

## Senegal's Precolonial Kingdoms

**BAOL (Bawol) (1689-late 1800s)** Historically a vassal state of the Djoloff empire until the latter's collapse in the 1550s, Baol became an independent state following its succession from Cayor in 1689. Like Cayor, it was a Wolof kingdom although a large Serer minority had long lived in the area. The state was ruled by a system of electors. Following French annexation, much of the aristocracy became followers of the Mouride brotherhood which became the dominant political force in the area formerly home to Baol (largely mapping onto today's Diourbel region) ever since.

Capital: Lambaye

Sources: Davidson 1966; Martin and Becker 1974; Searing 2002

### **BOUNDOU (Bundu) (early 1690s-late 1800s)**

A state run by a Peul aristocracy descending from the founder, Malick Sy, a migrant from Fouta Toro. The area had long been home to substantial Soninke, Mandingue and Wolof populations, many of whom submitted to the Sissibe dynasty following the state's foundation. The state expanded westward and to the south, conquering new territories that formed provinces ruled by the Sissibe family, but by late 1700s the state turned to consolidating its authority over existing territory and its role as a liaison between the Senegal and Gambian river states. By early 1800s Boundou's economy began to stagnate following a series of unsuccessful wars with Kaarta (present day Mali) and from increased pressure by growing trade with France and England to the northeast and west. The combination of a cholera outbreak in the 1860s, the effects of the Umarian jihads and significant out-migration following increased political unrest in the region, left the state significantly depopulated and geographically reduced in size in the latter half of the 1800s thus that Mamadou Lamine's uprising in the 1880s forced the state's hand to ally permanently with the French.

Capitals: Koussan, Boulebane

Sources: Flize 1856; Rançon 1894a; Rançon 1894b; Curtin 1975; Gomez 1992; Clark 1996; Clark 1998

### **CAYOR (mid-1500s—~1886)**

Founded when Amary Fal's led Cayor and Baol to succeed from the Djoloff empire in the mid-1500s, Cayor became the most powerful Wolof states in the period leading up to French conquest. Given its long coastline, Cayor was able to trade in slaves and a variety of commercial and food goods with European and Moorish traders. Nominally Muslim, the royal court was dominated by a Wolof aristocracy that had clear rules of succession and elections, though the monarchy was prone to substantial in-fighting. Military authority was maintained via the crown-slave caste of ceddo and administered via provinces. A Peulh minority existed throughout the territory and were subject to specific tax codes. Cayor's last king, Lat Dior,

resisted French annexation for over twenty years before the French finally constructed the Saint-Louis-Dakar railroad through the heart of the Cayor empire, effectively ending the region's independence.

Capital: Mboul, secondary capital at Nguisguis

Sources: Rousseau 1933; Fall 1974; Ba 1976; Casanova and Kaké 1976; Suret-Canale and Barry 1976; Diouf 1990

### DJOLOFF (late 12th-14th century-late 1800s)

At its height in the 15th century, the Djoloff empire covered much of western Senegal. The state grew around its role in the trans-Saharan trade but following the arrival of European traders on the coast and along the Senegal river, the state was unable to reorient its economy with its vassals, notably Cayor, breaking off and dominating these new economic activities. Following the succession of Baol, Cayor, Walo and Sine, the empire collapsed, leaving the Djoloff state as a relatively impoverished and isolated kingdom in Senegal's sparse interior. Dominated by a Wolof aristocracy, the area was traditionally home to Fulbe herders and Maure traders.

Capitals: Yang Yang, Ouarkokh

Sources: Monteil 1966; Coifman 1969; Charles 1973; Leyti 1981

### FOULADOU (Firdu) (1867-early 1900s)

Founded by Alfa Molo Balde and ruled subsequently by his son, Mousa Molo, Fouladou formed in the wake of Kaabu's collapse by Peulh herders unhappy with the long-time domination of Mandingues in the area. For much of its existence, Fouladou was a tributary of Fouta Jallon (present day Guinea). The state was at a disputed level of consolidation upon the arrival of the French with Fanchette arguing that it was little more than a large chieftaincy (resulting in a conservative measure of state expansion here, though all results hold with a more liberal estimation).

Key Villages: Hamdallaye

Sources: Girard 1964; Quinn 1971; Innes 1976; Fanchette 1999; Ngaïdé 2012

### FOUTA TORO (mid-1400s-1891)

Peulh state stretching along the middle to upper Senegal river, the state was composed of a set of highly independent provinces that shared deep cultural and ethnic ties and which together elected a council that ruled in conjuncture with an elected king. The state converted to Islam early and was home to many famous clerics. The state weakened in the 1800s as the French began to exert more control and became less willing to meet Futanke demands. Economically, the state was hurt when as the pre-colonial economy shifted to groundnuts, moving away from the river-based commerce Fouta Toro dominated.

Capital: Rotated; Hore-Fonde ceremonial center

Sources: Davidson 1966; Wane 1969; Robinson et al. 1972; Johnson 1974; Robinson 1975

GAJAAGA (Gadiaga, Galam) (foundation disputed (late 8th-14th century) - 1890s)

A long-established Soninke state centered around a handful of large commercial cities that controlled commerce (principally gold, gum arabic and slaves) along the southern bank of the upper Senegal (centered around present day Bakel). Ruled by the Bathily family, the territory was divided into an upper provide, Kamera north of the Faleme river and Goy to the south.

