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The Grave Preferences of Mourides in Senegal: Migration, Belonging, and Rootedness

Ato Kwamena Onoma

Abstract: Burial in cemeteries created by and on the orders of Cheikh Amadou Bamba, the founder of the Mouride Sufi order in Senegal, is said to guarantee passage to paradise. While many Mourides, understandably, prefer to have their corpses transported for burial in these cemeteries, others opt to be interred elsewhere. Focusing on the commune of Joal-Fadiouth in Senegal, I argue that the choices of Mourides concerning place of burial are influenced by histories of migration in the commune and the processes through which people develop ties to the area. In explaining Mourides' divergent preferences, the paper sheds light on broader questions of identity and rootedness, evolving conceptions of "place of origin" – as well as illuminating interactions between the religious and non-religious spheres in the lives of many Africans. I draw mainly on ethnographic research in the Thies and Diourbel Regions of Senegal.

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Introduction

The holy city of Touba in Senegal's Diourbel Region is the seat of the Mouride Sufi order. Established by Cheikh Amadou Bamba in the 1880s, the Mouride order is one of the biggest and most influential in Senegal (Diouf 2000; Mbacké 2005; O'Brien 1971; Copans 1988; Villalon 1995; Coulon 1999), a country whose population is said to be over 90 per cent Muslim. Since its founding in 1887 by Cheikh Amadou Bamba, Touba has grown rapidly to become the second-largest city in Senegal – with a special autonomous administrative status in the country (Kane 2016: 73; Babou 2013: 129; Gueye 2002: 1). Cheikh Amadou Bamba had a special fondness for the city; in his poem “Matlaboul Fawzeyni,” he offered prayers for “the blessed city of Touba.” Serigne Touba, as Cheikh Amadou Bamba is also known, asked for the forgiveness of the past and future sins of those who constructed it, those who live in it, and for “all who visit Touba for reasons of piety” (Bamba n.d.). During his stay in the town of Diourbel, under house arrest by the French colonial authorities, he told his followers to take Mourides who pass away to Touba since that settlement offers forgiveness and salvation to all buried in its soil.¹ He expressed a wish to be buried in Touba; his body was years later transported there from Diourbel, where he died in 1927 (Dumont 1975).

It is unsurprising, then, that Touba has acquired a privileged status as the burial site of the Mouride order. Every year, deceased Mourides from all over Senegal as well as farther afield are brought to the city for burial. In 2015, 10,414 bodies were interred at the Cimetière Bakhiya de Touba. Of that total, only 3,924 were people who had died in Touba itself. The rest were from other regions of Senegal as well as from countries overseas including Brazil, France, Gambia, Mauritania, Morocco, South Africa, and the United States (*Touba Magazine* n.d.: 28). The massive and sophisticated Cimetière Bakhiya de Touba was opened in 2014, when the old cemetery ran out of space.² Other cemeteries associated with the Mouride order that are said to provide special benefits to those buried in them can be found in Diourbel, Darou Mousty, Darou Salam, Mbacké, and Taif.³

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- 1 Interview with a Mouride cleric in Joal, 6 February 2017 (Interview 12). I have employed pseudonyms for all interviewees for reasons of anonymity.
 - 2 Interview with a senior administrator of Cimetière Bakhiya de Touba, 25 February 2017 (Interview 32).
 - 3 Interview with a senior administrator of the Daraay Kamil Library of Touba, 24 February 2017 (Interview 31).

Burials in these Mouride cemeteries⁴ present us with a good window onto the propagation of religious doctrines and the responses that they elicit. In a survey of 438 Mourides that I conducted in the Senegalese commune⁵ of Joal-Fadiouth in 2016, 77 per cent of respondents preferred that at death their bodies be transported for interment in Mouride cemeteries. But 22 per cent of survey participants preferred to be interred in places other than these cemeteries. This will surprise many in Senegal, where it is taken for granted that if one is a member of the order then they will want to be buried in Touba or in a cemetery identified with the Mouride order.

Focusing on the commune of Joal-Fadiouth, this paper⁶ explores why some Mourides who live in settlements with no Mouride cemeteries prefer to have their bodies transported for burial in these cemeteries while others opt to be interred elsewhere. Ethnographic evidence gathered in 2016 and 2017 suggests that the diverging preferences of members of the order concerning interment in Mouride cemeteries are linked to histories of migration in, and the elaboration of ties to, the commune. How long an individual's family has stayed in Joal-Fadiouth sheds significant light on the tendency of some Mourides in the locality to prefer burial in Mouride cemeteries while others opt for inhumation elsewhere. Members of the order whose families have stayed in Joal-Fadiouth for only a short period of time are more likely to prefer to be transported for interment in Mouride cemeteries than those whose kin have lived in the area for multiple generations.

