from Mali to start a formal branch in Lagos. Members were required to pay dues of 200 Naira a month. Moussa Cisse, a Malian who lived in Idumota, was the secretary of the local *Ançar Dine* branch, coordinating communications between Lagos and the Bamako headquarters, and arranging occasional trips to Lagos by *Ançar Dine* preachers. He also arranged for Malian residents of Lagos to go on *hajj* through *Ançar Dine*'s affiliated travel agency.[32] Cisse provided me with a thorough introduction to the *Ançar Dine* movement, including its central tenets, its history, its finances, and the extent of its reach.

Haidara's emphasis on moral conduct at the expense of ritual and theological doctrine was reflected in the prerequisite for membership in *Ançar Dine*. Somewhat redundant with the *shahadaa*[33], yet bypassing both the six articles of faith[34] and the five pillars of Islam[35], *Ançar*

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[30] (French: Bambara) The predominant local language in Mali.

[31] Benjamin F. Soares, "Islam and Public Piety in Mali," in *Public Islam and the Common Good*, ed. Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman (Brill, Leiden, 2004), 205–226, 218-219.

[32] Interview with Moussa Sumanguru on July 11, 2010 in Idumota, Lagos, Nigeria.

[33] Arabic: "to know and believe." The *shahada* is the Muslim declaration of belief in the oneness of God and acceptance of Muhammad as God's prophet.

Dine codified *Sura* 60, Verse 12 of the *Qur'an* into the following "Six Promises," that all

members of *Ançar Dine* were required to make.

1. I will not associate anything with Allah;
2. I will not steal;
3. I will not commit adultery;
4. I will not kill my children;
5. I will not slander; and
6. I will not disobey God in what is right.[36]

As the prohibition of infanticide hints, this *sura* sets forth a pledge for believing women. *Ançar*

Dine adopted it for all devotees, presumably to lend the *Qur'an's* authority to the initiation.

These promises regulated behavior by prohibiting certain immoral actions. While the first

promise appears theological, it was aimed specifically at Sufi practices, such as saint-worship

and use of charms. The five pillars, in contrast, largely ignore immoral behavior, instead

requiring the performance of specific ritual actions, while the articles of faith are concerned

exclusively with beliefs rather than actions. The difference in emphasis between *Ançar Dine*'s

initiation pledge and the canonical principles of Islam revealed Haidara's practical orientation.

In addition, the particular acts prohibited by *Ançar Dine*'s promises were anathema to Sahelian[37]

society prior to the advent of Islam. The pattern was representative of Haidara's conflation of

societal with Islamic values.

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[34] A list of core beliefs that define a Muslim. Specifically, one must believe in one God, the angels of God, the books of God, the prophets of God, the Day of Judgment, and the supremacy of God's will.

[35] The core responsibilities of all Muslims, including the profession of faith by reciting the *shahada;* the performance of *salat*, the five daily prayers; the giving of *zakat* (alms); fasting during Ramadan; and completion of the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) if able.

[36] Interview with Moussa Sumanguru on January 17, 2010 in Idumota, Lagos Island, Lagos.

[37] From s*ahel* (Arabic: literally "shore"). In this usage, the term denotes the southern edge, or "shore," of the Sahara desert. It is an area of transition between the desert and the forested zone of the Atlantic coast. The Sahelian zone is sparsely vegetated during the dry season, but supports crops during a short rainy season. In West Africa, the Sahel stretches across parts of Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Nigeria.

Ançar Dine succeeded in attracting Malians in the twenty-first-century by retaining formal aspects of local Sufism that remained popular, yet limiting its doctrine to the newly-standardized practices of public Islam within the nation-state. Soares catalogues *Ançar Dine*'s Sufi vestiges: it required a *bay'a*, or act of allegiance, for membership; it had its gatherings at *mawlud,*[38] the Prophet's birthday; and many devotees performed physical labor for "the guide," a Sufi title that Haidara affected. Many of his followers, in fact, performed devotional acts usually reserved for living saints, such as kissing his hand. Haidara's background itself represented a syncretism between Sufi hierarchy and reformist democracy. He came from a recognized lineage of minor clerics, and his father was a *Tijani*. Yet, unlike traditional major Sufi *shaykhs* in the region, Haidara had only limited clerical education, despite reading French and Arabic.[39] Nevertheless, not only was this apparent shortcoming consistent with the new reformist ethos of lay preaching, it also evoked comparison with Mohammed, "the unlettered prophet." Such a comparison, in turn, highlighted that the Haidara patronym was sharifan, another traditional qualification for major Sufi figures. Soares argues that Haidara's sharifan lineage was crucial to his acceptance as a religious specialist.[40]

The increase in Haidara's popularity within the diaspora mirrored that in the homeland. The number of Malians in Lagos who were inspired by Haidara grew over time through immigration of his followers, exposure to his recorded sermons, and activities of the local branch

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[38] Arabic: variation of *mawlid*, used colloquially to abbreviate *Mawlid an-Nabi*, the birthday of the Prophet.

[39] Soares, *Islam and the Prayer Economy*, 253-254.

[40] Ibid. The idea that there may be elements of continuity between *turuq* (Sufi orders) and certain modern associations is given credibility by *Ansar Dine*'s near namesake *Ansar al-din*, the modern transnational association into which Ibrahim Naiss restructured the Niass Tijaniyya in the late 1950s. As an association that has ties to the Tijaniyya and retains vestiges of a Sufi order, *Ansar Dine* bears similarities to *Ansar al-din* beyond its name. Like *Ansar Dine*, *Ansar al-din* has sections in different cities, each with a president, vice-president, secretary-general, etc. Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge*, 94.

of *Ançar Dine*.[41] Given the transnational Malian network, it is no surprise that Malians in Lagos,

like their counterparts in the homeland, were attracted to *Ançar Dine's* particular mix of

traditional and reformist characteristics. In the next section, I introduce the *Tabligh* movement,

one of the Muslim organizations vying with *Ançar Dine* for followers in the diaspora, and

presenting to the community an alternate form of religious syncretism.

The *Tablighi Jama'at*: Democratic Transnationalism

A minority of Malians in Lagos gravitated to the *Tabligh*, one the largest Muslim

reformist organizations in the world in the first decade of the twenty-first century, with branches

in Asia, Europe, the Americas, and throughout Africa. Largely through its use of foundational

texts, the sect created a transnational community, based exclusively on a common interpretation

of Islam, allowing its members to "withdraw from the meta-narratives of nationalism or

immigration into which others might inscribe them."[42] The *Tabligh* was a Salafist movement,

significant here as the dominant brand of reformism in Mali since the 1940s. Consequently,

Malians, including those in the diaspora, were familiar with the basic tenets of this brand of

reformism, although typically under the inaccurate colonial rubric of "Wahhabism."

In a series of interviews, Abdurahman Sangare, an Ivoirian resident of a Malian-run

lodge in Idumota and committed *Tablighi*, outlined his understanding of the sect's doctrine,

mission, and methods of working. The primary mission of the *Tablighis* was *da'wa*, or

proselytizing. The targets of this outreach were not adherents of other religions, but those

coreligionists whom the *Tablighis* considered to be practicing Islam incorrectly. While the

Tabligh, in its most visible characteristics, fit the profile of a global reformist movement. It, too,

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[41] Interview with Moussa Sumanguru on July 11, 2010 in Idumota, Lagos, Nigeria.

[42] Barbara D. Metcalf, "Living Hadith in the Tablighi Jama`at," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Aug., 1993): 584-608, 604.

represented a syncretic form of Islam that combined elements of reformism with those of local Sufi-inspired interpretations of the religion. In the case of the *Tabligh*, the source locality was not West Africa, but north India, where Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas Kandhalawi, a cleric of the Deobandi school, founded the sect in the 1920s. Although Deoband became a center of reformism, many of its founders, notably Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, were Sufi. Gangohi initiated Ilyas into no fewer than four Sufi *turuq*.[43] Ilyas, however, perceived that the way Muslims practiced their religion had become corrupted due to ignorance of Islam's central tenets, and called for a closer following of the *Sunna*.[44]

The *Tabligh*, anticipating movements like Haidara's, used the vernacular to make Islam's core principles directly accessible to the average Muslim. The sect developed its own texts centering on the *hadith*, published in inexpensive pamphlets, which it combined into book-length collections in the 1950s. The collection *Tablighi Nisab* (the *Tabligh* curriculum; also known as the *Faza'il-i a'mal,* The Merits/ Rewards of Actions), which includes the *Hikayat-i Sahaba*, (Stories of the Companions), became a standard text for the sect.[45] Ilyas placed greater emphasis on practice than on doctrine. He believed the *ulama* was losing sight of the central tenets of the religion as it became increasingly obsessed with esoteric disputes over obscure points of Islamic theology and law. He sought to reform popular practice through a move to "lay" leadership that would end the masses' dependence on elite scholars.[46]

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[43] These were the Chishtiyya, Suhrawardiyya, Qadiriyya and Naqshbandiyya orders. Ilyas's primary affiliation was to the Sabiriyya-Chritiyya suborder. Marc Gaborieau, "What Is Left of Sufism in Tablighi Jama'at?," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions,* 51e Année, No. 135, Réveils du Soufisme en Afrique et en Asie: Translocalité Prosélytisme et Réforme (Jul. - Sep., 2006): 53-72, 57.

[44] Christian W. Troll, "Two Conceptions of Da'wa in India: Jama'at-I Islami and Tablighi Jama'at," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions*, 39e Annee, No. 87 (Jul.-Sep., 1994): 115-133, 117.

[45] Muhammad Zakariyya Kaandhlawi, *Faza il-e-a Maal: Revised Translation of Tablighi Nisaab* (Karachi: Altaf & Sons; South Africa: Waterval Islamic Institute, 2000).

[46] Metcalf, *Living Hadith*, 585.

While Ilyas was concerned with moral behavior on the individual--rather than the societal--level, he demanded that believers engage effectively with the world by changing the behavior of wayward Muslims. In Ilyas's view, the latter category consisted of all non-*Tabligh* Muslims. Although historian Barbara Metcalf describes the *Tabligh* as having "no formal bureaucratic structure,"[47] by the twenty-first century it had a well-developed institutional framework and leadership hierarchy. On the international level, the Banglewali Masjid in New Delhi was the primary *markaz*[48] or *Tabligh* center, and was affiliated with the *Idara Ishaat-e-Diniyat* (Institute for the Dissemination of Works on Religion) bookshop, which published *Tablighi* texts and shipped them around the world.[49] Significantly, Ilyas built this *Tablighi* headquarters around the tomb of Nizimu'd-Din Awliy, a fourteenth-century saint of the Chishti *tariqa*.[50]

Metcalf further interprets the absence of official titleholders in the *Tabligh* organization as a manifestation of its grass-roots informality and horizontality. In Lagos, however, this ethos was difficult to discern at the local *markaz*, where lay members proved reluctant to discuss their own ideas about the sect. Instead, all those I approached directed me, not just to the local Imam, but to the Imam of the organization's primary *markaz* in a distant Nigerian city. While there may have been no official titles, the structure of the Nigerian organization clearly featured some vertical elements. More perplexing, rather than endeavoring to broadcast the *Tabligh* message,

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[47] Barbara Metcalf, "Travelers' Tales in the Tablighi Jama'at," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 588, Islam: Enduring Myths and Changing Realities (Jul., 2003): 136-148, 140.

[48] The Tabligh's use of this term, literally "center," which, in Marloes Janson's interpretation, connotes "*da'wa* center," for their compounds communicates the centrality of the proselytizing mission to the movement, almost obscuring the fact that these compounds contain mosques. For more on the use of "markaz" in the Gambia, see Marloes Janson, "Roaming about for God's Sake: The Upsurge of the Tabligh Jama'at in the Gambia," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 35, Fasc. 4 (Nov., 2005): 450-481, 453.

[49] Metcalf, *Living Hadith*, 585.

[50] Gaborieau, *What Is Left of Sufism*, 54.

the lay preachers exhibited a penchant for secrecy that was more consistent with the exclusionary practices of Sufism than with reformist outreach.[51]

In contrast, members of *Ançar Dine*, which boasted a full complement of titled officials, not only in the Bamako headquarters, but in each national branch, exhibited no such reluctance. My informants at that organization were eager to pass along their understandings of the movement, despite the fact that it revolved around the insights of a single *shaykh*.[52] The two organizations, thus, presented a double paradox. *Ançar Dine* worked as a relatively hierarchical association whose individual members, nevertheless, readily registered their ideas in the public sphere. In contrast, the *Tabligh*, organized as a more individualistic sect, whose members—despite their practice of outreach—resisted the exchange of ideas outside the framework of proselytization within the *markaz*.   This contrast in ethos between the two organizations contributed to their disparate reception in the Malian diaspora.

Competing Notions of Islamic Purity

Frederick Cooper writes that, "[w]hat is missing in discussions of globalization today is the historical depth of interconnections and a focus on just what the structures and limits of the connecting mechanisms are."[53] The primary purpose of this section is to fill in the missing part of the conversation as it relates to the transnational religious networks that the *Tabligh* and *Ançar Dine* extended into the Malian diaspora in Lagos. To accomplish this goal, it is not sufficient to simply narrate the facts on the ground. We must, in Cooper's language, uncover the mechanisms through which each organization forged connections in the diasporic community—its methods,

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[51] Informal conversation with unidentified *Tablighis* in the Oluti *Markaz* on June 1, 2010.

[52] Interviews on October 13, 2010 with Mamadu Baba Sangare, Supervisor de Chantier, and Ansar Badri Traoré, Chef du Mission, Centre de Sante, Ansar Dine, Banconi Djanguinebougou, Bamako, Mali.

[53] Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 91.

and then delve further into the structure underlying these mechanisms—each organization's doctrines and practices. Toward that end, I devote this section to a comparative analysis of these competing Islamic movements. To supply the historical depth Cooper finds lacking in other analyses, I place each doctrine, practice, and method in historical context, delineating the factors informing the perceptions of each movement that prevailed in the diaspora over the past decade.

If the *Tabligh* and *Ançar Dine* shared a mixed heritage of Sufism and reformism, why did many Malians in the diaspora react differently to them? The answer, I argue, lies in the specific mix of the traditional and the modern informing each movement and its relationship to Malian diasporan society and its Sahelian culture. The reformist movements in nineteenth-century West Africa were Sufist, and hence centered on hierarchical institutions created and maintained by charismatic leaders. One of the primary characteristics that distinguished late-twentieth-century reformist movements was their attempts to replace this vertical model with a horizontal one that eliminated the role of the charismatic leader as *shirk*, or the association of something with God. This new model recognized the individual's obligation to forge his own relationship with God and to determine proper Muslim conduct for himself, although within the deliberative context of the congregation. The caveat with the *Tabligh* was that only a *Tablighi* congregation was capable of providing the proper guidance. From the *Tabligh's* perspective, individuals in other *jama'ats* were unable to determine their own relationships with God absent the assistance of the peripatetic *Tablighis*. More crucially, the *Tabligh* required its members to actively provide such guidance.[54]

Because one of the *Tabligh's* central tenets was that the act of proselytizing was necessary for the full spiritual development of each devotee, it pushed democratization to an

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[54] Metcalf, *Travelers' Tales*, 139.

extreme by requiring all members to instruct and preach. This aspect of the *Tabligh* system broke with not only the *shaykh/murid* (master/disciple) Sufi hierarchy, but the indigenous and more pervasive *karamogo/kalanden*[55] (teacher/student) model that informed instruction of all kinds in Mali, from Islamic scholarship to hunters' traditions. The system had its roots in the age and lineage hierarchies that had weakened over the last half-century, but retained meaning for many Malians in the diaspora. The *kalanden* respected the *karamogo* for his wisdom and erudition, but age and clerical lineage were traditional proxies for those qualities. Hence, it proved difficult for many Malians in the diaspora to accept religious instruction from a peer.

Both *Ançar Dine* and the *Tabligh* focused on the embodiment of Islamic ideals as the salient aspect of the religion, largely ignoring purely abstract doctrinal matters. But whereas Haidara measured piety primarily according to personal morality, *Tablighis* stressed correct performance of ritual. The primary focus of *da'wa* in Lagos, for instance, was the standardization of prayer routines. The long history of Sufism in the Sahel left many Malians even in the twenty-first century with a belief in the power of specific ritual performance that, if not mystical, at least reflected a strong faith in its centrality to the religion. When I asked Malians in Lagos to delineate the differences between various sects, they often ignored more substantive doctrinal controversies in favor of minute differences in the bodily performance of prayers.[56]

The Malian population in twenty-first-century Lagos, thus, largely shared the *Tabligh's* view of ritual's centrality. Nevertheless, precisely because of the importance assigned to these matters, most Malians believed that the ritual as they had learned it in childhood was orthodox.

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[55] Charles Bailleul's dictionary of standard modern Bamamankan translates *karamogo* as "teacher," and *kalanden* (literally "child who reads") as "student." Note, however, that Brenner uses *karamogo-ba* and *karamogo-den* (literally "big teacher" and "child teacher") respectively as teacher and student. Bailleul, *Online Bambara Dictionary*.

[56] Interview with Numu Sempara on June 12, 2010 in Idumota, Lagos, Nigeria.

Given the vestiges of the hierarchical Sufi schema in the Malian habitus, only clerics possessing

superior credentials, backed by demonstrated erudition, would be likely to convince them

otherwise. It would be difficult for a lay member of the *Tablighis* to meet these requirements,

and, in their absence, the target of proselytization would consider the interlocutor to be not only

presumptuous, but skirting the edges of the *Qu'ran's* proscription of compulsion. Avoidance of

compulsion was a strong element of the *Tabligh* ethos, and *Tablighis* in Nigeria often stressed to

me that they did not, for example, force their wives to wear the burnoose, despite their own

endorsement of the practice.[57] Nevertheless, many Malians in the diaspora perceived the

intrusion into the personal realm of individual religious beliefs as coercive. Such perceptions

highlight an inherent contradiction in the *Tabligh's* doctrine: in theory maintaining that the

essence of Islam is a personal relationship between the believer and God, while in practice

mediating that relationship through their particular style of *da'wa*.

In their respective approaches to promoting moral behavior, *Ançar Dine* and the *Tabligh*

were in diametric opposition. Whereas the *Tabligh* scrupulously avoided direct criticism of any

specific incorrect behavior, Haidara employed a contrasting tactic—criticizing immoral behavior,

while avoiding detailed directives regulating lifestyle. The dearth of specific prescriptions gave

Haidara more doctrinal flexibility to incorporate believers from all traditions. Moreover,

whereas the *Tablighis* were implicitly critiquing their audience's practices, Haidara attacked the

actions of government and religious leaders.[58] The message that others should change their

behavior proved easier for the typical devotee to embrace than the message that he or she should

change his or her own conduct, especially when those others were already the objects of popular

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[57] The burnoose is a hooded cloak. Interview with Abdurahmane Sangare on February 11, 2010 in Idumota, Lagos, Nigeria.

[58] Schulz, *Charisma and Brotherhood Revisited*, 154.

resentment. Corrupt and hypocritical government and religious leaders fit the latter profile among many Malian citizens. Thus, Haidara connected individual behavior more directly to societal transformation by focusing his lifestyle prescriptions on individuals with the most power to effect such change. In doing so, he benefited from a combination of populist anti-government sentiment and resistance to personal change.

Despite the underlying ethos of democratization and horizontality, it is revealing that Ilyas modelled the *Tabligh* system of proselytization on the Prophet Mohammed's military jihad against nonbelievers. Emphasizing the martial aspects of the *Tabligh*, he applied military hierarchy and terminology to its organization, labelling the tours "patrols," to be led by *amirs*.[59] The sect's Nigerian adherents retained the latter Arabic title, a testament to the dictatorial style of command deployed. Abdullai Maiga, a Malian *Tablighi* in Ibadan, described the draconian rules governing *da'wa* in Nigeria, requiring participants to secure the permission of the *amir* even to urinate.[60] In its style and mission, then, Ilyas conceived the *da'wa* as a ritualized military incursion to take control of the spiritual life of Muslims under other leadership. Despite the founder's proscription against entering into doctrinal debates, or overt criticism, the process was by its nature somewhat adversarial. The implicit message—reflecting Ilyas's beliefs—was that other Muslims required instruction, and that only *Tablighis* could provide it. Naturally, non-*Tabligh* Muslims, having been taught their practices by respected elders and teachers, sometimes found this attitude presumptuous.

The attitude of many Malians, whether in the homeland or diaspora, toward strangers attempting to control the sources of their religious instruction was encapsulated by the testy reply of a Malian to a Nigerien who tried to stop him listening to a Haidara tape on a bus after the

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[59] Metcalf, *Travelers' Tales*, 145.

[60] Interview with Abdullai Maiga on May 18, 2010 in Ibadan, Nigeria.

reforms of 1991. As reported by Dorothea Schulz, the Malian retorted, 'Hey, could you mind your own business? We have democracy right now, everybody can listen to whatever he pleases.'[61] But, while Haidara's followers recognized others' rights to hold differing beliefs, their characterization of his sermons as the "undeniable truth" echoed the chauvinism of the *Tabligh*is. [62] The difference was that members of *Ançar Dine* did not actively attempt to convert other Muslims away from their personal beliefs. *Ançar Dine* considered itself ecumenical, advocating broad principles that were compatible with all sects. Rather than competing for members with Sufi orders, it provided them with an additional affiliation.

