Article

Globalization and Missionary Ambition in West African Islam. The *Fayda* after Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse

Cheikh E. Abdoulaye Niang

IFAN, Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar 10700, Senegal; cheikhabdoulaye1.niang@ucad.edu.sn

Abstract: For more than 10 years, we have been observing the *Fayda Tijaniyya* and its ramifications around the world. Starting in 2006 we have been conducting observations in Nigeria, Niger, Senegal and Mauritania. Between 2015 and 2017, we closely followed some developments of the *Fayda* in the French capital and in other European cities. In parallel to these field investigations, we have been interested in the new religious arrangements that are gradually emerging in the United Kingdom. More recently, in 2020, we benefited from a stay in the USA which allowed us to widen our observation framework. From there, we were able to collect empirical material consisting of several dozen interviews, direct observation notes, private and public documents (reports, administrative documents, correspondences, letters of recommendation, press articles, travel chronicles and private videos, among others). In the *Fayda Ibrahimiyya*, the global culture suggests an update of the mode of inheritance, but in addition it makes emerge a new framework of activity essentially composed of a device of formation with global character, of a hybrid diplomatic-religious space, finally of a humanitarian action which appears as a missionary presenza. We first show that the conjunction of these three registers of action has as a condition, a process of articulation and appropriation through which the actors of the *Fayda* manage to convince of the link of identity that prevails between their own history and that of the founder. The conclusion of the article is devoted to a critical discussion in which we postulate that the imagination of a homogeneous global community comes up against a form of local resistance that is a counterpoint and probably an anti-globalizing replica. The historical socio-anthropology of comprehensive inspiration that we favour allows us to finely approach the interdependencies between these three registers and the narrative elaborated locally by the supporters of this community. The paradigm of mobility in which we place the *Fayda*, allows us to grasp the scope of the globalization of practices and uses, as well as the tension that operates between a dynamic of continuity and a dynamic of rupture that crosses for some decades this religious community.

Keywords: Sufism; Africa; globalization; new perspectives

1. Introduction

Fayda Ibrahimiyya is a branch of Tidjaniyya, this Sufi organization founded in the late 18th century in an Algerian oasis by Sheikh Ahmad b. Mouhammad Tidjani and which began its descent south of the Sahara thanks to the proselytism of the Mauritanian tribe of Idaw ʿAli. Born in 1929 (or 1930) following the self-proclaimed Sheikh Ibrahim b. Abdoulaye Niasse (1900–1975), the *Fayda* movement spread throughout West Africa in the 1940s and 1950s and, at the end of the colonial regime, it was the largest Muslim community in West Africa. This international expansion continued to develop in the 21st century thanks to the missionary zeal and insight of the founder's children, grandchildren and disciples.

The contemporary manufacture of religious repertoires and their transformation has concerned many researchers in the social sciences in recent years. The idea that spatial and social mobilities occupy an important place in the material and symbolic transformation of denominational organizations seems widely shared. It is true that the globalization of

the religious has been the subject of a considerable amount of research, particularly in the French-speaking academic field. However, the analysis of this transnational religious in its connection with global culture still deserves to be based on case studies, which would start from specific communities. If we know enough about the transnational tradition that is specific to the Tidjaniyya, we know little about the rise of globalization in this Sufi organization of Africa. The question therefore arises: Which direction does the global religious take in the case of this Sufi organization? What are its concrete characteristics? What kind of cultural and material experience does religious globalization submit to this transnational Sufi community?

For more than half a century, there has been a phenomenon in the *Fayda Tidjaniyya* that has not yet been studied to the extent of its importance: the phenomenon of roaming[1], a circulatory dynamic through which actors considered as heirs of the religious culture proper to this community, towards different countries and different continents. Through this circulation, the community crosses new spaces, captures new resources, integrates new groups and appropriates new codes of action that were not previously included in its action repertoire. This ability to leave the places and terroirs of origin to go towards the world nourishes new ambitions and makes possible new socio-political perspectives. A mode of circulation in the world and towards the world, and a major axis in the activity of this religious community, this practice is also actively involved in the reinvention of a religious imagination. It is a whole new skill emerging from there.

Today, the *Fayda* community presents the features of a globalized transnational community. This article explores the effect of the double process of globalization and transnationalization on the orientation of the actors of the *Fayda*, in particular that of the heirs of the religious culture of this community. Our main argument is that the process of globalization has fostered a renewal of perspectives in this religious community, in that it suggests methods and resources favourable to its management and administration in a context of transformation. Because the heirs, bearers of the authority of the *Fayda*, must actualize the relationship of trust that binds them to the faithful, they see them obliged to find a new basis of action. Global resources seem to offer effective weapons. This enterprise of renewal of management perspectives, on the internal scale of the community, has become a key issue as the issue of the community widens day by day. What is asked here, therefore, is less the problem of the strategy of expansion and dissemination than that of the practical methods of management of a community that tries to feed itself transnationally and globally. Moreover, the recent innovations of the actors of the *Fayda* are to be placed under the sign of a will to find new techniques, new ways of doing things, faced with the advent of new types of demands and concerns in matters of faith, salvation, teaching and solidarity. The economy of trust and respectability that is today inherent in the approach of the heirs of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse, draws a good part of its processes from the global culture. Not only does the global culture suggest an update of the mode of inheritance, but in addition it makes emerge a new framework of activity whose major components are a training device of global character, a diplomatic-religious hybridization, and finally a humanitarian action as a form of missionary presence. It is thanks to its three combined modes of action that the heirs of Sheikh Ibrahim succeed in ensuring the chances of occupying a pre-eminent position in the management of a transnational and global community. This managerial excellence aimed at the heirs of Sheikh Ibrahim is not based on intentionality of control or domestication. It owes its interest to a virtue of justification and renewal of the basis of trust.

We first show that the conjunction of these three registers of action has as a condition, a process of articulation and appropriation through which the actors of the *Fayda* manage to convince of the link of identity that prevails between their own history and that of the founder. The conclusion of the article is devoted to a critical discussion where we postulate that the imagination of a homogeneous global community collides with a form of local resistance that is counterpoint and probably an anti-global replica. The socio-anthropological and historical approach of phenomenological and comprehensive inspiration that we prefer,

allows us to approach finely the interdependencies between these three registers and the narrative elaborated locally by supporters of this community.

Because the transnational process concerns many religious movements in Africa, it is important to present the general framework of this transnational mutation in which African Islam is inscribed today.

2. African Islam between Transnational Mobility and Religious Globalization

In general, today's religions seem to be gradually separating themselves from the places, peoples, social formations, civilizations and sites within which they have historically formed (Geertz 2006). This change is a coextensive of an "intensification of dependencies and trade that results in an increased flow of religious goods and services. In this respect, individuals and collectives are increasingly relying on cross-border or transnational resources and spaces. The emergence of new forms of "translocal" religiosity results in the emergence of new socio-political issues that fuel imaginations by generating new types of symbolic experiences. The increasingly apparent disconnect between denominations and territories finds its most complete form in the new "transnational religious enterprises" (Guillebaud 2008, p. 5; Fourchard et al. 2005). Today, they seem to be taking advantage of the desire for alternative salvation and the surprising need for parish conviviality that is found in the four corners of the world.

In the image of Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism, the Muslim religion carries a transnational secular tradition, which in reality precedes even the phase of political transnationalization that was observed in the times of the Empire. These religions, let us be clear, did not wait for the 20th century to engage in a logic of globalization or globalization. There is, to speak like François Thual, a logic of globalization specific to religions that attests to a globalization that is always repeated within the major religions such as Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Buddhism and Judaism (Thual 2003). The circulation of beliefs and that of religious actors relative to the transnational process, also cause mobility at the level of aspirations and projects, and thus at the level of the modalities of being a subject. This is how the links between actors, structures and subjectivity are reorganized. The multiplication of centres of production of religious objects and practices profoundly affects social spaces, local issues and the future of individuals. One of the consequences is a "parallel explosion of contradictory social reactions that range from the revaluation of local cultures to the stimulation and emergence of syncretic or emerging third cultures" (Saint-Blancat 2001, p. 76).

The export of religions out of their territories of "origin", their deterritorialization, is certainly a very old phenomenon, but the situation seems new today, as the spatial transformations and their consequences on the religious are important (Bastian et al. 2001, p. 9). Whether it takes the form of an institution, a process, a disjointed practice or an imaginary creation, globalization transcends the exclusive framework of national states at the same time as it invests national institutions and territories (...). It includes processes that are not necessarily located on a global scale like global organizations, global financial flows, new cosmopolitanism and international tribunals. Globalization also refers to processes that are in place at the heart of territories and institutional heritages and that have been widely conceived in national terms throughout the world. Located in national environments, even sub-national, these processes are part of globalization insofar as they involve transnational networks and entities that connect multiple local or "national" processes and actors, or show the recurrence of certain problems or dynamics in a growing number of countries or localities. These are, for example, cross-border networks of activists engaged in specific local struggles with an explicit or implicit global objective. The presence of a dynamic of globalization is also to be sought in dense social environments that mix both national and non-national elements (Sassen 2009, p. 12).

