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When Senegalese Tidjanis Meet in Fez: The Political and Economic Dimensions of a Transnational Sufi Pilgrimage

Summary

The tomb of Ahmad Al-Tidjani in Fez has progressively become an important pilgrimage centre for the Tidjani Sufi order. Ever since the Tidjani teachings started spreading throughout the sub-Saharan region, this historical town has mainly been attracting Tidjani disciples from Western Africa. Most of them come from Senegal where the pilgrimage to Fez (known as *ziyara*) has started to become popular during the colonial period and has gradually gained importance with the development of new modes of transportation. This article analyses the transformation of the *ziyara* concentrating on two main aspects: its present concerns with economic and political issues as well as the impact that the transnationalisation of the Tidjani Senegalese community has on the Tidjani pilgrims to Morocco.

Keywords: Sufi shrine; political and economic aspects; tourism; diaspora

Dieser Beitrag befasst sich mit der Entwicklung der senegalesischen Tidjaniyya Pilgerreise nach Fès. Schon seit der Verbreitung der Tidjani Lehren im subsaharischen Raum, ist der Schrein vom Begründer dieses Sufi Ordens Ahmad al-Tidjani zu einem bedeutsamen Pilgerort für westafrikanische und insbesondere senegalesische Tidjaniyya Anhänger geworden. Während der Kolonialzeit und durch die Entwicklung der neuen Transportmöglichkeiten, hat dieser Ort weiterhin an Bedeutung gewonnen. Heute beeinflussen zudem die politischen und ökonomischen Interessen Marokkos als auch die Transnationalisierung der senegalesischen Gemeinschaft die Entwicklung dieser Pilgerreise.

Keywords: Sufismus; Pilgerreisen; transsaharische Beziehungen; Tourismus; informeller Handel; Diaspora

This article aims to analyze the different meanings of the pilgrimage of the Tidjaniyya, a transnational Sufi order, to the Moroccan city of Fez, focusing on two main aspects: its present concerns with economic and political issues, and the impact that the transnationalization of the Tidjani Senegalese community has on the Tidjani pilgrims to Morocco.

After the establishment of the Tidjaniyya Sufi order in an Algerian oasis in 1781/82, the Sufi scholar Ahmad al-Tidjani settled in Fez, where he built a Sufi lodge (a *zawiya*). From there the Tidjaniyya teachings spread throughout the region and reached West Africa in 1820. Partly by an armed movement established in 1852 by al-Hajj Umar Tall, different channels of transmission departed from Mauritania towards Guinea, Senegal, and today's Mali. Although the Tidjaniyya order is currently found in a number of countries within the Muslim world, it certainly has more prominence in African countries,¹ especially in Senegal where it represents the first brotherhood by the number of its followers.²

The Tidjaniyya order gained considerable impact in the Senegal region in the late nineteenth century. Two Senegalese disciples played a central role in reorganizing this Sufi path, and contributed to the dissemination of the Tidjani teachings in West Africa. Al-Hajj Malick Sy (1855–1922) spread the brotherhood within the Wolof communities and established a Tidjani center in Tivaouane. The second, Abdoulaye Niasse (1840–1922), established a religious center in Kaolack. His son Ibrahim Niasse became a leading figure of the Tidjaniyya of the twentieth century.³ Like many Sufi orders, the Tidjaniyya has developed many branches over time. It represents at present more a shared heritage of readings and rites and a strong identity than an organized, centralized Sufi order.⁴ Today, the religious centers of the various Tidjani branches and families in North and West Africa are centers of pilgrimage that attract not only local pilgrims but also international followers, as is the case of the center of the Niasse family in Kaolack.

Although Ahmad al-Tidjani's successors settled in Algeria after his death,⁵ the possession of the tomb of the founding father by the Tidjanis of Fez served to maintain privileged relations between the Tidjanis of sub-Saharan Africa and those of Morocco.⁶ Notwithstanding the significant role played by some Moroccan Tidjani scholars in disseminating Tidjani precepts throughout the African continent, it is unlikely that the Moroccan Tidjaniyya would have had the same value for the Tidjani community if the founder had not been buried in Fez. With the burial of Ahmad al-Tidjani in his *zawiya*

1 Triaud 2000, 10.

2 Villalón 1995, 67–68.

3 Triaud 2000, 12.

4 Triaud 2000, 14.

5 Ahmad al-Tidjani nominated as his successor Ali al-Tamasini from Tamalhat. For that reason, the small town of Tamalhat in the east of Algeria became the

center of the order after Ahmad al-Tidjani's death, whereas the sons of the founder moved to the birth town of their father in the Algerian oasis Aïn Madi. Today the official seat of the head of the order is Aïn Madi.

6 El Adnani 2007, 181.

in 1815, the edifice acquired even greater value in the eyes of the Tidjani disciples. Thus, large flows of pilgrims from abroad – particularly from Senegal or from Senegalese communities resident in Europe – regularly travel today to Morocco in order to make the pilgrimage to the *zawiya* of Fez.

Due to the large popularity of the Tidjaniyya Sufi order in West Africa, the *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani in Fez plays an important international as well as national political role in the Moroccan state. At the international level, this Sufi order contributes to fostering relations between Morocco and its African neighbors. When the Organization for African Unity (OAU) in 1984 recognized the sovereignty of Western Sahara (under Moroccan rule since 1975), Morocco withdrew from the Pan-African organization and since that time has been carrying out numerous bilateral cooperation projects with its African neighbors to compensate for its isolation from the OAU and to gain support for its territorial and economic interests.⁷ The Tidjaniyya members have played a crucial role in fostering the bilateral relations between the Moroccan state and its West African neighbors. The Senegalese spiritual guides in particular have been acting as informal diplomatic agents and have been lobbying towards strengthening relations between Morocco and Senegal, these two countries being tied to each other by the Tidjaniyya order.⁸

At the national level, the Moroccan state has been carrying out, since the early years of the twenty-first century, several measures to enhance and promote the Sufi dimension of Islam as a more legitimate and authentic form of Moroccan religiosity. This policy is aimed at weakening radical forms of Salafi Islam that are developing in the country.⁹ The rediscovery of Sufism as one of the core elements of official Moroccan Islam goes hand in hand with the valorization of the local Sufi patrimony, such as the Moroccan Sufi literature, Sufi music, and the shrines of local Sufi scholars. This cultural heritage is directed to nationals as well as being used as cultural products to attract international tourists.

Due to its transnational connection with West Africa and to the Sufi heritage it represents, the *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani of Fez is nowadays a particular site where both foreign and religious policy issues intersect and are interwoven. Focusing on the perspective of the Senegalese, who represent the main category of Tidjani pilgrims visiting the *zawiya* of Fez, this article aims to analyze the impacts of political, economic, and cultural identity issues on the meanings of the Tidjani pilgrimage, and asks to what extent the Tidjani journey to Fez represents a practice that enables Senegalese Tidjanis, from Senegal and from the Senegalese diasporas in Europe, to identify with Morocco.

