

## FULBE MOBILITY: MIGRATION AND TRAVEL INTO MANDE

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The Fulbe are famous for their migratory movements. In the course of history they have spread over most of West Africa. In pre-colonial times they expanded their life-world from Senegal and Mali over the rest of the West African Sahel and even as far as Sudan and Ethiopia. They established states in such diverse areas as northern Senegal, central Mali, northern Nigeria, northern Guinea, and Cameroon. Elsewhere, they have become the rulers of small political entities, or have constituted a livestock keeping minority, or have assimilated into local sedentary society (see e.g. Amselle 1990). Over the last century they also moved into hitherto unexplored territory in the forest zone of West Africa, notably in Nigeria, southern Cameroon, the Central African Republic and northern Ivory Coast (see e.g. Frantz 1975, Waters-Bayer 1988, Bernardet 1984). As a result travel, movement and mobility have become deeply embedded into the ways they organise themselves and in their understandings of the world.

Mobility is an essential feature of life for the Fulbe. It has become part of their lifestyle and is embedded in Fulbe culture, or the various Fulbe cultures that came into being during this process. Their mobility has also influenced other cultures not only in the way they perceive the Fulbe, but also with respect to the ways they understand themselves as non-Fulbe, though at times the distinctions were blurred. In this way, the Fulbe have moved into the Manden and have become the neighbours of Mande populations in a variety of qualities: as cattle herders working for Mande cultivators; as (former) rulers in the Futa Jallon; as sedentary cultivators completely assimilated into Mande culture in the Wassulu; as traders alongside the Jula and Mande, etc. Interethnic relations and mobility have thus been of utmost importance for the Fulbe, not only in an economic sense to gain a living, but also for social security, religious services, and the formation of their identity. Their presence has equally been important for their hosts or neighbours and for the very creation of their culture as well. The Fulbe often served as, and continue to be, the stereotypic counterpoint to sedentary society; they live in the bush with their cattle like birds – one day they are there, the next day they are gone (cf. De Bruijn & Van Dijk 1997).

The recent migrations into 'new' zones however cannot be described solely from the perspective of voluntary mobility or travel. They spring from different

motivations, ranging from forced displacement because of drought and/or poverty to voluntary migration out of a spirit of adventure.

In this paper we are concerned with mobility and migration of two groups of Fulbe and individuals originating in central Mali, who are currently moving into Mande: the Jallube from the Hayre and the Fittoobe from Duma. Both groups have a long history of mobility and displacement. The place they come from and the locale where they are is always a temporary point of fixation in a history marked by mobility and not a fixed area of origin. The form taken by permanent movements differ according to the reasons for migration, to the political situation in which they live, and to their level of wealth.

However, this is not an easy process, as was again proved by the most recent migration waves induced by the droughts of the 1970s and 1980s. This movement increasingly takes the character of a 'forced displacement' as the possibilities for survival in their homeland decrease. Some of the Fulbe families we encountered on our field trips might indeed be defined as displaced people, with all the misery, poverty and marginalisation this entails (cf. Lassailly-Jacob 1998; Cernea 1998; Bennett 1998), just as some of the people who stayed behind might be labelled 'destitute'. As we will show this leads to ambiguous attitudes and motivations among migrants vis-à-vis their kinsmen and home area.

We start with a general description of Fulbe and their mobility in central Mali; then we discuss some case-studies. We end with some observations on the migration process itself and its implications for the migrants.

### Central Mali: the Fulbe and their Mande neighbours

The Fulbe discussed in this paper are part of two large lineage-groups: the Jallube and the Fittoobe. Both lineages played an important role in the history of central Mali especially in the empires in the Inner Delta of the Niger during the 19th century and in the formation of chiefdoms on the periphery of these empires. The groups of migrants discussed here do not originate from the Fulbe at the center of these empires. According to local traditions they fled the Inner Delta because of the political oppression that accompanied empire-building as early as the 17th century. In Douentza, around the mountain range connecting the Bandiagara plateau with Mount Hommbori, in an area called the Hayre, the Jallube established their own chiefdoms in the 18th century (De Bruijn & Van Dijk 1995). These chiefdoms were composed of a nobility with political and religious functions at the apex, with semi-nomadic herder groups as their vassals. Under the influence of the 19th century Islamic empires in the Inner Delta of the Niger slavery became a central element of their economy. During the colonial period this social structure altered in its content but not in its form. Even today the Jallube remain highly

hierarchical in their organization, and recognize the power of their chiefs in the Hayre. Their former slaves are also still assigned specific roles in relation to the division of labour and ritual life.

The Fittoobe have a different background. They originate from the Guimballa, an area east of the Inner Delta, lying closer to the river and characterized by big lakes. Some groups of the Fittoobe migrated to the Hayre. The exact timing of these events is not clear. People trace this event back to a distant ancestor with whom direct links are not very clear. The group we will discuss in this paper settled in Duma,<sup>1</sup> south of Douentza in the border area between the Hayre and the Seeno. They neither submitted to the Jallube chiefdoms of the Hayre in the 18th century, nor accepted the rule of the Maasina Empire in the Inner Delta led by Seeku Aamadu in the 19th century. They initially constituted an independent group of herders who were not hierarchically organized and were extremely mobile. Even today they are regarded as the richest cattle owners and the best herdsmen of Douentza. The inhabitants of Duma also made use of slave labour, however their system of labor recruitment was based on individual slaves, slaves of families, whereas the Jallube organised their slaves in villages in an estate-like manner (see De Bruijn & Van Dijk 1995). As they were not politically integrated into larger empires, the distinction between political elite and vassals is absent. They are also said to have converted to Islam much later than the Jallube. Whether this is true or not is unclear.

