

Krzysztof Trzcíński

ORIGINS OF ARMED SEPARATISM IN SOUTHERN SENEGAL¹

The end of the Cold War rivalry between the world's two superpowers undoubtedly contributed greatly to the extinction of a number of armed conflicts in Africa. On the other hand, in the 1990s the continent went through many new bloody wars of a complex origin. The participants in these dramatic events were usually fighting to control the entirety of a country or for control of its natural resources. However, the power distribution changes that took place in the world fifteen years ago were hardly of any significance in terms of the increase or decrease of separatist tensions in Africa south of the Sahara.

In the history of statehood, separatism is a natural phenomenon rather than something unusual. Separatism is mostly perceived as a group's seeking to separate one part of the territory of a given country from the rest in order to create a

¹ This study is the result of the author's four visits to Senegal as well as of research based on literature and press sources and of interviews conducted with Senegalese citizens of different ethnic backgrounds. The author wishes to express his gratitude to everyone who helped him to gather research material and with whom he could discuss the issue of the conflict in Casamance, especially to Dr NFamara Lou Sambou (from Ziguinchor), Dr Mamadou Diouf (from the Saloum region) and Cheik Amadou Dioum (from Thiès). The author is also grateful for the opinions and discussions on research methodology, terminology, and issues in question to Professor J.J. Milewski and Dr M. Solarz from the Institute of Developing Countries at Warsaw University, Dr M. Skotnicki from the Institute of Social, Economic and Regional Geography at the Warsaw University, Dr M. Szupejko from the Centre for Studies on Non-European Countries of the Polish Academy of Sciences and to Dr W. Lizak from the Institute of International Relations at Warsaw University. The author is solely responsible for the contents of this study, and opinions and theses included in it do not always correspond to the views of his interlocutors.

new state organism (secessionism) or to unify within one country lands inhabited by people that form a single ethno-cultural community (irredentism). The idea of separatism serves sometimes as a negotiating strategy for a regional group to get from the state authorities benefits that are minor in comparison to territorial separation, e.g., the governance of a regional community within the framework of territorial autonomy, or better conditions for a region's integration with the rest of the country. It is often the case, especially during a long-lasting intensification of a regional conflict, that separatism becomes the ideological legitimisation for the outbreak and continuance of an armed conflict, while the conflict itself turns into a way of life for at least some of its initiators and participants.

Postcolonial Africa has been, and will be, experiencing conflicts of a separatist nature. The most famous secession attempts in Africa include the case of Katanga (1960-63) and Biafra (1967-1970). The war in Eritrea (1961-1991) is, so far, the only African separatist conflict which has led to the establishment of a new country (1993). The two bloody conflicts in Southern Sudan (1961-1972 and 1983-2005) are also of a separatist nature. Since 1975 till today, Ethiopia has been grappling with armed separatism in Ogaden. The irredentist idea of building a Greater Somalia, i.e., of uniting all the Somali people within one country, was the underlying cause of the war that Ethiopia and Somalia fought over Ogaden in 1977-1978. In 1981, a conflict broke out in a northern part of Somalia, which in 1991 had declared its independence as Somaliland. Although the country has not been recognized as a country by the international community, Somaliland possesses all the other attributes of a state, in contrast to the Republic of Somalia, which has been in decline for many years. These are only some – often already past – examples of armed separatism on the African continent – the most bloody or long-lasting.

Armed separatism, however, is currently present in many other places in Africa. Almost every country south of the Sahara has the prerequisite conditions for the growth of separatism. Almost all the borders in Africa were arbitrarily laid out by the colonial powers as early as the nineteenth century. Most of these borders divide entire ethnic groups into the nominal citizens of different state organisms. On the other hand, it is often the case that the borders of a country comprise many peoples of different ethnic backgrounds as well as of different cultures and beliefs. The multi-ethnic character of a society and its cultural diversity are not, in themselves, a cause for separatist aspirations but they do provide an important basis for it.

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Separatist conflicts are extremely often, if unjustly, seen in strictly ethnic terms. However, both Somaliland and the Republic of Somalia are inhabited mainly by the same people – the Somalis (though they are greatly divided because of competition between various clans). Eritrea is inhabited by ethnic groups that also live in Ethiopia (though their share in the population is different in each country). The bulk of the inhabitants of the Comoros speaks the same language and forms a single cultural community that came into being as various races and peoples intermingled over the centuries, and yet one island of the archipelago, namely Ndzuwani (Anjouan), functioned as an independent quasi-state in the years 1997-2001. These examples favour the theory that holds that separatist conflicts have at their heart numerous and diverse factors that are not necessarily connected with ethno-cultural otherness.

One example of separatism in Africa that is extremely complex and interesting to the researcher in such problems is the conflict that has taken place since 1983 in the Senegalese region of Casamance², situated on the river of the same name. Its direct and indirect results include 3,000 to 5,000 fatalities³, tens of thousands of refugees⁴, the destruction or closing of many schools and medical care facilities, thousands of anti-tank mines, the worsening underdevelopment of the south of Senegal, and the outbreak of a civil war in neighbouring Guinea Bissau. These facts seem amazing since Senegal is one of the few African countries that has remained politically stable since achieving independ-

² The Casamance region (within the borders of two administrative regions: Ziguinchor and Kolda) is a little more than 28 thousand square kilometres in area (according to *Grand Larousse Universel*, vol. III, Paris 1987, p. 1838), while the whole Senegal – almost 197 thousand square kilometres in area. The Casamance region constitutes about 14% of the Senegal's surface. Main urban centres of Casamance are Ziguinchor with 156 thousand inhabitants in 2003 and Kolda with about 55 thousand inhabitants in 2003 (in both cases the approximate data come from *Senegal – City Population – Cities, Towns and Provinces – Statistics and Maps*, <http://www.citypopulation.de/Senegal.html>).

³ M. Humphreys, H. ag Mohamed, *Senegal and Mali*, Working Paper, United Nations Studies at Yale/World Bank Workshop, Case Studies on the Economics and Politics of Civil War, January 2003. (http://www.columbia.edu/~mh2245/papers1/sen_mali.pdf), p. 4; M. Doyle, Senegal's southern rebellion starts to end, *BBC News World Edition*, December 16, 2004 (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4102267.stm>).

⁴ See Casamance Looks Forward to More Prosperous 2005 After Peace Deal, *UN Integrated Regional Information Networks* (Dakar), December 31, 2004 and Senegal: Time to Support Returns of the Displaced in Casamance, January 8, 2004 (<http://www.refintl.org/content/article/detail/930>).

ence and that has never been governed by a military junta. Moreover, for years Senegal has been considered a country that is introducing a democratic system of government in a way that could serve as an example for many countries of the African continent, where processes of democratisation seem to be rather ostensible than real.

Issues of separatism in southern Senegal are particularly topical in these days, since at the end of 2004, separatists from Casamance and representatives of the government in Dakar signed a preliminary peace treaty that is meant to put an end to 20 years of military operations. Unlike the numerous previous agreements imposing a suspension of military operations, the present agreement is estimated by press commentators of the African political scene to have brought an actual end to the armed conflict. Still, a scholar of Africa's political post-colonial history has to keep in mind that a cease-fire in itself does not solve the problems that lay at the heart of the conflict, but merely creates an opportunity to work out a political *modus vivendi* that could result in finding lasting bases for the future peaceful coexistence of the parties to the conflict. The example of Sudan is a case in point.

In every case, the establishment of a regional anti-government movement and the use of the idea of separatism by its leaders is connected with the existence of specific conditions. Undoubtedly, the definite otherness of the majority of Casamance's inhabitants in comparison with the ethnic group predominant in Northern Senegal could not remain without influence on the emergence of the conflict. Nevertheless, for more than twenty years after gaining independence, the ethno-culturally diverse population of Senegal lived peacefully within the borders of one state. This study is based on the premise that the outbreak of the armed conflict took place in the context of a number of different factors and will aim at sorting those at its genesis and at showing their complexity. The initial part of the study presents an outline of the course of the conflict, while emphasising the significance of the humiliations and persecutions endured by members of a regional anti-government group and the formation by this group of an armed faction. This latter became the political instrument for initiating the conflict and provided the impulse that turned it into an armed one and led to its violent evolution. Subsequently, this study will analyse the factors favouring and affecting armed separatism in Casamance according to their nature and will divide them into historical, ethno-cultural, geographic, environmental, social, economic, and political factors. In its last part, the study will attempt to conduct an axiological classification of the factors and to arrange them in keeping with

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their degree of significance for the outbreak and evolution of the conflict in Casamance.

AN OUTLINE OF THE CONFLICT AND FACTORS DETERMINING ITS OUTBREAK AND EVOLUTION

As early as in the colonial period, in 1947, school teachers in Casamance – Émile Badiane and Ibou Diallo – founded a regional organisation called The Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC, *Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance*), whose main aim was supposed to be the defence of the interests of the inhabitants of South Senegal, still a French colony. The movement enjoyed popularity mainly among the Diola and Malinke people, in the towns of Ziguinchor and Sédhiou, and in the surrounding territories. Before Senegal gained its independence, in 1960, the MFDC had been absorbed by the countrywide *Bloc Démocratique Sénégalais (BDS)*⁵, directed by Léopold Sédar Senghor, who was later to become the legendary first president of Senegal. Reportedly, Senghor promised the leaders of the MFDC that he would consider granting Casamance a special status (or even separate statehood) within twenty years of Senegal gaining its independence. A part of the region's population thinks that Senghor and Badiane even made written arrangements concerning the possibility of changing the future status of Casamance. Moreover, it is believed that Badiane, who died in 1972, was *de facto* murdered on the orders of the authorities in Dakar and copies of the written agreement were destroyed.

Since 1967, the Catholic parish priest of the cathedral in Ziguinchor, Augustin Diamacouné Senghor, had programmes on a local radio in which he called upon Casamance's inhabitants to cultivate their regional identity. In 1978, this charismatic priest of Diola background published a booklet in which he enumerated the various injustices suffered by the inhabitants of Casamance at the hands of the Senegalese authorities. Among the population of the region there arose an awareness of its otherness in relation to the rest of the Senegalese population. Meanwhile, in 1981, Abdou Diouf was elected president of the

⁵ At that time Assane Seck, Louis Dacousta and Djibri Sarr created The Movement for Autonomy of Casamance (*Mouvement Autonomie de la Casamance*), later also included in BDS.

country and ruled out any possibility of changing the status of the southern part of the country. In 1982, Father Diamacouné re-established the MFDC. Of the members of the organisation, made up of various ethnic groups, most were Diola. The movement was joined by Christians, Muslims and followers of traditional religions. As its principal goal, the re-established organisation strived to defend the region against so-called Wolofisation (the formation of a Senegalese culture based on that of the country's prevailing ethnic group, namely the Wolof) by way of nurturing the cultural otherness of the Casamance population, improving the living conditions of the region's inhabitants and – in the long term perspective – separating Casamance from Senegal and forming a new independent state. The last postulate was, according to Father Diamacouné, to be legitimated by the fact that, from a formal point of view, French colonisers considered Casamance to be a separate colony, and the fact that the region had not been granted independence should simply be regarded as an oversight.