This paper engages with and contributes to the wealth of literature on death rites. Preoccupation with what happens to the corpse is a major theme in this literature (Thomas 1980; Brooks 1989). Some authors have broached the question of whether corpses are buried or are disposed of

4 Reference to these cemeteries as “Mouride cemeteries” is not meant to indicate that they are exclusively used by members of the Mouride order. These cemeteries are open to non-Mourides, and some people who are not Mouride occasionally are indeed buried in them. My reference to them as Mouride cemeteries is meant to indicate their very close identification with the movement, the special significance that they have for members of the order, and also the fact that the Mouride order is involved in the management of some of these cemeteries.

5 In French official lexicon, a commune refers to a municipality.

6 The research from which this paper draws was funded by the Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity's programme on “Christianity and Social Change in Africa” and supported by CODESRIA. I thank Pierre Diop, Rosalie Aduayi Diop, Mamadou Fallou Diouf, Emiliane Faye, Simone Faye, Sereign Cheikh Ka, Ellen Ngom, and Justin Sonko for their guidance and support in carrying out this work.

in other ways (Droz 2011; de Boeck 2005; Grootaers 1998; Park 1995). Others have addressed the differing scale, grandeur, duration, and timing of funeral rites (Arhin 1994; Tingbé-Azalou 1993; de Witte 2001; Hayden 2009; Chau 2004; Chen 2011). Further, the physical space where interment takes place is an issue that has concerned a number of researchers (Onoma 2018a; Dennie 2010; Posel and Gupta 2009; Droz 2011; Goren 1994). This article contributes to this literature by addressing diverging attitudes towards the faith-based segregation of interment, which has received little systematic attention in this area of study. Why do some people prefer to be buried in cemeteries that mostly receive people of their own religious orientation, while others are open to being interred in cemeteries that accept people of many different ones?

The study also engages with and contributes to the rich literature on identity and belonging (Fall and Vignaux 2008; Mamdani 2001; Nyamnjoh 2016; Geschiere 2009; Siddique and Suryadinata 1981–1982; Monson 2017). I argue that migration and the processes through which bonds to physical spaces are developed, performed, and eroded over time shed light on the interment choices of the Mouride faithful in Joal-Fadiouth. The paper invokes the botanical phenomenon of vivipary in plants to make sense of the ways in which Mourides (re)fashion their identities and create new places of origin as they move. This helps reconcile the popular idea of rootedness with the mobility and (re)fabrication of the identities and ties that are pervasive in human lives.

Issues related to the plurality and ambiguities of religious landscapes in Africa and the complex structural factors that influence how both individuals and communities negotiate them are explored. I shed light on the intricate interactions between questions of *doxa* and spirituality on the one hand and the quotidian processes through which geographical homes and the identities that they are tied to are elaborated and performed on the other. Death and the rites that surround it change over time, just like the societies that they constitute key – if not central – parts of do too (Thomas 1975; Bauman 1992). The study of death and the ways in which societies deal with the dead is, thus, a very promising means of understanding interactions among the living (Thomas 1978; Fall 2011; Brooks 1989; Onoma 2018a).

This work thus makes an original contribution to the study of the Mouride order. This Sufi order has been the subject of a very rich body of literature, focusing among others things on its social organisation (O'Brien 1971; Mbacké 2005), political location (Babou 2013; Diouf 2013), the mobility of its members (Bava 2017; Buggenhagen 2009), their insertion into global currents (Diouf 2000; Glover 2007), and their eco-

conomic activities (Copans 1988; Buggenhagen 2001). But their burial practices have not received serious attention to date.

The rest of this article is divided into five sections. Immediately below, I deal with methods and case selection. This is followed by a segment that elaborates a theory which helps shed light on why some Mourides in Joal-Fadiouth tend to prefer burial in Mouride cemeteries while others opt for inhumation elsewhere. The next section then uses this theory to examine social dynamics focusing on *doxa*, mobility, the negotiation of belonging, and the question of burials in Joal-Fadiouth. The conclusion highlights some of the broader implications of this work.

Methods and Case Selection

Ethnographic research methods were employed in Joal-Fadiouth in Thies Region and in the cities of Diourbel and Touba in Diourbel Region, Senegal. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 102 people, including ordinary Mouride faithful, senior religious leaders of the order, members of notable Mouride families, workers in the library of Touba, and people involved in cemetery work. Interviewees included 62 men and 40 women. I also visited cemeteries and many sites of religious importance in Joal-Fadiouth, Diourbel, and Touba. The paper also draws on a survey of 438 Mourides in Joal-Fadiouth that I conducted in 2016.

