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Cultures of travel: Fulbe pastoralists in central Mali and Pentecostalism in Ghana

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Population mobility has always been regarded as a special and temporary phenomenon. However, in many instances mobility is the normal state, while sedentarity is the extraordinary situation. This is illustrated with two examples of so-called 'cultures of travel'. The first about the Fulbe in Mali demonstrates the ways in which mobility has historically been embedded in Sahelian cultures under conditions that are marginal from both an ecological and an economic point of view. It illustrates how people develop economic and cultural strategies marked by a high degree of opportunism. Their society is, in fact, organised around mobility. The second case, that of Ghanaian Pentecostalism, shows how a specific form of culture acts to bring about a particular form of mobility. Unlike the Fulbe, it is not the whole society that moves but persons who are mobile for individual and personal reasons. It is an example of how people construct and, almost literally, produce cultural forms and means for dealing with everyday problems of mobility, and success and failure in this domain.

Introduction

The study of population mobility in its different forms has started to receive increasing attention. Migration has always been an important topic for geographers, economists of development and development studies but within anthropology the subject used to receive much less attention from anthropologists concentrating on small, territorialised communities. Only fairly recently have scholars such as Appadurai (1991 and 1995), Clifford (1992), Hastrup & Olwig (1997), to name but a few, taken up the challenge of studying the cultural aspects of population mobility. Notions like 'travelling cultures' (Clifford 1992), 'the production of locality' (Appadurai 1995), 'global ethnoscapes' (Appadurai 1991) found their way into the anthropological vocabulary on the wave of the post-modernist shift towards Cultural Studies that took place a decade ago. Large-scale population movements in the form of labour migration, refugee movements,

asylum seeking, international and intercontinental travel and tourism have led anthropologists and sociologists into new theoretical and empirical fields.

The exploration of new forms of mobility has encouraged anthropologists to re-examine the foundations of their discipline. According to Hastrup & Olwig (1997: 1), cultures were conceptualised as separate and unique entities corresponding to particular *localities*: "The erection of cultural distinctions and borders is thus closely related to the anthropological practice of understanding culture from an internal *local* point of view" (emphasis added). In his essay on 'travelling cultures', Clifford (1992: 101) proposed an alternative "[...] why not focus on any culture's farthest range of travel while *also* looking at its centres, its villages, its intensive field sites? How do groups negotiate themselves in external relationships, and how is a culture also a site of travel for others? How are spaces traversed from outside? How is one group's core another's periphery?"

Clifford reserved his notion of travel for contemporary forms of travel and excluded involuntary forms of movement like the slave trade and contract labour, modern involuntary travellers like refugees and asylum seekers, and economic travellers like labour migrants. Travel in his view carries with it a special kind of culture, such as that of nineteenth-century British intellectuals and explorers travelling through Europe (especially Italy) and to such remote places as the source of the Nile. In its contemporary form, it seems to refer to movement in a seemingly border-free cosmopolitan world consisting of hotel lounges, airports and the like. This idea of travel applies to those with specific bourgeois class and gender positions and is distinct from other forms of mobility such as labour migration.

This chapter discusses how population mobility in Africa is frequently a cultural phenomenon and is culturally mediated, and how contemporary and past forms of population mobility have given rise to cultural forms and ways of relating to others. The question is not so much whether travelling cultures exist but how they are produced and respond to, mediate and mitigate social, economic, political and ecological conditions in Africa and beyond. Population mobility and the associated travelling culture are decisively influenced by conditions on the ground that force people to move. In Africa some people have developed travel as the very basis of their existence.

The problem with the study of population mobility is that it has always been regarded as a special and temporary phenomenon (Hastrup & Olwig 1997: 6) and that the natural state of people and the world was conceived of in terms of stability and coherence (Davis 1992; Hastrup 1993). Gypsies and nomads, obvious exceptions to this rule, have always been regarded as unruly and undisciplined people. However, today the reality is unprecedented mobility and massive movements of people in Africa and beyond. The various forms of mobility cannot be reduced to abominations of 'normal' patterns of life. In many instances mobility *is* the normal state, while sedentarity is viewed as extraordinary.

This poses some methodological problems. Social science, as a product of our own society, has been marked by strong assumptions of life being organised in bounded geographical spaces of the state, the city or the village. Mobility is assumed to be contained within neatly demarcated territorial boundaries. It is regarded as problematic when it not only overturns our conceptions of culture but also the political, social, ethnic

and cultural boundaries that social science supposes to exist. Mobility is often associated with disorder and suffering with poverty, political and military conflicts or ecological disaster frequently the reason for population movements. These subjects have long been neglected in social science (Davis 1992; Hastrup 1993). Our notions of culture and of social order need to be redirected. In this way a new perspective may emerge on mobility in time and space and the processes of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation, and the disordering and ordering which it involves (cf. Hastrup & Olwig 1997: 7).

The case studies discussed in this chapter deal with various aspects of mobility, showing not only two forms of mobility but also two kinds of mobility of forms. The case of the Fulbe involves the mobility of a whole culture, a specific form from one location to another embedded in a myriad of forms of mobility. It demonstrates the ways in which mobility has historically been embedded in Sahelian cultures. The specificity of the conditions in areas that are marginal from both an ecological and economic point of view means that people develop economic and cultural strategies marked by a high degree of opportunism. The whole society is, in fact, organised around these opportunistic strategies. The second case, that of Ghanaian Pentecostalism, is different. A specific form of culture acts to bring about a particular form of mobility. Moreover, it is not a whole culture or a whole population that is on the move but persons who are mobile for individual and personal reasons. Mobility among Ghanaian Pentecostalists is not yet part and parcel of daily life as it is for the Fulbe but it presents a fascinating example of how people construct and, almost literally, produce cultural forms and means for dealing with everyday problems of mobility, and success and failure in this domain.

In both cases mobility has acquired a momentum in itself, in which something has emerged that may be labelled a culture of travel. A field of practices, institutions, and ideas and reflections related to mobility and travelling, which has acquired a specific dynamism of its own, has arisen out of interaction with conditions 'on the ground'. The most striking aspect of these cultural fields is that they are closely related to others. In the Ghanaian case, the links between mobility and Pentecostal churches, and evangelical Christianity in general, are indispensable for an understanding of particular forms of migration from Ghana. In the case of the Fulbe, the phenomena discussed are part of a larger cultural and historical repertoire that extends back in time and is shared by Fulbe society and most of semi-arid West Africa.

A culture of travel: The Fulbe of Mali, a nomadic cattle-rearing people

Diversity in Fulbe society

The Fulbe are an example of a pre-modern travelling culture. Although questions surround their unity and origins, they have spread over much of Sub-Saharan Africa between Senegal and Ethiopia and the Sahara and the West-African coast, creating an archipelago of "islands of Fulbeness" (Botte & Schmitz 1994). During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, their political control extended over pagan populations in Senegal, Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Cameroon. As a result, a string of

empires and emirates emerged along the Sahel (Schmitz 1994; Ba & Daget 1984; Robinson 1985; Diallo 1999; Burnham & Last 1994). Other groups of Fulbe who felt uncomfortable within these theocratic states moved north to the northern Sahel to escape political control (Dupire 1962). Fulbe who are descended from pilgrims travelling to Mecca are known as Islamic scholars in Sudan (Abu-Manga 1999; Delmet 2000). They moved into towns in Sierra Leone as traders (Bah 1998).

