3. L'ETAT CE N'EST PAS NOUS! CULTURAL PROLETARIZATION IN CAMEROON

by W.E.A. van Beek

INTRODUCTION

> Not everybody in France at the end of the (19th) century knew Napoleon. J.E.M. Brodley, putting up at an inn by Durance, close to the spot where Napoleon crossed the river on his way to Elba, asked an old woman if she had known elders who might have seen him there. "Napoleon", she replied in her broad Provençal accent, "connais pas ce nom-là. Peut-être bien c'est un voyageur de commerce" (Weber 1976: 109-110) (1).

This is nineteenth century France, one of the earliest centralized states in Western Europe. In this contribution I shall dwell on the West-African region, where much history has passed without many traces in people's memories and where the great names of West African history quickly sank into oblivion. Exploring the penetration of the state into the region of the Kapsiki and Higi of North Cameroon and North-Eastern Nigeria, I try to show that the isolation of these marginal African groups was not caused by geographical factors, but mainly by their interaction with outside influences (2). They were not left out by history, but kept out. Their marginality was and is a product of interaction with state building processes. So neither the 'traditional' nor the 'modern' way of life of these people can be understood without reference to larger societal formations.

AN IMPERIAL FRINGE

Our story starts about the same time as Napoleon. In the 18th and the 19th century West Africa experienced one of the greatest state building endeavours of its history, a series of jihads (holy wars) by the Fulani of which the largest has been the one in Nigeria (Webster & Boahen 1967). A long series of conflicts between the Fulani nomadic herdsmen and the Hausa city states was triggered by an Islamic reform into a succesful revolt. Inspired by a famous scholar, Usman dan Fodio, the Fulani herdsmen rallied to the side of Islamic orthodoxy, became reconverted to Islam, and eventually declared war on

the ruling Hausa dynasties (Last 1967: 14). That declaration of *jihad*, issued in 1804 in North-Nigeria, marked the start of an empire, which - directly or indirectly - was to have a lasting impact on the Kapsiki in Cameroon (Kirk-Greene 1969). Though this group lived a thousand kilometers from Sokoto, it was to be drawn into the fringe of this empire, battling the enemy, the Fulani.

This is not the place to dwell upon the success of this *jihad* and the consequent growth and consolidation of the Fulani empires of Sokoto and Gwandu; here I shall focus on the impact the growth of the Sokoto empire has had on the Kapsiki in Cameroon.

The Fulani empire was built not only on the Shari'a (Hiskett 1973: 64) but also on war and the spoils of war (Smaldone 1977) i.e. captives. Slaves were essential as a resource. Only with a continuous supply of slaves could the empire expand and consolidate. Slaves served both as productive labour and as commodity in the imperial mode of production. Slaves were needed to cultivate the food crops and to herd the Fulani cattle. They made up the great majority of the craftsmen, thus supplying the empire with tools and the army with weapons. In the army they formed a considerable part of the foot soldiers and archers (Fischer 1971). They were supremely important as barter value. As warhorses could not be bred in sufficient numbers on the Sokoto plains, but had to be imported from the West and the North (Johnson 1972), the Fulani - as the Hausa before them - needed slaves to trade for horses. Cavalry was the most valued part of the army, which in turn proved to be a major instrument in state formation (Goody 1968). Thus, captives were by far the most important commodity of the empire: they fed, supplied and mounted the cavalry and formed the rest of the army (Fage 1969, Flint 1974). So the Fulani empire had a continuous hunger for slaves, which resulted in constant raiding on their pagan population. Some of those populations lived in the middle of the empire - like the many tribes in Bauchi which sought refuge in the Central Nigerian Plateau (Morrison 1982). The *jihadists* never managed to subdue or convert those tribes. More important still were the great numbers of pagans living on the borders of the empire. In the years of expansion a constant influx of captives guaranteed the functioning and consolidation of the empire. When this process slowed

down and eventually ground to a halt, the peoples on the border such as the Kapsiki, became supremely important as a slave reserve (van Beek in press: 9). Raids into their strongholds became the major source of captives. Border emirates such as Adamawa became ever more important in the political economy of the area. This called for some doctrinal accomodations in the jihad ideology, as one had to adapt the ideology of doctrinal expansion of the Dar-al Islam (Peters 1977) to the practical reality of the empire, which needed a fringe population that was never to be converted.