Another factor in the diaspora's disparate reactions to *Ançar Dine* and the *Tabligh* related to the organizations' contrasting views on the accumulation of personal wealth. The *Tabligh* ideal of asceticism, modelled on the sect's interpretation of the traditions of the pious ancestors, set it apart from both traditional and reformist groups in late twentieth-century Mali. The ascetic lifestyle was not compatible with the dominant Muslim traditions of the Sahel. The connection between religion and commerce has deep historical roots in West Africa. Traders introduced Islam into West Africa by the beginning of the second millennium, and commerce remained intimately connected with religion there through the twentieth century. Islam was instrumental in the accumulation of wealth, as its prescriptions for moral behavior enabled the extension of credit within networks of Muslim traders. The Kunta lineage of trans-Saharan traders, which had migrated to Walata, near Timbuktu by the fifteenth century, later formed the core of the first *Qadiriyya turuq*.[63] Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, eighteenth century founder of the *Qadiriyya-Mukhtariyya* branch in Walata professed the doctrine that wealth indicated one's *jah* (dignity and

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[61] Dorothea Schulz, *Charisma and Brotherhood Revisited*, 147.

[62] Ibid., 146.

[63] Trimingham, *A History of Islam*, 156.

status).[64] In the postcolonial era, some of the most renowned Sufi holy men adopted ostentatious

lifestyles, which only enhanced the popular perception of their power.[65] The mid-twentieth-

century Malian reformists known as the Subbanu denounced these practices, and the gifts that

made them possible.[66] Nevertheless, in contrast with the *Tabligh*, the majority of reformists in

Mali were far from separating themselves from worldly pursuits. As the Islamification of the

general populace proceeded apace over the second half of the twentieth century, strict scriptural

interpretation became the new marker for elite business circles, and wealthy merchants were

heavily represented in the Malian reformist movement by the 1990s.[67]

As a Muslim diaspora the *raison d'être* of which was accumulation of personal wealth

though commerce, the Malian community in Lagos demonstrated its members' perceptions that

trading in pursuit of worldly success was consistent with Islamic values. Haidara's emphasis on

improving material conditions for the poor reflected the same values on a societal basis. Such

views contrasted sharply with the *Tabligh's* message, which framed worldly concerns as

detracting from one's duties as a Muslim. The *Tabligh* preachers constantly reminded their

audiences of the ultimate futility of amassing worldly things.[68] This was a message that, despite

being a mainstream doctrine, was not likely to resonate with a group that had left the homeland

for the specific purpose of wealth accumulation. While it potentially gave comfort to diasporans

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[64] Louis Brenner, "Concepts of *Tariqa* in West Africa: The Case of the Qadiriyya," in *Charisma and Brotherhood in African Islam*, ed. Donal B. Cruise O'Brien (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988), 39. Although al-Mukhtar also encouraged *murids* to learn to empty themselves of all attachment to material things, he did not mean that one should not work hard to acquire wealth, which was *Sunna*, as the Prophet had been a merchant. Similarly, his simplicity of appearance denoted modesty, not a rejection of wealth. Peter B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to the 20th Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1982), 89-90.

[65] See Soares, *Islam and the Prayer Economy*, 172.

[66] Kaba, *The Wahhabiyya*, 116.

[67] Richard L. Warms, "Merchants, Muslims, and Wahhabiyya: The Elaboration of Islamic Identity in Sikasso, Mali," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (1992): 485-507, 501.

[68] Observation of the author at the Oluti *Markaz* on May 27, 2010, and interview with Abdurahmane Sangare on February 11, 2010 in Idumota, Lagos, Nigeria.

who had been unable to meet their goals, the *Tabligh's* stance against accumulation was unlikely to be embraced by the majority still striving for exactly that.

Here again, in embracing the ascetic ideal, the *Tabligh's* problem with Malian diaspora audiences derived ultimately from the democratization of religious responsibilities. Whereas a life of poverty could be considered admirable when lived by a saint with *baraka*, or divine grace, it was to most Malians in the diaspora inappropriate for a young unmarried man who was in search of bridewealth, and deplorable for a married man with a family to support. This objection reached beyond theological disputation. The imperative to "go on *da'wa*," in practice, meant the committed adherent spent a minimum of four days per month during which he was not only away from his family, but was precluded from earning any income. In distancing itself from *maraboutic* practices, the *Tabligh* had implemented strict rules against receiving, much less soliciting, monetary contributions. The rules forbade the receipt of even precooked food. Pilgrims could accept solely uncooked foodstuffs, and then only if not solicited.[69] Members of the group could not even collect enough to finance their *da'wa*, much less accumulate anything toward their ongoing household expenses. A number of devotees, including hostel-owner Abubakar Silla, emphasized that monthly *da'wa* was optional, and that they only went when they could afford it. Such caveats, however, did not change the fact that *da'wa* served as the organizing principle behind the *Tabligh*, and that a faithful adherent was under immense pressure to participate as often as possible.

The practice again conflicted with the central purpose of the Lagos diaspora, which was the pursuit of wealth through work. While the ideal may not always have equated with the reality, to advocate a new form of Islam in which lay persons would spend days at a time

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[69] Interview with Abdurahmane Sangare on February 11, 2010 in Idumota, Lagos, Nigeria.

pursuing an activity that was not their vocation was outside the range of the acceptable. Indeed,

a number of informants expressed disapproval of the proselytizing tours specifically because the

Tablighis did not work during that time. Many more viewed the tours as an abdication of

familial responsibility, not only because they typically required extended time away from wives

and children, but because they also prevented devotees from earning money to support their

dependents.[70] The incompatibility of Salafist doctrine with Sahelian norms of family relations

was recognized when the first Sahelian Salafists began proselytizing in the 1940s. Even then,

"the movement was most severely criticized because of the refusal of its members to participate

in the public ceremonies and celebrations of their families and communities."[71]

While the salience of distant kin ties, and even the extended family of the homeland

compound, had waned somewhat in the diaspora by the twenty-first century, there remained a

near-universal consensus in the community that obligations to the immediate family outweighed

all other moral considerations. One informant captured this ethos in recounting how a

compatriot had absconded with her cache of *bazen*,[72] worth thousands of dollars. When I

expressed surprise that she apparently did not share my outrage at the act, she patiently explained

that the current economic environment in Lagos made it difficult to scrape together enough

money to live on. In her straightforward assessment, "If there is no food for your children, you

have to get money to buy some."[73] The unequivocal empathy conveyed the idea that it was more

acceptable even to steal than to abdicate one's responsibilities to the family.

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[70] Interview with Ibrahim Tangera on March 16, 2010 in Kano, Nigeria.

[71] Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge*, 143.

[72] Also spelled *bazin*, or *bazan*. Bamanankan: High-quality, hand-dyed polished cotton fabric.

[73] Interview with Fatoumata Keita, July 12, 2010, Idumota, Lagos, Nigeria.

The de-emphasis of familial responsibility that Malians perceived in the *Tabligh's* proselytizing tours, in fact, reflected a principle the sect formally advocated. The *Tabligh* taught that the believer "must transcend the narrow interests of family and relations."[74] Moreover, this decentering of kinship duties was not limited to men; the *Tabligh* also expected women to "abandon all the conventional restraints, so intimately linked to family honor, in order to travel…"[75] *Tablighis* realigned their social relations to "identify with groups outside those defined by birth and inherited status alone."[76] In my interviews with Sangare, he asserted that, for the committed *Tablighi*, if family obligations or opinions prevented the believer from pursuing *da'wa*, they were to be ignored. This philosophy not only contradicted Malian norms of moral behavior toward the family in general, but the specific moral directive that one must obey his elders, especially the family patriarchs. Sangare had personally followed the *Tabligh* principles in ordering his life. Not only did he defy his father, who disapproved of him becoming a *Tablighi* and going on *da'wa*, but he had essentially abandoned his wife in the Ivory Coast for a year, while he alternated *da'wa* with searches for economic opportunity.[77]

The *Tabligh's* disengagement from larger societal issues reflected the same lack of concern for others' material needs. This policy put the *Tabligh* at odds with the reformist organizations operating contemporaneously in Mali that generally supported increased involvement of Islamic interests in government, some even calling for the implementation of *shari'a*.[78] At the same time, the policy drew a contrast between it and local Islamic organizations, such as *Ançar Dine*, which viewed enhancing the welfare of all as a central

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[74] Metacalf, *Living Hadith*, 595.

[75] Ibid., 595.

[76] Ibid., 596.

[77] Interview with Abdurahmane Sangare, February 11, 2010, Idumota, Lagos, Nigeria.

[78] Arabic: Islamic law.

responsibility of Islamic institutions. Malians in the diaspora heard reports of *Ançar Dine*

funding civic projects, and of Haidara criticizing the government for failing to do so. This

difference between the movements' respective relationships to the wider society masked a

common philosophy. Each movement based its approach on the reformist principle that the best

way to reform society was through reforming individuals' behavior. While for *Ançar Dine* that

principle was the starting point for social activism, for the *Tabligh* it represented the full extent

of engagement.

Despite accusations in the popular press, and even in some academic quarters, that it was

radicalizing its converts, the *Tabligh's* doctrine was unambiguously apolitical with respect to the

state. In sharp contrast, despite his criticism of other Muslim leaders for participating in

government, Haidara felt the state had a responsibility for solving social problems, and his

criticism of the government was the precise reason he initially rose to prominence. Such

political activism placed him squarely outside the Suwarian tradition. Indeed, Haidara's socio-

political critiques were characteristic of Malian reformists,[79] as was his most popular rhetorical

tactic. The criticism of prominent religious figures for "the discrepancy between their lives and

Quranic morals" had been used by the mid-century Sahelian Salafists in attacking Sufi leaders.[80]

On the other hand, Haidara represented a continuation of the core Sufi model of a

charismatic teacher orally instructing a community of believers.[81] Because his charisma derived

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[79] Brenner, in discussing the Malian Salafists of the 1950s notes that "social and political criticism would become a key element in the Wahhabi movement." Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge*, 145.

[80] Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge*, 142.

[81] The positive reaction to Haidara's political interventions from the public represented a marked departure from the Suwarian tradition, consistent with the increasing participation of Islamic voices in the Malian public sphere. Anthropologist Bruce Whitehouse, in contrast, argues that the Suwarian tradition remained a powerful continuing influence on Sahelian behavior in the diaspora into the twenty-first century. A careful reading of Whitehouse, however, clarifies it is *particularly* in diasporas like that in Brazzaville where the tradition remains relevant. Muslims in twenty-first century Brazzaville represented a tiny minority of the population, as they did in the Sahel at the time Suwari developed his theology. By the last decade of the twentieth century, Muslims in Lagos, as in Mali, no longer represented a minority. Whitehouse, *Migrants and Strangers,* 95-7, 103, 112.

from his oratorical skills, he embraced an aural, rather than print, medium to transmit his

message beyond his physical reach, but one that captured his personal eloquence. In contrast, a

central tenet of the *Tabligh* was that the message, which originated from the written sources of

the *Sunna,* transcended the individual messenger. For the *Tabligh*, there was no advantage in

reproducing a personalized performance conveying Islam's universal truths. As scripture set

forth these moral precepts, the print medium represented the native mode of transmission to the

core believers, all of whom were deemed equally capable of further transmitting the message

face-to-face by word-of-mouth. That mode of secondary transmission was, in fact, an integral

part of the *Tabligh* system, leaving no place for electronic media. Whereas the Sufi model, with

its s*haykhs* acting as spiritual guides, was well-suited to an illiterate population, modern

reformism depended on a large percentage of highly literate persons, who could study the

canonical texts for themselves and contribute to informed deliberation in *jama'at*. The

requirement remained problematic in Mali, despite the growing percentage of the population

attending school. It proved nearly fatal in the Lagos diaspora, the members of which had

emigrated largely from the less-educated communities of rural Mali.

Finally, one of the founding principles of the *Tabligh* was to avoid the doctrinal debates

that founder Ilyas found so unproductive. This approach was out of step with the newly

competitive marketplace of ideas initiated by the 1991 loosening of restrictions on freedom of

association and freedom of the press in Mali that I discuss below. More directly, the *Tabligh's*

model for proselytization did not allow for participation in the public sphere. On the contrary,

the sect's exclusive dependence on lay members' face-to-face interactions within the mosque met

French colonial ideals of confining religion to the Habermasian private sphere. The core

importance of *da'wa* tours further hampered the sect's effectiveness by precluding the

displacement of these trips through dissemination of electronically-reproduced sermons. All of

these characteristics left the *Tabligh* out of the currents that were pulsing through Malian

networks during the last decades of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. I explore the

sources of these cultural eddies in the following section.

Commodification of the Sacred and the Development of the Public Sphere[82]

The historical intertwining of the commercial and religious in the early second-

millennium Sahel not only facilitated economic exchange, but generated new goods and services.

Religious specialists adapted the spiritual power of Islam to existing indigenous practices,

notably *bamanaya*,[83] to create *silamaya*[84] divination and syncretic amulets containing *Qur'anic*

verse that they provided in exchange for gifts. Such practices were already so prevalent in

fifteenth-century Gao (present-day northern Mali) that Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Karim al-Maghili,

clerical advisor to Askia Muhammad Ture I, ruler of the Songhay empire, felt compelled to warn

that nobody should "treat the Islamic faith as a 'commercial product.'"[85]

As the panoply of traditional religious merchandise available in twenty-first-century West

African markets suggested, al-Maghili's warning went largely unheeded. The market

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[82] While recognizing the shortcomings of Habermas's original bourgeois European model, I retain his fundamental conceptualization of the public sphere as "a zone of mediation between the state and private individual," albeit encompassing "discursive contestation." Nick Crossley and John Michael Roberts, introduction to *After Habermas: New Perspectives on the Public Sphere*, ed. Nick Crossley and John Michael Roberts (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 2, 14. The critiques of Habermas's exclusionary definition of the public by Fraser and others are particularly germane to the present case, given that the majority of Haidara's followers were illiterate. Ibid., 14-5. Although I agree with McLaughlin that the public sphere "escaped the boundaries of the nation-state," I argue that some of these spaces continued to mediate between expatriate citizens and their homelands. Lisa McLaughlin, "Feminism and the Political Economy of Transnational Public Space," in Ibid., 156-176, 161. My most significant divergence from Habermas, however, is in his equation of "rational public debate" with purely secular discourse. William J. Meyer, "Private Faith or Public Religion? An Assessment of Habermas's Changing View of Religion," *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 75, No. 3 (Jul., 1995): 371-391, 372. In my reinterpretation, religious ideas were not only included, but central to the Malian public sphere during the period of my study.

[83] Bamanankan: The indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices of the Bamana.

[84] Bamanankan: Islam

[85] Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 52.

surrounding the Central Mosque in Mali's capital, Bamako, was a case in point. One section of

the market was devoted to selling the material artifacts of Islam, from copies of the *Qur'an* to

prayer beads. The other was dedicated to merchandizing objects, such as monkey paws and

antelope horns, freighted with spiritual power in *bamanaya*.   While the latter goods were a

reminder that commodification of the sacred predated Islam, the former highlighted the fact that

commercialization was essential to the transmission of scripture beyond its birthplace. The

*Qur'an*s were not free. Thus, when Haidara used cassettes to spread his message, the medium

was new, but its transformation of the sacred word into a commodity was not.

In her authoritative studies on the role of radio in Mali, and on Haidara's use of that

medium in particular, Dorothea Schulz argues that audiocassettes, CDs, and video discs

transformed religious sermons into commodities and, as I interpret it, believers into consumers.

Viewed through a reformist lens, this public religious marketplace was the commercial parallel

to the ideal of each individual forging his own relationship with God. For Schulz, this meant a

"resacralizing" of secular domains. Whereas devotees previously listened to sermons as a

member of a *jama'at* in a mosque, now they could listen as individuals in their own homes. I

argue, however, that it was the resacralization of *public* secular space that was the more

significant transformation effected by this recommodification of the sacred.

The new religious goods transformed the marketplace itself, and popularized preachers

like Haidara, leading to their preaching in public venues, such as stadia, previously reserved for

secular pursuits. In both cases, however, it was a "resacralization" in the sense of a revitalization

of a spiritual component already present in existing practices. West African soccer players, from

the days of the sport's adoption in the region, used charms and other mystical techniques to

influence the outcome of matches in all sporting venues. Nevertheless, this limited role of

spiritual power within the context of a secular activity was qualitatively different from dedicating

the stadium fully to a religious event, as during a Haidara sermon. Such an arrangement

represented an expansion of sacred zones from the private space of the mosque out into the

public square. It constitutes the spatial analogue of expanding the group interpreting the

scriptures from the *ulama* to the *umma*—from the scholarly elite to all believers.

By contrast, the *Tabligh* emphasized secular uses of sacred space. Because of its single-

minded devotion to the metaphor of the prophet's jihad, the *Tabligh* revived the mosque's

original roles as "place of accommodation, seat of councils, and forum for organizing

campaigns."[86] The most visible manifestation of this process in Lagos was the regular Thursday

night gathering, which drew *Tablighis* from all sections of Lagos to the Oluti *markaz* on the

Western outskirts of the city. On these occasions, between the sunset and nightfall prayers, [87]

and late into the night, lay elders preached to small groups inside the *markaz* mosque. Devotees

from distant areas stayed overnight, sleeping on the floor on blankets brought for the occasion.

The *Tablighis* proselytized in mosques, where the *jama'at* s served as their captive

audiences. Haidara, in contrast, preached in public fora, where believers from all traditions were

de facto consumers, with the choice of whether or not to listen; and offered audiocassettes in the

public market, where consumers had the choice of whether or not to purchase. In short, whereas

Haidara's commodification of the spiritual injected the sacred into the public sphere, the

Tabligh's failure to do so recapitulated the traditional spiritual landscape in which isolated

groups of believers were confined to a religious archipelago of private spaces.

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[86] Metcalf, *Living Hadith*, 603.

[87] These are two of the five obligatory prayers in Islam, the prayer just after sunset (Arabic: the *Maghrib*), and the prayer at nightfall (Arabic: the *Isha*).

Schulz further credits the consumption of religious broadcasts with fueling a trend toward the public display of spirituality, which in her view became an important factor in generating individual belief and, thereby, shaping identity.[88] The trend initially manifested itself passively in listening to such programs in public spaces, and actively through participation in call-in programs. The media for display expanded to clothing and accessories that projected religious affiliation symbolically, or, increasingly, through printed images and words. Again, this trend was an extension of a deep-historical phenomenon. West African Muslims used clothing style to signify their religious affiliation throughout history, including the Subbanu reformists in mid-twentieth-century Mali who marked their identity with the *chemise arabe*.[89] Nevertheless, the last decades of the twentieth century saw marked increase in both the boldness and specificity of such symbolic discourse. The widened range for public display of faith by individual devotees was yet another manifestation of the reformist trend toward allowing the individual to define her own spirituality. In the wave of reformism, this important aspect of defining and expressing one's religious beliefs devolved to the individual along with the ability to interpret the *hadith*. In the following section, I explore the consequences of the democratization of expression through material culture in the Malian diaspora.

Welcome to the bin Laden Hotel: Views of Global Reformist Islam in the Diaspora

How did different groups of Muslims in Lagos in the late-twentieth/early-twenty-first century publicly express their spirituality, and how were these significations understood by their coreligionists? Within the diaspora, the owners of hostels and other informal businesses in the Idumota district displayed their respective personal spiritual beliefs most explicitly through the

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[88] Schulz, *Charisma and Brotherhood Revisited*, 164.

[89] The Subbanu were the mid-century reformist movement in Bamako, Mali. Kaba, *The Wahhabiyya*, 119,139.

articles they hung on the walls of their businesses. Such displays sacralized the secular space of these commercial enterprises, reinventing the Mande tradition of proselytization through trade. While privately owned, these spaces acted as public gathering spots for immigrants, as well as Nigerians. Most of these establishments were owned by one or two individuals, whom all those entering the hostels immediately identified with the selection of the décor. Drissa Traoré, for instance, freely mixed political and religious posters on the walls of his forex bureau in Idumota. An image of *Shaykh* Haidara in mid-oration on a calendar of the Muslim year shared the south wall with a poster of a smiling Barack Obama. Traoré's bureau was filled on a daily basis with customers, assistants, and friends. The men and women formed a diverse mix of nationalities and religions, including Nigerians, Malians, and other immigrants, both Christian and Muslim. The absence of images on the walls of Abubakar Silla's hostel, in contrast, constituted an important dimension of his public display of spirituality. None of his wall hangings was representational, the two most prominent consisting of *Quranic suras* in Arabic script. Silla's hotel bustled with guests from all over West Africa, as well as Nigerians changing money and conducting other business. It also served as the primary gathering spot in the community for *Tablighis*.[90]

Turning to bodily adornment, the *Tablighis* in Lagos observed a relatively strict dress code as part of the sect's doctrine. Their mode of dress, in fact, overshadowed their verbal message and became a flashpoint for criticism by much of the Malian community. Here, again, their goal of reproducing material details of the prophet's seventh-century Arabian community alienated the *Tablighis* from modern local audiences. Many members of the Malian community viewed certain elements of the *Tabligh* dress code, such as hemming their pants at half-calf, as

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[90] Observations of the author between October 2009 and June 2010 in Idumota, Lagos Island, Lagos, Nigeria.

strange and foreign.[91] Beyond its foreignness, the *Tablighis'* dress shared elements with that of more radical reformists. Emblematic were the *Tablighis'* beards, which had become symbols of militant Islam through visual portrayals of Muslim radicals in popular media. The power of these bodily idioms as visual signifiers of militant Arabism displaced the content of the *Tabligh's* Suwarian message of nonintervention in matters of the state, as well as its South Asian origins. The most striking manifestation of this displacement within the Malian community in Lagos was the sobriquet by which the sect's main gathering spot was known: "the bin Laden Hotel."

