

Fally Kebbeh and Mamadi Kumba: Emancipation and Slave Ancestry in the Twentieth-Century Urban Gambia

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<A> Abstract

Fally Kebbeh and Mamadi Kumba were two slave descendants born in rural Gambia in the 1910s. By following their migration in the period before the outbreak of World War II to Bathurst, the capital of the Colony of the Gambia, this essay focuses on the opportunities and restraints that ambitious young men willing to shake off the social disability of their slave ancestry experienced both in their home contexts and in the urban setting. The cultural, economic, and social dynamism of colonial cities held the promise of anonymity. Yet a micro-historical focus on the trajectories of these two men shows that memories of a slave past could travel along the paths of rural-urban migration with different outcomes in the course of the individual life cycle. Indeed, as much as the village, the city could become a theater of post-slavery negotiations between former masters and former slaves.

<A> Introduction

As in other African contexts, historical wisdom about slavery and emancipation in the Senegambia region has linked the upward social mobility of freed slaves and their descendants to

their migration to growing urban centers – coastal cities like Dakar and Bathurst (renamed Banjul in 1973) as well as the administrative and commercial towns that mushroomed throughout colonial Senegal and the Gambia. According to this line of thought, urbanization allowed bonded men and women, and their descendants, to conceal their previous status by accessing paid work, formal education, and emerging class structures based on wealth and proximity to the bureaucratic apparatus of the colonial and postcolonial state (Diop 1981, 207-209; Moitt 1989; Klein 1998, 199, 222; Searing 2002, 150). Regional and interregional processes of socioeconomic change followed this general trend. However, a micro-historical focus enables a better understanding of the struggles and successes, as well as the stumbles and dead ends experienced in the individual life cycles that marked the urban careers of people of slave descent. It also invites consideration of the plurality of experiences and outcomes that drove the emancipation process (Rossi 2016, XIII-XVII). In spite of their promises of anonymity, cities could become theaters of post-slavery negotiations (or confrontations) about slave-master relationships as much as the most conservative of villages (McDougall this issue; Oxby this issue; Pelckmans 2015, 300).

The trajectories of “Fally Kebbeh” and “Mamadi Kumba” are significant in this respect. Due to the social sensitivity of the issues raised by this article, the names of these two protagonists and of all interviewees are pseudonyms. All other information is accurate. Fally Kebbeh and Mamadi Kumba, both then young men of slave ancestry, left the Protectorate of the Gambia to settle in the city of Bathurst on the eve of World War II. Established at the mouth of the River Gambia in 1816 as a military and commercial outpost, Bathurst became capital of the Colony of The Gambia in 1888. Shortly afterwards, in 1893, the British consolidated their control of the River by the creation of a Protectorate, which was completed in 1901 with the

annexation of the upper part of the country (Gray 1966; Park 2016). In principle, Bathurst was an abolitionist outpost, but the engagement of settlers with slavery and the slave trade continued up to the beginning of the twentieth century (Mahoney 1963; Quinn 1972; Saho 2016).

Born in the 1910s, Fally Kebbeh and Mamadi Kumba were legally free, as the anti-slavery ordinances of 1894 and 1906 had declared all children of enslaved parents born afterwards to be.ⁱ An additional provision in 1930 had outlawed the legal status of slavery entirely (Bellagamba 2011, 449).ⁱⁱ By moving into the city, these men thus did not challenge legal slavery, which had already ended, but rather they consolidated the idea of freedom as birthright and resisted the notion of enslavement as a heritable condition that impinged on their effective emancipation. In their home villages, slave ancestry brought prejudice, restrictions and expectations of subservient social behavior towards people who claimed a freeborn genealogy. The latter thought of themselves as trustworthy, enterprising, and generous, all qualities they refused to recognize in people of slave descent. Instead, slave descendants were positioned as the negative contrast against which those with freeborn ancestors built their own sense of identity. The social, economic, and cultural dynamism of Bathurst in the years after the end of World War II offered slave descendants the prospect of parting with this legacy of submission. The development of a regular boat service and road transport eased relocation to the city during the post-war period. But recollections of a slave past could travel the paths of rural-urban migrations as much as people could. In later life, both Fally Kebbeh and Mamadi Kumba came to terms with their slave ancestry in different ways. It was then the 1970s, a period of crisis for the Gambian economy (Sallah 1990, 625). Fally Kebbeh apparently developed a relationship with the family of his former masters, whom he had previously rebuffed, as a shield against complete economic dispossession in his old age. Mamadi Kumba, on the other hand, capitalized on his

ancestry to increase his influence among the rural migrants who left his home region for the city during the 1970s droughts; in fact, he even supported the urban relocation of a part of his former masters' family.

Life histories of freed slaves and slave descendants are often difficult to trace in the Senegambian region because of the stigma still attached to these identities (Klein 1989; Searing 2002, 150). In Gambian rural communities, where face-to-face relationships make slave ancestry a “public secret” (Rodet 2015, 368), people may be troubled by researchers' attempts to uncover such genealogies. This is even more the case in the urban context (Bellagamba 2016; Bellagamba 2017). The reconstruction of Fally Kebbeh and Mamadi Kumba's emancipation trajectories therefore must rely instead on an unconventional historical source—one which Elisabeth McMahon (2013, 23-24) has shown to be central to recreating society in post-slavery contexts: gossip and rumor. Sociologically, this discursive genre represents “one of the chief weapons which those who consider themselves higher in status use to put those whom they consider lower in their proper place” (Gluckmann 1968, 309). The attempts, however, are not necessarily successful. Historically, gossip and rumor add to the reservoirs of oral historical information that people keep in case the need arises (Cohen 1980, 206). Indeed, gossip and rumor have the ability – as Jan Vansina (1985, 17-18) remarked – to outlive the events, situations, or people to whom they refer. In the Mandinka language, this highly popular, although formally reprimanded, activity of talking about people in their absence is called *kumo kumaroo*, literally “backbiting.” From the local point of view in Senegambia, oral history should revolve around events that narrators and audiences consider discussable in public without raising feelings of shame. On the other hand, *Kumo kumaroo* is made up instead of “social ‘secrets’ shared in gossip” (Hoffmann 1998, 90) because of their embarrassing and quarrelsome nature. The house,

its confidential networks, and close circles of friends who kill time by chatting together are the typical contexts where this knowledge is produced and shared.

Discreetly, descendants of the former masters of Fally Kebbeh and Mamadi Kumba continued to comment upon the urban careers of these two men. Shaped by these descendants' own social position and heritage, the resulting stories communicate their struggle to retain the upper hand over the renegotiation of their relationships with slave descendants in the post-slavery context and, especially in the case of Fally Kebbeh, the humiliation of having been socially outdistanced by the emancipated slave. Yet, these stories offer more. The biographical hints inscribed therein, properly contextualized through other written and oral sources not necessarily dealing directly with slavery and emancipation, help delineate these two men's "anthropological silhouettes." Less rich than a biography, this form of historical reconstruction is nonetheless "sensitive to the social contexts, to change and to wider factors that shape individual lives without losing sight of the individual interpretations and understandings through which human make the worlds they live in" (Zeitlyn 2008, 167). For the rest, as with any other historical source, and also in the case of gossip and rumor, the balanced exercise of what Antonio Gramsci (1965, 876; Musitelli 2007, 8) called the "concrete fantasy" is key to building up sensible historical reconstructions of people and communities that are long gone (Toledano 2007: 35). That is, we must rely on the capacity typical of human beings to imagine and feel the needs, aspirations, and constraints of other human lives.

