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They Leave their Jars Behind. The Conversion of Mafa Women to Islam.

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Preface

When I took off for Cameroon with my six-year-old son on the 9th of December 1986, just after we celebrated 'Sinterklaas' with the family, we had no idea what awaited us. I had never before set foot South of the Sahara. After we landed in Douala and disembarked the airplane, with the forty kilos of luggage to serve our needs for the next one-and-a-half years to come, I smelled the air and knew I would never forget that moment. My son not only smelled it; he tried to grasp it with his fingers saying: "Mom, do you feel that? The air is all wet down here!" When we returned at the beginning of June 1988, it was a warm and sunny day. Again, family and friends were there, welcoming us with an extensive Dutch breakfast. It was so good to see them back. Yet I knew that my life would never be the same as before, that I would not be able to just pick up where I left off. The process that lies in between departure and homecoming, changes a person's outlook on life and leaves an indelible mark on ones sense of self. That is what I have been trying to explain to my students ever since. Anthropology is the most wonderful profession in the world. But to be an anthropologist is sometimes a painful experience; one can feel a stranger among one's beloved, while having to leave behind new friends whose norms and values have also become part of one's view of the world. It feels like being half of oneself and by definition always longing for the other half. Then so be it. There is nothing I would rather do in my life and with my life.

This book, which deals with the conversion of Mafa women to Islam, is a product of these two halfs. It goes without saying that this book would not have come into being without the help, support, love and faithfulness of the people in Mokolo and Cameroon but also many people here in Europe played their part. The list of people whose role I want to acknowledge is long indeed.

First of all, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my Ph.D. advisor, Prof.Dr. Bonno Thoden van Velzen, who was a supervisor in the true sense of the word. I never felt discouraged by his critical remarks; on the contrary, I felt encouraged to hurry home and start rewriting immediately. When I ploughed through the texts again, I always had the exalting feeling that my arguments had changed for the better. It made the process of writing, also in the difficult last phase, nearly as pleasant as the fieldwork period.
I also acknowledge the contribution of my other Ph.D. advisor Prof. Dr. Els Postel-Coster. She kept reminding me to look for the gender relations when I lost sight of them absorbed in all the other interesting cultural aspects.

I am indebted to my co-advisor Dr. Wouter van Beek, who showed interest in the research topic I wanted to pursue, when I arrived at the Institute in Utrecht in 1984. He pointed me the direction of Mafa society. He endorsed my applications for research grants, which I obtained from WOTRO (The Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research) in 1986. When he came to visit me in Cameroon, we drank beer (me, not him) and climbed the holy Kapsiki Mountain.

As I do not want to relegate my steadfast companion to the position of 'last but not least' at this point I express my thanks to my son Reinout, who accompanied me to the field. As a consequence his life will probably take a different course than otherwise. I am keenly aware that it was my choice, not his. Through his presence I had easier access to the society under study. Moreover he and his friends - Papa, Vieux and Mois - gave me so many happy hours filled with voices and laughter. We went back several times. Being older he was then a real support on the difficult journeys; he is inclined to belittle his role and says I am exaggerating. I hope we can often return together, as we both left dear friends behind. I also thank him for his patience and understanding during the last phase of writing this book.

I want to thank the population of Mokolo and the surrounding area.
Lamido Mohammadou Magadji eventually helped me to find an assistant. During my last visit *Lamido* Yacouba Mohammadou Mourtalla received us most kindly and showed great interest in the research. Unfortunately, I did not meet *Lamido* Tjamaha, as he was away on a tour of the regions of his canton, but I was kindly received by his assistants.
I thank the people from the *préfecture* and *sousprefecture* for access to the town and the archives. I thank the Mobile Police and the Special Police for granting my research permit.
I am most indebted to my friend Aminatou and her husband for loving us, giving us lodging during later visits, for the letters that still come every month and keep us informed, for always being there. Their whole family has offered us warmth and tenderness. I especially thank their daughter Didi, little as she was she gave me so much comfort. *Usoko la bee Abdu, Usoko on juur, Sey Allah andi.*
I thank my dear friend Ounesa and her family for showing so much interest and understanding in my research topic and for dragging me around. Through them I came to know the whole town. *A nani na, Ounesa subaajo am? mi yetti maa, bee maama maa, bee daada maa, bee baba maa, bee bappa maa, on fuh, usoko.*
I am grateful to Yacadam, my dear assistant and friend, for her modest presence; day in, day out, always listening intently never tired of explaining. If Had she not

been so conscious in typing out the interviews, the perspective of women could not have been expressed so literally here. Her son Abia was born in this period, he started crawling then walking, and always came along to the interviews He is a well informed boy now. *Merci Yacadam, il n'y a pas de mots pour te remercier.*
I dedicate this book to the three of you. Aminatou, Ounesa and Yacadam, may we and our children always keep in touch We we can't do without you anymore.
I further thank all my friends in Mokolo. *Yimbe Mokolo, on fuh, usoko mon juu Allah hovnu on, que Dieu vous bénifice*

