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Babou, Cheikh Anta, *The Muridiyya on the Move: Islam, Migration, and Place Making*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2021. 336 pages. ISBN 978-0-8214-2467.

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A recent trend in African Diaspora Studies is the focus on African diasporas that have emerged because of immigration in the late 20th/early 21st century; scholars/researchers evaluated their cultural, economic, and political impacts on home countries (i.e., those from West Africa) and host countries (i.e., those in Europe). On the one level, the analyses of these diaspora communities are responses to (and perhaps reflections of) the popular discourse on immigration from the Global South, and Africa in particular, to Western Europe and the United States, and anxieties relating to potential cultural and demographic impacts on host countries.

An interesting and timely addition to the study of the African diasporas that have emerged over the last century is Cheikh Anta Babou's *The Muridiyya on the Move*, an examination of the formation of a Murid Diaspora. Through the course of the work, Babou traces the gradual migration of members of this Sufi Order from rural Eastern Senegal to the country's urban centers, then to Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon; and from there, he traces them to France, and finally to the United States. Babou investigates the ways in which Murid immigrants maintained their spiritual and cultural identities as Murids abroad (even in the case of their initial migration from the Murid heartland to Senegalese cities like Dakar and St. Louis); and he attempts to show how they actively incorporate their new homes into the larger Murid Diaspora.

In Babou's analysis of the Murid Diaspora, he approaches this phenomenon from the bottom up. Murid migration is presented as an initiative that was undertaken by individuals and groups, not exclusively in response to the push and pull of economic pressures at home and incentives abroad; these, he argues, are part of a tradition of migration that seasonal agricultural workers, itinerant tradesmen, and merchants undertake. Moreover, the author reflects on the history of the Murid Diaspora on the immigrants, individually and collectively, rather than Murid leadership.

He highlights that the practices and features of Murid communities abroad are understood as the products of migrants' resilience and adaptation to their surroundings on the ground, rather than the implementation of edicts originating from the Caliph or other members of the Murid hierarchy in Tuubaa. Additionally, the support and encouragement of the growth of the Diaspora is detailed, including the important contributions of individuals like Shaykh Murtada Mbakke, and the positioning of communication between the leadership in Senegal and the Diaspora as a conversation in which there is a multidirectional flow of ideas and practices.

Babou also underscores the central role that sacred spaces play in the various localities where the Murid Diaspora settled. He shows the significant connections of space in Murid history; and he does so by using the life of Ahmadu Bamba (in Senegal and Gabon) as his entry point and considering the increasing needs of growing Murid communities (in Côte d'Ivoire, France, and the United States). In his examination of these spaces, Babou considers the process of transformation by which a secular space becomes a sacred place, and the roles these sites play in informing and reifying group identity. In urban spaces in Senegal such as Dakar and St. Louis, sacred spaces carry an additional significance in that they reflect the emergence of the local Murid communities as economic and political forces

The contested history behind Murid sites and festivals reveals tensions of class (the local elite versus the ascendant Murid bourgeoisie), culture (Francophile/ "cosmopolitan" versus Islamic/traditional) and socio-religious (other established Sufi Brotherhoods [Tijani, Qadiri, etc.] versus Murid). Within Senegal, controversies over the Murid historical claims to spaces reflects tensions over the extent to which Murid identity informs and influences Senegalese identity. This tension manifests itself both in opposition to Murid expansion in the public square vis-à-vis claims to public spaces (e.g., the Murid demand that Faidherbe Square be renamed after Ahmadu Bamba and the ensuing controversy in St. Louis) and the economic, political, and cultural influence Murid communities increasingly bring to bear.

It is in its focus on the historical development of the Murid Diaspora in Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon that *The Muridiyya on the Move* signals a welcome reframing of the conversation regarding African diasporas by highlighting an overlooked dimension of African immigration: intra-continental immigration. As Babou reminds readers, two-thirds of African immigration is within the continent, which raises questions as to why African migration is framed almost exclusively through the lens of migration to Western Europe via the Mediterranean Sea. The Murid Diaspora in Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon, the most popular destination for Murid immigrants outside of Senegal and the location of the "Backyard of Tuubaa"

respectively, demonstrate the ways in which Murid migrants established communities outside of Senegal, carved out sacred spaces and maintained ties with Murid leadership in Tuubaa, all of which served as a template to later Murid migration to Western Europe and the United States. To a certain extent, Murid immigration to Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon is presented as an outgrowth of the same economic, historical, and socio-cultural factors that motivated rural-rural and rural-urban migration in Senegal, aided by greater freedom of mobility throughout French West and Central Africa after World War II, and then favorable economic circumstances post-Independence.