Economic and ecological relations between the Fulbe and neighbouring groups are mainly based on exchanges. Central in the life of nomadic people are the relations with the outside world (Khazanov 1984). To get access to cereals and to a market for their milk products they have to exchange livestock products with the sedentary population. On the other hand the sedentary population needs the pastoralists and their cattle for the manure, to restore fertility to the soil of their fields. These exchange relations are central in the interaction between sedentary people and pastoral nomads. Even today, during a period in which Fulbe are increasingly becoming agro-pastoralists and more and more cultivators keep their own cattle, this exchange still plays an important role. Another important exchange product for the herders is their specialised labour, the herding of cattle, which is becoming more and more prominent in the last decades.

The former slaves of the Fulbe, called Riimaybe, form an important part of the population of the Hayre and the Seeno. They are mainly cultivators with whom the Fulbe have a special exchange relation. Other groups in this area are Sonray and Dogon. The Fulbe regard the Sonray as their equals, based on a shared history as power holders. They also established a chiefdom and possessed a *tarik*, a written chronicle of their history. They regard the Dogon as inferiors, since in the past they formed the reservoir of slaves. These sentiments still play an important

role in mutual perceptions in the Hayre as well as in the Seeno and Gondo plains in the Bankass and Koro cercle and the Bandiagara plateau (cf. De Bruijn *et al.* 1997).

Social relations between Fulbe groups and between Fulbe and others are for a large part determined by a central concept in their culture, *yaage*, which may be translated by shame or reserve. This implies a code of behaviour, rules and norms with regard to special kin groups and to other ethnic groups, and is mainly characterised by avoidance behaviour.

### **Fulbe society and mobility**

The Fulbe have been mobile their whole history. Over time the Jallube of the Hayre discussed in this paper have experienced periods of greater and lesser mobility. The degree of mobility was influenced by a number of factors: political, military, economic and ecological. Before the 19th century their mobility was apparently due to political unrest, military insecurity, and raiding bands. Probably they were an integral part of this 'raiding economy'. When in the 19th century the Maasina Empire was created by Seeku Aamadou in the Inner Delta, they were forced to 'dig in' and participate in the political and military organization, which was created for the defence of the empire. During the second half of the 19th century under the rule of the Futanke it seems that they became more mobile. In the chaotic situation, in which the military control of borders was not strict any more, raiding became once again one of the major subsistence strategies in central Mali.

In the beginning of the 20th century, soon after the colonial conquest, raiding was suppressed. The French tried to organize pastoralism better by regulating pastoral movements, as Seeku Aamadou had done before. Slavery was abolished and the Fulbe were forced to pay taxes and to participate in public works for the colonial government. This led to a situation of lesser mobility for the herding groups. They were forced to cultivate their own fields, and they became increasingly fixed in space for the payment of taxes and marketing of their cattle, as the trade became more organized in regular and institutionalized commodity markets. This process of decreasing mobility continues until today and is also promoted by the expansion of agriculture. As we shall see however, this is not a linear development for all herdsmen and there is considerable variation between groups and individuals in the degree of mobility.

Mobility of the Fulbe is also influenced by ecological and climatic circumstances. Given the variability in time and space and resource availability in the drier parts of the Sahel, moving is imperative for the best possible management of the herd. In a number of cases this mobility has taken the

characteristics of 'forced migration'. The 20th century started with a very difficult period for the Fulbe. The hunger years of 1913-1914 especially are remembered as a period of extreme suffering. One of the strategies of the pastoral Fulbe was to move, seeking pasture and food elsewhere. Similar periods occurred in the 1930s, the 1970s and the 1980s, and again recently in 1997-1998. During the colonial period, another reason for the Jallube to move was the avoidance of tax payment and other oppressive measures of the French, such as forced labour. In the archives the displacement of entire villages is reported as a consequence of the strict rules of the colonial government. We do not know how the Fittoobe of Duma reacted to these developments. Their reactions most likely will not have been very different.

For the Fittoobe as well as the Jallube, mobility is a very important component of their Fulbe culture. Individuals, families and groups almost always migrate and/or travel during specific periods of their life. Movement or travel is a very acceptable way of being. The displacement of persons or their relatives and their herds mark most life-histories of the people. Reasons for travel vary. People are motivated by simple curiosity, by economic incentives, by conflict with parents or brothers, by poverty, for religious and political reasons. We will elaborate on this below. Migration and/or temporary movements are an individual affair or that of a nuclear family. Although some people may leave in a group with others, this occurs only if this recourse is indeed in the best interest of all the families involved. Otherwise, they readily split the group and each go their own way.

This process of group fission and fusion is part of the yearly cycle but movement may also extend over years and may lead to diffusion and dispersal of pastoral groups. This process has been labelled 'migratory drift', the gradual expansion of a pastoral group by the slow migration to the east (Stenning 1957). In this process the Fulbe enter new territories, and enter into contact with new groups. Interethnic contacts are given new contents under these novel conditions. By means of these new relations people exchange goods and experiences with each other, leading to a redefinition of who they are etc. (see Amselle 1990; de Boeck 1993; De Bruijn & van Dijk 1997). In this process Fulbe culture is transformed, but also preserved.

Displacement is not a recent phenomenon for the Fulbe. Since the beginning of this century certain groups of Fulbe with diverse origin in Mali and Burkina Faso have migrated into the south of Mali and the north of Ivory Coast (see Bernardet 1984; Bassett 1994; Diallo 1995). Before that groups of Fulbe settled in areas like the Wassoulou, the kingdom of Segou and Sikasso (see Amselle 1990; Grayzel 1990). In the course of history they lost their language and have become 'barbaric,' as the literature says. Recent Fulbe migrants into these areas regard them as improper Fulbe and approach them in the same manner as the other ethnic groups the Malinke, the Bambara, the Dogon, the Mossi, etc.