The choice of Joal-Fadiouth for this study was informed by its diversity with regards to the origins and ethnic identity of its residents, as well as by the significance of migration in its various localities. This affords extensive variation in explanatory factors, which facilitates causal analysis. The commune has three settlements, and a total population of around 45,500 inhabitants. The mainland settlement of Joal is the largest, and has a population of around 40,000 people. The island of Fadiouth, which is just south of Joal, has around 5,000 residents. The settlement of Ngazobil, situated north of Joal, is part of a freehold parcel that belongs to the Catholic Church (Kama 2010: 49). Like elsewhere in Senegal (Cochrane 2013), the two dominant religions in Joal-Fadiouth are Catholicism and Sufi Islam – with the presence of many Sufi orders, including the Tijaniyya, Layenne, Qadiriyya, and Mouridiyya.

On account of its port and its marine resources, Joal-Fadiouth – which is also the home town of Senegal's first president, Leopold Sedar Senghor – has received multiple waves of migrants. From the sixteenth century on, the area saw the visit and eventual settlement of Portuguese, Dutch, English, French, Syrian, and Lebanese migrants among those already living there (Boilat 1984: 117–179; Boulegue 1989: 30–31; Kama

2010: 47). Since the nineteenth century, meanwhile, large waves of migrants from all over Senegal and from countries like Burkina Faso and Mali have arrived to work in fisheries, the colonial and then postcolonial administration, French business establishments, and the like. While many arrivals from the Fatick, Kaolack, and Diourbel Regions of Senegal are Serere, like the earlier inhabitants of the area, there are large populations of Wolof, Toucouleur, and Lebou in the locality too. The Mouride community in the commune thus includes both long-term residents as well as relatively new migrants. In recent history, Joal has witnessed significant immigration while Fadiouth has seen high levels of emigration.

Migration, Rootedness, and Grave Preferences

In Joal-Fadiouth, the propensity of Mourides to opt for inhumation in Mouride cemeteries instead of elsewhere is significantly influenced by centuries-old migratory processes that ensure interactions between people with different levels of ties to and roots in the area. To mention “migration” and “rootedness” is to invoke concepts that are frequently employed in discourses on identity and belonging, which tend to valorise origins over residence (Mamdani 2001). The distinction that is often drawn between “rooted” autochthones and “floating” strangers is sometimes said to hinge on the duration of people’s stay in an area (Jackson 2006; Konings 2008). The leitmotif of temporality in these discourses is inherently political, since the determination of who was first in an area involves moral suasion, the arts of (re)making history, and the deployment of force (Berry 2000; Murphy and Bledsoe 1987). At other times the nebulous idea of origins is invoked, heightening the peculiarity of one group as that sprouting out of the land (coming from nowhere else!) as opposed to others who merely settle on it from elsewhere (Onoma 2017; Nyamnjoh 2015; Jackson 2006). The distinction here juxtaposes autochthones for whom an area in which they live is their “ground zero,” against “strangers” who have left their own ground zero to wander around on voyages that are often portrayed as both incessant and insidious (M’Bokolo 1982; Geschiere and Nyamnjoh 2000).

The literature shows that, in many places, funerals are fundamental to this anchoring of identities into territory (Smith 2004; Petit 2005; Nyamnjoh 2013; Jua 2005; Park 1995; Hill 1992). First, burial in one’s “place of origin” portrayed as a physical space where multiple generations of one’s ancestors were born, lived, and are buried, returns the dead into the protective fold of his or her family and a specific piece of the earth from which he or she hailed. Where the burial of the whole

body is not possible, certain remains are sometimes buried at home or the spirit taken there through various rites (Ranger 2011; Park 1995).

Second, in (re)connecting to the living family, burial at “home” aids the transformation of the deceased into an ancestor. The memory and recognition of living relatives as well as the performance of rituals by them are central to the process through which certain among the dead become and remain ancestors (Thomas and Luneau 1975; Thomas 2006; Gravrand 1990; Hill 1992). Grave sites and cemeteries have, over time, become central to these processes through which ancestors are made, venerated, propitiated, and exhorted (Thomas 1982; Hardenburg 2012).

Third, proximity to living family members at home is thought to encourage ancestors to intervene in the affairs of these relatives. It may well be that the ancestor who is far away easily forgets about living relatives who could benefit from his or her intervention (Droz 2011). This is the flip side of the view that the dead who are buried far away can be easily forgotten by living relatives. Proximity of the dead to their places of origin and loved ones is, therefore, a preoccupation of both those who are about to depart and those that they will leave behind.