More recently, other forms of population mobility have emerged. Over the last few decades numerous livestock-keeping Fulbe have moved southward in search of new pastures (Bernardet 1984; Blench 1994; Diallo this volume). This movement accelerated under the impact of drought and economic problems in the Sahel proper, and political problems in Guinea and Mauritania forced some Fulbe to settle as refugees in Senegal (Tanoh 1971; Santoir 1994).

In the literature this mobility has become linked to the fact that they are a cattle-keeping people and therefore moving to feed their livestock. This stereotype is based on the Fulbe's self-image and the ethnic stereotypes held by their neighbours.[1] In reality, this mobility based on a pastoral economy relates to only one of this society's many social groups. However, the cattle-rearing Fulbe have come to represent the Fulbe identity and have found their way as such into coffee-table books produced by Western photographers (Beckwith & van Offelen 1983; Mols 2000) and magazines like *National Geographic*.

It is the mobility and the associated political (and sexual) freedom that attracts these relative outsiders but the role of mobility goes much deeper than this and permeates the ways in which people relate to each other and the shape their social life has taken. Fulbe society is divided into a number of social groups, some of which are sedentary, while others lead a more mobile way of life. The political elite (the chiefly lineages), Islamic clergy, artisans and a group of courtiers have an almost sedentary lifestyle though they have a history of mobility. Mobility is a way of life of a cattle-rearing people that has developed into something else over the course of history. Traditionally the nomadic pastoralists, who form the majority of these people, had a mobile way of life. The keeping of cattle and the cattle themselves symbolise mobility but are not synonymous with it or with Fulbe identity. Other elements of Fulbe identity such as Islam are also related to forms of travel. This case study considers the various aspects of mobility in their contemporary as well as their historical forms.

The Hayre

The Hayre is located in the Sahel, the semi-arid belt extending across Africa from Senegal to the Indian Ocean. The area experiences low annual rainfall (300-600 mm per annum) that is extremely unpredictable in both time and space. This variability accounts for wide variations in the crop and livestock production that forms the basis of the livelihood of the population.

The Hayre ('rock' or 'mountain' in Fulfulde, the Fulbe language) derives its name from the mountains and the plateau that dominate the landscape in the centre of the

[1] See Breedveld (1999) for information on ethnic stereotyping and internal categorisations in relation to the Fulbe

Niger Bend (see Map 5.1). The region further consists of an area of sandy soils and fixed dunes called Seeno where good pastures can be found, and an area with clayey soils called Ferro that is overgrown with dense forest alternating with strips of bare earth.

The research on which this section is based took place in central Mali in the districts[2] of Douentza and Bandiagara and in south Mali in Koutiala District. It considered the mobility of the Fulbe, how they express mobility in their lives but also in a geographical sense the interactions of the people with their Sahelian ecological environment. Given the climatic conditions, resource availability is extremely varied in time and space. Mobility in a variety of forms is a necessary strategy for dealing with this variability (Gallais 1975). In the past, as well as today, it is not only the climate that has caused mobility but also a variety of social, political and economic factors that are culturally mediated.

The history of population mobility has to be framed within the context of political change in a much larger area. People do not just move due to ecological considerations. They have perceptions of the places they move to or might move to and meanings are attached to these places in cultural ways, acting as coordinates in the process of movement. Outside influences impede or promote movement.

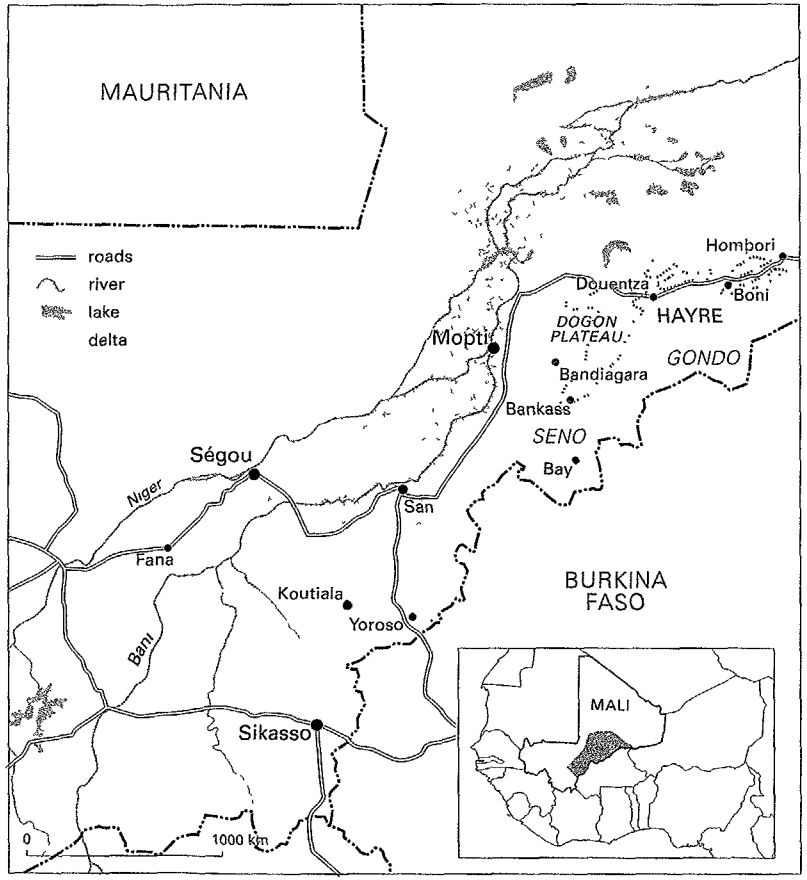
The Fulbe established chiefdoms in the Hayre in the seventeenth century. Before these political entities came into existence, warriors from the Inner Delta (*ardube* or *weheebe*), Fulbe from the Gao area, other Fulbe on the move with their cattle, Sonrai from the north, Bambara from the south and Dogon from the west all moved into the area. Given the insecure political situation, political and military organisation provided protection against outside raiders who regarded this marginal area as a source of booty in the form of livestock and slaves.

With the growth of empires beyond the Hayre, centralised forms of political organisation practised outside the area increasingly influenced the local situation. Initially the Hayre functioned as an independent political entity. However, gradually power was taken over by the Maasina Empire that dominated the Inner Delta of the Niger from 1818-1862. This led to the curtailing of population mobility in the Hayre and the settlement of specific groups within Fulbe society in this area. The political elite along with their entourage consisting of Islamic clergymen, counsellors, craftsmen and slaves to work the fields settled in villages. The basis of the economy changed from almost purely pastoral to a combination of pastoralism and cereal cultivation. The mobile livestock-keeping population that formed the basis of the political power of the chiefs in the past disappeared and lost their control over politics (see De Bruijn & Van Dijk 2001; H. van Dijk 1999).

Political control over movement began to disappear in the second half of the nineteenth century when another Fulbe Empire took over in the larger region, and especially during the colonial period. Moreover, under the French colonial regime, antagonistic relations between various population groups and mutual raiding were suppressed. This led to a pulverisation of the movements of nomadic groups. They were no longer con-

[2] In Mali a district is called *cercle*, literally 'circle'

Map 5.1: The Hayre, central Mali



tained in their territories where they maintained some measure of control. At the other end of the spectrum, sedentary groups of cultivators also started to move and occupy large areas of the pasturelands of the mobile livestock-keeping population.

When viewed from afar, the region appears to portray a picture of continuous movement of people and animals and the constant replacement of fields. With increases in political centralisation, the character of movements changed. Some lines moved out of the area, others have come in. Some move faster than others, some lines split up, disperse or even vanish. Others are re-created every year, yet more are created only once, some are circular, others go back and forth to the place of origin.