7 Bouhout 1996, 61.

9 Rachik 2007, 59.

8 Sambe 2010, 146.

To address these questions, I will analyze the meanings of the sacred in the frame of the pilgrimage by describing the shrine of Ahmad al-Tidjani and by presenting the religious grounds upon which Tidjani pilgrims base their commitment to make the *ziyara*¹⁰ to Fez. In a second part, I will describe the evolution of the Senegalese pilgrimage and discuss its communal and social dimension, focusing mainly on trade and collective pilgrimage practices. Finally, I will focus on the commercialization of the *ziyara* as a tourism product and discuss its effects on the shape and meanings of the Tidjani pilgrimage.¹¹

I The *ziyara* of the saint Ahmad al-Tidjani: representations of sainthood and the religious meanings of the Tidjani pilgrimage

The purpose of the *ziyara* is to renew. It is true that we are Tidjani wherever we go. It is lived everywhere. Making the *ziyara* is above all to renew the love and fidelity of the follower vis-à-vis his shaykh. It is life [...] the physical experience, the feeling. You often wish to visit the tomb.¹²

Islam made the *hajj* – the pilgrimage to Mecca – an obligation for all Muslim believers.¹³ However, and without being uncontested among Muslims,¹⁴ the practice of saint veneration has continued to exist at the same time as the *hajj* pilgrimage and is not considered a mere compensation for a non-performed canonical pilgrimage. Making a *ziyara* primarily requires journeying to the tomb of a person perceived as a saint in order to ask for his intercession. The necessity to visit the place where the saint is buried is a particular characteristic of pilgrimages in Islam. This may be explained by the absence of figurative representations or of relics. Since such options are absent in Islam, traveling to the saint's tomb becomes indispensable. The only alternative to “the dictatorship of the place” are visions of the saint.¹⁵ In the Tidjani tradition, such visions also play a central role in the life of the followers. However, despite the possibility of seeing the saint and feeling his presence in all places, a number of Tidjanis aspire to pray, one day, at the tomb of the founder of their Sufi order.

10 Muslim pilgrimage to a sanctuary.

11 This article is based on a fieldwork I conducted in Morocco and Senegal between 2009 and 2011.

12 A Senegalese Tidjani based in Morocco. Interview on March 15, 2010, in Rabat.

13 The *hajj* is considered one of the five pillars of Islam. It is mandatory for every person capable of its performance, physically and financially.

14 Since the ninth century, there has been a crystallization of opposition towards *ziyara* in the Muslim world. According to many thinkers, *ziyara* is perceived as a heretical innovation and the veneration of saints as polytheism. Today, these arguments are still put forward to condemn pilgrimage to sanctuaries. There is a large literature on the religious debates on saint veneration in the Muslim world.

15 Mayeur-Jaouen 2000, 140.

1.1 The *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani: a multifunctional religious place embedded in the urban space of Fez

The shrine of Ahmad al-Tidjani is located in the old town of Fez, a very densely built part of the city which was founded in 789 and is called *Fas al-Bali*. Today the old town of Fez represents one of the largest car-free areas in the world and is characterized by its large number of Sufi shrines, mosques and religious schools. The *zawiya* has a main door where two caretakers take turns in keeping an eye on the visitors who enter the place, making sure that all have taken off their shoes and women have covered their hair. After entering through the main door, female visitors turn right and cross a courtyard used for ablutions to get to their designated place at the back end of the building, whereas men find their place at the left of the building. The building of the *zawiya* resembles the shape of other mosques in Fez and its architecture combines different elements of Moorish style. Since it functions also as a mosque, the *zawiya* holds a *mihrab* (a niche in the wall that indicates the direction of Mecca, the direction Muslims should face when praying) situated in the part of the shrine that is reserved for men. It is also in this part of the *zawiya* that three high pendulum clocks are placed indicating the time for prayers and showing the richness of this place and its owners. The walls of the whole *zawiya* are covered with mosaic and Arabic letters engraved in plaster; its wooden ceiling is colorfully painted and its floor is covered with green carpets.

The white marble sarcophagus of Ahmad al-Tidjani is located in the center of the building and is surrounded by a golden railing with a door that faces only the section of the *zawiya* that is reserved for men. Before 2010, this door was sometimes open and worshippers (mostly foreigners and Moroccan men) were able to approach the tomb to pray and touch it. In 2010, access to the shrine was restricted and no more visitors were allowed to enter through the golden door and approach the tomb. The area that surrounds the sepulchre became a prohibited space, enhancing by the same way the sacredness of Ahmad al-Tidjani's tomb. Since that time, worshippers only communicate with the saint while touching the railing and looking at the tomb from a distance. Since its foundation in the late eighteenth century the *zawiya* has been renovated and extended several times. The last renovation took place in the early years 2000 and led to larger transformations of the decoration and the spatial organization inside the *zawiya*, contributing to enhancing the visibility and popularity of the place among local inhabitants.

The *zawiya* has numerous functions: it is used as a mosque, a Tidjani lodge, and a shrine. Consequently this place is visited by different groups with different aims: local Tidjani adepts, local inhabitants who do not belong to the Tidjaniyya order but who visit the saint as a means of leisure or to conduct canonical prayers, and foreign pilgrims, mainly Senegalese. Whereas non-Tidjanis consider that Ahmad al-Tidjani is one saint

among many others, Tidjani adepts consider that he is of a particular status. They base their representations of the saint on the religious teachings of the Tidjaniyya. For that reason it is necessary briefly to lay out these teachings and the role played by Ahmad al-Tidjani in the Tidjaniyya in order to understand better the meanings of the Tidjani journeys to Fez.

1.2 Ahmad al-Tidjani: a saint¹⁶ with a particular status

In the Sufi teachings, the world is mythically and mystically divided among saints and according to a hierarchy that governs over the destiny of the world through a celestial court whose earthly effects can be felt at any moment.¹⁷ For the Tidjani disciples, Ahmad al-Tidjani occupies the two most elevated statuses of this hierarchy. He is not only seen as the seal of all saints and the pole of all poles but also as the purest of all saints, a qualifier that he attributed to himself. He is the pivot, the highest rank in the Sufi hierarchy of saints. As the seal of saints, Ahmad al-Tidjani represents the perfect embodiment of sainthood for Tidjanis, like the prophet Muhammad, who is the complete embodiment of all prophetic revelations and the last of all prophets. All the saints who preceded him directed their inspiration towards him and all those who came and will come after him derived their inspiration from him.¹⁸ The idea of Ahmad al-Tidjani's superiority can also be found in the remarks of the Tidjani pilgrims I met in Fez:

I can't explain this to you ... Seydina Shaykh he is ... he is really extraordinary, he is really extraordinary [...] You know [that] the prophet Muhammad [he] is deceased but [this] doesn't change anything to the fact that, when you are a Muslim, he is the best of all beings for you. He is the most perfect being. In every prayer, we pray for him. You know, it is the same thing with Shaykh Ahmad Tidjani. He is [a being] like the Prophet.¹⁹

Ahmad al-Tidjani's position is situated between that of prophets and that of saints. This places him at the top of sainthood, and just below prophets and their companions. This high spiritual position is further legitimated by the descent from the prophet Muhammad that Ahmad al-Tidjani claimed and which is another element upon which my interviewees emphatically insisted. It is indeed quite common among Maghrebi Sufi *shaykhs* to claim descent from the prophet Muhammad. It is therefore a criterion which further justifies the sainthood of a person.