THE ARTICULATION OF THE MODES OF DESTRUCTION

The Kapsiki were one of those fringe populations. The Adamawa emirate expanded right into what is now Northern Cameroon, where in the Mandara Mountains as well as on the inundated river plains of the Logone and the Chari dozens of pagan groups lived in constant threat of Fulani slave raids. The mountains offered a good retreat for at least 18 smaller or larger groups, though it is difficult to identify ethnic groups at that time. The steep rugged mountain sides gave some protection against the mounted slave hunters, while at the same time offering a reasonably fertile soil (van Beek 1978: 15). All groups in the area praticed hoe cultivation of millet and sorghum with a limited amount of animal husbandry. The Kapsiki lived on the steep sides of a small plateau in the center of the mountain range. The plateau itself was sparsely inhabitated, being too well suited for the enemy cavalry. It was, however, used for herding cattle, either by the Kapsiki themselves, or by the nomadic Mbororo Fulani, some of whom never were drawn into the jihad (Mohammadad 1978). The Kapsiki millet fields were situated on the stony slopes, and the villages on top of some larger granite volcanic outcroppings, far from the wells, but out of reach for the Fulani (van Beek 1978: 7). In the western part of the Kapsiki area, steep mountain ranges guarded off long, narrow valleys; in some of those the Kapsiki built high stone walls crossing the valley in order to keep the cavalry at bay (van Beek 1978: 6).

Still, despite the spirited defense and the strategic qualities of the terrain, the loss in human lives must have been considerable.

In 1852 Barth, witnessing a razzia on another mountain people, reported five hundred captives for the raid (Barth 1857: 195). Denham, in 1823, mentioned a group of pagans who tried to buy off a razzia with a gift of two hundred slaves, and estimated the total amount of slaves traded on the market of Mora (just north of the mountains) at one thousand per year (Denham 1826: 313).

The pagan groups were at a disadvantage against the Moslims: their weaponry as well as their organization were inferior to those of the raiders. The mountain groups such as the Kapsiki did not command any cavalry, but had to rely on bow and poisoned arrows. No mountain group did ever develop a form of centralized military organisation. Kapsiki society e.g. consisted of a loose agglomerate of independent, autarchic villages, tied together by a loose network of numerous but ephemere alliances (van Beek 1978: 106 ff) and incidental ritual authority (van Beek 1982: 118). For a particular defensive battle the Kapsiki could muster a force from only one village, incidentally reinforced by matrilateral kinsmen from a few neighbouring settlements. On the village level fighting was hardly organized at all: apart from a ritual war leader there was no military organization.

One major reason for this lack of coherence in battle, is the fact that the Kapsiki - like the other mountain tribes - fiercely fought one another. Internal war was - as far as oral history permits any estimates - as great a threat as the external one. Fighting took place on several levels in the village: between clans, between village halves, between related villages and between unrelated villages. In each of these wartypes an escalating set of weaponry was used (Otterbein 1968, van Beek 1986: 126). Our main concern here, slavery, was important between unrelated villages (which made up the majority). Each Kapsiki village fought against its neighbours trying to kill some adversaries and to catch alive as many of them as possible. Those captives were either ransomed by kinsmen or sold to Moslim merchants to sell either to Bornu or to Sokoto. In the latter instance prices were much higher. So a considerable proportion of the slaves going from the Mandara area to Sokoto was caught by their own people, and, thus, the internal war and slave raiding can be seen as an

articulation of the insecurity in the area in general and of the external slave raiding in particular.

The Fulani empire was one important factor in the history of the Mandara area, but by no means the only one. A marginal area like Northern Cameroon had - of course - other neighbours. The most important ones were Bornu, in the North and the emirate of Mandara, a small kingdom just north of the Mountains, peopled by an islamized tribe that dominated the rest of the mountains for more than a century. From the 18th century the Mandara were vassals of Bornu and paid a levy in slaves, about a hundred a year (Le Moigne 1918: 132). For the Kapsiki the difference between the Fulani, the Mandara or the Bornu (which organized its own razzia's into the area) was minimal. The enemy was always mounted, superior in speed and strength, and ever dangerous. The Fulani jihad, however, brought an intensification of war pressure on the mountains, as the Fulani were added to the number of the enemies, and the old enemies needed more slaves too, for their wars against the Fulani (Van Beek 1986).

As a result of this pressure, societies such as the Kapsiki never were able to organize above the level of the village, and even then organisation was segmentary. When comparing the reaction of the Kapsiki with those of some Nigerian Plateau tribes, the fragmentation of the Mandara tribes social organisation comes to the fore (Morrison 1982) (3).

Thus, the Kapsiki society described as traditional, is a product of intensive interaction with one or several state-like organisations. The Kapsiki reaction was one of violent non-participation; however, through this reaction they effectively contributed to the states in question. The means of destruction were the effective means of production for the Islamic states (see Goody 1968).

The same holds for the state fringe. Kapsiki society was generated in the clash of two modes of destruction: an internal one based on the absence of horses and the presence of an unsophisticated weapon technology on the one hand, and on the other hand an external one, based on cavalry and a concomittant technology and organization. The interaction between war among kinsmen and fighting between related and unmatched partners was part of the infrastructure. In the Kapsiki

case the social formation was forged by this 'articulation of the modes of destruction'. The internal structure of the society, the political organization, the marriage system and - of course - the religion were well geared towards this overall situation. Then autonomy of the villages, with the hostile relations between them and the hazardous links with any but the closest kinsmen, pervade those 'traditional' forms of institutions.