With globalization, we are witnessing a remarkable "intensification of reciprocal dependencies", this acceleration of "exchanges between scattered centres of production, circulation and consumption of tangible and intangible goods". By accentuating the de-

velopment of networks and the emergence of new transnational actors, globalization precipitates institutional changes, including in religious communities. Globalization, which brings about new perspectives within religions in that it brings about changes in the scale of daily religious practices, also changes the ways of believing, the manifestations of religious values, the circulation of ideas and the methods of formation of religious collectives. It is because, beyond its economic effects, the cultural dimension of societies is affected by globalization from the effect of flows and circulations on cultural contents but also on processes and media. As a result, the religious is re-introduced into "network configurations" where the needs of social groups and individuals, whether they are in search of identity, cultural and social promotion, personal restructuring or alternative methods of health, may cross specific Community logics. The Sufi organizations illustrate this meeting between networks and community dynamics as well as the interplay between the local and the global. The relationship to the territory evolves according to religious systems whose deterritorialization trajectory does not spare universalist ambitions or ethno-national anchoring. Thus, the deterritorialization of candomblé made it undergo a transformation by accentuating the customer relationship characteristic of candomblé, by making it lose its ethnic foundations and become an abstract object in a competitive religious market supported by processes of community uprooting (Motta 2001, p. 12). Globalization promotes a certain hybridization that brings together cultural logics from different socio-spatial universes. Whether in Pentecostalism or in contemporary Islamic movements, this same phenomenon of hybridization seems to be at work. Globalization is governed by a common logic of homogenization and differentiation, individualization and communitarization. Globalization has probably reduced the margins of manoeuvre of the States. Many researchers believe that a kind of "welfare state crisis, perceived in terms of deregulation, has opened the door to multiple reconfigurations in the relationship between public and private spaces". Figures in the private sector, religious groups and non-governmental organizations are now finding new opportunities for, on the one hand, engaging in new relationships with public actors; and on the other hand, challenging liberalism's exclusive claim to assume the motives of justice and redistribution. (Esposito and Watson 2000; Shigetoni 2002; Mainuddin 2002). The current rise of religious actors and other transnational religious entrepreneurs is to be sought in their ability to integrate the expectations of civil society (Esposito and Watson 2000). At the same time, globalization, which is also a revolution in information and communication technologies, favours the redeployment of religious transnationalism, which, although it is not new, nevertheless finds today a logistics that is favourable to it, especially for actors from the "South". Transnationalism is based on the mobility of people and ideas, also on transfers of funds, in short, transnationalism postulates a geographical "de-compartmentalization", a deterritorialization that the logic of network work accentuates. Transnational actors manage to impose a rhetoric that goes beyond the mere register of protest. They are involved in the field of social justice, action in favour of development (educational or hospital institutions), or in the field of ecology, thus taking charge of sectors traditionally falling within the remit of the State Providence. This new process is co-extensive with an ability to develop networks that transcend identity circles. (Mabille 2003, p. 29; Esposito and Watson 2000). Taking advantage of the advances of liberalism, transnational religious actors find new structures of opportunity and discover new contexts of action, privileged and less restrictive places of social connection which often take the form of an associationism of religious inspiration. This is the neofundamentalism described by Olivier Roy, in the following terms: "neo-fundamentalism is perfectly compatible with globalization, in its liberal form, setting as a limit only the question of morals and morals, a theme that can also be found in the American religious right" (Roy 2002, p. 60).

Sub-Saharan Africa is far from being on the margins of globalization, although its share in international trade is small (Otayek 2003–2004). Various mechanisms, both legal (cooperation agreements, structural adjustment plans, etc.) as well as illicit (trafficking in arms, drugs, medicines, etc.), support its integration into the international system. This

is also the case, and perhaps above all, with religious networks which, through their proselytism and their capacity for mobilization, impose themselves as one of the privileged vectors of this insertion. The phenomenon is well studied with regard to the Christian, Catholic or Protestant Churches, whose analysts like to emphasize the extraordinary dynamism of the combination of "inter-individual relations" and "inter-organizational relations". Concerning Islam, René Otayek continues, its transnational process is most often of interest for security reasons related to radicalization and the rise of extremism, notwithstanding the fact that "the Islamic articulation of the local and the global does not pass only by the disturbing game of the Islamist networks". The globalization of Islam has accompanied its expansion throughout the 20th century. The *Ummah*, the community of believers, is supranational by definition. The transnationalization of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa, which takes a plurality of paths and combines individual and collective strategies, is not only a matter of institutions, political-commercial networks or «material civilization» but also of culture and symbols because globalization is also being constructed and deconstructed in the imaginaries. (Otayek 2003–2004, p. 53). Today, African Islam feeds on influences from outside homes. At the local level, Islamic traditions are revitalized from European, North American, Asian and Middle Eastern experiences. Witness to this is the exponential development of organizations and associations dedicated to preaching and the operationalization of educational or charitable practices that bear witness to the depth of the transformations that operate thanks to globalization.

As many authors such as Jean Schmitz and Emmanuel Grégoire (Grégoire and Schmitz 2000), Christian Coulon (Coulon 1983) and Bakary Sambe (Sambe 1999) have pointed out, it is impossible to talk about the transnationalization of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa without addressing this "Muslim connection" (Coulon 1983) that structures lasting relations between African Muslims and their co-religionists in the Arab world. On the one hand, Islam is a major structuring element of these relations; on the other hand, the contemporary expansion of Islam south of the Sahara is frequently perceived as the result of the politico-religious activism of Arab states, or even Iran or Pakistan. One has even been able to qualify as "Islamic modes of diplomatic action" these informal, infra-state, parallel dynamics, straddling the legal and the illegal, as well as the internal and external, which bypass official diplomacy and "give the state apparatus a headache". Playing on borders, colonizing the interstices of a fragmented international system, transnational Islamic dynamics draw a complex web where the religious and the economic, the political and the charitable are in permanent interaction (Otayek 2003–2004, p. 53).

These transnational logics are certainly of great interest, but their analysis would benefit from taking into account the typically local impulses, because, without a rigorous examination of the modes of endogenous re-appropriation and patrimonialization, the analysis of transnational exchange flows risks showing its limits in the face of an understanding of the processes of identification and revaluation underway within globalized religious communities. The "problematization" of local histories and the putting into perspective of traditions and normative systems internal to these communities, would have the advantage of opening an analytical field on the reordering of the local, the traditional and the identity. The arrangements that emerge from globalization bring to the agenda a singular interplay between religious and world homes, past and present, foundation and development, and finally the renewed exchanges between the religious and the political.

The Sufi organizations are probably the most important, if not the oldest, vector of the transnationalization of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa. Comparable to the religious orders that organize Catholicism, they have accompanied the expansion of Islam when they have not been its privileged agent, favouring by their universalism the regulation of "ethnic and sociological diversities that the expansion has multiplied". In spite of administrative obstacles and control mechanisms, the colonial period, synonymous with a certain modernization, stimulated the expansion of Islam. Prompted to adapt to the changes brought about by colonization, the Sufi organizations took advantage of this period to accentuate their deterritorialization, spreading their lodges (*zawaya*) and their networks

to the four corners of Muslim Africa, blithely transcending colonial borders, and sometimes even ethnic particularisms. They will thus contribute to the spread of Islam, articulated around a double movement of circulation of men and goods of salvation. They will also appear as the cultural and political negation of the colonial order, either by embodying resistance to white domination, or by acting as a counter-society. It is, moreover, in these terms of the exit option that the gesture of Sheikh Ahmadou Bamba (1853–1927) and that of Sheikh Hamallah (1883–1943), respectively founders of the Mouride and Hamallist Sufi orders, whose anti-colonial mobilization took the form of an internal hijra (exile), allowed them to escape the European hold (Otayek 2003–2004, p. 57).

Both on a continental and intercontinental scale, African Islamic Sufi organizations are today involved in mobility, through its flows of goods and people, thus sharing a mobility "momentum" with other movements from different religious traditions and geographical areas, such as the evangelist movement, the Pentecostal movement, Buddhist sects and religions of African origin in the United States. In these religious groups concerned with mobility, the reshaping of religious culture seems to be driven by exchanges with social and cultural worlds other than those of origin.

3. The Perspective of Mobility as an Analytical Paradigm

The *Fayda* has been operating its own "mobility turning point" (Faist 2013) for several decades now. Today, the history of the men and ideas of this religious community is written from these relationships with other places in Africa and the world. Claiming several tens of millions of faithful in the world, the community of the *Fayda* is connected to several countries and cities of the world, through more or less different forms of shuttles. In this religious movement, mobilities give rise to mechanisms of reinvestment of symbolic structures of meaning and religious imagery because reinterpreted from a local grid where missionary intentionality and circulatory imagination are in perfect solidarity because of their ideological relationship with the very concept of *Fayda*.[2] Thus, mobility occupies an important place in the regime of inheritance from the moment that those who engage in circulation find in it not only a means to actualize their allegiance, but also an ideal opportunity to justify their claim and successfully assert it. On the other hand, mobilities foster a whole cultural materiality, i.e., impulses of exchange, services and ritualized behaviours that testify to an active reshaping of socio-cultural, political and economic ties between this community and the rest of the world. The dynamics of diffusion of ideas, values, codes, norms and symbols that its mobilities allow to offer perspectives for action that go beyond the religious sphere, i.e., the field of faith production, worship, rites, religious personnel. Independently of the transformation of the contents of ideas and practices, these mobilities initiate new practical techniques and new relationships with time, techniques of self, modes of valorization, techniques of government of men and objects, and finally innovative modes of management of initiatives.

The mobility perspective brings into play a religious person who negotiates new entries, as well as a fascinating capacity to draw on repertoires of action other than that of religion and to engage in unprecedented compromises with the universe of the market, that of the State and that of political entities under construction. The space-time of mobility is, in this relation, that of the interweaving of signifiers from different universes, that of the articulation between the faculty to move, to make people move, and that of de-centring social and religious activity. The idea of the influence of mobility on the development of "a culture that is a source of new life skills" (Tarrius 1993, p. 50) can be observed in terms of the shaping of this community through transnational mobility, the reworking of its historical trajectory, its repertoire, its patterns of thought and action, its practical markers and its political resources. With its multiple mobilities, the *Fayda* has seen its institutions, language, aspirations, projects and ambitions move over time.