To place this usage into its proper context requires a closer examination of how and why it developed within the community of immigrants in Lagos. The "hotel" in question is more accurately described as an informal dormitory. No signs indicated its existence or location on the third floor of a building that stood behind a women's clothing market on a back street in Idumota. The majority of the hotel's clientele were from Francophone countries other than Mali, particularly Burkina Faso.[92] The owners, as well as a large percentage of their guests, irrespective of origin, were *Tablighis*. Abubakar Silla and Mamadu Ouedraogo, a Malian and a Burkinabe, respectively, jointly owned and ran the business. Silla was well known in the Malian community. He had previously run a forex bureau with Drissa Traoré, but had a falling out with him over his alleged misappropriation of money.[93] Silla continued to provide currency conversion in the hotel's office, as was typical of such operations, although fewer customers and guests occupied the built-in benches along the walls than at Traoré's. In contrast with the décor on the walls of most other Malian establishments in Lagos, no posters featuring portraits or other images graced his walls. Two framed verses of the *Qu'ran* in Arabic provided the sole

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[91] Interview with Salim Diarra on February 27, 2010 in Idumota, Lagos Island, Lagos, Nigeria.

[92] Observations of the author between October 2009 and July 2010 in Idumota, Lagos Island, Lagos, Nigeria.

[93] Interview with Fatoumata Keita, May 17, 2010, in Idumota, Lagos Island, Lagos, Nigeria.

decorative elements. Also in contrast to procedures at Traoré's, Silla led group prayers for

Dhuhr[94] and *Asr*[95] every day (other than Friday), rolling out two ten-by-ten-foot prayer rugs to

accommodate as many worshippers as possible. The employees and clients at Traoré's took turns

praying individually in a narrow walkway outside the office, while business continued.[96]

Most Malians in the community used the nickname when referring to Silla's hotel.[97] If

the bin Laden had an official name, I never heard it. Community members used the sobriquet in

a joking manner, the humor based on the recognized divergence between the radical appearance

of the *Tablighis* and their benign character. At the same time, the name carried a subtext that

distanced those who frequented the hotel from the rest of the community. The mild ridicule

expressed an informal consensus that the hotel's residents were exhibiting behavior outside

community norms. The veiled commentary was not based solely on the sect's dress code. My

discussions with community members made it clear that they were familiar not only with Silla's

clientele, but with important elements of the *Tabligh* doctrine.

It is possible that Malians in the diaspora were also aware of the activities of the *Tabligh*

in the homeland, which suggested a more meaningful connection to militant Islamists. As

discussed in Chapter 1, the Tuareg represented the one major ethnic group conspicuously absent

from the Lagos diaspora. The demographic pattern reflected the gulf between them and the rest

of society in Mali itself, a rift that widened following government neglect and the Tuareg's

attempts to seek redress through rebellions in the 1960s and early 1990s.[98] Thus, the fact that the

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[94] Arabic: The obligatory noon prayer in Islam.

[95] Arabic: The obligatory afternoon prayer in Islam.

[96] Observations of the author between October 2009 and July 2010 in Idumota, Lagos, Nigeria.

[97] Conversations and interviews with Malians in Lagos between October 2009 and July 2010.

[98] Salafism was not new to the Tuareg. The first documented Azharist in Western Soudan was Abdullahi Ag Mahmud, a Tuareg of Kel es Souk, who returned from the Middle East in 1938. A patient advocate of Salafist doctrine, Ag Mahmud opposed Sufism, condemning both s*haykhs* and the manufacture of amulets by marabouts.

Tabligh concentrated its efforts in Mali among the Tuareg had serious political implications.[99]

The *Tabligh* began its proselytizing in Kidal in February 1999, culminating in the conversion of

Iyad ag Ghali, who had acted as leader of the Second Tuareg Rebellion, 1990-6.[100] The

Tablighis were able to forge solidarity with the Tuareg as fellow non-Arabs, joining a strand of

discourse then popular among Malian clerics celebrating Asia and Africa as having done more

for Islam than the Arab world following the initial spread of the religion.[101] The popularity of the

sect fell somewhat after 9/11, when the Malian government extradited 25 *Tablighis* back to

Pakistan.[102] Nevertheless, during the 2006 rebellion, the rebels still publicly identified

themselves with the *Tabligh*, although characterizing it as a tolerant form of Islam, and

distinguishing their actions from jihad.[103] This characterization lost some credibility in 2012,

when self-described *Tablighi* Iyad ag-Ghali led yet another group named *Ançar Dine* in

implementing *shari'a* and destroying historic Sufi shrines in Timbuktu.[104]

Irrespective of whether the Malians in Lagos were aware of the *Tabligh's* links to Tuareg

militants or not, the consensus in the diaspora on the nature of the sect was clear. Deploying

popular discourse in which the sect's central tenet of *da'wa* was characterized as incompatible

with obligations of kinship, and the power of naming to associate the sacralized space of Silla's

hostel with an Arab terrorist, a large faction of the Malian community categorized the *Tablighis*

He advocated jurisprudential reform, and denounced prayer to the Prophet or the saints. Ag Mahmud avoided the violent reaction directed at other reformers by leading his audience to correct interpretation through reading and explaining the *Qur'an*. In 1942 he visited the Gabero district near Gao, and successfully sparked a movement among the youth to avoid affiliation with the Sufi orders. Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge*, 145-6.

[99] Victor Le Vine, "Mali: Accommodation or Coexistence?" in *Political Islam in West Africa: State-Society Relations Transformed*, ed. William F.S. Miles (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), 93.

[100] Lecocq and Schrijver, *The War on Terror*, 148.

[101] Ibid., 151.

[102] Ibid., 151.

[103] Ibid., 155.

[104] Peterson, *Mali Islamization Tackled*.

as foreign. The fact that Malians were a minority at the bin Laden hotel was representative of

the transnationality of the *Tabligh*. Although most of their fellow *Tablighi* guests at the bin

Laden were from other Francophone countries, in the *markazes* this cosmopolitanism extended

beyond the Malians' usual camaraderie with fellow Francophones. The *Tabligh's* mission

required members to interact beyond praying side-by-side. Malians attended the Thursday night

instructional sessions at the Oluti mosque, during which they discussed doctrine and theology

with their fellow Nigerian *Tablighis*. Staying overnight at these sessions was optional, but

strongly encouraged. When Malians slept at Oluti, the level of familiarity with their Nigerian

coreligionists increased dramatically through informal conversation, sharing meals, and sleeping

side-by-side on the floor.[105]

Intimacy was further enhanced when Malian and Nigerian *Tablighis* went on *da'wa* tours

together. *Da'wa* groups typically embarked on several-day sojourns around Lagos, but

sometimes ventured out for weeks at a time on international missions throughout West Africa.

Even during the shorter trips, group members lived together in the mosques they visited, forming

an impromptu household, where domestic tasks were assigned by the *amir*. The group slept,

prayed, and ate meals together. Its members strengthened interpersonal bonds through the

shared labor of cooking and cleaning.[106] Consequently, the *Tabligh* was the only sect in which

Malians other than the Dogon were well integrated with Nigerians in the religious sphere. In fact,

the *Tabligh* provided one of the few frameworks in which Malians and Nigerians interacted

socially outside the medium of commercial exchange. Yet assimilation was not highly valued in

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[105] Observation of the author on May 27, 2010 at the Oluti *Markaz*, Oluti, Lagos, Nigeria, and interview with Abdurahmane Sangare on February 11, 2009 in Idumota, Lagos, Nigeria.

[106] Interview with Abdullai Maiga on May 18, 2010 in Ibadan, Nigeria.

the diaspora, and the intermingling only enhanced the negative association of the *Tabligh* with foreignness in the perception of many in the diaspora.

Within other sects in Lagos, Malians and Nigerians interacted much as they did when playing sports, such as soccer or wrestling as described in Chapter 4. They performed ritualized activities as a collective within a mutually-recognized framework. The structure, in turn, reflected fundamental values held in common, such as fair play in sport or submission to God in Islam. Nevertheless, the participants remained divided by nationality. As the attitude of the Nigerian clerics at the Lagos Central Mosque indicated, even within a single *jama'at*, the two constituencies acted much like opposing teams in competition.

The Creation of a National Islam

Schulz views the public sphere in Mali as "an arena in which various actors struggle over competing definitions of the normative foundations of the political community."[107] But, in a departure from Habermas, she situates religious activists within this struggle, and as participating in the politics of a secular state. From the beginning, the newly-independent state of Mali sought legitimacy through the appropriation of religious authority. Despite its socialist policies, the initial government of Modibo Keita attempted to co-opt moral authority by linking socialism to Islam.[108] The following Moussa Traoré regime, while espousing the ideal of *laïcité*, sought to give at least the appearance that government policy remained consistent with Muslim ideals through its 1980 creation of AMUPI, a Muslim advisory council providing guidance on

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[107] Schulz, *Charisma and Brotherhood Revisited*, 149.

[108] Keita stated that "[t]here is no religion more socialist than Islam, because it teaches among its principles that the rich should give, should share, should relieve the suffering of others." Snyder, *The Political Thought of Modibo Keita*, 94.

government policy.[109] Finally, under President Amadou Toumani Touré, the High Islamic

Council brought private independent Islamic voices into a quasi-governmental body to

coordinate religious affairs for the national Muslim community. These actions, despite mixing

religion and state institutions, were aimed at subsuming, rather than conforming to, religion.

Nevertheless, such measures reflected a national consensus that the state should consider Islamic

viewpoints.

Meanwhile, outside the government, a handful of Muslim leaders began criticizing state

policies from a Muslim perspective, expanding the public sphere beyond Weberian civil society

to include religion. As one of the more strident of these voices, Haidara gained notoriety in the

mid-1980s when President Traoré banned him from the monopoly national radio station. The

decision led to Haidara's early adoption of audio cassettes, which his followers circulated in the

informal information market, placing the preacher in the vanguard of a technological expansion

of civil society that was to have far-reaching consequences.

In 1991, a wave of such activists emerged in the public sphere, joining political debates

through the expanded opportunities for participation attending Amadou Toumani Touré's

overthrow of Moussa Traoré. The number of religious organizations mushroomed, while private

radio stations and independent presses proliferated following the new regime's guarantee of civic

rights, including freedom of association and freedom of expression. These debates demonstrated

the difficulty of drawing a line between religion and politics, and thus between civil society and

government in Mali, and elsewhere. Informing both spheres were the society's behavioral norms,

shaped by social mores that were themselves drawn from both religious and secular sources.

When Malian clerics addressed moral conduct, their critiques applied equally to a Muslim's

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[109] French: *L'Association Malienne pour l'Unite et le Progres de l'islam*; English: Malian Association for Unity and the Progress of Islam.

almsgiving, or the way officials operated government programs, and even government policy. While fundamental principles of fairness and compassion typically underlay these critiques, they were often framed as attacks on the personal behavior of prominent individuals, whether clerics or politicians.

The state's promotion of "public identification with Islam," along with the opening of the public sphere forged a "supralocal consensus about proper religious conduct and public piety."[110] The relationship between the nation-state and the public sphere was clear, as "[a]cross postcolonial Mali, the Islamic public sphere, as it were, has expanded via electronic and print media, enabling urban and rural Muslims alike to imagine belonging to the larger community of the faithful."[111] Rather than the global *umma*, this religious community was the greater Malian *jama'at*.

Malian society underwent a fundamental change over the last seventy years. Beginning with the education of the first Sahelian students at North African and Middle Eastern universities in the 1930s, and given a new public platform by the political reforms of 1991, reformists contributed to a shift in the local Islamic landscape. The power of their ideas gradually weakened the Suwarian tradition that many Sufi orders had followed since the fourteenth century, with the major violent intercessions of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century jihads, giving way to a public sphere in which Islamic organizations took active roles in politics. At the same time, Malian practitioners reshaped reformist ideas to conform to local societal norms, resulting in new syncretic brands of Islam. It is significant that the most popular of these hybrids, *Ançar Dine*, took anti-Arabist positions and championed prayer in local languages. Moreover, although the organization touted its international presence, it was transnational only in the diasporic sense.

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[110] Peterson, *Islamization from Below*, 252.

[111] Ibid., 251-2.

Ançar Dine was built entirely around the ideas Haidara promoted in his sermons, which he delivered in Bamanankan, the primary indigenous vehicular language of Mali. Only Malians living abroad, along with the small population of Bamanankan speakers originating outside Mali, were able to access the organization's message. Haidara made his national focus explicit, calling for a "Malian Islamic tradition."[112]

While, after 1991, Mali fulfilled to some extent the Islamist ideal of involving Muslim voices in the shaping of its government, the form of Islam remained localized, and drew on a set of dynamic historically-contingent social mores that it held in common with local secular authorities. In Mali, Islam was subsumed by local culture rather than displacing local with universal Islamic practices. While most Malians thought of themselves as members of the *umma*, and observed the core principles of Islam, the 2012 takeover of portions of northern Mali by Islamic militants provided a stark delineation of the shallowness of the pan-Islamic transnationality. Brian Peterson frames the underlying religious conflict as "*Ançar Dine* v. *Ançar Dine*,"[113] the foreign group initiating *shari'a* law sharing a name with the local group that condemned it. The wide disparity in translating into action the straightforward Arabic phrase meaning "helpers of the faith" derived from the respective actors' divergent religious worldviews, one representing Haidara's vision of "a Malian Islamic tradition independent of Arabic language and culture,"[114] the other reflecting a belief in a pan-Islamic society based on the untranslated *Sunna*.

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[112] Peterson, *Mali Islamisation Tackled*, emphasis supplied.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid.

Conclusion

Benjamin Soares observes that, "[w]hen migrants are outside Mali, they frequently re-imagine themselves both as Malians and as Muslims."[115] In this chapter I have attempted to elucidate the process by which such refashioning occurred in Lagos over the half-century following Malian independence. In doing so, I take as my starting point Soares's further observation that "the public sphere has helped to foster a supralocal sense of shared Muslim identity in Mali, an imagined community of Muslims often linked to the Malian state."[116] Drawing on the work of Schulz and others, I have argued that new media have expanded the public sphere Soares cites, so that the supralocal sense of shared identity includes the Malian diaspora. In Lagos, transnational networks paradoxically heightened national identification. Inclusion of the Malian residents of Lagos as participants in the religiously-inflected national conversation "anchored" their self-fashioning in the homeland.[117] With that mooring, members of the diaspora recreated identities as moral citizens. The dynamic link with the homeland moderated the cosmopolitan influences on the diaspora, including those exerted by transnational Islamic movements like the *Tabligh*. While their common religion brought Malians and Nigerians together in the same space for prayer, their different citizenship, reflected in divergent practices, largely separated them outside that circumscribed context.

I have shown that Malians in Lagos used electronic media to listen to preachers such as *Shaykh* Haidara. I have argued, in turn, that Haidara represented a highly localized brand of Islam that was distinctly parochial in its focus on the Malian nation-state. *Ançar Dine* conflated

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[115] Soares, *Islam and the Prayer Economy*, 236.

[116] Ibid., 238.

[117] I borrow this apt metaphor from Bruce Whitehouse's description of how identity among Sahelians in Brazzaville was related to their homeland. Whitehouse, *Migrants and Strangers*, 211.

religious morality with broadly-held societal values, while lobbying the Malian state to initiate development projects. Haidara preached in Mali's predominant local language, advocated praying in, and translation of the *Qur'an* and *hadith* into, that language; and attacked foreign influences on the practice of Islam in Mali. He continuously engaged the diaspora in discourse framed in the language of Islamic piety that centered on the Malian state. Through such participation in a homeland-centered public sphere, members of the Malian diaspora were imbued with a mutually constitutive set of Islamic and societal values that emanated from the homeland and defined Malian citizenship in Nigeria.

Chapter 5

The Reimagined Community: How the Diaspora Influenced the Homeland

This chapter traces the ties between Malians living in Lagos and their families in Mali, and draws on interviews with family members to document how living in Lagos changed Malians, despite their resistance to cosmopolitan influences in the diaspora. The majority of these expatriates modified homeland beliefs and practices little, despite immersion in the novel cultural environment of the diaspora. For a significant minority, however, the change in locale led to alterations in lifestyles and values. I draw on several individual case studies to illustrate how the creation of "transnational households" influenced Malian family organization and asset distribution, challenging the normative conception of wealth itself. These innovations, however, did not displace, but coexisted with, deep-historical understandings connecting wealth and family that continued to dominate Malian society.

The Malian diaspora in postindependence Lagos represented a liminal space not only in its cultural ambiguity, but in its relationship to other, more widely studied, African migrant communities of the time. It shared certain characteristics with both the contemporary African diaspora in Europe and individual African nations' internal rural-to-urban migrations. Fundamental to all these demographic shifts, however, were the migrants' entrance into capitalist markets, and their exposure to cosmopolitan ways of living and thinking. These factors require engagement with the concept of modernity or, more particularly, its nonevolutionary reconfiguration, "alternative modernities." The transnational social field encompassing the homeland and its Lagos diaspora embraced a bricolage of "Western" and local concepts and practices. But while the dominant pattern fit what Bayart describes as a "capitalist transformation of the economy" taking place "by traditional modes of action," certain elements

within the diaspora effectively extricated themselves from their "traditional" homeland network of kinship and neighborhood ties.[1] Hence, in this chapter, I explore the "different, coexisting strategies of urban-rural mobility" that Malians in Lagos took over the diaspora's half-century history, focusing on the variable effects those divergent strategies had on the interrelated notions of wealth, family, and household, both in the diaspora and in the Malian homeland.[2]

The chapter is organized into two parts, the first dealing with changes in the practices and institutions that constituted homeland culture, the second focused on the rise of Malian nationalism. Each part comprises three sections. In the initial section, I make the case that the emigrant remained a member of homeland communities at several levels, including her hometown and *du*, or extended family compound. I argue that the emigrant continued to affect his concession and hometown through acts of commission and omission made in the diaspora. Although the effects were variable, a significant percentage of the emigrants acted in ways that weakened both institutions, and increased the popularity of alternative practices. A minority of emigrants weakened the *du* economically by rejecting its emphasis on communal wealth and diverting the majority of their discretionary income to personal investments. As I discuss in the section on marriage and childrearing, they adopted new domestic practices in the diaspora, in the process transforming the family dynamics that structured the compound. Religious epiphanies in the diaspora, also, had potential for influencing both an emigrant's extended family and his hometown, as outlined in the section on reformist Islam. The final three sections move up in register to explore how many Malians in the diaspora switched their allegiances from parochial and ethnic sodalities to the nation, and transferred their heightened nationalism to the homeland.

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[1] Jean-Francois Bayart, Janet Roitman, trans., "The Paradoxical Invention of Economic Modernity," in Appadurai, *Globalization*, 331.

[2] James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt*, (Berkely, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 43.

In the section on the imagined community, I illustrate how the nature of associations and the intervention of the Malian government in the diaspora refocused migrants' interest away from their hometowns and regions and onto the nation. The national dialectic refers to the two social forces acting on the diaspora to generate cohesion among citizens. Externally, the host society's exclusionary nationalism discouraged assimilation, while, internally, the increased integration among emigrants of disparate ethnic and regional origins encouraged an inclusive camaraderie. *Remitting the Nation* outlines the various methods by which members of the diaspora influenced members of their *duw* and hometowns to widen the scope of their affinities.

The Transnational Household

A standard trope in the literature on transnationalism is the idea that local and global beliefs and practices are mutually constitutive.[3] In examining the Malian diaspora in Lagos as part of the wider transnational community of Malians, such relationships become important in understanding the mechanisms through which the diaspora affected the homeland. Just as individuals who emigrated from the homeland into the diaspora did not leave the imagined community of the nation, despite residing outside its territory, they did not cease to be members of the other communities of which they were a part prior to their migration. This comprises a different sort of imagining than that examined by Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities*.[4] Anderson argued that nations were made possible only when individuals imagined they were connected in a fundamental way to other persons they had never met. In creating a transnational household, the members had to imagine that they remained connected to persons they knew, but who were separated in space. Nevertheless, the salient characteristic of each of these

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[3] See, e.g., Charles Piot, *Remotely Global:Village Modernity in West Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 173.

[4] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

communities is that its members did not conduct the kind of daily face-to-face interaction with each other that historically formed a community. Despite the physical separation from her home village, the Malian in Lagos was still a member of that local community. More significantly, she remained a member of her *du*. These continued ties, while important to some degree in all cultures, were particularly significant for Malians. The difference derives from a constellation of cultural constructions, notably the normative conception of wealth in Mande culture, which, although encompassing individual property, remained strongly communal at the level of the compound. The extended family expected the emigrant to continue contributing to the wealth of the family from the diaspora.[5] In this very concrete sense, the *du* itself functioned as a transnational community, but its significance transcended the purely economic. The emigrant retained an entire suite of social obligations, including--for males--the obligation to return home and resume the mantle of *dutigi* if he became the oldest living male of the extended family.

Economic obligations to the *du* historically entailed farming (*senneke*) the family fields (*forow)*. Although members of the Lagos diaspora had switched their vocations from agriculture to trade, they demonstrated their continued link to the homeland *du* through their idealization of the ability to *senneke* as the measure of one's usefulness. The term especially connoted the skill most central to Mande cultivation—wielding the *daba*, or short-handled hoe, used for weeding and digging. It is difficult for someone from the global North to fully appreciate the meaning attached to this skill in Mande culture. It was often explicitly cited by my informants as central to their respective *laadaw*, or cultures, almost regardless of ethnicity. Persons of either gender who were unable to *senneke* were the objects of ridicule, regardless of other vocational or educational attainments that those from the global North would value more highly. There were

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[5] Ibid., 7.

certainly no males in the diaspora who would admit to being less than masterful in the fields. All

Malian men in Lagos claimed a continued ability to *senneke*, despite the quintessentially urban

lifestyle that defined their present realities. Informants in Lagos who had not raised a *daba* in

thirty years exhibited uncharacteristic braggadocio in describing their power with the tool. These

men were maintaining identities not only as agricultural laborers, but as part of their compounds'

agricultural labor forces, that could, if necessary, be redeployed from Lagos back to the family

fields at any time. This fiction was another way that Malians in the diaspora reinforced

membership in the imagined community of the *du*, thus reconstituting it as a transnational

institution.