The marriage system is a good example (van Beek 1978). Each wife who leaves her husband for another man, has to leave her village. One of the guiding features in this system is the relationship between two consecutive husbands of the same woman: they may never belong to the same village; their relationship resembles the one between villages: hostility, jealousy and outright fighting (van Beek 1978, 1986).

Thus, on the imperial fringe, a large group of segmentary societies developed, in which the articulation of the modes of destruction produced societies geared to the threat of slave raiding, inter- and intra-village hostility.

One additional feature of such societies is of interest. In nearly all of those, one artisan group occupies a special position. Among the Kapsiki, like among all other Mandara tribes, this is the case with the blacksmiths. They form a small minority in each group (about 5% of the population) and are strictly endogamous (Podlevski 1966, van Beek 1978: 181). Though they speak the local languages, and have various ties with the patrilineal clans and lineages that make up the core of the village, their origin is different (at least according to oral history; van Beek 1982: 116) and their kinship networks easily extend beyond the current tribal borders. Their main niche in society was and is that of 'general specialist', as they perform nearly all tasks in the village life calling for some degree of specialization: iron forging and brass casting, medicine, music, leatherwork, pottery and above all burying the dead. In those capacities they not only were indispensable in the village, but also served as an intermediary between hostile villages. They could function as an envoy in times of war, or help negotiate the payment of blood money. In any rate, they did not at any time engage in hostilities (van Beek 1986). Still, as a group they form the lower status of society. It is hard to see how

this type of incipient stratification could have been formed in the clash between modes of destruction. This kind of labour specialization and isolation is to be found in any hierarchic West African society. Thus, the presence of the smith group might be seen as a form of penetration of a larger and more complex social formation.

THE FORMATION OF A TRIBE

The autarchic Kapsiki villages never formed a political unity. Before the colonization they never constituted an ethnic unit either. In precolonial times the term 'Kapsiki' indicated three related villages, characterizing them as 'they that sprout the millet for beer making' (Kapsekè). Other villages, claiming a common origin, were called 'Kakama' after an ancestral mountainside, or 'Kankafa'. The name 'Higi' in use in the part that is presently in Nigeria, was given to them by a neighbouring tribe (now called 'Marghi') and means crickets/locusts, an indication of large numbers.

The relation between the villages was based upon a shared tradition of common descent: the founders of the villages were thought to be brothers who either quarreled before splitting up or divided the available area between them. The relationship entailed a limitation of fighting between the settlements. In some cases the most lethal weapon - poison - was not allowed, among other village groups no captives were taken, thus removing one important incentive for war. There the relationship ended: no intermarriage, no joint festivals or rituals, nor any defensive alliances. Often the related villages were situated at a fair distance from each other, with non-related villages between them. Thus, the effect of the common descent was minimal.

The only supra-village authority recognized was in ritual. The most important of those was the chief of Goudour, a location in the Mofu area, within 50 km from the center of Kapsiki land, which was considered to be the point of departure of most migrations that gave rise to the Kapsiki villages. Its chief has been an important functionary, who 'commanded' the locusts. In case of plagues he had to perform the sacrifices on behalf of all the villages descended from Goudour; delegations from all those villages had to come to Goudour

for that purpose. On the other hand, the chief could and - according to oral history of Goudour - did enforce some authority. He regularly sent his envoys through the villages to check if they heeded the ways of the ancestors. These were defined - retrospectively - as wearing the Kapsiki leather pants, using a goat skin bag, performing sacrifices and using the right kind of weapons in war. If people did not meet these expectations, the chief of Goudour would send either locusts or other insect pests. Tradition has it that these envoys went naked and spoke to nobody. The chief was deemed never to leave his compound.

> The present chief of Sukur is an important figure still today. Though he leaves his compound, he never leaves his village. People do fear to come into his presence. Delegates refuse a sleeping mat and sleep on the bare floor, refuse good food in favour of beer residu, do not look into the eyes of the chief and never under any circumstance try to take a seat which is placed higher than the chief. Also the Christian interpreter I took with me when visiting Goudour, was visibly afraid. Like others, he was convinced that upon infraction of these rules panthers would follow him to our own village and kill him there. After my first visit, our village was visited by a small plague of caterpillars. The elders promptly concluded that the Goudour chief was not pleased with my visit. Thus, I set out for a second one with additional presents, and, lo and behold, the caterpillars disappeared.