<A> Fally Kebbeh, and "the slavery problem"

Fally Kebbeh was born in Niani, a region on the north bank of the river, facing MacCarthy Island, which the British established in 1823 as a commercial outpost in the Upper Gambia River. His parents were enslaved during the turbulent historical period that lasted from

the 1830s until colonial conquest: religious wars, military raids, and civil strife ravaged the population of Niani and that of the opposite riverbankⁱⁱⁱ (Fox 1851; Gray and Ingram 1847; Héquard 1855; Moister 1866; Morgan 1864; Poole 1850). The reconstruction of Kebbeh's trajectory passes to us through the reminiscences of Aja, the granddaughter of those who owned Kebbeh's parents. Relatively affluent, Aja belonged to a family of Muslim religious scholars whose branches are at present in the north-bank region of Niani (where Aja was also born) as well as in coastal areas. In 2008, she welcomed my request to discuss her rural youth in The Gambia of the 1950s and 1960s. Questions about social rank kindled her recollection of Fally Kebbeh, one of the slave descendants associated with her paternal grandfather:

<EXT> “[While] still young, Fally Kebbeh must have realized this slavery problem and probably said: ‘Let me go and struggle a bit!’ He said so before coming to Bathurst where he learned to drive. After acquiring his license, he got the blessing of the Governor who took him on as his personal driver. This is what Kebbeh did for a long time. I saw him dressed in a uniform, the buttons were like gold, and he used to drive for the Governor.”^{iv}

To what “slavery problem” does Aja refer? After all, in law, Fally Kebbeh was free. In the eyes of his former masters, however, no piece of British legislation could change the fact that “once a slave, forever a slave,” as a Mandinka proverb goes. Freedom had, for former slave owners and their descendants, genealogical legitimation; freed slaves and their descendants' claims to equality triggered resentment and competition. It was usually around the age of seven or eight, when they began contributing to the household workload, that children of Kebbeh's generation developed a first understanding of their station in life. Freeborn boys and girls had grandmothers and mothers who monitored their behavior so that they developed habits of restraint and decorum considered appropriate for people of their social position as well as the

enterprising character expected from them later in life. Freeborn households were prosperous and never short of food. These children's fathers and uncles stood as respected and powerful members of the community, men with the social and material resources to care both for their close kin and associates and for the migrants who sought their protection to start a new life in the expanding agricultural areas of the Protectorate of the Gambia. In contrast, children of slaves and freed slaves saw their grandmothers and mothers ordered around. They saw their fathers and uncles keeping their mouths shut during village assemblies because slaves had no right to voice their opinions in public: they had to stay behind their masters. In his childhood in the 1910s, Kebbeh no doubt was subject to such lessons about his position in society and that of his family.

Social differences continued to manifest in the course of the life cycle. For instance, one of the privileges of freeborn men was overseeing the productive and reproductive dynamics of society: they controlled land distribution and labor, and they orchestrated the marriages of the younger generations. They would choose the first spouse for their sons among families of the same rank, either to strengthen existing alliances or to create new ones; the preferred bride was usually a maternal cross cousin. For the sons of their slaves, freeborn men would select a girl from their own slave entourage or pay the bride wealth for a girl of slave descent attached to another freeborn family. It is worthwhile emphasizing that such marriages were arranged even for the ostensibly legally free children of a freeborn man's slaves. Whether the recipient of this bride wealth was a girl's former master, as remained the rule up to the abolition of the legal status of slavery in 1930, or her own father was a tense issue with claims on both sides. The moral obligation of the former master to facilitate the marriage of his male slaves was equally contentious. In their own understanding of abolition as a way to get rid of dependents, some of whom they perhaps disliked, masters were eager to step away from this customary obligation. On

the other hand, former slaves considered these marital arrangements a reward for the “acceptance” (Bellagamba 2009, 64) of their subordinate status: they had not run away, as others did in the immediate aftermath of colonization. Men like Fally Kebbeh were thus in a double bind. While a freeborn man could choose a girl of slave descent as second or third wife, and pay the price for ransom, children of slaves could marry only in their social category, and even that was difficult without the economic assistance of their parents’ former masters. Freeborn men competed vigorously for political and religious office; for a freed slave to achieve comparable authority was rare. Indeed, when colonial officials nominated a freed slave or a slave descendant as chief, he always met deliberately generated, incessant rumors that typically led to his demotion.^v Religious office was even more difficult to attain, as no community of freeborn people would accept praying behind an imam of slave descent.

Freed slaves’ economic position was in general vulnerable. A successful agricultural season demanded labor. Freeborn households “accessed by consent” a cheap labor force created by generations of intermarriages with other demographically strong households and by control over several categories of dependents, starting with the freed slaves themselves (Haswell 1975, 134; see also Ames 1953; Gamble 1955; Haswell 1953). Being recently established as a consequence partly of abolition and mostly of the hut tax (which masters did not want to pay for them), freed slaves’ households were small and had to hire the additional labor they needed. If they wished to grow economically and rise socially, they needed to find ways to increase their demographic size, by attracting outsiders, for instance. This politics of expansion would have led to friction with freeborn families. The reality was that households of slave descent stood little chance of surviving the economic challenge of an unprofitable agricultural season: they relied on

their former masters' households in times of scarcity, and this dependency stood as a reminder of their inferior social status.

Labor mobility was at the time common in Niani but, again, rank mattered. The most common pattern was circular migration between Niani villages and the groundnut-producing areas of the Gambia River and Senegal.^{vi} Groundnut cultivation attracted seasonal labor from as far as Eastern Senegal, Guinea Conakry, and Guinea Bissau. While local youth, at an early stage, started to venture out of their villages, migrants (whom the colonial correspondence called “strange farmers”) also were flocking in (David 1980; Swindell and Jeng 2006, 120; Sallah 2012). Dry season provided other temporary labor opportunities: young men could serve as intermediaries for the traders who bought groundnuts from the peasantry or as porters and workhands in the commercial settlements along the river.^{vii}

Niani households grew groundnuts as well. However, most young men preferred the personal autonomy and economic reward ensured by working away from home over the obedience their elders demanded if they joined the household workforce. Indeed, elders themselves often pushed them out, as the profits from seasonal migration could be used to support the household in periods of extreme difficulty, which were not rare in the rural areas. Aja's remark about Fally Kebbeh's statement— “Let me go and struggle a bit!” – gives voice to aspirations about what emancipation could be in this generation of young men; they were eager to prove their worth to elders who had come of age in the warring environment of the late nineteenth century. The “struggle” now consisted of the hardship that seasonal laborers faced in their host communities. It was worth the endeavor. When coupled with the unskilled labor opportunities available during the dry months in the commercial settlements along the Gambia River, a few seasons as “strange farmers”^{viii} (the term which the administration used to identify

this kind of agricultural hand) usually enabled young men to assist their families and create their own small households. Some returned to their villages. Others settled nearby, clearing land to build and establish the nucleus of new agricultural communities in which they would acquire leadership positions via their role of first settlers. Still another option was to settle in one of the growing commercial centers, places like Bansang, Kuntaur, or MacCarthy Island.