While Côte d'Ivoire serves as the template for Murid community formation that would be replicated in Western Europe and the United States – the rise of a stable, prosperous multigenerational community stimulating the creation of Murid spaces – the Murid experience in Gabon has a spiritual dimension unmatched outside of Senegal. The history of Ahmadu Bamba's exile to Gabon (1895-1902), and the spiritual significance attached to this period by Murids, reframes the process of creating sacred spaces as reclaiming sacred spaces. As immigrants and a religious minority, Murids cannot utilize the political or cultural levers available to them in Senegal, and instead have relied upon their collective economic power and political ties in the work of acquiring and consecrating sites in Gabon that figure prominently in the story of Bamba's exile.

As Babou's discussion turns to the Murid Diaspora in France, new issues of Murid identity and objectives come to the fore. Babou details the process through which the Senegalese, and in particular the Murid, community grew in France during the Colonial Era and post-Independence, including the French legislation that facilitated and then later curtailed immigration from former French colonies. A crucial part of the Murids' experience in France revolves around their position as members of two stigmatized groups, Africans and Muslims, and their approaches toward carving out their own space within a context of both anti-Black and anti-Muslim sentiment. Within this context, the Murid houses in Aulnay-Sous-Bois and Taverny serve as examples of divergent strategies toward establishing Murid space, one an exclusively Murid undertaking (Aulnay-Sous-Bois) and another that involves collaboration with members of the larger Muslim community toward the shared goal of an Islamic center operating under Murid management (Taverny).

The houses at Aulnay-Sous-Bois and Taverny exemplify divergent philosophies within the Murid community over the nature of its purpose in France. The question is: should proselytizing (*da'wah*) to Muslims who are not Murids and the larger non-Muslim society be an objective, or should the Murid community's main concern be maintaining its connections to Senegal, and to Tuubaa and the

leadership in particular? The responses to this question reveal a central tension over Murids' perceptions of the mission of Ahmadu Bamba, and whether or not it was intended for a Senegalese audience, as well as class-based tensions between working-class, traditionally-educated immigrants and Western-educated immigrants/second-generation French citizens.

The approach of Shaykh Abdoulaye Dièye, a Western-educated Murid scholar who engaged a wider French audience in ways that reflected an awareness of and comfort with the French scholarly tradition, is the embodiment of the universalist strand of Muridism. Shaykh Dièye's legacy in the Murid community in France and in Senegalese politics is a reminder of the possibilities of a universalist interpretation of Muridism within Senegal and abroad.

In the final chapters of *The Muridiyya on the Move*, the scene shifts to the United States, Harlem, New York in particular, and an analysis of the formation of a Murid Diaspora in a country in which the immigrant experience is a central part of the national identity, and in which there is also a large African-descended population whose presence is also an important part of the nation's history. For Babou, these two factors provided the space for public expressions of Murid identity unparalleled in the West, exemplified in the rise of Little Senegal in Harlem and in the yearly celebration of Shaykh Amadu Bamba Day in New York City (among other cities, including Chicago and Washington, D.C.).

The presence of African American Muslim communities rekindles debates over the Murid mission such as the degree to which proselytizing should be a component of the Murid program in the United States, the extent to which Senegalese culture (i.e., Wolof as the lingua franca of Muridism) is a part of the mystical tradition, and the possibilities of non-Senegalese Murid leadership. The tenure of Balouzi Harvey/ Muhammad revealed the potential problems non-Senegalese leaders confronted within the Brotherhood. Within the context of the Murid experience in New York, the emphasis on Senegalese culture emerges as potential limitation on the expansion of Muridism within African American Muslim and non-Muslim communities.

The Muridiyya on the Move makes invaluable contributions to the scholarship on African diasporas and the Muridiyya through its detailed analysis of the Murid Diaspora as a cultural, historical, and spiritual phenomenon, and its emphasis on the agency of individual migrants in shaping the development and expansion of this international community. His attention to the Diaspora within Africa reframes the popular narrative, identifying Africa as an important site in the development of Murid internationalism rather than a stop on the journey to the West, and challenging

narratives that overestimate the roles of Western Europe and the United States in discussions of diasporic communities.

Moreover, in privileging individual and collective responses to larger social and economic pressures, Babou presents a comprehensive portrait of the phenomenon that acknowledges the larger historical contours of the rise of the Muridiyya and the Diaspora while reminding readers of the integral roles played by the individual actors on the ground. Finally, its focus on the transformation of secular space to sacred space, and the ways in which such spaces contribute to group identity, enriches the discussion on Murid identity in Senegal and abroad, and the nature of memorializing sites in general. It is a necessary addition to the scholarship on Muridism as a spiritual, social, economic, and political force, and the ways in which it is experienced and expressed across the globe.

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