The mobile viewpoint allows us to approach the ruptures and at the same time to highlight the continuities that run through this religious community. A paradigm of heuristic fertility, mobility here has the virtue of highlighting the tangle of spaces-time and the artic-

ulation of different categories and levels of action to the "mobility system" as a whole. The perspective of mobility makes it possible to consider not only the "multiple forms of action surrounding the change of geographical location" (Ortar et al. 2018, p. 191), but also the forms of action relating to changes of course, i.e., the modes of action by which individuals, groups of individuals, ideas, material objects and practices change horizon, direction and orientation. In the religious community we are dealing with, mobilities participate in the restructuring of the religious system, in the reconfiguration of the community ecosystem, and in the reestablishment of the relationship with the State and with global society. The development of this community's "circulatory capital" has strongly influenced its ambitions within different countries such as Senegal, Nigeria and Niger, among others. Entry through mobility facilitates "a comparative, cross-cutting and de-compartmentalizing perspective, since it allows us to modulate long and short time, variations in space, modes of expression and types of narrative, social realities and categorical practices. Mobility is a notion that makes it possible to historicize the most diverse movements and to link their components and uses with representations" (Roche 2006, p. 513). Further, "the notion of mobility transcends the history of travel and migration and makes it possible to combine the varied perspectives offered by social history, economic history, the history of mentalities (. . .) to paint a very rich and varied picture of displacement (. . .)" (Viviès 2004, p. 207). Viewed from the perspective of a system (Bassand and Brulhardt 1980, 1983; Bassand 1986), the logic of mobility reveals a whole dynamic of interactions between journeys (both individual and collective), the configuration of places and current practices. The mobility system brings into play the interdependencies between the "long time" of intergenerational succession and the short time of emerging events and mechanisms. Quite rightly, the study of mobilities undoubtedly plays a central role in deciphering the essential contours of life in a world that combines exceptional freedom (at least for some on certain occasions) and dependence on exceptional systems (Urry 2005, p. 2). Indeed, "the mobility paradigm goes beyond spatial mobility alone, because moving in space always means crossing social hierarchies (. . .). It means attaching all places, travelled through by oneself and others whom one recognizes as identical, to a memory that, having become collective, creates a territorial entity" (Tarrius 1993, pp. 50–51).

How does one observe the double process of transnationalization and globalization of the *Fayda*? This question poses the framework of observation and the empirical tools we have, as well as the material from which we have been able to conduct analyses. The observation of the double process of transnationalization and globalization of this religious community has required the joint use of several types of methods and techniques of investigation. Our investigative process ranges from maintenance to the exploitation of archives. About thirty semi-directive interviews, about fifteen notes of observation in situ, and an analysis of a documentary base composed of archives, correspondence, letters of recommendation, reports, minutes, administrative documents, press articles, travel chronicles, and videos[3], among others, form the empirical material[4] from which we have elaborated a socio-anthropological and historical analysis.

The history of the *Fayda* occurs in a multitude of places. In this respect, the understanding of the dynamics of this community necessarily requires a multi-situated approach of investigation. The challenge of understanding the practical mechanisms underlying the religious globalization of the *Fayda*, suggested us to conduct from 2006 to 2013 a survey in Senegal, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and the Paris region in France. The trips we made to Mauritania, Niger and Northern Nigeria were salutary in that they allowed us to identify the interactions and temporalities related to the mobility of the *Fayda*. If the interest of a multi-situated ethnography is to allow us to approach closely the declinations of a transnational religious mobility, the interest of a historical socio-anthropology consists in allowing us to grasp the historicized interdependencies that give us the opportunity to grasp the socio-political forms that the *Fayda* is led to invent and those that it integrates by force of circumstance in parallel to the ethnographic work. To the exploitation of official archives and recourse to academic literature, we were led to mobilize some internal sources

(hagiographic texts, correspondence, popular writings, doctrinal elements) of the group studied. This consideration of internal resources is not intended to be an explanatory theology. On the contrary, it offers the researcher the opportunity to learn about the "home-built model": a model whose consensual nature allows social actors to see their community as a distinct and autonomous entity. Consideration of the categories constructed by the actors facilitates, for the researcher, what Schütz calls "second-degree theorizing" (Schütz 1987). There is a common theorization available, therefore, within the reach of the members of this community, which is a valuable basis both for them and for the researcher.

It is on the basis of a socio-anthropological and historical theoretical framework of phenomenological-comprehensive inspiration that we have proposed to consider the double transnational and global phenomenon at work in the *Fayda*. Indeed, the dynamics of religious globalization of this religious community is inscribed in the space-time of plural social, cultural and political productions, and in a territory of meaning that involves several generations. In this respect, we mobilize operational concepts from Sociology and Anthropology. From Alfred Schütz, we borrow the concept of second-degree theorizing. From interactionist sociology, we borrow the notion of the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann 2006), as well as the notion of scenes, the notion of moment, the notion of rituals, the notion of experience and the notion of self-presentation. From Elias, we borrow the concepts of configuration and socio-historical process. Thanks to these different sources of theoretical inspiration, we have been able to approach "religious activity closely" (Piette 1999), while taking into account long-term socio-cultural structures and their involvement in the daily elaboration of a religious fact subjected to historical criticism.

4. From the Transnational Itinerancy to the Globalization of usages in the *Fayda*

Circulation is a significant marker of a community that deals with the world, a community that is not confined to the territory of tradition, that of the place of origin and finally that of an exclusive ethno-national group. It is even the vow of adhesion in the space of the global and universal as envisaged in the religious thought of the *Fayda*, in which circulation allows the realization and thus ensures effectiveness. The circulatory journey of the founder and the present circulatory enterprise of the heirs. Obviously, the logics and procedures of this transnational circulation (trips, tours, periodic appointments, visits, exchanges of various kinds) link the different places. How does this conditioning of sites on a common practice, in this case circulatory practice, operate? To what extent does this circulatory practice bring into play several significant action logics, namely, a logic of borrowing, a logic of re-appropriation and a logic of re-circulation? To what extent is the transnational process of support at the same time a mechanism of inheritance, a dynamic of reinterpretation and a logic of transformation of the religious tradition specific to the *Fayda*? The analysis of these three moments, which are in fact linked, necessarily requires taking into account different historical temporalities: the horizontal temporality of current flows and circulations, on the one hand, and the vertical temporality, on the other hand, of historical frameworks and previous situations where recent developments find their source of inspiration.

4.1. Sheikh Ibrahim's Itinerancy as a Model to Imitate

Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse ensured the expansion of his community through a series of decisive trips and visits. Travels to the great capitals of the world and visits with great political and intellectual personalities such as the Egyptian Jamal Abdou Nasser, the Ghanaian Nkrumah, Sheikh Mahmoud Shaltout of Al Azhar (1893–1963), the Russian Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, the Chinese Chou En-Lai and the Pakistani Inamullah Khan (1912–1997). He had many personalities with whom he could share common concerns, such as the independence of the African continent, Pan-Africanism, Pan-Islamism, the liberation of Palestine, "non-alignment" during the Cold War, the rejection of the atomic bomb, solidarity with Muslims in Asia and the Indian subcontinent, and the promotion of the Arabic language in sub-Saharan Africa, among others.

According to Ousmane Kane, Nasser appreciated Ibrahim Niasse's erudition from the very first contact, particularly his "Arabophilia", and saw in him an excellent relay of the pan-Arab vision and anti-colonialism in sub-Saharan Africa (Kane 1997b, p. 309). It was from the sponsorship of Nasser's[5] support that Niasse was to experience a certain rise within certain Muslim institutions. Indeed, many of Niasse's journeys in the Arab world were made on the basis of invitations from Nasser or from institutions with special ties to Nasser's Egypt.[6]

This mobility of reference inherent to the transnational preaching of the first hour, concerns the journey of the founder of the *Fayda* and his companions. It serves as a model and a source of inspiration for all those who intend to travel, to travel the world in the name of this religious community. Through his itinerant journey, did Niasse want to show that the vocation of his preaching was to address everyone? In any case, this is how it is interpreted at the local level of the religious community. The idea that the followers retain is that the *Fayda* was intended for the world and not only for Senegal or Black Africa. In the same way, it had to open itself to the world and take care of the concerns of the whole world.

Sheikh Ibrahim was thus able to acquire many inputs and significant resources for a new political and religious experience. The whole second part of the religious leader's career is marked by this openness to concerns. The filial attachment with a founding act gives coherence to the activities of the heirs and gives them the legitimacy necessary for their success. How does this global turning point prosper today from a re-connection both with the experience of the founder and with missionary values whose fluidity guarantees survival in time and space?

4.2. Globalization and Renewal of the Missionary Perspectives

Thanks to the circulatory phenomenon, the *Fayda* has been able to invest places and places of the world like the capitals and major economic and cultural centres of the contemporary world. This way of investing in places of the world has contributed to suggesting new methods, new approaches and new concerns in terms of relations, aspirations, relations to culture and education, and solidarity. It is thus that immersion in global culture has been able to give rise to three main results: an educational activity which, at the same time, is "transnationalized" and can be adapted to significant changes, a diplomatic offer imagined from a universalist pretension proper to the religious community, and finally, a charitable and humanitarian action which borrows the model of the NGOs, and which allows itself an ideology of presence in a world in distress. The stake of transnationality reinforces the interest of this triple space at the same time as the requirement of their concordance, because as the *Fayda* accentuates its connection with the world, the interdependence between these three spaces becomes an indispensable necessity.