Wherever they went, it was customary for young migrants to maintain connections with their home villages. For Fally Kebbeh and other young men of slave ancestry, however, maintenance of these ties implied their acceptance of “the slavery problem.” They could help their families, of course. However, they could not invest to improve their family’s living conditions in any substantial way for risk of stirring up the jealousy of local freeborn people. The village was the place par excellence where former masters, often also first settlers (with ensuing rights over the political, economic, and religious control of the entire community), clung to their past privileged status and fought all attempts to subvert existing hierarchies. Thus, only by moving out and staying out could this category of young men hope to move up in social rank.

<A> “He ended up in Niani, where he used to join the children dancing”^{ix}

Before World War II, Bathurst was not a favorite destination for rural young men of outstanding social background (e.g., Denton 1912, 137-138). They disliked the terrible conditions of the overcrowded wood-and-bamboo shacks^x that made up the “native” section of the city, and they resented how British residents and Anglicized Gambians looked down upon them as uncivilized rural loafers. However, rural immigrants of slave descent appreciated urban life. Even though Bathurst had its own hierarchies based on wealth, western education, and proximity to the colonial lifestyle (Gijanto 2013; Mahoney 1963; Park 2016), the African population intermarried across ethnic, linguistic, and social boundaries.^{xi} Moreover, part of the

upper social strata of professionals, civil servants, and traders was descendant from captives whom British patrols had freed at sea from the hands of slavers and resettled in areas stretching from Freetown to the River Gambia in the first part of the nineteenth century (Hughes and Perfect 2006, 20-22; see also Mahoney 1963). These slave descendants were a living symbol of the potential for true emancipation. Bathurst, moreover, was always looking for workers. After the groundnut harvest, commercial companies looked for strong men to load cargo ships linking to Europe as well as cutters sailing the river. In this period of the year, the city population normally increased by several thousand thanks to migration from the Protectorate and the French territories of Senegal (Orde-Browne 1941, 140-149). With the rains, seasonal workers returned to rural areas or sought land to cultivate in the outskirts of the city. Those who wished to become permanent residents of Bathurst had a number of options. According to the 1951 Population Census, out of a total population of 19,602 people, 4,792 were categorized as laboring as various kinds of servants, including ‘boys,’ maids, watchmen and gardeners.^{xii} Alternately, the many artisans in town – butchers, blacksmiths, carpenters, tailors, and seamstresses – were always looking for apprentices. Petty trade was another possibility. The better employment opportunities, however, were in the departments of the British colonial administration,^{xiii} which guaranteed regular wages and allowances for food and housing. This category of workers was in a privileged position compared to most other Gambian city dwellers who had to strive to make ends meet. According to Aja’s account, Fally Kebbeh followed just such a social pathway and became the Governor’s driver. It was a unique position to attain, which speaks to his intelligence and his drive to succeed.

On how Kebbeh reached Bathurst, Aja was silent, but a few possibilities arise from our knowledge of the broader historical context. Colonial officials who served along the River used

to recruit rural young men to serve as their attendants. Such workers would fit into the so-called labor category of “boys,” which included personal attendants, domestic servants, and hotel employees into the 1960s (Rice 1966, 144). Did Fally Kebbeh leave Niani in this way?

Alternatively, he could have moved to the city without being recruited by boarding a cutter or by traveling on foot, a common option at the time (Jawara 2009; Sidibeh 2017).^{xiv} He must have learned English at some point, probably hanging around in the trading stations near his home village, and, once in Bathurst, he found a way to become a driver. This historical sketch of Kebbeh’s social rise leaves much room for questions: How did he acquire the job as the Governor’s driver? Was it through the benevolence of a British official? Or perhaps it was that he helped another driver, who took him as an apprentice and later recommended him for the position? Aja’s account overlooks all these details because its purpose was not to praise Fally Kebbeh’s achievements. Rather, its purpose was to express her and her family’s perception of Fally Kebbeh’s social career.

The city had offered Fally Kebbeh the possibility of being a man of his own. Certainly, the family who had once owned his parents looked at Kebbeh as a potential family resource in this urban context. However, with Kebbeh’s increasing social consequence and position came conflict over how relationships between slave descendants and slave owners should work. Aja’s account clearly conveys this conflict in her grandfather’s interactions with Fally Kebbeh. Kebbeh had to assist Aja’s grandfather when he travelled to the city, as all permanent city dwellers used to do when their Protectorate relatives and acquaintances came to Bathurst for business or other activities.^{xv} It was not easy for an old rural notable to adapt to the requirements of urban life: the man may have thought that Fally Kebbeh, being a driver, could facilitate his daily mobility or, as a member of the colonial administration, smooth his relationships with

colonial bureaus. Maintaining a large dependent household was a sign of status as much in the city as in the village. Indeed, British colonialists were ordering around Gambians, and all the upper social strata relied on servants and a flock of dependents to run their errands. Aja's grandfather believed that the social hierarchy established in the village would transfer to the city. He expected Fally Kebbeh, as son of his former slaves, to behave in the "loyalty style" (Pelckmans 2015, 293-294)—that is, the style of behavior conventionally attached to slave ancestry: modest and subservient. Surprising Aja's grandfather, Fally Kebbeh instead appropriated the freeborn style of behavior; Aja describes him as proud of his uniform and arrogant. According to her, Fally Kebbeh repeatedly refused to answer her grandfather's calls. Such a gesture implied that he was rejecting the ongoing "reciprocity" commonly understood to underpin post-slavery relationships. One of the ways that freed slaves and slave descendants expressed their respect was precisely that of reacting promptly if "masters" required their assistance. The climax of Aja's account is the public confrontation that took place between Fally Kebbeh and her grandfather one day in the streets of Bathurst:

<EXT>My grandparents were his masters. They lived in Gunjur, but he would never go to visit them. And when his master came to Bathurst, he never met him. He went and married a woman who was the slave of somebody. She was from the rural areas. And then he took a second wife from Bakau, and that one is alive and is called Kumba Sillah ... At the time of his marriages, he was in a good position.