I also wish to thank Cyprian and Grace Fisiy for lending a helping hand and their generous hospitality in Yaoundé

Further, I wish to express my gratitude to many other friends outside Cameroon: Veronique Huybregts, for her attentive ear, the plates of food and the use of her bureau's facilities. I am grateful to my dear friend Roch M Mongbo for his comments, for his moral support and for his love. Maria and Rien Quist for fetching me when I was ill and exhausted.
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I thank my neighbors on both sides - Ton and Anne Marie, Jet and Otto - for their help and support in ordinary and awkward situations. running out of sugar, watching my son when the train delayed or when I had a meeting; climbing to the attic or crawling under the floor when the heating broke down, and always flowers to welcome me home after every trip abroad
I thank Hilda van der Rijke, Inez Hackenberger and Dick Drayer for their company in Cameroon on adventurous expeditions to the festivities of the M'bororo and Dowajo, afterwards back home for teaching me to use all those computer programs, and for all the attention
Many other friends played a role. Forgive me for not mentioning all of you personally

I thank my in-laws Yt en Anton Eikelboom, for lending a helping hand with the statistical program and offering their love and moral support in regard to raising my son. The same goes for all the members of my own family. They were often on hand to stand by my son, while I was busy writing. I especially thank my mother Johanna, Jeannette, Bas,and Nicolien.

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There are many colleagues who have supported me in the writing process. I sincerely thank Cees Schilder, who started a research project on the process of Islamization in Kaele at the end of my fieldwork period. During my second stay in the area and in the years to follow, we discussed our experiences on many occasions. We commented on each other's first and later drafts. It is difficult to determine who came up with which ideas, but I definitely owe him a lot for his careful and critical comments.
I sincerely thank Nancy van Weesep for turning 'my' English into the prose you find in this book. She always did justice to my texts, making a thorough correction of the language without altering the meaning.
I want to thank the members of the 'mytheclub', for their collegial support and for commenting on earlier papers and drafts, especially Jan Pouwer and René van der Haar. I thank my friends and colleagues from the 'intervision' group and from 'het ouwewijven-overleg'.
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Introduction

The bushtaxi drove one and a half hours into the mountains and stopped at Mokolo market, the end of our journey the start of my sojourn On the way, kids and adults had blocked the road waving strangely arms above their heads women and men reeled dangerously in the street, obviously half or completely drunk 'Too much *bilbil* local beer - apologized the other passengers The contrast with the neatly dressed men walking around the marketplace in their islamic garments was striking, though not surprising After all, the transformation of local religion and culture into Islamic ways was the topic of my research the reason for coming here in the first place This was my initial confrontation with the difference Islamization was making here in the Mandara mountains Those differences would keep me busy for years to come

The Mandara mountains lie in the far north of Cameroon near the Nigerian border Coming from the plains the transition is spectacular North Cameroon is rather flat with an occasional steep hill In most parts, villages appear at regular intervals interspersed with large herds of cattle and flocks of sheep In the dry season yellowed herbs and brushwood dominate the scenery incidental high trees often baobabs, serve as verdant landmarks, points of orientation on the horizon But in the rainy season green predominates Grasses and millet grow quickly The bushes sprout new leaves and their bright colors makes comparison with spring back home inevitable The palette of greens and the water-filled *mayos* - rivers - of July and August remind me of landscapes immortalized by seventeenth-century Dutch painters

These visions belong to the plains they vanish upon entering the Mandara mountains After the plains, the mountains look friendly They are not too steep and seem accessible But the further we penetrate, the rougher they get Huge boulders are scattered all around, as if a giant has just vented his anger In fact the mountains are volcanic massifs of granite with heights that rise above 1,000 m , peaking at 1,494 m (Mont Upay)

The mountains are inhabited by many different ethnic groups (Podlewski 1966) After seeing the villages of the Mofu people, the Mafa settlement pattern looks remarkably different Here in the Mafa landscape, as I call it we do not come across villages anymore The Mafa live in compounds scattered over the countryside These compounds called *ga)* in Mafa - consist of several small huts built close together, their pointed roofs are thatched with millet stalks

As we travel further into the Mafa area the landscape undergoes transformation The giant who passed this way seems to have been friendly Mountain sides in Mafa country are strewn with contour terraces The giant must have lent a

helping hand, as the terraces shore up even the most rocky and inaccessible slopes It seems impossible that human hands could have built them The people themselves cannot believe they did

A woman explained to me.