Though all informants agree on the importance of Goudour and its envoys, I have been unable to find any specific instance in the history of the Goudour-related villages, in which this system of control actually was implemented. Of course, the last locust plague took place more than half a century ago (1931) and the need to send delegates to Goudour has not been very urgent. Still, one would expect some reactions from the ritual center on and against the changes that set in with the colonization. None could be found. I tend to think that the ritual preeminence of Goudour operated only in times of catastrophes, of serious threat to survival. One additional indication for this is that fact that the sacrifice against the locusts is the only one for which a human sacrifice is indicated (a blacksmith in fact).

Some other rituals resulted in ties between villages. The most important one was the rooster ordeal in Mogodé, a form of divination

widely acknowledged by villages far away. In the next paragraph we shall return to this institution as it has been used as a means for political centralization.

Even if these ritual positions of specific villages provided some supra-village authority, the total of these villages by no means comprises an ethnic group or a tribe. First of all, only half of the Kapsiki villages trace their descent through Goudour; the other half originates from villages which are dispersed in the plains of present Nigeria. Secondly, the villages stemming from Goudour belong to various language groups and - in present days - different ethnic units. Mofu, Mabass, Sukur, Marghi, Kapsiki, Matakam and other groups, all trace for a portion of their villages their descent from Goudour (Van Beek 1982). So above the level of the village there existed only some relationship by virtue of either an institutional or a personal network of incidental ties and obligations, which never resulted in a military or political unit, nor in a kind of we-feeling.

The colonisation of the area brought about changes in this perspective. The Germans, coming into North Cameroon about 1904, defeated the Fulani in several battles, which since then have become the subject of griot songs (Haafkens 1979). The results were ambiguous. The slave trade and consequently slave raiding were ended, at least officially, which should have eliminated one of the principal aims for war. Still, fighting did not stop at all. The Germans administered the mountains through the only centralized indigenous tribe, the Fulani. This resulted in a heightened pressure by the Fulani on the pagan tribes:

> "Les structues coloniales à l'arrivée du colonisateur allemand ne furent guère modifiés. Les rapports entre les Habé (= Kirdi) et les Foulbé restèrent ceux de vassaux payant tribut à leur féodaux, avec ce correctif que la puissance militaire européenne était mise au service des authorités autochtones instituées et jouait donc en faveur des chefs peuls.
> En effet, ces officiers allemands prirent appui sur les lamibé (- Fulani chiefs) aussi furent-ils enclins à confirmer officiellement l'autorité peule sur les groupements paiens qui avaient rejeté celle-ci qui étaient depuis toujours hors de son obédience" (Lestringant 1964: 162).

The Europeans themselves were late in penetrating the Mandara mountains. The first one to see the Kapsiki plateau was captain

Zimmerman in 1905, by order of his commander, the (in)famous Dominik (Dominik 1908: 308). Regular visits to the area occured only after the World War. In Kapsiki oral history the Germans have a good "press". Their brutality in battle was accepted as something equal to the treatment the Kapsiki meted out to one another. After the French and British take-over in 1916 the actual colonization and pacification still had to start from scratch. Just after the first World War, an English colonial officer reported after visiting the - then British - part of Kapsiki/Higi territory:

> (these) 'are the most lawless, ill-governed places I have seen in Nigeria since the early years of the Northern Nigerian Protectorate. Slave dealing and slave raiding are rampant ... chiefs of minor importance were given rifles with which they were encouraged to attack the wretched pagans (who are) hiding like frightened monkeys on inaccessible hilltops ... of course, everyone goes about fully armed: spears, shields, bow and arrows, clubs etc.' (Kirk-Greene 1958: 84).

Putting a stop on slave raiding and trading was the first concern of the colonizers, ending the internal fighting the second one. It took almost 40 years to accomplish both.

For the Kapsiki the colonial time was the golden age, the era of peace, relative prosperity and friendly intervillage relations.

> My first encounter with our 'colonial burden' in the Cameroons occurred in a rather isolated village which I visited on the trail of a run-away wife. A group of elders gathered in the shade of one of the scarce trees and seated themselves on the rocks. A silence fell. One of the oldest men looked straight into my eyes, and after a considerable pause, asked: 'Why are you here? What do you seek here?' Just when I was about to apologize for the white man's presence in Africa, he continued: 'Why have you people left us? Why did you deliver us to the Africans? What have we done to you that you should leave us mezhèthe (orphans, fatherless)? You let yourself deceive by the brown people (the Fulani) and left the country to them. You should have stayed here, and cared for the black people (Marghi = mountain dwellers)'.

For the Kapsiki, the French and British were natural allies in their struggle against the Fulani. The colonizers had stamped out slavery, and stamped out war. Though the Kapsiki missed the excitement of the battle and the glory of the victory, they still are grateful for the relief the pax colonialis brought them. They did and do relish the

intensification of contact between villages, even if they still are wary among 'strangers' (people from other villages).