4.2.1. A Global Education Named "School of the Good Life"

It is well known that since the time of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse, there has been in Medina Baye a course of study that goes from the study of the Koran to that of Muslim law, theology, linguistics (Arabic grammar, rhetoric, literature, poetry and prosody, philology), Koranic exegesis, hadith, mysticism and Sufism, among others. These teachings form the traditional educational curriculum of the *Fayda* in its esoteric and exoteric dimension. However, during the last decades, we see more and more at work a rather holistic model of education, that is to say, one that integrates dimensions other than the academic ones. Medina Baye has a reservoir of teachers and institutes such as the Franco-Arab Islamic Institute or the African and American Institute of Sheikh Hassan Cissé. The traditional curriculum (*majâlis*) also attracts many students. Teachers from Mauritania or Egypt are also part of the teaching staff and thus of an educational system that attracts many people to the religious city of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse.[7] In Medina Baye, the main home and holy place of the *Fayda*, education includes an indirect and implicit level which has not yet been questioned to the extent of its scope in the training of men. From how to form a good Muslim or a good disciple of the Tidjaniyya, we are obviously moving on to how to form

an efficient, useful man, imbued with religious values but in tune with his time, that is to say a citizen of the world. Even if they are not at the origin of this type of formation, the heirs are nonetheless the most assertive and dedicated promoters, as shown by the willingness they show in their search for young people to adopt and mentor. These young people come mainly from Nigeria, Gambia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Niger, and today from South Africa and the United States of America, among others. Some of them settle for a long time in the religious city; others make shorter stays. In Medina Baye, they receive an indispensable basic training. The least ambitious will aim at a minimal base of notions relating to Islam, to the Tariqa of the Tidjaniyya. Others will focus on deepening or even specializing in a specific field of Arab Islamic sciences, which may be Arabic grammar, jurisprudence, theology or any other field.

In any case, the formula of education with a global character has visibly found a singular impetus in transnational circulation and in religious globalization. This type of education pursues a global approach and aims implicitly and indirectly at the promotion of codes and norms related to the good life, that is to say, to a decent, acceptable, worthwhile life. This "school of the good life" that the community is increasingly proposing, owes its interest to the broadening of the recruitment base of a community where the profiles of the members are more and more heterogeneous, sometimes with people who come from deviant or marginal backgrounds (drug addicts, child soldiers, young delinquents and convicts, among others), and who hope to find salvation in membership in the religious community.[8] The offer of the good life is a new offer of salvation through which the *Fayda* comes closer to other approaches coming from organizations engaged in a process of religious globalization. It may seem obvious and natural to those who have always lived in the historical fiefdom of the *Fayda* that is Medina Baye. However, it is less so for those who have felt the need to change their living environment, by leaving countries and socio-cultural settings to come and settle in the city of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse. The new formative ambition of Medina Baye consists not only in shaping good Muslims, that is to say pious Muslims armed with science, but also in forging men, shaping them, making them fit to carry out professional activities, for example. This will to organize, for those who respond to the Call of the religious community, a renewed formative framework, is singularly supportive of the emergence of the new heirs of the *Fayda*. Many have capitalized on an experience in large cities of the world for having stayed there as part of their studies.

The parents who send their children to the religious city as well as the adults who deliberately take the initiative to follow a religious guide in Medina Baye, all do so on the basis of trust: that of finding a good path. They all hope to achieve a positive transformation, or at least a substantial improvement. There is, at the same time, a moral resonance and a religious resonance behind the notion of school and school of the good life that the *Fayda* implicitly claims, through its fief, around which is built locally a whole narrative related to the good, to the virtue of its first inhabitants, a tradition of good, virtue and wisdom based on example and persuasion. It is thus this school that the heirs intend not only to preserve, but also to propose to the world. Let us take concrete examples to illustrate the future of the individuals coming out of this training in Medina Baye. First of all, let us specify that there are two categories: those who return to their country of departure after having received training and those who remain permanently in Senegal. The first choose, after long years of life in Medina Baye, to return definitively to their country of origin, to return to the holy city only occasionally, during religious festivals such as the *Maoulouds* or during international Islamic conferences. This is the case of many young African-Americans who came through Imam Hassane Cissé. Many of these young people have acquired knowledge in Islam and religious sciences that have enabled them upon their return to the United States to do the work of imam, chaplain in places of detention, lecturer or preacher. This is particularly the case of brothers Ahmed and Youcef Cissé, who became imams after several years of study in Medina Baye. It is also the case of Adjib Cissé, who officiates in the Brooklyn mosque. Contrary to these young people who return to their country of origin, others rather take the option to stay permanently in Senegal to

earn a living. This second category is interesting from the point of view of its contribution to "morphological complementarity" (Médam 1993) and from the point of view of its mode of integration in the host country that is Senegal. These are people for whom the passage to Medina Baye was both an opportunity to acquire basic religious knowledge and a framework for professional development, which enabled them to settle later, in the town centre of Kaolack or in Dakar, and to carry out their professional activity. Some of them can be found in sewing and design, hairdressing, masonry, tiling, restoration, pedicure, bonnet laundering and rosary making. This tendency to perfect oneself thanks to the support of the religious community clearly weights the centrality of religious qualification in the trajectories of the members of the global *Fayda*. Religious qualification is not the only path that the *Fayda* knows how to offer its members. It also offers them, starting from a stay in Medina Baye, one of exercise and valorization of competence in a trade. This willingness to adopt people, to accommodate them, to serve as their guarantor, to encourage them to stay in an activity or in a service, is part of a will to stabilize a training of a global nature. Today, many people from other West African countries have been able, through this channel, to find their professional path, while benefiting from the smell of holiness of a city whose vocation is to open its doors to people from all over the world. The direct and active involvement of Imam Sheikh Ahmed Tidiane Cissé, in the acquisition of Senegalese nationality for owners of grilled meat restaurants ("dibi haoussa"), is part of this intention to offer foreign guests of the community, a framework for training, and therefore a rewarding socio-professional future. This process of training of the community's recruits merges with that of the formation of a city which is now in step with the global rhythm of time, and is therefore permeable to global meanings such as "value", "creation", "flexibility", "performance" and "free initiative". However, what thrives in Medina Baye is not only a readiness to be nourished by the world, but also the fluidity of an imagination that puts the actors in a disposition to connect the holy place with other places in the world. In any case, we are dealing with a device of network formation because it involves exchanges between different places and also involves shuttles[9] as well as a succession of generations.[10]

　　For many young people who come to Medina Baye, religion by its precepts and codes can be a source of deliverance and the sober life that Medina offers allows them to get rid of certain imprisons and addictions. This register of deliverance and good life that is also found in other religious movements, like the evangelists, aligns the *Fayda* with approaches similar to those of religious organizations engaged in the process of globalization. These movements not only offer the faithful the opportunity of a religious education, but also offer them a path of spiritual and moral re-education. Generally, the religious ideas that these actors promote are, for the most part, morally charged ideas such as that of good, of good deeds, which refer to the Koranic repertoire of the "Recommendation of Good and Prohibition of Evil".[11] Apart from this discursive category drawn from Koranic morality, we find other ideas much more specific to the spiritual and initiatory claims of the *Fayda*. On this subject, notions such as divine grace and favour, spiritual elevation, fidelity to the community, love of the saint and his family largely dominate the field of ideas circulating in the transnational space of the *Fayda* are markers of a religious identity specific to the *Fayda*, even if these religious ideas can have implications in political and economic life because they can be interpreted or instrumentalized according to the concerns of the actors. The more difficult question of the impact of the religious commitment of the faithful of this community in their political and economic life. What alternative inspires them to belong to the *Fayda*? What does belonging to the *Fayda* imply in their daily conduct and in their integration into national spaces? The multiplicity of historical trajectories forbids us any form of generalization. The heterogeneity of this community makes any homogeneous and standardized attitude unlikely. There is no doubt that there is a common awareness among all individuals who claim to be *Fayda*. However, nothing is less certain that such an awareness could have generated an identical attitude everywhere and in all circumstances. One thing remains a constant, there are as many uses of the *Fayda* as there are places

and stakes, and within these uses it would be difficult to extract a dominant or majority trend. For example, the electoral base of the faithful of Nigeria is characterized by its fragmentation, as well as the economic conduct of the faithful are characterized by their multiplicity. Further, the stakes for supporters of one country are not those of supporters of another country. This ability to dissolve in local rhythms and impulses makes the existence of an identical form difficult. The morphological properties probably had something to do with it. A community that recruits the most diverse backgrounds and not within a single or homogeneous constellation of classes.[12]

The action of these heirs of Sheikh Ibrahim also used the diplomatic channel to deploy in different countries. It is this diplomatic-religious hybridization that is now being examined.

4.2.2. The Diplomatic Path as a Religious Opportunity

Sheikh Mouhamadou Lamine Ibrahim Niasse Known as Baba (born in 1940) occupies an important place in the circulatory enterprise of the *Fayda*. A career diplomat, Baba Lamine held for several years the position of Vice-Consul of Senegal in Saudi Arabia. During his career, he combined his work as a diplomat with that of spiritual master and promoter of the *Fayda*. His various residences in Jeddah and Riyadh were places of sociability, cultural and religious animation. Baba Lamine Niasse made sure that his residences served as a place of refuge and social centre. In addition to providing room and board for many African nationals living in Saudi Arabia, the marabout-diplomat also played a protective role. In addition to providing moral and material support, Baba introduced many immigrant workers and those from the Southeast Asian diaspora to the Tidjaniyya. Until the end of his diplomatic mission in 1999, he spoke to expatriates from Sudan, Chad, Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Indonesia, Bangladesh, India and other individuals in search of spirituality or simply looking for "cover" in a country where migrants are often exposed to precariousness and mistreatment (Boureima 2019; Boyer 2017; Beauge 1986; Hill 1977; Kapiszewski 2001; Thiollet 2015; Rigoulet-Roze 2007). Many of them have asked for his benevolence to take the necessary steps to obtain the Ikhâma, the residence permit that allows foreigners to find an employer. As a tutor, moral guarantor and resource person, Baba was able to ensure that his residences were used as civilian domiciles for many African students who were leaving Cairo, for example, to go to Saudi Arabia to find seasonal employment. Some even were able to obtain facilities through Baba's own personal network of friends and clients. Even if this system of assistance, mediation and guarantee does not reach a level that would allow him to claim to provide solutions to all difficulties, it is nevertheless true that it represents a safety valve for some. The marabout-diplomat has the merit to have been able to relieve and solve punctual problems, however small they may be. At the level of religious life, this device is even more functional because, in addition to assuming the function of religious guide (through the direction of the cult, the distribution of the wird and the initiation to Tarbiya[13]), Baba also assumed a role of director of conscience and moral patronage of celebrations such as the maoulouds and other family ceremonies (weddings, baptisms, funeral prayers, etc.).