> "Once upon a time, we did not have to cultivate, we did not have to work We had only a millet tree, and one could just pick the millet from the tree Then there was an old lady, she was too old to pick the millet, so she asked a girl if she wanted to pick the millet for her because of her age she could not climb into the tree anymore Now the girl refused and the old woman got so very angry that she cursed the tree From that day on, it no longer gave any millet and people had to start to cultivate. It was at that time that God made the terraces for us Human hands could never have made them, could they? We just have to maintain them now Before there were no terraces, just the tree "

In the north, the area of the Mafa people is delimited by the Tchadiène, low-lying plains, where the Islamized Mandara live In the west, the valley of Yadséram separates the Mafa from the Marghi, who live in the Madagali (Nigeria) plains. In the south, Mafa territory is demarcated by the *mayo* Luti, which borders the plateau of the Kapsiki In the southeast, it reaches to the Gawaplains, where Fulbe graze their herds. Finally, in a similar mountainous area to the east, we find the Mofu and several other micro-ethnic groups, who are their next-door neighbors (Martin 1970 16)

The climate in this area is determined by the altitude The dry season - from about the end of October until the beginning of May - alternates a shorter rainy season from May through October The temperature may rise up to 41-42o C in March and April, just before the rainy season. It is lowest in December and January, dropping to about 10 o C at night [1] The Harmattan blows during this period and its dust clouds bring mists to the mountains

In the middle of this terraced Mafa landscape lies the town of Mokolo. Its existence can only be understood against the background of the process of Islamization in West Africa, which in turn influenced the political and ethnic history of North Cameroon Mokolo appeared as a town in the Mafa area under the domination of the Fulbe Originally a pastoral people, the Fulbe started to

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[1] Martin even mentions 8 o C during the night, but I either never experienced that temperature or was not aware of it He also mentions that the Harmattan blows just before the rainy season In the two years I spent there it always blew in January and February

convert to Islam a few centuries before Mokolo as a town was founded Allied with their domination are the processes of Islamization and political centralization The Mafa had never encountered either of these features But once drawn into the sphere of influence of the Fulbe, the Mafa came to adapt This book considers the process of conversion to Islam in Mafa society Specifically, it treats the effects on gender relations the motives of women, and the actual changes conversion brings about in their lives

When discussing conversion to Islam, I use the terms Islamization' and 'Islamize' to indicate that the transition from one religion to another is processual in character These words are direct translations from Fulfulde, the word *silmugo* means to Islamize The common expression in Mokolo is '*mi jippi hoscere, mi silmi*' This was translated into French as '*je descendais de la montagne et je me suis islamisée*' In these cases the word *islamiser*' was often replaced, as a synonym, by the word '*civiliser* For the population within the Islamic community of Mokolo, these synonyms referred to concomitant processes I wanted to do justice to their view that conversion to Islam nowadays is not a step somebody else drags you into but a conscious choice you make yourself, imbedded in a process Accordingly the word Islamize seemed appropriate

Studying Islamization: different approaches

In West Africa, religious experts are very important in the community They have played a vital role in the spread of Islam throughout the region and continue to preserve Islamic truth The essence of their message is simple To become a Muslim, a person only needs to accept the basic creed - that God is one and Muhammad is his Prophet - and declare loyalty to Islam This involves accepting the norms of Islamic life and expressing loyalty to the Islamic community Considering the ease with which one can become a Muslim, we might expect syncretism to be a common feature of the Islamic faith I think this is indeed the case, though this aspect has received little attention in the history of the spread of Islam in West Africa Until recently, two approaches have been central as elaborated below

Different phases in the process of Islamization

The process of conversion has been described in regard to the three different phases a community traverses towards the 'true' Islam (Robinson 1985 1395) Robinson points out that in the descriptions on the spread of Islam in West Africa, ethnic groups that had not converted to Islam exemplified the phase of

jahiliya the state of not knowing' (Robinson 1985 1395) Ethnic groups that had previously played a dominant role in the process of state formation, like the Manding and situations where Islam had played an important role at the court served as examples of the syncretic phase The groups that stood for orthodox Islam and therefore played a dominant role in the *jihad*, or holy wars, were considered as the true propagators of Islam One such group is the Fulbe Torodbe

Application of an approach that took these different phases as a point of departure however does not clarify the place of Islam within the communities in question We end up wondering with which phase Islamized Mafa can be associated It would seem more useful to focus on understanding the society under study

Official and popular Islam

Another approach in use since the seventies makes a distinction between official and popular Islam (Waardenburg 1979 Eickelman 1977) In my opinion this distinction introduces an dichotomy where such is not necessary It seems to disparage the popular believers who have been too often condemned by orthodox Islamic scholars For example, Waardenburg recounts the opinion of Ibn Taimiya, a juristic theologian of the 13th century with a deep conviction that Islam is the religion of *tawhid* (testifying to the perfect unity of God) Ibn Taimiya had the ability to draw out the implications of *tawhid* with utmost clarity He was convinced that popular religious practices promote idolatry, that they are related to *shirk* (associationism, polytheism in the widest sense of the word), and that they are by nature antithetical to religious truth as proclaimed in Islam

Waardenburg classifies the most striking forms of popular Islam and comes up with quite a few features (Waardenburg 1979 345) We could use these to demonstrate whether the Islamic Mafa people ought to be categorized as popular or official believers But again, would this enhance our understanding of the society under study?