The factor that determined the outbreak of the armed conflict in Casamance was the humiliation and persecution of MFDC members, while the factor that determined the evolution of the conflict into armed separatism was the formation of MFDC armed units. The MFDC, originally resorting to solely peaceful measures, started demanding from the authorities in Dakar that they put a stop to the migration of people from the north to the south of Senegal and that they grant the Casamance elites real influence over the region's administration. In December 1982, a peaceful demonstration of MFDC members and supporters in Ziguinchor, during which Senegalese flags were burnt, was the occasion for brutalities by the police and security forces, the conflict's first fatalities, and numerous arrests. The authorities made a mistake by refusing to listen to the arguments of the local population. Many MFDC members fled in fear of repression to the local woods, which are considered sacred, where they underwent basic military training. In pursuit of the fugitives, the Senegalese forces ventured deep into the woods, a move that was universally viewed as a profanation of the sanctity of this place. Father Diamacouné was among the detainees. Persecutions and arrests of separatists in 1983 confirmed the MFDC leaders' belief that the change of the *status quo* could not be achieved by peaceful negotiations with the government. The disregard and humiliations endured enhanced the frustration of MFDC activists and spurred them to take up military action. From the peaceful movement that it had been upon its re-establishment, the MFDC embarked on a course of violence as a

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response to the brutal actions of the government forces⁶. The wave of riots in the region and the initial clashes in December 1983 between the state armed forces and armed units of the MFDC⁷, which had almost immediately been formed in the woods, brought numerous fatalities.

The armed confrontation in Casamance that started in December 1983 was concentrated around the city of Ziguinchor, on the Atlantic coast between the borders with the Gambia and Guinea Bissau, and, occasionally, in the administrative region of Kolda. The fighting of MFDC members with state forces were of an irregular nature. Separatists used mainly guerrilla tactics, organising attacks on roads leading to Ziguinchor. More serious attacks on military barracks, local police stations, the airport in Ziguinchor (e.g. a rocket attack in 1993), buildings of administrative authorities, and tourists⁸ were not a rarity. The Senegalese army responded sometimes with the use of tanks and planes against the separatists. Such periods of exacerbated fighting interspersed with suspensions of military operations ended with several dozens of fatalities and hundreds or thousands of refugees who sought shelter in neighbouring Gambia or Guinea Bissau or who became internal refugees⁹. The world press devoted a lot of attention to the conflict in Casamance, particularly after April 1995, when four French tourists disappeared in the region (they have yet to be found). Meanwhile, international human rights organizations repeatedly raised the issue of the conflict's civilian victims. For the state forces from time to time launched brutal pacification operations in the region of Casamance, in particular in Lower Casamance¹⁰, where on-the-spot executions and the razing of entire villages

⁶ Cf. M. Evans, *Senegal: Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC)*, Africa Programme: Armed Non-State Actors Project AFP BP 04/02, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, December 2004, p. 17.

⁷ It is believed that formally the armed faction of MFDC called *Attika* (i.e. warrior) was established in 1985. See M. Hall, *The Casamance Conflict 1982-1999*, Research & Analytical Papers, African Research Group, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, London, August 1999.

⁸ See e.g. Tourist buses attacked, *The Birmingham Post*, February 22, 2000.

⁹ See e.g. *Global Appeal 2003. Strategies and Programmes*, A. Encontre et al. (eds.), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva 2003, p. 126; V. Zeitlin, *Refugee Voices from the Casamance Region of Senegal: Reunited*, January 14, 2004 (<http://www.refugeesinternational.org/content/article/detail/1246>).

¹⁰ In academic literature on the subject one can come across different divisions of Casamance. For the purpose of this study the author adopts the following division: Lower Casamance (Basse Casamance), situated south of the Casamance River and west

took place when the inhabitants were suspected of supporting the separatists. The Senegalese forces often practiced various sophisticated torture methods on the civilians (such as hanging women and the elderly on trees in the sun during the hottest time of the day). They often destroyed local crops as well. Sometimes, the MFDC fighters also treated civilians – especially immigrants from the Northern Senegal – with cruelty, for example, shooting people caught in an ambush on a road or sacrificing them later in the sacred woods.¹¹ MFDC fighters were often involved in violent crime, including the raiding of shops and burglaries. Separatists obtained financing for their military operations mainly from selling hashish (obtained from Indian hemp cultivated in the region)¹², cashew, and rare kinds of timber¹³, as well as from robberies and donations from Casamance emigrés, living mainly in France, the United States, and Switzerland. The largest concentrations of rebels were active near the border with Guinea Bissau. MFDC fighters used rifles, sub-machine guns, and revolvers, as well as grenade launchers and various types of explosives. They laid thousands of mines in many parts of the region¹⁴. The number of armed separatists differed from year to year and, according to various estimations, it fluctuated between two and four thousand¹⁵, while the state forces of Senegal had 4 to 5 thousand soldiers in the region¹⁶. The fact that some of the

of the Ziguinchor town, Northern Casamance (Casamance Nord), situated north of the Casamance River and spread up to the border with Gambia, Upper Casamance (Haute Casamance), situated east of Ziguinchor in the upper reaches of the Casamance River and spread *de facto* till the Senegalese stretch of the Gambia River.

¹¹ See e.g. *Senegal: Climate of Terror in Casamance*, Amnesty International Report, 1998.

¹² Drug sales could constitute in some periods of the conflict up to 70% of MFDC income (M. Hall, *The Casamance Conflict 1982-1999*, *op. cit.*).

¹³ For more information see M. Evans, *Senegal: Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC)*, *op. cit.*, pp. 2 and 10-11.

¹⁴ For more information see *Casamance Looks Forward to More Prosperous 2005 after Peace Deal*, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ M. Evans, *Senegal: Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC)*, *op. cit.*, p. 6. In the second part of the 1990s MFDC accepted mercenaries from Liberia and Sierra Leone. See *idem* pp. 7-8.

¹⁶ Le Sénégal et la rébellion indépendantiste de Casamance, *Questions internationales* 5, janvier-février 2004, p. 38 and P. Englebert, *Should I Stay or Should I Go? Compliance and Defiance to National Integration in Barotseland and Casamance*, Paper prepared for the 19th biannual conference of the Vereinigung von Afrikanisten in Deutschland e. V. (VAD), Hannover, 2-5 June 2004, p. 9. The Senegalese armed forces are cyclically prepared to combat readiness by Frenchmen. Moreover, in 1997 Senegal

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Senegalese army officers who were stationed in Casamance derived material benefit from their control of the trade in rare timber in the region might prove a significant factor explaining protracted nature of the conflict¹⁷.

What influenced the low intensity of military operations in Casamance was the lack of either the willingness or the possibility of adopting resolute and forceful methods by the government party. The Senegalese authorities used the carrot and stick approach towards inhabitants of the south. In the 1980s and 1990s the presence of government forces and security services personnel was significantly increased in the rebellious region. In addition to harassing Casamance civilians, they jailed, tortured, and killed MFDC fighters, tortured, (some of them are said to have been thrown into the sea while being transported to Dakar). At the same time, Senegalese authorities took measures to spur the development of Casamance (among other things, they developed the road infrastructure of the region), conducted negotiations, and signed ceasefire agreements with MFDC on several occasions, amnestied its members and treated father Diamacouné with considerable indulgence. Many local politicians who dissociated themselves from MFDC activities were provided with work in the administration of the region or even posts in the central government. The authorities in Dakar were not interested in either escalating or publicising the conflict, mainly on account of the hopes they pinned on the development of tourism, especially in the face of competition from Gambia and the Republic of Cape Verde in this respect¹⁸. Consequently, the conflict in Casamance in comparison to many other African conflicts never turned into a full fledged war, an eventuality that would have resulted in a heavy death toll.

In reality, there always were severe splits within the ranks of the MFDC, having to do with power struggles and differences of opinion on the aims of the conflict, on combat tactics and on the further legitimacy of the conflict. On the

was included in the programme The US African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) whose aim is to improve military capacity of Senegalese soldiers and to prepare them better for peace operations. For more information see *Strategic Survey 1998-1999*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London 1999, p. 281.

¹⁷ M. Humphreys, H. ag Mohamed, *Senegal and Mali, op. cit.*, p. 14, [after:] M. Evans, *The Political Economy of War in the Casamance*, Working Paper, SOAS, London 2002.

¹⁸ Tourism and other relevant branches of economy for years brought revenues to the Budget of Senegal. For more information see *West African Tourist Trends, Africa Insight*, Vol. 27, No 2, 1997, pp. 147-148.

one hand, the lack of unity among members of the organisation led to apathy within its ranks and to the ineffectiveness of its actions, but on the other hand, it brought about a situation in which for a long time the authorities in Dakar lacked a partner for peace talks. Till this day, some of the MFDC members are not interested in a peaceful solution. The main factions of the MFDC include the Northern Front (*Front Nord*) from Northern Casamance that since 1991 has been avoiding forceful action and has even signed a ceasefire with the government in Dakar on behalf of the entire MFDC, and the Southern Front (*Front Sud*) from Lower Casamance that has for many years been most decidedly in favour of continuing military operations. In 2003 the leaders of the MFDC officially backed out of a demand for independence for Casamance and embarked on peace negotiations with the government.

HISTORICAL FACTORS

Lack of tradition of a common state organism in the region of Casamance and Northern Senegal and lack of a developed political organisation among most of the inhabitants of the South. Senegal within its present borders is a territorial unit established by the French colonial authorities. Casamance and Northern Senegal never constituted a common state organism but, at the same time, there never existed a single separate country where Southern Senegal is situated today. The Wolof people which constitute the majority of today population in Northern Senegal did not have extensive contacts with the Diola people who predominate in the lower reaches of Casamance.

In the history of Northern Senegal there was a number of strong and well-organised ethnic states, including, among others, countries of the Wolof (Djolof, Cayor, Walo, Baol) established in the 15th century. State traditions of peoples living north of the river Gambia were much more developed than in the case of peoples inhabiting the so-called Upper Guinea, i.e. the area situated between the river Casamance and Sierra Leone. M. Tymowski points out, the history of small states and peoples of this part of Africa is poorly researched on account of a lack of written sources and of unfamiliarity with local oral traditions¹⁹.