This engagement on the combined front of the Sufi community and Senegalese diplomacy offered the confraternity community considerable opportunities. From then on, the positioning of Sheikh Ibrahim's son shows that the work of the Sufi organization is embedded in the diplomatic mission, without any decoupling enterprise being deemed necessary.[14] On the contrary, this concomitant production of a double missionary enterprise, one official in favour of the State of Senegal and the other confraternity, seems not to suffer from any inconsistency according to Baba Lamine.[15]

Imam of the Medina Baye mosque from 1982 to 2008, Hassan Cissé coupled this function with that of UNICEF ambassador for the cause of children and mothers. Engaged on the double ground of a UN mandate and that of the Imamat, Cissé bases his international prestige on his reputation as an imam defender of children and other disadvantaged people. For having conducted several immunization awareness campaigns, notably for polio

vaccination, the fight against excision, for family planning and the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding, Cissé's action symbolized the perfect alchemy between the *minbar* and the desk, that is, the strategic alliance between the art of advocacy and that of preaching.

In addition to the two aforementioned figures Sheikh Hassan and Baba Lamine, other members of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse's family show significant paths of hybridization between the diplomatic and religious elements. This is the case of Sheikh Ahmed Tidiane Cissé, current imam of the mosque of Medina Baye, who has held a post of ambassador-at-large in addition to assuming a position of religious leader. It is also the case of Sheikh Mamoune Niasse who was Minister of State, then Goodwill Ambassador during the regime of Abdoulaye Wade. Moreover, the ambition to take charge of the population may have led to finding more structured frameworks for action. It is this passage through the logic of NGOs that is now being examined, as it involves an articulation between the global perspective and the missionary logic of benevolence.

4.3. NGO Space as a Mode of Missionary Presenza

At first glance, it seems appropriate to us to present the historical context that serves as a basis for the emergence of these new establishments[16]. Since the 1980s, the emergence of new independent States, the decline of national governments, inter-State conflicts, new emergencies of a complex nature and rapid technological advances in communications have created both a need and a political space for the development of a "third sector",[17] which is that of NGOs sector (Berger 2007, p. 26). In sub-Saharan Africa, the gradual withdrawal of State institutions has contributed to a sense of abandonment among the population. At the same time, this disengagement of the State has opened up opportunities for private actors and associations. Thus, in Senegal since the 1990s, representatives of Islamic civil society have been trying to take over, seeking to fill the gap following the withdrawal of State institutions from social and health issues. Even if the involvement of religious entities in the management of social and community well-being is part of a historical continuum, the forms and modalities it takes today seem completely new. It is in the context of a renewed perspective within a globalized civil society that the emergence of NGOs and associations within *Fayda* ought to be placed. With their development, we have something in the order of a transfer from community ethos to formalized structures, rather established on bureaucratic norms that do not abrogate traditional and informal modalities. An example will suffice to demonstrate this point: in parallel with the establishment in November 1988 of an NGO called IIAA[18] (African Islamic American Institute), the imam of the Mosque of Medina Baye, Hassan Cissé, continued to encourage the creation of a network of associations called Nasrul ʿilm, whose branches now exist in several countries (Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Ghana and the United States of America, among others). The coexistence between IIAA and Nasrul ʿilm network testifies to the imam's ingenious strategy. Thus, his own religious project is rooted in the transnational assets of the Niasse family and finally on the imamat institution. IIAA now enjoys General Observer Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC[19]). IIAA's partnerships with UN organizations such as UNICEF, UNFPA, USAID and UNDP have made it a key player in the protection of children and vulnerable groups in the sub-region where, since 1990, many campaigns have been conducted by international institutions. In addition to providing transnational recognition, UN accreditation has worked to give IIAA real opportunities through which it can reinvest the codes of devotion to others, in education through the building of schools, in health with the creation of establishments, the most important of which being the Shifa al Asqam Medical Center built in Medina Baye, a centre which has for several years benefited from technical and material assistance from the United States, where Hassan has been able to build a personal network of vital importance.

Sheikh Hassan and Sheikh Ahmed Tidiane's younger brother, Sheikh Mouhamadoul Mahi Cissé[20] also set up an NGO called Alfityanou Humanitarian International (AHI). Its actions are similar to those of IIAA. Its flagship project today revolves around the

construction of a health centre in Taïba Niassène[21], the village where Sheikh Ibrahim
Niasse was born. In a presentation document, AHI defines itself as an organization present
in nine countries on three continents (Africa, Europe, Asia), and involved in various areas
ranging from education to the care of vulnerable people, including the sponsorship of poor
or orphaned children, nutrition assistance for the needy, medical assistance, distribution
of seeds and fertilizers to farmers, monthly provision of food and supplies to the needy,
distribution of sheep and oxen, especially during religious events (Maouloud, Eid), etc.
The organization has two offices for the moment, one in Dakar and another in Luxembourg
where the activities are spearheaded by a disciple of Sheikh Mahi Cissé who lives in that
country. A traveler on behalf of *Fayda*, Sheikh Mahi regularly travels to Asia (Singapore,
Indonesia, Malaysia, etc.), the United States of America, Trinidad and Tobago, Europe
(Italy, Spain, France, etc.), England, Norway, Nigeria, Chad and Burkina Faso among
others. He lectures and conducts religious ceremonies for both the Senegalese diaspora and
nationals of the countries he travels to. He has the support of international humanitarian
organizations such as the South African organization *Gift of the Givers* and also collaborates
with organizations such as Sout Illahi[22] (Singapore) and IDDEF in Turkey.[23]

Like many other faith-based NGOs, IIAA and AHI are also concerned with spreading
faith and religious education. Sheikh Hassan Cissé himself has been able to convert
thousands of people during campaigns and tours on behalf of the religious community,
but through IIAA. In February 2008, for example, a news item reported cases of massive
conversions by Sheikh Hassan[24] between Cameroon and Chad. Many of these converts
came from traditional religions and practiced ancestral cults. There are strong presumptions
that these were individuals exposed to poverty who saw in the imam's action some glimmer
of hope on the social, moral and religious levels. The dispatch gives us some interesting
clues about this COMAF is an organization whose initial goal was to manage *Fayda*'s
activities at both the national and international levels. However, COMAF's scope of
action was very quickly broadened through the implementation of activities other than the
management of religious events. Thus, this establishment has been positioned in the same
way as faith-based NGOs. Established by Sheikh Mamoune Ibrahim Niasse in 1999, the
creation of COMAF has enabled its initiator to find a new platform for managing social and
philanthropic action on which he can build a whole reputation.[25] Like the aforementioned
organizations, COMAF is also active in advocacy, particularly for the Palestinian people
and more locally for the populations of Medina Baye, as it calls for the administrative
status of the city to be reviewed and be made a district municipality; thereby facilitating
the provision of health and safety facilities for the populations of this religious city.

The NIG (New Islamic Generation) is a movement born of the COMAF that was
created by Ibrahim Mamoune Niasse on the day after the death of his father Sheikh
Mamoune Niasse. Thus, Ibrahim started heading two organizations, COMAF and NIG.
The difference between Ibrahim Mamoune Niasse and Sheikh Ibrahim's other grandsons,
Sheikh Hassan and Sheikh Mahy, is his position in national public institutions as a senator
and currently as a member of the ESEC (Economic, Social and Environmental Council).[26]

Although NIG's activities have decreased in intensity, it plans to expand its operations
in the sub-region and elsewhere in Africa. As can be seen on its presentation page, NIG
aims to promote socio-economic and cultural development, foster human development
and growth, combat poverty in all its forms, carry out charitable works, build cultural
centres, Koranic schools and health posts, and even hospitals. Ibrahim Mamoune Niasse
often travels to Mali, Gambia and other countries where he has friends and supporters.
The growth of COMAF is also linked to the globalization of funding networks, relating
to Islamic solidarity[27] and a new form of sponsorship from the Persian Gulf countries on
behalf of sub-Saharan Africa. Sheikh Mamoune Niasse had many supporters and friends
in Saudi Arabia and in the Arab world in general. Sheikh Ibrahim's son also continued
the friendship that his father had forged with some Arab princes from the ruling families.
These include Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan of the United Arab Emirates and Fayçal ben
Abdelaziz Al Saud of the Saudi dynasty. Thus, he was able to travel regularly to Arab

countries where he raised funds to support people in distress and other needy. Thus, he created several entities including the COMAF (Committee organizing *Fayda* events) and the political party RP (People's Rally). According to his spokesmen, the RP party was founded on a community-based vision of *Fayda*. This implies that this political establishment intends to use community platforms to address issues of concern. The President of the party is himself referred to as the "first servant".

A whole set of establishments governs this associative universe of *Fayda*, which is clearly evident when the same leader is at the head of various establishments. This is particularly the case with the COMAF/NIG ticket or the IIAA/Nasrul ʿilm combination. In both cases, we are witnessing the implementation of relay mechanisms or even alternation between a strong and a weak regime, depending on the circumstances or opportunities of the moment.