Gunjur is a village along the Atlantic coast about 35 kilometers from Banjul, then Bathurst. Bakau is another coastal settlement not far from Banjul, in an area that colonial sources

call British Kombo, already annexed to the British sphere of influence in the 1840s. Aja continued:

<EXT> One day my grandfather went to wait for him. He stood in the place Fally Kebbeh usually passed in the car to reach the market, and kept waiting. When he saw the car, he stopped it and said to Fally Kebbeh: “You are the one who did this to me. You came here, you grew big and proud, you never came to greet or visit me. I sent messages to you; you said you are too big and strong, that is why you did not come to me. You know who you are. There will be a day in which you will leave this place to go back to Niani, and you will join the small children dancing the *kumbafenoo*.”

The *kumbafenoo* translates literally as “the tail of the monkey.” Aja explained in her interviews that this particular style of dance can be done at marriage ceremonies by cross cousins if there are not slave descendants ready to perform it. The dance and related song are symbols of subjection and, as far as performers are compensated, also an icon of masters’ representation of slaves as beggars. In the conclusion of Aja’s narrative, her grandfather’s premonition comes true.

<EXT> My grandfather explained how things went in my presence. Fally Kebbeh was driving for the Governor and got two compounds, one in Banjul, one in Serrekunda, but he died in the village. Someone who was in that position, can you imagine that? He ended up in Niani, where he used to join the children dancing. After having tied a big piece of cloth around his waist so that the back resembled the tail of the monkey he would sing: “The slave is like a tail, when he sees the master, he shakes.” By the time he returned to the village, he had lost all his properties. There, he met another slave woman and married again. The mouth of the elders of Niani is very, very dangerous. Fally Kebbeh was a slave. They would be nice at the beginning but like “the

grass of the dumping ground,” which grows high and beautiful during the rains, they do not last. He ended up going with the children and dancing with them. I do not think he expected to end his life in such a way.^{xvi}

At first glance, Aja’s account closely resembles a “cautionary tale” (Searing 2002, 150) on the folly of freed slaves and slave descendants who challenged the authority of their masters. Yet, whatever its allegorical purpose, her story also encapsulates interesting biographical details. She mentions his three wives. The first and the third wife were certainly slave descendants who hailed from the country. This suggests that even in the city, Fally Kebbeh could not circumvent the rule that prevented freed slaves and slave descendants marrying freeborn women. Free by law, he was not free in the genealogical sense—the one that mattered most in relation to social reproduction. When Aja stated, “He went and took a wife who was the slave of somebody,” she meant that Fally Kebbeh carried out his own marriage negotiations, without relying on his master. That he could do so indicates a degree of economic success, as the city had provided him with the necessary economic means to pay bride wealth. She also mentions his compounds. Land and buildings were valuable assets in Bathurst and, by choosing to invest in real estate, he must have tried to bequeath a future to his family.

What Aja did not say – because it is common wisdom for Gambians of her generation – is that urban life was expensive. Day-to-day consumption was usually enough to run city dwellers into financial difficulties (Park 2016, 197-214). The fact that Bathurst citizens tried to show off by laying on lavish ceremonies (baptisms, nuptials, funerals) added to the “cradle-to-grave indebtedness of Gambian workers,” as aptly described by one of the few newspapers of the Colony in 1940.^{xvii} Most people, even those with a regular salary, relied on moneylenders. In the rural areas, debtors counted on relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances for basic assistance; they

could even beg the creditor for “forgiveness.” In contrast, in Bathurst, collateral required pledging properties, objects, and clothes, and lawyers aggressively protected the interests of moneylenders faced with customers’ late repayments. Though Aja did not explain this point – and only said that when Fally Kebbeh returned to Niani he had lost all his compounds – his economic situation must have deteriorated after his retirement in the 1960s. The 1970s inaugurated a period of crisis for the new independent nation: prices skyrocketed and the obligations of city dwellers towards their rural relatives, impoverished by the droughts and now seeking refuge in the urban areas, increased. The last part of life, in addition, was difficult for Gambian men. They started depending on their wives and children for daily survival. If these wives and children felt that a man’s past behavior had been far from commendable, for instance because he favored one wife and her children over the others, punishment came in the form of quiet neglect (Bellagamba 2013).

The subtext of what Aja said is that Fally Kebbeh had been a “bad” husband and father, in addition to being a “bad” slave: as much as he disowned his former masters, he must have also mistreated his family since he lost their support in his old age. Did he boss his wives and children around, as he had seen his former masters bossing his parents around? Did he gamble? Was he an adulterous husband? All these questions remain unanswered in Aja’s account. In the phase of life in which the possibility to strive for oneself was most limited, he found himself deserted. Returning to the home village was likely his only option: his slave ancestry offered a niche for surviving and a dependency to which to return. This extreme humiliation occurred after decades spent denying any kind of relationship with his former masters’ family.

From the historian’s perspective, the “failure” of Fally Kebbeh may be attributed a combination of circumstances and structural restraints, including freed slaves’ and slave

descendants' feeble social networks. In the eyes of Gambian society, however, failure is always a combination of destiny and individual responsibility. Having been born of slave parents, destiny had already put Fally Kebbeh in a difficult position. His inappropriate behavior added to it. Although Aja did not elaborate on this point, Fally Kebbeh was lucky that his former masters and the village itself accepted him after all his efforts to break away from his origins. The worldview behind this understanding of Fally Kebbeh sees success as sustainable across individual lifecycles and generations, and it links this success to blessings or in Mandinka, *baraka* (Camara 2008). The notion of *baraka* is at the core of Sufi conceptions of Islam. For the Senegambia, it has been studied in connection with the development of local Islamic traditions, and more recently in the frame of slave emancipation (Hanretta 2009) and international migrations (Bava 2003).

Blessings increase commensurately with individual moral and social compliance. Children have to respect their aging parents as much as other elderly members of the family; in the days of slave dealing and slave holding, masters expected the same kind of deference from their slaves, whom they regarded (both socially and legally) as the equivalent of children. Religious sanctions reinforced their supremacy: beliefs in the capacity of powerful men to curse and cause the sudden death of others sustained their authority (Hardung 2009; Meillassoux 1973). In the post-slavery context, where slave-master relationships endured only through the consensus of both parties, the card of religious sanctions could be played retroactively to keep former subordinates in place. Nobody could prevent Fally Kebbeh claiming his autonomy, but as his effort ended in dispossession, he became a living example of what could happen to those who overstep the boundaries set by their birth. Did Aja's grandfather really curse him or only voice his personal frustration?

