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## PROJECT

### Making Room for Islam in the West: West African Muslims in Europe and North America

Significant international migration from Islamic West Africa to Europe and North America began in the aftermath of World War II and accelerated between the 1960s and 1990s. West African Muslims have been particularly successful in making room for Islam in the Western world. My research investigates this process of space making and the different ways Africans from the former French colonies in West Africa were able to negotiate their insertion into the Western public sphere at a time of increasing tension with Islam. In contrast to Arab immigrants who have severed their links with moderate centers of Islamic spirituality in North Africa, West Africans have maintained strong bonds with sources of religious knowledge and authority in Africa, and these sources remain powerful shapers of their Islamic identity. The continuing influence of religious ideas and leadership from the African continent has allowed Africans in Europe and North America to resist the wave of political radicalization that has recently swept other Muslim communities living in the West.

## Recommended Reading

Babou, Cheikh Anta Mbacké. *Fighting the Greater Jihad: Amadu Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya of Senegal, 1853-1913*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007.

-. "Brotherhood Solidarity, Education and Migration: The Role of the Dahiras among the Murid Muslim Community of New York." *African Affairs* 403 (2002): 151-170.

-. "Exploring the Impact of Migration Abroad and at Home: Money, 'Caste', Gender, and Social Status among Senegalese Female Hair Braiders in the United States." *Africa Today* 55, 2 (2009): 3-22.

## Making Muslim Space in Secular Land: Senegalese Muslims in Europe and North America

Significant international migration from Islamic West Africa to Europe and North America began in the aftermath of World War II with the loosening of the laws that constrained the mobility of French imperial subjects and accelerated between the 1960s and 1990s. West African Muslims have been particularly successful in creating space for Islam in the Western world. My research investigates this process of space making and the different ways in which Africans from the former French colonies in West Africa, especially Senegalese, were able to negotiate their inclusion in the Western public sphere at a time of increasing tension in relation to Islam. In contrast to Arab immigrants, who have severed their links with moderate centers of Islamic spirituality in North Africa, Senegalese have maintained strong bonds with sources of religious knowledge and authority in Africa and these sources remain powerful shapers of their Islamic identity. The continuing influence of religious ideas and leadership from the African continent has allowed Africans in Europe and North America to resist the wave of political radicalization that has recently swept other Muslim communities living in the West. I look at the experience of Senegalese Muslims in the West by exploring their communal religious life, their connections to home, their insertion in the European secular public sphere, and their attitude toward the state and institutions of civil society. I begin my presentation by first locating the research within the broader context of my work on the history of the Muridiyya Muslim order in Senegal; next, I present the conceptual foundations of the research. And a third section focuses on the life and work of the late Murid sheikh (spiritual guide) Abdoulaye Dièye, one of the most successful Murid religious entrepreneurs in the diaspora, and how his work has impacted Murid religious discourse and practices both abroad and at home.

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### PUBLICATIONS FROM THE FELLOW LIBRARY

Babou, Cheikh Anta (Athens, 2021)

The Muridiyya on the move : Islam, migration, and place making

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1740946278>

New African histories

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1740946278>

Babou, Cheikh Anta (Oakland, CA, 2017)

Globalizing African Islam from below : west African Sufi masters in the United States

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1041183836>

Babou, Cheikh Anta (East Lansing, MI, 2016)

Negotiating the boundaries of power : Abdoulaye Wade, the Muridiyya, and state politics in Senegal, 2000-2012

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=167733388X>

Babou, Cheikh Anta (Berlin, 2016)

Noun classes and grammatical gender in Wolof

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=870768646>