The Jallube and Fittoobe who migrated from the Hayre to southern areas like the Dogon plateau and the Koutiala region over the last 30 years are part of a new wave of migrations induced by drought, poverty, and the 'modernisation' of the Malian economy. The form and direction taken by this last wave of migration is linked to the previous migration 'waves' of the Fulbe and to their patterns of movement in general. However at the same time they extend into totally new areas, and the Fulbe are exploring new social environments.

### **Incentives for travel to the south**

Most Fulbe who migrated recently to the south give as the main reason for their movement the droughts of the 1970s and the 1980s. Reconstruction of migration histories over this period indicates that indeed many families went to the south.<sup>2</sup> Due to the drought many lost most of their cattle and were suffering severe impoverishment. For many poor there were insufficient fall-back options in the form of social or natural resources to help them through the crisis. They had no choice but to leave their camp or village and try to find a living elsewhere. These decisions were also influenced by the image of poverty in Fulbe culture. Being poor leads to feelings of shame for the poor and must be avoided (see also De Bruijn 1994, 1999). Asking for help, which is a logical consequence of being poor is also an act that gives rise to sentiments of dishonor for the needy person. No extensive social security networks exists and as the people themselves admit they were almost forced to vanish from their homeland by their inner feelings along with the economic decline within the group. The Fittoobe from Duma as well as Jallube confirmed this.

For many poor leaving for the south also meant new opportunities, because of changing economic conditions in the south of Mali. The farmers in the south especially in the cotton area have earned so much cash over the last years that they have been able to invest a lot in cattle. The labor to herd this cattle is recruited from outside. Fulbe herders from the north have filled this gap. This kind of herding contract has long existed in the region. Herding contracts with the Dogon of the Bandiagara plateau, for instance, also have acted as a fallback option for impoverished herdsman. The labor (and the cattle) of the Fulbe is in high demand on the Bandiagara plateau because of the exchange of manure for cereals, which has become crucial to maintain fertility in the poor soils of the Bandiagara plateau. Herding and manure contracts have become the most important constituent of the interethnic relations between Fulbe and Dogon. Over the past decades, however, the influx of impoverished herders seeking such a contract has led to an 'inflation' of the contract. The conditions of contract have become less favorable for the

herders as other fallback options have decreased with the decline of the pastoral economy in the Hayre, Gurma and the Guimballa further north. The Dogon have the power to set the conditions of contract in such a way that they profit most from the contract.

Migration takes various forms. Among the migrants were families who had lost all their cattle as well as families who still had some cattle. Individual migrants were mostly young unmarried men. Many who had already married left their families behind. Only a small minority returned to their home area after a few years. Most did not return. This was tragic for some old people and young women with small children (see De Bruijn 1998). In some cases there is still some contact between the people who left and the ones who stayed behind but this is never very intensive. In most cases, however, contact is limited to sparse information about the whereabouts of the relatives who left. Sometimes people just disappeared until their return, if they came back at all.

It is difficult to predict the future situation of the Fulbe migrants. It is partly dependent on the hospitality and the economic situation of the receiving zones. For instance the case of northern Côte d'Ivoire shows the real possibility that ethnic conflict may stimulate people to return to their home areas. Also the shortage of land, increasing competition over water resources, new policies with respect to natural resource management, and political decentralisation, which work against minorities of migrants may well lead to a more hostile attitude towards herdsman and lead them to decide to return to their home area, although survival there would be more difficult.

### **The end of old contacts, the creation of new contracts**

Our research put us into the process of migration.<sup>3</sup> We simply became part of the networks that people developed in this process. The thread connecting the localities we visited and the case-studies we collected is our own search for the 'lost' Fulbe from the area where we had previously done our fieldwork. We were trying to find out how the Fulbe attempted to settle in a new area and how they perceived this process. The research results are so far rather fragmentary, which makes it difficult to generalize, perhaps as a consequence of the organization of our work, i.e. following the networks of the Fulbe themselves. However this fragmentary picture probably reflects the migration process itself quite well, and how the Fulbe themselves organize and perceive it. It is a reflection of their own flexibility and mobility but also of their individuality and insecurity. Each story is a unique one.

## Bogolo

In the first half of the 20th century many Jallube families left the Hayre to settle on the Bandiagara plateau. For the period before the droughts of the 1970s and 1980s, it is difficult to determine the motives for peoples' movement. Their descendants give a number of possible explanations: the tax they had to pay to the French; forced labor under French rule; oppressive Fulbe chiefs (the chief of Booni at the beginning of the 20th century is particularly mentioned in this respect); drought; famine; expansion of agricultural land; adventure, etc. Some people also declared that their parents may have liked to move, just for the sake of being mobile. Other families left because they wanted to be closer to the Inner Delta where the good pastures are. Whatever their actual reasons, the variety offered by each family already tells us something about the nature of the process of movement.

The Jallube who decided to stay on the Bandiagara plateau established three villages: Bogolo, Diombo, and Dari-Jallube. We take Bogolo as an example. Bogolo itself is made up of various families whose their exact numbers are difficult to estimate, since most families do not actually reside in Bogolo, but are related to the village only because they pay their taxes there.<sup>4</sup> The origin of the 'founding' families lies in the Hayre, but they came from various places and they all arrived on different times and on an individual basis on the plateau.<sup>5</sup> The village was in fact a temporary gathering of families who had no more in common than that they happened to live on the Bandiagara plateau. The piece of land on which they established a village was given to them halfway through this century by the Futanke chief of Bandiagara, a descendant of Al-Hajj Umar Tal of the Fuuta Toro (the Futanke ruled the plateau just before the colonial conquest). Only then did Bogolo become a 'village'. Bogolo has never been a very stable village: families come in and move out all the time. Nowadays most families live elsewhere on the plateau for the greater part of the year or have moved to the south of Mali. About 30 nuclear families have departed the village and settled elsewhere on the Bandiagara plateau since the onset of the droughts. In addition 11 men left the plateau accompanied by their families. Of the 25 families, nuclear or otherwise, who still have members living in the village, 41 men migrated on an individual basis and left the Bandiagara plateau altogether. Nine of these were married and abandoned their family.