In Aja's eyes, the way Fally Kebbeh spent the latter part of his life was in itself proof that freeborn families, like her own, had not completely lost their social leadership: as she remarked, "the mouth of Niani elders is very dangerous." Sadly, this "cautionary tale" is woven not of fiction but of painful life experience. It is also only accessible to us from the perspective and through the memory of his former masters' family. Kebbeh's own voice in this story is audible only through the song he sings that recalls the humiliation of slaves in front of their masters: "the slave is like a tail: when he sees the master, he shakes." Such a powerful image conveys the sufferings of the last part of his life. The emancipatory trajectory of Fally Kebbeh remained trapped in the very ideology that supported slaves' subjection to their masters. His eventual "failure" continued to live through the *kuma kumaroo* of his former masters' family; for them, it served as a consolatory example of the ephemeral nature of the achievements of freed slaves and slave descendants. This is Aja's conclusion at least. "Like the grass of the dumping ground," which grows high and beautiful during the rains, people like Fally Kebbeh could shine for a while, but they did not last. Yet, the trajectory of Mamadi Kumba, another slave descendant, defies this uncharitable stereotype. Like Fally Kebbeh, he returned to connections with his former masters' family in the last part of life but, unlike Fally Kebbeh, Kumba did so from a vantage point of indisputable wealth and power that he had accrued via the social and economic dynamism of the city.

<A> Mamadi Kumba and the challenges of trade

Colonial employment provided Fally Kebbeh with a path to social emancipation. Mamadi Kumba's path was trade. Together with commercial agriculture, this was the privileged avenue to social mobility for men of his generation. The events of his life remain vividly remembered

and widely known since he became an extremely successful businessman whose sons, daughters, and grandchildren fully integrated into The Gambia's national elite. Not everybody, however, knows that he was the son of an enslaved woman, and that he used to declare this inheritance openly in the latter part of his life. Some of the accounts I heard on this point praised his courage while some others considered these claims of slave ancestry a manifestation of his arrogant character. The main source I use here is Kebba Suso, a Gambian oral historian, who mastered an incredible repertoire of oral traditions, apart from being interested in contemporary Gambian history. Suso was closely related to the former masters of Mamadi Kumba's mother. He died in 2009 and belonged to the old social category of bards (known also as griots), which includes artists, musicians, genealogists, local historians, and praise singers.^{xviii} The recollections of a number of other elderly men who moved from the rural areas to Bathurst in the early 1950s also enrich the following account.

According to Kebba, Mamadi Kumba's father was a Toranka immigrant. Toranka is the commonly used Mandinka term used to identify Islamized Fulbe people originally from Futa Toro, a semi-desert along the present Senegal-Mauritania border. Fulbe people (also known as the Fulani) remain a sizable group in The Gambia.^{xix} Indeed, in the mid 20th century, the population of Toranka alone in the Upper River Region was recorded as 1,281 inhabitants.^{xx} On the eve of the twentieth century, Mamadi Kumba's father settled in Basse, today the capital of the Upper River Region. At the time, Basse was but a cluster of earthen houses inhabited by a few Fulbe and Mandinka families. By the mid-1910s, however, it had developed into a vibrant commercial outpost that, during the trading season, hosted representatives of commercial European companies, Syrian and Mauritanian merchants, African traders, artisans, and craftsmen (Reeve 1912, 135–136).^{xxi} Kumba's father worked as a tailor embroidering gowns for the local

elite: African headmen, chiefs, religious scholars, and traders. In the dry season, he toured the villages in search of customers. During the rains, he engaged in seasonal agricultural labor. Basse's surroundings were suitable for groundnut cultivation, which after colonization rapidly expanded on both the British and the French side of the border. Immigrants like him accounted for one third of the labor for the groundnut harvest.^{xxii} Local farmers also cultivated millet and sorghum, which were their main foodstuffs, and tended large herds of cattle, which, since the end of the slave trade, had been a very popular investment.^{xxiii}

It was not clear whether Mamadi Kumba's father was in fact a runaway or freed slave, but for local society, even the slightest suspicion in this direction earned him the social rank of slave. The colonial government in Basse encouraged immigrants to settle there because of the immense labor needs that came with the colonial expansion of groundnut production. However, colonial officials were also aware of the social stigma imposed on many of these immigrants by other residents (Bellagamba 2011; Gaibazzi 2016). In 1923, for example, a British agricultural report noted that "a certain section of the native population" regarded seasonal laborers as slaves.^{xxiv} This view is also confirmed by oral accounts.^{xxv} I should clarify here that we are again discussing the social rather than legal category of slave. Clearly, no one (in Basse, at least) ever owned Mamadi Kumba's father.

The story goes that Kumba's father fell in love with and married an enslaved girl who belonged to the man for whom he farmed during the rains. Their union was a typical social outcome for immigrants in Basse as such newcomers could hardly expect to marry into freeborn families. While such arrangements would provide immigrant men with wives, it was uncommon for them to amass the resources necessary to buy these wives out from slavery. Thus, any children they had together inherited their mothers' enslaved status. The Basse area was

conservative on this point. His mother being a slave, Mamadi Kumba was unconditionally classified with slave descendants. Indeed, the maternal inheritance of slave status was a more general region pattern at the time. Mandinka, Soninke, and Wolof communities believed slavery was inherited on the mother's side. Strictly speaking, the Fulbe of The Gambia and neighboring Senegal put the heritability of slavery on the father's side: if a man was a slave, his children would be classified in the same social category. However, the mother in these cases could hardly be freeborn, as marriages between freeborn women and freed slaves (or men of slave ancestry) were strictly forbidden.

Despite their social categorization as slaves, Mamadi Kumba and his family maintained considerable independence after his birth. He was born in town, where his parents had settled permanently after their marriage. His father assisted a butcher by seeking cattle for him in the villages around Basse.^{xxvi} While still very young, Mamadi Kumba started to sell candies, biscuits, candles, matches, soaps, hair pomade, bicycle spare parts, tobacco, cloth, and any other easily transportable item in Basse's surrounding areas and across the Senegalese border.^{xxvii} For some time, he helped his father with the cattle trade. When he travelled in the rural areas, according to Kebba, he passed himself off as a Mandinka, the ethnicity of his mother, because declaring that he was Toranka would have immediately betrayed him as a recent settler. Everybody knew that the Toranka were newcomers, and all newcomers had something to hide, most probably slave ancestry.

Youths who belonged to historical trading families (all of freeborn pedigree) usually received a sort of "business dowry" from their parents to buy their first stock of merchandise. This payment might be in cash or in the form of a cow or bags of millet to exchange for what they needed.^{xxviii} Those who lacked this familial well of support had to follow the alternative of

seeking the patronage of one of the well-established traders of Basse. These more senior traders were prepared to provide goods on credit, which young traders would repay once they had sold them. These youth would act as connections between the traders stationed in Basse and the peasantry, preparing the ground for future collaboration: the objective was to create a climate of trust so a farmer would ask for seed on credit and then repay the Basse trader with his groundnut harvest. In this highly competitive commercial environment, the ability to attract producers and keep them loyal was key to success.^{xxix} Mamadi Kumba played this part well. At a certain point, one of the African representatives of an important commercial European company operating in Basse helped him by giving him a horse to reach the most remote villages of the district.^{xxx} While some traders profited on the backs of younger traders, others were supportive out of their own good will, as a sort of moral reimbursement for the assistance they themselves had obtained at crucial junctures of their trading careers. At a certain point, Mamadi Kumba was employed by one of the Lebanese traders in town. This was an advancement. Young men longed for this kind of job, which entailed a fixed salary, food, and accommodation, together with the most important benefit – an introduction to the secrets of that business sector.