These lines may involve people moving from one field to another, and people moving with cattle or flocks of small ruminants, sometimes from one village or a camp to another, sometimes just searching for the best pastures while drifting over large areas. One sees the clearing of new fields, the abandonment of old fields and the number of livestock fluctuating. These fluctuations are in turn another source of movement. One sees dispossessed families and individuals move out of an area looking for a better existence elsewhere, and older people moving to large agricultural villages to live off charity. Others stay put and enlarge their fields to create a new existence in cereal cultivation.

Of course the landscape, the background against which these movements take place, is not just a combination of physical objects. It is a deeply humanised landscape providing the people moving in it with the coordinates for orienting their movements. Property relations direct people in a specific direction, for example to reoccupy an old field of their grandfather's somewhere or to water their cattle at their relatives' well. Social and political relations promote and impede travel to specific locations. Hostility prevents people from moving to specific areas and they go to villages where people used to receive them in the past, and with whom they maintain host-stranger relationships (De Bruijn *et al.* 1997). Possibilities for exchanging livestock products such as milk, butter and sour milk for cereals make them reconsider their routes. When a period of drought occurs, all their schemes have to be re-arranged and different vistas have to be explored to escape from the negative effects.

However, ecological conditions are not the only reason for movement. Young boys were and still are sent away with Islamic scholars to study the Koran, surviving by begging in villages or camps. Adolescent boys travel on their own, going from one learned man to another to further their studies. More recently, adolescent boys and young men have started to wander all over West Africa looking for work and adventure and to escape from the harsh reality of existence in the Hayre. Those who stay behind have to cope without their contribution to the family's existence (De Bruijn 2001).

Perceptions of mobility

Reflections on these movements of the people indicate that all have different reasons for being mobile but for most, movement is the natural thing to do. It is embedded in their social organisation and forms part of their Sahelian identity. Historical accounts, songs and oral histories are all imbued with mobility. The main Fulbe narrator living in the Hayre started his introduction to the history of his people with a story about migration.

The very first chiefs of the Fulbe in this area came from elsewhere as hunters with their horses and dogs. They settled, but never permanently, and became leaders of a group of wandering nomads in the region. They assured their survival and hegemony by raiding other wandering groups such as the Tuareg but probably also other Fulbe groups.

This narrative about the origin of Fulbe society in this area stresses that these people are not from one place and their strength is their geographical mobility that ensures their subsistence. At the same time, the existence of this narrative gives the people a feeling of belonging, of being of the same stock, of having created a society. Today this feeling of belonging reaches far into Burkina Faso and into the south of Mali where the Hayre is still recognised as the point of origin by many and everyone sharing this feeling is part of their group. The mobility in the narrative supplements the movement of 'them' as a people.

The story explains why some groups are more mobile than others. The cattle-rearing groups are most mobile because of the wishes and needs of the cattle. Herders have to be mobile to explore the best pastures, to gain access to water in the dry season, and also to reach markets. Other social groups like the political and religious elite and former slaves are less mobile and administer the country and provide religious services. The slaves are put to work on the land to produce the cereals that serve as the basic food of the noblemen. Differences in mobility are thus based on a political and historical division of labour but there is also a strong cultural dimension. Manual labour is regarded as degrading by the noblemen and herdsmen (see De Bruijn & Van Dijk 1994).

Narrative additionally depicts other ethnic groups in the region, like the Dogon, as being more sedentary. However, a closer look at their strategy shows they are also mobile and move within the year from inner to outer fields, and over the years over large distances from their cultivation hamlets. They are also experts in seasonal migration. Nevertheless, they consider themselves different to the herding groups, as sedentary and having less of an ideology of movement than the elite and former slaves of the Fulbe.

From past to contemporary forms of mobility

Over the course of the twentieth century, Dogon from the Bandiagara Plateau and villages on the escarpment migrated to the Seeno Plain, occupying large areas of the pastures used by the Fulbe herdsmen (Gallais 1975; Martinelli 1995). Some, in their turn, moved onto the Bandiagara Plateau and established villages and camps there (H. van Dijk 2001). Many Fulbe and Dogon moved out of the area to look for a better life elsewhere. After major periods of drought at the beginning of the twentieth century, rainfall was more abundant in the 1950s and 1960s. People moved less and were able to live relatively prosperous lives for some decades.

The situation changed dramatically with the droughts of the 1970s and 1980s, which led to a profound crisis for the inhabitants of the Hayre, as existing production systems were not able to absorb these climate changes. The droughts of the 1980s in particular gave rise to new forms of mobility in all groups of Fulbe society as large numbers of Fulbe lost the livestock that served as the basis for their livelihood. Some families split up, while others were able to maintain some form of internal cohesion and carve out a new existence. The stories of a couple of Fulbe families who ventured into new areas to look for fresh opportunities to herd the few remaining livestock or to find employment in livestock keeping, trade or other economic activities illustrate some of the responses to the crisis.

Research carried out all over Mali, on the Bandiagara Plateau, along the border with Burkina Faso and in the cotton-growing area around Koutiala, showed that there were Fulbe families camping outside the official villages in the bush, sometimes just one or two families per village territory, at other times a whole camp was established in the bush. At one site, representatives from other status groups in Fulbe society could be found (artisans and former slaves) performing the same tasks as in their area of origin (see Van Steenbrugge 2001).

Moving along one of the lines representing mobility to the south of the Seeno is the Forest of Bay, south of Bankass and Koro in the border area between Mali and Burkina Faso. It consists partly of a flood plain and each year, if the rains are good, it is flooded by the Volta River. Fulbe have been using the Forest of Bay as a dry-season grazing reserve for a long time and have even settled permanently in villages there. Other population groups, mainly Samo and some Dogon, also live in the surrounding areas.

The line connecting the Hayre and the Forest of Bay reappears each year but it has not yet become as important as after the drought of the 1980s. The line is not straight and the people moving along it do not all belong to one group. They come from different camps and families and move at different times in various years. When they arrive in Bay, they do not camp at the same place nor do they stay in one place for a long time. They know and have contact with each other and sometimes set up camp together. Their stories differ in the reasons for mobility, in their wandering history and in their wealth. When considering each individual migration history, the general picture crumbles and becomes a very fine net of lines between the Hayre and Bay.

The first story is of two brothers from Yirma. They left Yirma accompanied by two other brothers and their father when they only had two cows left. Their father, with their older brother, camped somewhere on the Seeno, north of Bay, the youngest brother lived somewhere else. All herd cattle belonging to the sedentary cultivating population.

Initially they took refuge in Burkina Faso but had to leave because of Burkina government tax demands. They settled temporarily on the Seeno where the older of the two brothers said he had been on his way home even though he had a problem with his knee and foot, both of which were so swollen that he could not walk. They have many goats and a few cows. But will they ever return? He did not plan to travel any further back to Yirma. He does not know if it is possible to have a reasonable life there and he appears disinterested because ultimately he will just continue wandering.

The other brother and his wife have more contact with the people in Yirma. They do not consider returning because in Bay there is more space and they seem to be doing pretty well. They offered us visitors sugar and tea and they were all well fed. This no-man's land also gave them the opportunity to escape all kind of rules imposed upon them by a government they do not consider their own.

In the third hut lived an old woman. She followed her son who has been wandering for years because his future near Booni was not promising. His elderly mother had no

one other than her son to take care of her so she travelled with him. Her presence is a burden for her son, making him immobile, so he said.