Capital: Tiyaabu

Sources: Flize 1857; Curtin 1975; Chastanet 1987; Bathily 1989; Gomez 1992

KAABU (Gabu) (1200s- ate-1700s) Mandingue empire, founded in the era of the Malian empire, whose capital (Kansala) was in present-day Guinea-Bissau with borders crossing into Senegal and Guinea. The empire, which peaked in the 1500s, was based upon a set of provinces whose increased calls for autonomy coupled with growing pressure from Fouta Djallon to the East led to its decline from the mid-17th century onwards.

Capital: Kansala (Guinea-Bissau)

Sources: Girard 1964; Innes 1976; Niane 1989; Clark and Phillips 1994

NIANI (mid-1600s-turn of the 19th century)

Mandinka kingdom located along the Gambian river that, at its peak in the 18th century, was quite powerful in the area, growing around the Atlantic slave trade. The state had declined by the 19th century into a series of small chieftaincies with substantial in-fighting among them.

Key Villages: Kataba (The Gambia)

Sources: AOF 1904; Quinn 1972

NIUMI (~1500-mid-1700s)

Small Mandinka state on the coast bordering the Gambia. For much of history, a tributary state to Saloum; declines in the 1700s.

Capital: Rotated

Sources: Wright 1977; Suret-Canale and Barry 1976

### OULI (Wuli) (mid-1600s-turn of the 19th century)

Mandinka kingdom located along the Gambian river that grew around the Atlantic slave trade and its ability to control communication between seaports and the Sudan interior. Capital in Madina (present day Gambia) and ruled by the Wali family. Although the royal family was Mandingue, the area was always home to substantial Sarakhole, Wolof and Peul minorities. A series of succession crises, provoked in part by the decline of the slave trade and increased political tensions in the region (notably pressure from Boundou to the east), undermined the state. By the early 1800s was largely considered a province of Boundou and by Rançon's mission in 1891-2 he reports the royal family was reported as impoverished and with no meaningful authority in the region.

Capital: Madina (The Gambia)

Sources: Rançon 1894b; Rançon 1894a; Quinn 1972; Galloway 1975; Van Hoven 1995

### RIP-PAKALA (1600s-1860s)

First known as Badibu, Rip was a Wolof (though with Mandinka-dominated provinces and Soninke and Peulh minorities) state that had intimate relations with but was always independent of Saloum. Rip was where Ma Ba staged his jihad in the 1860s and although he conquered the area, he died shortly after and the area was not clearly controlled until the French took over in the late 1800s.

Capital: Nioro du Rip

Sources: Afrique Occidentale Française 1901; Ba 1957; Sarr 1986-7

### SALOUM (late 1400s-late 1880s)

Serer kingdom originally a tributary of the Djoloff empire and gaining independence in the 1600s, the state was founded by a matrilineage migrating from Kaabu. As trade with the coast grew, the state became quite powerful, with a well-developed military bureaucracy, supported by a royal slave-caste (*tyeddo*), the state became a commercial force. Power was centered in the Buur, or king, who was elected between eligible families, but his power rested on an extended aristocracy across a large number of provinces, many of which were Wolof. The French tried to establish a protectorate in Saloum in 1862, but this was largely unsuccessful and, shortly after, Ma Ba's jihad further challenged the state. Nonetheless, the state remained autonomous until 1898 when the French officially annexed it and, unlike everywhere but Sine, a nominal king stayed in place until 1969.

Capital: Kahone

Sources: Ba 1957; Venema 1978; Klein 1968; Suret-Canale and Barry 1976; Martin and Becker 1979; Sarr 1986-7

### SINE (Siin) (14th century-late 1880s)

Serer Kingdom that gained independence from the Djoloff empire in mid-sixteenth century. Like Saloum, Sine was based on a matrilineal aristocracy though there were more direct ties between the Buur (king) and villages. Unlike the other states in the region, the Sine aristocracy never converted to Islam, retaining animist beliefs up until the early colonial period when a combination of Catholic missions and Islamization converted much of the population. Like Saloum, the Buur Sine retained a nominal title until 1969.

Capital: Diakhao

Sources: Klein 1968; Sarr 1986-7; Galvan 2004

### Walo (Oualo) (1630-mid-1800s)

A Wolof kingdom in the Senegal River delta area that was originally part of the Djoloff Empire and which became independent in the early 1600s. Walo was a weaker state than the other Wolof kingdoms and the aristocracy had recurrent fights between three royal lineages. Moreover, the kingdom's location made it particularly vulnerable to raids from Maures to the north, pressure from neighboring kingdoms and to the growing trader community in Saint Louis, at the base of the Senegal river. As the aristocracy became dependent on the slave trade, the kingdom suffered a series of religious jihads and had dramatically declined when it finally fell under French annexation in the mid-1800s.

Capital: Nder

Sources: Rousseau 1929; Monteil 1966; Coifman 1969; Suret-Canale and Barry 1976; Barry 1985

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