Nonetheless, limits were set to the potential social advancement of slave descendants by the upper social strata of Basse society. In order to expand his commercial networks and consolidate the wealth they generated, Mamadi Kumba had to leave the settlement. His repeated attempts to marry into the upper social strata of Basse had been frustrated. If he stayed, he would have risked arousing the jealousy and potential mystic retribution of freeborn people who feared and resented the economic ambitions of freed slaves and slave descendants. Of particular concern was the district chief himself, Jawru Kurubally. Busy consolidating his grip over the area, Kurubally rarely tolerated *any* other man being richer or more powerful than him, much

less one of slave ancestry. Mamadi Kumba's geographical mobility was necessary for his rising economic and social success. However, this mobility was equally important as a form of protection against the risk of mystic retaliation by Basse's most powerful men.

<A> "Surely he was a man who knew what would last"^{xxxix}

It is rumored that, after having left Basse, Mamadi Kumba spent some time in Sierra Leone and that he travelled to other West African countries. Sometime shortly after the outbreak of World War II, he finally settled in Bathurst.^{xxxii} In 1931, the Gambia Colony and Protectorate had a population of 199,520 people, 14,370 of them living in Bathurst. By 1946, the town's population had increased to 21,152 (Colonial Office 1949, 14). During the war, seasonal migrations to the capital of the colony had begun to turn into permanent resettlements, and the flow of newcomers rose dramatically. Wartime restrictions on immigrants from surrounding Vichy Senegalese territories had drastically reduced seasonal labor. This lack of ready labor pushed the government to raise salaries in order to find the workforce needed for the new infrastructural projects undertaken by the War Department to facilitate Gambia's contributions to the war effort (Park 2016, 216). These rising salaries awoke an interest in the city in rural youths.^{xxxiii} Because of food scarcity during the war, profits were high for urban traders, and new entrepreneurial avenues were cropping up, including an expanding industry smuggling diamonds out of Sierra Leone and into Gambia.^{xxxiv} Ships sailing from Bathurst provided an easy connection to European markets for the stones.

Mamadi Kumba thrived in this environment. For a short time during the war, he smuggled government property, specifically fuel, spare parts and ammunition, to Senegal and Portuguese Guinea.^{xxxv} There is some suggestion that he might have been active in the diamond "business" as well; however, if this was the case, his participation was also short lived. He built

shacks at the edges of the “native” section of Bathurst, which he rented to newly arrived laborers. Then there were the possibilities presented by foreign currency exchange, a recent byproduct of the colonial situation. Currency was scarce throughout the colonial period because the administration feared the risk of inflation. Silver British one-shilling sterling coins were in high demand, especially after the international devaluation and subsequent local demonetisation of the French five-franc coin during the 1920s. This currency, which traders had introduced in the late nineteenth century (Archer 1967, 44, 123), abruptly lost its legal tender status. People from Senegalese territories selling their groundnut harvest in the colony, or buying merchandise in Bathurst, suddenly had to use the silver shilling: currency sellers like Mamadi Kumba prospered. The most lucrative business venture, however, was that of the moneylender.^{xxxvi} Exorbitant rates of interest could rapidly enrich unscrupulous traders who did not mind breaking Islamic rules against usury.^{xxxvii} Those who observed Mamadi Kumba in Bathurst described his moneylending enterprise as far from reputable. My interviewee “Fally” hailed from MacCarthy Island and established himself in Bathurst in the 1950s. This early migration to the city made him a witness to the development of the city in the late colonial period. He described Mamadi Kumba’s moneylending enterprise thus:

<EXT> He used to take guarantees from people and lend them money; when he took the guarantee and gave you the money, at the end of the established period, even if you gave him back the money, he would not return the guarantee. These are some of the things that happened in those days. Men like him were like kings, and I say that because when you owe someone money and do not pay them back, you will not have any right to talk. They had lawyers. Money enabled them to do what they liked.^{xxxviii}

Unlike some of his contemporaries who buried their savings in the backyards of their homes, Mamadi Kumba trusted the banking system. In return, the banking system appreciated his ability to repay his loans. Kumba's participation in the colony's financial modernization clearly worked in his favor. Carefully cultivated relationships with the Bathurst upper class strengthened his position vis-à-vis his customers; as one interviewee put it, "[he knew] people like the commissioner of police, and then lawyers and doctors; he was very friendly with those people who were the pillars of government. Because of this, the others, I mean the ordinary people, feared and respected him."^{xxxix} By the early 1950s, a pilgrimage to Mecca had increased his status despite lingering rumors about his unscrupulous moneylending activities. Later that same decade, as political activism started to spread, Mamadi Kumba was firmly established as one of the most powerful and wealthy traders of the colony. Politicians in search of financial support courted him. Both in Bathurst and Basse, aspirations of achieving social change and equality were emerging across different sectors of society. From the colony-educated youths, who enthusiastically engaged in political battles, to Basse's manual workers who went on strike against the low wages paid by commercial companies, decolonization generated a new level of political consciousness (Bellagamba 2009; Hughes and Perfect 2006). This political awakening extended to rural areas of the colony.^{xl}

Mamadi Kumba sponsored political campaigns and drew political support from his Bathurst and Basse clientele. He had, in fact, cultivated relationships with the Toranka of Basse. He had also kept investing in the rural areas by buying cattle, which local families tended for him. After independence, his daughter married one of the most important political personalities in The Gambia. One of his sons, who studied in England, reached the top of the country's economic elite. At this stage,^{xli} Mamadi Kumba started to acknowledge his slave ancestry in

public; for example, he called himself a *cheDDo koloyajo*, a Fulbe expression that my interviewee Kebba translated as “slave of the griots.”^{xlii} Twentieth-century Futa Toro social stratification included a number of lineages, known as *SeBBe* (Fulbe, singular *CheDDo*) each of which descended from other ethnic groups. These *SeBBe* were split between those who asserted free origins and those of slave ancestry. The *cheDDo koliyajo* lineage claimed by Mamadi Kumba would have been in the latter group (Wane 1969, 39-40).

Though emancipation of the social category *cheDDo koliyajo* predates colonization (Schmitz 2009), its potential for stigma remained. Thus, Mamadi Kumba’s declaration of his slave ancestry later in life was a further manifestation of the strength of his success. He lived like one of the wealthy freeborn traders of the past that griots celebrated in their oral history. People seeking assistance surrounded him and he could command them as he liked. In fact, he could afford to sponsor the children of his mother’s master and help to move them from the rural areas, where they were stuck, to the city. He gave them a compound on the periphery and paved their way to becoming urban griots who earned a living by attending the new elites. According to Kebba:

<EXT> . . . when he [Mamadi Kumba] had a ceremony, he used to invite the griots and say: ‘I will give you money because you are my masters.’ When the griots had a ceremony, he would ask them to give him money as he was their slave. He was really helped by God, because he married four wives who were teenagers at the time of the marriage. He was a lucky man. All his children are alive but one. None of them had a mental problem.^{xliii}

The kind of exchange described by Kebba here is similar to the reciprocity between the old trading families of the River Gambia (known as *jula*) and the bards. Bards serve at *jula* ceremonies and vice versa. The explanation is that they are linked by a joking relationship.