For instance a number of families moved from Bogolo to another place on the plateau in the 1960s. They settled in a village called Wuro Kakawel from where they could explore another part of the plateau's pastures. Jallube from other Fulbe villages settled there. After the droughts of the 1980s another 'small settlement' was formed near the Dogon village of Nyongono. They felt there was no more room around Bogolo, and from this new place they could more easily

explore the Pinyaari and the Inner Delta of the Niger. Next to these Jallube camps individual families just roam around, moving each month or even every few days in search of pasturelands and good milk markets. An important reason for their dispersion is the fact that they often do not own the animals they herd. The owner of the animals, often a Dogon from the plateau or a Malinke from the Inner Delta, has an important say in where the herdsmen must stay or where they should move in the dry season.

The relations of the Jallube on the plateau with the Dogon are ambiguous. On the one hand they call each other friends, and on the other hand they have regular clashes about damage to fields by cattle and disagreements about cattle that are lost. Their relations are also marked by very persistent historically based ethnic prejudices about each other (see De Bruijn *et al.* 1997). For the Dogon the Fulbe are former slave raiders, which is of course not a peaceful memory. But for the Islamized Dogon, the old Islamic tradition of the Fulbe is another important aspect of their culture, and in the Dogon were Islamized by the Fulbe. In more recent history of the 1940s, the Fulbe obtained their village territories from the Futanke overlords, thanks to a conflict between two Dogon villages. To resolve the conflict and to punish the villages the Futanke chief took the land from the Dogon and gave it to the Jallube. The Dogon remember quite well how the Jallube obtained this land and regard the Jallube claim as illegitimate. They still consider the land to be their property which the Jallube 'use'. The pasture areas of the Jallube are also part of what the Dogon still regard as their village territories. There is a constant struggle over these pasture areas, as the Dogon time and again clear land in the bush which the Jallube regard as their domain. This situation leads to clashes between both groups in which they involve the administration and the court in Bandiagara.

Since the droughts, the Jallube have been almost exclusively keepers of Dogon-owned cattle. This dependence makes it difficult for them to oppose encroachment of agriculture into pasture areas. Between the Dogon-owner and the Fulbe-herder, relationships vary from hostile to real friendship. Some of these relations started long ago as an exchange between a cattle-owning herder and a cultivator, which has changed into the relationship of herder and cattle-owning cultivator. Friendship and mutual help mark these relations. Today help is mainly given by Dogon to the Jallube and not the other way around.

It is clear that the Jallube have retained their own identity on the plateau despite their minority position and their dispersion over the plateau. These factors, along with their social and political organisation, do not make them a corporate group with a strong leader, but they do adhere to certain ethnic markers that make them easily recognized, and they behave as if they were a homogenous group. These ethnic markers are Islam, certain codes of behaviour and clothing, and a

strong preference for cattle herding. These ethnic stereotypes are also kept alive and articulated by the Dogon in their perception of and interaction with the Fulbe and the way they talk about them.

Nevertheless they live together and share at least part of the year the same space. This has also led to the adoption by the Jallube of certain Dogon features such as the architecture of their granaries, the use of wooden doors and the wooden locks fabricated by Dogon craftsmen. The Jallube on the plateau are also much less prudish about beer drinking than their fellow clansmen in the Hayre. Further Dogon and Jallube master each other's languages. Jallube women especially speak Dogon very well. They go to the Dogon villages almost every day to sell their milk. Dogon men almost all speak Fulfulde. Jallube men will always deny that they understand or speak Dogon, but given their reactions to Dogon conversations it is clear that they do understand Dogon quite well, especially the youth.

The Jallube also maintain a separate posture from other Fulbe groups on the plateau. Their main instruments are a strong endogamy and continued reference to their shared history and origin. One important marker for the Jallube in this sense is their putative relationship with the Hayre. Although nowadays they are completely integrated on the Bandiagara plateau, they still preserve strong memories of the Hayre. In daily practice however, there is hardly any contact. They tell each other they have to go there to bring condolences and visit their families. Only one or two will indeed do so. Some families look for marriage partners for their children in the Hayre, but fail to find one. At present most parents look for a spouse for their children on the plateau.

### **A family of Bogolo: Halimata and her brothers**

We met the brothers of Halimata for the first time in the bush of Nyalmaane, near Koury on the border with Burkina Faso. Our first thought on seeing their camp was that they had become like pygmies. For us, who came from the Sahel and who mainly knew the Fulbe in a dry environment with sparse vegetation, it was a surprise to see their huts surrounded by green leaves, large trees and, at first sight, without any open space for the animals.

Gede is the oldest brother. According to his sister Halimata, who lives in Bogolo and is considered the richest woman there, Gede spoiled the wealth he inherited from his father (15 animals) to buy alcohol and clothes, etc. As a youth he went adventuring in the south, and happened to come to Koury where he was taken in by M. Karambe, a Dogon from Bandiagara, a 'douanier en retraite' with an extensive network among the Minianka in the area. He mediates for the Fulbe

who come from his home area to find work herding cattle for the Minianka. In this way, Gede came to live for a while near Nyalmaane, where he herded the cattle of the chief of the village. He decided to stay there and went back to Bogolo once to sell his few remaining animals. As he says now, the south pleases him and he would rather live among the Minianka than die of hunger in Bogolo. It is too difficult in the north.