Finally, the act of burial in territories designated as home can put the individual at the service of the community through the reinforcement of future generations’ claims to these spaces. Today’s buried body becomes tomorrow’s archaeological evidence of land ownership and of origins (Glazier 1984). It is all of these considerations that have motivated some to adopt where one desires to be buried as a foolproof method of determining where one belongs (Jindra 2011; Geschiere and Nyamnjoh 2000). Migrants, it is said, will always want to be buried “back home,” just as it is assumed that they always will seek to acquire property there and contribute to the development of these areas (Fall 1998; Geschiere and Gugler 1998; Muccazato, Kabki, and Smith 2006; Onoma 2018b).

The conceptualisation of rootedness deployed in these discourses is problematic however, because it poorly captures the ways in which individuals are constituted by multiple and flexible ties. In shifting from the treatment of individuals as atomised and discreet entities, the approach of relationality allows us to grasp in a much more satisfactory way the ties that bind migrants to various places and people in the journey of life (Mitchell 2000; Cooper 2005). It privileges a focus on interactions and interdependencies between entities located in multiple sites (Dyer and Singh 1998), and the exploration of what Bradbury and Bergmann Lichtenstein (2000: 551) call the “space between” over the focus on bounded entities. Relationality destabilises categories, and in so doing forces us to

face the challenge of exploring what Cooper calls the “underlying complexities” (2005: 1689) in the plenitude of social interactions involving a host of entities scattered over the wide spaces into which individuals are inserted.

These insights from the approach of relationality make it clear that the idea of rootedness deployed in discourses of autochthony may be drawing on botanical processes that obfuscate our understanding of the multiple, flexible, and sometimes transient ties between people and spaces. First, their portrayal of human rootedness is informed by the vertical sinking of roots by plants, over their lateral spreading of roots across wide spaces – as dramatically seen in plants like the African baobab (*Adansonia digitata*). But the lateral spreading of roots might provide a much better analogy for understanding human rootedness. It allows us to grasp the possibility of individuals’ simultaneous embeddedness in multiple soils, which many have written about (Diawara 2000; Appiah 1992; Simone 2001).

Second, these discourses on human rootedness are modelled after the sprouting of plants up into the atmosphere by embryos that are already rooted in the soil. This is the phenomenon of oviparity that is very common in plants. But this model tends to imagine people as sedentary beings tied to particular soils in perpetuity. I argue that the incidence of vivipary in plants furnishes a more propitious analogy for understanding human rootedness. Vivipary in plants (a notable example is the red mangrove plant, *Rhizophora mangle*) sees seeds first germinating in the atmosphere while still attached to plants, before eventually falling off and sinking roots into favourable soils (Elmqvist and Cox 1996). Vivipary in plants better captures, then, the human link with territory. We come to be outside of the soil (we are viviparous mammals after all), and sink roots into favourable soils as we move around in search of better lives. It is the search for favourable soils that makes life an “ambiguous adventure,” to borrow the famous Senegalese writer Cheikh Hamidou Kane’s reminiscent title (Kane 1972), and it is the ability to sink roots in various territories along the way that makes identity what the renown Senegalese philosopher Souleymane Bachir Diagne calls “an open question” (Diagne 2001).

Invoking the incidence of vivipary in plants has two important consequences. First, it provides a solid grounding for relationality’s insistence on the multiple, flexible, and often transient nature of the ties to multiple spaces that constitute people. Second, it helps us reconcile continued attachment to discourses of rootedness on the one hand and the facts of mobility and the refashioning of ties and identities that define

human history on the other by banishing the nativist and exclusionary entrails of the idea of rootedness. The long stay of a family in an area facilitates their development of roots there through the acquisition of property, integration into social, economic, and political networks, the birth of new generations and the burial of the deceased there. Furthermore, the passage of time allows the gradual thinning of bonds to prior homes.

The involvement of generations of individuals in these processes in Joal-Fadiouth sheds light on the preferences of Mourides over place of burial. Those with long histories of presence in the commune tend to more frequently prefer inhumation in the area itself on their death. But the expectation created by discourses of autochthony that more recent Mouride migrants will opt for burial back home is not borne out by field research. As linkages to their previous home areas gradually wane, the urge to be buried there diminishes as well. But still burgeoning bonds to Joal-Fadiouth do not make interment in the commune particularly attractive to these migrants, either. It is areas with Mouride cemeteries that hold an extreme attraction as places of inhumation to more recent Mouride migrants in Joal-Fadiouth.