In the evening many other Fulbe appear from an apparently empty land to greet the white visitors coming from their 'home' area and to hear the latest news. They arrived from across the border or from the Forest of Bay. All these people are migrants from the Hayre, the Seeno or further north. They reported that many of the people who had come with them had moved on to the south. Bay was becoming overcrowded, as we discovered ourselves the next day when we continued our journey. The road was full of cattle and pastures were being heavily exploited.

The people travelling still further to the south do not go in a straight line either. They travel from place to place, sometimes visiting acquaintances but in most cases creating acquaintances by inviting themselves or by creating ties with a family residing in the place where they hope to settle. All the people we interviewed knew people, sometimes close family, who had moved with them and who had gone further. They were looking for better pastures, for a herd to watch, or for adventure. Virtually no one went back to where they had come from, though the majority are still in contact with those who stayed behind, but to varying degrees. After the drought of the 1980s a new network of Fulbe developed extending far into south Mali and over the border into Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, a web of people.

Most of these people disappear administratively. They are invisible for the Malian government and do not appear in statistics. If they cross the border they are immigrants at best tolerated. They do not reside in villages but camp in the bush. They are not invisible to themselves. They live their lives on the margins of society in a nation-state that is not theirs, creating their own web of people with its own rules, its own sense of law and order, in short, its own mobile, travelling culture.

Mobility and identity

Taking the perspective of mobility in this area of central Mali leads one along different tracks away from villages and towns to people who are not directly visible, who do not live in 'localities'. It illustrates another aspect of their lives and of the lives of the presumed sedentary people: they live in and with their mobility Daily talk is about being mobile, and relations with others are all placed in the perspective of mobility. In fact we have a mobile culture, a travelling culture. Their hotel lounges and airports, to paraphrase Clifford, are local and regional markets or watering points for the livestock. They do not communicate by mobile phone or e-mail but through an immense network of kinsmen, acquaintances, hosts and traders who transmit messages in code.

This is clear among the cattle-keeping Fulbe but also other Sahelian people seem to be adopting a mobile lifestyle, a mobility which is central to their lives. The basis of this lifestyle is '*la condition sahélienne*' as Gallais (1975) put it, the innate necessity to move in an environment so unreliable and patchy in resources as the Sahel. However, in the course of history it is not only adaptation to a climate or a certain geography, it has become more to include other domains such as religion, trade and youth culture. It has indeed become a pre-modern, non-cosmopolitan, non-bourgeois, non-consumerist travelling culture with its own narratives, ideology, and social organisation.

This mobility is definitively not only a coping strategy to deal with the diminishing or increasing availability of natural resources, as an answer to the insecurities of the dry-land environment in terms of rainfall and biomass production. It is also a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon with its own *raison d'être*. Some people do migrate; others stay around the whole year. The question has to be raised as to why some migrate while others do not. Is this again only an adaptation to the same environmental and contextual factors or are there cultural and social or even political reasons for doing so?

A consequence of their mobility is that they are regarded everywhere as 'the other' or 'the stranger'. They are always the people who come from far away. Also in areas where they have been politically dominant, their hegemony has been relatively short, as is stressed in oral traditions. There too, they are regarded as the 'strangers' in relation to the original population that they ruled. In the Hayre, they were the last to arrive. In disputes over land that are increasingly taking place, they are often on the losing end nowadays because they cannot claim the right of first occupancy. In areas where they were the first they often have problems maintaining control over land because of the low intensity of the use of the land, their mobile way of life and the associated flexible rights that they define over land and pastures.

As a consequence, the Fulbe do not relate their identity to a specific territory in the same way their sedentary cultivating neighbours do. They define themselves by referring to a common ideology in which livestock, Islam and their way of life are the main components. Depending on the context, they may stress different aspects of their identity. The Fulbe who move to the south are politically marginal in the eyes of the others, of the sedentary townspeople, also in terms of development interventions or national politics.

However, marginality is also a group survival strategy. By remaining marginal, they are able to claim a specific position wherever they happen to be. As marginal people, as strangers, they do not form a threat to the existing order. They use their marginality and their illegality to live as the people they want to be, to formulate a counter discourse. As Agrawal (1998: 167) formulated for the Raikas in India: "[a mobile lifestyle] allows them to construct an ideology and practice of difference that other village castes might find more difficult. Their fragmented agency finds birth in precisely those practices that in their minds are differently constituted from those of their [sedentary] neighbors".

These features of a mobile culture – specifically including the people's own daily discourse about being mobile, about moving somewhere and about how and when to do so – question sedentarity. This Fulbe nomadism is a form of mobility that does not take it for granted that culture necessarily has to relate to a sedentarised life as if their culture can only exist when attached to locality. In fact their *form of mobility* also implies a *mobility of form* by which it is meant that forms of social interaction, exchange, rituals and family structures travel along on the pathways they take, and are attuned to this mobile way of life. By exploring this mobility of forms, *a priori* assumptions about sedentarity can be questioned. The following case study aims to demonstrate just that. Here, in the spread of specific Ghanaian religious forms outside Ghana, other elements call a sedentary perspective into question. The issue is that although in Ghana and else-

where 'citizenship' presupposes an attachment to a place and to a state, religious forms may crosscut that and create a kind of moral domain in which people move about. In this culture, spirits, gods and deities and their forms of worship are considered unhampered by states and localities and attempts to bind people to certain places. This specifically applies to the spread of a new form of Christianity, Pentecostalism, and the way it has come to appeal to Ghanaian migrants worldwide.

From migration to multi-locality: The Ghanaian Pentecostal diaspora and its subject

In Ghana, on the road leading from the coast to Kumasi, the age-old capital of the Asante Empire, is what superficially looks like any other remote rural village. On both sides of the tarmac road are huts, some in much better shape than others, and people seem to be busy with their daily chores. This image of a mundane, quiet and rural life is, however, deceptive. The first indication of something special about this place is a small building bearing a sign saying 'Reception'. Adjacent to it there is another small building with a sign that reads 'International Calls'. The more perceptive may even have noticed that the place has a peculiar name, 'Adomfa', a 'Blessing Taken', a locality where powers of supernatural origin are at work.

It is the Adomfa Residential Prayer Camp belonging to the largest of the Pentecostal churches in Ghana, the Church of Pentecost. It is led by the 75-year-old prophetess and deaconess, Grace Mensah Adu and is the oldest of all the prayer camps in the country. Since its inception in the early 1960s it has attracted thousands of visitors. The prophetess's prayers are considered so powerful that they help to resolve a wide range of illnesses, problems, conflicts and misfortune. Many people come to consult the prophetess and attend her prayer-healing sessions. In November 1997, the registration books of the camp showed that over 70,000 people had visited over the previous years. Some just stay for one day, feeling assured that the prayer-healing sessions have alleviated their problems, while others stay in one of the many houses for weeks or months before they are certain that the heavenly powers have worked to their advantage and have resolved their problems spiritually.

What does the existence of these prayer camps have to do with mobility and migration? The fact is that many people visiting camps such as the one at Adomfa perceive mobility and migration as a spiritual problem (R. van Dijk 1997). Or perhaps better, there is a profound and popular conception within Ghana that there are barriers to overcome which prevent ordinary people from travelling abroad, from partaking in the massive intercontinental migration to the West in which so many West Africans seem to participate. Peil (1995) estimated that by the mid-1980s more than 15% of Ghana's population were living abroad, a figure that by now probably is a conservative estimate. Many want to travel, a desire largely inspired by the global spread of images of the West, its wealth and its luxuries, but find serious obstacles in their way such as the inability to raise enough money to buy air tickets, passports and a visa from the dealers in Accra, the so-called connection boys (De Thouars 1999).