Pacification brought forth the most important changes so far: the opening up of new cultivation areas, mainly on the plateau and in the Nigerian plains. There new village wards as well as new villages were created. This diminished the coherence of the village as a socio-political unit. However, other colonial measures tended to strenghten local political structure. First of all, they gave the village chiefs new authority as well as new tasks in addition to their traditional duties.

The village of Mogodé between 1930 and 1960 expanded from four to thirteen wards. This radically changed the lay-out of the village. The dense settlement, with few fields between the houses, changed into a dispersed one, when people chose to live closer to their fields than to their kinsmen. This centrifugal tendency aggravated the administrative problems. The French as well as the British colonial officers favoured the formation of administrative nuclei. Before colonization, village headmen were older men occupying a ritual position chosen from one clan in the village by the ward elders. They were respected but had little power; their task was to 'arrange the village', settling disputes and performing sacrifices to guarantee the attention of the supernatural world to the village problems. The colonizers loaded these headmen with new responsibilities such as collecting taxes, organizing forced labour and - during the second world war - army subscription. When they first contacted the villages to appoint traditional headman as their representatives, the people in several villages were very suspicious of their motives. In one village they hid the headman, afraid that the colonizer would take him captive or keep him as a hostage. In his place they presented someone else as headman, who immediately was appointed officially. To these days the descendants of the latter are headmen of the village. These new tasks were difficult to meet for the new officials. They could not rely on traditional sanctions while they had no control over the full force of the colonial office; anyway, its use would erode the tenuous base for authority they held. In Cameroon as well as in the Nigerian half of the group, a precise political hierarchy was established. The

immediate superiors of the village headman were the district and canton chiefs supervising 15 to 18 villages. At first, these posts were held by Fulani, but after some serious difficulties between the village headmen and the Fulani superiors, they were replaced by Fulanized (= Islamized) Kapsiki. In the post-colonial era this pattern is still clear: the chief of the Canton which encompasses all Cameroonian Kapsiki villages is a Kapsiki from the North, converted to Islam.

Among their responsibilities the administration of justice was among the most important. Previously, the Kapsiki had held no formal courts; disputes were discussed by any collective of men - and women - that happened to be present at the time the conflict rose; in this, the older men and the village chief were prominent, but their voice by no means was decisive. The Kapsiki society had been very individualistic, and the judicial procedures reflected the autonomy of each adult. During the colonization this changed. The canton and district heads were given judicial authority in all minor matters; 'minor' being defined as all conflicts in which no blood was shed. Fighting was the immediate concern of the higher colonial stratum, situated for Cameroon in Garoua and - later - in Mokolo, and in Mubi for Nigeria. Through the installation of the regional courts, the village headmen became intermediaries in matters of law, and consequently began to have some courts of their own.

The headmens' position as intermediaries was further stressed by the construction of roads, the 'route Kapsiki' being the most important one. Here the headmen had to muster a labour force to work on the construction, just as they would continue from that time on to organize the yearly upkeep of the roads. Tax collecting had the same effect: it stipulated the delegated power of the headman, but separated him from his peers. Some headmen began to organize working parties for their own benefit (building a house, breaking a new field) on the basis of their new authority. As functionaries they no longer felt obliged to reciprocate the workers with beer and food, but sensed they were entitled to the same deference as their colonial superiors. These, however, were exceptions rather than the rule. Some conflicts between a few village headmen and their villagers, as well as some

convictions by the colonial office of some headmen who had surpassed their authority, taught the headmen about the uneasy balance they had to strike between kinsmen and power, between reciprocity and delegation.

So much for the headmen. Through them, as well as through the dealings of the other officers, the Kapsiki for the first time were being treated as members of not only a village but also of a tribe. The villages of the Mogodé canton in Cameroon were treated as one coherent unity, likewise the villages in Cubunawa district in Nigeria. Though village affiliation remained crucial for the Kapsiki, a new identity was imposed on them, that of Kapsiki. Not only three, but all villages in the canton became 'Kapsiki'. The tribal designation was marked on every official document; in any dealing with outsiders people were expected to define themselves as Kapsiki. Notwithstanding some border realignments between the Nigeria Protectorate and this part of French West Africa, the same process occurred in the 'English country' as the Kapsiki still call the Higi territory. There, the tribal name used was Higi. So, in both colonies a new identity was created, which at the same time joined and separated the cultural/linguistic unit. For both 'tribes' together, Higi and Kapsiki, a case for a cultural agglomerate could be made, but not for each separately (see van Beek 1978).

On both sides of the border, the Fulanized chiefs used any means at their disposal to centralize the authority. One was the rooster ordeal.