Mamadi Kumba's behavior resembles this sort of relationship – which is a historically built-up alliance between descent groups or social categories – more than the asymmetric forms of exchange between “master” and “slave.” This renegotiation of post-slavery relations again demonstrates Mamadi Kumba's power. Nonetheless, rumors surrounded the social career of Mamadi Kumba, which are here invoked by Kebba's assertion that none of his children “had a mental problem.” This statement is in answer to gossip about the mental instability of his daughters. Such disability is in turn seen as a sign of Kumba's association with the spiritual world, namely with a jinn, who according to a number of accounts helped him to build up his material and social fortune. Like failure, success in The Gambia is often explained by invoking connections with the invisible realm.

Kebbe's account of Mamadi Kumba casts his behavior as honorable and dignified: even though he had surpassed the descendants of his mother's master socially and economically, he acknowledged their original relationships by helping them. The post-slavery representation of the slave-master relationship in terms of family could indeed work in several directions. For one, it was a safety net for freed slaves and slave descendants facing economic difficulty: they could not be cast out since these relations were perceived as familial. Rather, they had to be cared for by their former masters' family because they served them, either as laborers or as status symbols. For example, the *kumbafenoo* that Fally Kebbeh danced in the village during his old age humored his masters' family sense of social distinction. But such “familial” obligations could cut both ways: relationships with freed slaves and slave descendants could also help former masters and their children who had not successfully negotiated the configurations of power emerging from colonization and decolonization.

Being a trader, Mamadi Kumba had an adventurous spirit that launched him into the future. In those days, other politically marginalized sectors of society, namely professional endogamous groups, were also striving for social mobility. The major political figure of the country, Dawda Jawara, first President of The Gambia, was rumored to have been a descendant of cobblers. Jawara's autobiography itself does not mention the rumored "cobbler" status of his ancestors; he instead details the trading activities of his father in colonial times. Curiously, there is an indirect reference to slave ancestry when he writes that one of his grandmothers had been a captive of Fode Kabba Dumbuya, the Islamic reformer and war leader who controlled part of the southern bank of the River Gambia and adjacent Casamance territories between the late 1870s and 1901 (Jawara 2009, 5-6). Some of my elderly interlocutors who had participated in the nationalist political struggle reported that one of Jawara's advantages was that his origin allowed him to play an intermediary role between the higher and lower strata of society. Constituents with slave ancestry were numerous, and the party led by Jawara was able to acquire their support by stressing the value of progress and equality. Slave ancestry could indeed become a resource in this new political context. In describing Mamadi Kumba, an elderly man who witnessed his ascending social career, remarked: "Surely he was a man who knew what would last."^{xliv}

<A> Conclusion

Recollections of significant social transformations are not always as accessible and coherent as researchers would like for the sake of historical reconstruction (Roberts 1990, 341), and so it is for the end of slavery in Gambian society. This process was only marginally recorded by colonial sources, and so our understanding of it is largely mediated by oral history. *Kumoo kumaroo* or gossip about men and women of slave ancestry is a precious source for

understanding their experiences of emancipation: the refraction of freed slaves' and slave descendants' lives through the recollections of their former masters is often the only way to achieve a glimpse of their struggles. This remains, however, a prejudiced archive and only a partial solution to the historiographical problem of "studying the history of those who would rather forget" (Klein 1989, 209). While it expands the understanding of post-slavery African societies with particular insight into the former masters' point of view, it also raises ethical considerations that require the researcher to respect anonymity.

Even today, most slave descendants in The Gambia keep quiet about their origins. Thus, in this context, my disclosing the identities of Fally Kebbeh and Mamadi Kumba would be perceived as an offense to their memory. As a result, in this article, pseudonyms were employed and real lives have had to turn into a set of historical possibilities. Fally Kebbeh speaks for freed slaves and slave descendants who strove for autonomy, achieved some results, and had to give up this autonomy eventually. His story also makes clear that the drive for independence and the desire for protection may balance against one another differently during different periods in the individual lifecycle. Mamadi Kumba stands for those slave descendants who, although successful, shared at least partly in their former masters' ideas of honor and dignity. When the family of his mother's master asked for his assistance in relocating to the city, Mamadi Kumba welcomed the request. In so doing, he embraced the idea, which freeborn people had been repeating for years, that when you disown your origins, you betray yourself. As an old man, he could well afford to joke about his lower status and "beg" during ceremonies because, in reality, he had become the person on whom others relied.

Both life trajectories are exceptional and exemplary at the same time. Comparative ethnographic evidence from 1960s Dakar and Bamako supports the conclusion that in the

Senegambia, too, migrating into the towns and cities in the first part of the twentieth century did not always help freed slaves and slave descendants to remove the stains of their ancestry (Diop 1981; Meillassoux 1968). Cities granted some anonymity, but rural-urban connections left open the possibility of being one day recognized by a passerby from the home community. In this article, a micro-historical focus has helped to uncover the renewed dependence that could follow phases of emancipation in the individual lifecycle. Many variables influenced this process: the personal connections the migrant established in the town, as well as those he retained with rural areas, the durability of his success in the face of changes beyond his control (such as periods of economic crisis), and the new social networks he was able to create. Being a driver for the Governor or an independent trader were two different things. To be sure, the first position was attractive but its benefits were short-lived. Trade, on the other hand, favored a multiplicity of contacts and experiences. Parting with slave ancestry meant leaving behind the social and economic networks of the former masters. Creating new ones took time and a bit of luck. Usually, the span of a single life was not sufficient. Mamadi Kumba's story shows the importance of cultivating a trans-generational perspective in the study of emancipation. If followed, the careers of his sons and daughters, as well as those of his grandchildren, would provide a fuller picture of how the migration strategy played out by his father in the early twentieth century, and then by Mamadi Kumba himself thirty years later, laid the groundwork for the expansion of a solid network of national and international ties between Gambian, European, and North American localities. Unlike for Fally Kebbeh, the "push" out of the home community really was fortuitous for Mamadi Kumba. His migration supported the more full emancipation achieved by his children and grandchildren.

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ⁱThe National Archives (hereafter, TNA), London, Kew Gardens, CO88/4, n.12, 1894, *An Ordinance for the Abolition of Slave-Dealing in the Protected Territories Adjacent to the Colony of the*; TNA, CO 88/5, n.5, 1906, *An Ordinance to Amend the Law Relating to Slave-Dealing in the Protectorate*.

ⁱⁱTNA, CO 88/8, n. 3, 1930, *An Ordinance to Affirm and Declare that the Legal Status of Slavery Does Not Exist*.