16 The concept that is translated here as saint is *wāli* which means the one who is close to God and who possesses a certain authority and particular powers and capacities. For further details on sainthood in Islam, see Chodkiewicz 1995, 13–32.

17 Mayeur-Jaouen 2000, 144.

18 Abun-Nasr 1965, 28.

19 Interview with a Senegalese pilgrim on May 10, 2010, in Fez. Ahmad al-Tidjani is also known as Seydina Shaykh.

Through the supreme sainthood of the founder of the Tidjaniyya, the sanctuary in which he is buried becomes “the focal point”²⁰ of the brotherhood. Having been initiated into the Tidjaniyya by a living spiritual master called *shaykh* or *muqaddam*, the pilgrims I met in Fez consider Ahmad al-Tidjani to be their supreme *shaykh*, a *shaykh* whose physical proximity is rewarding and who plays the role of a mediator between worshippers and God.

1.3 The saint as a mediator

Unlike the pilgrimage to Mecca, which is canonized, the *ziyara* does not have fixed rules. Despite this, my interviews and observations reveal that a specific etiquette is being observed among Tidjani pilgrims who come to Fez. In some cases, it is the *shaykh* who gives informal directions and advice to his disciples when they decide to undertake the *ziyara* to Fez.²¹ However, in addition to the informal steps prescribed by the *shaykh*, some rites to be performed during the *ziyara* have been institutionalized over time. These rites corroborate the supreme position of Ahmad al-Tidjani in the Tidjani teachings.²²

The sainthood of Ahmad al-Tidjani becomes discernible in the way pilgrims behave within the *zawiya*, which is perceived as a blessed place. According to them, it is necessary to purify oneself in the form of ablutions before entering the *zawiya*. Subsequently, it is important to pray two *rak'a*²³ in respect of the place. This rite, however, is not restricted to the *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani or the Tidjaniyya brotherhood in particular but is also customary for Muslim pilgrims in other Muslim countries, such as Egypt, for instance.²⁴ Another aspect that is reflected by the practice of these rites during the *ziyara* is that of the saint’s role as intercessor. The physical proximity of the sepulchre seems to make this intercession possible. The *ziyara* ends with the following sequence of phrases:

O! Lord by the law of Your slaves whom when You look at, Your anger ceases, and by the law of those who surround the Throne and by the law of our excellence Muhammad and by the law of our excellence, our shaykh and master Ahmed Tidjani, I implore you [...]²⁵

20 Interview with a Tidjani master of Dakar on October 12, 2010, in Dakar.

21 A *muqaddam* explained that he prepares every disciple individually for his *ziyara* to Fez according to his particular needs.

22 I base this argument on information I collected from Senegalese pilgrims. I also found a handout summarizing the protocol of the *ziyara* in the pos-

session of Senegalese pilgrims from Dakar. This text was written and distributed by representatives of the *zawiya* of Lyon, France, known as “La Grande Zawiya d’Europe”.

23 Cycles of prayer.

24 Hoffman 1995, 102.

25 Based on the translation into French provided in the handout summarizing the protocol.

While the pilgrims often talk about miracles that the saint has accomplished for them, in this prayer it is to God that the requests are directed and not to the saint. Although he is considered to be the most perfect of all saints, he remains a human being that should not be worshipped like God. This refers to the dogma of the uniqueness of God in Islam and reflects according to Tidjanis the conformity of the Tidjaniyya teachings with Islam. Ahmad al-Tidjani should therefore not be venerated. He simply plays the role of mediator between the celestial and the worldly.

1.4 For blessedness on earth and salvation in the hereafter

Accomplishing the *ziyara* is, in many cases, motivated either by a specific aim to be achieved in this life, or by the wish to gain salvation in the hereafter. The primary motivation common to all pilgrims is their desire to be close to the saint and to draw from his spiritual energy. As explained by a Senegalese woman I met in Fez: “When you come here, it is as if Seydina Shaykh²⁶ (he) connects you to something.”²⁷

The desire to be in close proximity to the saint Ahmad al-Tidjani appears in the accounts of the pilgrims as a means of maintaining a privileged relationship with him, of learning about him, and thus becoming a better Tidjani follower. Making the *ziyara* to Fez sometimes serves as a rite of passage into the life of a practicing Tidjani. In the Tidjaniyya doctrine, becoming a Tidjani requires adherence to the *tariqa*. This is achieved by making a pact with the saint in which the adherent commits to perform the Tidjani prayers and rituals that are referred to as *wird*. “Taking the *wird*” signifies commitment to practice the Tidjani rites²⁸ in addition to other Islamic obligations. According to the *shaykh* in charge of the *zawiya* of Fez, visiting pilgrims usually take the *ziyara* as an occasion to take the *wird* or to renew it. I met a Senegalese nurse who confirmed having taken her *wird* during her three-day stay in Fez. She experienced this pilgrimage as a passage into a new phase of her life in which religious practice has become essential. I met this woman for a second time in Dakar. She explained that the *ziyara* to Fez not only made her a better Tidjani practitioner but also affected the way people treat her. Since her return from Fez, people call her *sokhna* which in this context means a reputable woman.

Furthermore, making the *ziyara* to the saint Ahmad al-Tidjani is also perceived as a means to alleviate problems of everyday life. A Senegalese student from Rabat explained:

26 Ahmad al-Tidjani.

27 Interview with a Senegalese Tidjani on May 10, 2010, in Fez.

28 According to Tidjani teachings, there are three Tidjani rites that a disciple has to engage in practicing. For further details, see Abun-Nasr 1965, 50–57.