Exploring Mourides' Grave Preferences in Joal-Fadiouth

Field research in Joal-Fadiouth provides significant evidence for the argument that Mourides whose families have stayed in the settlement for long periods, as compared to more recent migrants, have a higher tendency to opt against being transported at death to Mouride cemeteries elsewhere. They explain their choice for interment in Joal-Fadiouth in terms of an interest in lying in eternal repose near their ancestors buried there, as well as living relatives very settled in the area. In some ways, this dynamic reflects the widely recognised importance to many Africans of eternal repose in the places that they see as home (Smith 2004; Petit 2005; Nyamnjoh 2013; Jua 2005).

Most Mourides whose families have stayed in Joal-Fadiouth for a relatively short period of time show little interest in being buried in the area, however. A 2016 survey of Mourides in the locality indicated that of 177 members of the order whose parents were born outside of the commune, only 10 per cent wanted to be interred locally. But this story does not fit with the idea of a universal desire to return to places of origin at death, either. These Mourides, overwhelmingly, opt for burial in Mouride cemeteries, with 82 per cent of them making this choice. This is

despite the fact that only 2 per cent of the 177 can count even one parent that was born in an area with a Mouride cemetery, making this a veritable form of post-death migration. Waning links to buried ancestors and living relatives in previous places of residence and still burgeoning ties to Joal-Fadiouth, where they now live, make Mouridism's calls for burial in special cemeteries very appealing to them. This transition away from burial back home by migrants is something that has been noted in other contexts, too (Fall 2011; Geschiere 2014; Grootaers 1998; Noret 2010). It marks the slow transition from an established place of origin to a new one or ones (Jindra and Noret 2011; Fall 2011; Dime and Fall 2011; Aggoun 2006).

The Geography of Grave Preferences in Joal-Fadiouth

The links between Joal-Fadiouth's migratory patterns and the preferences of Mourides over place of burial is evident when broad tendencies are superimposed on the map of the commune. As one moves from the island of Fadiouth in the extreme south to the newest neighbourhoods of Joal in the north, the tendency to prefer the transportation of one's corpse for inhumation in Mouride cemeteries becomes more widespread. In Fadiouth, which has seen the lowest level of immigration in the commune in recent history, it is very difficult to find a member of the order who wants to be transported to a Mouride cemetery at death. Almost all the Mourides in Fadiouth want to be buried in the island's Dioty cemetery, which is renowned for being one of the few in the country where people of all faiths can be inhumed (Onoma 2018a).

The desire to be buried in Mouride cemeteries becomes more common when one crosses the footbridge that links Fadiouth to what is popularly known as "*les quartiers traditionnels*" of Joal. There, one encounters many more Mourides who wish to be buried in Mouride cemeteries. *Les quartiers traditionnels* are portrayed as the oldest parts of Joal, where the earliest arrivers in the settlement are said to live. But they are, in fact, a diverse mix of neighbourhoods of varying ages. Njongue and Mbelegnieme are said to be the very first settlements, dating back at least several centuries – while Afdaye-Diamaguene, for instance, dates only back to the turn of the nineteenth century, and Tilene is even more recent. The settlement of more recent arrivers for reasons that include marriage has created neighbourhoods with a mixture of very old and comparatively very recent occupants. In these areas, there is a mixture of preferences for burial in Mouride cemeteries and contrariwise in the commune.

As one continues northwards to what are called "*les nouveaux quartiers*" of Joal, it becomes extremely difficult to find Mourides who do not

want to be transported to Mouride cemeteries for burial at death. Santhie I was created in 1966, Santhie II in 1986, and Santhie III in 1996. To these can be added the even newer neighbourhoods of Mboudaye (2007) and Mboudaye Extension (2014). These are often portrayed as zones of “strangers” by those who claim to be “*les Joaliens de souche*.” This is even though these new neighbourhoods also host some people who settled there from the old ones, and from Fadiouth. As is common in such oppositional discourses, these sets of neighbourhoods are constituted in relation to each other. It is against *les nouveaux quartiers* that *les quartiers traditionnels* are defined. It is the strangers of *les nouveaux quartiers* who consolidate the diverse populations of *les quartiers traditionnels* into *les Joaliens de souche*.