From precolonial times, wealth in Mali's agricultural economy depended on access to

land, so that the village (sing. *dugu*, pl. −*w*)[6], as the seat of land tenure, became the local center

of economic activity. The archetypal *dugu* was divided into wards corresponding to different

patrilineages, themselves segmented into "concessions," or family compounds (*du*, −*w*). Rural

concessions typically consisted of several huts (*so* −*w*) situated around a central courtyard. The

village chief (*dugutigi*, -*w*)--the oldest male of the village's founding family--assigned to each *du*

usufructuary rights to a given plot of land within the *dugu's* territory.[7] In 1960, the majority of

the population lived in "complex" *duw* comprising extended families, either paternal or

fraternal.[8] The former consisted of a patriarch (*dutigi*, −*w*) and his married sons, along with their

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[6] I focus in this chapter on the majority ethnic population in Mali, the Mande, incorporating the Bamana, Maninka, Soninke, and many other subgroups, which generally share a set of fundamental cultural characteristics. Hence, I render local terminology in *Bamanankan*, the predominant local language in Mali during this period.

[7] Interview with Tamba Traoré in Gonsolo, Région de Koulikoro, Mali on June 30, 2007; for Bamana custom in land tenure more generally, see Laurence C. Becker, "The Collapse of the Family Farm in West Africa? Evidence from Mali," *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 156, No. 3 (Nov., 1990), 313-322, 314.

[8] Although just under half of all 1960 Malian households were complex, the larger average size of complex households translated into over half of the population. The percentage of simple households in 1960 is based on the percentage of concessions having a single ménage in the "Ensemble Mali" column of Tableau 24, pg. 62,

wives and children. The latter incorporated two or more adult sons of the same mother, the

eldest acting as the *dutigi,* along their spouses and progeny. Typically, each wife and her

children lived in a separate *so*, along with her husband, if the marriage was monogamous.

Otherwise, the husband split time among the *sow* of his wives. The mid-twentieth century *du's*

land comprised primarily communal fields of both food and cash crops, worked cooperatively by

all household members (*dumogo –w*). Individual members, including women, could hold small

plots to grow both supplemental food and cash crops.[9] The distinction between the communal

and personal fields for food crops was clearly marked in *Bamanankan*, the former termed the

foroba (literally, the big field), the latter *suroforow* (literally, the night fields). The latter term

denoted the ideal balance of a *dumogo's* labor between the collective and personal. In the

ideology of the *du*, it was expected that *dumogow* would work their own fields only "at night,"

meaning after the normal working hours of the day or week. This balance, maintained in all

domestic activities, actually benefited each individual more than working exclusively alone

because the collective could in a far shorter time generate a lump sum surplus sufficient to invest

in productivity-enhancing equipment like plows and oxen. The *du*, thus, formed the primary

socioeconomic unit in Malian society at mid-twentieth century.[10]

Republique du Mali, Service de la Statistique, *Enqueîe démographique 1960-1961: Resultats Definitife*, (Paris: République Française, Secrétariat d'état aux affaires étrangères [&] I.N.S.E.E., Service de coopération, 1961.

[9] Interview with Samba Traoré in Gonsolo, Région de Koulikoro, Mali on July 4, 2007; for other areas of Mali, see Becker 1990, 315.

[10] Writing in 1968, Meillassoux noted the centrality of the *du* to social relations even in the highly urbanized setting of Bamako. Claude Meillassoux, *Urbanization of an African Community; Voluntary Associations in Bamako* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968), 42. Guyer outlined the methodological problems with defining the African household, given its socio-economic connections to external entities, including the lineage; its nonuniform internal economy, in which different members have different levels of obligation to collective labor; and its variable composition, with members constantly moving in and out. While these complexities present difficulties for quantitative comparisons, they do not undermine the qualitative discussion I present here. I do not assume these households to be static, wholly autonomous, or share uniform internal structures. Jane I. Guyer, "Household and Community in African Studies," *African Studies Review*, Vol. 24, No. 2/3, Social Science and Humanistic Research on Africa: An Assessment (Jun. - Sep., 1981): 87-137, 98.

The *du* collectively made decisions regarding its members' marriage pacts, which played a central role in the creation of the household's wealth, not only through the addition of wives' and children's labor, but through the network of obligations that bridewealth paid to other *duw* established.[11] The family compound practiced collective childrearing, guaranteeing its continued wealth by training the group's future labor force.[12] The negotiation of marriage agreements and performance of childrearing as communal, rather than individual, activities constituted another way in which Mande had historically conceived of wealth as a long-term state of well-being maintained and shared collectively by the *du*.

The *dutigi* ultimately controlled all of the *du's* collective liquid assets in the form of agricultural produce and livestock. Although norms governing livestock ownership differed widely throughout the Mande world, the *dutigi* generally wielded complete control over the *du's* commonly-held domesticated animals. He could convert those assets to cash or refuse to do so as he saw fit. On the other hand, in most subgroups, individual *dumogow* owned some livestock as personal assets, and directly controlled cash generated by selling produce from individually-worked fields and gardens. Thus, while Mande household structure incorporated both communal and personal wealth, the latter was supplemental. Basic survival depended on the *du*, and its "wealth in people." *Dumogow*, as subsistence farmers and members of Mande society, recognized the centrality of this form of wealth and the complex *du* as its source.[13] In addition to

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[11] Interview with Drissa Kone in Djigidalla, Région de Koulikoro, Mali on July 2, 2007.

[12] Fieldwork in Mali, 2007, 2009-10; for collective childrearing among co-wives see Sangeetha Madhavan, "Best of Friends and Worst of Enemies: Competition and Collaboration in Polygyny," *Ethnology*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Winter, 2002): 69-84, 76-7.

[13] Pointing to the fact that Bamana youths in his 1974 study returned to farm on their *duw*, despite foregoing wages greater than the cost of hiring temporary field hands, anthropologist John Lewis asserted that "More than a slave, client, affine, or employee, a patrilineal descendant can be relied upon to a farm virtually irrespective of the outside market opportunities for his labor at any given time." Lewis concluded that "In this peasant situation, subsistence farming takes on a *political significance* that transcends, and even occasionally contradicts, the goal of maximum subsistence. These bamana (sic) are involved in a long-term structure for survival that involves the reproduction of

economies of scale, it created a larger risk pool, allowing household production to survive the illness or death of any individual worker. Applying Guyer and Belinga's concept of wealth in knowledge,[14] the complex household also provided a greater diversity of labor categories through a wider range of generations--old women to watch infants; primary school-age children to watch the livestock. Moreover, it allowed the diversification of the family's income sources. Larger households could more easily spare individual members to work as traders or wage-workers, contributing their profits or discretioinary income to the *du*. Thus, even during times of drought, the complex *du* could maintain a revenue stream, increasing its members' chances for survival.

Distribution to their kin by such nonfarm workers was not always voluntary. In contrast to cash from sales of produce grown on individuals' plots within the *du*, if *dumogow* accrued currency from working others' fields, as traders, or as wage-earners, their fellow *dumogow*, and even members of their lineage outside the *du*, had an implicit claim on a share of that money.[15] In many Mande subgroups, accumulated cash represented unused surplus. As such, social norms required that it be distributed to kin upon request. Here, again, we see a manifestation of the idea that the *du* had a claim on each individual's labor and, by extension, the product of that labor. These obligations militated against the accumulation of wealth by individuals. To reduce the window for such *de facto* confiscation, it became common practice by the turn of the twenty-first century for individuals to convert cash to durable assets as soon as practicable, which led to the

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allies in a delineated space." John Van D. Lewis, "Domestic Labor Intensity and the Incorporation of Malian Peasant Farmers into Localized Descent Groups," *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Feb., 1981): 53-73, 55.

[14] Jane I. Guyer and Samuel M. Eno Belinga, "Wealth in People as Wealth in Knowledge: Accumulation and Composition in Equatorial Africa," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (1995): 91-120.

[15] Interview with Tamba Traoré in Gonsolo, Région de Koulikoro, Mali on June 30, 2007. Lewis demonstrates the mutual responsibility among households within the same patrilineage in his study of the dynamics of farming production in central Mali. Lewis, *Domestic Labor Intensity,* 66.

purchase of the least expensive items in that class. While kin had claims on a share of these resources, the buyer distributed the value of the asset through its use. The prototypical example in the twenty-first century was young men purchasing motorcycles, which their relatives could borrow, but not take possession of.

In Mali, as in other parts of Africa, colonial policies had influenced these patterns through taxes, forced labor regimes, military conscription, and the introduction of wage labor. In the postwar era, voluntary circular migration for agricultural labor expanded markedly in response to increased wages. Malians, predominantly young men, traveled seasonally to Senegal to farm peanuts as *navétanes* and to Ivory Coast to farm cocoa and coffee. The migrants' resulting independent control of significant wealth created "household fissures." In his study focusing on the colonial district of Buguni, Brian Peterson cites this period as marking, in his informants' memories, "the emergence of individualism (*tako*) and ownership (*tigiya*), which had previously been associated with greed, selfishness, and even sorcery."[16] Peterson characterizes these changes as "processes of disintegration…on a wide scale," as youths' pursuit of their own interests forced them "to disavow the interests of household heads, which meant breaking with tradition."[17] The break was not complete, however. Post-war migrants continued to visit and send funds to their families, as they "straddled" the worlds of localism and cosmopolitanism. Nevertheless, Peterson finds that, by 1960, "a new ethos of agrarian individualism" had developed which "would fundamentally reshape social relations."[18] The widespread mid-century breakdown of the complex household that Peterson describes for Buguni, however, was not as thoroughgoing in other areas. In 1960, over 47 percent of all *duw*

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[16] Peterson, *Islamization from Below*, 167.

[17] Ibid., 168.

[18] Ibid., 183.

in Mali were still complex households.[19] While, in Mali as a whole, household size trended

sharply downward over the decades following independence,[20] studies from various locations

throughout Mali between 1960 and 2010 provide evidence that complex households continued to

be the dominant domestic model in many places. The following table summarizes these

findings.[21]

Household Size and Type Found in Post-Independence Studies of Malian Farming Communities					
Author	Yr	Site	Closest City	Avg Size	Complex
Guirkinger/Plateau	2006	Multiple	Koutiala/Sikasso/San	10.6*	80.0%
Mosely	1997	Siwa	Koutiala	19	n/a
Mosely	1997	Djitoumou	Bamako	19.6	n/a
Becker	1996	Soro	Bamako	19.3	n/a
Lilja et al.	1995	Koutiala/Sikasso/Buguni/San/Fana	Multiple	19	n/a
Becker	1987	Soro	Bamako	19.6	72.2
Toulmin	1981	Kala	Niono	18.2	85.6
Lewis	1974	Dukolombo	Segou	7.8 **	n/a
*Excludes children under 12 **Women, children, and aged counted as .8 ea.					

In the table, the year represents the period in which the study was conducted, rather than the

publishing date, while the "Complex" column shows the percentage of the sample <u>population</u>, if

known, that lived in households including more than one married male. Although even Malian

households containing one married male could be large, given the high incidence of polygyny,

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[19] Republique du Mali, Service de la Statistique, *Enquête démographique 1960-1961,* 65, Tableau 24.

[20] Although later reports stopped reporting households per concession, the average household size nationwide fell from 10.7 persons in 1960 (Ibid, 63, Tableau 23) to 5.6 in 1996 (Republique du Mali, Cellule de Planification et de Statistique, Ministère de la Santé, de la Solidarité et des Personnes âgées : Direction Nationale de la Statistique et de l'Informatique; *Enquête Démographique et de Santé 1995-1996* (Calverton: Macro International, 1996), 15, Tableau 2.3.

[21] Sources: Catherine Guirkinger, Jean-Philippe Platteau, "The Effect of Land Scarcity on Farm Structure: Empirical Evidence from Mali," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (January 2014): 195-238, 210; William G. Moseley, "Global Cotton and Local Environmental Management: The Political Ecology of Rich and Poor Small-Hold Farmers in Southern Mali," *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 171, No. 1, Poverty and the Environment (Mar., 2005): 36-55, 40; Laurence C. Becker, "Garden Money Buys Grain: Food Procurement Patterns in a Malian Village," Human Ecology, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Jun., 2000): 219-250, 229; Nina Lilja, John H. Sanders, Catherine A. Durham, Hugo De Groote and Issiaka Dembélé, "Factors Influencing the Payments to Women in Malian Agriculture," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 78, No. 5, Proceedings Issue (Dec.,1996): 1340-1345, 1343; Becker, *Collapse of the Family Farm*, 316; Camilla Toulmin, *Cattle, Women, and Wells: Managing Household Survival in the Sahel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 31, Table 2.1; and Lewis, *Domestic Labor Intensity*, 57-8, Table 1, (aggregate consumers for all households/no. of households).

the magnitudes of all but the earliest average size listed strongly suggest a majority of

participants in each case were living in complex households. This proposition is borne out by

the correspondence within the table of average household sizes greater than ten with a high

percentage of the population living in complex households in every case for which the latter

statistic is known. Consonant with this trend, Toulmin recorded a reversal of what she terms

"agricultural individualism" over the first twenty years of this period--a trend at odds with the

nationwide reduction in household size. Beginning in the 1960s, with declining groundnut yields,

men in her study village of Kala gave up their *suroforow*, and transferred the time they

previously spent on individual production to collective work on the *forobaw*. The emphasis on

collective household wealth continued through the time of the study. In Toulmin's formulation,

the pattern developed less for cultural than for economic reasons, as only large households

pooling resources could afford the large investments in productivity-enhancing technologies such

as oxen plow teams, donkey carts, and wells.[22]

Thus, the *du* as a complex household, in tandem with the conception of wealth as residing

in that corporate body, continued to exist not only after independence, but past the turn of the

century, alongside the nuclear family domestic model, with its view of wealth as personal

property. My dissertation picks up the story of the effects of migration on ideologies of kinship

and prosperity where Peterson leaves it in 1960. I explore the continuing tensions between

individualistic and collective notions of wealth, which, as we have seen, were intimately

connected to household organization. I examine how the typical migration experience for

emigrants from the territory that became Mali changed from colonial to postindependence

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[22] Toulmin; *Cattle, Women, and Wells*; 32-3. This analysis begs the question of why all households did not make this choice.

periods. I further consider how those differences opened new spaces for migrants to extricate themselves from ideologies of descent and the rights and obligations they engendered.

How did the complex household survive the "modernizing" influences of locals pursuing labor and trade in other cultural milieux? Peterson himself provides the general answer in that many types of labor and labor migration coexisted "in constantly shifting sets of household and individual strategies."[23] Nevertheless, he represents an upsurge in circular migration as a significant factor in the widespread social change he discerns in the Buguni area at the end of the colonial period. Peterson's observation is consistent with historical records showing the bulk of intraregional migration in West Africa during the postwar period and up to independence to be circular and seasonal.[24] His account of the resulting disintegration of *duw* in Bugani notwithstanding, the defining characteristics of this migration tended to moderate cosmopolitan influences on the migrants. Returning annually to their villages created disincentives for individuals seeking to separate from their *duw*. The ability to transcend Mande epistemologies was not aided by regular reimmersion in them. Disengagement from rural *duw* was awkward, as returnees would have to build new compounds while living in the old, their fellow *dumogow* depending on them to help sow the families' fields. Returnees seeking personal independence were forced to confront their *dutigiw* in person—an intimidating prospect, as well as break with their fellow *dumogow* face-to-face, a potentially embarrassing and emotional trial. From a material standpoint, the earnings from seasonal agricultural labor were not always sufficient to

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[23] Peterson, *Islamization from Below*, 141.

[24] Daryll Forde quantified the percentage of annual seasonal migrants in West Africa as a whole as follows:
    1920-40 180,000 intraregional migrants/yr.; 75% seasonal
    1950-60 250,000 intraregional migrants/yr.; 70% seasonal
    1960-70 300,000 intraregional migrants/yr.; 67% seasonal
Daryll Forde, foreward to *Modern Migrations in Western Africa: Studies Presented and Discussed at the Eleventh International African Seminar, Dakar, April 1972*, ed. Samir Amin (London: Published for the International African Institute by Oxford University Press, 1974), 75.

sustainably support the migrant worker outside the extended family. Writing in 1975, Meillassoux compared the rural Sahel to South Africa's reserves because the extended families' subsistence agriculture subsidized the low remuneration available to migrant labor. Discussing neighboring Haute-Volta's seasonal agricultural laborers in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, Meillassoux concluded that "domestic relations of production persist because they are the only ones able to support the survival and perpetuation of their communities."[25]

Migrant workers from Buguni overcame these obstacles; many in other areas of Mali did not, or were not trying to do so. Sayon Traoré, for example, from the village of Gonsolo, south of Sibi, spent several years as a *navétane* in Senegal during the early 1970s, returning seasonally to sow millet, corn, cotton, and other crops in Gonsolo. Yet, despite learning French, being exposed to Western ideas concerning private property, and accumulating significant wealth, he remained a member of his compound *du*, working on the *foroba*. The same was true for the majority of the large contingent of young men from Gonsolo who worked as *navétanes* in that era. They viewed migrant labor through the lens of the existing system of complex *duw*. While using some of their earnings to purchase personal property such as bicycles, they transferred the bulk to the control of their *dugutigiw*.[26] Consequently, in Gonsolo, as in many other communities throughout Mali, the complex household and the associated communal ethos survived seasonal migrations.

Although, as Peterson cautions, migration in late colonial Mali did not break down into "discrete epochs" of circular migration followed by urbanization, historical records show a gradual and partial shift in this direction over the decades surrounding Malian independence.

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[25] Claude Meillassoux, *Maidens, Meal, and Money: Capitalism and the Domestic Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 119.

[26] Interviews in Région de Koulikoro, Mali with Sayon Traoré in Gonsolo on June 13, 2007, Lamine Kone in Djigidalla on June 14, 2007; Tanamaga Traoré in Gonsolo on June 30, 2007; Drissa Kone in Djigidalla on July 2, 2007; Cheba Kone in Djigidalla on July 3, 2007; and Samba Traoré in Gonsolo on July 4, 2007.

The transformation came about over the medium term as a result of different types of migration coexisting in each period. At least a quarter of annual migrants to both Senegal through the 1950s and Cote d'Ivoire through the 1960s settled in those destinations. The resulting annual increase in on-site workers produced a proportional decrease in demand for immigrant agricultural labor. The annual decrease more-than-offset annual production growth, which slowed in both locations in the late 1950s and 1960s, respectively.[27] While the demand for such seasonal agricultural work declined accordingly, the supply of immigrant workers continued to expand, creating an oversupply in the labor market. Workers prevented from entering the saturated agricultural labor market shifted focus to urban centers, where opportunities were wider and expanding, but not seasonal. Pluriannual labor and trade migration, thus, became increasingly common after independence, representing a more potent challenge to maintaining historical Mande social values, as migrants remained immersed in the cosmopolitan setting continuously for years, or even decades.[28] Westernized lifestyles could be difficult to avoid for rural-to-urban migrants. In Lagos, from the 1960s on, the metropolis's high density and concomitantly-high rental costs in comparison with even Mali's capital, Bamako, forced the few

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[27] Forde, foreward, 75.

[28] Manchuelle provides a clear description of this transition for the Soninke Mande subgroup, although the pattern occurred earlier in Soninke areas, primarily encompassing the far northwest tip of Mali, roughly the territory to the northwest of a line between Bafoubale and Nioro, including the city of Kayes. According to Manchuelle, "The period 1930 to 1960 thus saw a shift not only from *rural-rural* migration (*navétanat*) to *urban* migration, but also from seasonal to *pluriannual* and even *lifelong* migration, with a return to the village upon retirement (the trend toward the latter form of migration being especially visible by the end of the period)." Manchuelle, *Willing Migrants*, 209. Daryll Forde, characterizing West African migration in 1974, observed that "today a large and increasing proportion of migrants in West Africa are no longer temporary migrants even if it was the case twenty of thirty years ago in some regions and even if it is still true for a few others." Daryll Forde, foreward, 68. Population censuses and surveys from the 1970s show that the transition was already well under way for Malian migrants. In 1971, there were 21,114 Malians living in Senegal. Lucie Gallistel Colvin et al., *The Uprooted of the Western Sahel: Migrants' Quest for Cash in the Senegambia*, (New York, N.Y.: Praeger, 1981), 80, Table 4.4. In 1975, there were 419,500 Malian citizens living in the closest eight other West African countries, including 348,500 in Cote d'Ivoire, and 28,900 in Senegal. K.C. Zachariah and Julien Condé, *Migration in West Africa: Demographic Aspects*, (New York: Published for the World Bank by Oxford University Press, 1981), 35, Table 2.1. While the great majority of Malians residing in both countries were agricultural laborers, a substantial minority in Cote d'Ivoire were traders, most commonly of kola nuts.

married Malians to live in nuclear-family households. While nuclear family *duw* had existed in

all Mande areas from precolonial times, they had not represented the ideal household form. This

was due not only to the difficulty of farming in the Sahel with so few workers, but to the security

a large household provided members in old age. This function of the complex *du* constituted the

principal economic factor in preserving the transnational household over the half-century of the

diaspora's existence. As Meillassoux first pointed out with respect to internal migrants in 1960s

Bamako, the largest change in lifestyle for Malian rural-to-urban migrants was the loss of

support networks. The extended family was not nearby to provide assistance in case of

emergencies.[29] He later identified the same pattern for Malian, Senegalese, and Mauritanian

laborers in 1970s France. Reprising his analogy to South African reserves, Meillassoux noted

that European employers maintained a dual wage structure in part by restricting benefits such as

family allowances, unemployment, workmen's compensation, and pensions.[30] Although

Malians in Lagos during those periods did not typically find wage labor, they shared their

European counterparts' lack of a social safety net. While Malians in all three locations

established mutual aid associations to fill this role for short-term assistance, long-term support

remained beyond the means of nearly all.[31] The latter was a major factor in the widespread

aspiration among the diasporic population to retire to the homeland *du*. Aside from social

continuity, security in old age constituted the long-term return on remittances. Consequently,

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[29] Meillassoux, *Urbanization of an African Community*, 74.