True proselytization or popular Islam?

In the first period of the spread of Islam in West Africa Muslims adopted a pacific approach Yet after 1600 some scholars sought positions of religious and political authority and used militant means to achieve these ends By the 17th century the Torodbe in Senegambia founded strong Muslim communities where Islam had not previously existed Non-Muslims were excluded In the literature

those Torodbe groups are considered representatives of the last phase of Islamization, in which 'true' Islam was propagated (Robinson 1985). From one of these groups emerged the religious scholar Uthman dan Fodio. He played a seminal role in state formation, which eventually ushered in the Islamization of the Mafa area. According to the first approach Uthman dan Fodio is considered to be an orthodox Islamic scholar. But Waardenburg classifies his activities as popular Islam (Waardenburg 1979:346).

These different points of view concerning one and the same movement underline the relevance of the issue I raised above. Using a dichotomy or trying to determine what phase Islam is in at a given time does not bring us any further. Who defines what 'official' or 'true' Islam is? Dan Fodio probably considered himself as an exponent of the official and 'true' Islam, as did many others. I consider the notions of official and popular Islam only applicable when a society makes a distinction between clerics and practitioners. The religious leaders earn a living by teaching religion. As they can invest more time in learning and reading, they automatically have more knowledge of their belief system. In contrast, the people who practice it in daily life have to combine religion with other activities. But then, this distinction simply pertains to theoretical aspects of religious scholarship and practical activities of human beings. Both clerics and practitioners legitimate their activities by means of Islam. [2]

Islam and state ideology

In cases where Islam has become a state ideology - like in the Sokoto Empire in the 19th century, which included Cameroon and whose impact on its history has been enormous - the state represents a more official version of Islam than that professed by the constituent population with their diverse backgrounds. But even then, the state's claim to the official interpretation is questionable, as events in distant and recent history have taught us.

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[2] The interaction between the two is again called a popular version by Waardenburg (1979:349) The unfruitfulness of the dichotomy is demonstrated anew if one simply asks. Where does 'popular' begin and 'official' end? Who is going to set the criteria for a religion that does not have an organized institution? Of course Waardenburg gives an impressive list But if directly inspired theologians represent official Islam, why is Uthman dan Fodio's movement regarded as a popular version?

Islamization as a sociological process

In contrast to the theories that give much attention to the profoundness or purity of the religious practice I am inclined to accept a different approach, the sociological point of view elaborated by Robinson (1985) He criticizes approaches in which less orthodox practices were considered as a phase in the development of orthodox Islam, because these approaches gave less attention to the process of integration of Islam within different societies (Robinson 1985)
In this study I want to consider the process of conversion from a sociological or anthropological in this case - point of view From this angle the individuals and groups under study appear to play more important roles, and we need not detach Islam from the believer This approach leaves room to consider in what ways Islam has been integrated within different societies or adapted to pre-Islamic social processes (Robinson 1985b) [3] That is precisely what I will try to do in this thesis Succinctly the research question is how was Islam integrated and adopted in Mafa society?
Robinson's approach also helps us understand the historical processes For example, in the mid-19th century the Torodbe, who can be ethnically classified as a Fulbe group started to make a clear distinction between the *Dar al Islam* (house of Islam) and *Dar al harb* (the land of war) (Clarke 1982 81) Therefore they are looked upon as orthodox Muslim reformers However, it is not clear in what way the Islam practiced in the communities under their influence was affected by their former tribal tradition As we will see in the course of this thesis, Fulbe customs are presented, for example to the Mafa as Islamic and are incorporated into the Islam of the converts

Islamization and Women: a conceptual vacuum

A more anthropological analysis is also desirable to highlight women's position within the different Islamic societies (Van Santen 1985) In describing the spread of Islam none of the authors mention women or discuss the effect of this transformation on women of different ethnic backgrounds Nor do they consider how women became involved in the process This vacuum is certainly related to their approach We know that Islam was brought to West Africa by merchants

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[3] As an example of a sociological approach he mentions Nicolas who describes how the Fulbe in the process of Islamization adopted not only Islam but also Hausa customs In the process the typical Fulbe philosophy of life referred to as *pulaaku* became a vague reference to these groups (Nicolas 1975)

and that political leaders slowly adopted Islam. But the historical sources make no mention of women. Why not consider the possibility that it was women who came across the Sahara in search of gold or slaves? Could it be that the political leaders adopting Islam were women? If the approach used had made human beings and their practices more visible, the many authors who described the process might have made a distinction between the adoption of Islam along gender lines.
Women in the former Bornu and Hausa states did have important political and religious functions. For example, women functionaries ruled over the female part of the population; the queen had an important position (Nicolas 1975:20 ff.). In pre-Islamic Hausa cults, the *bori* cults, women played the main roles, serving as spirit mediums (Barkow 1972: 326; Greenberg 1946; Nicolas 1975: 152; Ahmed 1988). How Islam slowly affected these positions, with or without the consent of women, has been left open to speculation. It is this sort of question that we are going to ask in regard to Mafa society.