Moreover, like non-governmental organizations such as the Catholic NGO Sant' Egidio,[28] *Fayda*'s organizations seem to have capitalized some know-how put to good use, within the framework of a "meso-diplomacy". (Colonomos 2000). This is a diplomatic action on the fringes of the official one, resting on a network of contacts, on community-based establishments and international prestige. Since 2000, several requests have been made to *Fayda* to be involved in some crises resolution in Africa. Many of the press articles[29] we have consulted are related to this meso-diplomatic activity. It was in this vein that the daily *WalFadjri* on 21 March 2008 headlined: "Medina Baye invited to end the Darfur crisis"; prior to that, a strong delegation from Sudan, headed by the imam râtib of Darfur, Mouhamadoul Habib, came to Medina Baye. Another article published in the national daily newspaper *Le Soleil* on 8 August 2008 was entitled: "Hearing with the President of the Federal Assembly: Mouhamadou Mamoune Niasse, carrying a message from Pape Diop". In July 2009, President Abdoulaye Wade, the then President of the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) entrusted the city of Medina Baye with a conciliation mission in northern Nigeria.[30] More recently, we found in Archipo's archives (in 2014) a press note on the visit of the former Nigerian President Olesegun Obasanjo, then sent on a mission to Senegal, by his successor Goodluck Jonathan. The press release states: "Nigerian delegation's visit to Medina Baye: President Jonathan thanks the Khalifa of Medina Baye Niasse for his prayers for peace".

It is true that silence in the face of certain flaws and inadequacies of the States can pose a problem and discredit all religious actors who display a certain closeness, or even complicity with the leaders. In need of a basis of trust coming from the populations to renew their legitimacy and act effectively, the religious must do everything so that they are not assimilated to a ruling class that no longer inspires confidence. There lies all the difficulty and action which has an interest in appearing as a religious vocation. At the same time, for the sake of realism, these religious actors find themselves in the need to make, as small as they are, some compromises with the state authorities, if they want to benefit from certain resources and certain margins of manoeuvre. For example, it is these political authorities that religious actors depend on to acquire diplomatic passports in order to travel easily, as well as to obtain many other privileges. In the end, it is in this difficult tension between a concern for priestly coherence and a realistic compromise that lies the transnational action of these religious actors. This tension is all the more complex as they operate in a country like Senegal, where the relationship between Sufi organizations and politicians has long been based on the exchange of good practices, to the point that it sometimes becomes a risk of radicalizing any opposition to the State. The wisest and most pragmatic attitude that many religious actors find is to settle in between, that is to say, by dealing with the political authorities, out of practical necessity, while giving the people a pledge of solidarity and loyalty.

From the rest, these current affairs and press articles provide sufficient evidence that governments themselves are committed to involving this religious community in mediation, peace and conflict resolution processes. In reality, this attitude of Senegalese authorities only reflects an international trend: the era of "multi-track" diplomacy. Since

the 1990s, international institutions and communities of States have placed great emphasis on "multi-track diplomacy" or "multi-channel diplomacy". Thus, with the limits of traditional diplomatic channels (Diamond and McDonald 1996), the trend is to explore other possibilities and avenues for conflict resolution, such as the religious path. This renewal in diplomatic action is also in line with the widespread recognition of the "limits of a purely secular approach to the world's economic, social and environmental issues" (Berger 2007, p. 24).

Linked to an ethic of presence, these associative establishments of *Fayda* now occupy an important place in Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse's Hadra's stock of experiences. At the local and internal levels, they have an influence on moments, people and projects. For example, it is under the leadership of his NGO that Imam Hassan Cissé has had to lead several dozen conferences on a range of topics. Each of these conferences was an opportunity for him to diversify his preaching, which is, to a certain extent, a way of occupying the confraternal space other than through celebration and apology. Like many other faith-based NGOs, *Fayda*'s associative establishments demonstrate an ingenious connection between an attachment to the original religious infrastructure and an appropriation of techniques, processes and spaces that seem to have an "elective affinity" with contemporary globalization. The attachment to the original religious infrastructure can be interpreted as a phenomenon of re-territorialization of the confraternal rhetoric, its moral and soteriological meaning. In addition, re-anchoring in the original sphere enables actors to ensure the legitimacy they need to successfully carry out planned activities. This legitimacy depends on the mobilization of human and organizational resources at a low cost. This makes it possible to understand why these establishments resist secularizing temptation and the euphemism of religious reference better than some other faith-based NGOs. On the other hand, their submission in all circumstances, or even their alienation from the main religious institution and its standard, seems more difficult to leave insofar as these establishments need a margin of autonomy to be able to operate at full capacity. Generally, their inevitable tendency to emancipate themselves from existing guardians is compensated by over-investment in the register of the "truth regime" and the community-based system. It is a local understanding of the co-existing establishments that guarantees a balance within this globalized religious community, which accommodates the influences of modernity, provided that they do not blur any prospect of faithfulness at the service of the world. Even if this "concern for the world", this conviction that we must find solutions to a world in crisis, is somewhat utopian, it has the virtue of projecting the actors towards "new possibilities" and to enable this community to build new territories of hope[31] and to maintain them. It is highly tempting to view these initiatives from the market's perspective only.[32] The only prism of economics and the "religious economics"[33] does not allow us to question the complex forms and articulated intentionalities that govern these initiatives. The phenomenological approach to presence offers the advantage of allowing us to cross several signifiers and dimensions of actors' practice. The fact that there is a competitive logic between various religious movements and that they increasingly resort to strategies of performance and media visibility hardly abolishes the deep anchoring in a normative, spiritual and charismatic space that resists radical alienation from the strictly material purposes. At both the local and global levels, the initiatives described above are distinguished more by their socio-cultural scope and performance than by any economic power. Their influence and the "presumption of goodwill" much depend on their ability to propose offers of meaning and salvation, which allow them to play a role of arbitration and mediation during crises.

Moreover, "altruistic action" (Passy 1998) which is theirs, is a form of political commitment, which has its roots in a form of social and humanitarian intervention specific to the Niasse community and which is undergoing rapid transnational development since Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse. It seems, however, that recycling mechanisms and the capture of ancient materials, whether ideological, symbolical or organizational in origin, have never been brought to the level they are today, which can be understood in the light of resources available to individuals today to re-imagine communities and rework historical memories.

With regard to all the codes from various worlds and resources that this *Fayda* community mobilizes and in virtue of the opportunities of its globalization, it acquires assets that it combines with the charisma of its members, their multilingualism (English, Arabic, Wolof, Hausa, Hassanya), their managerial culture, their multiple networks (United States, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Burkina, South Africa) to offer itself new perspectives. The organizational molds in which *Fayda*'s multiple initiatives take place provide an interesting insight into the variations of an in-person perspective. In this context, religion finds new resources in the transnational secular civil space. This is particularly true when the imam carries out a free distribution operation of food supplements[34] via his NGO. Here, it is the imam who perceives the need for it by virtue of his proximity to the people, but it is still through the NGO that he will find the means and opportunity to collect donations, so that there is an interpenetration between the two spheres: that of the imamat and that of the NGO.

Starting from the concept of presenza, a whole anthropological structure is at work in the *Fayda*, allowing us to take charge of the symbolic order and socio-political reconfiguration that is at work in the *Fayda*. Paradoxically, the issue of presence has strong affinities with political, economic and cultural globalization because this issue feeds on the resources the globalized world distils. As an internal stimulant, the presence and desire that presides over us are the source of a renewed impetus whose role in transforming paths and relationships, in the scope for renegotiating positions, are anything but marginal. The faculty of presence is in perfect affinity with the desire to represent *Fayda* on all continents. By integrating the rhetoric and methods of contemporary NGOs, the new establishments of *Fayda* are able to overcome certain obstacles that depend on a confinement to the territory, the nation or the ethnic group. The encounter between a sensitivity to the fate of the world[35] ("*xéttali jaam yi*") and a logic of action borrowed from transnational NGOs, testify to the reshuffles that are taking place in certain religious spaces, where new actors emerge by capitalizing on a leeway that would be misunderstood outside the "globalization of religion" (Guillebaud 2008; Bastian et al. 2001; Mabille 2003). Precisely this globalization of religion does not mean a total indifference towards State and national frameworks. The case of *Fayda* shows to what extent this religious movement integrates regional and international political and institutional mechanisms. Contrary to widespread opinion, transnational communities do not deprive States of any capacity to produce and promote collective standards, particularly those with a strong moral or spiritual charge. An organization such as IIAA has very often responded to the discussions or meetings initiated by the State of Senegal on issues relating to morals and values in general.

5. Conclusions

The new frameworks for action are emblems of a religious who circulates in the globalized world, that is, who adopts processes promoted by the global culture. In this respect, major shifts have taken place that seem to be taking this religious community towards a new horizon of action and imagination, in the image of the markers we have just discussed, which bear sufficient witness to immersion in a global temporality. Moreover, if the development of the *Fayda* is linked to the transnational process it has been able to appropriate, contemporary globalization offers this community the resources and the pretext for a missionary reorientation in an African environment struggling with many political, economic and cultural changes. There is indeed a globalization within globalization, a religious globalization of the *Fayda* that crosses and captures the resources of contemporary economic and cultural globalization. The flows[36] of economic and political globalization provide this religious community with new resources, new instruments and new norms thanks to which it sees emerging within it new religious trajectories embodied by individuals whose dynamics of action are strongly impregnated in the frame of reference of global culture. A prodigious process of refounding the meaning of the *Fayda*, these initiatives also promote a redefinition of the missionary field of the *Fayda*, as well as a redeployment of the categories that constitute its doctrinal base: "flow", "movement",

"irradiation", "flood", "illumination", "relief" and "transformation". At the same time, they are the expression of a tightening of the links between a community and the space of economic and cultural globalization.