This inability is first and foremost conceived of as a spiritual blockage, something that occult forces have concocted and for which somebody else must be responsible. So, Prophetess Grace Mensah organises prayer sessions over passports, visas and air tickets and urges those that come for 'travel problems' to engage in dry-fasting, i.e. no food and water for the maximum number of days a human body is able to sustain such a practice. This is all meant to strengthen a person's own spiritual powers, to have visitations in the night by spirits that come to inform about good and bad so that the powers of the prophetess will hit hard and provoke a 'breakthrough' (*ogyee*) against those forces that block progress and prosperity. During the day the Pentecostal prophetess organises ecstatic prayer meetings where people scream and shout, experience possession by the Holy Spirit, fall down and roll on the ground, showing in their bodily gestures the serious fights that are going on inside them with the evil forces that control their lives. Special times are reserved for 'travel problems' when people facing such problems are requested to step forward so as to receive special blessings. Those who are not yet in possession of a passport and visa, and who want to ensure their travels to Europe are successful, put documents at the feet of the prophetess who engages in loud ecstatic prayers to 'bind the powers' that may concoct something bad for the person to whom these documents belong.

The transnational dimensions of the prayer camp are striking. A Ghanaian, let's call him David, who had come from Amsterdam to spend a couple of weeks at the camp demonstrated how these camps create their own international domain. Prayers and fasting at another camp had provided him with a 'breakthrough' a couple of years ago allowing him to travel successfully to Amsterdam using a false passport and by overstaying the tourist visa that he had obtained through bribery.

Before then, he had held some powers in his family that were responsible for him being unsuccessful in emigrating. Those prayers of some years ago had effectively dealt with the powers although when he arrived in Amsterdam, he was not entirely sure whether all these occult powers that came from within his family had been broken (*obubu*) effectively as he experienced difficulties in finding work and earning a living. He decided to join one of the satellite groups in the Netherlands that had emerged from these Pentecostal prayer camps. They have been developing as independent Ghanaian Pentecostal churches in such places as Amsterdam, the Hague, Hamburg and London.

The prayers helped for a while and he was not visited at night by visions of the occult, he got a couple of odd jobs and even began a relationship with a Dutch girl. But then his troubles returned and he felt forces from his family mounting against him. His illegal stay in Amsterdam began to become troublesome, his partner walked out on him and he felt a serious threat of spiritual weakening which ultimately would jeopardise his entire position in the Netherlands. If the Dutch police arrested him and forcibly repatriated him to Ghana, he would face serious social disgrace. It would demonstrate that he had not 'made it' or lived up to the expectations of the family to provide for them in a material sense. In addition, however, it would also show a failure to keep afflicting forces under control, powers that in the spiritual realm cause misfortune and mishap. David therefore decided that it was time to seek spiritual help at a prayer camp where

the right kind of charismatic powers were available, and for that he needed to return to Ghana.

Upon arrival he went straight to Adomfa and felt that through prayers and fasting another breaking of those powers that were 'pulling him down' would soon be effectuated. His mother had also visited a prayer camp on several occasions since her son had not been able to remit money to her. She had been praying for a 'financial breakthrough' on his and her behalf while he was still in the Netherlands. "Perhaps I will need two more weeks of fasting to get back to Amsterdam," he said.

Mobility and identity in ideological spaces

What can be seen from examples like this is that migration and mobility are deeply cultural and secondly that geographical spaces are just one of many that can be conceived of as spaces in which people move about. Pentecostalism, an immensely popular form of Christianity, appears to create its own specific ideological space, very transnational and at the same time very multi-local. Multi-local here means that the creation of the Pentecostal ideological space is produced not only in Ghana but also at many other locations around the world at the same time.

Building on the experiences of the prayer camps, a more modern form of Pentecostalism has emerged in Ghana in recent years, characterised by the establishment of hundreds of churches particularly in the urban areas (Gifford 1998; Meyer 1998; R. van Dijk 1997 and 1999). Many young, upwardly mobile urbanites and those of the emerging urban middle classes are attracted to these new churches, some of which have in the meantime grown into mega-churches with many thousands of members. Their moral views have become highly influential in the public domain, mainly because of their access to the modern media. They are considered a political force of tremendous importance.

All of these churches have in common a zest for establishing branches in as many places outside Ghana as possible (R. van Dijk 2001a): By adding words such as 'international', 'global' and 'world' to their names they indicate to everybody their presence in the field of transnational relations and intercontinental migration. Nearly 40 of these Pentecostal churches have emerged in the Ghanaian migrant community in the Netherlands, particularly in Amsterdam, the Hague and Rotterdam where a total of 30,000-40,000 Ghanaian migrants live (Ter Haar 1998; R. van Dijk 2001a and forthcoming). One of the striking facts is that these are not only satellite churches from Ghana but that a number of them are Ghanaian Pentecostal churches that have emerged on Dutch soil and are spreading from the Netherlands to Ghana and other parts of the world.

In other words, there is a multi-local production of Ghanaian Pentecostalism worldwide, albeit not in a singular, uniform format. There are important differences in the way for instance the prayer camps operate in Ghana as compared to these newer Pentecostal churches in the Diaspora (R. van Dijk 1997). Each of these forms appears to contribute in its own way to the notion of a worldwide Pentecostal ideological space which the Ghanaian migrants can easily tap into at the many places they tend to travel

to.[3] For many migrants the notion of spiritual coverage – a spiritual blanket – is considered crucial, as the case of David shows. Any member of a Pentecostal church, whether in Ghana or in the West, is at the same time a member of a larger transnational community. At the prayer camps, the ritual practice the aspiring migrants go through prepares them spiritually for detachment from their families and their wider social environment. The practices of deliverance and fasting are meant to break the spiritual ties connected to the family in the first place, ties that when they take the form of occult powers obstruct the person from migrating to the West. As these practices foster the experience of 'de-localising' the person, detaching him or her from local cultural bondage, Pentecostalism appeals to many as it helps to restructure kinship relations and obligations, specifically 'at home'. Pentecostal prayers and fasting are meant to keep the powers from the family at bay, and thus create a spiritual opportunity for bringing kinship obligations under the control of its individual members. Pentecostal ideology rejects the power of the ancestors and tends to confront family authority head-on as part of creating a modern identity and a sense of modern 'individuality'.

In addition, and most appealingly to migrants, Pentecostalism actively reformulates the compulsory gift-giving system, which in Ghana is considered crucial to the maintenance of kinship relations (R. van Dijk 1999). Gifts (remittances) to the family are proclaimed by the Pentecostal leaders to be spiritually endangering and therefore in need of thorough moral supervision. This is of particular significance in the Diaspora where many migrants are faced with the obligation to send money to relatives living at home and elsewhere. In restructuring such obligations the churches can often seen to be taking on 'surrogate' family responsibilities thereby communicating the message that religious and moral control of such relations are at stake. Often the church leaders re-direct the flow of gifts away from the family into their own rituals of exchange (in the context for instance of funerals, marriages and birthing ceremonies they organise) or perform 'consecration' of the gifts that are sent to or received from the family. In this way they hope to be able to disentangle their members from this reciprocity and the way in which family members can be suspected of sending, along with the gifts, occult and binding forces to these migrants.