It may be too readily assumed that women Islamized simply because their fathers adopted Islam or because of intermarriage with men who were (or had become) Muslims. Historical events mark different waves of Islamization in Mokolo and suggest otherwise. The data collected in the course of this research indicate that women mostly do Islamize on their own initiative for various reasons. History cannot be lived or experienced anew. But - without falling into evolutionist arguments - we may look at the process of Islamization in the area under concern from a different point of view. Specifically, we can try to find out how it affects women in the area under study.

Besides the desire to expand the perspective on Islamic societies to include women, there is still another reason to examine how the process of Islamization affects women. That is to set a tone and make a modest attempt to dispel the bias implicit in studies of Islamic societies. Islam has too long been considered as the religion that pre-eminently brings about and maintains asymmetrical relations between the sexes through their segregation. Supposedly, Islam reduces women to their reproductive capacities (Postel-Coster and Schrijvers 1976:79). Women are denied access to public areas and thus access to information, knowledge and political power (Dwyer 1978). Pre-occupation with descent, the honor of the family, and chastity of women are supposed to be constraints on change in their situation. In such a system, all factors seem to work against women. A woman is first the possession of her father and then of her husband; she only acquires a degree of status when she has brought forth a son (Beck and Keddy 1978:26).

Differentiations for the many societies far apart that are Islamic, are not often made.
In this respect Lazreg questions the inability to address the intersubjective foundation of difference, which she considers a significant problem in academic feminism. Western feminists, she stated, operate on their own social and intellectual ground and under the unstated assumption that their societies are perfectible. In this respect, feminist critical practice takes on an air of normalcy (1988: 81). She than shows how definitions as 'the Arab women' or 'Islamic women', accept and strenghten the notion of difference as 'the objectified otherness'. Consequently the 'other' is described in terms of essentialist categories, which are not considered to be social constructions but given objective knowledge (also Tempelman 1993).
Thus, women are not described in their lived reality, as subjects in their own right. Instead, they are reified, made into mere bearers of unexplained categories. She than rightly remarks that religion cannot be detached from the socioeconomic and political context within which it unfolds and that religion can not be seen as having an existence independent of human activity. As such, she said:

> "...it is subject to change, if not in content at least in function. To understand the role of religion in women's lives, we must identify the conditions under which it emerges as a significant factor, as well as those that limits its scope. In addition, we must address the ways in which religious symbols are manipulated by both women and men in everyday life (Lazreg 1988: 95;).

Besides scientific biases, we find many statements concerning Islam in general and women's role within this world religion that are embedded in Western prejudice against Islam. Recently in Dutch society many myths and negative stereotypes about Islamic societies got new stimuli in debates mounted for political reasons. [4]

Last but not least, another reason to study women's role in Islamization is to fill a gap in the litterature. A good deal of theoretical and feminist work has been done on women in Africa and women in Islam. But the topic of women in Islamic movements in sub-Saharan Africa is still almost untouched (Hodgkin 1990: 73-130).

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4. See article/interview in Volkskrant (supplement) of September, 19, 1992 with W.A.R. Shadid following his discussions with the political leader of the right-wing (V.V.D.) political party Bolkestein and the publication of the book written by Shadid (with P.S. van Koningsveld) entitled "De mythe van het Islamitisch gevaar".

Male-female relations in societies where people claim to be Islamic deserve to be re-examined. Besides, as Lazreg said, the positions of women need to be considered in the context of other cultural elements. If we look at the status of women within an Islamic society, as we do in this study, we must also be aware of the syncretic character of these societies. Not all the customs and manners are determined by the Qur'an. Nor are they always prescribed by Islamic rules or laws, *Sharia*, concerning the women or other aspects of these societies (see also Haleber 1992). As Fahmi stated some time ago for Arab societies (1909):

> Islam may seem to have matured in a revolutionary way by abolishing certain morals and customs and institutionalizing new ones, but nevertheless underneath the differences and oppositions, a great number of common features combine the continuity between Arab customs and Islamic institutions (Fahmi 1909 in Sou'al 4/1983:24 ff.)

Consequently this may also be the case for Fulbe and Mafa society. Syncretism in a specific society need not be in conflict with Islamic law. The status quo can be maintained in a society as long as it does not contradict these laws (Anderson 1954).