In any case, two lessons can be drawn from the process that emerges from the double movement of transnationalization and globalization of the *Fayda*. On the one hand, the encounter between these new emerging spaces of action and the religious imagination traditional to this community is not the fruit of a happy coincidence. It is the result of an active mechanism of concordance operated by the actors of the *Fayda*, first and foremost the heirs of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse. It is through an effort of translation that these heirs succeed in enhancing a set of activities by making them consistent with the original intention attributed to the religious community. However, if the effort of coherence between the activity of the heirs of the *Fayda* and the religious ambition of the founder is successfully achieved, it is especially because of the very fluidity of the missionary values. These are characterized by their "extratemporal" dimension and by their convertibility in other languages and in other concerns, which can be social, economic or political. La *Fayda*, like other contemporary religious organizations, is nourished by such forms of translation. It is the permeability of missionary intention that makes such work possible. On the other hand, this tendency towards transnational and global flows, which seems to dominate the space of the *Fayda*, does not reduce the confraternal landscape to absolute monolithism, nor would it mean an absolute consensus in terms of orientation and relationship to time and space, much less a definitive monopoly of the management of the religious community. It is one of the faculties of the globalizing tendency to nourish its opposite, which puts it at the heart of the internal conflicts of this community. Even if transnational itinerancy would allow the actors to capitalize an important prestige, it would not go as far as to abolish any other form of sedentary, localized commitment. There is a whole discreet and diffuse arm wrestling that resurfaces in an untimely manner, that is to say, on occasion, and which confronts the globalizing and other tendency that operates behind an exacerbated particularism that takes on the appearance of "patrimonialism", even patriarchalism in the name of orthodoxy and fidelity to the past, to tradition and to the original model. As an illustration, in the 1990s, Sister Khadija, a surgeon from the United States of America and no less a wife of Imam Sheikh Hassan Cisse, introduced the modern surgical technique to circumcise boys. With this technique, the healing period is reduced from a few weeks to only a few days, with the other advantage that the risks of infection that existed before were almost nil and that the circumcised child could after two to three days resume his school activities, for example. Many dignitaries, including Imam Hassan Cissé, welcomed this innovation with great satisfaction. In spite of this, other dignitaries were reluctant and some did not hesitate to show their disapproval in the name of the idea that circumcision was a sacred rite thousands of years old and that the very space of this rite should remain a domain reserved for men.[37] Imam Hassan Cissé himself had given an answer, arguing that nowhere is it written that a woman should not perform the act of circumcision. Before adding that "circumcision is an operative act like any other. If it turns out that a woman is more effective than her male colleagues, common sense obliges us to entrust this practice to a woman". This technique has finally triumphed because the majority of the inhabitants of the city take their children to the "Shifâ" clinic[38] to undergo circumcision according to the Khadija method. This debate was not just a simple divergence of styles, it hid a difference of orientation and interpretation, between, on the one hand, those who are open to global influences, and, on the other hand, those who cling to the local particularism of the original universe of reference.

In spite of the transnational breakthrough of the *Fayda*, the instrumentalization of a local identity remains thanks to an exaltation of the virtues of the terroir, of memory and of the original reference points. In this respect, many local maneuvers aim to territorialize, to sanctuarize and to patrimonialize a community religious fact whose attributes must remain the holy place, the holy family, the blood ties, the long companionship; in short, all the vectors and endogenous impulses of the community. Along with that which is rather

centred on norms of action stemming from global modernity, this competing possibility is not systematically in favour of flows of exchange, contact with the outside world, interethnicity, intermingling and exogamic alliances. In its hierarchy of values, it is the holy place, the local identity, which takes precedence over the rest. Nevertheless, it is not totally indifferent and indifferent to flows and circulation, even if it pledges its legitimacy on the observation of the shortcomings of globalizing dynamics. In other words, it extends its influence as the norms of borrowed actions show signs of weakness and fragility. Through it, it is a community ambition that demonstrates its complexity in an alternation and in a confrontation: a logic of extension outside the place and the religious fact of origin versus an alleged will to refocus and to put down roots in the field of norms stemming from the sacred place and the religious tradition in the strict sense. The globalizing tendency implements an appropriation of norms attributed to global modernity and an immersion in the economic, institutional and cultural spaces that are related to it.

The figure of the itinerant missionary who travels everywhere, who goes to meet world leaders, who takes on the role of diplomat, who adopts codes from other cultural environments and universes, who creates new alliances and who intends to extend the religious mission in development initiatives, faces discreet and diffuse resistance led by a figure of actor who takes less advantage of the resources of globalization. This second figure of actor takes less advantage of the process of bureaucratization and formalization from which the NGOs that we have previously reviewed proceed. Advocating a rather traditional turn of the screw, or even a revival of a model that risks being altered by the influences of the world, this figure of actor erects rather sedentary landmarks as a shield against the temptation of politicization and secularization in the face of what it considers to be an invasion of the structures of the global. It is thus a use of place and of the link of origin that is thus found as a watermark.

On the other hand, the fine and long multisite observation that we have carried out suggests that these two tendencies work simultaneously and their opposition would be more of a theoretical distinction than anything else. In empirical reality, few actors in this community are completely dedicated to a sedentary routine or only to an identity-based approach. Even those who claim to make the local, the traditional and the original their priority, do not remain less present, to a greater or lesser extent, in the new flows, in certain transnational networks of the community. Very often the traditionalist tendency is a posture dictated by the stakes of positioning in the hierarchy of prestige and influence. This is how those whose margins of activity are weaker in relation to the capital and resources linked to mobility are quick to disavow or even decry any option based on circulation, on a permeability to the norms of the world, those of the market, in this case the neo-liberal one. Advocating refocusing on original essentials and attacking the NGOizing wave seems to be a power strategy.

For its part, the globalizing trend would not be at the antipodes of the religious culture of the *Fayda*. Contrary to what its detractors sometimes suggest, this tendency assumes, for example, the culture of gift and virtues linked to birth, the family distribution of roles in the religious community, the structure of genealogical authority, the institutional hierarchy, the belief in the pre-eminence of places and objects because of their supernatural charge—so many elements linked to the past. In short, the movement of traditionalization, which one might believe to be exclusive to the figure of the sedentary heir, would be at work everywhere. There is just a difference of degree in its affirmation, which is probably a strategic use of community heritage.

Just like his sedentary competitor, the itinerant heir shows an ability to draw his strength from the religious culture[39] of this community, and to find his impetus and reason for acting from the socio-political and cultural realities of Senegal: his ecosystem is both national and transnational. Symmetrically, the inventions and innovations linked to exchanges with the outside world can only impose themselves at the local level of the main religious city through the strategic use made of them by the tutelary figures of the heritage of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse.

The conflicts that have crystallized since the emergence of NGO-type initiatives contribute to animating the internal life of this religious community by exacerbating the ambitions of each other, allowing the redefinition of the hierarchies of action and performance. Thus, one can rightly ask the question whether the recent revitalization of an organization with a national vocation, such as the Jami´atou Ansaroudine[40], could have been the case if this structure had not found in the same competitive field initiatives such as the AHI, the IIAA and the COMAF, which for the most part benefit from transnational trade flows. The conflictual matrix guarantees a significant redeployment from which the actors discover new capacities for action, projection and adjustment. In this respect, the concomitant dynamics to which we have alluded do not maintain a relationship of mutual exclusion. They are in a relationship of dialogue and complementarity on which a community balance seems to depend.

Even if some would see this as a source of discordance detrimental to the smooth functioning of the community, it is not unlikely that the multiple uses and orientations of the same community reality have a socializing virtue in that they promote positive emulation. The sociologist Georg Simmel has made us understand that contrary to indifference and rejection, conflict is a "positive moment" (Simmel 1992) and that as a form of struggle, competition has a value for the structure of the social circle. Even if in some circumstances this conflictuality takes on such astonishing proportions that one has the impression that the union is being sacrificed, the sense of close belonging to the same community destiny always manages to remain present. The elasticity of this sense of belonging to the same destiny guarantees occasional reunions, circumstantial compromises and forms of reconciliation in order to face the multiple external threats. The alternation of moments of conflict and cooperation inscribes this community in the historical continuum that is supposed to link it with its own founder.

The above considerations come to renew our view of African Islam in general, and Muslim Sufi orders in particular. The empirical reality puts us in front of forms of social and cultural production that are far removed from the certainties and stereotypes in some works on African Islam. The metamorphoses of the very function of religious Sufi Organization actor are the result of the emergence of hybrid forms, liminal spaces that many actors operating between Africa and other continents are experimenting. These observations deconstruct the clichés of an African Islam that is fundamentally based on reflexes of race, culture and custom and condemned to reproduce ethnocultural patterns. These are on and in the register of the processual, that of turbulence, that of dynamics and uncertainty, and that of instability, where the concern for reconquest, redefinition and renewal prevails over that of the certainty of achievements and the stability of orientations in the face of time and space. The recodification of the imagination of benevolence, that of hospitality towards the men and women of the world, as we think we have demonstrated, sufficiently demonstrates the tension between the feeling of being faced with an uncertain world and confidence in a religious normativity as a guide to a method of restoring certainty and overcoming the anguish of uncertainty.

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Notes

1   Certainly the Nigerian researcher Yakub Quadri had studied the circulation of spiritual masters from Nigeria to the surrounding countries. Quadri (1983, 1984).

2   Considered as a flow, an overflow, a propagation of Grace, the idea of movement and circulation is inherent to that of *Fayda*. The idea of *Fayda* implies a philosophical perspective which concerns the idea of diffusion, that of transmission, that of reception, that of propagation, and thus of circulation. The concept of Fayda predates Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse because it is found in other writings, notably in the metaphysics of Ibn ʿArabi (1165–1240). As for the advent of the Fayda as a religious turning point through which people would massively access divine knowledge, it was the subject of a prophecy attributed to Ahmed Tidjani, founder of the Tijaniyya. Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse is considered by his followers as the holder of this Fayda. Many authors have studied the Fayda of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse. We can cite among others, (Seesemann 2000, 2004, 2011; Hill 2007; Wright 2010, 2015; Brigaglia 2000–2001). Moreover, Ousmane Kane has published numerous articles on the transnational dimension of the Fayda. For a better overview see (Kane 1987, 1988, 1997a, 1997b, 2009).

3   We have watched a dozen videos relating to the stays of religious guides in the United States, Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom.

4   The fieldwork started from a doctoral research conducted at the University of Toulouse.

5   Telegram arrived from Cairo, addressed diplomacy n° 462, signed by Jacques Roux, document n° 184PO/1/369/21, Center of Diplomatic Archives of Nantes.