In breaking with the spiritual ties with the family, in critiquing cultural practices in Ghana and in developing its own distinctive gift-economy, Pentecostal groups appear to be engaged in specific identity work. Appadurai (1995), Rouse (1991 and 1995), Basch *et al.* (1994) and others explore situations in which identities emerge that can no longer be indicated by referring to localities and communities that have a firm geographical anchorage. Particularly through the global spread of ideas, images and ideologies that crosscut national or cultural borders in both Africa and the West, the migrant, the refugee, the tourist and the traveller form de-territorialised categories and localities. Pentecostalism is one such newly emerging 'locality' that has developed in the process of Ghanaian intercontinental migration and is based on an ideological 'footing' in the first place. It is on the basis of adhering to that ideology and by following its often rigid,

[3] The case of Ghanaian Pentecostalism is not exceptional. Similar trends in the transnational success of Pentecostal groups have also been reported from other countries (see for instance Marshall 1998; Corten & Marshall-Fratani 2001, Poewe 1994).

moral creeds (no alcohol, no smoking or drugs, no ancestral veneration etc.) that a person may gain access to all it can offer in practical terms of help and support.

Whereas in prayer camps in Ghana, such as the one described above, people go through a ritual process with the intention of cutting away ties and bonds with the family and the control that is exerted over them through the ancestral domain, the Ghanaian Pentecostal groups in the Netherlands ensure the person is not 'localised'. Integration in Dutch society is not their hallmark. The creation of images of 'Dutch citizenship' to be followed by all is not the intention of their rituals or proclamations. Furthermore, church leadership often holds highly critical views of public morality in the Netherlands and tends to declare the country a wild place with omnipresent dangers. In a specific way, therefore, this mobility of form establishes a 'de-local' identity: an identity whereby the meaning of being a Ghanaian Pentecostal is to create a certain distance from Dutch society while at the same being able to hold Ghanaian cultural traditions (for instance relating to ancestral worship) at bay as well. In other words, by becoming Pentecostal and by joining a Pentecostal community in the places where one has migrated to, such as the Netherlands, one remains neither 'fully' Ghanaian nor becomes totally Dutch.

Ghanaian Pentecostal groups have been established in many parts of the world, from England to Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, the United States, Israel and even Japan. There is much interchange between these groups in terms of travelling preachers and musical performers, trade in specific cloths and clothes, intermarriage and support in times of difficulty (funerals for example). The continuous contact and exchange from place to place between the Ghanaian Pentecostal churches also creates a high level of uniformity in the ways meetings and rituals are conducted, the content of the messages preached to audiences and the format of the various organisations within these communities. This enables migrants to travel from place to place and church to church without difficulty in joining in and relating to what may be going on locally.

Discussion of the 'identity work' of these Pentecostal groups has left one question unanswered. To what extent is mobility, in this case a mobility of a form i.e. that of Ghanaian Pentecostalism, to be regarded as exceptional? Is it something that from the perspective of a sedentary type of life appears as out-of-the-ordinary, as a reaction or a form of adaptation available to migrants who have arrived in an estranging environment? Or is it to be regarded as something that is representing certain cultural forms that, like Fulbe nomadism, are characterised and determined by mobility?

Mobility of form versus sedentarity

In Ghana there is a saying that if a bird sits on a branch of a tree for too long it can expect a stone to be thrown at its head, meaning that if a person does not look for opportunities elsewhere, his or her environment will hit hard. Mobility is on everybody's mind and one of society's ideals is to become a 'bin-to', that is somebody who has been to Europe and has come back with something worthwhile for the family as a whole. Many families aspire to having relatives abroad and many often have family members residing in a number of countries outside Africa. For important events in life, ranging from sending children to school, the organisation of the customary and costly

funeral or wedding ceremonies or the care of the elderly, families have become increasingly dependent on organising, in fluid and mouldable ways, their relations with those living *aburokyire* (beyond the horizon or literally 'beyond the maize'). This 'multi-spatial livelihood' (see Foeken & Owuor, this volume) has not only become transnational but intercontinental. The intercontinental movement of people, particularly to the West, follows, to a greater extent, earlier forms of massive movement both within and beyond Ghana's present-day borders. It is not difficult to point to a range of religious and cosmological notions and repertoires that have played a role in the historical track record in Ghana of mobile socio-cultural forms of life. In fact, there is a striking relationship between religion and mobility in Ghana that can be related to these developments of mobility in colonial and post-colonial times.

From the early eighteenth century onwards, the Asante kings established a highly centralised rule by conquering neighbouring groups and subverting them under their hierarchy of power (McCaskie 1995; Chazan 1988). Even before the colonial era, politics had become a well-defined and distinct domain of thought and action, separate from other sectors of public life. The epithet of power was the golden stool of the Asantehene, a stool symbolising the religiously sanctified power of the king given to him by the High God of *Onyame*. Within this centralised Akan polity, ideas of 'citizenship' and 'strangerhood' emerged which identified a circumscribed space for the traveller and sojourner. Special arrangements were made for travel within its boundaries, which in a cosmological sense would not endanger or annoy the local gods or the High God. The Akan polity in particular is known to have had a network of royal roads, travel shrines, professional travellers, a logic of time-reckoning based on the covering of specified distances to and from Kumasi, and an articulated mode of distance trading, upon which a specific cosmology was grounded (Perbi 1991; Wilks 1992). This operated separately from the religious domain that was and still is closely related to the family (*abusua*), its elders and its ancestral veneration. Each family would have its own house (*fie*) with a shrine, often located at a significant place (for example near rivers), where the offerings to the ancestral deities (*abosom*) would be made to ask for their protection and benevolence towards family members. While this religious form was political in that it sanctified the belonging to a particular family, the authority of the elders and at a higher level the citizenship to the wider polity, its exclusivism denied a place to strangers. The regionalised cosmologies pertaining to travel shrines and the like, however, provided a sacred crossing for strangers and included the notion that within these cosmologies the stranger was allowed a circumscribed space for protection, ancestral veneration and safe travel.

These notions not only played a role in how conquered neighbouring groups were perceived and how these interlinked with the making of slaves and slavery on the Atlantic coast but also with the place of mobility as a whole in society. Within the dominant polity, various notions of strangerhood were held, varying from the *ohoho*, that is the internal stranger, i.e. an Ashanti or Akan from another chiefdom, to outsiders considered to be real strangers who were excluded from any right of ownership and investment in Asante or Akan. The most despised were the *odonko*, the slaves brought in from the northern peoples, employed to perform the most menial tasks in the Asante-

Akan polity (see Fortes 1975; Rosenthal 1997).[4] Under the rule of the Asantihene, cities and towns in pre-colonial and colonial times were ruled by policies regulating the flow of people and determining who was a stranger and who had the right to call himself a citizen. Special areas were designated for strangers in the so-called *zongo*, a practice, perhaps not exclusive to the Akan polity in West Africa, which persisted throughout colonial times.

Authors such as Schildkrout (1979), McLeod (1975) and Peil (1979) have pointed out that one of the most dominant streams of migration emerged in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. At this time, a massive labour migration from the northern Sahelian areas to the south began to take place. Most of the northerners settled in the *zongo* areas. This southbound migration was related to the fact that, in the fertile southern areas, cocoa production had increased under the influence of expanding colonial trade. More labour was needed for gold mining and in the urbanising areas along the coast where trade and commerce were becoming increasingly important. Under the influence of this migration, the former *zongo* were growing steadily and the nature of the relationship with strangers and their concomitant religiously protected crossing changed.