When you wake up feeling melancholy, you go to the *zawiya* because you wish to get the blessing of the *shaykh* [...] you wish that, by renewing your visits, God will fill you with satisfaction.²⁹

During my stay in Fez, I met a number of pilgrims who hoped that the *ziyara* would mitigate their problems: “When someone is sick and believes in the *shaykh*, he goes to Fez and the issue is solved.”³⁰ It is in this spirit that a female Senegalese resided in Fez for several months, hoping to get pregnant and to obtain a visa to join her husband, who works in Europe. She told me:

You know, [in] this *zawiya*, you can’t pray [here] and not have it fulfilled. You can’t ask Sidna Shaykh for something and not have it fulfilled.³¹

The *ziyara* of Ahmad al-Tidjani, therefore, fulfills the same functions as the other Muslim *ziyaras*. They are undertaken either for emotional or sentimental reasons, to gain “an individual spiritual uplift,”³² or to solve worldly issues through the intermediary of the saint. Tidjani pilgrims tend to experience a combination of two types of motivation: “attaining a healthy life through the *ziyara*,”³³ and finding bliss on earth.

Particularly to those pilgrims who come from afar and for whom the *ziyara* represents a real sacrifice, praying in the vicinity of their supreme *shaykh* is an ‘extraordinary’ achievement and may become a passage to another stage of life. If the visit to the sanctuary in Fez represents the major step in this double quest towards blessedness on earth and salvation in the hereafter, the pilgrimage sometimes takes the shape of an itinerary that is long and discontinuous, like a journey with different stages. Furthermore it is a practice that is often linked with everyday life. The recent evolution of the Senegalese Tidjani pilgrimage was particularly influenced by the international migration of Senegalese and its interrelationship with trade activities.

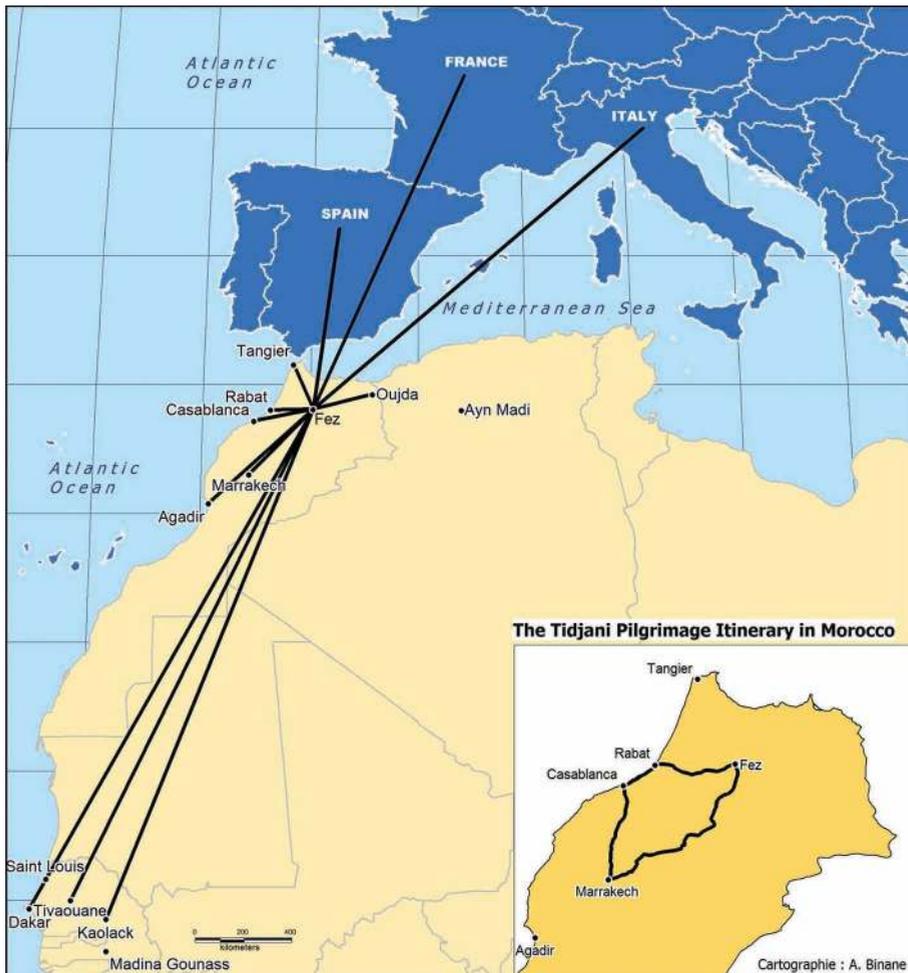


Fig. 1 The transnational dimension of the Senegalese Tidjani pilgrimage to Fez.

2 The *ziyara* of Ahmad al-Tidjani: a drive for transnational Senegalese mobility to Fez

2.1 From the pilgrimage of elites towards a more global phenomenon

The evolution of the *ziyara* to the sanctuary of Ahmad al-Tidjani is related to the long-standing relations between Fez and Senegalese Tidjani centers. The Senegalese religious leaders in particular have shown great interest in establishing and consolidating relations with the Moroccan Tidjaniyya. Even though not all of them have sojourned in Fez, these Senegalese religious chiefs communicated with Moroccan scholars on a regular basis and obtained degrees from them.³⁴ Until the 1920s, however, only religious elites traveled to the sanctuary of Ahmad al-Tidjani in Fez.³⁵ With the improvement of means of transportation and the development of Senegalese international mobility, the *ziyara* to Fez has subsequently become more accessible to a larger public.

After the opening of the port of Casablanca in the 1920s, the routes of the pilgrimage to Mecca were diverted northwards: departing from the port of Dakar, passing by North Africa and crossing the Mediterranean towards the Middle East. Between 1928 and 1958, the annual pilgrimage of West Africans to Mecca was made under the supervision of a commissioner of the government of French West Africa. The colonial authorities organized the pilgrimage in order to control all contacts between the Muslims of FWA and the Muslims of North Africa, the latter being suspected of supporting nationalist and independence movements.³⁶ From that moment on, it became common for boats heading towards Mecca to stop off in Casablanca or Oran. Pilgrims were thus given the choice of using the period of transit to travel to Fez (Fig. 1).³⁷ While the pilgrimage to Mecca was organized for nationals of French West Africa (FWA), the pilgrims who made the *ziyara* to Fez were in the majority from Senegal. Out of 119 pilgrims from FWA returning from their pilgrimage to Mecca in 1952, 106 Senegalese had made the *ziyara* to Fez during their stopover in Morocco.³⁸

From 1958 on, there was a liberalization of these flows and a flight connection between Dakar and Casablanca as well as a bus connection between Casablanca and Fez

29 Interview with a Senegalese Tidjani adept on January 15, 2010, in Rabat.

30 Interview with a Senegalese Tidjani master on October 8, 2010, in Dakar.

31 Interview with a Senegalese Tidjani adept on May 10, 2010, in Fez. – To have the prayer fulfilled means that it will have a positive effect on the life of the devout.