[30] Meillassoux; *Maidens, Meal, and Money*; 120.

[31] For Lagos: Interviews in Idumota, Lagos Island with Ibrahim Toloba on January 7, 2010; Ibrahim Traoré on August 16, 2010, and Lassana Cisse on July 16, 2007; for Bamako: Meillassoux, *Urbanization of an African Community*, 74, 62, and 67. Although, as Meillassoux points out, Mali expanded social security for old age to all wage workers in 1962, the percentage of the population that fell into that category was minimal. Similarly, the only associations he cites as covering payments to widows were those formed by wage-earners, ibid., 79.

few had any interest in diverging from the historically dominant model, despite the naturalizing

of nuclear family households in Lagos.[32]

Nevertheless, among the tiny cadre able to accumulate sufficient wealth in the diaspora,

some saw advantage in permanently maintaining the spatial remove from the extended family.

In economic terms, these men had more to lose than to gain from the collective finances of the

du. In social terms, they had moved away from their identities as members of extended

households. This was understandable given the change in these men's daily lives. It was

difficult to maintain the view that most of their labor should benefit the *du*, when they were

neither cultivating the household's land, nor living in the family compound. Likewise, they no

longer saw first-hand the physical consequences for the welfare of their fellow *dumogow* of

depriving the *du* of their labor's value.

"Hiving off" to establish new households had always formed an integral part of the

system: without it, *duw* would grow unmanageably large. In the case of the diaspora, however,

the mechanism driving the split was different. Rather than a battle over control of existing

communal assets caused by *fadenyaw*, or rivalries between brothers of different mothers,

diasporic hiving off was over control of individual wealth. The novel accumulation was a direct

product of transnational migration, and the concomitant long-term and long-distance separation

from the *du*. As we have seen, accumulation of wealth by individuals within Mali was extremely

difficult, even for wage-earners. The immediate cause of this limitation was the obligation to

share such wealth with lineage supplicants. But relatives' requests for assistance were a product

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[32] Again, this finding is consistent with Manchuelle, who observed that, despite "the reorientation of Soninke migration" toward pluriannual urban situations, no "penetration of city values" occurred. "Through migration, a young man could obtain a measure of emancipation from the traditional society simply by living abroad with independent financial resources, but these financial resources also allowed him to build up influence within his home society as the years went by. When he became old, he would return to his village and become a respected elder himself." Manchuelle, *Willing Migrants*, 209.

of accurate information about the individual's fortunes enabled by the homeland's thick kin networks. Those connections became attenuated with distance, especially across national borders, making independent assessments of migrants' wealth in real time impossible. As a result, Malians in the diaspora who were so inclined could protect accumulated wealth by hiding it from their relatives.[33] Moreover, the limited telephone landline network in West Africa from 1960 through the end of century discouraged financial requests in the first place. Though the widespread availability of inexpensive cellphones across West Africa changed that in the early twenty-first century, knowledge remained imperfect, with the concomitant potential for obfuscation.

The potential for saving anything to protect in the first place waxed and waned over time with the health of both the Malian and Nigerian economies. Many in the diaspora earned income sufficient to fund such savings during the oil boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s, whereas only a handful enjoyed that level of success in early twenty-first century Lagos. Even fewer had maintained a revenue stream over the long term sufficient to fund retirement independent of their *duw's* support networks. Within that elite group, some planned exclusively for the long-term welfare of their Lagos households, to the detriment of their transnational *duw*. These migrants undermined their *duw's* economic viability directly by diverting their earnings and indirectly by diverting their children's future labor away from the *du*. Ironically, while families encouraged migration of junior males into the diaspora from most regions of Mali to increase their collective

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[33] Whitehouse argues that the ability to delay and obfuscate in response to family requests for money was a central factor motivating Malians and other West Africans to immigrate to Brazzaville from the nineteenth into the twenty-first century. Explaining how these migrants sought to accumulate wealth "without alienating their kin networks," Whitehouse writes, "By physically distancing oneself from one's neediest family members (who are least likely to emigrate), one dramatically reduces the weight of obligations one must uphold." Whitehouse, *Migrants and Strangers*, 81-2.

income and diversify its sources, in these cases migration had the opposite effect.[34] Outside the surveillance of the *dutigi*, or family patriarch, some Malians in the diaspora shifted savings patterns away from remittances to the *du* and toward investment in personal assets beyond the extended family's reach.[35]

In these cases, the siphoning off of what previously constituted collective assets created a downward spiral, hollowing out the *du* and forcing additional junior males to migrate in search of economic opportunities.[36] Exacerbating the negative impact on the complex family compound, some Malians returning from Lagos reintroduced into the homeland the nuclear family, reconfigured as an urban household model. This development took the form of successful Malians in Lagos remitting funds to build homes for retirement, not in their *duw* or even their natal *duguw*, but in cities--primarily Bamako--where the network of extended kin was weak, and only the nuclear family resided. As the matriarch of one complex *du* struggling for existence in the absence of remittances from Lagos starkly put it, "the family is broken."[37]

The shift in savings patterns by some Malians in the diaspora from the 1960s to 2010 was not the only factor in weakening ties between some Malians in the diaspora and their compounds in the homeland. Equally important was the <u>perception</u> in the *du* that Malians in Lagos were withholding funds from the extended family for their personal use. In Mali, the *dumogow*, or residents of the compound, generally developed an unrealistically inflated estimate of the economic success of their relatives in the diaspora, even during the recession of the mid-1980s.

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[34] In many cases, youth would, on their own initiative, but with the blessing of the family, leave the *dugu* to "search for money" specifically for the benefit of the *du*. Most began their searches in Malian cities, many permanently settling there; others took their search into the diaspora. Interview with Tamba Traoré in Gonsolo on June 30, 2007.

[35] Interviews with Fatoumata Keita in Idumota, Lagos Island, on May 17, 2010, and Yunogu Giptele in Sangha, Région de Mopti, Mali, on September 5, 2010; and additional fieldwork in Mali and Nigeria in 2007 and 2009-10.

[36] Interview with Jaji Coulibaly in Hara, Région de Kayes, Mali on September 17, 2010.

[37] Ibid.

From their perspective, the point of emigrating was to increase the family wealth by relocating to a zone of increased economic opportunity. Although a large percentage of family members living in the homeland had themselves spent time in Lagos, they typically shared these illusions, despite first-hand experience to the contrary.[38] Those back in the homeland compound assumed that relatives in Lagos who remitted little or nothing were merely hoarding their wealth.

Here is where the global and local intertwine. With the rise of new centers of trade in China and Dubai during the 1990s, along with the concomitant proliferation of air routes between West Africa and such centers, and the opening of China to foreign businessmen, Lagos's importance as a trade hub steadily waned. Over the two decades straddling the *fin de siècle*, Malian merchants shifted an increasing portion of their purchases of imports from Lagos to these alternate sources. To do so, they recapitulated the patterns they had used in buying goods from Lagos. Some made periodic buying trips to Middle-Eastern and Asian centers, while others permanently located a partner—often a family member—there. After the turn of the century, increasing internet access in Mali introduced yet another option, allowing a small number of wealthy early adopters to make wholesale purchases online. In sum, these changes gradually reduced the volume of imports being purchased by Malians in Lagos below what it otherwise would have been, given the population increase in Mali over this twenty-year period. These relative reductions in the core business of the diaspora coincided with a steady acceleration of emigration from Mali to the diaspora, resulting in increased competition among aspiring Malian purchasing agents for participation in a dwindling number of transactions. As a

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[38] Interview with Mahammadu Diarra in Harah, Région de Kayes, Mali on September 15, 2010. Hometown suspicions and fantasies of urban emigrants' wealth are common throughout West Africa. Peter Geschiere observes that, in Cameroon, "the wealth amassed in the city, even if it is only imaginary, retains a more or less suspect character for the people at home." Peter Geschiere and Francis Nyamnjoh, "Witchcraft as an Issue in the 'Politics of Belonging': Democratization and Urban Migrants' Involvement with the Home Village," in *African Studies Review*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Dec., 1998): 69-91, 72.

result, each agent's income was reduced, a trend that was exacerbated during the several recessions that occurred during this span. Thus, during the last twenty years, most Malians were able to remit little to their homeland relatives, even if they were not diverting money.

Thus, the spatial separation weakened the *du* by both active and passive means. The lack of surveillance by the homeland compound not only allowed Malians in the diaspora to accumulate personal wealth, it allowed their family members to imagine such actions—whether real or not. Given the widespread poverty in the diaspora, the latter was more common than the former. In this way, the actual economic undermining of the compound was secondary in effect to the homeland family members' belief in the extended family's failure. The compound served as an economic institution, and as with other such entities, whether banks or national economies, expectations affected real-world results. By the early years of the twenty-first century, some Malians in the homeland had lost confidence in the solidarity of the extended family as a transnational community, imagining members in the diaspora to be acting for personal gain. Consequently, they lost faith in the *du* as the optimal household model. As such, they were less willing to stake their fate on this model, and less willing to allow the *dutigi* to determine the disposition of their contributions if their overseas counterparts were opting out.[39]

In Mande culture, this pattern, in which family members were suspicious of close relatives perceived to be highly successful economically, but who were not sharing that success with the extended family, carried connotations of *suya*, or witchcraft. Informants described the continued belief among many Malians in the power of *suya*, the existence of *subagaw* (witches), and use of practices based on *suya* into the twenty-first century. [40] Such beliefs remained common to many West African cultures, and in postcolonial times typically emerged in relation

[39] Interview with Mohammed Cisse in Tulungumbe, Région de Kayes, Mali on September 16, 2010.

[40] E.g., interview with Fatoumata Keita in Idumota, Lagos Island, Lagos, on May 12, 2010.

to the accumulation of personal wealth. Family members viewed such success as resulting from

the relative's deployment of supernatural powers, giving them an unfair advantage over others.

The association of sorcery with the accumulation of personal wealth marked the behavior as

unnatural, and those who practiced it as evil. Jealous family members or neighbors counteracted

such powers by themselves engaging in witchcraft to punish the successful relative or friend for

unfairly amassing wealth at the expense of the extended family or village. When I was surprised

that Fatoumata Keita, a middle-aged Malian who had lived in Lagos since the late 1980s, did not

know much about her "home village," she explained that she had lived there for only two years.

Her father had relocated to Bamako, where he had developed a successful business, making

enough money to build a house. "His friend in the village knew he had money, so there was a lot

of jealousy." The envy spawned witchcraft, prompting Fatoumata's father to forbid her from

returning.[41] Although none of my informants in Mali framed their own family situations in such

terms, the widely-held view of personal wealth, typically attained after migration to urban areas,

as undesirable and dangerous provides the historical context in which they formed their views of

the diaspora. In its essential elements, then, the suspicion that relatives in the diaspora were

acting malevolently by diverting communal income to personal investments represented a

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[41] Interview with Fatoumata Keita in Idumota, Lagos Island, on August 13, 2007. Susan Rasmussen records broadly similar beliefs in northern Mali, recounting the story of a Tuareg jeweler who achieved "individual monetary success" by traveling abroad. Subsequently, he was unable to work, suffering from the "evil eye" (*togerchet*), activated by jealousy of his success. She connects these beliefs back to the kind of food security discussed in relation to the compound *du*, as they "limit the accumulation of wealth or resources in an environment of scarcity," and are deployed in the face of "perceived greed and hoarding, refusal to share belongings, especially food." Susan J. Rasmussen, "Reflections on Witchcraft, Danger, and Modernity among the Tuareg," *Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 74, No. 3 (2004): 315-340, 324, 323. The popular distrust of new forms of wealth, especially as manifested in the construction of modern houses, is common throughout West Africa. The rumor in Cameroon that "there is a grave before each modern house" encapsulates the idea that occult powers punish the hubris of conspicuous consumption. Peter Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997), 138.

continuation of deep historical fears of sorcery. In any case, a number of my informants blamed their relative in Lagos for the impending downfall of the compound.[42]

On the other hand, these transformations affected only a minority within the diasporic community. Virtually all members of the diaspora remained linked to their *du* at some level, communicating sporadically prior to cellphones and regularly thereafter. Drissa Traoré was fairly representative in this regard. With telephone service in the twentieth century restricted to the Nigerian national telephone company's customer service centers in Lagos and *cabines*[43] in the large Malian cities, Traoré only occasionally called his sister, Miriamu, who lived in Bamako. He also sent annual letters to his family and, separately, to his sister on Ramadan prior to the introduction of cellphones to the town around 2005. After that time, he began calling "everyone all the time."[44] Many Malians in Lagos, from the 1960s on, consistently supplied their homeland compound with cash remittances, as well as clothes and foodstuffs, at regular intervals. Many more homeland compounds of Malian Lagosians survived, despite the lack of such remittances. Throughout the diaspora's history, almost all members had remitted money or gifts in kind at some point during their residency in Lagos. Single young men were the most steadfast in meeting their family obligations, as their marriages depended on their *dutigiw* accumulating sufficient remittances for their bridewealth. Some older emigrants who did not have sufficient incomes to make remittances or who diverted their discretionary income to personal investments, maintained their emotional connection to the family by sending gifts. Most made these gestures on religious holidays, which allowed them to participate in the rituals remotely, while endowing the gifts with added significance. Drissa Traoré, for example, from the time he arrived in Lagos

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[42] E.g., Interview with Issa Maiga, Hara, Région de Kayes, Mali, on September 17, 2010.

[43] French: phone booth; in late twentieth/early twenty-first century Mali the booths were more like tiny one-room shacks on the street manned by a proprietor who charged a fee for use of a rare landline telephone.

[44] Interview with Numori Traoré in Karan, Region de Koulikoro, Mali, on August 15, 2010.

in the late 1980s, regularly sent "two to three" 50 kg. bags of sugar to his family on Ramadan.

He sent the sugar by truck to his sister Miriamu in Bamako, who transshipped them by *sotro ma*,

the ubiquitous green vans, to their home village.[45]

Changes in Marriage and Childrearing

Historically, the institution of marriage, *furu*, articulated with those of the *du* and the

dugu to form an integrated whole that largely provided the superstructure for rural Malian

society. *Furu* represented an alliance of families more than a partnership between two

individuals, an understanding common across much of West Africa. In her study of bridewealth

among the Beti of Cameroon, Guyer found that marriage payments "symbolize and mediate both

descent and alliance relations."[46] As the Bamana practice of "widow inheritance," in which a

widow was married to her husband's younger brother <u>without additional bridewealth</u>

demonstrated, the wife's relationship with the family transcended that with her husband. The

dutigi's mediation of the original transfer of assets reinforced this formulation. The etymology

of the Bamanankan word for bridewealth—*furunafolo*—also hints at this relationship, as it is

composed of *furu*—marriage, and *nafolo*—wealth. The use of "wealth" rather than "price" is

significant in that the former connotes a *longue-durée* state of being, the latter a one-time

transaction.

Over the decades, a minority within the diasporic community decoupled marriage from

the *du's* structure. While the majority returned to Mali to marry in accordance with Mande

custom, those who married in Lagos typically bypassed the entire historical matrimonial process,

including the family's central role. Among the Malinke of the southern Koulikoro region, for

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[45] Interview with Drissa Traoré in Idumota, Lagos Island on December 5, 2009.

[46] Jane I. Guyer, "The Value of Beti Bridewealth," in *Money Matters: Instability, Values and Social Payments in the Modern History of West African Communities*, ed. Jane I. Guyer (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995), 126.

example, the bride, accompanied by three young female members of her family, travelled to the groom's home village, where the groom's family hosted a series of ceremonies.[47] The day following the completion of these ceremonies, the groom and three of his young male relatives escorted the bride and her "bridesmaids" back to her home village, where the bride and groom spent their first night together in a designated hut. The next day, the bride's family oversaw final ceremonies. A marriage that took place in neither the bride nor groom's hometowns, thus, disrupted the entire traditional framework of the ritual. More problematic, as a practical matter, the distant venue typically precluded the participation of the Malian groom's family. Although I uncovered a handful of instances in which one of the groom's brothers travelled to Lagos for the ceremony, no informant's parent ever came.[48]

Long before the ceremony itself, marriages conducted in the diaspora eliminated the household's most crucial function, that of arranging the marriage.[49] This change prevented the selection of the bridal household providing the "sociological investment…through which domestic and village relations are best maintained."[50] Paralleling the shift from communal to personal assets, the novel freedom from the *dutigi*'s oversight enabled such matrimonial departures. By the late twentieth century, the complete control of the patriarch in these matters had begun to loosen. In Mande areas of rural Mali, the groom's parents typically selected from nearby villages several likely marriage candidates, from which the groom would make the final selection. In some places, by the twenty-first century, young men designated as preferred

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[47] Interview with Mohammed Cisse in Tulungumbe, Region de Kayes, Mali on September 16, 2010.

[48] Interview with Naman Maiga in Missira, Region de Koulikoro, Mali on August 16, 2010.

[49] Interviews with Madu Touré in Harah, Région de Kayes, Mali on September 15, 2010, Tamba Traoré in Gonsolo, Région de Koulikoro, Mali, on June 30, 2007, and Fatoumata Keita in Idumota, Lagos Island, Nigeria on August 7, 2007. While Guyer suggests that monetization of bridewealth has reduced patriarchal control over marriage arrangements in West Africa, familial control remains strong in rural Mali, providing the transaction is mediated by the family. Guyer, *Beti Bridewealth*, 126.

[50] Meillassoux; *Maidens, Meal, and Money*; 130.

candidates women from neighboring villages that they had seen from afar. In either case, a tightly choreographed series of ritual interactions between the family of the groom and that of the bride followed this initial selection. The groom's father, bearing a dozen cola nuts as a sign of respect, paid an initial visit to the bride's father to propose the union. If the bride's family embraced the idea, the groom's father paid a second visit to his counterpart, during which they haggled over, and set, the bridewealth, comprising a figurative basket of goods, services, and currency that the groom's family would present to the bride's as a demonstration that the groom had sufficient means to support a family. While in the colonial era, services in the form of the groom working a number of days a week on his in-laws fields, constituted a common component of bridewealth, along with livestock and currency, a combination of the latter two became increasingly more common after independence.

Ironically, many of the young men who eventually chose to marry onsite in Lagos had initially emigrated to accumulate money for bridewealth, which they had originally intended to remit to their respective *dutigiw* until sufficient for hometown marriages. A number of factors played into changes in plan, primarily related to economic constraints. Migrants could marry sooner if they needed only bridewealth, and did not have to wait until they had saved the additional amount for transport back to Mali. This was a major consideration, given the long amount of time it took the average Malian in the diaspora to accumulate the fare home. In addition to that advantage, Malian men found that substantially reduced levels of bridewealth allowed them to find Nigerian marriage partners in Lagos, which not only reduced the wait time further, but sometimes made the difference in migrants' ability to marry at all.[51]

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[51] Allocating earnings between current and future personal expenses also played a part, as lower bridewealth released savings for the maintenance of the nuclear family beyond the marriage ceremony. Guyer finds that similar patterns developed in Cameroon following the 1970s. She notes that "[o]nly gradually, as school fees have become integrated into personal budgets and housebuilding becomes more expensive, are other destinations for money

Through the early 1980s, few Malian men married on-site in Lagos. Those who did, however, typically intermarried with Nigerians, as few single Malian women had emigrated at that time.[52] This early marriage pattern is visible in the marriages of the most prominent members of the diaspora at the time of my fieldwork, who were also those who had lived in Lagos the longest. Almost all of these figures married Yoruba or Hausa women. In addition to the dearth of Malian women, returning for a homeland marriage was prohibitively expensive at that time, due to the poor West African road system. The percentage of intermarriage decreased over the decades with the increased influx of Malian women, and especially after Togo and Benin improved connections between the coastal and Dakar-Burkina-Algeria roads. Nevertheless, a substantial portion of Malians continued to marry Nigerians even in 2010. Another common pairing for Malians' in on-site marriages was with women from other Francophone nations, especially women of Malian descent. Despite the closer cultural match, however, any marriage outside the homeland community constituted another way in which the diaspora over its fifty-year history contributed to the disintegration of some *duw*. When, as in these on-site Lagos marriages, bridewealth was transferred directly from the groom to the bride's family, it was not clear that the bride owed allegiance to her husband's family, especially as it had no corporate presence locally. If her husband were to die, she would be less likely to return with her children to her husband's *du*, much less accede to widow inheritance. Such marriages, then, represented another dimension in the devolution of institutions from the communal (the *du*) to the individual.