> Conflicting claims on property or conflicting testimonies could be settled by a rooster ordeal, called Rhwemetla. In pre-colonial times this was held at the side of an outcropping of that name. The procedure was supervised by a clan elder of Mogodé, a village on the border with Nigeria. When Mogodé became the center village of the canton, the chief immediately assumed authority over the ordeal and used it in his court dealings. About 1935, however, the paraphernalia of the cult were taken to the neighbouring Nigerian village of Kamalé, and used for the same purposes there. For many years the Mogodé Lamido sent his 'hard cases' over to Kamalé for the ordeal. When after independence the villages were separated by a international border, the new Lamido of Mogodé had new paraphernalia made, reinstalled the ordeal under his own authority, and ever since used it in his court. Incidentally, he drastically upped the price of the ordeal. So, instead of one Rhwemetla, there now are two. The villages from the Nigerian part, who used to come to

> Mogodé before 1935, now acknowledge only the authority of the Nigerian ordeal while the Cameroonian villages recognize the historical claims of Mogodé and use that one.

This process of dual tribalization did not stop with independence. Increasing contact with other ethnic groups, through schooling, commerce and other institutions reinforces their tribal identity. Officials, teachers but also missionaries from whatever extraction consider the Kapsiki as one tribe; the view of a higher stratum in society has been - as is often the case - very persuasive for the Kapsiki. They more and more view their 'Kapsikiness' as an important aspect of their definition of self, incorporating the tribal definition by the outsider.

MARGINALIZATION

So the Kapsiki found themselves a tribe (or even two tribes), but they increasingly became aware of their marginality. Of course, they had been marginal to the great happenings of the West African political scene. But they wanted no part of the 'old' world-at-large, while they now gradually became aware of the attractions of the new world-at-large. Dominated as they continue to be by the Fulani, they tend to subscribe to their evaluation of the Kapsiki. An often bitter self depreciation has been noticed (Smith 1969) and indeed can be found wherever Kapsiki come into contact with outsiders.

> 'Je pense que les Kapsiki parmi tous les montagnards sont les plus ancestraux du pays, toujours en retard avec toutes les *choses*'

For a people who had been described as materially and socially selfsufficient - 'Une société que se suffit à elle-même (Podlevski 1966)' - this is a sudden and bitter awakening. The realization of this marginality comes through various channels.

Economically, the changes have been gradual and limited. In colonial times in the mountain areas the cultivation of peanuts as a cash crop has been pushed. From the early thirties onwards, the cultivation of peanuts has been gradually integrated within the subsistence cultivation of millet, sorgum and corn. Both crops easily blend in with cereal cultivation, as they can serve as rotation crops.

Peanuts are either sown mixed with sorgum, or on alternate years. This integration was facilitated by a long-standing cultivation of another Arachis-variety. In the Kapsiki economic organisation, however, this new cash crop was defined as a women's crop. The older variety had been womens work, the new one became so too. Thus, the cultivation tended to favour the cash income of women, enhancing their financial independence from their husbands (van Beek 1978: 38). This implied that staple cereals were not abandoned in favour of cash crops; consequently the food situation of the Kapsiki has not become as fragile as elsewhere in Cameroon. Still, in marketing the peanuts, the Kapsiki became to feel their dependency on outside institutions, i.e. on merchants. Prices for peanuts have often been fixed by the (post-) colonial government, and ever so often have the Kapsiki tried to stock their produce in search of better deals. The mean household reaps about 35% of its cash income from peanuts.

Cash income, such as the money derived from peanuts, has become important as the area has been opened up for foreign made consumer goods. The colonial government organized weekly markets in the Kapsiki villages. In pre-colonial times the Kapsiki had no markets. In those days commerce was carried out by incidental Hausa merchants, trading on an individual basis through a network of friends and alliances in the villages. The new weekly markets provided an enormous amount of interaction within and between villages, but also made the Kapsiki aware of many desirables. For cash income, however, they became ever more dependent on the allochthonous merchants, dependent on the central government who fixed prices and set quota.

So in order to limit this dependency and to seek riches, nowadays an increasing number of Kapsiki turn to trade. The trader is their model of the self made man, someone who becomes rich despite his kinsmen. This is the example one tries to follow. On the local level this means that the men try to trade their wives' produce, in order to have some working capital. This, of course, raises new problems inside the family and often induces wives to leave their husbands (Richards 1979). If trade goes well, the men will expand and go into imported luxury goods (soap, sugar, scents, batteries, etc.).