32 Bhardwaj 1998, 72.

33 Interview with a Senegalese Tidjani adept on February 15, 2010, in Rabat.

34 The first Senegalese spiritual leader who had been to Fez was Abdoulay Niasse, the founder of the Kaolack branch. Niasse visited Fez on his way to Mecca in 1890 (El Adnani 2005, 11–12).

35 El Adnani 2005, 12–14.

36 Loimeier 2001, 71.

37 O. Kane 1994, 6.

38 Rapport du Capitaine Cardaire, Commissaire du Gouvernement de l'AOF au pèlerinage de 1952 (Archives Nationales du Sénégal).

were established. Consequently, the connections between Senegal and Morocco became more frequent and the number of Senegalese and West African pilgrims going to Fez increased considerably in the 1960s.³⁹ From the 1970s, however, these flows stagnated because of the closure of the sea connection between Dakar and Casablanca and the establishment of direct flights from Senegal to Jeddah for pilgrims going to Mecca.⁴⁰

2.2 The ziyara to Fez today: a transnational Senegalese pilgrimage

Everybody dreams of making the ziyara to the tomb of the shaykh Ahmad Tidjani because they consider that the shaykh is Senegalese. Because the Senegalese love the shaykh Ahmad Tidjani more than Moroccans do.⁴¹

According to the Tidjani master quoted above, the Tidjani *ziyara* is represented as a mainly Senegalese practice. Although official data about the origins and number of pilgrims making the Tidjani *ziyara* to Fez are lacking, my investigations have shown that foreign pilgrims currently coming to Fez are predominantly Senegalese. With the development of Senegalese international migration, the Senegalese traveling to Fez are not necessarily coming from Senegal. Their countries of residence are considerably diversified: the majority of Tidjani pilgrims either live in West Africa or belong to the African diasporas living in Europe. The analyses of the police records of two local families that host Tidjani pilgrims indicate that 90 percent of the guests were Senegalese.⁴² But 45 percent of these Senegalese were from Europe, mainly from France.⁴³

Since the city of Fez is geographically close to the European continent, accessibility may explain the substantial proportion of Senegalese pilgrims coming from Europe. Moreover, travel costs between Europe and Moroccan cities are rather affordable. This has been the case since the liberalization of the air transportation sector and the opening up of the Moroccan airspace to competition. Since 2006, some low-cost companies started providing services to tourist destinations such as Fez. Nowadays, it is possible to travel to Fez by plane at low cost from Paris and Marseille, as well as from several Italian and northern Spanish cities. This allows pilgrims from Europe to spend the weekend in the sanctuary of their saint.

Trips between Senegal and Morocco are more expensive. Transport fares from Senegal to Morocco are costly since Royal Air Maroc has the monopoly on flights between

39 El Adnani 2005, 21.

40 Interview conducted on September 1, 2010, with the *shaykh* in charge of the *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani.

41 A Senegalese Tidjani master based in Dakar. Interview on October 8, 2010, in Dakar.

42 Other pilgrims came from Mali, Nigeria, and Sudan.

43 However, not all pilgrims use this type of accommodation, as some prefer to stay in hotels. Unfortunately, hotels have refused to cooperate by giving information in this regard.

the two countries. A round trip costs approximately 600 euros, which represents a considerable sum for average Senegalese people living in Senegal.⁴⁴ Since 2002, a road has linked Senegal to Morocco through Mauritania.⁴⁵ This route, which covers a distance of 3000 km and connects Dakar to Casablanca, is frequented by numerous Senegalese tradesmen. Projects aimed at organizing trips by bus for Senegalese pilgrims along this route exist but, for the time being, most of the trips to the *ziyara* are by air.⁴⁶

Another group of Senegalese who regularly visit the *zawiya* of Fez lives in Morocco. They belong to a small community of Senegalese nationals who are either studying or working in Morocco and for whom the *zawiya* represents a hub for religious and community gatherings.⁴⁷ During religious holidays, particularly prior to the *mawlid* celebration,⁴⁸ these communities move from different cities of the kingdom to celebrate this event in the *zawiya*. For those that reside in Fez, the *zawiya* is also a privileged place for prayers. Among the African migrants living in Fez, the Senegalese seem to feel particularly close to this place here they regularly meet members from their country of origin.⁴⁹ The *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani therefore represents a meeting place for Senegalese where they can connect with their fellows and consolidate their transnational ties. Additionally to its role as a place touched by the divine, it represents also a point in the transnational Senegalese Tidjani territory.

2.3 The communal dimension of the trip: the case of collective *ziyara*

The communal dimension of the *ziyara* to Fez can furthermore be observed in the collective pilgrimages organized by Senegalese Tidjani branches. These journeys represent an opportunity for Tidjani adepts to gather around their living spiritual guide. One of the Tidjani branches participating most actively in the organization of collective *ziyara* journeys is the Senegalese branch of Madina Gounass. This religious center, founded in the 1930s by Al Hadj Mamadou Seydou Bâ, hosts a branch that distinguishes itself through the practice of spiritual assemblies. The disciples of this Tidjani branch are encouraged to organize spiritual retreats of a few days during which they recite the Koran and commemorations of the Prophet (*dhikr*). Nowadays, this branch has adherents in

44 A teacher in Dakar has a monthly salary of approximately 380 euros.

45 In February 2002, the first official point of passage was opened between Western Sahara and Mauritania; see Wippel 2004, 36.

46 All pilgrims I met during my fieldwork in Fez came from Senegal by air. Completing the *ziyara* sometimes requires saving for years or taking out bank loans. I wonder if the high price of the trip to Fez

does not contribute to giving it more value and conceiving the *ziyara* as a sacrifice.

47 Interview with a Senegalese immigrant resident, on January 2, 2010, in Rabat.

48 The event commemorates the birth of the Prophet. The day before *mawlid* and seven days later, a night of religious chants is organized in the *zawiya*. These two nights are moments of festivity in the *zawiya* and the gathering of a considerable number of Moroccan and foreign pilgrims.

