

## Facing the Denial of Islam: Two Strategies in the Senegal River Valley

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We shall compare two groups of descendants of slaves belonging to the former capital of the Haalpulaar imamate in the Senegal River valley (XIXth century). This river is now the border between Senegal and Mauritania. The first group, the *GallunkooBe* has been engaged for a long time in a strategy of recognition in front of the « denial of Islam » which the slaves are the victims of. The fight against this « prejudice of ignorance (of Islam) » (*jahil* ar. *majjere* pul.) took place at first at the regional level by the investment in the network of Koranic schools (*dude*, sing. *duDal*) and Sufi brotherhoods, in particular some branches of Tijaniyya. Now this quest for acknowledgement makes return for the local politics associating the conquest of the imamate of the mosque and that of the chieftainship of the village.

The second group, that of the « schoolteachers » speaking French, plays on oblivion by investing larges registers of stigmatization and communities of suffering. This « republican strategy » has given rise to voicing of opinions at the national political level: left-wing political parties, associations...

The mosque and the city hall were recently conquered by the progressive weaving of affinal ties between the well read Moslems and the modern elite and thanks to the support of the international migrants. But these two strategies would not have been possible without the existence of « initiated » (Goffman) knowing or sharing partially the stigmatization of the descendants of slaves. It asks the question to know how to tell the « invisible history » (Feierman) about the fight against a religious or discursive stigmatization (Lahire).