Justifications for Opting against Burial in Mouride Cemeteries

One of the main reasons that long-resident Mourides give for their desire to be buried in Joal-Fadiouth is their interest in resting near relatives who are themselves interred in the settlement.⁷ A devout member of the order, who hails from one of the leading Mouride families in the area, declared:

I want to be buried in Joal-Fadiouth. I have no desire to be buried in Touba. I should say “*astaghfirullah*” for saying that, but it is true. If I get buried in Touba by chance it will be fine. But I prefer to be buried in Joal-Fadiouth. I hear that if you are buried in Touba you will go to paradise, but I want to be buried near my dead relatives. All my relatives are buried here. My dad, my mom, grandparents, in-laws are all buried here. I want to be near them.⁸

Many Mourides also express a desire to be buried in Joal-Fadiouth where living relatives can regularly visit their graves. This concern is seen among West African populations elsewhere, too (Dime and Fall 2011). People whose families have a long history of residence in the commune are more likely to have living relatives who have a stable presence there and will undertake these visits. This is how one member of the order put it:

7 Interviews with an old Mouride in Fadiouth, 31 January 2017 (Interview 1); with the leader of a Mouride association in Joal, 4 February 2017 (Interview 10).

8 Interview with a member of a leading Mouride family in Joal-Fadiouth, 21 June 2016 (Interview 3b).

I have a marabout and I follow the teachings of Serigne Touba, but when I die I want to be buried in the Muslim cemetery of Joal. I don't want to be far from my relatives. That way my family will be able to come and pray on my grave.⁹

In Joal-Fadiouth, the reasons for which people visit the graves of their dead relatives are many. People visit cemeteries to clean and decorate graves, to pray for, propitiate, and venerate the dead, and also to seek their help with earthly concerns. These rites happen in many parts of the world (Thomas 1982; McCall 1995; Werbner 2004; Goren 1994; Park 1995). The contributions of world religions to the rise, intensity, and changing forms of cults of ancestors is the subject of work by Jindra (2005). These cemetery visits and the rituals that they involve reveal the pluralistic environment resulting from the layering of Christian and Muslim beliefs over traditional religious practices (Langewiesche 2003; Jindra and Noret 2011).

The decision to forgo burial in Mouride cemeteries for interment in Joal-Fadiouth is not always an easy one for long-resident Mourides. They often find themselves wedged between relatives pressuring them to choose inhumation in the area and newly resident peers who cannot fathom why a “good Mouride” would opt against burial in Touba.¹⁰ These tensions can become heated upon the passing of some members of the order, buttressing points made by many scholars about how death rites can become central to the (re)negotiation of relations among the living, the shaping of societies, and the amassing as well as deployment of power (Verdery 2000; Vangu Ngimbi 1997; Dississa 2009; Goren 1994).

The case of the late Moustapha Ndour in Fadiouth is worth invoking here. He is known as the first Mouride in Fadiouth, and is credited with having performed miracles. He was a friend of Cheikh Amadou Bamba and of Cheikh Ibra Fall, who was a close collaborator of the founder of the Mouride order.¹¹ All of this left little doubt in the minds of many that he would be interred in Touba upon his death, in the late 1950s. But some of his relatives had other ideas.

When Mame Moustapha died the Mouride marabouts and dignitaries from Joal came to take his body to Touba for burial, but his

9 Interview with a Mouride faithful in Joal, 9 February 2017 (Interview 19).
 10 Interview with a community leader and fervent Mouride in Joal, 30 June 2016 (Interview 44).
 11 Interview with a Hassan, descendant of Moustapha Ndour, in Fadiouth, 31 January 2017 (Interview 2).

sons and members of his maternal lineage refused to allow his body to be taken. They insisted that he be buried in Fadiouth. There was a long discussion, but the family made it clear that there was no way they will let him be taken to Touba. The Mourides eventually relented, and left him to be buried in Fadiouth. His relatives in Fadiouth wanted him to be buried here so that they will be able to go and pray in front of his grave whenever they felt like it.¹²

Today, the grave of Moustapha Ndour is at the centre of an annual *thiant*,¹³ and attracts regular visits by his descendants and visitors to the area. The burial of Moustapha Ndour in Fadiouth has also inspired his descendants who are Mourides to choose burial in Fadiouth, so as to lie near their illustrious ancestor.¹⁴

Explanations of the Embrace of Burial in Mouride Cemeteries

More recent Mouride migrants in Joal-Fadiouth speak of their overwhelming embrace of interment in cemeteries associated with the Mouride order in terms of the value of the process, the end results of such burials, as well as “established norms.” Emphasising the benefits, it is said that burial in these cemeteries means you will certainly go to paradise, that the passage will be immediate, and that the angels that normally ask questions of the dead will pose none to you.¹⁵ Others focusing on the value of the process explain their choices in terms of their dedication and commitment to Cheikh Amadou Bamba and his teachings.¹⁶ Some additionally see burial in these cemeteries as important because of the possibility of “lying near” their religious guides also interred in these

12 Interview with an old Mouride in Fadiouth, 31 January 2017 (Interview 1).

13 Interview with a Mouride sage who witnessed the funeral of Moustapha Ndour in Fadiouth, 31 January 2017 (Interview 3a). A *thiant* is a prayer, worship, and thanksgiving event. It involves prayers, recitals, and singing of songs of praise to God, the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him), and various marabouts.