¹⁹ M. Tymowski, Wybrzeże Górnej i Dolnej Gwinei do XVI w. (The Coast of Upper and Lower Guinea until 16th Century), [in:] *Historia Afryki do początku XIX wieku* (The History of Africa until the Beginning of 19th Century), M. Tymowski (ed.), Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1996, p. 590.

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However, it is a well-known fact that when the Portuguese arrived in West Africa, different stateless communities and small local organisations²⁰, politically dominated by peoples from the Mande group, inhabited the river basin of Casamance. They had most probably been under the political influence of the Mali state until 13th century²¹.

Alvise Ca'Da Mosto – an Italian sailor in the service of Henry the Navigator, the Portuguese infante – who came to Casamance in 1456 is said to have learned from local people that the name of the river upon which they lived was derived from a combination of words *manza* (ruler) and his name – Casa (Kaza)²². Unlike in Senegambia, Islam was not predominant in this area, as trade with Muslim merchants only developed here quite late²³. In the period of expansion of Portuguese influence, especially in the 16th century, the area south of Gambia was one of the main regions of the slave trade. The Portuguese did not, however, establish fortified centres in the river basin of Casamance, and they carried on their activities mainly from their base on the Cape Verde Islands. The Portuguese and rulers of the Mali Empire maintained mutually advantageous trade relations. The Atlantic coast and the Casamance basin were settled by the Afro-Portuguese (*tango maos, lançados*)²⁴, who were active in local trade, among others areas. Creole culture started developing in some places of the region.

In the local oral tradition, the coastal province of Mali is called Gabu (Kabu)²⁵. At the end of the 16th century, as Mali was disintegrating, Gabu won

²⁰ P. Curtin, Wybrzeże Afryki Zachodniej w dobie handlu niewolnikami (The West African Coast in the Era of Slave Trade), [in:] P. Curtin, S. Feierman, L. Thompson, J. Vansina, *Historia Afryki* (The History of Africa), Gdańsk 2003, p. 276.

²¹ M. Tymowski, Sudan Zachodni od VII do XVI w. (Western Sudan from 7th to 16th Century), [in:] *Historia Afryki do początku XIX wieku, op. cit.*, p. 484.

²² J. Staszewski, *Mały słownik. Pochodzenie i znaczenie nazw geograficznych* (A Small Dictionary. Origin and Meaning of Geographic Names), Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1968, p. 89. Casamance belongs to one of the first names of African rivers that the Portuguese brought to Europe and which are used until the present day.

²³ P. Curtin, Handel i ruchy religijne w Afryce Zachodniej (Trade and Religious Movements in West Africa), [in:] P. Curtin, S. Feierman, L. Thompson, J. Vansina, *Historia Afryki, op. cit.*, p. 468.

²⁴ B. Nowak, Początki obecności europejskiej w Afryce Czarnej (Beginnings of European Presence in Black Africa), [in:] *Historia Afryki do początku XIX wieku, op. cit.*, pp. 781 and 784.

²⁵ M. Tymowski, Sudan Zachodni od VII do XVI w., *op. cit.*, p. 463.

independence and either split into a few smaller states or became a separate country which was divided by Fulani warriors not earlier than in the 19th century²⁶.

In the 19th century, there existed several smaller states in the Casamance basin which were founded by the Mande and Fulani people. Most probably, the Diola people neither had their own proto-state nor constituted greater state organisms. The absolute power of their rulers (*oeji*) – who were, at the same time, local priests – extended only over small communities separated by forests or a river and which included up to a few villages²⁷. Lack of developed forms of political organisation was a common feature among most small ethnic groups which inhabited the coast of Upper Guinea²⁸. The village was their basic organisational unit and blood ties were essential.

During the period of colonial rivalry between Europeans in Africa in the 19th century, the Casamance area was under French control as a result of the negotiation of several agreements by Paris and Lisbon in the years 1850-1865²⁹. In the end, France obtained formal rule over the region for, among other things, granting the Portuguese the right to fish along the coasts of French territories in Africa. However, only in 1886 did the French get the rights to Ziguinchor, the centre of the Portuguese presence in the region.

The main occupation of Casamance inhabitants, most of whom were Diola people, was at that time rice cultivation. Trade in the region was controlled by Muslim and Lusophone-African traders. While in Northern Senegal there existed a complex hierarchy of marabouts, in the Casamance region the hierarchy system in the political sphere was poorly developed³⁰. The leading authorities in the life of the community acted above all in the spiritual sphere, as intermediaries to sanctuaries in the holy woods, where men undergoing initiation made decisions on wars, land, and cultivation collectively. In the era of colonialism and during the formation of the Senegalese state, features characteristic for political life in Casamance – central leadership vacuum, lack of a developed hierarchy, and decision-making egalitarianism – proved to be an

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 846.

²⁷ Z. Komorowski, *Senegal – kształtowanie się jedności i niepodległości* (Senegal – Unity and Independence Formation), Warszawa 1977, pp. 14-15.

²⁸ M. Tymowski, *Wybrzeże Górnej i Dolnej Gwinei do XVI w.*, *op. cit.*, p. 590.

²⁹ M. Hall, *The Casamance Conflict 1982-1999*, *op. cit.*

³⁰ P. Englebort, *Should I Stay or Should I Go? Compliance and Defiance to National Integration in Barotseland and Casamance*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

important factor explaining the lack of a clear articulation of the need for the existence of separate statehood in the Casamance region.

Late colonisation of Casamance and controversies over the formal status of the region during French rule. The first French trading posts in Senegal north of Gambia began to spring up in 1639. In 1836 the French established their first foothold in Casamance on the Carabane Island.³¹ In 1854 the French started colonising the Senegalese interior and, although in 1860 they managed to occupy some lands in the Casamance basin, they did not subdue the little state of Fuladu upon the upper reaches of Casamance until 1903.³² It is usually assumed that the colonial conquest of Senegal was finished in the years 1891-1895.³³ Thus, the colonial conquest of the whole of Casamance took place relatively late.

From the perspective of administrative management, the French treated Casamance in a special way. In the colonial period, the area of Casamance was not a separate protectorate but was administrated separately from the rest of Senegal as the *Territoire de la Casamance* until 1939. It remained under the direct authority of the governor of the French West Africa. The region enjoyed far-reaching autonomy which was probably connected with its difficult accessibility and its significant distance from the administrative centre in Dakar.³⁴ D. Darbon³⁵ argues that, originally, Casamance was considered by the French as a “trade area” which was not to be included in Senegal.

Casamance was administratively integrated with the rest of French Senegal only for the last two decades of the colonial period, in the 1940s and 1950s.³⁶ After Senegal gained independence in 1960, Casamance became a component of a new state. Such a short period of Casamance’s integrity with other regions of Senegal as one administrative organism could have led to the

³¹ F. Brigaud, *Histoire du Sénégal* (History of Senegal), Dakar 1964, p. 44.

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ Z. Komorowski, *Senegal – kształtowanie się jedności i niepodległości*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

³⁴ M. Hall, *The Casamance Conflict 1982-1999*, *op. cit.*

³⁵ D. Darbon, *L'Administration et le Paysan en Casamance essai d'anthropologie administrative*, Paris 1987, [after:] M. Humphreys, H. ag Mohamed, Senegal and Mali, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

³⁶ P. Englebort, *Should I Stay or Should I Go? Compliance and Defiance to National Integration in Barotseland and Casamance*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

smaller degree of political, social, cultural³⁷ and economic integration of the southern region with the rest of the country.³⁸ The region's elites still invoke the distinct colonial history of Casamance. For many years, separatist leaders even maintained that uncompleted decolonisation processes constitute a legitimisation for their fight for independence. MFDC leaders entrusted French historian Jacques Charpy with investigating this issue based on available data. This expert evaluation from 1994 – based on the study of documents and writings of the colonial era – did not find any evidence which could indicate that Casamance had ever enjoyed any formal autonomy within French West Africa.³⁹ Thus, research did not confirm that when Senegal was being decolonised the region had any right to independence on the account of a separate colonial heritage.

The Casamance residents' experience of military action. The region of Casamance was the last part of Senegal to fall under French rule and had a very rebellious history in the colonial period. Given the extraordinary mobilisation of local people against the colonisers, the Diola people's tradition of resistance was compared by one of the author's Senegalese interlocutors with uprisings known from Polish history of the Partition period. Inhabitants of the region still cherish the memory of numerous heroes of the struggle against the French. Alinisitowe Diatte, who was deported by the French in 1943 to a different part of West Africa (probably Timbuktu) from which she never returned, remains, among other figures, such a symbol of resistance to colonizers.⁴⁰ In the 1960s and 1970s, the bravery of the Diola people was put to the test during the war of liberation in neighbouring Portuguese Guinea.⁴¹ Casamance residents not only

³⁷ V. Foucher (Les 'évolués', la migration, l'école: pour une nouvelle interprétation de la naissance du nationalisme casamançais, [in:] M.C. Diop, *Le Sénégal Contemporain*, Paris 2002, [after:] M. Humphreys, H. ag Mohamed, *Senegal and Mali*, *op. cit.*, p. 37) indicates that the Senegalese authorities used cultural otherness (or even exoticism) of Casamance for development of foreign tourism in the region. It could paradoxically lead to enhancing sense of regional separateness.

³⁸ Cf. an opposite case of Majotta in K. Trzciński, *L'anatomie de la désagrégation de l'État – le cas des Comores*, *Africana Bulletin* 52, 2004, pp. 134-135.

³⁹ For more information see J. Charpy, *Historical Testimony on Casamance*, Dakar 1994.

⁴⁰ L. Hartman, *Indigenous Rebellion in the Casamance Province of Senegal*, *Fourth World Bulletin*, December 1993, Vol. 3, No. 1.

⁴¹ For more information see M. Evans, *Senegal: Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC)*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

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actively supported their fellow neighbours who, as a part of the PAIGC⁴², fought with Portuguese soldiers, a member of NATO, but also gained combat experience which later proved useful during the separatist conflict with Senegalese troops. The fact that the peoples in Guinea Bissau had forced, partly by military force, the Portuguese to leave continental West Africa was certainly inspiring for supporters of the idea of separating Casamance from Senegal by military action. Moreover, the fact that some of the MFDC military leaders had fought in the ranks of the French army in Indo-China and Algeria also proved significant in this respect.

THE ETHNO-CULTURAL FACTOR

Multidimensional ethno-cultural otherness of the Diola and Wolof people. Senegal is inhabited by about 10.3 million people.⁴³ It is estimated that the entire region of Casamance has 1.3 million residents.⁴⁴ The population of Senegal consists of a dozen or so ethno-cultural groups which differ significantly. In the north of Senegal, the **Wolof** people (who constitute 44% of the country's inhabitants⁴⁵) are the most numerous group. The bulk of the population of Casamance, considerably over 60%⁴⁶, is made up of the **Diola**⁴⁷ (who constitute around 5% of the whole population of Senegal) and their fellow peoples (the Manjak, Balante, Flup, and Bainuk). Other peoples inhabiting Southern Senegal are the Malinke (from the Mande group), the Fulani, the Wolof, and the Lebu people, in addition to the Mancagne, Serer and Toucouleur.