49 Berriane 2014, 139–153.

different West African, Central African, and European countries, namely in France. Although it was mainly focused on the Fulani and Halpulaar⁵⁰ communities, this branch also managed to attract American, French, and Moroccan adepts.⁵¹ In the 1970s, the founder of Madina Gounass initiated collective *ziyaras* to Fez and led every year and for a period of three weeks a convoy of around 300 pilgrims towards Fez.⁵² This practice of collective *ziyara* had been carried on by his successor Mansour Baro, who was known to be a tireless traveler who moved to different countries in the course of a major Halpulaar diaspora in order to consolidate the transnational social ties among his followers and to improve their religious education.⁵³ Mansour Baro also maintained close relations with the Moroccan Tidjaniyya. He came to Morocco up to three times a year and transformed into a *zawiya* a villa in Casablanca that a Moroccan disciple provided for him. Later, he bought a house facing the *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani to serve as accommodation for his disciples during their *ziyara* to Fez. The journeys of Mansour Baro to Morocco also took the shape of a collective *ziyara* during which he was accompanied by Senegalese disciples from Senegal, Senegalese Tidjani followers living in Morocco and France, as well as Moroccan disciples. The pilgrimage group would land in Casablanca, then visit the sanctuary of a Tidjani scholar buried in Rabat, and finally travel to Fez in order to visit Ahmad al-Tidjani.⁵⁴

The current representative of the Madina Gounass branch, Amadou Tidiane Bâ, also regularly visits Morocco and every two years, during June, a collective *ziyara* is organized in partnership with local travel agencies. In June 2010, about 200 disciples of the Tidjani branch of Madina Gounass from different countries in Africa and Europe met in Casablanca in order to accompany their religious leaders to the sanctuary of Rabat and subsequently to Fez. This trip, however, did not end in Fez; Amadou Tidiane Bâ continued his journey to France, in order to call upon followers who had immigrated to Europe.

Such journeys of religious leaders are not a specificity of this branch of the Tidjaniyya, nor are they restricted to the Tidjaniyya itself. For Senegalese religious leaders this practice, which is likewise referred to as *ziyara*, entails traveling to places where their disciples live.⁵⁵ Since the latter are increasingly to be found today in European countries and in the United States, it has become customary for Senegalese religious masters to travel to their disciples' countries of residence.⁵⁶ What is unique to the Tidjaniyya, however, is that the trips not only lead to the disciples' host countries, but also to Fez, which

50 Halpulaar literally denotes the community who speaks Pulaar. It represents an ethnolinguistic group found in various West African countries.

51 A. Kane 2007, 190.

52 El Adnani 2005, 21.

53 Soares 2004, 916.

54 A. Kane 2007, 195–196.

55 In the West African context, *ziyara* means also the travel of a *shaykh* to his disciples in order to collect their donations.

56 For further details on itinerant Tidjani leaders, see Soares 2004, 913–927.

can be seen as a pivotal location. Morocco in general and Fez in particular are both becoming centers for transnational Tidjani Halpulaar community gatherings. However, while the *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani is perceived as the main pivot of the *ziyara*, the Senegalese marabouts⁵⁷ represent the living pivots around which the *ziyara* takes place. The motivation to experience the physical proximity of the saint Ahmad al-Tidjani is coupled with the possibility of gathering Tidjani adherents and consolidating in this way the transnational social networks that span Senegal, Morocco, and Europe.

2.4 The links between pilgrimage and transnational informal trade

These social networks are also linked to networks of informal Senegalese pilgrim-traders who combine pilgrimage and transnational trade activities. Although most Senegalese pilgrims who come to Fez from Senegal belong to the elite, people from other social classes – who finance their trip through trade activities – also take the road to Fez. As is the case in numerous Muslim pilgrimages, the connection between religion and trade is very common in the Senegalese *ziyara* to Fez, and the development of the Tidjani pilgrimage went hand in hand with the development of informal trade.

In her work on Senegalese traders, Laurence Marfaing demonstrated how the Tidjani pilgrimage to Fez was closely tied to the development of informal commerce between Senegal and Morocco. Indeed, trade between the two countries has followed the same routes as pilgrimage. Merchants initially traveled in caravans on trans-Saharan routes. From the 1920s on, they used vessels as transportation means and transited in Casablanca on their way to Fez. Their main purpose was to obtain merchandise and, on the same occasion, they could make the *ziyara*. Nowadays, traders who fly to Casablanca have their regular suppliers and they combine their business trips with a passage to Fez, where they visit the sanctuary of Ahmad al-Tidjani. Women, in particular, have used the pilgrimage as an alibi to engage in commercial activities. Since the 1950s, women have been just as active as men in those activities. The sacred dimension of the journey to Morocco allowed women to travel alone and engage in trade activities during the trip to Fez.⁵⁸

Today, too, Senegalese pilgrims combine their religious journey with trade activities. One of the purposes of the commercial activities is to finance the *ziyara* to Morocco. Some pilgrims bring along Senegalese merchandise (fruit or clothing) and sell it during their journey in Morocco in order to finance their trip. On returning to their home country, they bring back Moroccan merchandise and sell it in Senegalese markets. The mobility of pilgrim-merchants that initially occurred between Morocco and Senegal is nowadays also extending towards Europe. Some Senegalese pilgrims who reside in

57 Religious master in West Africa.

58 Marfaing 2004, 235–260.

Europe use their journey to Morocco to supply themselves with Moroccan products that they later sell to the Senegalese community in Europe.⁵⁹ I also met two transnational couples where the husbands lived in France or Spain and the wives in Senegal and who regularly meet in Fez. Their journeys were funded by informal trade activities since the wives return to Senegal with European products while the husbands go back to Europe with Senegalese goods. The journey to Fez was for them an opportunity to meet and to visit the saint Ahmad al-Tidjani. Through these activities, the city of Fez has become a commercial hub for goods circulating between Senegal and Europe, contributing to making the *zawiya* a point in the Senegalese Tidjani transnational territory.

Due to the transnational dimension of the Senegalese community and the existence of Senegalese diaspora communities in Europe and Morocco, the pilgrimage to Fez has a communal dimension and works as a way to gather, meet, and trade. Traveling to Morocco therefore also functions as a tool to build and foster Senegalese social networks spanning from Senegal to Europe.

In his work on pilgrimage, Erik Cohen distinguishes pilgrimage from tourism. While the tourist tends to move towards the peripheries of his world, the pilgrim – as Cohen postulates – proceeds towards his spiritual sociocultural center.⁶⁰ To some extent, the pilgrimage practice of Senegalese Tidjanis in Morocco represents the *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani as a center towards which Senegalese Tidjanis move. It also represents a social and cultural place of identification for Senegalese Tidjanis, although it is not located on the Senegalese national territory.

But not only the *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani appears as part of the Senegalese transnational territory; sometimes, and particularly in the frame of the commercialization of the Tidjani pilgrimage as a form of religious tourism, other Moroccan sites have also been integrated into this topography. The reinvention of the Tidjani pilgrimage points to interrogations of the relationships Senegalese pilgrims have with the Moroccan territory. Although the Senegalese Tidjani pilgrimage appears as a journey that consolidates social ties based on kinship and Senegalese identity, the Tidjani ziyara functions also as a medium that links up Senegalese Tidjanis with Morocco, symbolically incorporating elements of the Moroccan national heritage into the Senegalese Tidjani identity.

59 This is the case, for instance, of a Senegalese I met in Fez in September 2010. He was a resident of the French town of Nancy and came by car to spend the twenty-seventh night of Ramadan in Fez (Septem-

ber 2010). He took advantage of this first *ziyara* to Fez to buy Moroccan outfits in order to sell them in France to the Senegalese community.