If we seek to discover a changing situation for women due to the process of Islamization, knowledge of the process of syncretism is necessary. Only then do we get an accurate picture of women's new positions. Consequently women's situation in pre-Islamic society - hence, in the traditional Mafa society - needs to be analyzed.

Islamization and Fulberization

In our case, the matter is even more complicated. In North Cameroon, the sedentarized Fulbe have claimed Islam as their ethnic marker. Being Muslim means adapting the Basic Creed that there is 'No God but Allah and that Muhammad is his Messenger'. But being a Muslim also means adapting to the Fulbe way of life. Many features that accompany Islam are not Islamic but Fulbe. This is the reason why the process of Islamization is often referred to as Fulberization. An anthropological perspective is needed to elucidate the integration of Mafa society into this Islamic community, which had previously integrated aspects of pre-islamic Fulbe lifestyle.

Part I: Historical Developments

Mokolo

In Chapter One we will get acquainted with Mokolo town, where the Islamic and non-Islamic community live together. We will define the main characteristics of the two ethnic groups who have contributed to the existence of Mokolo as a town and who play a dominant role in the chapters to come. The Fulbe and Mafa ways of life will be described in a 'snapshot' approach. Their political and social organization, their religious and economic occupations, and division of labor will be touched upon.
We will situate these groups within the town. What were their reasons to come to live in town? What were their motives to Islamize? What are their economic occupations? What ties do Islamized people keep up with their relatives and the region they originated from?
To be able to answer these questions, I will use the data from a sample survey I conducted among 90 households in the different quarters of town and the 40 cases I documented during my fieldwork period. With these results and the collected life histories of several families, I will sketch the different waves of Islamization that have passed through the region in the course of this century. Some Mafa Islamized because they had been taken as slaves at an early age; at a later period, they Islamized because they were often adopted or given to Islamic families. During these historical periods but also recently, many women tended to Islamize at an older age, sometimes after several marriages 'in the mountains' (meaning in Mafa surroundings and circumstances). In that case, the changes in lifestyle are drastic. The religious transition still continues, though recently it has slowed down for men.

The history of Mokolo

In the second chapter we give a short overview of the history of Islamization of West Africa. This will lead to a description of the main features and leading figures of the Sokoto Empire, which included North Cameroon in the 19th century.
The Fulbe, who instigated the process of conversion, have tried to dominate the Mafa area since the middle of the last century. They did not meet with great success. Their slave raids remain awful reminders of subjection to the people concerned. These raids did play an important role in the spread of Islam. For many groups - including the Mafa - the first encounter with Islam was under threatening circumstances.

Complete domination of the Fulbe over the area was only possible with the help of the German conquerors at the beginning of this century. For the Mafa, this did not put an end to slave raids. However, the captured slaves where more or less freed when the Germans were beaten by the English and French at the end of the First World War.
The specific process by which the Mafa converted to Islam should be placed against the emergence of Mokolo as a town. Islamization in West Africa occurs mainly in urban centers. And this certainly is the case among the Mafa. The history of Mokolo has not been written before and is partly reconstructed from oral accounts. In Chapter One, it was obvious that the object of this research needs to be viewed in its particular historical context to perceive and grasp the changes due to Islamization. Though Islam was not a state religion, until recently in North Cameroon most of the powerful and influential functions were performed by Islamic people. However, the policy towards the North has changed under the influence of the non-Islamic president, Paul Biya, who has been in office since 1984. The recent call for democratization has placed the Islamic and non-Islamic Mafa population in a new situation again. We will briefly touch upon the recent political developments in this part of the thesis.

The influence of the Sokoto Empire on the region took place not only on a political level but also on various religious and ideological levels. This was possible because the founder of the Sokoto-empire, Uthman dan Fodio, left many written documents that have been influential. He also had outspoken ideas concerning the position of women within a Muslim society. This thesis will give attention to those ideas.

The differences between the Fulbe as the Islamic conquerors and the Mafa as a traditionally conquered group are great. The changes the invasion of the region has brought about in religious life, in the marriage exchange and prestation system, and in the economic occupations of women will be dealt with in the second part of this thesis.

Part II: Religion, symbolism and the Economics of Reproduction

Religion

In Mafa religious life, libations of millet beer in honor of the local God - *Jigilé* - play an important role. Another eminent feature of Mafa religion is the

personal jar each individual possesses In this jar sacrifices must be made on all sorts of occasions festivals rituals, or misfortunes like an illness or accident These libations so important in Mafa religion - were heavily condemned by the Muslim founder of the Sokoto Empire Uthman dan Fodio This chapter discusses what people do with the main features of their former religion after conversion We will develop our arguments around Horton's theory (1971, 1975) of a 'basic' African Cosmology which has a two-tiered structure one of the lesser spirits and one of the Supreme Being