⁴² Partido Africano de Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (African Party for Guinea and Cape Verde Independence).

⁴³ An estimate by UNFPA from 2003 (*Senegal: Statistics & Indicators*, United Nations Population Fund, New York 2005, Part 1. Population).

⁴⁴ The estimated data from 2003 for the administrative regions of Ziguinchor and Kolda according to *Senegal – City Population – Cities, Towns and Provinces – Statistics and Maps*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ *Afryka. Popularna Encyklopedia Powszechna* (Africa. Popular Universal Encyclopaedia), R. Mydel and J. Groch (eds.), Warszawa 2000, p. 321. Northern and Eastern Senegal is inhabited apart from Wolof people by *inter alia* the Serer (around 15% of the whole of the country's population), the Toucouleur (around 11%) and the Soninke (around 9%).

⁴⁶ M. Hall, *The Casamance Conflict 1982-1999*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷ See C.G. Seligman, *Ludy Afryki* (Peoples of Africa), Warszawa 1972, pp. 65-66.

From the perspective of the division of the Casamance region adopted in this study the Diola constitute a majority in Lower Casamance and Northern Casamance. The Fulani and the Malinke predominate in Upper Casamance. The Diola have lived at peace with the other peoples inhabiting Casamance for ages. They regard the Wolof and culturally akin Lebu peoples, who migrate to Casamance from the northern part of Senegal, as their main antagonists. The attitude of the Diola to newcomers is perfectly illustrated by one of their sayings: “everyone who is at home feels like a hippopotamus in water”⁴⁸. This saying could be explained as a lack of acceptance for the culturally different peoples who occupy lands in the region that have traditionally been inhabited by the Diola.⁴⁹ The Diola and the Wolof differ from each other in numerous features of their cultural and mental being. Mixed marriages between the Diola and the Wolof are very rare in Senegal, while marriages of the Wolof with members of other peoples are quite common.

The ethnic Diola group constitutes a mosaic of forest people who have been quite isolated from the external world for ages. Fundamental criteria of social prestige among the Diola include great attention to following tradition and customs⁵⁰. Many Diola people are members of various secret or open associations. Local rulers and councils of elders continue to have significant influence on the inhabitants of many villages. The Diola are not divided into castes, which explains in part why they lack a well established social hierarchy and political organisation and figures of authority that would be universal for the whole region.

In comparison to the Diola, the Wolof are a people of the savannah zone, where contacts with other peoples have been frequent and often of the nature of an invasion. As a consequence of numerous wars, the existence of a long-lasting and strong state power, and the division of labour imposed by the state, the Wolof are distinguished by an established caste system⁵¹ in which power and

⁴⁸ Z. Komorowski, *Senegal – kształtowanie się jedności i niepodległości*, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

⁴⁹ Mamadou Diouf, the author’s interlocutor, explains the meaning of this saying in the context of antagonisms existing between the indigenous Diola and the incoming Wolof as follows: “A Wolof will never become like a Diola and he will never be accepted by the Diola”.

⁵⁰ Z. Komorowski, *Senegal – kształtowanie się jedności i niepodległości*, *op. cit.*, pp. 24 and 39.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

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religion are interwoven. The political influence of the marabouts, their spiritual leaders, has played a leading role in filling the main state posts in Senegal until now. Even in the era where a democratic system of governance is being formed, the marabouts still shape election preferences for a significant part of the Wolof.

Much more than 90% of all of Senegal's population are Muslims. Meanwhile, quite a number of the Diola, especially those living near the Atlantic coast, are Catholics. The Diola and their fellow peoples have been subjected to the process of Christianisation since the 15th century by Portuguese missionaries. Yet a part of the Diola are exclusively followers of traditional beliefs, while a part are Muslims. Meanwhile, almost all of the Wolof people inhabiting Senegal profess an allegiance to Islam. The Muslim religion is expanding rapidly among followers of traditional beliefs.

In Casamance, both Christianity and Islam have a syncretic character, since they include a number of elements of traditional belief, such as worshipping the 'sacred forests' (*bois sacrés*) in which ceremonial initiations are practiced. These initiations are still of great significance in the world of men, as they constitute a true school of life. They also aim at, among other, the fraternization of men from one or several neighbouring villages, the instilling and strengthening of loyalty towards people of one's own kind, and the preservation of ancient traditions⁵².

⁵² Elements characteristic of the traditional beliefs of the Diola are totems and sacred places (often with altars) in which magic power is believed to remain. Sacred woods play an extremely important role in the life of the Diola. It is believed that forests are inhabited by ancestors who watch the living. In woods, various secret meetings (e.g., councils of war) and ceremonies take place. The most important are collective initiations of men. Initiations are nowadays usually organised once every several dozen years. It often happens that fathers go through initiation together with their sons. From time to time, individual initiations may take place. At one time a man could not take a wife before his initiation, but at the same time initiations took place more frequently. According to the tradition of the Diola, every man should go through the whole process of initiation. Only those men who have been through initiation or who are to go through that process may enter the sacred woods. A part of the initiation ceremony is kept secret. It is, however, known that the initiation can take even up to a month. Men live the whole time in the forest. Women prepare food and drinks that they bring to an agreed place at the edge of the forest. During the process of initiation a woman cannot see any of the men. If she does it could result, amongst other things, in her infertility. The traditional ruler of a community is the master of the ceremony. He is believed to have the largest amount of knowledge. During initiation men receive their education about adult life, reprehensible acts, loving people and doing good, respecting their neighbour, and the way women should be

The residents of Senegal speak many - often very different - languages. At the same time the language of the Wolof is the real *lingua franca* of this multi-ethnic country, even though it does not have a written form. It is used in private life as well as in the administration, the media, and partly in the educational system. For a significant part of the Senegalese who are not Wolof, the Wolof language has already become their prime means of communication. Most of the Diola know Wolof but they actively cultivate their own language. Even the Diola inhabiting Dakar use exclusively the language of their ancestors when they are at home. This tradition is sacred to the Diola. Many indigenous inhabitants of Casamance also speak a Creole language.

The Diola and the Wolof live different lives and have quite different mentalities. Most of the Diola till the soil, cultivating rice especially⁵³. Animal husbandry has developed on a small scale. Very few are fishermen or hunters. The Diola are extremely attached to their land, while the Wolof are a mobile people. Moving and looking for better conditions are second-nature to the Wolof. Many Wolof people are no longer emotionally attached to a particular land or a particular region. The Wolof do not cultivate rice. Some migrants are, nevertheless,

treated. Initiation also serves to improve knowledge of the region's history and the life of Diola ancestors. During the initiation, the ceremonial burial of a community member who has recently died takes place. Every evening at the fire they sing songs together. A separate song is composed for every man – it talks about him, his family, and ancestors. Its purpose is to boost the pride of, and strengthen the bonds between, the Diola. At the end of the ceremony cattle offerings are consumed. Not before the initiation is over can a man regard himself as an adult. A man who has not been through initiation is not respected by his community in the way adults should be and is not allowed to make joint decisions on issues that are important to the life of the community. Going through initiation is a matter of honour, arising both from the social pressure and internal need. Initiation has a psychological effect: from now on a man knows what initiation consists in, has access to all the secret matters of the community, and may participate in gatherings in the sacred woods. After initiation a man may wear a symbolic cap as a sign of maturity. During the conflict in Casamance some separatists' hideaways were situated in sacred woods. The author is grateful to Nfamara Lou Sambou for outlining the subject of the contemporary role of woods and the process of initiation. For more information on traditional rites of the Diola see R.M. Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade: Diola Religion and Society in Precolonial Senegambia*, New York – Oxford 1999, and L.V. Thomas, *Les Diolas*, Dakar 1958, Vol. 1.

⁵³ Rice cultivation has been a traditional occupation of the Diola in the Casamance basin for a dozen or so centuries. See S. Szafranski, *Wczesna epoka żelaza w Afryce na południe od Sahary (The Early Iron Age in Africa South of Sahara)*, [in:] *Historia Afryki do początku XIX wieku, op. cit.*, p. 323.

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farmers who have come into possession of local land. The Wolof cultivate mainly peanuts or millet. Some Wolof people who settled in Southern Senegal are civil servants, teachers, policemen, or soldiers.

The Diola are regarded by the Senegalese as honest and hospitable people. They are not rich and they are not business oriented. As one interlocutor from Northern Senegal describes them: “The Diola adhere to simplicity of life. They have their rice fields, palms and palm-wine. Money is not the most important thing for them.”⁵⁴ A sense of solidarity and the attachment to their ancestors’ customs, including ancient beliefs connected with land, rice, and woods are of the utmost importance for the Diola. The Wolof are regarded as cunning, dynamic, and money-hungry people. The Diola irritate the Wolof mainly because they allegedly treat the whole of Casamance as their own land, although the region is inhabited by other peoples as well. Meanwhile the Diola, proud of their ethno-cultural otherness, are afraid of the Wolof’s cultural and quantitative domination.

GEOGRAPHICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

The unique shape of the region, its limited territorial contact with the rest of Senegal, and its peripheral location relative to the political and economic centre of the country⁵⁵. The area of Casamance is an oblong strip of land, which as a result of arbitrary territorial divisions in the era of European colonialism, became separated from Northern Senegal by the territory of Gambia (once a British enclave cutting into the territory of French West Africa)⁵⁶. In the south, Casamance borders Guinea Bissau, to the west it has the Atlantic Ocean, and only in the east does it neighbour with Tambacounda, a

⁵⁴ Cheik Amadou Dioum is the author of this opinion.

⁵⁵ On the significance of these features for the success of separatist actions see K. Trzcíński, The Significance of Geographic Location for the Success of Territorial Secession. African Example, *Miscellanea Geographica*, Vol. 11, 2004, pp. 207-216.

⁵⁶ In the years 1982-1989 Senegal and Gambia constituted a confederation named Senegambia, for political reasons, as well as, amongst other reasons, to harmonise trade and transport between the two countries. Among the factors involved in the confederation’s collapse were misunderstandings between the presidents of Senegal and Gambia in regards to divisions of power and the introduction of a single currency.

Senegalese administrative region. In consequence, the land connection with Senegal remains much slighter than that with Gambia or Guinea Bissau. Moreover, the region of Casamance is situated at the very south of Senegal, far from the capital city and other main urban centres. All these features cause Casamance to be very isolated in terms of communications from the remainder of the country, and this, in consequence, leads to the region's low degree of economic and social integration with the rest of Senegal.