14 Interview with a Hassan, descendant of Moustapha Ndour, in Fadiouth, 31 January 2017 (Interview 2).

15 Interviews with a young professional and active Mouride in Dakar, 8 August 2017 (Interview 100); with an elder of a family descended from a leading disciple of Cheikh Amadou Bamba in Diourbel, 23 February 2017 (Interview 25); and, with an elder of a family descended from a leading disciple of Cheikh Amadou Bamba in Diourbel, 22 February 2017 (Interview 22).

16 Interviews with a Mouride cleric in Joal, 6 February 2017 (Interview 12); with a Mouride faithful in Joal, 4 February 2017 (Interview 9).

places.¹⁷ This desire recalls the wish of people in other religious contexts to be buried close to their ancestors. It reminds one of the complex interactions between questions of *doxa* in world religions and the “traditional practices” that scholars like Dime and Fall (2011) as well as Hardenburg (2012) have pointed to.

Others yet still explain their preference for interment in Mouride cemeteries with reference to established norms. When a Mouride dies, the family organises to have the body transported to a Mouride cemetery for burial. If the family is not able to do so, Mourides in the community offer help.¹⁸ The *dabiras* (associations of Mourides in a locality), the *djeveriines* (leaders of Mouride associations), and the Keur Serigne Touba (the houses that act as the headquarters of Mouride organisational life in many communities in Senegal and around the world) are central in this process.

Many of the more recent Mouride migrants in Joal-Fadiouth have thoroughly integrated the practice of Mouridism in their process of sinking roots in their new place of origin – Joal-Fadiouth. Scholars have noted how the *dabira* and its *djeveriines* and Keur Serigne Touba have over time come to play important roles in the settlement and integration of Mouride migrants in cities around the world (Magassouba 1985; Diop 1982; Bava 2004, 2017). These processes are also evident in Joal-Fadiouth.¹⁹ These institutions represent important resources in migrants’ bid to over time become autochthones of the commune. Their choice of burial in Touba, and in other towns associated with Mouridism, integrates them in these Mouride settlements, through the dissolution of their bodies within these soils – as scholars of Muslim death and burials elsewhere (Dime and Fall 2011; Aggoun 2006) have previously noted. This is even as they also sink roots in Joal-Fadiouth.

Knowledge and Belief in the Teachings of Mouridism

There is always the temptation to think that Mourides that choose burial in Mouride cemeteries are better informed of the benefits of such interment, or are stronger believers in the teachings of Mouridism on it. There is a significant body of literature on the causal power of know-

17 Interview with a woman playing a leadership role in a Mouride association in Joal-Fadiouth, 7 February 2017 (Interview 16).

18 Interviews with a Mouride faithful in Joal, 6 February 2017 (Interview 14); with another Mouride faithful in Joal, 4 February 2017 (Interview 9).

19 Interview with a leading political figure in Joal-Fadiouth, 30 December 2016 (Interview 1C).

ledge and belief that could support such an argument (Klausen 2015; Henne 2012; Weber 1998). But the pervasive knowledge of the importance of burial in Mouride cemeteries raises questions about the viability of this as an explanation. The limited explanatory power of the knowledge variable is unsurprising, since belief plays an important mediating role between knowledge on the one hand and actual preferences and action on the other.

Field research indicated that belief in the teachings of Mouridism on interment does not better explain Mourides' preferred place for that. The difference between Mourides that prefer interment in Mouride cemeteries and those opting for burial in Joal-Fadiouth is, rather, better understood in terms of the ways in which their different structural positions in the commune motivate them to interpret what are, in reality, ambiguous religious edicts. Langewiesche adopts a similar approach, to explain diverging attitudes towards "practices of religious bricolage in Burkina Faso" (Langewiesche 2011: 146).

The edicts of Mouridism on interment can be understood as an institution in the sense of "the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction" (North 1991: 97). Like other institutions, Mouride edicts on interment possess the characteristic of ambiguity – which some new institutionalists have frequently pointed at (Mahoney and Thelen 2010; Onoma 2013). Edicts thus leave many issues "unclarified." The multiple components of religious doctrines, along with their diversity of sources, constitute, then, a set of beliefs that do not always demonstrate the quality of coherence. This, like is the case with other institutions too (Thelen 2000; Jackson 2005), creates room for people to interpret and elaborate them in line with their own norms and interests. Mourides are, hence, called on to imaginatively create accord between ambiguous teachings that they often hold very dear and their actual lived circumstances. One effect of this ambiguity is the fact that the institutions' (Mouride edicts are a good example here) expected homogenising influence on behaviour and preferences does not always materialise (Schneiberg 2005). We thus end up with a situation where Mourides adopt very different preferences on where they wish to be interred, even though they all believe in the teachings of their order on the benefits of burial in certain cemeteries.