60 Cohen 1992, 47.

3 The reinvention of the pilgrimage: the *ziyara* as a journey

3.1 The promotion of spiritual tourism in Fez

As part of the valorization of Sufi Islam in official discourses and the recent conceptualization of religious or spiritual tourism as new tourism products, the city of Fez has begun also to target Tidjani followers from sub-Saharan Africa. The main NGO working for the development of new tourist activities in Fez is the Regional Council for Tourism of Fez (CRT). This council, which has been created in every Moroccan region to develop local tourism projects, works closely with the national Ministry of Tourism. The main focuses of the tourism projects developed by the CRT in Fez are aimed at promoting the old town (medina) as a tourist attraction and, the city having been able to preserve its 'traditional urban life' and cultural customs, at emphasizing its characteristic as UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1981. In this framework, the local Sufi tradition of Fez has been highlighted remarkably. Numerous Sufi shrines and lodges have been renovated by the municipality and opened to international tourists, who can in this way take part in Sufi rituals. Furthermore, two international festivals dedicated to sacred music and Sufi culture take place every year in the city.

The desire to promote spiritual tourism to Fez is furthermore the result of Moroccan politics towards Africa. Since the late 1990s Morocco has aimed to open up economic opportunities on the African continent, which has been perceived as a potential market for Moroccan products, services, and investments. In this respect, the CRT has begun to target the Tidjani followers from sub-Saharan Africa. Since 2007, this council has regularly organized cultural weeks abroad in order to promote the customs of Fez in African cities with large Tidjani communities, such as Bamako, Dakar, Yaoundé, and Kano. The objective is to demonstrate the different aspects of the city to Tidjani disciples who wish to visit Fez and to promote African tourism beyond a mere trip to the sanctuary. In other words, the aim is to incite West-African pilgrims to prolong their journey and to encourage their tourist activities in the city.

At the same time, a project for the promotion of religious tourism has been developed to facilitate pilgrimage for the sub-Saharan Tidjanis. Nowadays a promotional package with affordable prices covering transportation and accommodation is available. However the very recent development of this package was mainly influenced by the existence of Tidjani *ziyaras* that are taking the form of a multiple-stage journey, thus redefining the scope of the *ziyara*.

3.2 Organized trips to Fez: between pilgrimage and tourism

Unlike the Christian tradition, where the trajectory to the sanctuary is an integral part of the pilgrimage and represents an enduring experience of austerity,⁶¹ the journey itself is not necessarily part of the pilgrimage in Muslim contexts. Nevertheless, the concept of the Tidjani *ziyara* is taking different forms in which the itinerary receives a new meaning.

As mentioned earlier, the conception of the Tidjani *ziyara* as a journey is not a recent phenomenon, since the visit to the shrine of Ahmad al-Tidjani was already organized by colonial authorities in the context of pilgrimage journeys undertaken by the nationals of French West Africa to Mecca. The collective *ziyara* journeys organized by the Tidjani branch of Madina Gounass also take the shape of a multiple-stage journey. Furthermore, for many Senegalese pilgrims on their way to Mecca it remains today a regular practice to stop off at Casablanca before heading towards Fez, thus contributing to propagating the idea that, for the Tidjani pilgrims, the *ziyara* to Ahmad al-Tidjani completes the pilgrimage to Mecca.⁶² Many Senegalese pilgrims begin their journey by visiting the sanctuary of the Tidjani scholar ‘Arbi Ibn al-Sayih who lived during the nineteenth century and founded a Tidjani *zawiya* in the city of Rabat, where he was buried after his death.⁶³ Many of the pilgrims interviewed confirmed that this stage is part of the *ziyara* and that the sanctuary of ‘Arbi Ibn al-Sayih in Rabat represents the threshold that guarantees access to Ahmad al-Tidjani’s sanctuary. In other words, it is necessary to ask for the approval of the saint in Rabat before setting out to visit the shrine in Fez. Similarly, it is also common among some Senegalese to begin their *ziyara* with a visit to the shrines of Tivaouane or Kaolack⁶⁴ in Senegal before heading for Morocco.

In the 1990s, some Senegalese travel agencies identified, therefore, a need to organize trips to Morocco, combining the *ziyara* to Fez with visits to other religious as well as secular sites.⁶⁵ Since the involvement of the city of Fez in promoting the *ziyara* in 2007, the number of agencies proposing this type of trip has increased. The offer was also expanded to other sub-Saharan countries. These travel agencies have devised offers that are adapted to the *ziyara* to Morocco, with a choice of diverse itineraries to Fez.

In order to illustrate the malleability of the concept of the Tidjani *ziyara* in the frame of the promotion of religious tourism, I would like to present two organized trips offered by a Senegalese travel agency that was among the first to organize tours for

61 Coleman and Eade 2004, 11.

62 This idea is very popular among residents of Fez who live in the vicinity of the *zawiya*. In contrast, all the Senegalese pilgrims and the representatives I interviewed rejected it.

63 ‘Arbi Ibn al-Sayih (1814–1892) is well-known for his fundamental writing on Tidjaniyya and is often cited by Senegalese *shaykhs*.

64 Tivaouane is the religious center of the family of Malik Sy, and Kaolack is the religious center of the Abdoulaye Niassé family.

65 Interview with the director of a travel agency on October 11, 2010, in Dakar.

Tidjani pilgrims.⁶⁶ These trips are particularly designed for well-to-do customers such as bankers and corporate executives. Travel costs vary between 700 000 and 750 000 CFA⁶⁷, the equivalent of 1100 euros. Being the first to offer such trips, this agency managed to bring together 30 to 60 individuals per trip. These two itineraries were planned with the assistance of Senegalese religious leaders who are close to the family of Tivaouane. The trips can, therefore, be interpreted as a reflection of the way Tidjani scholars of Tivaouane envision a *ziyara* that complies with the Tidjani precepts. Besides, they also inform us about the multiple significations of the *ziyara* as a journey, and the relationship that Senegalese Tidjanis have with the Moroccan kingdom.

The travel agency offers a choice of two products related to the *ziyara* to Fez, which depend on the Muslim calendar and distinguish between a festive *ziyara* and a more religious *ziyara*. The more religious trip is scheduled for the last ten days of the sacred month of Ramadan and merely comprises visits to Tidjani sanctuaries and prayer sessions. The journey starts with a first stopover at the Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca followed by a visit to various Tidjani sanctuaries, namely 'Arbi ibn al-Sayih in Rabat, the tombs of the Tidjani scholars al-Nadhifi, al-Kansusi, and Ahmad Sukayridj in Marrakech,⁶⁸ and finally the shrine of Ahmad al-Tidjani in Fez. In addition to that, the pilgrims use their stop in Rabat to visit the mausoleum of the Moroccan kings Mohamed V and Hassan II. The second package is more leisure-oriented and takes place in the period of the Muslim calendar coinciding with the commemoration of the Prophet Mohammed's birthday. As in the first trip, the travelers visit the Casablanca mosque and continue to Rabat before spending time in Fez. But, in addition to the visit to the Tidjani sanctuary and the mausoleum in Rabat, additional tours are organized to the surrounding area of Fez; typical examples are trips to Meknes or to the thermal springs of Moulay Yacoub.