The possession of borders with third countries and a peripheral location are very important factors in the development of separatism⁵⁷. At various moments of the conflict, MFDC fighters took advantage of foreign bases, shelters, and channels for smuggling weapons and financial means. Casamance's bordering only a short stretch of another Senegalese region frequently facilitated Casamance's military actions and the movement of separatists, while at the same time it hindered the mobility of the government forces.

The limited land connection with the rest of Senegal affects the Casamance population psychologically as well, as they treat every journey overland or by ship to Dakar as travelling abroad. Inhabitants of Casamance who are going to Dakar or other cities in the north even say that they are 'going to Senegal.'

The insignificant area of the countries neighbouring Casamance. Both countries neighbouring Casamance are very small. Gambia has an area of around 11.3 thousand square kilometres, which means that it is almost three times smaller than the area of Casamance (more than 28 thousand square kilometres). Guinea Bissau has a territory not much bigger than that of Casamance, namely 36.1 thousand square kilometres, while the area of the smallest country in Africa, i.e., the Republic of Cape Verde, is a little over 4 thousand square kilometres. The examples of small but independent countries neighbouring with Casamance inspire the separatists to regard it as natural to found another small state organism in the region.

Features of Casamance's natural environment. Casamance has a different climate from the rest of Senegal, i.e., it has a humid subequatorial climate which is distinguished by larger amounts of rainfall than in the northern part of

⁵⁷ Cf. M. Evans, *Senegal: Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC)*, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

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the country with its subequatorial dry climate⁵⁸. The dry climate contributes in the north (and in the north-east) to drought disasters and to progressing soil desertification (Ferlo Desert is an example of this phenomenon) while on the county-wide scale it results in intensified internal and external migrations, significant urbanisation, and the emergence of considerable disproportions in the spatial concentration of the population (the most densely populated areas include the capital city and the lands around it, as well as the Atlantic coast)⁵⁹. The uniqueness of Casamance's climate allows for more developed cultivation than in the rest of Senegal, which is very tempting for migrants from the north.

Some features of Casamance's natural environment provide favourable conditions for the activity of separatists. The area situated along Casamance's Atlantic coast, north of the mouth of the Casamance River up to the city of Diouloulou, near the border with Gambia, is boggy, marshy, and overgrown with mangroves. The southern part of the river's estuary, in the direction of the border with Guinea Bissau, is distinguished by a labyrinth of small islands, bays, and river branches. These lands, that can be traversed by pirogue, became a convenient hiding place for MFDC fighters during the conflict. The thick woods with which Casamance abounds also provided shelter.

Important natural resources in Casamance. On Casamance's shelf there are deposits of natural gas and oil⁶⁰. The exploitation of oil is to begin soon. In comparison, the main natural resources of Northern Senegal are phosphorites (an important export commodity, used for the production of artificial fertilizers) and rock salt.

The perspective of possessing a raw material base may seem attractive to separatists who aim at founding their own state in Casamance⁶¹. For the elites of Northern Senegal, a region that abounds in natural resources has special value and this may strengthen the resistance to its secession.

⁵⁸ In the South rainfalls exceed 1500 mm during a year and the rain season lasts from June to October. Rainfalls decrease even to around 350mm as one travels farther to the North and the rain season lasts from July to September (*Afryka. Popularna Encyklopedia Powszechna, op. cit.*, p. 322).

⁵⁹ For more information see M.C. Diop, Senegal, [in:] *Encyclopaedia of Twentieth-Century African History*, P.T. Zeleza and D. Eyo (eds.), London – New York 2003, p. 481.

⁶⁰ For more information see M. Evans, *Senegal: Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC)*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁶¹ Cf. M. Humphreys, H. ag Mohamed, *Senegal and Mali, op. cit.*, p. 33.

SOCIAL FACTORS

Problems and antagonisms stemming from migration from Northern Senegal to Casamance. Since the 1970s migration of people from other regions of Senegal to Casamance has been increasing. The people who migrate to Casamance are mainly Wolof and Lebu people, who enjoy higher financial standing than inhabitants of the South. Migrations of ethno-culturally disparate people started to be regarded – especially at the beginning of the 1980s - by the inhabitants of Casamance as a serious threat to their cultural identity and traditional existence. A part of Casamance's elites suspects that an influx of migrants from the northern part of Senegal is stimulated by the authorities in Dakar and that it aims at the future quantitative domination of the indigenous population by the immigrant one.

As a consequence of the increased migration numerous antagonisms arose in relations between the indigenous population and the newcomers from the North. The Wolof often bought land from impoverished Diola people, allegedly paying below the land's real value, and developed the cultivation of peanuts, which the native inhabitants of Southern Senegal associate mainly with colonialism⁶². In Casamance the Diola in particular were repeatedly dispossessed and their lands were allotted as settlement plots for migrants, grounds for building tourist infrastructure, and planting orchards⁶³. This was possible thanks to the Land Nationalisation Act, which concerned lands that were not formally in private hands (that is, were not utilized economically)⁶⁴. Although the legislation had been enacted in 1964 its resolutions were introduced in Casamance no sooner than 1979. In order to graze cattle and cultivate peanuts, a part of the immigrant people occupied grounds that for ages had been regarded in the region as belonging to the Diola, even if they had not been adapted

⁶² Peanuts were brought to the contemporary Senegal by the Portuguese and were popularised by Frenchmen who managed to levy a tax on local people partly thanks to their cultivation.

⁶³ There could be even six thousand of expropriation cases. For more information see M. Humphreys, H. ag Mohamed, *Senegal and Mali, op. cit.*, p. 43; M. Evans, *Senegal: Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC), op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁶⁴ Loi sur le domaine Nationale, no. 6446, from June 17, 1964 (*Journal Officiel* 3690 from July 11, 1964, 905).

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economically. Some newcomers from the North cut down trees for firewood in local woods considered by the Diola as sacred. Earth is of sacred significance to the Diola, while for the Wolof - mostly of material importance. Newcomers from North Senegal also dominated the transport services and even minor trade in many parts of Casamance⁶⁵. There is a clear economical gulf between the local and incoming people.

The migration of members of a small people called the Lebu to Casamance's seaside lands is also a significant problem. The Lebu speak the Wolof language, inhabit the region of Dakar and nearby Cape Verde, and earn their living by fishing. They are traditional fishermen, fishing for sardines in small pirogues. The Lebu migrate to Casamance for economic reasons. The Atlantic coast in the region of the capital city has become less and less attractive because of the progressive over-exploitation of the fishing grounds. This is due to the fact that fast modern trawlers, most of which belong to fishing fleets of European Union countries, fish along the coast of Northern Senegal⁶⁶. The government of Senegal has been selling fishing quotas on its territorial waters to Europeans for years, but Senegalese fishermen do not directly benefit. Fishing is diminishing as the quantity of fish available in the immediate vicinity of the coast is quickly decreasing⁶⁷. Traditional fishermen cannot afford to buy cutters for deep-sea fishing. In consequence, some of them decide to migrate to lands where the fishing grounds are not so exploited. Casamance, where fishing constitutes a subsidiary occupation of the local people, is such a region. Nevertheless, the settlement of more and more Wolofised Lebu people from the North in the region arouses anxieties about the potential domination of the "strangers," with whom the Diola and their fellow peoples have never had much to do. As one Senegalese interlocutor said: "it is a sick situation when a Senegalese from Casamance nurses a grudge against a Senegalese from the North for fishing on Casamance waters which belong to Senegal."⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Le Sénégal et la rébellion indépendantiste de Casamance, *op. cit.*, p. 38; B. Posthumus, *Senegal: An End in Sight to Casamance Violence?*, European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation in Cooperation, Utrecht 1999 (<http://www.conflict-prevention.net/print.php?id=57>), p. 2.

⁶⁶ *Senegal. Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2003* (http://bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/fileadmin/pdf/laendergutachten_en/frankophones_afrika/Senegal.pdf), p. 9.

⁶⁷ For more information see C. Simpson, *Where's the Catch?*, *BBC Focus on Africa*, October-December 2001, pp. 34-35.

⁶⁸ Mamadou Diouf is the author of this opinion.

The patronizing attitude of some Wolof people towards people from the South. Some of the Wolof traditionally regard the forest people of the South as *ex definitione* less civilised. Among some of the Wolof there are vivid stereotypes describing the Diola as a people abusing alcohol and eating pork. Some Wolof people call the Diola and their fellow people *niak*. This pejorative term refers to people coming from the forest zone and it is semantically related to the notion of “savage”. The use of this term by the Wolof evokes an inferiority complex in some of the Diola, and in others it evokes a desire to rebel as they see it as a confirmation of the discriminative attitude of the Wolof towards the smaller peoples in the country. According to one Wolof interlocutor, the Diola are “very honourable people who should be respected and who shouldn’t be hurt. In Senegal, many peoples are looked down on but the Diola take it most to heart.”⁶⁹

ECONOMIC FACTORS

Underinvestment and underdevelopment of Casamance. Many inhabitants of the South believe that President Senghor promised to pay special attention to the development of Casamance after Senegal gained independence. The fact that he did not keep this promise is considered to have been an important contributing factor to the frustrations of the region’s residents at the beginning of the 1980s. The authorities in Dakar have been accused for years of neglecting investment in, or even of entirely passing over, the southern region. Some statistical indexes prove that before the conflict broke out Casamance really had been neglected in many respects by the centre. For instance, in 1979 in Casamance there were more than 32 thousand people to every doctor while the domestic average was one doctor per 13 thousand; in the same year in Casamance there was not a single kilometre of asphalt road, while the average for all regions was 486 kilometres; in 1978 there was one single telephone line per 793 people, while the average for all the rest of Senegal’s administrative regions was one line per 132 people⁷⁰.

⁶⁹ Cheik Amadou Dioum is the author of this opinion.

⁷⁰ M. Humphreys, H. ag Mohamed, *Senegal and Mali, op. cit.*, p. 41. Improvement of the quoted indexes took place in the 1980s and 1990s. See *idem* p. 45.

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The longstanding underinvestment of the region has manifested itself especially in the government's creating new jobs almost exclusively in Northern Senegal. Among the decisions that were opposed by Casamance inhabitants was, for instance, the placement of the country's important industrial investments: for instance, a plant for cotton processing was located in Thiès near Dakar, while cotton is cultivated mainly in Casamance (between the cities of Kolda and Vélingara) and in the eastern region of Tambacounda. It is also incomprehensible that the authorities in Dakar invested in rice and sugar cane growing along the river Senegal instead of in the fertile soil of the south. According to some sources, Casamance is potentially able to meet the food demand of all of Senegal⁷¹.