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savings emerging to divert the flow of personal funds" from marriage payments. Guyer, *Beti Bridewealth*, 117. As discussed below, even some men who had married through the *du* later diverted savings away from disposition by the *dutigi* to cover the extensive investment required for housebuilding.

[52] Interview with Daouda Traoré in Tulungumbe, Région de Kayes, Mali on September 16, 2010.

An example clarifies the relationship. My first informant in Lagos, Bakari Traoré, died suddenly in 2007. In Lagos, he had met and married Geneba Camara, a woman of Malian descent who had grown up in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. In 2008, as soon as he was able to accumulate sufficient funds for transportation, Bakari's younger brother, Sayon, travelled from Bakari's hometown of Gonsolo, Mali to Lagos and brought Bakari's widow and two children back to live in the family *du*. But after a few months, Geneba refused to continue living there, and returned with the children to Lagos.[53] Their departure represented a loss to the *du* of Geneba's labor—at minimum cooking and gathering firewood, and of the future labor or earnings of her two sons. The latter loss highlights the potential of these Lagos marriages to divert the next generation, including its labor and earning power, from the *du*, endangering the institution's future existence. Marriages held in Lagos, thus, potentially weakened homeland compounds by severing the economic tie between marriage and the extended family. The migrant remained a member of the transnational household on whom the homeland members depended for contributions to wealth in property and in people—the latter equating to the reproduction of the *du*'s labor force. Actions taken by the emigrant that essentially transferred both forms of wealth to families outside the system removed assets from the *du*'s figurative balance sheet.

Malian men marrying in Lagos intermarried into Nigerian families of various ethnicities. Consistent with their greater presence in Lagos, Yoruba women intermarried with Malian men at a higher rate than women from other groups. Despite the similarities between Hausa and Malian cultures, the relative dearth of single Hausa females in Lagos resulted in less intermarriage than

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[53] Fieldwork in Lagos in 2009-10, and interview with Fatoumata Keita in Idumota, Lagos Island, on May 17, 2010.

with Yoruba women.[54]   Given the widespread suspicion of Igbo businessmen by diasporic

traders, I was surprised by the existence of intermarriage between Malian men and Igbo women.

Considering that the Igbo were virtually all at least nominally Christian, and given their history

of conflict with the Muslim Hausa, intermarriage with Malians would seem even more unlikely.

Consistent with the patriarchal practices dominant in Mande culture, as well as normative

understandings of allowable Muslim practice, the Malian men demanded immediate conversion

by their Igbo brides. According to my Malian informants, this demand was not a major point of

contention for their wives or their families. Perhaps in reciprocation, these informants did not

object to purchasing cases of alcoholic beverages for the marriage celebration, as was a standard

part of Igbo bridewealth by the early-twenty-first century. Neither did they object to drinking

some of this alcohol as a standard part of the Igbo marriage ceremony.

A few Malian men who married Nigerian women, however, took steps to integrate their

wives into the homeland *duw*. Husbands sent their wives to Mali for extended periods, usually

accompanying their children, to absorb Malian language and culture. Nigerian wives who lived

in the *du* assimilated, learning the local language and cuisine, thus strengthening the link

between the diaspora and the *du*. The reinforcement proved durable, wives maintaining Malian

ways, even if they returned to Lagos. The practice of having wives living in the homeland *du*,

however, had several different purposes. A number of men who were married before emigrating,

from the 1960s through 2010, left their wives in the homeland compound, either never taking

them to Lagos in the first place, or sending them back. According to Lassana Keita, one of the

earliest to settle in Lagos, many men in the diaspora, from 1981 through 1984, left their wives at

home due to the then-prevailing anti-foreigner sentiment, which regularly manifested itself in

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[54] Interview with Mohammed Cisse in Tulungumbe, Region de Kayes, Mali on September 16, 2010.

violence, as "Area Boys beat Malians for nothing."[55] Not coincidentally, this period

encompasses the lead-ins to Nigerian government's official expulsions of foreigners in 1983 and

1985.[56] In later periods, cultural as well as economic and safety considerations played a role in

these decisions. Although informants recall Malian women working in Lagos at least as early as

1985, some Malian men disapproved, especially of the work most commonly available to

women--street selling.[57] Many Wahhabiyya and other "orthodox" Muslims considered it *haram*,

or forbidden, for women to work outside the house; others considered the streets of Lagos

unsafe—not an irrational fear in any period.[58] For these men, having wives accompany them to

Lagos represented additional expense without offsetting additional income. The result was a

doubling of living expenses. Whereas a man on his own who was not well established could rent

a room at a low rate in one of the Malian hostels, if his wife lived with him, he would have to

rent an apartment, requiring a year's rent in advance, a major capital outlay.[59] A wife left in

Mali, in contrast, remained a contributing member of the *du*, requiring no payment from her

husband. These arrangements also occasionally led to situations that amounted to abandonment.

After becoming more established, some husbands took second wives in Lagos, and even started

second families, all the while leaving the first wife languishing in the *du*. One of my informants

in Mali told me bitterly that she had not seen her husband in twenty years—since around 1990,

and begged me to convince him to return.[60] Aside from such negative effects on household

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[55] Interview with Lassana Keita in Idumota, Lagos Island on February 19, 2010.

[56] For the 1983 expulsions, see Aluko, *Explusion of Illegal Aliens*, and Gravil, *The Nigerian Aliens Expulsion Order*; for the 1985 expulsions, see The Nigerian Information Service, "On the Renewed Expulsion of Illegal Migrants from Nigeria," *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Sep., 1985): 573-574.

[57] Interview with Abesina Dabo in Idumota, Lagos Island on December 15, 2009.

[58] Fieldwork in Lagos in 2007 and 2009-10.

[59] Interview with Mohammadu Cisse in Harah, Région de Kayes, Mali on September 15, 2010.

[60] Interview with Amadu Traoré in Sinby, Région de Kayes, Mali on September 22, 2010. The pattern of men abandoning their wives while working in distant locations is certainly not unique to Mali or West Africa.

morale, these second families diverted *du* resources in the same ways that I have described for first marriages conducted onsite in Lagos. In summary, the effects on the homeland of diasporic intermarriage were uneven and contingent on the particular partners and the ways they approached the institution.

Although such intermarriage generally had destabilizing effects on specific *duw*, on a broader scale, they worked to break down barriers between ethnic groups in the homeland. Malians in the diaspora expanded what was previously imaginable by transgressing traditional ideas surrounding intermarriage between various groups. An elaborate system of rules governing interaction among clans provided the cultural context within which Sahelian peoples evaluated all relationships, including marriage. Liaisons falling outside this framework passed beyond the known universe of family interaction—they could not even be contemplated. Consequently, when Malians in the diaspora married Nigerians who did not belong to any Sahelian clan, they were shattering the conceived limits of intermarriage. By comparison, intermarriages across ethnicities that were taboo, but at least contained in the Sahelian universe, were understandable.

For virtually all Malians, regardless of their place of residence during this period, the primary purpose of marriage was to produce offspring. Irrespective of household type, children represented cultural and familial continuity into the future. The transnational nature of the *du* thus manifested itself in the common—though not universal—practice by families in the diaspora of sending one or more children back to be raised in the homeland compound.

Nevertheless, given the particular obligations of marriage in Mande culture, it is significant that historians of Mali have recorded such abandonments in earlier periods. Gregory Mann, for instance, recounts the story of the mother of a *tirailleur's* infant in 1917 Bamako who faced starvation after receiving no assistance from her husband following his deployment. As Mann reports, one of the primary functions of the Comité d'Assistance aux Troupes Noires after 1918 was to help soldiers' wives in Bamako return to their natal villages, where the French assumed their kin networks would support them. Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 84.

Typically, parents accompanied their children on the trip back to Mali when they reached school age. Families gave several reasons for engaging in this practice. The most common of these was that the emigrants wanted their children to learn their "culture," defined most often in ethnic, but occasionally in national, terms. Nearly as common—and not mutually exclusive—the parents expressed their desire that the child be schooled in Mali. They gave alternative reasons for this, some emphasizing the superior education, others the modest price. In any case, Malians in the diaspora from the 1960s onwards made a common practice of sending children, upon reaching school age, back to the *du* to be raised and educated in their father's hometown.[61] While this practice universally enhanced the connection between these children and their kin, several aspects of the practice could be detrimental to the *du*. If parents did not remit sufficient funds to defray the cost of raising their children, the *du* by default was forced to make up the difference, adding to the communal expenses. As there were a number of cases in which the parents sent nothing from Lagos, or started off sending money, but quickly trailed off, the expense could be substantial, especially since in most cases the *du* sent the child to school.[62] Students' families in most areas of Mali paid school fees, which, although relatively small, were difficult to manage for a group of subsistence farmers with few sources of cash. Although the child increased the family's labor force, he was not available during the school day, which was the most productive time in the fields. Moreover, after completing his academic career, just as the child reached his peak years of productivity and was freed-up for full-time agricultural labor, he typically left the *du* to return to Lagos. Essentially, then, the compound bore the cost of raising the child, but did not benefit from the fruit of his labor, which, like his parents, he diverted from the *du*.[63]

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[61] Interview with Fatoumata Giptele in Tulungumbe, Région de Kayes, Mali on September 16, 2010.

[62] Interview with Jaji Cisse in Harah, Région de Kayes, Mali on September 17, 2010.

[63] Fieldwork in Mali, 2007, 2009-10.

According to my interviews, for some in the diaspora, sending their children to be raised in the homeland was partially or wholly a financial strategy. Amaroa Diarra sent all of his children to school in Mali, despite his opinion that all Nigerian schools "have power beyond" those in Mali. He explained that school cost him 4,000 Naira per three months in Nigeria, but only the equivalent of 50 Naira in Mali.[64] The practice of sending children to be raised for extended periods of time in the homes of relatives was common within Mali quite apart from the diaspora. The communal practice of childrearing reduced the importance of the biological parents' daily oversight. Nevertheless, some diasporic parents took the system to an extreme that could be tantamount to abandonment. While, generally, parents either visited their children, or had their children visit them periodically, some did neither. In 2010, I met one sad teenager who had never seen his father, and was starved for any news of him. Moreover, he had not received the normal benefit of growing up in the *du*—a Malian education, as his father had saved the *du* the cost by instructing that his son not be sent to school.[65]

Even those families in the diaspora that lacked the wherewithal to repatriate their children were generally able to keep them within the Malian social sphere, an important consideration for most. Although we have already seen examples of cultural assimilation, these instances were generally more the result of circumstance than design. Malians in Lagos almost universally resisted assimilation into Nigerian society, which remained foreign to them, even after decades of residence.[66] Knowledge of a Malian language was crucial to maintaining separation. Since

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[64] Interview with Amaroa Diarra in Idumota, Lagos Island, on February 4, 2010. The Naira is the Nigerian currency. The Naira/dollar exchange rate varied from .66 in 1972 to 1.7 in 1985 (parallel market) to 160 in 2009, although the rate varied at any given time depending on factors such as denomination and condition of the scrip and location.

[65] Interview with Nemeke Sikiru in Farabanyafala, Région de Kayes, Mali on September 23, 2010.

[66] Whitehouse observed the same attitude within the heavily Malian West African diaspora in Brazzaville. These immigrants "sought to insulate themselves from the cultural influences of the host society." Whitehouse, *Migrants and Strangers*, 149.

children in the diaspora generally learned their mothers' language, those with Malian mothers were the most likely to meet this requirement. Sometimes Malian men took an active role in the cultural education of their children. One father, a longtime informant, gave his children lessons in Soninke every night, simultaneously inculcating them with ethnic lore.[67] A handful of the remaining intermarriages with Nigerians produced offspring that spiraled out of the Malian sphere of influence. These children grew up in Lagos, speaking a Nigerian language at home and school. In a mirror image of Malians newly arrived in the diaspora, these children—and their mothers--were uncomfortable in Malian gatherings where they were unable to follow the conversations in an unintelligible tongue. But being able to function in the larger society, there was less incentive to learn. Children of intermarriages with Nigerians who spoke a Malian language—particularly *Bamamankan* or Dogon--were well-integrated into diasporic society. Those who did not tended to gravitate to social circles comprising their mother's Nigerian ethnic group. As adults, such progeny were alienated not only from their fathers' homeland *duw*, but the diaspora itself.[68]

All of the transformations I have described in this section are familiar to students of African history, often characterized in the literature as elements of modernity, and associated with urbanization and entry into capitalistic markets during the colonial period. For the Malians in Lagos, however, it was necessary to cross national borders to escape the kin network's effective oversight. I recapitulate those earlier findings that emigration from one's hometown removed individuals from the family's gerontocratic patriarchal power structure, potentially allowing younger members to control their own actions and earnings. Nevertheless, I show that

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[67] Interview with Lassana Cisse at the High Council of Malians Overseas in Idumota, Lagos Island, Lagos on March 11, 2010.

[68] Interview with Naman Maiga in Missira, Région de Koulikoro, Mali on August 16, 2010.

the effects of spatial separation in this case were variable, contributing to a plurality of local understandings. My findings indicate that this process was not coeval throughout Africa, or even Mali, and was still underway in 2010 in certain places. Moreover, by showing that most Malian Lagosians and their homeland relatives continued into the twenty-first century to conceive of wealth as fungible within the *du*, I cast doubt on the assumption of an inevitable "progression" toward a Western conception of wealth as severable from the claims of kin. As such, this dissertation adds to the thirty-year accumulation of evidence corroborating Jane Guyer's observation that "there is no set of stages through which family structure, economic conditions, fertility, urbanization, and so on, change together, in step, and in the same direction."[69]

The Transnational Village

Members of the diaspora drew on idioms of kinship to recast the home village as a transnational entity. My informants routinely introduced me to "brothers," who turned out to be Malians from their home towns. Although fictive kinship did not carry the same obligations of wealth distribution as cognatic and agnatic relations, it required the same kind of cooperation as in the physical confines of the home village. The most common of these obligations was to *ci*, or send things. Prior to the widespread availability of the cell phone in both Nigeria and Mali, the latter not until around 2006 in many places, Malians transmitted letters, remittances, and gifts from the diaspora to the homeland by hand. Visitors to the diaspora, typically traders on buying trips, carried items for Lagosians from the same homeland village.[70] Although letter writing-- never that regular even in earlier decades—all but disappeared with the advent of commonly-

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[69] Guyer, *Household and Community*, 88.

[70] Interview with Jaji Cisse in Hara, Region de Kayes, Mali on September 17, 2010.

available cell phones, hometown visitors continued to hand-carry some remittances and material objects. (In the twenty-first century, Malians used informal money transfer services, such as that run as part of his forex business by Drissa Traoré, to transmit many remittances. They also shipped gifts on one of the trucks that regularly plied the route between Lagos and Bamako.) By the same token, Malian norms of conduct obligated the emigrant to act as the hometown visitor's *jatigi*, or host, while the former stayed in Lagos.[71] As *jatigi*, the emigrant housed the visitor in his dwelling, and provided him meals for an indeterminate period, in practice stretching up to a year.[72]

Reformist Islam Comes Home

Exacerbating the destabilization of historical social structures, the cosmopolitan influences of Lagos in some cases caused the displacement of local forms of Islam with the transnational standardization of reformist sects. Migration to Lagos removed Malians from a religious community dominated by Sufi practices, placing them into a *jama'at* that incorporated strong reformist influences.[73] Although the majority of Malians in Lagos successfully resisted the pressure to conform, over the long term, immersion the new religious environment gradually shifted beliefs and practices of many away from mysticism and toward more direct engagement with scripture.[74] When they returned to Mali, they often spread "Wahhabist" ideas.[75] Converted returnees criticized *maraboutic*[76] and other mystical practices, formed separate, more

[71] Interview with Naman Maiga in Missira, Region de Koulikoro, Mali on August 16, 2010.

[72] Interview with Mahammadu Cisse in Harah, Region de Kayes, Mali on September 15, 2010.

[73] Ibid.

[74] See, e.g., interview with Jaji Cisse in Hara, Region de Kayes, Mali on September 17, 2010.

[75] Interview with Mahammadu Cisse in Harah, Region de Kayes, Mali on September 15, 2010.

[76] Of, or relating to, the French *marabout* (derived from the Arabic *marbut*, "attached," in the sense of attachment to God), a saint or venerated descendant of a saint; also used in colloquial West African French for a commercial

conservative *jama'ats*, and, in extreme cases, even built new mosques to ensure the observance of what they deemed orthodox prayer. In such areas, over the fifty years following independence, in some villages, emigration gradually began undermining all three core social institutions of rural Mali: Islam, the household, and the village—the latter challenged most visibly when returnees bypassed it to retire in major urban centers.

Migrants returning to more isolated areas sometimes undertook more fundamental departures from traditional religious practices. The ancient settlement of Dalakanda was one such location, lying out on the Dogon plateau, twenty kilometers from the nearest road. I travelled to the tiny village on the back of a motorcycle, following a faint track in the dirt across a plain with no human habitat visible to the horizon, then up natural rock steps into the interior of a massive rock outcrop. Abdoulay Kassogue, visiting from Lagos, and his uncle, Seydou Kassogue, the village chief, recounted how a stream of returning migrants over the chief's lifetime gradually converted the village from exclusively "idol worship" to Islam. Although Dalakandans had been "traveling out" to, and returning from, urban centers throughout West Africa since the early decades of the twentieth century, the Lagos diaspora played a pivotal role in the town's conversion. Sometime before 1925, the first of the future Lagosians left for Accra, Ghana, where they formed an interim settlement. Emigrants returning from that diaspora built the first mosque in Dalakanda sometime before 1960. The Dogon remaining in Accra moved to Lagos in the 1980s, where at least 80 Dalakandans remained as of 2010. Adboulay associated the conversion of the migrants with their transition to an urban environment. As he explained, "you cannot be an idol worshipper in the big city," where people considered such practices

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Islamic religious specialist, sometimes differentiated from a saint as *petite marabout*. Marabouts charged believers for spiritual services, notably the provision of charms for protection against evil.

"dirty."[77] He implied that immigrants came to share this perspective, rendering relapsing into idol worship unthinkable. According to Abdoulay, "If you come back you cannot change," providing the impulse for proselytization, as "you will try to find people to join you."[78] Returnees, through constant preaching, convinced their fellow residents "one by one" that Islam was "the best way."[79] The incremental process of converting the town was almost complete at the time of my interviews--the chief comprising the sole holdout. Although seemingly incongruous, the exception was understandable considering that chiefship always reverted to the town's oldest male. The chief represented the last surviving resident from the era during which the entire population observed indigenous spiritual practices. Other informants identified the connection between migration and conversion, but attributed it to the pressure for conformance with local standards. Yunogo Giptele quoted his parents' observation that

> When you travel to go some way, when you're Muslim, when people are animist, you leave [being a] Muslim. You cross the people to be an animist. When you're animists, you travel and people [are] Muslim. When you do there, you change; you do the same religion for him. When you go back, you take your religion—no problem.[80]

While the influence of such conversions on emigrants' hometowns was readily evident, it was less clear at the household level. As a site of religious contestation, the domestic role of women, as well as their dress, was a particularly significant indicator of this influence. Women's roles in the diaspora were shaped more by the perception of Nigerian society by Malians living in it than by shifts toward cosmopolitan religious beliefs. A number of Malian women informants who spent time in Lagos knew surprisingly little about the city because their

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[77] Interview with Adboulay and Seydou Guindo in Dalakanda, Dogon Plateau, Region of Mopti, Mali on September 7, 2010.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Interview with Yunogo Giptele in Sangha, Pays Dogon, Region de Mopti, Mali, on September 5, 2010.

husbands had confined them to their families' tiny apartments.[81] Although their husbands or

other male relatives usually initiated this sequestering, the women generally agreed with the

rationale, which was that the streets were too dangerous for them. Even some women who ran

businesses did so out of their homes, if possible. Drissa Traoré's wife, Fatoumata Keita,

manager of a lucrative business importing *bazan* from Mali, coordinated everything from her

husband's forex office. Her sister shipped the bazan from Bamako to Traoré's office, where

Keita divided it into parcels which she distributed to her street sellers, who met her at the office.

She told me that, at the insistence of her husband, she lived her entire life in Lagos shuttling

between their cramped two-bedroom apartment east of Nnamdi Azikiwi Street, overlooking the

Oba's palace, and her husband's hotel and forex office in the adjoining section of Idumota.

Occasionally, he would allow her to go to one of the outdoor markets. On the other hand, neither

Keita, nor any of the other Malian women I knew in Lagos, wore the burka, or even the hijab.[82]

Women's roles in society constituted an area in which reformist ideas emanating from

Lagos made only modest headway in Mali. A large majority of returnees came back to rural

areas, where the economic imperative for efficient farmworkers trumped fine points of theology.

Devout, but practical, informants explained that, even though the *sunna* clearly stated that

women should wear the burka outside their homes, the garment did not allow sufficient range of

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[81] Interview with Fatoumata Cisse in Tulungumbe, Region de Kayes, Mali on September 16, 2010.

[82] There was a relative dearth of women visible in Lagos wearing the burka. The reasons for this situation, however, were not entirely clear. I noticed among both Nigerians and Malians a disconnect between conservative rhetoric and liberal practice in relation to women's dress conventions. I witnessed a particularly jarring instance of this contradiction during an interview at the Lagos Central Mosque, in which the administrator of the mosque carefully explained that women were not allowed in the mosque with any portion of the arms or legs visible. Meanwhile, his secretary was bustling about the office wearing a knee-length skirt and a sleeveless blouse. Although he made a distinction between clothes appropriate for worshipping and for other activities when I brought the apparent contradiction to his attention, such a distinction would be an anomaly in Sunni practice. My *Tablighi* informants explained the contradiction between their beliefs and their wives' practice as a result of the *Qu'ran*'s injunction against compulsion. The explanation highlighted the fact that these men were married to women who were not *Tablighis* themselves, seemingly a difficult formula for a settled family life.

movement to farm effectively.[83] Moreover, as it confined the entire body, it would have been

stifling in the searing heat of Sahel during the extreme physical exertion required to *senneke*.