Mourides hailing from families that are relative newcomers to the commune often adopt an interpretation that emphasises the importance of the act of physically burying the corpse in Mouride cemeteries. But those from long-established families embrace more nuanced understandings. One view insists that interment in Mouride cemeteries, while suffi-

cient, is not necessary for entry to paradise. All good Mourides, it is said, regardless of where they are buried, will go to paradise.²⁰ Another account suggests that the interment of the body in Mouride cemeteries may not be necessary for the soul to rest in these spaces and enjoy the attendant benefits. Cheikh Amadou Bamba and other Mouride notables can bring your soul to repose in Mouride cemeteries regardless of where your body is buried.²¹

Conclusion

At the heart of this account of how histories of migration shape what are otherwise seen as religious choices is the plurality and complex interactions of the domains that make up peoples' lives. The religious and non-religious domains in which people are immersed in today's Africa do not each exercise discreet influences on their lives that can be understood without reference to other domains. Instead, these different domains rub against and permeate each other (Dime and Fall 2011). This ensures that what can be ostensibly thought of as the religious can only be understood in reference to extra-religious domains. Further, in each domain (the religious, for instance) people are immersed in multiple currents and sources on which they can draw and through which they must steer. At both levels, either/or approaches are bound to do little to help us understand processes whose comprehension requires lenses designed to make sense of complexity.

Like in many societies in Africa, these intricate processes involve the refashioning of identities and contestation over belonging. Often, these take the form of struggles over belonging *within* an established schema – in which length of stay constitutes the primary criterion for conferring rights. This study of burial practices in Joal-Fadiouth points to the fact that struggles *over* the schema for determining rights – or what one might characterise as meta struggles over belonging – also exist across the entire continent. In the Mouride community in Joal-Fadiouth, this meta struggle involves the posing of the following question: Can one claim to belong to a place while choosing to be buried somewhere else? The answer is an obvious “no” to some, while others articulate a “yes”

20 Interviews with an old Mouride in Joal, 8 February 2017 (Interview 8); with a Mouride faithful in Joal, 9 February 2017 (Interview 19); and, with the leader of a Mouride association in Joal, 4 February 2017 (Interview 10).

21 Interviews with an imam in Diourbel, 22 February 2017 (Interview 22); with an old sage in Joal, 9 February 2017 (Interview 9); and, with a leader in the Mouride community in Joal, 3 February 2017 (Interview 8).

response instead. These meta contestations, more than struggles within schemas, hold significant potential for exorcising some of the exclusionary miasma that pervades discussions of belonging and rootedness. The invocation of vivipary in plants to make sense of processes of identity formation, as presented in this paper, provides a framework that can help save the idea of rootedness – to which people cling strongly – from its nativist and exclusionary connotations.

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Die Grabpräferenzen der Mouriden im Senegal: Migration, Zugehörigkeit und Verwurzelung

Zusammenfassung: Die Bestattung auf Friedhöfen, die von Cheikh Amadou Bamba, dem Gründer der Mouriden Sufi-Bruderschaft im Senegal, angelegt wurden, soll den Weg ins Paradies gewährleisten. Während viele Mouriden es daher vorziehen, ihre Leichen für die Bestattung auf diese Friedhöfe transportieren zu lassen, entscheiden sich andere für eine Beerdigung anderswo. Am Beispiel der Gemeinde Joal-Fadiouth im Senegal argumentiert der Artikel, dass die Entscheidungen der Mouriden hinsichtlich ihres Bestattungsortes von Migrationsgeschichten in der Gemeinde und den aufgebauten Beziehungen zu dem Gebiet beeinflusst werden. Um die unterschiedlichen Vorlieben der Mouriden zu erläutern, beleuchtet der Artikel weitergehende Fragen nach Identität und Verwurzelung sowie sich entwickelnden Vorstellungen des „Herkunftsorts“ – und betrachtet die Wechselwirkungen zwischen den religiösen und nicht religiösen Bereichen im Leben vieler Afrikaner. Der Artikel beruht vor allem auf ethnographischer Forschung in den Regionen Thies und Diourbel im Senegal.

Schlagwörter: Senegal, Beerdigungen, Migration, Identität, Mouridismus