On the other hand, Islam has often been described as just 'a way of life' (Trimingham 1968 56) If that were true, Islam would only affect people's lives on a superficial level Underneath, old ideologies would remain alive, still practised, affecting men and women and their interrelations Concerning Hausa women, Trimingham remarked that women are inclined to stick to old traditional religious practices longer than men, because they want to make the best of both worlds The Ardeners considered women be more conservative on an ideological level as they expend so much energy to adapt to men's dominant model in society (Ardener 1975) If this were the case men would spread the dominant, more orthodox perspective within Islamic communities in Mokolo women would keep to their old traditions In this thesis the old and new religious systems will be analyzed We will systematically trace the evidence for that supposition If we find it to be true, we will determine up till which generation remnants of the old religion are carried out

We also have to consider the beings that inhabit the Mafa cosmological world They may either change position or disappear from the cosmological order due to Islamization These beings include the eaters of human souls and the water spirits, both type of beings play a prominent role in the daily life of Mokolo's inhabitants
Other changes due to conversion may be found in the visits and use of diviners and indigenous healers Is recourse to their practices and knowledge replaced by visits to the Marabouts - Islamic religious leaders -, who can achieve the same ends with the use of Qur'anic texts? I will describe the conditions under which such changes take place

Ritual life

In Chapter Four we will elaborate upon the rich ritual life of the Mafa I do not consider symbolic actions as ritualized rituals In the previous chapter we will

discover that within Mafa society actions in ordinary life can be seen as an extension of the rules within the rituals. These actions cannot be disconnected from the other levels of society. The Mafa know many rituals, - such as the twin ritual, the bull ritual and the harvest rituals -, in which not only Mafa cosmology but also the gender relations and the status of women are reflected on a deeper level. We will analyze these rituals extensively because they give us a deeper insight in the importance the Mafa attach to life and death, social organization and the importance of the female and male species. I consider this knowledge essential to be able to understand the changes that take place within the symbolic order and the categorization of the Mafa due to the process of Islamization, as I am of the definite opinion that changes on these deeper levels affect - immediately or in the long term - the position of women.

Marriage decision making and prestations

In Mafa society, marriage is clan exogamous and caste endogamous. Women take an active part in decision making. Marriage prestations can be categorized as bridewealth and the transactions this entails are dominated by men. In contrast, the marriage system of the sedentarized Fulbe is endogamous. Women are the main participants in the system of marriage prestations, which has a strong tendency towards dowry. This chapter takes the women's perspective as a point of departure. Here we compare both systems and elucidate the complicated gift exchange system of the Fulbe. We will elaborate on the role women play in the 'atom of alliance', that is, in the elementary unit of alliance (Lévi-Strauss 1949). But we also examine whether the endogamous marriage system is taken over by the new converts. We determine whether they accept the new marriage prestation system and, if so, how they accumulate the wealth necessary to participate in it.

Trade and smuggling: an economic system.

The procurement of the gifts in the context of the marriage prestation system of the Islamic community is an almost exclusively female affair. Women need to provide the material wealth that keeps this system going. Consequently women need to invest in their children's weddings, as well as in those of the offspring of friends and relatives. By making such contributions, they will gain acceptance into the Muslim community. But unlike Fulbe women, they have no cattle to sell. This chapter provides insight into how they accumulate the necessary wealth. We draw the contours of the economic life of women in the Islamic community in Mokolo, in which men according to the ideology need to provide the daily necessities for their wives and children. Women earn the capital they need for