In this phase, it will be useful for them to change religions. Islamization is called for. In Northern Cameroon, however, this takes a very peculiar form, that of Fulanization (Schulz 1984). The merchantin-spe (and if possible his wives and children) adopts the culture of the Fulani as completely as he can. He adapts himself to the culture of the city Fulani, not the pastoral one. The same Fulani he fought during the *jihad*, serve as a model now. The merchant will speak *Fulfuldé*, dress in the long Fulani *boubou*, perform his prayers and ablutions, go to the Friday prayers with his fellow 'Fulani', in short not only becomes a Muslim but a Fulani too. In North Cameroon there is no middle ground: Islamization automatically implies Fulanization. He also adopts the derogatory attitude of the urban Fulani towards the 'Kirdi' (pagan) mountain people. This proces is speeded up when he moves to the urban centers. Then he tries to blend into his new surroundings, in which the urban Fulani culture is dominant. Only reluctantly will he admit being a Kapsiki - or being born a Kapsiki - and even inside his own compound he ceases to speak Kapsiki.

This Fulanization is a complex process, which is not only triggered by commerce, but by any striving for upward mobility. As government jobs are available nearly only to Muslims (read Fulani), any economic expediency may induce Fulanization. In the village of Mogodé for instance, the canton chief rules as a Fulani chief of old, even if he is in fact a Kapsiki. Around his court a settlement of houses of functionaries, dependents and hopefuls has grown. In 1972 this ward counted 22 households, in 1984 over 80!

One of the results of this process is a cultural marginalization of the Kapsiki. Their culture is considered not an asset but a burden, something to get rid of, to be replaced by a superior one. This attitude is strengthened by other innovations as well. Christian missions, for instance, stimulate a similar view on traditional culture, especially when they operate through *Fulfuldé* as a *lingua franca*. Schooling, done by either government or missions, implies for the Kapsiki a similar distancing from village life. As a 12 year schoolboy told me: 'Je ne suis pas un paysan. Moi, je suis un écolier!' Whoever becomes educated, usually leaves his village, turns

his back on the mountains and settles in the cities, in the process rapidly losing the affiliation to the village of birth. This 'brain drain' sharpens the tension between evolué and paysan. Who stays in the village becomes more estranged from the world-at-large, so the gap between those kinsmen inside and those outside the village grows.

EXPLOITATION

The marginal Kapsiki culture can gain a barter value on its own. The 'backwardedness' of the Mandara mountains and the combination of a spectacular scenery with a 'traditional society' produce a tourist attraction. French, Italian and German travel agencies since independence have 'discovered' North Cameroon.

> 'Fahrt durch die Mandara berge, ins Land der Nackten.
> Tag für Tag lernen Sie die geheimnisvolle Welt der Kirdi besser kennen. Sie besuchen eine Missionsstation in Mandaramassiv (Podokos und Mukdele) und fahren weiter über kurvenreiche Pisten in das Land der Matakam und der Kapsikis die noch unzivilisiert in zerklüfterer Berglandschaft hausen.' (Quelle catalogue 1970-71).

A tour through the Mandara mountains is the touristic highpoint of a trip in Cameroon, 'wo Afrika noch richtig Afrika ist'. The Cameroonian government has monopolized this cultural and scenic asset, and is the sole organizer of tourism, through 'Norcamtours'. A fixed program has been developed to give the tourists what they expect from Africa: dances by the Podoko, naked women threshing millet among the Muktele, a Matakam compound, and the breathtaking views of the Kapsiki region. A hotel has been built in Rumsiki to enjoy the scenery and restore one's strength after the trials of the bus trip. Most tourists there visit a blacksmith who casts some brass objects, and some dare-devils take a guided tour through the village of Rumsiki to visit the headman, have the smith perform divination with the crab-fish or cauri-shells, and take pictures of women at the village well. When taking pictures, they often complain that everybody wears clothes. This problem has been solved by the Cameroonian government. In one of the earlier stops, when the Norcamtour bus arrives, people scramble into their homes, take off their modern (=Fulani style for the men) clothes, and emerge in traditional (un)dress.

For many Kapsiki, tourism is the most intensive way of interacting with their own government. Tourism is government income, and any fringe benefit for the people themselves just has to be that, fringe benefit. Some blacksmiths profit from tourism, as their artifacts, crafts and divination interest Europeans. Some boys, who act as a guide, gain some money from it too but, again, this is marginal.

In exploiting tourism the Cameroonian government (as many other African governments) exploits its <u>patrimoine culturel</u>, in fact the very cultural variation it tries to reduce by all other means.

For example, the traditional dress, described in the <u>Quelle</u> folder as nudity, has been prohibited by the government. Only in traditional ceremonies is it allowed, but in the context of tourism it is prescribed. This double standard is shown in many instances.