Werbner (1989) highlighted the remarkable interrelationship between the various forms of strangerhood and the rise of the *zongo* on the one hand and the influx of specific personal security cults and a variety of shrines that became part of the southbound traffic of people into the Asante and Akan rural and urban areas on the other. These cults accompanied and guided the traveller by providing ritually protected corridors and a cosmology that incorporated the local and the ancestral into the regional. Along with the import of people and labour from the north into Asante came shrines, *materia sacra*, substances, cultural codes and ritual activities. Certain cults, with shrines in the north such as the Talis' Boghar Cult or the Tigare anti-witchcraft cult from Wa, established satellite shrines in the south or developed travelling shrines to speak to the migration movement.

While these types of cults developed and safeguarded the crossing of strangers into other cultural domains, the Ashanti and Akan fascination with powerful protection originating from elsewhere had a tremendous influence on the shrines within their domain. Although the strangers of the *zongo* were perceived in terms of great social distance, their religious expansion, their cosmological powers of the travelling shrines and their ability to venture into the bush and travel safely resonated deeply in Asante life. Asante shrines began to cross to other cultural areas replacing, as Werbner showed (1989: 238), those of the northerners. Hence, the possibilities for religiously protected travelling and trading also expanded for the southern groups and covered a region far greater than ever before.

A second development that enhanced the notion of a wider world of travel and opportunity reaching the heartland of Asante was the arrival of Christianity. As with the northern personal security cults, strangers brought this religious form to Asante. Wide-

[4] These northern groups included the Dagomba, the Mamprusi, the Tallensi or Frafra and the Dagati, while groups originating from surrounding countries were also included such as the Mossi, Haussa, Yoruba and Zabarama (see Schildkrout 1979. 186).

spread fascination started to emerge with a new window out onto a larger world. Missionary education, health care and the possession of all sorts of Western objects not only produced awe and respect but also a desire to become part of that world (Goody 1975; Meyer 1995 and 1999). As Hefner (1993) pointed out, conversion also meant a cultural conversion into a different world. The strong western 'missionisation' after the late 1880s by the established Christian churches (Roman Catholic, Basel Mission, and Methodists, but also missionary Pentecostal churches from England and the United States) brought new vistas of modernity, of an enticing world where new skills could be acquired and fortunes made. As early as 1900, these religions facilitated access to a wider world for increasing numbers of Ghanaians and encouraged many to migrate to the United States and the UK, often in search of education.

Local appropriations of Christianity took the form of independent prophetic-healing churches, which began to appear in large numbers in the 1930s and 1940s (see Wyllie 1980; Meyer 1995). Hundreds of churches emerged, often combining syncretically elements from Christianity with local cosmological notions and practices especially those concerning healing. These churches spread rapidly through the activities of itinerant prophets and healers, and seemed to cater to the needs of the rural-to-urban migrant. Many settled in the fast-developing cities of Kumasi, Accra and Cape Coast. In a deeper sense, these prophet-healing churches formed a continuation and transformation of the personal security cults mentioned above. Through the use of water, concoctions, herbs, candles, rings and statues they could offer healing and ritual protection in a wide variety of places to ever-increasing numbers of migrants. In so doing, they embodied a critique on the missionary churches that perceived issues of spiritual healing and protection as mere superstition. At the same time they rendered services, like the personality cults did, at a regional level and demonstrated the deep-seated fascination for the kind of religious powers that originate from elsewhere (namely Christianity) and the way in which they could be incorporated.

The rise of charismatic Pentecostalism highlights yet another development in the relationship between religion and mobility. This form of Pentecostalism did not develop so much in the context of regional mobility and the growth of cities, but emerged at a time when transnational travel and migration were becoming significant in the post-colonial years. Around independence in 1958, Ghana became part of cross-border flows of labour migration in and out of the country. Due to increasing cocoa production, mining and trading, large groups of migrants from neighbouring countries, such as the Yoruba from Nigeria, arrived in Ghana. As Peil (1979) and Sudarkasa (1979) showed, the word 'alien' was not in common usage in Ghana until the proclamation of the Compliance Order in November 1969. In the face of a declining economy, it set in motion a massive expulsion of aliens, many of Nigerian origin, from post-colonial Ghanaian society.

Ghana's economy started to decline rapidly in the 1970s causing Ghanaians, and Ashanti in particular, to migrate in ever-greater numbers to neighbouring countries, specifically Nigeria. In their turn, these Ghanaian migrants soon found themselves harassed and expelled in large numbers from Nigeria in 1983. Aggravated by this expulsion of more than a million Ghanaian labour migrants from Nigeria, many young men

saw very limited chances of finding paid employment in Ghana's urban centres. The rural sectors had equally lost their appeal as well as their absorption power due to sharp declines in world-market export commodity prices (especially that of cocoa). A steep increase in intercontinental migration occurred. There are, for example, many Ghanaian migrants who arrived in the Netherlands after 1983, after having tried their luck in Nigeria before deciding to leave for Europe.

Thus, the rise of Pentecostalism from this time onward comes as no surprise. Its prosperity gospel promised access to opportunities, to wealth and God's benevolence for the true believer. With an emphasis on style, clothes, religious entrepreneurship, money donations and the like, many hundreds of churches not only focused on rising consumerism in Ghanaian society but also on some deeper cultural notions of what can be expected of religious forms. Extending to new areas, holding 'crusades' in villages and even jumping on the bandwagon of globalisation meant that this religious form signalled a message of being able to open up profitable opportunities to all those who were willing to follow its creed. Some Pentecostal churches in Ghana resulted directly from the return migration from Nigeria as they appear to have Nigerian origins and in some cases even Nigerian leadership (for instance the well-known Deeper Life Ministries). Many churches established 'deliverance ministries' focusing on restoring prosperity through spiritual means for those who felt their success in life blocked by forces beyond their control. In the context of the Pentecostal prayer camps described above, international travel and the crossing of state borders became a matter of spiritual protection as well.

The point made in this overview is, first of all, that since pre-colonial times an intimate relationship has existed between mobility and religious forms. Secondly, this relationship is still present in Pentecostalism today despite the transformations that have taken place in religious forms since the occurrence of personal security cults, and despite the differences in geographical scale that have emerged in the domain of mobility. The third point is that these forms of religion have always appeared to be able to crosscut political boundaries and identity formations. Ranging from the erstwhile security cults of travelling shrines that crossed the boundaries set by the Akan centralised polity to the new transnational Pentecostal churches, all these cases show a dialectic relationship existing with 'citizenship' in political terms. These religious forms appear to bear an element of strangerhood – as exemplified in the travel shrines of the security cults, the itinerant prophets of the healing churches and the transnational orientation of the Pentecostal churches – that creates a distanced if not tense relationship with political power. Much of the political power of chieftaincy, of the colonial rulers or the post-colonial state was focused on regulating flows of people and of creating a citizenship that could be known and controlled, such as the mass expulsion of 'aliens' demonstrated.