Lack of investment in Casamance has led to a slowing down of development in the South and has increased the problems of local people in connection with the labour market. Many inhabitants of Casamance migrate for economic reasons to Dakar (especially young girls, who work in the capital as housemaids).

The economic neglect of Casamance makes people in the region feel ignored and abandoned by the central authorities. A part of the local elite interprets the authorities' policy as vengeance for Casamance's traditionally strong sense of identity. When the Senegalese from the North are asked about this problem, they say that though it was possible that President Senghor treated Casamance worse as an explosive and "insecure" region, President Diouf neglected almost all of Senegal and that, in fact, only greater Dakar, whose area of less than 1% of Senegal's surface is now inhabited by almost a quarter of the country's whole population, is developing⁷².

The inhabitants of Casamance bear the central authorities a grudge for poor investments in local education. For instance, at the beginning of the 1980s, i.e., right before the conflict broke out, there was only one secondary school whose graduates were capable of going on to higher studies (a secondary school with a program ending with a school leaving-exam, the *baccalauréat*). There was no school of higher education either in Ziguinchor or in Kolda. Local youth who wanted to attend a secondary school ending with a *baccalauréat* or a college were sent to Saint Louis, a city situated at the border with Mauritania, that is, over seven hundred kilometres from Ziguinchor, instead of to Dakar. In Saint

⁷¹ *Senegal. Country Profile*, Economist Intelligence Unit, London 2001, p. 22.

⁷² See *Senegal – City Population – Cities, Towns and Provinces – Statistics and Maps*, *op. cit.*

Louis students lived with Wolof families, who were culturally different from themselves. Many of Diola students eventually left school and came back to their relatives in Casamance. The educational policy of the authorities was regarded by the inhabitants of the South as being discriminatory, especially in a situation where graduating from a college in the capital provided Senegalese youth from the provinces with an opportunity to make a career in Dakar. The inhabitants of other regions in Senegal were also dissatisfied with the underdevelopment of their educational systems, but in their case communications with Dakar or Saint Louis facilitated matters.

For years the authorities in Dakar ignored the need for improving the existing transport infrastructure in Casamance⁷³ and for connecting the region with the rest of Senegal. Most of the roads in the south of the country are in a very bad condition, which makes travelling in the region difficult and time-consuming. Transport communication with Dakar is a top priority for inhabitants of the South since Dakar constitutes the centre of the country's economic and political life. Many farmers from Casamance sell their commodities (especially fruit, palm oil, and rice) without the participation of intermediaries. Agricultural products are traditionally brought to the capital by women, who buy other goods for the money they earn and take them back to Casamance. Providing better transport conditions would certainly increase the trade initiatives of Casamance's inhabitants and would provide better earning conditions.

Moreover, the main port of the region in Ziguinchor, in the estuary of the Casamance River, also needs investment. It is said that in order to enable larger vessels to enter the port, the waterway leading to it needs to be deepened. Modernisation of the port could potentially lead to an expansion of the processing base and provide new jobs.

For many years the easiest way for inhabitants of Casamance to reach the capital was to travel by sea. A regular connection between Ziguinchor and Dakar has not existed since 2002, when the only ferry that sailed between the cities sank in the Atlantic Ocean⁷⁴. Transportation by ferry guaranteed farmers

⁷³ Significant investments in road infrastructure of Northern Casamance were made at the end of 1990s. See *Africa. Tourism Market Trends*, Madrid 2000, p. 96.

⁷⁴ On September 26, 2002, the ferry *Le Joola*, sailing from Ziguinchor to Dakar, overturned near the Gambia coast during stormy weather. During this sea disaster, which is considered the most tragic in the modern African history, at least 1200 people (some sources even mention 1800 fatalities), mostly Diola women and children, lost their lives. The ferry *Le Joola* had the capacity to transport 550 passengers, but it was of course overloaded. Particular members of the government in Dakar were made

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from Casamance quite a convenient and cheap way to carry large quantities of fruit, which in high temperatures rot quickly.

Travelling overland around Gambia through the city of Tambacounda takes a long time and is unpredictable (the bad condition of roads in eastern Senegal causes vehicles to break down often) and the transport of agricultural goods in this manner is not really profitable (cars are not very capacious). An alternative solution is to travel through Gambia, but this unfortunately requires going through the arduous border control twice. Moreover, on the way to Dakar one needs to cross the Gambia River twice and since there is no bridge one needs to take a - usually overloaded - ferry and pay for it. For years the Senegalese authorities have been negotiating in vain with the authorities in Banjul to build a bridge on the Gambia River⁷⁵. Lack of progress in the negotiations is perceived by some inhabitants of Casamance as Dakar's acting to their region's disadvantage.

Casamance's elites have allegedly been lobbying for years for the building of a turn-off to Casamance of the railway leading from Dakar to Bamako, Mali. The line passes *inter alia* through the cities of Kaolack and Tambacounda, from whence a track to Ziguinchor could potentially be constructed. However, the authorities in Dakar regard this undertaking as being unfeasible for lack of financial means (most of the railway infrastructure in Senegal was constructed back in the colonial period).

Ziguinchor and Cap Skirring in Casamance have flight connections with Dakar but flights are becoming more and more irregular, and the tickets are too expensive for inhabitants of the country's southern region.

Part of Casamance's population being convinced that their region is economically exploited by Senegal. Casamance is often described as the granary of Senegal since thanks to its natural conditions it is a well irrigated and fertile area. Its cultivated crops include mainly rice, peanuts, maize, oil palm, var-

responsible for this sea disaster. The families of the victims have not yet been paid their insurance, which makes the inhabitants of Casamance feel ignored by the authorities in Dakar. For more information see G. Ewens, The tragedy of Le Joola: Graeme Ewens reports on the possible causes of Africa's worst ever shipwreck and the political fallout in Senegal, *African Business*, January 12, 2002.

⁷⁵ L. Hartmann, *Indigenous Rebellion in the Casamance Province of Senegal*, *op. cit.*

ious kinds of other trees and fruit shrubs, tuberous plants, cashews, sorghum, and cotton. Some food products that are sold in Northern Senegal are brought there from Casamance. When Northern Senegal is struck by drought Casamance is the only region with a food surplus. Thanks to its access to the sea Southern Senegal has also developed fishing (of fish, prawns, and lobsters).

Peanuts (and peanut oil), as well as sea resources, which come in part from Casamance, are among Senegal's main food export commodities⁷⁶. Raw goods from Casamance reach the port in Dakar, which is one of the main centres of international trade in West Africa and also a great processing centre for agricultural products and fish.

Some inhabitants of Casamance complain that raw products coming from their region are purchased at low prices in the capital city, where they are processed and sold abroad at higher prices. This system of the circulation, processing, and export of products is typical of almost the whole economy of the country. However, as one Senegalese interlocutor admits: "This phenomenon can be perceived as the exploitation of the Casamance region by Senegal if one lives in the south"⁷⁷. At the same time it should be mentioned that in Ziguinchor there are small food-processing plants for peanuts, fishes, and oranges.

Foreign tourism to Casamance has been developing for years⁷⁸. The region's beaches, which are amongst the most beautiful in Africa, attract foreign

⁷⁶ It should be stressed that the most of the peanuts come from the North of Senegal.

⁷⁷ Mamadou Diouf is the author of this view.

⁷⁸ The Senegalese authorities are stimulating the development of foreign holiday tourism (especially in the tourist resort of Cap Skirring on the Atlantic coast near Kabrousse at the Guinea Bissau border) and they are also trying to persuade European nature enthusiasts to visit Basse Casamance National Park near the estuary of the Casamance River and they are trying to develop so-called 'alternative tourism.' An opportunity to stay overnight in Diola villages in the *campements (campements ruraux intégrés)* i.e., original (or stylised) huts forming a traditional living complex, is a great attraction for tourists visiting the region. An advantage of visiting such a village is being able to commune with people who still cherish ancient traditions and to take a closer look at their culture. Nevertheless, a characteristic feature of tourist activity in the interior is still the lack of mass tourism. In previous decades the construction of *campements* managed by a village cooperative movement in Casamance was possible thanks to government loans. Income from tourism was invested in construction of schools and in medical infrastructure. The development of alternative tourism allowed the quality of life to be improved in some villages in Casamance without the excessive threat of the side effects that are connected with mass tourism.

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tourists (especially from France and Italy) and investors. The Atlantic coast of Casamance probably has the largest (right after Gambia) concentration of tourist infrastructure in continental West Africa⁷⁹. However, tourism does not contribute in any notable way to improving the quality of life of most of the inhabitants of the region. In Cap Skirring on the Atlantic Ocean, where most of Casamance's hotels were built, local people complain that they do not even have permanent access to running water, and tourism concerns like *Club Méd* do not contribute to alleviating their problems⁸⁰. A significant number of the people employed - especially in managerial positions - in the hotel industry and other tourist branches come from the North, if only because private tour operators who act as go-betweens in organising tourist transport to Casamance have their seats in Dakar. Most income from tourism is transferred abroad, goes into the central budget, or to tourist entrepreneurs in the capital city. Local elites describe this state of affairs as neo-colonialism in tourism, while the authorities in Dakar call it the rules of the market.

Another area for the dissatisfaction of the region's inhabitants is the issue of oil exploitation. The local elites believe that on the Casamance shelf there are very rich resources for oil production, but that this production was for many years maliciously forbidden by the Senegalese authorities. Dakar maintained earlier that the economic viability of oil production in the area is not entirely certain and that it is hard to find investors willing to embark on this venture. It seems that this problem has recently been solved since the demand for black gold is dynamically increasing and the prices are going up.⁸¹ The authorities have recently negotiated a contract for producing oil with a Malaysian concern and they are holding talks with investors from other countries. However, this is not the end of the problem – the region's elites consider that there is now an opportunity to build a local oil refinery in Casamance, while the government of Senegal considers this to be an economically unprofitable idea since there is already one refinery in Dakar. In consequence, some inhabitants of Casamance

⁷⁹ A. Newton, D. Else, *West Africa*, Hawthorn 1995, p. 811.

⁸⁰ For more information see C. S ipson, Senegal: Tourism blues as hotels operate below capacity, February 3, 2003 (<http://www.warmafrica.com/index/geo/4/cat/2/a/a/artid/168>).

⁸¹ Perhaps the issue of a recent discovery of significant oil resources on the Gambia shelf is not at that point insignificant. For more information see M. K a n t e, Oil at last, *New African*, May 2004, p. 25.

fear that oil production may become not so much the mainspring of the local economy as a curse for the region⁸².