His brother Usmane also left Bogolo. He did not have so many animals. He left as a singer and musician. He did not follow his brother's tracks on purpose, but they finally ended up in the same place. They decided to work together. Usmane has not gone back to Bogolo ever since, for over ten years now.

Both were married when they left Bogolo. Their wives wanted to divorce them, but the family of the two brothers preferred to give them the money to travel to their husbands. Probably they hoped that the women would be able to convince them to return to Bogolo. This did not happen. Instead the wives also stayed in the south. Their children never saw Bogolo.

When asked whether they would return to Bogolo if they could both brothers answered that of course they would. However, from the way they said it and from their intonation it was clear that they meant otherwise. They might go there for a short visit, but not to live. Gede said that he had tried to convince Halimata to come to the south, but she refused. He is convinced that life is better here, especially in a material sense.

Gede's wife died in 1996. She was even taken to hospital in San but in vain. She left 5 children. After this tragedy Gede went back to Bogolo. This was the first time in more than ten years he had seen the village where he was born. He went there to inform his wife's family of her death and quite possibly also to ask for support. One of his children was adopted by his sister Halimata, and his mother came back with him to Nyalmaane to take care of the four remaining children, of whom the youngest died a year later. His sister Halimata also went to Koury once because of this, but she never reached Nyalmaane. She only delivered her condolences and went back to Bogolo.

When Halimata's youngest brother heard that we intended to go south and probably would meet his brothers he gave us a tape with some news and greetings for his brothers. Usmane tried to listen to this tape during our stay, but it was impossible to understand because it had been recorded through the speakers instead of the microphone. He did not seem disappointed that he could not hear it, and never asked us what the contents of the tape were.

When we tried to interview Usmane about his stay in Nyalmaane and his relations with Bogolo he did a very remarkable thing. Apparently he did not feel at ease with all these questions and tried to avoid them:

'*Aan a kootata Bogolo?*' (Don't you return to Bogolo?)

'*Ko wadi?*' (What about that?)

'*Mi lamndoo tan*' (I just ask you)

'*Mi kootan*' (I will return)

While answering he took his cassette player and started to listen to the tape of his brother again. Then his mother replies:

'*..o hootaay fez!!*' (He never returned (implying that he will not do so)),

'*duubi sappo hika o hootaay*' (it is ten years that he has not returned).

'*a yiaay yimbe maa duubi sappo jooni?*' (You did not see your people for ten years now)

'*Ana buri ... Bogolo kay, ana buri*' (More than that.. to Bogolo.. more than that)

He then decided to show us something. He took out the tape of his brother and put in a tape with Minianka music. He urged the children to put on cloth and to come and show their dance. They showed a Minianka dance. They were better dancers than some Minianka children were. Usmane was proud of them and again urged them to take the good turns and to show how well they could dance. We recorded this with our video camera so that the people of Bogolo could see the children dancing the Minianka dance and see the brothers of Halimata with their haircut of the south. He did not seem to mind at all.

His mother did not know yet whether she would return. She said she did not like it in Nyalmaane as there were no other Jallube around, but she said they had enough to eat and there was no scarcity. What to do then when back in Bogolo, where that year (1997) scarcity was again reality? As Usmane said: '*coodoowo gawri henyata, a soodan gawri, a tampan meere, bolum, bolum, bolum.....*' (a buyer of millet is never free, you must buy millet, and you become tired for nothing, nothing, nothing ...).

According to the mother of Usmane's wife who lives in Bogolo, the reason why the brothers cannot return to Bogolo is simply that they are too poor. Their sister Halimata proposed that they come back and herd her cattle. For them this is no option. According to Gede it is simply not a good idea... he would feel humiliated if he had to do so.

Neither Gede nor Usmane longer look like Bogolonke any more. They wear their hair in the fashion of the southern Fulbe. They speak Fulfulde with a different accent. They speak Bambara fluently. The women from the North were very proud of the market of Nyalmaane, they presented this market as the best in the

surroundings. They have good contact with the other Fulbe groups, mainly families like themselves from the North, but of various origins. Gede's daughter married a boy from a Fulbe group living in the surroundings of Koury. He is a Pullo but that is all.

Some Beledugu Fulbe also live in that area. These are Fulbe who immigrated into the area a long time ago and no longer speak Fulfulde. For the new immigrants, these people no longer count as Fulbe although they may all live in the same way. Most probably, however, the newcomers will be integrated into this group of Beledugu Fulbe within a few generations. It is interesting again to notice that the recently arrived Fulbe strongly keep to their identity as Fulbe although they do take over many things from the Minianka and become integrated into the Minianka economy. They will remain a group apart just like the Beledugu Fulbe, marked by a different housing (scattered in the bush and living in huts), with jewelry that is said to be typical for the Fulbe in that area. Probably, and for better or for worse, they will stick to cattle-herding, their main vocation, with their own animals or those of others.

### The Fittoobe of Duma

The pattern of migration from Duma is very similar to the paths followed by the Jallube belonging to villages like Bogolo. Basically, they also left individually. The reasons for their departure are as various as those of the Jallube. It seems however that in the first half of this century their mobility was mainly organized around the yearly transhumance. They returned each year to Duma in the rainy season. There were no oppressive chiefs and Duma was far away from the road, where most forced labour was recruited and French colonial officers had to be carried. Only after the droughts of the 1970s did more permanent migration become part of reality for the inhabitants of Duma.