6   Recent trip of the great marabout El Hadji Ibrahima Niasse, 3/1/64, unsigned document no. 184PO/1/369/21, Center of Diplomatic Archives of Nantes; *see* also BSS documents. Senegal, 15/5/1961, no. 184PO/1/369/21, Center of Diplomatic Archives of Nantes.

7   These Egyptians come thanks to a program of cultural cooperation that began since the time of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse. It was the Sheikh himself who had managed to obtain this cooperation from the Egyptian authorities. On this issue, the reader is referred to (Kane 2017).

8   It may also be for this reason that the balance of religious cities may seem fragile, since following these profiles of individuals, accompanying them over time, requires greater resources in terms of human resources, skills and infrastructure, among others. Moreover, not all of them succeed. Moreover, there is a paradox of the shoemaker who operates. Either it is the magic of the holy place that sometimes fails, or it is the effect of the discreet connivance between the system and the paradox that manifests, to speak as Yves Barel (2008).

9   Religious guides constantly travel back and forth between Senegal and other capitals of the world where they respond to invitations in spaces (conferences, meetings) where it is a question of extolling this model of formation that African Islam offers to the world.

10 The example of the first generation of young Americans speaks eloquently of this. Today it is the children, nephews or nieces of the first generation of students who came in the 1980s, who come to the city of Medina Baye, for training purposes.

11 *al amr bi-l maʾrûfi wa nahyi ʿani-l mounkari*.

12 Max Weber established the link between belonging to an order, a class and the type of religiosity. This example does not apply well in a transnational community constituted by the heterogeneity of the profiles of its members.

13 The singularity of the *Fayda* may lie in this practice of the Tarbiya, this initiatory experience which allows the disciple to access the infuse knowledge of God, that is, to experience extinction in the Divine Reality (*fanâ*). Thus, the content of the Tarbiya, the steps, the prayer formulas that are associated must be the subject of the greatest secrecy. Only insiders have the right to talk about it among themselves. The Tarbiya must remain in the domain of the esoteric; science of the hidden, it must be the privilege of the elite of the initiated. There is a whole symbolism through representations, figures and images relating to this initiation that is the Tarbiya. We find here the secret dimension proper to the paths of initiation in general and which starts from a distinction between the Sacred and the Profane, the Apparent and the Hidden, the Inside and the Outside, the Void and the Fullness, the Ignorance and the Clairvoyance, among others. These categories punctuate the language of the Tarbiya initiates.

14 It is a tradition of the Senegalese political authorities to appoint representations of Sufi organizations to diplomatic functions (ambassadors, consuls, consular attachés, etc.), especially in Arab or Muslim countries. It was President Senghor who initiated this practice by appointing various members of Senegalese religious families as ambassadors. After him, his successors Abdou Diouf, Abdoulaye and today, Macky Sall. For example, Sheikh Ahmed Tidiane Sy (religious guide of the Moustarchidines and member of the Tidjaniyya zawiya of Tivaouane); Moustapha Cissé, marabout of Pir; Sheikh Tidjane Mouhammad Zaynab Niasse, nephew of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse, were all integrated into Senegalese diplomacy through this channel.

15 That is what came out of a meeting we had with him in 2008.

16 We borrow this term from the Italian anthropologist Ernesto de Martino. For a better overview, see (De Martino 2016).

17 According to Michel Lallement and Jean Louis-Laville, The third sector is the "vast array of organizations that are neither private for-profit nor public sector" (Lallement and Laville 2000, p. 523).

18 Since Hassan Cissé's death, his brother and successor, Sheikh Ahmed Tidiane, has inherited the presidency of IIAA. Of all the organizations that have emerged from *Fayda*, IIAA is the one that best meets today's definition of a faith-based NGO: "a formal

organization whose identity and mission derive directly from the teachings of one or more religious traditions and operates on a non-profit, independent, voluntary basis to collectively promote and implement ideas on the public good, both nationally and internationally" (Berger 2007, pp. 23–24). As such, IIAA plays a leading role within *Fayda* with regard to other entities. Moreover, the involvement of these religious leaders in social action is not an isolated phenomenon. It is part of a new phenomenon which has caught the facny of researchers for some time. See (Renders 2002; Gomez-Perez 2011; Kaag 2011; Savadogo et al. 2016; Couillard et al. 2016).

[19] See the biography of Sheikh Hassan Cissé on the UNICEF website: WCARO_Senegal_Ambio-Cisse.pdf (accessed on 7 July 2020).

[20] Sheikh Mouhamadoul Mahi Cissé was born on July 6, 1966 in Medina Baye in Kaolack. After a Koranic and *majalistic* course in his grandfather's city, he continued his higher studies at Al Azhar University in Egypt where he obtained a diploma in Islamic Studies and Arabic literature.

[21] This project is estimated at CFAF 859,020,866 million (EUR 1,313,538), Document from the ceremony of laying the first stone of the new secondary health centre in Taïba Niassène, Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse.

[22] In particular for everything related to the distribution of sheep and oxen at religious events. See on this subject the nature of this collaboration on Saout illahi's page: http://soutilaahi.com/qurban-2018-at-medina-baye-senegal/ (accessed on 7 July 2020).

[23] The motto of this NGO based in Turkey "with tenderness in the service of humanity" is quite significant in the light of the three signifiers that make it up: "tenderness", "service" and "humanity".

[24] *Dispatches from Cameroon*, Saturday, February 23, 2008.

[25] Sheikh Mamoune Niasse left his mark on *Fayda*. He is presented as one of the pillars of Niassène's generosity, an "embodiment of benevolence", to quote a famous Senegalese griot. Provision of food for the needy, distribution of tickets to go on pilgrimage to Mecca, scholarships for students who cannot afford them, funding of sports clubs and women's groups, etc. His death in 2011 left a void in the community of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse.

[26] He was appointed by decree [Decree No. 2018-1460] in the category of qualified persons, appointed for their expertise in economic, social and environmental matters.

[27] About this Muslim charity, we can refer to the work of Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003).

[28] "Sant' Egidio works in relation with various political institutions on confidential and specialized issues. The diplomatic activity of the Roman community is part of this framework. Its consultants intervene in various crises, as specialists in mediation and experts of the regions in crisis" (Balas 2007, pp. 188–89). On Sant Egidio's diplomacy, see also (Dupuy 1999; Riccardi 1995).

[29] These press articles, press kits and reports were collected during our thesis. For a more detailed overview, the reader may consult the appendix of our doctoral thesis. (Niang 2014).

[30] APS (Senegalese Press Agency) http://www.cherchonslapaix.fr/themes/113-afrique/446-mewade- (accessed on 7 July 2020) sends a reconciliation mission to the north of Nigeria.html; On the Seneweb site, Wade sends Medina Baye's Khalifa to Nigeria to stop religious fights http://www.seneweb.com/news/Societe/nigeria-wade-envoie-le-khalife-de-medinabaye-au-nigeria-pour-arreter-les-batailles-religieuses_n_40220.html (accessed on 7 July 2020).

[31] Desroche has shown that "hope dominates the human adventure of its powerful stature" against the backdrop of an ever reinvented messianism. It particularly accompanies the phases of unrest, oppression and revolution, i.e., periods of crisis and uncertainty from which humanity draws on its deep roots to set out on its journey towards an ideal world (...) thus imagining, on the horizon, the plan of a perfect society that it is rushing to build (Desroche 1973, p. 156).

[32] This reading reduces the action of religious actors to power relations, of which the economic one seems to be a bourdieusian inspiration. It underlies and suspects the cleric of pursuing hidden agendas.

[33] Approach to the understanding and intelligibility of the religious person who presupposes to make a reading of it from the prism of the scientific economy and in particular the political economy (Obadia 2013, p. 56). On this approach, see also Iannaccone (1992, 1998).

[34] In the late 1990s, Imam Hassan Cissé distributed thousands of milk boxes/food supplements through his NGO. The operation lasted several months. People came from various parts of the country looking for packages.

[35] A sensitivity inspired by Islamic injunctions as well (Koran, Sunna).

[36] (Appadurai 2001).

[37] In Black Africa in general, circumcision is the most important male rite. The whole process of this rite must be surrounded by a mystery that only men have the right to pierce. According to custom, circumcised men must be in conclave during the entire period of circumcision, that is to say from the operation itself until complete healing. During this conclave, elders who have already had the experience of circumcision are responsible for initiating new circumcisers, teaching them wisdom and codes of conduct designed to forge their "manhood". This conclave is called "the men's hut" ("*néégu goor*"), no woman has the right to access it.

[38] The "*Shifaʿ*" clinic was set up by Hassan Cissé in the early 2000s.

[39] Inheritance (wirâtha) and guidance (houdâ) are among the most decisive elements of this religious culture. Their implications are major for the simple reason that the power issues themselves are largely informed by these two elements. By definition, religious culture is "the system of knowledge and practices informed by religion and governing the relationship of those identified with it

to the world, a system that still remains to be placed in a broad socio-historical context" ([Elboudrari 1993](), p. 3). Religious culture therefore refers to a system of "thoughts, speeches and practices" that structures the direction in which the representations and actions of supporters of a particular religious community take. It is composed of doctrinal elements, normative prescriptions as well as historical acts and consensus whose survival is guaranteed by institutional mechanisms of dissemination, transmission, adoption and adaptation.

[40] The Djamiʿatou Ansaroudine is the only structure that had been set up by the founder in the 1930s. This symbolic advantage allows Ansaroudine to fly with authority. The vocation of this structure is to ensure the coordination at the national level of all the faithful and the associative structures specific to the *Fayda*. It functions on the basis of membership fees and contributions from members. Sheikh Mamoune Niasse himself was for several years its national coordinator. Its current president, Sheikh Mouhamina Niasse, is a son of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse.

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