It must be emphasised that in the post-colonial situation the new Pentecostal churches were not particularly concerned with contributing to citizenship in a political sense. Theirs was not a discourse of belonging to a certain place or a certain country. Instead, a problematic and ambiguous relationship frequently developed with political authorities whereby during the Rawlings regime some churches came closer to his

power while others preferred to develop a position of being critical moral watchdogs.[5] They stressed the need to christianise the nation and make it part of a larger modern world in which the nation-state would become disentangled from its cultural roots and all the ancestral powers that dominated it. When it comes to traditional keepers of power, especially the chiefs, it is important to note that this duality of religiously inspired mobility and politically maintained sedentarity applies again. Chiefs do not and cannot become members of Pentecostal churches as they are seen to embody ancestral powers that, in the eyes of the Pentecostalists, are demonic and tie people to certain places and shrines where veneration takes place. The opportunities and vistas the Pentecostal churches offer in their ritual practices are not available to chiefs as the custodians of 'local custom', unless they become deeply delivered from whatever may tie them to their traditions. Even violent conflicts have resulted from this disparity in the acknowledgement of the chiefs' authority. This has been the case, for instance, with the traditional authorities of the ethnic unit of Gas in Accra who invaded some of the Pentecostal churches in an attempt to enforce their rulings (R. van Dijk 2001b).

In the Diaspora as well the Ghanaian Pentecostal community, churches cannot be perceived to be interested in promoting Dutch citizenship or in establishing fixed identities within stable communities. Instead, interest lies with the individual, with personal moral life and with the saving of the personal soul unto the believer. The concept of soul ((*o*)*kra*) is considered of great importance by the leaders of the Pentecostal groups in the Netherlands. A frequently heard expression in these groups is *Okra ye ohoho* (the soul is the stranger), a well-known Ashanti saying (Bempong 1992). It indicates a specific quality of every individual that instead of signalling ancestral relations with the family represents detachment and strangerhood. Both modalities are generally perceived to be present in each and every person: each person is expected to have an *okra* in addition to family spirits, and thus an element of strangerhood. Upon death, the *kra* will leave the body and return to God, *Onyame*, from where it came. In the context of the Diaspora churches, it is an expression meant to indicate that the political field, in this case the Dutch authorities, will never be able to capture fully the Ghanaian Pentecostal identity. This ideology perceives religious mobility and political sedentarity as a duality that runs through the body personal and the body social at the same time. This thinking is not without significance in a context where the Dutch government has increased its efforts to curb migration from Africa and has put in place a range of measures to check identities and record them in every possible detail.

So, whereas things religious and relating to 'soul' have all the characteristics of crosscutting boundaries, of guiding travel to other places and gaining access to resources elsewhere, the political field of authority is seen to control and fixate identities. In other words, these religious forms, in their mobility, provided and in the case of Pentecostalism still provide notions of opportunity and prosperity elsewhere, in other places or spiritual spaces. Religion in these forms and varieties in an important way is perceived by many of its adherents as a kind of port of entry, as a doorway leading to

[5] Mensa Otabil, founder and leader of the influential International Central Gospel Church in Accra became particularly well known for this.

these opportunities elsewhere, beyond the boundaries often set by the polity that, for instance, Ghanaian Pentecostalism now encounters in the Dutch state.

To conclude this section, the Fulbe case demonstrated that sedentarity and locality cannot *a priori* be assumed to be the paradigmatic point of departure for exploring mobility. This section has aimed to show that mobility must be explored on its own terms. A change of perspective may apply to an entire culture such as the Fulbe but may also be fruitfully applied to the exploration of an *aspect* of a culture; in this case not an entire culture but elements of a culture, namely certain highly mobile religious forms, have been explored in their mobile characteristics. In so far as these can be distinguished from other aspects of culture (an epistemological point that is left untouched in the context of this contribution), the analytical point here is that a perspective that assumes and operates from sedentary notions will not ensure a total understanding of Ghanaian Pentecostalism. It is not about creating locality, settlement, citizenship or anything else to which other forms of power in Ghanaian society cater. Pentecostalism is about mobility, of being 'moved by the Spirit' in ecstasy, of creating 'breakthroughs' so that successful travelling can commence for its followers and so on. In this perspective another saying by which Pentecostals refer to their churches is apt: *asore ye kra* which means 'the church is soul, but a wandering soul altogether'.

Concluding remarks

These two case studies show the importance of mobility and the complexity of related phenomena. Population movements have always been and are still important vehicles for self-promotion, survival and, in case of the Fulbe, part of their self-definition. As the Ghanaian case shows, people sometimes create ideological spaces to constitute some form of identity that produces and allows for mobility. Even though in both cases these aspects of identity do not directly enhance their situation in material terms, they nevertheless provide people with a social network, a sense of belonging, which indeed may act as a social and ideological environment of a 'normal' sedentary form.

So far, the inherent socio-cultural features of these kinds of 'societies' have often escaped social scientists. Anthropologists have typically frozen their objects of study in villages, tribes, territories, reproducing the paradigm of the North-Atlantic mode of organisation so closely intertwined with the hegemonic colonial and post-colonial state. Geographers have been much more sensitive to geographical mobility but have mostly dealt with its economic and spatial aspects and not with its social and cultural forms.

The two example cases presented here stimulate new ways of thinking about mobility leading back to the central concern set out at the beginning of the chapter about how to develop new ways towards a cultural understanding of moving people. This is also a plea for empirical research. As the case studies have shown, it is only through the richness of ethnographic detail derived from research in multi-sited settings that the real dynamics of mobile cultures and people are revealed. Some have said that to look for data is also to look for oneself. While that may be true, it is even more relevant in the

sense that the issue of mobility has become so intimately integrated in our own way of life that looking for another while moving may offer new insights and new ways of looking at ourselves.

In addition, perhaps an even more pressing issue is at stake. Moving people have indeed become a problem in the sense that refugee movements in Africa – because of dissolving states, interethnic strife, struggles for hegemony, and control over natural and mineral resources – are causing enormous hardship. This has become an unsettling predicament that must be dealt with, not only technically but also as a social issue affecting our own societies. The movement of people within and outside Africa has become an issue of global concern to many other nation-states, international organisations, local NGOs and the like. Often *a priori* mobility is constructed as problematic, irrespective of the extent to which mobility is experienced as unsettling by people themselves or by the societies concerned. Regardless of local forms of mobility that may have been in existence long before considerations of international intervention of any sort were at stake, the problematic nature of mobility is defined for them but often without them and without a close reading of how problems are being experienced and expressed.

Both cases show the consistent failure of the North-Atlantic mode of organisation to contain people within the established boundaries set for them. Little is known about the economic, social and cultural dynamics of these transnational and trans-African 'societies'. How do people remain connected and together, when administrative power structures, tax regimes and identity cards are put to use to fragment their (and our) world into distinct political, social and cultural spaces?

What is then the connection between the strategies of an individual traveller linked to a globalising religious form on the one hand and those of nomadic bovine identity on the other? They meet each other where the constructions of travel and movement are concerned. Meanings, emotions, decisions and motivations for movement and travel cannot be assumed and cannot be cast in a discourse of rupture alone. The extent to which persons themselves perceive travel and movement as a form of continuity is surprising. It is rather the interruption of travel due to visa problems, lack of money and contacts that is a problem in the case of Ghanaian Pentecostalism. For the Fulbe, a lack of space in which to manoeuvre, the weight of state regulations and the occupation of their pastoral territories are important incentives to move. They have to continue moving if they do not want to become permanently immobilised. In both cases it is clear that people resist being contained by and attached to specific localities.

Questions concerning the relation between the individual, the group and larger wholes in much broader geographical perspectives need to be posed. We are challenged to delve into the traveller's mind, as well as those of the people who stay behind. People do not think in the bipolar models we scientists have developed. The decisions they take every day determine whether they move or not. As such, understanding and analysing cultures of travel can only be done, we argue, from a processual perspective, one which underscores the need to apply concepts and methods that are as dynamic as societal life is in many parts of Africa.

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