Some families decided to settle just north of San across the Bani, where they also went on transhumance with their goatherds. A quite large community of people of Duma settled there and received land for their proper use. Many families also ended up near Bandiagara where they had good relations with the people in town and in the villages through which they passed on their yearly transhumance to the Inner Delta. The plateau itself was also a region for transhumance for less wealthy families. So there were long-standing relations between the Dogon of the plateau and the citizens of Bandiagara with the herdsmen from Duma before they settled there during and after the droughts.

Diikal is an old woman from Duma. She left Duma in the 1970s, after the drought. As she admitted, it was not a voluntary but a forced migration. Even today she still says she would prefer to return to Duma, her family's place. An

important indication for this is the fact that her 'bed', a central part of the household items of women, is still in Duma. It is waiting for Diikal to return. This, however, will never happen, something she has never said aloud but which is clearly her own projection of her life. Life had become too hard in Duma, but probably more decisive was the fact that her children did not want to return. They like it on the Dogon plateau where most of them were born and which has become their life-world.

Diikal had been coming to the plateau since she was a young girl. Her parents came on transhumance with their own cattle. Sometimes they continued on to the Inner Delta of the Niger, but in some years they stayed in the neighbourhood of the Dogon, who indeed were friends of her parents and of Diikal. This is the way most people from Duma know the plateau. They are closely acquainted with the Dogon whose language they often understand rather well.

The 1970s were dramatic for Diikal and her husband. Their animals died and they decided to settle around Bandiagara and not to return to Duma because they were too poor. Diikal's husband Alu had a very good relationship with the Dogon chief of Bandiagara. They were friends. He decided to stay near this Dogon chief, and to herd the cattle of his family. A couple of years later Alu died.

They were not the only Fittoobe of Duma who settled in the neighbourhood of Bandiagara in this period. Some families were closely, others distantly, related to Diikal. Most of the year they camp on the fields surrounding Bandiagara and some villages in the vicinity of the town to apply manure. The owner of the field and the owner of the cattle need not be the same. They move from field to field during the dry season. Only in the wet season do some families from Duma come together to camp on a site in the mountains near Bandiagara, which is not yet cultivated. This is the Fittoobe camp of Bandiagara (Biilal), although a family from the Gondo also lives there. Other families from Duma prefer to camp on a Dogon field even in the wet season to gain some extra cash or millet.

Diikal lives with her son Umaru. Four of her sons left for the south and she does not know where they are. One of them, Aamadu, left only three years ago. We tried to find him in the vicinity of Koutiala, where according to the latest information to reach the family he was herding cattle. In Bandiagara, he had been studying the Koran, as a so-called *taalibo*. Just before he left he married his 'cousin', Fata. Fata is the caretaker of two old paternal aunts of Aamadu, the childless sisters of Diikal's husband, Alu, the father of Aamadu. These two sisters lived with the Dogon chief, and their niece kept the household for them. The old aunts adopted Fata when she was only two years old. Aamadu as a son of their brother has the duty to take care of them. Marrying this niece would thus be a good combination. Fata was pregnant when he left.

Aamadu told his mother that he would leave. His Islamic teacher also left

the area and there was 'nothing' that bound him in the region. Diikal had not expected him to stay away for such a long period, three years at that point, because he had so many social obligations and people dependent on him in Bandiagara. She was convinced that he would return some day or other. Fata had her child, but the child died. Aamadu never told her anything, nor did he send any letter or ask for news about his child.

Umaru once went looking for his brother and found him in Koutiala. When he and Diikal heard we were planning to go to Koutiala they asked us to visit him and to ask him, or rather to convince him, that he had to come back. We never found him in Koutiala, and people said that he left for some other place such as Sikasso or the Inner Delta: they did not know.

Aamadu may finally end up as one of the many young Fulbe men who travel to the south to try their luck as a herdsman, or in trade, or in Islamic practices, and just disappear from sight. In their search for work they continue drifting further southward, where they may finally end up marrying a woman of their own choice and having children. This may be a woman from another Fulbe group or even a woman from another ethnic group. Contact with these young men is almost non-existent. If they return to the plateau, to the Hayre, or wherever they came from, they will be received with open arms again as the lost sons. But will they ever return? Especially if they have married, their attachment to their own family and their home area becomes very weak indeed.

### Allay Yaaye

Migrants may also be extremely successful. In a village south of Koutiala we found a Fulbe family from the Bandiagara plateau who had settled there seven years before. The family was composed of the male head, his two wives, three sons and a daughter. A fourth son had died of meningitis the year before. The imam of the Minianka village had given them a large tract of land. They cultivated maize, millet and sorghum, and a garden with all kinds of vegetables. Moreover they cultivated a cotton field, which in a good year yielded up to CFA 400.000 in cash.<sup>6</sup> During their seven years there, they had been able to buy a plough, a weeding machine, oxen-teams, and all sorts of other agricultural equipment. They had repaired an abandoned well belonging to someone in the village which lay some hundred meters from their camp, which in this way had become their property. The head of the family was now saving money for the pilgrimage to Mecca, which would enhance his prestige in the village even more.

After some years, one of the sons along with his mother and their own cattle went back to their home-village in the Wo arrondissement of the Bandiagara cercle. The reason was that the pastures were not able to feed the cattle originating



from Bandiagara during the dry season. The nutritional value was too low. Of the two remaining sons, one studied the Koran in Koutiala. He came back from time to time. He was wealthy enough to have built a house of mud bricks for himself.

On a revisit in June 1998 the situation of the family had changed completely. The head of the family had left for Mecca in January 1998, and had not yet returned. As his caretaker, the son who studied the Koran in Koutiala had returned with his family and 6-7 pupils studying the Koran. The second wife of Allay Yaaye had also gone back to Khassungu for the time being. The sons who had been away with the cattle on our first visit were now present. The household was completed by two distant aunts, and some children who were temporarily staying there as there was no food in the North.