ⁱⁱⁱGambian National Archives (hereafter, GNA), Banjul, The Gambia, PUB 13/5, *A Short History of Niani District, 1933*. Further information is in the scanty correspondence of the Island manager, such as TNA, CO 87/74, n. 145, 24/10/1862, *Governor d'Arcy to the Duke of Newcastle*, CO 87/84, n. 6, 24/10/1866, *Abduction of a female slave from MacCarthy Island*.

^{iv}Interviews with "Aja", Serrekunda January 14, 2008; January 16, 2008; January 18, 2008.

^vFor instance, GNA, PUB 13/5, *A Short History of Niani District, 1933*, 5, mentions Saderr Manneh, who was district chief of Niani between the late 1920s and the 1930s and whom the British commissioner qualified as a "son of the people," that is, the descendant of a slave owned by the extended family. Another case is that of Mamadi Sanyang, chief of Kantora, who was

highly unpopular and whom the British discovered to be of slave ancestry (after having established that he was a legitimate member of the Sanyang ruling family); GNA, PUB 13/17, *Report on the Kantora District of the Upper River Province*, 1932.

^{vi}GNA, CSO 3/86 (1924), *Natives in the Protectorate, regarding emigration of, From MacCarthy Island Travelling Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, Confidential, 6 October 1924*.

^{vii} Interviews with “Fode,” Talinding, January 10, 2010; January 11, 2010; January 12, 2010).

^{viii}TNA, CO 89/26, J. H. Palmer, *Notes on Strange Farmers*, 1946. This system of seasonal labor had been in place since the 1850s, when groundnut cultivation started to develop along the River Gambia.

^{ix}Interviews with “Aja,” Serrekunda January 14, 2008; January 16, 2008; January 18, 2008.

^xTNA, CN 3/20, *Health conditions in Bathurst, Gambia (1935)*; see also the report, which originally contained the photos: TNA CO 87/240/8, *Bathurst: sanitary and health conditions (1935)*. Interview with “Bakoyo,” Dippakunda, February 5, 2010.

^{xi}Interviews with “Cham,” Bakau, January 20, 2010 and January 21, 2010; Interview with “Kha,” Bundu, January 19, 2010.

^{xii} GNA, CSO 2/2996, *Census of Bathurst for 1951*. For a comparison with Dakar during the same historical period see Cooper (1996, 32-34).

^{xiii}GNA, CSO 2/509 and CSO 2/510, *Gambia Civil List, African Staff 1922*; CSO 2/712, *Subject D. Labor*; the file also contains information on the apprenticing of drivers.

^{xiv} Interview with “Fally,” “Fode,” “Seineh,” and “Bakary.” August 7, 2002.

^{xv} In Dakar, Bamako, and Freetown, similar mechanisms were at work, though on a larger scale, see Banton (1957), Diop (1965), Meillassoux (1968), and Mercier (1954). Bathurst and Freetown shared a joint colonial history and had a similar social structure topped by a Creole elite of professionals, civil servants and merchants.

^{xvi} Interviews with “Aja,” Serrekunda January 14, 2008; January 16, 2008; January 18, 2008.

^{xvii} The Gambian Echo, October 21 1940.

^{xviii} Interviews with “Kebba,” December 13, 2007 and January 18, 2008.

^{xix} GNA, NGR1/16, Dr. Gamble’s Files, W.B. Stanley, T.C. 1907, *Notes on the Physical Distribution of The Country, and Political Organization of the Fullahs of The Gambia, their Customs and laws, etc..*

^{xx} GNA, CSO2/2388, 1939–1940 Notes on the ethnological division of the Fulas by ex-commissioner D. Bayley, URP

^{xxi} TNA, CO/87/196, *Enclosure in Governor to Secretary of State for Colonies, 15/01/1915*, Dr. Hopkinson’s Report on the Upper River.

^{xxii} TNA, CO 87/178, 4/7/1907, *Travelling Commissioners’ Reports, Upper River, W. B. Stanley*; TNA, CO/87/182, 11/07/1909, *Travelling Commissioners’ Reports, Upper River, W. B. Stanley*.

^{xxiii} GNA, CSO 2/46, *Report by Travelling Commissioner, MacCarthy Island Division, 1903*; TNA, CO 87/175, *Governor Denton to Secretary of State for Colonies, Visit to MacCarthy Island and Upper River Province, 26/02/1906*.

^{xxiv} TNA, CO 87/219, 7/07/1923, *Governor to Secretary of State for Colonies, Transmission of the Report on "Agricultural position and requirements of the Gambia" by M.A.J. Brooks, Director of Agriculture*.

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- ^{xxv} Interview with “Kaneba,” Talinding, May 3, 2000.
- ^{xxvi} Interviews with “Kebba,” December 13, 2007.
- ^{xxvii} TNA, CO/87/299/2, *British Trade in The Gambia, 1930*; Interview with “Bakoyo” and “Omar,” Dippakunda, October 16, 2006.
- ^{xxviii} Interview with “Solo,” Bakau, November 21, 2008.
- ^{xxix} Interview with “Fode,” August 10, 2002.
- ^{xxx} Fieldwork notes, conversations with “Bakary,” 2008.
- ^{xxxi} Interview with “Tamba,” August 18, 2008.
- ^{xxxii} Interview with “Fally,” Abuko, December 8, 2006.
- ^{xxxiii} GNA, ARP 5, *Development and Welfare in the Gambia (Bathurst, 1943), Chapter 12, ‘Labour’*; GNA, CSO 2/594, *Undesirable persons prohibited immigration of, Labour shortage in Bathurst*; Perfect (1987: 7-11).
- ^{xxxiv} GNA, CSO 4/74, 1938, *Illicit Diamond Trade*. See also, for the period after the war, GNA CSO 11/90, *Diamond Smuggling (1953–1955)*. Some first-hand details, which also include comments of foreign currency exchange, are in Rice (1967: 212–216).
- ^{xxxv} GNA, CSO 3/400, *Illicit trade in British Service Property*.
- ^{xxxvi} GNA, CSO 2/2765, *Money Lender Ordinance 1934, n.9, 1939, n.6, 1939*.
- ^{xxxvii} TNA, CO 87/225/4, *Report on Provinces for 1925, South Bank Province, Major L.A.W.Brooks, Acting Travelling Commissioner*.
- ^{xxxviii} Interview with “Fally,” Talinding, November 28, 2007.
- ^{xxxix} Interviews with “Baba,” January 31, 2008 and February 1, 2008.

^{xl} GNA, CRM1-1, *Commissioner's Correspondence, MacCarthy Island, CRU1-4, Commissioner's Correspondence, Upper River.*

^{xli} Interview with "Aziz," Banjul, February 21, 2008.

^{xlii} Interviews with "Kebba," Talinding, December 13, 2007 and January 18, 2008.

^{xliii} Interviews with "Kebba", December 13, 2007 and January 18, 2008.

^{xliv} Interview with "Tamba", August 18, 2008.