Although the *du* comprised a courtyard surrounded by a circle of huts, Malians considered the

entire compound as constituting the woman's home. This exempted women from wearing the

burka during the rest of a typical day, leaving forays to the market as the sole quotidian activity

during which full coverage remained mandatory.[84] But, since nobody knew whether a woman

was shopping on her way back from her garden, even that venue was subject to exceptions. Thus,

in rural areas where returnees otherwise successfully introduced reformist practices, the wearing

of the burka did not translate well into the agricultural lifestyle of the rural Sahel.

Imagined Community and Fictive Kin

As we have seen, members of the diaspora demonstrated their continued solidarity with

others sharing their hometown origins through fictive kinship. While nearly all Malians acted on

this relationship in the diaspora, fewer exhibited a willingness to reinsert themselves into the

physical space of their home village, where the obligations of fictive kinship would multiply in

inverse proportion to the reduction in distance. Malian migrants, whether internal or

international, typically returned to their home village after making their fortunes elsewhere.

Malians, whether in diaspora or homeland, continued to make this pattern their goal. However,

the reality for two disparate groups within the diaspora did not match the ideal. These groups

comprised the diaspora's most and least successful members. The latter either did not even have

sufficient funds to purchase transportation home, and/or they sought to avoid the shame of

returning as perceived failures. The former sought to avoid the constant and increased economic

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[83] Interview with Jaji Cisse in Harah, Region de Kayes, Mali on September 17, 2010.

[84] Ibid.

demands of their family and neighbors that their wealth would provoke. The former group

tended to stay in Lagos, where distance veiled their status; the latter retired to one of the major

Malian cities, like Bamako, Kayes, or Segou, where the anonymity of urban life likewise

obscured them from the hometown gaze.[85] In either case, the emigrants erected an additional

layer of separation between their offspring and the family's local places of origin, thus

dampening the next generation's feelings of obligation to respond to claims emanating from

those places.

The case of Adama Giptele demonstrates the diaspora's influence on these transactions

particularly well. Rather than resettle near his family in the Mopti Region, which lay in the east

of the country, Giptele, a Dogon, remitted funds to Bamana friends in the city of Segou, in the

region of that name, located in the center of the country. He instructed his friends to buy land for

him in Segou, where he could build a house.[86] In this case, Giptele complemented the break

from *du* and hometown with financial ties across ethnic groups, indicative of a level of trust

previously reserved for kin. This kind of interethnic financial connection reflected those in the

diaspora.

The transition from some towns into the diaspora slowly contributed toward reordering

society in those places. The ways that Malians in the diaspora organized themselves revealed the

way they were redefining their identity with respect to the homeland. Whereas internal rural-to-

urban migrants in both Mali and Nigeria founded hometown associations, Malians in Lagos

developed regional sodalities. The difference was a necessary outcome of the fewer numbers of

migrants from each town that migrated to Nigeria. The situation forced Malians to expand their

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[85] See, e.g., interview with Numori Traoré in Karan, Region de Koulikoro, Mali on August 15, 2010; interview with Mahammadu Cisse in Harah, Region de Kayes, Mali on September 15, 2010.

[86] Interview with Yunogo Giptele in Sangha, Pays Dogon, Region de Mopti, Mali on September 5, 2010.

conception of shared origins, and, consequently, to develop with other Malians close relationships that were in the homeland reserved exclusively for fellow villagers. The regional focus also led to a change in function, as the kind of civic improvements that could be implemented on a regionwide basis were too massive for the contributions of a few score members to be appreciable. Thus, while hometown associations in Bamako undertook the dual functions of funding civic improvements in their place of origin, and providing assistance to the less fortunate in the local migrant community, Malian associations in Lagos confined their mission to the latter.[87] The economic reconfiguration emphasized the emigrants' commitment to their fellow citizens in diaspora at the expense of that to their hometowns. Significantly, the revision represented a step toward Malians in the diaspora reimagining themselves as being connected by national, rather than local, origins.

Hometown and regional associations provided social safety nets that could be activated immediately to address emergencies for migrants living in urban areas. Before emigrating, the dense network of kin and neighbors in his hometown provided each member with such security; but these links did not always reach into major urban areas, even within Mali. In hometown associations, the replacement of the connection from hometown to urban migrant with connections among urban migrants was offset to some extent by the initiation of a connection from the group of urban migrants to the hometown. The flow of power was reversed, with migrants providing assistance to the town. In contrast, regional associations, although they used the homeland as an organizing principle, did not produce a direct institutional connection to it.

These new associations did, however, participate in a "reverse" flow of political input as integral parts of the High Council of Malians Overseas, which acted as both the governing body

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[87] Interview with Mohammed Cisse in Tulungumbe, Region de Kayes, Mali on September 16, 2010.

of the diaspora, and as a liaison between the diaspora and the Malian government. As described

in Chapter 1, representatives of each regional and other Malian association in Lagos sat on the

high council, which coordinated Malian government initiatives involving the local community.

Foremost among these activities was the coordination of absentee voting in presidential elections.

Absentee voting did not include regional or local elections. The High Council, thus, channeled

the political energy of the multiple regional organizations into the unified national project.

Through this system of incorporation, the Malian national government ensured that the

individual regional associations did not remain autonomous, each loyal to a different, narrowly-

conceived place of origin. By absorbing voluntary associations into its larger bureaucracy, the

state forced members of each regional group to situate themselves within a hierarchy that

culminated on the national level, and whose ultimate purpose was to participate in the national

democracy. Not all of these voluntary associations were organized around region, with at least

one—the Dogon association--based on shared ethnicity. But, as the high council incorporated all

Malian associations, regardless of organizing principle, the same channeling process took place.

For all subpopulations, the reconfiguration of social relations within the diaspora,

especially the outreach efforts of the embassy representatives, piqued their interest in the civic

right to vote. Significantly, this right was reserved for citizens, and tied to the nation-state.

Because of its greater spatial and organizational separation, the experience of the Dogon

community is particularly instructive. My Dogon informants in Lagos described in detail the

extensive activities that the embassy representatives and, separately, representatives of various

political parties conducted in the Agege section of Lagos, home to the primary Dogon enclave.

These informants' accounts of long lines at the improvised voting site and the need for awnings

across the road to shade the waiting crowd attest to Dogon voters' high level of civic engagement

in the diaspora. This situation represented a marked departure from that in these migrants'

hometowns. According to Yunogo Giptele, in Pays Dogon, "people don't know the

politics…more people don't want to vote."[88] Even civic improvements--the traditional *quid pro*

quo for gaining office, proved ineffective in attracting voters. In a pattern familiar throughout

postindependence Africa, international membership organizations, NGOs and even foreign

governments took the lead in implementing development projects in Pays Dogon. As Giptele

pointed out, "I have Belgium (sic) friends [who] built [a] new school building, but not

politicians."[89] Although such outside initiatives did not completely "hollow out" the Malian

government, which built infrastructure of its own, they created confusion among the populace

regarding who was responsible for development projects. Voters typically did not realize the

government was involved in these projects, or at least did not know which party to reward.

Consequently, when Dogon returned from the diaspora, they injected into their hometowns a

rekindled political consciousness focused on national government. Beyond communicating the

excitement of absentee voting, such returnees resowed an appreciation for the power of the

government to improve the life of the individual. They had regained this appreciation through

being the beneficiaries of the embassy's assistance in providing them with the updated

identification documentation enabling them to return to the homeland in the first place.[90]

The diaspora's internal organization, including grass-roots associations, organic

intellectuals, and, finally, intervention by the state, all worked to expand members' conceptions

of common origins. Emigrants came to rely on fellow members of the diaspora for the support

hometown networks previously provided. Although they shared a home region, as a practical

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[88] Interview with Yunogo Giptele in Sangha, Pays Dogon, Region de Mopti, Mali, on September 5, 2010.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Interview with Mahammadu Cisse in Harah, Region de Kayes, Mali on September 15, 2010.

matter, they had connected with each other as common members of the diaspora, a community

defined by citizenship. The Malian government intervened to emphasize that organizing

principle, most visibly by subsuming the disparate voluntary associations into a national

umbrella organization. More instrumentally, it provided services to the diaspora, including the

provision of identification documents, which facilitated travel, while enhancing state surveillance.

Most successfully, it organized absentee voting, which mobilized the population around its civic

right to vote, and actively involved them in the nationalizing project. In the following section, I

explore the socio-cultural factors that worked in tandem with institutional initiatives to promote

national solidarity in the diaspora.

A National Dialectic: Exclusion, Integration, Cohesion

Reversing Anderson's process of nation-building, differential treatment before the law

forced conational migrants to reimagine themselves as connected more fundamentally by

citizenship than ethnicity. While the High Council of Malians Overseas constituted the primary

institutional conduit within the diaspora for bridging ethnic, regional, and religious divisions, the

Nigerian state reinforced the importance of Malian national identity from without. Nigeria, like

Mali, sought to redefine permanent residents within its borders primarily as citizens rather than

members of ethnic or religious sodalities. The new governments in both countries reified such

identities by endowing them with legal force. They assigned different rights to citizens and

noncitizens, inscribing nationality onto everyday life. One's citizenship carried greater practical

consequences than one's ethnicity or religion. In Nigeria, differential treatment took the form of

mandatory residential permits, which identified all expatriate Malians legally by their citizenship,

rather than their ethnicity or religion. Thus, Nigerian bureaucrats used the same technologies of

control--identification documents--described by Brubaker in the context of the Soviet Union, but

to the opposite effect. Whereas Soviet IDs crystallized ethnic national identities, Nigerian residential permits reinforced a common national identity <u>across</u> ethnicities within the diaspora.[91] Conversely, they drove a wedge between Nigerian and Malian Fulani, the single ethnicity common to both populations.

The Nigerian state's assignment of differential rights based on citizenship manifested on the federal level the principle of autochthonous rights that was enshrined in regional laws. For many subnational states within Nigeria, these laws separated residents into indigenes and immigrants, reserving certain state resources exclusively for the latter. Reporting on such policies in 2006, Human Rights Watch identified a wider culture of discrimination, finding that "the idea that non-indigenes have no right to demand the benefits of full citizenship is now so deeply ingrained in Nigerian political thinking that many Nigerians take it for granted."[92] The federal government's placement of aliens into a separate legal category of resident thus constituted the same treatment afforded internal immigrants who faced "state and local government policies and practices that exclude them from many of the material benefits of Nigerian citizenship" based on their places of origin.[93] While the federal government issued residency permits to aliens, local governments throughout Nigeria excluded internal migrants by issuing "certificates of indigeneity" to persons who were adjudicated indigenes of their jurisdictions.[94]

The legal framework reflected the accepted basis for claimsmaking against the state that the colonial administration's system of indirect rule had inculcated in the populace, and that

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[91] Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed,* 32.

[92] Human Rights Watch, *Nigeria: "TheyDo Not Own This Place": Government Discrimination against "Non-Indigenes" in Nigeria* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2006), 14.

[93] Ibid., 17.

[94] Ibid. 20.

subsequently shaped intergroup relations of all kinds. At the local level the concept gave rise to

the patchwork of violent gangs in Lagos who projected the territorial rationale for extortion

through their generic name: "the *Area* Boys," the etymology deriving from the connection of

each gang to the area of the city in which they grew up. In the Area Boys' view, as the local

autochthons, only people from any given neighborhood had the right to benefit from the use of

its territory. Outsiders gaining such benefits by doing business there were obligated to pay them

for that right. The quintessential practice under this principle was the Area Boys' extortion of

payments from *danfo* drivers who used bus-stops in their neighborhoods. In commerce, the

principle of exclusive autochthonous rights manifested itself in the refusal of market committees

to rent stalls to immigrants. Both of these groups targeted Malians in Lagos for such

exclusionary treatment. But the same attitudes informed even individual interactions between

Nigerians and Malians.[95] All Malians experienced this treatment in common, regardless of

ethnicity, hometown, or religious sect. As with the national laws, exclusionary tactics were

based on the Malians' citizenship. While all identity is situational, living in the diaspora placed

Malians into a long-term situation in which their national identity played an instrumental role in

the majority of their social interactions.

The idea that autochthony bestowed a special relationship to territory derived only partly

from the politics of indirect rule. The concept has appropriately indigenous roots that predate

colonization. The Yoruba, who were the original settlers of Lagos, have a special term for local

autochthons: *àwọn ọmọ ibíl`ẹ*, (literally "native children," but idiomatically translated as "sons of

the soil"), denoting an exclusive relationship with the territorial spirits in indigenous religions.[96]

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[95] Interview with Mohammed Cisse in Tulungumbe, Region de Koulikoro, Mali on Septemeber 16, 2010.

[96] Falola discusses historical variations on this concept in *From Hospitality to Hostility*, 51-68.

The concept also underlies Laitin's findings that Yoruba in the twentieth century identified more strongly with city of origin than with their ethnicity.[97]

But even absent the concept of autochthony, the social dynamics of the diaspora made it a space in which Malians would delineate their common identity as a group of citizens more sharply than in the homeland itself. While Malian citizens confronted few if any groups of foreigners at home, they faced many in Lagos. As anthropologist Frederik Barth demonstrated in his seminal work on ethnicity, contrary to previous ideas associating isolation with strict maintenance of group boundaries, populations develop exclusionary strategies only through interaction with other peoples, which stimulates the setting of markers.[98] Hence, it is by venturing into a cultural frontier where it encounters new groups that a population would be most likely to strengthen its group identity. This is precisely the situation presented by the Malian diaspora in Lagos, causing those in the diaspora to develop a stronger sense of belonging to the nation than their homeland counterparts.

Other factors forged solidarity within the diaspora. In Lagos, spatial and social constraints forced Malians from different groups to mix more freely than in Mali, both socially and in commerce. The typical male newcomer to Lagos spent nights and much of each day in one of the hostels, which housed Malians of all backgrounds in close quarters. With the standard three beds to a room, and communal bathrooms, internal divisions were difficult to maintain. The spatially-dictated integration continued when the residents socialized, packed into tiny common rooms and narrow balconies. Throughout the day, whomever happened to be nearby brewed tea on tiny charcoal stoves, distributing it to the group using a pair of communal shot

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[97] Laitin, *Hegemony and Culture*, 100.

[98] Frederik Barth, Introduction to *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, Frederik Barth, ed. (Bergen: Scandinavian University Books, 1969), 9.

glasses in successive rounds. Beyond the immediate conviviality of sharing a drink, the activity

highlighted the deeper cultural bonds among all the residents, as it was a practice common to all

Malians.[99] In these random assemblages of fellow citizens, those from all backgrounds

participated in wide-ranging discussions. Most significantly, they secured clients and forged

business partnerships across ethnic and other lines of division.

Maintenance of cultural purity was secondary to the imperative for economic survival

and success. Absent the spatial divisions that often existed in the homeland between ethnic

communities, and the hierarchies that policed cultural limitations to interaction, the negative

repercussions of acting on that imperative were sharply reduced. The history of one of the

diaspora's most successful businesses illustrates how such tradeoffs were negotiated on the

ground, as material circumstances influenced decisions to forge new alliances across ethnic lines.

When Mohammed Daou decided to start a freight-forwarding business in the 1980s, he realized

that the absence at the time of affluent Malians in the diaspora dictated that he raise the several-

thousand dollar startup cost in small increments from a large number of investors. Whereas, in

Mali, he would have restricted investors to his kin, or at least his ethnic group, not enough

Soninke lived in Lagos to do so. The demographics of the diaspora forced Daou to approach

Malians from all backgrounds to invest in his startup venture. The firm grew over the decades

into a highly profitable business that operated its own warehouse and shipped goods worldwide.

At the height of its success in the early twenty-first century, the firm's Vice President, Moussa

Diarra, was Bamana. The multiethnic composition of Daou's firm was representative of

business ventures in the diaspora, and of the diaspora itself. This pattern marks a dramatic break

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[99] For an analysis of tea rituals among unemployed men in Francophone West Africa, see Michael Ralph, "Killing Time," in *Social Text*, No. 97 (Winter, 2008): 1-29.

from the regional historiography, which emphasizes the ethnic homogeneity of West African

trade diasporas.[100]

The business relationships between diaspora and host society, as well as Malians'

perception of those relationships, also contributed to the narrowing of ethnic divisions within the

diaspora. In the novel environment of Lagos, the ethnic landscape expanded to include Nigerian

groups wielding greater socio-economic power and sharing fewer cultural characteristics with

Malians. These unfamiliar ethnic groups quickly displaced their Malian counterparts as the

primary objects of Orientalizing in the diaspora. Malians adopted the ethnic stereotypes

circulating in Nigerian society, notably the portrayal of Igbos as aggressive and dishonest

businesspersons. The increased integration among Malian groups, combined with the discovery

of peoples representing an entirely new register of difference, shifted the focus from ethnic to

national boundaries, thereby enhancing cohesion within the diaspora. The cultural distance

between Sahelian ethnic groups no longer seemed large in comparison with that between

Malians and Nigerians. Malians in the diaspora communicated the adjusted perspective to their

homeland families through the quotidian news related in their letters and phone calls home.

When businessmen mentioned the names of their new partners, or hostel residents mentioned

their roommates, their families noticed the disparate ethnicities even without explicit discussion.

Malians often referred to persons by their surnames because of the cultural information such

names conveyed, many being specific to a particular ethnicity.

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[100] It is particularly significant that Daou's multiethnic company was involved in the shipping industry, as past studies of diasporas have argued that ethnic networks were instrumental in the long-distance transport so necessary to such settlements. I discuss these studies in the introduction and, at length, in the section on ethnicity in Chapter 1.

Remitting the Nation

Returning home from the diaspora, migrants brought a strengthened sense of national belonging, forged in the cultural frontier of Lagos, fortified by weakened boundaries between ethnic groups and between regions, and by a less parochial view of their places of origin. But even Malians who never returned from Lagos strengthened the sense of belonging to the nation within their hometowns. They accomplished this primarily through the stories they told their families and friends about Nigeria, invariably generalizing, and contrasting it unfavorably with Mali. Yunogo Giptele's overview was typical: "For me, Mali is ten times better than Nigeria." [101] This "othering" allowed Malians to refine the vision they held of their own nation, defining it by what it was not. When I asked the families of those in the diaspora their opinions of Nigeria and the Nigerian people, they expressed universal opprobrium. The reaction was the same whether the informant had been to Nigeria or not, invariably citing her perception that the country was awash in violence, crime, corruption, filth, and lax morals. Most informants traced the supposed chaos to their perception of the character of the people, which they contrasted with that of Malians, remarking that *Mali mogow ani Nigerian mogow te kelen*, or "Malians and Nigerians are not the same." An American equivalent would be the dismissive "they're not like us," implying the subject population is so fundamentally different as to defy understanding.

Malians who had been to Lagos and returned to the homeland cited specific events that encapsulated the differences between national cultures. Yunogo Giptele, who had visited his brother in Lagos for stays of several months on two occasions, was there when Nigerian head of state General Sani Abacha died in 1998, and witnessed Nigerians celebrating in the street. He

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[101] Interview with Yunogo Giptele in Sangha, Pays Dogon, Region de Mopti, Mali, on September 5, 2010.

was appalled at the idea of celebrating someone's death, emphasizing how foreign the idea was

to Malians. He went on to register his disapproval of Nigerian dissolute forms of leisure:

> When they have a celebration, they have a lot of beer. And whiskey. And gin. Every-everything. From alcohol you see everything, everything the people drink. Everybody drink." [102]

Dolo made the separate point that Nigerian Muslims participated in the debauchery.[103] When I

asked him about Yoruba Muslims in particular, he recounted a story to illustrate their perceived

lack of seriousness in observing Muslim practices.

> In the mosque my fifth time in Agege—ah, no—in Otip [his name for a section of Lagos], I see somebody—Muslim—he's Yoruba. He take the beer, if this [is] the mosque, he have the [beer] here. The bar, he go to take the beer from there. Every time he look [at] the time [on] the watch, he say, ah, it's time to go to prayer. He leave the beer to come to pray. Afterwards, he go back to get that same beer. I see this. On the Yoruba [laughs].[104]

Repatriated emigrants extended their chauvinistic critiques to a wide array of cultural

practices, portraying divergence at the national level as flowing from deep cultural legacies

rather than differential circumstances. Giptele, thus, addressed the cultural touchstone of cuisine,

concentrating on foods and aspects of preparation that were central to all Malian traditions.

Cattle, for example, constituted an important measure of wealth, even for nonherding cultures,

and the raising and preparation of beef was a point of pride in the Sahel. Hence, when Giptele

commented that "the meat that Malians cook is very nice past Nigerian meat," he was

disparaging what Malians perceived as a key element of Nigerian culture. Similarly, all Malian

cultures had very specific ideas about the type and intensity of seasoning that sophisticated cooks

added to various dishes, with the primary spice being *foronton*, a West African red chili pepper.