### **Bura & Fata Diallo**

The case of Bura and Fata Diallo represents another variant of the migration process. They have been 'wandering' for 14 years now, since the drought of 1983-1985. They have not yet found a group with whom to associate themselves. For them it is an open question whether or not they will return to the Hayre. Life can take all directions.

Bura was looking for his son who had departed that morning with the goatherd from the Seeno to the Bandiagara plateau when Han met him. Bura just left Bankass with his family. Around Bankass pastures were finished. There was no food for their goats, their most prized possession. Bura and his wife Fata and their four children planned to try their luck around Bandiagara. They had never been there before but, as Bandiagara is a small town, they thought it would be possible for them to survive in some way or another.

They left their home village in the Hayre, in the mountains near Nokara, 14 years ago, when their herd was killed off by the drought of the 1980s. They preferred leaving to living off the goodwill of Bura's uncle. Bura would have been ashamed to ask his uncle for anything, nor was it sure that this uncle would have been willing to help them at all. When they left their eldest son was only a few years old.

Leaving was not easy, for it did mean a parting. They first went to Borko (in the northern part of the Bandigara plateau) where they herded livestock for various cattle owners. Then they wandered over the Seeno from cattle owner to cattle owner, and finally they decided to go to Bandiagara. In the meantime they had been able to buy themselves some goats with the revenue for the milk from the cattle they herded for others. These goats had reproduced, so that they could live off the goats.

Travelling these years has not been without hardship for Fata and Bura.

Three of their children died: their third son Alu died in Borko; their first son Hama died somewhere on the Seeno, as did their second daughter Jeneba. The latter two were buried somewhere on the Seeno in the bush. Fata told us that she had had hard times. Food was always scarce and as she indicated herself: look at my children. Indeed her children were not full-grown for their age. Contact with the Hayre was sparse. Bura paid only short visits once every few years. Fata never went back and missed her mother very much. Only Bura went, because he is responsible for his sister who is a leper. No one else will take care of her. She has to look after herself most years, because Bura cannot really take care of her. In 1997, when his uncle died, Bura also went back to bring condolences to the family.

When they arrived in Bandiagara they had hardly any possessions. They were looking for a place to stay. They found an abandoned hut including a worn-out mortar and pestle near one of the families from Duma. They occupied the hut for some time. When they had to vacate the hut and the field on which it stood (because the millet was growing), Umaru, a young Fittoobe man of thirty years, was kind enough to invite them to stay with his family in Biilal. Two of his brothers left that year after a conflict with his father and he wanted to have some more company. He even offered them a part of his field, which he finally even harvested for them.

Fata and Bura accepted the offer and also came to live in Biilal Bandiagara on the mountain. They became integrated into the Fittoobe group in the space of a year. Bura found a herd with a herd owner in town whom he happened to know from Borko. This herd provided them with milk for consumption and for sale, and so with cash to buy food. Nevertheless they still considered returning to the Hayre, and assured us that they wanted their children to marry with their own people from the Hayre. They had already arranged a marriage for their oldest daughter with her cousin (Bura's brother's son). In December 1997, Fata considered returning to the Hayre. She concluded it would be impossible because of the drought, as happens almost every year. It seems highly improbable that she will ever return to her mother's house.

### **Discussion**

It is difficult to assess whether these migratory movements can be labelled voluntary migrations or whether they fall under the heading of forced displacement. Forced migration is defined as a movement of people resulting from a deep crisis that can only be resolved by leaving the home region for a new one. Displacement is not part of a known strategy but a forced movement, it is a break with the old life. *'En cas de mouvement forcé, c'est le départ obligatoire qui est ressenti comme*

*le problème. (...) C'est enfin une mobilité qui est 'rupture', 'cassure' dans le fonctionnement d'une société et de son espace de vie* (Lassailly-Jacob 1998:6). The migration wave of the Fulbe described in this paper has all of these characteristics. As such it can be analysed as a separate phenomenon, including all its consequences. The migrants end up everywhere and are considered as a problem in the south, a problem that is not really foreseen by the Malian government or by international aid agencies. Space in some areas of the cotton belt in the south of Mali is saturated. Conflicts between farmers and herdsmen seem on the increase, especially in northern Ivory Coast. On the Bandiagara plateau all cultivable land is taken into production. This means that there are no pastures areas left, except for degraded forest, as the best land is turned into cereal fields. Moreover, Dogon cultivators now remove all the harvest residues to feed their own small livestock, where they used to leave these for passing Fulbe transhumants with their livestock.

This period of forced migration without a good, open '*zone d'accueil*' also poses particular problems with regard to the migrants' integration into the other region and to their relations with neighbouring people. It appears that they are becoming more economically and socially marginalized than was the case in past displacements. Current conditions stand in sharp contrast to the earlier waves of migration when Fulbe were welcomed because they brought cattle with them, and were given a place to stay. Now, instead there may be very ambiguous relations between hosts and guests.

At the same time, the particularity of this present period of 'forced displacement' must not be overstated, and it should be situated in the history of travel of the Fulbe. They have never been people to remain in one place forever. They have always been quite dispersed in space, and we should try to understand the dynamics of their mobile mode of existence. This is a difficult endeavour in our tradition of research. As Hastrup and Fog Olwig (1997: 6) mention: 'The difficulty of seeing movement as an aspect of social life in general is related to the fact that mobility, in so far as it involved settled people, has been regarded as a special and temporary phenomenon which has been examined under headings such as migration, refugee studies, and tourism'.