> In 1973 a French filmproducer was called upon to make a film on Cameroon, in order to stimulate tourism. The filmcrew, made up mainly of French cinematographers and their wagon train, plus Cameroonian counterparts, as well a a - Fulani - interpreter, arrived in 'le pays Kapsiki' at a moment when in several villages the yearly harvest rites were being held. Without paying any attention to these ceremonies, the government official summoned all villages to send a large delegation to Mogodé, the cantonal siege. Obediently hundreds of Kapsiki flocked to Mogodé. The large and - very festive - gathering, in which several groups of blacksmiths all played different rithms and sang different songs at the same time, was filmed as such: 'typically Kapsiki'. A charge of a light brigade of Fulanized Kapsiki was shot as 'a typical Fulani scene'; finally about twenty nicely (un-)adorned Kapsiki were transported 15 kilometers to the north. On a scenic setting, they had to 'make war'. The bewildered men waited for nearly three hours, as the crew was first out to lunch. At last, just before sunset, they performed their act, intimidated and shy, before the camera's. A shallow thank you was all they got from the French filmers, while the government official continually tried to ignore their presence. He ordered that the Landrovers, who had brought the men on this spot, returned home empty! The people had to walk back. As anthropologist present, I made a small remark about the proceedings, and started to commute the Kapsiki back to Mogodé. This action, however, earned me a severe reprimand by the government official, who reminded me that I could be sent out of the country on a two days notice. That, luckily, did not happen and the next day a few of the 'warriors' came at my door, singing: 'Red Mogodian, I call you gwamena (government). My own government left me at the road, and you took me. We were orphans, and you extended your hand to us.' A year later, the same government official, in Yaoundé, chided me on being 'too much taken in by the Kapsiki'.

This exploitation is clear in tourism, but by no means only there. A marginal area such as the Mandara mountains for the central government is of no political importance and economically is marginal; in their view of a modernized state its backwardedness is an abomination, while in tourism it proves to be their principal asset. So their relationship and attitude are quite ambiguous. This is reflected by a new fad among the government officials in the north, i.e. to do their own anthropological research, at least to plan to do so. They know that European and American anthropologists are very much taken up by the pagan peoples like the Kapsiki. Sometimes they become slightly irritated that the townspeople seem to be less interesting than those wretched Kirdi; as a compromise they make their own research plans.

> The adjoint sous-prefet of Mora confided to me that he wanted to start some research. On one night, a month ago, he had heard a voice saying to him: 'Goudour, look at Goudour, you have to look at Goudour.' He had been waiting for an anthropologist to turn up as he wanted a 'colleague's opinion' on it. Now I was here, so what did I think of studying Goudour. By the way, what did I think was the best way to start the research?
> I told him research on Goudour was a very good idea, but very cautiously tried to tell him that such a research did not harmonize well with his position of authority. My explanations of the demands of participant observation were taken as a course on 'how to do research'. One year later he was transferred to another post; he still speaks of his plans to 'study Goudour'.

CONCLUSION: CULTURAL PROLETARIZATION

The processes of tribalization, marginalization and exploitation I have subsumed in the title as cultural proletarization. In doing so I started from an 'original situation' of continuous war leading to a fragmented segmentary society, the result of the articulation of modes of destruction. The Kapsiki were an imperial fringe, in that time valued only as slaves. Though the term proletarization is hardly ever used in the context of domestic African slavery (see Miers and Kopitoff 1977) the situation in fact is quite similar, and the term applicable. The individual slave or captive was transformed from an individual to barter value and a production value. He had no hold over the means of production, was part of but did not control at any moment the means of destruction. Though the slaves did not sell their own

labour value on the market on their own free will and choice, that value was in fact being barteretal mobility, no social recognition as a corporate entity. The close association between slaves and urban craft guilds is important in this respect. Work in these crafts can be measured per hour, in input as well as output.

After pacification the colonization brought a gradual development of the larger unit, the tribe. Increasing awareness of 'tribal identity' clashed with the marginal character of the mountain refuge. This marginality was always there, but new is the increasing economic and political dependency as well as a growing awareness of being 'left out of history'. The tribal culture, a newcomer in the development, received a low evaluation. It was a value to be reckoned with, but only quickly to be discarded in confrontation with others. So the individual proletarization of the slave trade made way for a collective proletarization of tribal culture. However, the low value for their traditions and the ease with which they barter it for a second rank affiliation in the dominant culture, clash with the value the old ways have for the government and themselves through the interests of tourists (and anthropologists) for 'things traditional'. Through this development the tribal culture gains a barter value in a more positive way. However, lacking control over the means of production - the coming of and spending by tourists - the Kapsiki have no choice but to conform with the wishes of Norcamtour, the demand of individual tourists and the whims of film producers. So they become proletarians again.

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1. Dr. Anton Ploeg was so kind to suggest this example from rural France to me. The article has greatly benefited from the constructive criticism of Dr. Wim van Binsbergen.

2. The data on the Kapsiki/Higi are obtained by fieldwork. Fieldwork in Cameroon occurred in 1971, 1972-3 and 1979 by the Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research (WOTRO), by the University of Utrecht.

3. A systematic comparison lies outside the scope and aim of this paper. The decisive factors, however, might be the amount of pressure experienced, the strategic properties and the carrying capacity of the habitat.

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