POLITICAL FACTORS

The central authorities' attempts to weaken the local culture through the so-called policy of assimilation. The cultural specificity of Casamance was already quite visible in the period when the territory of today's Senegal was a part of French West Africa. In independent Senegal, however, it became the cause of a serious rift between the policy of the authorities in Dakar and the needs of the region's population. Both the first president of the republic, Léopold Senghor (who governed the state in the years 1960-1980)⁸³ and his successor Abdou Diouf (head of the state in the years 1981-2000) continued the French policy of minimizing ethnic and cultural differences between peoples. In the colonial era, the French hoped they would be able to unite the various ethnic groups of Senegal through the French language and culture. The policy of Senghor (a Catholic from the Serer people) and Diouf (a Muslim from the Wolof people) consisted rather in an attempt to assimilate smaller peoples into the Wolof⁸⁴. This policy succeeded especially at the linguistic level.

However, the Diola do not like the idea of the Wolofisation (or Senegalisation à la Wolof), which they understand as imposing the culture of the predominant people on the smaller peoples of the country. The Diola do not want their children who attend schools in Casamance to find plenty of informa-

⁸² There arises an analogy to another region in Africa with strong separatist problems, namely to Kabinda where most of Angolan oil is produced but not processed and natural wealth does not contribute significantly to increasing the quality of the local population's life. For more information see L. P a w s o n, *Fields of Dreams, BBC Focus on Africa*, April-June 2001, pp. 32-34.

⁸³ For more information on nation formation processes in Senegal in Senghor's time see Z. K o m o r o w s k i, *Senegal – kształtowanie się jedności i niepodległości, op. cit.*, esp. p. 10.

⁸⁴ The French colonial administration cooperated in ruling the territory of today's Senegal with marabouts who have been linked with agricultural economy. Although Senegal, ever since it gained independence, has been a secular state by definition, the authorities in Dakar have also been cooperating with Muslim leaders. The process of state formation in Senegal has always required the strong support of Muslim Wolof leaders.

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tion in their textbooks on the history of the Wolof and of Northern Senegal and just a few lines on the history of Casamance and its people. Moreover, the Diola do not agree to having their local traditions ignored. In Senegal, men of letters and writers from Casamance are not known or revered, nor are those southern heroes who fought against the French colonialism known. The local people like to remind one that Casamance was the last bastion to capitulate to the French during the colonisation of the lands included in today's Senegal. Meanwhile, school textbooks talk almost exclusively of heroes from the north. An episode that has stuck in the memory of the South's inhabitants was the inauguration of the football stadium in Ziguinchor - the authorities did not respect the wishes of the people to name it after one of their local heroes.

The authorities in Dakar explain that their policy is not turned against the Diola and it only aims to strengthen the consciousness amongst the Senegalese of belonging to a nation state that allegedly functions above ethnic differences. Elaborate symbolism (portraits of leaders, flags, emblems, and national slogans) and, above all, the modern school, in which individual local cultures are to intermingle and change, are supposed to help propagate the idea of a single common state of various peoples. Such a manner of interpreting the assimilation policy is supposed to lead to the elimination of regional identities and to prevent the arousal of the antagonisms that used to separate particular ethnic groups. Yet the weakening of local cultures for the benefit of the dominant one disturbs age-old traditions and customs and may in consequence bring about an effect opposite to that intended by the authorities. Casamance is here a clear example.

The domination of peoples originating from Northern Senegal in the country's political life. Ever since the country gained independence the majority of the political elites of Senegal have descended from the Wolof. Traditionally rich families from Dakar have enormous influence on the political and military establishment. A southerner has never become Senegal's prime minister and a member of the Diola has never been nominated a general in the Senegalese army. However, moderate politicians from Casamance have several times occupied important ministerial positions in the government. Southerners have sat in the Senegalese parliament. However, their participation in political life did not entail representing the population of the South and was exclusively connected with their membership in the Socialist Party, which until 2000 governed the country and which had a *de facto* monopoly on power. In conse-

quence, the interests of the southern part of Senegal could not be adequately voiced in Dakar.

It is, however, possible that before MFDC was reactivated the Casamance elites were not united enough to fight effectively for the interests of the South. The South's traditional lack of a political hierarchy (or a political and religious one) common to the whole region remains in contrast to the situation in the North, where various Muslim brotherhoods governed by marabouts are very influential, especially among the Wolof, Toucouleur and Serer.⁸⁵ These people are governed by the traditional rule of *ndigel* – the followers do what the marabouts say. The power of the marabouts forms something of a state within a state.⁸⁶ The authority of the marabouts from the largest brotherhoods does not, however, reach the Casamance population, and the marabouts are not able to contribute effectively to solving the problems of Southern Senegal.⁸⁷

Not admitting local elites to administrative posts in Casamance. The most unfair and frustrating issue for the educated elites of Casamance was, however, the so-called internal colonialism,⁸⁸ i.e., the Dakar authorities' long-standing filling of the region's administrative posts (especially the posts of governors and prefects) with civil servants who descended from peoples other than from the Diola who are the majority there. During the colonial period, the Casamance population was governed by local elites, which were subordinate to the colonizers. In independent Senegal, the posts of governors in the South have been occupied mainly by the Wolof. There has never been, for instance, a Diola who became a governor of one of the provinces in the North. Before the conflict in Casamance broke out mayors in that region were often from the Wolof people – they were not acquainted with problems of the local communities and, since they were strangers, they were not accepted by the local people. At the

⁸⁵ The biggest brotherhoods of the Wolof are Murids from Tuba and Tijaniya from Tiwauan.

⁸⁶ On influence of marabouts before the arrival of the Portuguese to West Africa see M. Tymowski, *Sudan Zachodni od VII do XVI w. (West Sudan from 7th to 16th Century)*, *op. cit.*, p. 483.

⁸⁷ In the south of Senegal there are brotherhoods with hardly any influence like Hajdara and Fadelina.

⁸⁸ P. Boniface, *Atlas wojen XX wieku. Konflikty współczesne i w przyszłości* (The Atlas of 20th Century Wars. Contemporary and Future Conflicts), Warszawa 2001, p. 130.

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same time, the Diola never occupied similar posts in Northern Senegal. The situation in Casamance did not change until an escalation of military actions. The authorities in Dakar started filling administrative posts in the region with local but moderate politicians who officially did not sympathise with MFDC.

The mistakes that the authorities in Dakar made expose the weakness of the Senegalese system of governance. For if true democracy had been developing in Senegal at the time of Senghor's and Diouf's presidencies, then power would probably have been more decentralized and the Casamance elites would have had access to posts in the local administration. At the same time, it is a characteristic feature that in regions where the Wolof do not constitute the majority, local elites traditionally govern the local people. Not admitting the local elites to power in Casamance for many years was probably due to the fact that Dakar was afraid that they would become too active politically.

The personality and descent of Senegal leaders and their style of exercising power. Military separatism in Casamance emerged after Léopold Senghor ceased being the president of Senegal (1980). This famous politician with the soul of a poet, a co-originator of the concept of *négritude*, was held in high esteem in almost all of Senegal and other countries in Africa and the world. Diplomatic refinement and an ability to ease political misunderstandings were very characteristic of Senghor. He was descended from the Serer people who are related to the Diola by traditional bonds of brotherhood (called *parenté à plaisanterie*). Although during Senghor's governance, many decisions were made that became unpopular with the inhabitants of Southern Senegal, the Diola accepted the first president. In 1981, the office of president was assumed by Abdou Diouf of the Wolof, who, it is believed, intensified the so-called assimilation policy, and, in comparison to Senghor, proved to be a much less astute politician in both internal and external politics. The brutal and bloody reaction of Diouf's security forces to a peaceful demonstration in Ziguinchor in December 1982 became flashpoint of the armed conflict in Casamance a year later.

President Diouf's foreign policy resulted in an increase of antagonisms in contacts with neighbouring countries, which in consequence did not hamper the attempts of their citizens to support the separatists in Casamance. As far as internal policy is concerned. For a long time President Diouf made sure election results did not allow Abdoulaye Wade, a candidate of the opposition Democratic Party who had a conciliatory attitude towards the MFDC, who was popular in

the country, and who was respected by many inhabitants of Casamance, to come to power.⁸⁹

The resumption of activity by the MFDC as the institutionalisation of the opposition of some of the elites and of the Casamance population to the policies of the Senegalese authorities. Father Diamacouné, who descends from the Diola, taught for years about the cultural specificity of the Diola and other peoples in Casamance. This charismatic parish priest started to have considerable standing and to enjoy popularity among the local people and effectively filled the vacuum in local leadership. In 1982, Diamacouné reactivated the MFDC. The resumption of MFDC activity was a kind of institutionalisation of the opposition of part of the region's population and elites to the actions (or cessation thereof) of the central authorities in Casamance. The MFDC relied on the frustrations which had grown through the years. The movement became an exponent of the needs of some of the inhabitants of the region and at the same time provided the missing element for a potential armed conflict to break out. When the MFDC was reactivated a part of the Casamance population finally had a body to represent its interests and a defined centre of opposition against the policies of the central authorities.

The disintegration of the Casamance region into smaller administrative units. A part of Casamance's inhabitants maintains that traditionally the name Casamance was used to refer to the whole south-eastern part of Senegal. Greater Casamance is said to reach the Falémé River at the border with today's Mali in the east and Tambacounda in the north (i.e., much farther than where the springs of the Casamance River or the Senegalese stretch of the Gambia River are located). In 1960, the Senegalese authorities established two new administrative regions in the south and in the east of the country: Casamance and Oriental. In 1984 Casamance was divided into two smaller regions: Ziguinchor in the west and Kolda in the east. The population of the South thinks that the changes introduced in the administrative division aimed mainly at an artificial division of the historical region of Casamance and at wiping its name off the map.

⁸⁹ See e.g. *Senegal. Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2003, op. cit.*, p. 2.

The existence of models of late statehood in the vicinity of Casamance and on the African continent. When Senegal was gaining independence from France in 1960, the processes of state formation in the neighborhood of Casamance had not yet been completed. The little country of Gambia became an independent state in 1965, but the British monarchy ceased to fulfil the function of head of the state there only 5 years later. Portuguese Guinea, neighbouring with Casamance, became independent Guinea Bissau only in 1973, while another Portuguese colony in West Africa – the Cape Verde Islands – did not gain independence as the Republic of Cape Verde until 1975. Similarly, other Portuguese colonies in Africa – Mozambique and Angola, as well as Sao Tome and the Principe Islands – gained independence relatively late. The process of state formation in Africa has not yet completed. In the 1990s, an independent Namibia emerged and, as a result of secession, Eritrea. In the case of some African territories, decolonisation has not yet been completed. Instances of late decolonisation or secessions in Africa could undoubtedly have worked on the imagination of separatists in Southern Senegal. The existence in Casamance's vicinity of an experimental union of a confederate nature, i.e., Senegambia, which was established in 1982, could also have stimulated the hopes of separatists for future change in their region's status.