In this paper we have shown that the Fulbe of the Hayre are part of a tradition of travel. The case of the Jallube Bogolo shows that this travel has been an important aspect of their life extending from their home area, the Hayre, into the areas of Koutiala, Koury and even further into Ivory Coast, etc. The same is true for the Fittoobe from Duma. Reasons for travel may differ; poverty and loss of access to resources have been the dominant causes in the most recent years, which makes life much more difficult. Without denying the misery of these times for certain families, this period is also part of the travelling culture of the Fulbe.

Being nomads they need access to other resources, to markets, they need the outside world (Khazanov 1984). Today many families also need this outside world for their social security (care) and for their economic security (cattle). In this process people are influenced in who they are. Measures of integration into other groups vary with individuals and per situation.

People like Bura and Fata (of whom we met many during our stay) all refer constantly to going home: they are not happy in their situation, they feel at a loss. Their family is back there, their house and land is out there, but it is impossible for them to return. Diikal, also, who had been living for twenty-five years near Bandiagara, did not abandon the idea of going back. She still remembers Duma as the ideal place to be. Her children, however, have adapted to the Dogon environment while also conserving a Fulbe identity. If the family returned to their village, Duma, they would be the ones no longer at ease. They have become part of the Bandiagara plateau. This is even more the case for the brothers of Halimata. They do not feel they can return in part because of the economic necessity which keeps them in the south, but also because of their emotional feelings about being in the south. Their children no longer have any remembrance of the village of their parents. They still feel rather divided as they 'belong' in Bogolo and feel 'obliged' to maintain contact with friends and relatives. At the same time they feel being criticized for not behaving as a proper Pullo should, for exposing their children to another culture in which they learn other dances and other ideas, and for not maintaining contacts in a correct manner. They feel they have no other choice, because they have become isolated individuals or small 'islands of Fulbness' in a non-Fulbe world.

This point also came to the fore in interviews with young men who had migrated but who did finally return. They all say that being away was difficult because they had no family or friends in the other place. However, from a material point of view life was much better. Their reasons for going back were very mixed. Some just failed to create a new living and had to return. Others were located by their kinsmen and forced to return. Others came back for a short period to show their newly acquired wealth in the form of clothes and cassette players. Typically they give very little of this wealth to their impoverished family. Despite the fact that life in the south is considered difficult from a social point of view most young men do not return. They find a good or mediocre life or become simply too estranged from their own families to return. When they are back they often speculate about going south again because the easiness of life there.

In which sense then is Fulbe culture influenced by this mobility into other areas? In the cotton area in the south of Mali, other groups of Fulbe such as the Beledugu Fulbe have long been integrating. They keep their own characteristics. Will this also be the case for the Fulbe who migrated more recently? Much of this

depends on the ways they are received and perceived by the sedentary population in the south. The Fulbe are recognised and accepted by the other ethnic groups partly because they are Muslim. This makes others respect them. One young man, for example, was recognised as an Islamic magician and earned a lot of money. This may also play a role in allowing the Fulbe to keep their identity successfully.

The question of the language seems more difficult. First generation Fulbe migrants stick to the Fulfulde language. The second generation in most cases, speaks the language of the neighbouring group fluently. Another aspect which contributes to this great dispersal and the easy detachment of young people from their own group is the fact that within Fulbe society itself care for the poor is almost absent. As a consequence of this lack of social care they need other social groups for access to alternative ways to survive, e.g. access to herds and land (see also de Bruijn *et al.* 1997). The economic dependence of nomadic groups for the exchange of their products is extensively described in literature. Also in the case of the migrations in central Mali it seems evident that the Fulbe cannot live on their own. It is especially the access to land, cattle, and a milk market that is extremely important. In this situation of contact, exchanges leading to cultural adaptation take place relatively easily.

Thus we may conclude that for the Fulbe contact with other ethnic groups is an essential part of their identity and of their very existence from an economic as well as from a social security point of view. Each new migration wave has its own characteristics and adds new elements to this process. Nevertheless also in between the 'waves' of displacement, migration and travel take place. In a travelling culture social networks are of utmost importance. As long as the contacts with the old villages still exist people do not feel that lost. When new relations are formed, in most cases with other Fulbe groups, the old contacts may vanish (this is not always the case) and integration into a new area is the result. The period between these two outcomes may be a hard time for a family, especially when the process of displacement is accompanied by poverty and misery, lack of food and scarcity. Then it is not only a psychological and emotional crisis through which they must come but also a physical one. These groups are in a very risky position. They may never integrate into other groups because they do not have the means and will remain marginal for many years: a marginality, which is accompanied by poverty and isolation in many fields. This may be the outcome of forced migration. Cultural contact has no meaning in such situations, and leads only to further feelings of isolation.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup>. Related groups can be found in Karena, south of Dallah and Ban, just across the border with Burkina Faso.
- <sup>2</sup>. According to Bassett (1994) this is a new migration axe, however this is not new, only the amount of people migrating has changed.
- <sup>3</sup>. Research was carried out from June - December 1997. Research was funded by WOTRO (grant W 52-720). The research project was a follow-up of PhD research carried out from 1990-1995.
- <sup>4</sup>. According to the tax-register there are 24 families living in Bogolo, with 170 tax-paying members. This would mean that the number of official inhabitants would be around 300-350.
- <sup>5</sup>. During group interviews old men from Bogolo mentioned 42 families who settled at least temporarily in Bogolo. They came from different places in the Hayre: Ella Buuli, Bubani Kani, Wuro Peere, Dalla-Bumban, Dalla-Naani, Gono, Simbi, Torobani, Sarnyere, Dalla, Monndoro, Nokara, Sigiri, Beebi, Guimballa-Ngouma. Descendants of several of these families are still living in or affiliated to Bogolo
- <sup>6</sup>. 100 fcfa = 1 FF = \$ 0.16

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