Giptele portrayed Nigerian cooks as unsophisticated, and Nigerians in general as having

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[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

undiscerning palates, with his comment that "when you buy Nigerians' food it's all chili pepper. But Mali is a little bit; they know."[105]

Informants in the diaspora cited political differences to define the Malian system as the negative of a dysfunctional Nigerian counterpart. The Assistant Director of the High Council, Moussa Diarra, focused on separation of church and state, observing that Malians did not mix religion with politics like Nigerians. Nigeria provided him with a reference point against which to define Mali as a nation-state in an international context. Likewise, in the homeland, the diaspora created in the imagination of the average Malian a context in which she had cause to think of her nation as a whole and to articulate a national character. The international setting militated against framing the comparison in terms of ethnicity or in relation to other subnational groups, and, indeed, no informant did. This reticence contrasted with daily discourse throughout the homeland, which was replete with the use of ethnic stereotypes to explain all manner of behavior.[106] Only through the diaspora did the average Malian have any personal connection to interaction between Malian and other nationals. Similar patterns have long been recognized as instrumental for the development of nationalism in Europe, which was forged in the so-called "age of discovery." Only by coming into contact with different cultures were Europeans able to gain a sense of what elements distinguished their own.

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[105] Ibid. Giptele linked this deficiency in particular with the preparation of rice. Although *to*, the paste made from millet or sorghum, is the staple for most Malian subpopulations, the same groups typically prefer rice, which they consider more refined fare. Hence, when he repeatedly conveyed his dislike for the rice in Nigeria, finally making clear that the Nigerian cooks were ruining it with a clumsy excess of *foronton*, he was expressing an unmistakable disdain for Nigerian culture.

[106] The reinforcement of distinctions between ethnic groups followed directly from Barth, as groups of Malians were exposed only to other groups of Malians within the nation-state's borders. Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* 9.

Conclusion

The relationship between homeland and diaspora constituted a feedback loop in which each side continuously influenced the other. While the previous chapters emphasize the movement of ideas from homeland to diaspora, this final chapter examines the reverse flow. The diaspora influenced homeland communities in two principal ways. Most directly, emigrants transferred their newly heightened nationalism to their hometowns and extended families, both through their continued communications, and when they returned for visits or retirement. More fundamentally, though, the diaspora influenced mundane beliefs and behavior in these communities. The latter cultural practices constituted a central element in the national ethos. Through the continuous transnational feedback loop, members of the diaspora, thus, changed the object of their loyalty. The image of the homeland that inspired their patriotism represented more than a static memory, incorporating elements of their own modified diasporic culture. Thus, the standard formulation, in which members of a diaspora remain attached to an anachronistic vision of tradition, may itself be obsolete. The attraction, rather, appears recursive, the emigrants responding to flashes of their own reflections in the multifaceted national character.

Conclusion

As a multi-site history of the postindependence Malian diaspora in Lagos, my dissertation makes significant contributions in several areas. While scholars across disciplines have produced a substantial body of literature on postindependence African diasporas in the global north, few have focused on established, long-term south-to-south immigrant communities. Of those, fewer still have looked at West African migrants. Although I find that Malians in postindepence Nigeria retained the same level of connection to the homeland as their counterparts in the global north, that similarity is itself important. The historical factors involved in my case study were substantively different from those affecting Malians in Europe and North America. Not only did the diaspora and host nation in this case share a regional culture, but a common religion united the diaspora and half of the host population in an important dimension of identity. Assimilation in such a situation was far more likely than for Malians living in a country like France, where the predominantly Christian host society shared with resident Malians only a colonial language and the cultural residue of foreign rule. Although Malians in twenty-first century Brazzaville had more in common with their hosts than did their contemporaneous compatriots in France, they were equally divided by religion. Thus, Bruce Whitehouse's findings on homeland connection could not have been extrapolated to the diaspora in either twentieth- or twenty-first century Nigeria, where deep historical connections through Islam and commerce seemingly minimized cultural distinctions between diaspora and homeland.

The different categories of analysis that Whitehouse and I use highlight the different perspective I bring to the study of West African diasporas. Whitehouse delimits his study population according to two criteria: connection through joking relationships and through common grouping by Congolese as *Ouest Africain*. He devises this complex definition primarily

to avoid "the naturalization of the nation-state by the social sciences,"[1] arguing that other

scholars "treat national identity as an empirical fact rather than a social construction."[2] That

criticism does not apply to my approach, which centers precisely on how national identity *is*

socially constructed. In his efforts to *not* privilege the nation-state, Whitehouse ignores its

importance to the self-defnition of his subjects, and even to his own "transnational" analysis.[3]

He finally rejects nationality as a criterion for inclusion because of "the large number of people

living in Brazzaville who considered themselves Malians but had never possessed Malian

papers."[4] Thus, while Whitehouse criticizes the use of nationality as a category because it is not

"an empirical fact," he also *rejects* it as a category for the same reason. In applying my

theoretical framework to the Brazzaville diaspora, the question I am trying to answer is: Why did

this surprisingly large number of migrants who were not Malian citizens consider themselves

Malians? And why was that identity important enough to claim across a generation or more?

What I find is that over the fifty years following independence in Mali, actions of the

government, civil society, and other West Africa governments naturalized the nation-state of

origin as the most consistently salient facet of identity in the long-term situation of living in a

diaspora.

The principal contribution I make with this dissertation is to connect the study of West

African diaspora history to the fields of Islamic and transnational history in the most

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[1] Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, "Methodological Nationalism, the Social Sciences, and the Study of Migration: An Essay in Historical Epistemology," *International Migration Review* 37, No. 3, Transnational Migration: International Perspectives (Fall, 2003): 576-610, 576; cited in Whitehouse, *Migrants and Strangers*, 16.

[2] Whitehouse, *Migrants and Strangers*, 16.

[3] Despite pointing out that the most obvious example of the naturalization of the nation-state is the use of the term "transnationalism," Whitehouse tells us that "[t]his sense of belonging to a particular homeland is a hallmark not only of Africa's internal diasporas but of many other populations engaged in transnationalism—that is, activities spanning two or more nation-states." Ibid., 9.

[4] Ibid., 15.

fundamental sense of the latter term. I see this as the theoretical equivalent of the evolution within anthropology away from examining the village as a spatially- and temporally-closed system. Isolating focus on the Malian diaspora in Lagos provides an interesting microhistory, but without widening both the disciplinary and the geographical aperture, the resulting picture is artificially circumscribed.   The village studies of earlier generations misconstrued the meaning of local practices by ignoring the influences of global forces such as European colonialism. Failure to address such developments in the postcolonial world results in equally misguided conclusions. Hence, like Whitehouse, I have entered into conversation with the multidisciplinary literature on globalization, seeking to situate these West African diasporas within wider historical flows, while problematizing ostensible global trends that are ahistorical and ungrounded in fine-grained comparative analysis. I differ from Whitehouse, however, in my approach to the political and international relations aspects of transnational populations. Whitehouse's reluctance to connect political structures with individual identity and local culture is not peculiar to the field of anthropology. As cultural historians of Africa, we have sometimes been reluctant to stray into the territory of political history.

I reversed this trend only because the diaspora's relationship to the nation-state constituted the elephant in the room. Malians in Nigeria framed their purposeful and almost universal lack of assimilation and their robust interaction with the homeland most often in national, rather than ethnic or religious terms. Their actions matched their rhetoric. The overwhelming majority of the community returned to Mali to marry and sent as many of their Nigerian-born children as possible to grow up in their country of origin and be educated in its public schools, where they were taught by teachers trained and assigned by the national government. The High Council, a quasi-governmental organization that was partially funded by

the Malian government, acted as a genuine community hub. Malians depended on it not only for the papers necessary to negotiate the legal complications of citizenship, but for services as intimate as marriage counseling. Those in the diaspora overwhelmingly and enthusiastically participated in Malian presidential elections by absentee voting, one of the most quintessential public activities of the imagined community. These state-centered links to the nation of origin constituted the single most striking characteristic of the diaspora as a whole. It compelled me to define the homeland as the nation-state, a decision reflected in my title.

A more fundamental contribution I make to the study of postcolonial diaspora history is in tracing *how* the Malian nation-state naturalized itself as such an important object of identification for its citizens. In interrogating the ability of transnational solidarities to undermine national identitication, I examine Islam as a source of commonality that is unambiguously transnational, rather than international. I challenge a dominant narrative in the popular press and certain quarters of academia that, over the half-century following independence, a global trend toward a political Islam occurred that unified Muslims and threatened Western nation-states. I present an example in which solidarity within the *umma* across borders remained weak, and the nation-state actively embraced local Islamic values as part of the national character, purposely entertwining national and religious identity. For the Malian diaspora in Lagos, where coreligionists made up half of the host population, common membership in the *umma* had little historical assimilative effect. Moreover, the relative lack of religious solidarity persisted, despite the potential social and economic benefits to Malians of accessing such networks.

My dissertation delineates the mechanics of the transnational network that connected the diaspora with the homeland. "New media" effectively expanded the public sphere across borders.

However, while a zone of mediation between transnational populations and supranational institutions such as the World Bank and UN opened, it did not displace the Habermasian public sphere between citizens and the state. This was particularly true of the Malian diaspora because of the specific media available to its members over the decades, including audiocassettes, DVDs, and radio, but—until recently--excluding the internet, along with the proclivities of diasporans for information coming from the homeland. Moreover, the public sphere in Mali expanded after 1991 to include religious beliefs in national conversations on ethical state policy. Through this ongoing dialogue; government leaders, religious institutions, secular civil society organizations, and the public at large together refashioned the national ethos to reflect the most commonly observed brand of Islam within Mali's borders.

Recent events in Mali have brought these issues into focus, as Islamists *Ançar Dine* initially joined forces with Tuareg ethnic nationalists to undermine the territorial integrity of the existing state. The establishment of separatist states and the subsequent toppling of the Malian government demonstrated the potential of such solidarities to destabilize nation-states. Nevertheless, an examination of the coup-plotters' rationale reveals that the government takeover was in fact stimulated by patriotism, rather than a desire to destroy the country or its secular principles. The primary reason for the coup was the overwhelmingly Muslim army's desire to preserve the country's sovereignty, and its belief that the previous leaders of both the country and the army had put their individual welfare ahead of the state's. Similarly, the opinion of the general population, as reflected in polls following the coup, showed universal opposition to the breakup of the state. While the population was divided in its opinion of the coup, both sides favored the continuation of the secular state. Opposition centered on the disruption of scheduled democratic elections, as a constitutional guarantee. Thus, despite the success of transnational

movements of Islamic populations in destabilizing the Malian nation-state, it persevered as an imagined community that bound the majority of its Muslim citizens together in opposition to transnational Islamic governance. While my focus on these issues predates the foregoing events, I hope my dissertation may help in understanding them.

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Partial List of Informants

Abdourahmane Diallo	Came from Gao to Kano in 1971 to study with Karamogo Malawali and moved to Lagos in 1973. He was the first President of the High Council of Malians Overseas - Lagos
Abdullai Maiga	Came from Missira, a town near Bancoumana, who was a Tablighi and President of the Council of Malians in Ibadan in 2010
Abdullah Shwaib	Nigerian Imam and head of a Muslim charity.
Adboulay Guindo	Member of the Dogon Council, from Dalakanda, Mopti. One of the few Dogon who regularly did business in Idumota.
Abesina Dabo	One of the longest resident Malians. A money changer from Timbuktu who sold small items from a table on the street when he first arrived
Adama Giptele	A Dogon who came from Ghana to Agege in 1979.
Ali Diarra	Came from Segu to Lagos where he slept outside in front of Sekuba Sidibe's hotel on Kosoko St. in Idumota and worked as a porter.
Ali Dolo	A Dogon tailor who came to Agege from Accra in 1983. He had a small shop where elder Dogon men gathered to talk while Ali sewed. Ali's family operated the eatery and the minerals shop in the vacant lot where the community gathered.
Allesane Traoré	A purchasing agent from the town of Sandaman near Sibi who did business out of the Fula Che hotel.
Amadu Dembélé	A Fulani money changer and owner of the Fula-che Hotel.
Amadu Coulibaly	Born in Wani near Macina. Followed his jr. brother to Lagos in 1983. One of the few Bamana residents of Agege who represented that constituency at meetings of the High Council.
Amadu Traoré	Malian farmer.
Amadu Camara	An officer of the High Council and a truck owner-operator.
Amaroa Diarra	A freight forwarder who arrived in Lagos in 1990 and sent loads airfreight to Zaire and Mali
Ansar Badri Traoré	Chef du Mission, Centre de Sante, Ansar Dine, Banconi Djanguinebougou, Bamako.
Arama Onafawode	A Yoruba woman from Oshogbo, Osun State born in 1969. She moved to Lagos in 1994 to work as a tailor, but later sold Chinese-made plates and other goods in Benin and sold them in Lagos. She occasionally changed money with Drissa Traore.
Baba Adinni	The head cleric at Lagos Central Mosque.
Bakari Diarra	A 20-year resident from Gonsolo, Mali, who ran a Tae Kwon Do school in Lagos, and died in 2007.

Cheba Kone	Malian farmer in Djigidalla, Koulikoro born in 1942, whose father was from Gonsolo, and whose son farmed peanuts in Senegal.
Daouda Traoré	A Malian farmer.
Drissa Kone	A Malian farmer.
Drissa Traoré	Came from Karan, a small town near Bancoumana, to Lagos in 1989 and became owner of the White House Hotel and a forex bureau.
Fatoumata Cisse	A Malian farmer/homemaker.
Fatoumata Giptele	A Malian farmer/homemaker.
Fatoumata Keita	Came from Bamako after marrying Drissa Traoré. Ran a bazan importing business.
Ibrahim Tangera	A Fulani trader born in Nioro in 1941 who sold dyed cloth, starting in Ibadan in 1977, then in Onitsha from 1978 to 1988, when he came to Kano and married a Hausa woman.
Ibrahim Sidibe	A purchasing agent who operated out of the building that houses the "bin Laden Hotel." He was the son of community founder Seku Sidibe.
Ibrahim Toloba	A Dogon money changer who had a small office in the Bristol Hotel. He grew up in Ghana and was one of the few Dogon who lived in Idumota.
Ibrahim Traoré	Proprietor of Benkadi Hotel in 2007.
Ibrahim Sikuru	Yoruba gazoil seller in Ebute Ero Car Park. Did business and socialized with the Malians in Ebute Ero.
Issa Maiga	A Malian farmer.
Issa Tambura	Ran a major tailoring operation with around 20 employees housed in an entire floor of the building next to the Offices of the High Council.
Jaji Coulibaly	A Malian farmer/homemaker.
Kao Coulibaly	Born in Senegal to a father from Sikasso, he spent 12 years farming in Kumasi, Ghana, then came to Ibadan.
Kauru Bagayogo	Came to Ibadan in 1979.
Khalifa Diarra	Born in Turo, Segu in 1973 and came to Lagos in 1994, where he slept in storefronts and locals paid him to pick up trash. He later got a job refurbishing cardboard boxes.
Lamine Kone	A Malian farmer.
Lamine Kante	Came to Lagos from Kayes in 1976 for a short trip, returned the next year and stayed free in the Kosoko Hotel for a year because he knew proprietor Sidibe's wife's younger brother from Kayes.
Lassana Cisse	A Soninke from Nioro du Sahel who formed the Nioro Council, which was the first Malian association in Lagos. In 2007, he was an officer in

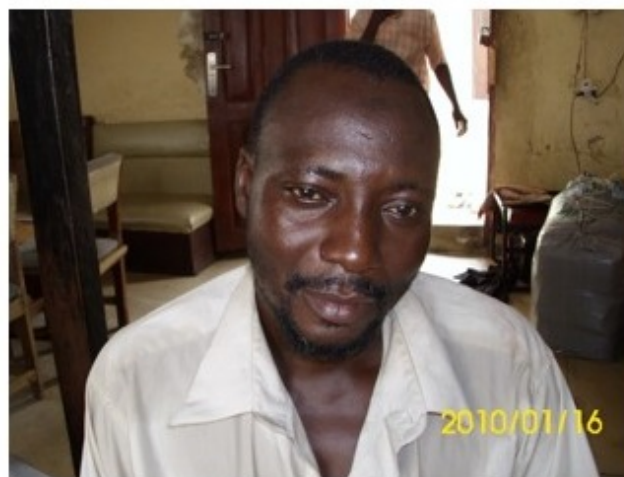|	
	the High Council and dye exporter, operating out of the High Council offices. He was previously a partner in the Mobert frieght forwarding company.
Lassana Keita	A Malian from Segu who came to Lagos in 1981. He first lived in Surulere and worked in Idumota as a porter, then moved to Victoria Island.
Madu Touré	A Malian farmer.
Madu Traoré	Ran a small forex bureau in Idumota.
Magan Traoré	Born in 1966 in a town near Sibi, and came to Lagos in 1987. Lived in Maroko 1989-90. In 2010 he was still single and sold watches on commission.
Magan Keita	Left Mali in 1974, spent a few months in Togo, then came to Nigeria, splitting time between Lagos and Ibadan. He returned to Mali in 1980, but was back in Lagos by 1988.
Mahammadu Cisse	A Malian farmer.
Mahmoud Sidibe	Son of diaspora founder Seku Sidibe who grew up in Lagos, but in 2010 lived in Bamako in his uncle's compound. His uncle was Sekuba Sidibe, who took over his brother's hotels after he left Lagos.
Mamadu Baba Sangare	Supervisor de Chantier, Bamako.
Mamadu Sidibe	A carpenter who left Sikasso in 1981 then spent some time in Ougadougou and Niame before coming to Maduguri in 1983, where he was detained by immigration and deported.
Modibo Coulibaly	Ran a frieght forwarding company out of Ebute Ero Car Park. Came from Nyemana, Koulikoro to Lagos in 1984. His relative, Madu Camara, gave him work when he arrived.
Mohammed Cisse	A Malian farmer.
Mohammed Touré	A Malian farmer.
Moussa Diallo	Came to Lagos in 1977 and was helped by Seku Sidibe, who acted as a kess, or informal bank.
Muki Sulusi	Yoruba woman born in Ogun State. Her mother was from Burundi. Came to Lagos in 1979 to do office work. She started running a small food shop after she married in 1982.
Muotune Christian Odusinabimpe	An Igbo man born in 1964. Came to Lagos in 1979 to trade jewelry. In 1998 started travelling back and forth to Mali to sell medicines. Relocated to Mali in 2001 to open cosmetics shop.
Nama Keita	Came to Lagos in 1990 and slept under Eko Bridgeand in store fronts, while working as a porter

Naman Maiga	Born in 1944. Al Hajji Maiga was Imam at the mosque in aptly-named Missira, Koulikoro, Mali. Brother of Abdullai Maiga of Ibadan.
Nemeke Sikiru	A Malian farmer.
Numori Traoré	A Malian farmer.
Numu Keita	A tailor from Niono. Came to Lagos with a fellow townsman in 1995 when he was 15.
Adepeju Afoloji	A market woman whose mother was Yoruba and father was Igbo who had been going to Drissa's bureau for 6 yrs as of 2007. She and her sister bought food and other provisions in Cotonou and sold it wholesale and in the market in Lagos.
Oumar Touré	An employee at Drissa Traore's bureau from Koulikoro. In 2008 married a Mossi woman named Karimu Darabo.
Peace Power Lee	Did traditional wrestling in Lagos in 1987. Became professional in 1990. Beat Super Mareius of Cameroon in Younde Cameroon in 2006.
Samba Traoré	A Malian farmer.
Seku Cisse	Born in 1958 in Nioro, died clothes in Lagos 1982-4 and in Ibadan 1993-4. In between ran a shop in Takomade, Cote d'Ivoire.
Seku Diakité	Born in 1948 in Congo Brazzaville. Moved to Lagos permanently in 1979 and began exporting goods to Mali. In 1985 became a purchasing agent for Malian traders coming in from Congo Brazzaville
Seydou Barry	A Kano-based dye trader who bought in Lagos and sold out of his store in Kano.
Seydou Guindo	Mayor of Dalakanda, Mopti and uncle of Adboulay Guindo of Lagos.
Suleiman Giptele	Elder Dogon resident of Agege, who was a regular at Ali Dolo's tailor shop.
Talibe Sidibe	Son of Seku Sidibe who grew up in Lagos and ran a Tae Kwon Do school that trained on the National Stadium grounds.
Tamba Traoré	A Malian farmer.
Tanamaga Traoré	Farmer born in 1934 in Gonsolo, Koulikoro whose father was originally from Wanda, moved to Tabu, then Gonsolo.
Teimoko Coulibaly	The High Council's Secretary for Conflict Resolution. Originally from Kayes, where his first wife continued to live. Married Yoruba woman in Lagos, where he started a second family.
Theresa Odebpo	Nigerian market woman with Muslim partner. Always changed money with Drissa Traore. Bought rice and ground nut oil in Cotonou from Beninoise Muslims and sold it in Lagos out of his store.
Tiemoko Diarra	An employee at Drissa' Traore's forex bureau. He was born in 1962 and came in 1989 to Lagos where he slept on a table in a storefront.
Tony Destroyer	An Igbo professional wrestler who worked out at National Stadium.

Tyemu Pepe	Came from Congo Kinshasha to coach professional wrestling.
Wakari Bagayogo	Born in 1954 in Tamba Kala, Kayes and traveled to Lagos in 1984. He was President of the High Council in 2007.
Wonderful Sholly	Came to Lagos in 1979 after secondary school to work for UAC Co. producing cosmetics. Took a written and practical test in 1989 at NIS. Had first professional wrestling bout in 1990.
Yahyah Abinmole	Administrative Secretary of the Lagos Central Mosque in 2009. Previously worked as personal secretary for the chief Imam of Lagos.
Yunogo Giptele	Resident of Sangha, Mopti who visited his older brother, Adama Giptele, in Lagos twice, the first time for a month in 1986.

Appendix A: Photographs