Supporting separatism in Casamance by external forces. The MFDC was supported by external forces to a limited degree. This help probably did not contribute to the eruption of armed separatism in the region and was provided rather periodically once the conflict had already started. It is characteristic that the deterioration of the conflict in Casamance took place during the civil war in Guinea Bissau and when Senegal's relations with Mauritania and Guinea Bissau had started to become tense.

For almost the whole period of the conflict the Diola could count on a safe shelter among their fellow peoples in Gambia, and especially on the help of the Diola inhabiting Guinea Bissau, whom they had once supported in their fight against the Portuguese (the conflict in Casamance broke out 10 years after the founding of independent Guinea Bissau). In May 1990, when the intensity of fighting in Casamance was very high, the pursuit of MFDC members by Senegalese soldiers onto the territory of Guinea Bissau nearly led to war between the two countries.

Certainly, an important factor in the evolution of the conflict in Casamance was the long standing border conflict between Senegal and Guinea Bissau, con-

cerning the boundaries of territorial waters (fishing) and the continental shelf (oil resources), which was finally solved in 1991 by the International Court of Justice in Hague in favour of Senegal. Seeking support for their fight with armed separatism in Casamance, the authorities in Dakar traditionally tried to maintain good relations with the authorities in Bissau. However, General João Bernardo (“Niño”) Vieira, who governed Guinea Bissau from 1980, for many years acquiesced to some army officers’ acting as a go-betweens in arms deliveries to the MFDC, which probably in part resulted from the complicated political situation in Guinea Bissau. Officially, Vieira maintained good relations with Dakar. The authorities of Guinea Bissau even signed an agreement with Senegal about non-aggression and mutual aid in case of an attempt to overthrow the authorities of one of the signatory states by force. When a war broke out in Guinea Bissau in June 1998 after the coup d’état instigated by Brigadier Ansumane Mane, the authorities in Dakar sent intervention troops to assist their neighbour. At the same time, units faithful to Brigadier Mane were supported by separatists from Casamance, who consequently received a considerable quantity of arms. Finally, in June 1999, Mane came to power in Bissau. The new junta supported the separatists from Casamance to a degree that allowed the latter to fire effectively at military installations in Southern Senegal. However, Kumba Yalla (Ialá), the new president of Guinea Bissau who came to power in January 2000, dissociated himself from helping the MFDC. Yalla stopped tolerating the presence of separatists within Guinea Bissau as he wanted his country to have good relations with its better developed and richer neighbour, and he wanted to sort out the political problems on his own territory.

In the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s, information about indirect Libyan⁹⁰ and Mauritanian⁹¹ support for the MFDC, which consisted in financ-

⁹⁰ See M. Kuczyński, *Konflikty zbrojne na świecie: Afryka* (Armed Conflicts in the World: Africa), Warszawa 1995, p. 80 and generally on Libyan participation in sponsoring African conflicts *idem*, p. 5. Cf. M. Evans, *Senegal: Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC)*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁹¹ In 1989 a border incident between Senegal and Mauritania took place. It resulted in riots and numerous acts of violence in both countries. The direct cause of the dispute was the killing of two Senegalese herdsmen by Mauritanian border guards – they were said to have illegally crossed the border while grazing cattle. The Dakar people reacted to this incident by raiding Mauritanian shops and killing their owners. The authorities in Nouakchott responded by detaining and expelling Senegalese citizens from Mauritanian territory. The authorities in Senegal acted similarly. In both countries

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ing or facilitating arms deliveries were nothing unusual. Mauritanian intermediaries living in Gambia⁹² (in 1989, as a result of misunderstandings between the authorities of Gambia and Senegal, the confederation disintegrated) allegedly played an important role in this.

FINAL REMARKS

In conclusion, it is worthwhile to make an attempt at an axiological classification of the factors involved in the conflict, i.e., to assign the historical, ethno-cultural, geographic and environmental, social, economic, and political factors to groups that defined their significance for the outbreak and evolution of armed separatism in Casamance. In adopting this approach, I divided the above factors into favourable, influential and determinant. In my opinion, **favourable** factors include objective factors which constituted very basic conditions for (“the basis”) and produced an appropriate environment for the conflict. They lay at the origin or facilitated the evolution of armed separatism. **Influential** factors are ones that constituted a pre-condition for the emergence or intensification of cleavages – factors that significantly contributed to the outbreak and/or evolution of the conflict. **Determininant** factors are the ones that gave the impulse for the outbreak or violent evolution of the conflict

hundreds of people died. A tragedy on a greater scale was avoided thanks to an air bridge organised by the international community which served to “exchange” residents coming from both countries. In consequence of the conflict the border between Senegal and Mauritania was closed and diplomatic relations were broken off (they were restored in 1992). Cf. B. Posthumus, *Senegal: An End in Sight to Casamance Violence?*, *op. cit.*, p. 4. Contemporary animosities between the Senegalese and Mauritanian people are hundreds of years old and are connected with the black slave trade practiced by the Moors. The Berber-Arabian people who predominate in present day Mauritania (over 80% of the country’s residents) still stress their superiority over the native Black peoples (which include the peoples living on the Mauritanian side of the Senegal River, such as the Wolof, Toucouleur, Fulani, and Soninke people) which intensifies the internal conflicts in Mauritania, where slavery is still practiced.

⁹² On the use of territories of West African states in the illegal arms trade see K. Trzcíński, *Wojny w Liberii i Sierra Leone (1989-2002). Geneza, przebieg i następstwa* (Wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone [1989-2002] Origins, development and consequences), Warszawa 2002, pp. 105-106.

I have also classified factors in accordance with the criterion of their **significance for the origin** and **significance for the evolution** of the conflict in Casamance. Some of the factors discussed in the study refer only to the origin and others only to the evolution of the armed separatist conflict in Casamance. There is also a group of factors that contributed to both the origin and the evolution of the conflict.

Both classifications are presented in the table below:

<i>Axiological classification of factors</i>	<i>Significance for the origin</i>	<i>Significance for the evolution</i>
I. FAVOURABLE FACTORS		
Lack of a tradition of a common state organism in the region of Casamance and Northern Senegal and lack of a developed political organisation among most of the inhabitants of the South	YES	NO
Late colonisation of Casamance and controversies over the formal status of the region during French rule	YES	NO
The Casamance residents' experience of military action	YES	YES
Multidimensional ethno-cultural otherness of the Diola and Wolof people	YES	NO
The unique shape of the region, its limited territorial contact with the rest of Senegal, and its peripheral location relative to the political and economic centre of the country	YES	YES
The insignificant area of the countries neighbouring Casamance	YES	NO
Features of Casamance's natural environment	YES	YES
Important natural resources in Casamance	YES	NO
The patronizing attitude of some Wolof people towards people from the South	YES	NO
Underinvestment and underdevelopment of Casamance	YES	NO
Part of Casamance's population being convinced that their region is economically exploited by Senegal	YES	NO
The domination of peoples originating from Northern Senegal in the country's political life	YES	YES
The Disintegration of the Casamance region into smaller administrative units	NO	YES
The existence of models of late statehood in the vicinity of Casamance and on the African continent	YES	YES

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II. INFLUENTIAL FACTORS		
Problems and antagonisms stemming from migration from Northern Senegal to Casamance	YES	NO
The central authorities' attempts to weaken the local culture through the so-called policy of assimilation	YES	NO
Not admitting local elites to administrative posts in Casamance	YES	NO
The personality and descent of Senegal leaders and their style of exercising power	YES	YES
The resumption of activity by the MFDC as the institutionalisation of the opposition of some of the elites and of the Casamance population to the policies of the Senegalese authorities	YES	YES
Supporting separatism in Casamance by external forces	NO	YES
III. DETERMINANT FACTORS		
The humiliation and persecution of MFDC members	YES	NO
The formation of MFDC armed units	NO	YES

An axiological classification of factors connected with the conflict in Casamance according to the criterion of their significance for the origin and/or evolution of armed separatism in Casamance.

The factors that above all contributed to the initiation of the peace process in Casamance include: the election of a the new president in Senegal (in 2000 Abdou Diouf was finally replaced by Abdoulaye Wade), the exhaustion of MFDC leaders and fighters with a long-lasting combat, the hardship caused to the region's population by the conflict, and the decrease of the separatists' operational capacities resulting from the liquidation of their bases within the territory of Guinea Bissau. In spite of all the victims and the damages, the conflict has brought some changes for the better: for some years now the central authorities have been investing in developing the infrastructure in Casamance; more and more posts in the local administration are filled with local people; and the Diola, thanks to having fought for their own interests, are today more respected by the Wolof⁹³.

The real and declared aims of MFDC separatists still need to be examined separately and in detail. They probably differed at various periods of the con-

⁹³ This opinion is a result of talks that the author had with the Senegalese Wolof.

flict and in various circles of the leadership. The most important aims included: the region's gaining independence or territorial autonomy, with separate political institutions; negotiating better terms for the region's development and its economic integration with Senegal; preservation of the cultural identity of the local people; and the gaining of power and the financial benefits connected with it by the region's elites. Among separatists there were also people for whom the conflict became, at some point, a way of life. And a small group of visionaries in the MFDC ranks adhered to the irredentist idea of reactivating the historical state of Gabu on the territory of Casamance, Gambia, and Guinea Bissau.

The conflict in Casamance began in a different era than today's. In today's times, the MFDC can be transformed into a legal political party and can win local elections. There is a small chance that the south will gain autonomy, with its own government, parliament, and partly different legal system, or that the post of vice-president of Senegal will be established for a representative of Casamance. But if the authorities in Dakar were to grant autonomy to Casamance, other peoples inhabiting other provinces could want to receive it as well, on the basis, for instance, of their ethnicity. And this could threaten the territorial integrity of the country. Casamance undoubtedly needs new investments – for the reconstruction and building of roads, hospitals, processing plants, schools, and a university. It is probable that creating a duty-free zone there would contribute to the development of the region. Moreover, the central authorities' greater respect for the region's cultural specificity is certainly indispensable.

Negotiations concerning the final terms of the peace in Casamance will probably not be concluded before the end of 2006. The international community is to help in reconstructing the region⁹⁴. In order to secure permanent peace in Casamance it would be worthwhile to refer to European experience where developing peripheral regions and policies towards ethnic minorities are concerned. An acquaintance with and understanding of the factors that contributed to the outbreak and evolution of the conflict are an indispensable foundation for elaborating the right strategy to prevent a new outbreak of armed separatism in Southern Senegal and to finally solve the conflict.

⁹⁴ The World Bank has already prepared the so called *Senegal – Casamance Emergency Reconstruction Support Project*. See Senegal Receives US\$20 Million for Emergency Recovery Project in Casamance, *World Bank Press Release* (Washington DC), September 9, 2004.

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