Hence, these two offers provide evidence that the *ziyara* is not always limited to the visit to the saint Ahmad al-Tidjani or to the visit to the sanctuaries in Rabat and Fez. In both cases, it takes the form of variant itineraries including multiple Moroccan sanctuaries and religious sites. The visit to the tomb of other Moroccan Tidjani scholars – such as 'Arbi ibn al-Sayih, al-Nadhifi, al-Kansusi, and Ahmad Sukayridj – shows that these Tidjani *shaykhs* have been integrated into the tradition of the brotherhood and demonstrates that a sacred topography has been established around this saint in which not only Senegalese sanctuaries (such as the one in Tivaouane) but also Moroccan scholars have been integrated and beatified.

66 Interview with the director of a travel agency on October 11, 2010, in Daka.

67 Currency in many West African countries.

68 The scholars al-Nadhifi, al-Kansusi, and Ahmad Sukayridj wrote essential texts about the Tidjaniyya

and are well known among Senegalese Tidjanis. Ahmad Sukayridj in particular gave to several West African scholars the authorizations to spread the Tidjani teachings.

But it is yet more surprising when places – as in the case of the tombs of Moroccan kings – that are not related to the Tidjani tradition are included in the Tidjani *ziyara* and take on a religious meaning.

Every Senegalese who goes to Morocco wants to visit the tombs of Mohamed V and Hassan II simply because they are the descendants of the Prophet. We, for example, do not care about the tomb of the president. No one goes to the tomb of Senghor [...] but visiting Hassan II [...] he is the descendant of Prophet Mohamed before being a king [...] his father had relationships with our ancestors [...] the biggest mosque in Senegal, it is Hassan II who built it. He offered it. So we consider him as a Senegalese. We consider him as our venerated marabout, simply because he is one of Prophet Mohamed's descendants and all Muslims should respect the Prophet's family. As Abdulaziz Sy said, he did a lot for Senegal. There are a lot of Senegalese students there [in Morocco], who learnt Arabic, who learnt the Koran and who are now famous scholars and who helped spread Islam.⁶⁹

For this Tidjani spiritual master, the visit to the mausoleum of the Moroccan kings does not seem to be in contradiction to the precepts of the Tidjaniyya, even though this order forbids the veneration of saints who are not Tidjani. In his interpretation, this part of the *ziyara* is justified by taking into account the Sharifian descent of the Moroccan kings. The act of declaring the kings to be 'marabout' – i.e. religious guides – ranks them higher than mere political leaders.⁷⁰ The visit to their tombs is furthermore legitimized by its interpretation as a display of gratitude towards the kings for their religious investment in Senegal. Moreover, the integration of the tomb of the former Moroccan kings into the Tidjani religious journey reflects the closeness of Senegalese Tidjanis to the Moroccan monarchy and the prominent role that the Moroccan kings have played in Senegal since the countries' independence.

The dual image of the Moroccan kings presented in the quotation above (as descendants of the prophet and as benefactors) derives from Morocco's policy towards Senegal, in which the religious status of the Moroccan king is instrumentalized in favor of foreign policy interests and in which the Senegalese Tidjanis have played a remarkable role.

Similarly, according to my informants the visit to the Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca is a recognition of the religious position of the Moroccan Sharifian dynasty.⁷¹ Inau-

69 A Senegalese Tidjani master Interview conducted on October 8, 2010, in Dakar. – *Léopold Sédar Senghor* (1906–2001) was the first Senegalese President upon independence. *Abdulaziz Sy* (1904–1997) was the son of El Hadj Malick Sy. He was the representative of the Senegalese Tidjaniyya from 1957 to 1997.

70 The Moroccan kings have both religious and political power. Legitimized by Sharifian descent, the King of Morocco holds the position of commander of the believers.

71 Interview with the director of a travel agency on October 11, 2010, in Dakar.

gured in 1993 by King Hassan II, this mosque aimed at the symbolic recuperation of Islam and its legitimation under the supervision of the informed orthodoxy of the monarchy.⁷² Furthermore, this mosque is one of the grandest mosques in the world and is aimed at symbolizing the Islamic prominence of the Moroccan kingdom and its international religious influence.

The marketization of the Tidjani *ziyara* by Moroccan as well as Senegalese tourism agencies has therefore contributed to a certain extent to establishing a new way of doing the Tidjani *ziyara* in Morocco, based as much on the Tidjaniyya teachings as on the national political history of Senegal and Morocco. The development of alternative forms of Tidjani spiritual journeys has therefore contributed to redefining the Tidjani topography of the sacred in which not only Moroccan Tidjani shrines have been integrated but also religious sites that symbolize the religious prominence of the Moroccan nation.

4 Conclusion

The historical evolution of the Tidjani pilgrimage to Fez is above all based on the conviction that the founder of the Tidjaniyya has a particularly core spiritual position and power and that pilgrims can reach and take benefit from it. The development of transportation means, the commercial function of Fez, and the central dimension of the shrine of Ahmad al-Tidjani have favored this practice among Senegalese Tidjanis, and led to the development of different forms of Tidjani journeys to Fez. Today, the Senegalese migration to Europe also contributes significantly to the consolidation of this practice among Senegalese Tidjanis. At the same time, the optional aspect of the *ziyara* to Fez renders this practice a pilgrimage with blurry limits. Despite the pre-eminence of the figure of Ahmad al-Tidjani, other sites have also been adopted as destinations of the Tidjani pilgrimage, thus contributing to the expansion of a sacred Tidjani topography and promoting tourism by Senegalese to Morocco.

The *zawiya* of Ahmad al-Tidjani therefore constitutes a point of meeting and assembly for Senegalese and is an integral part of a transnational Tidjani Senegalese territory. Furthermore the *ziyara* represents a religious practice that favors the symbolic interaction between the Senegalese Tidjani community and Moroccan culture, and functions as a medium binding and consolidating the relationships between Morocco and Senegal. Traveling to Morocco is therefore not only a way to benefit from Ahmad al-Tidjani's blessing but also a way to become closer to the transnational Senegalese Tidjani community as well as to the Moroccan kingdom, which is nowadays symbolically integrated into the transnational Senegalese Tidjani identity.

72 Cattedra 2002, 260.

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Illustration credits

1 Johara Berriane, based on a map by A. Binane.

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