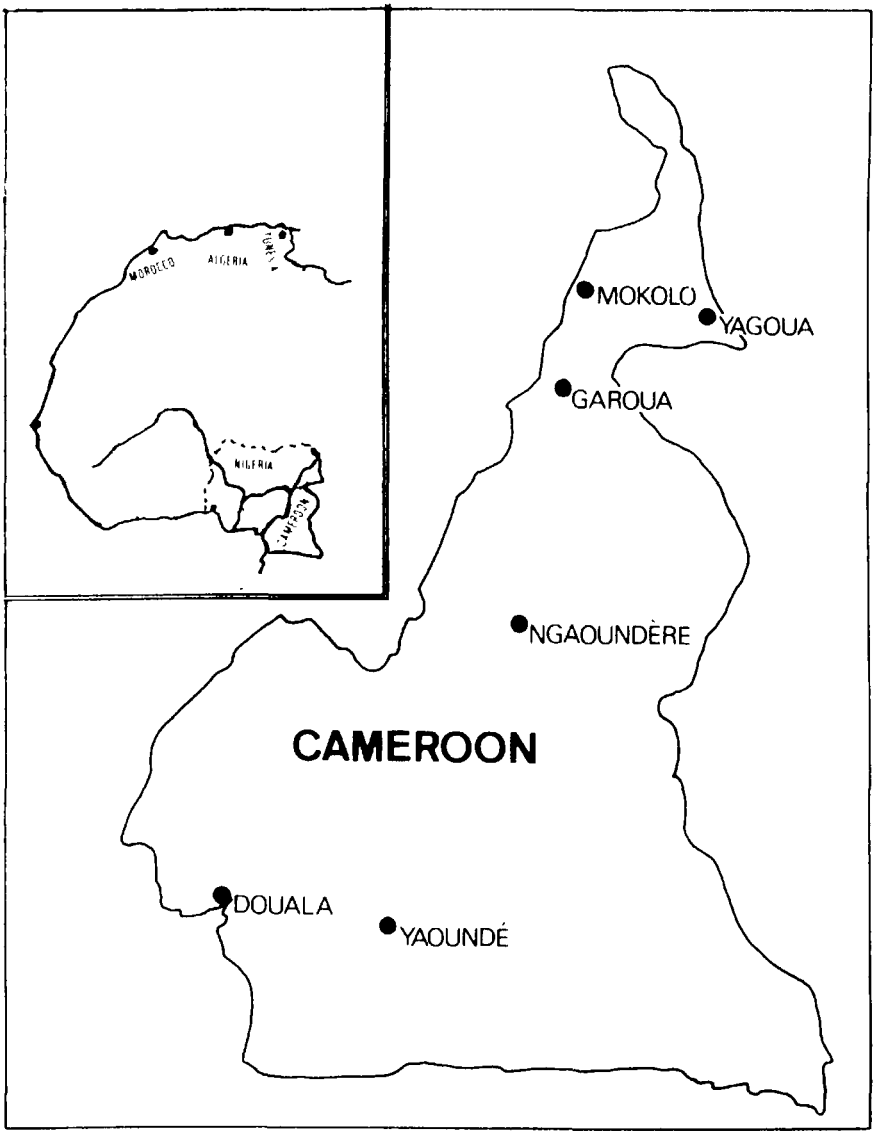
marriage prestations outside the formal economic system in an autonomous sphere. Recent debates concerning the relation between state and society will buttress the discussion of these economic strategies. We will assess whether women's aloofness from state affairs allows them to benefit from the present decline of the state, as is suggested in the literature (Chazan 1989; Parpart 1989). Finally, we will review all the chapters and formulate some conclusions.

This book describes the process of conversion of Mafa women to Islam, focusing on how this process affects gender relations, women's religious and economic positions, and how women use the existence of an alternative religion to change their lives. It reveals women's perspectives in these matters and the fact that women's motives to Islamize may be completely different from those of men. In the separate chapters, much space and weight is given to literal statements, histories and life-histories from many different informants. Their names have been changed and sometimes the succession of events.

part one

Historical Developments

Map 1



Cameroon

It is the sixth of July 1987 We are having breakfast when my friend Maimouna comes rushing in "Come along ' she says we are going to attend a Mafa funeral, and as you have not yet witnessed one you'd better come with us " I leave my breakfast and rush out behind her as everybody else is ready to leave 'Everybody' means several next-door women neighbors from our quarter We are living in a Muslim quarter in a small town in North Cameroon in the Mandara mountains which is situated in the midst of the Mafa area These people are horticulturalists In the countryside they continue to practice their own religion

We are on our way I have no idea yet where we are going or who died and what relation the dead person is to either of these women It does not seem appropriate to ask such questions right now I guess I will find out in due time

We leave the town behind us and enter the mountains We have to walk and climb for at least two hours before we reach our destination a traditional Mafa compound When we pass the entrance hut we notice many women sitting quietly together in the courtyard Nobody speaks These are all non-Islamized Mafa women, but we have to sit inside one of the huts with another group the Muslim people They are sitting on a mat two men I remember having seen in town and three women I have met before I recognize Fatima among them That is the Islamic name she got when she Islamized She is married to the son of our next-door neighbor and they tell me that it is her grandmother who died I hold her hands to express my sympathy and afterwards I do the same with the others They all speak in low voices First we sit for a while water is offered to us in a bowl different from the one the non-Islamized people use Then we have to enter the hut where the dead person is lying in state Before I went into the hut I was afraid it would smell, since the Mafa do not bury their dead until one or two days after death However, there is a fire burning inside the hut and the smoke is so strong that it prevents us from smelling anything else They tell me afterwards that this is to keep the flies away from the dead body and to keep the body warm

Fatima's mother is sitting next to the dead person she draws back the sheet that covers the body The head has already been wrapped in a goatskin We say aaaaaaah" and "ooooooooh' to express our sympathy and then return to our mat to mourn After us, others enter the hut where the dead person is laid out When all the visitors have come inside, the men start to play the *edinger*, drums used at funerals They also use a percussion instrument a calabash that they strike against a stick to which strings of small rings are attached Then the non-Islamized

women start to dance, though not very exuberantly; grief is clearly visible on their faces. The men dance differently. They put their hands on the back of their heads and hop from one foot to the other. The Muslim women watch the dancers cry, but they do not join in the dance.

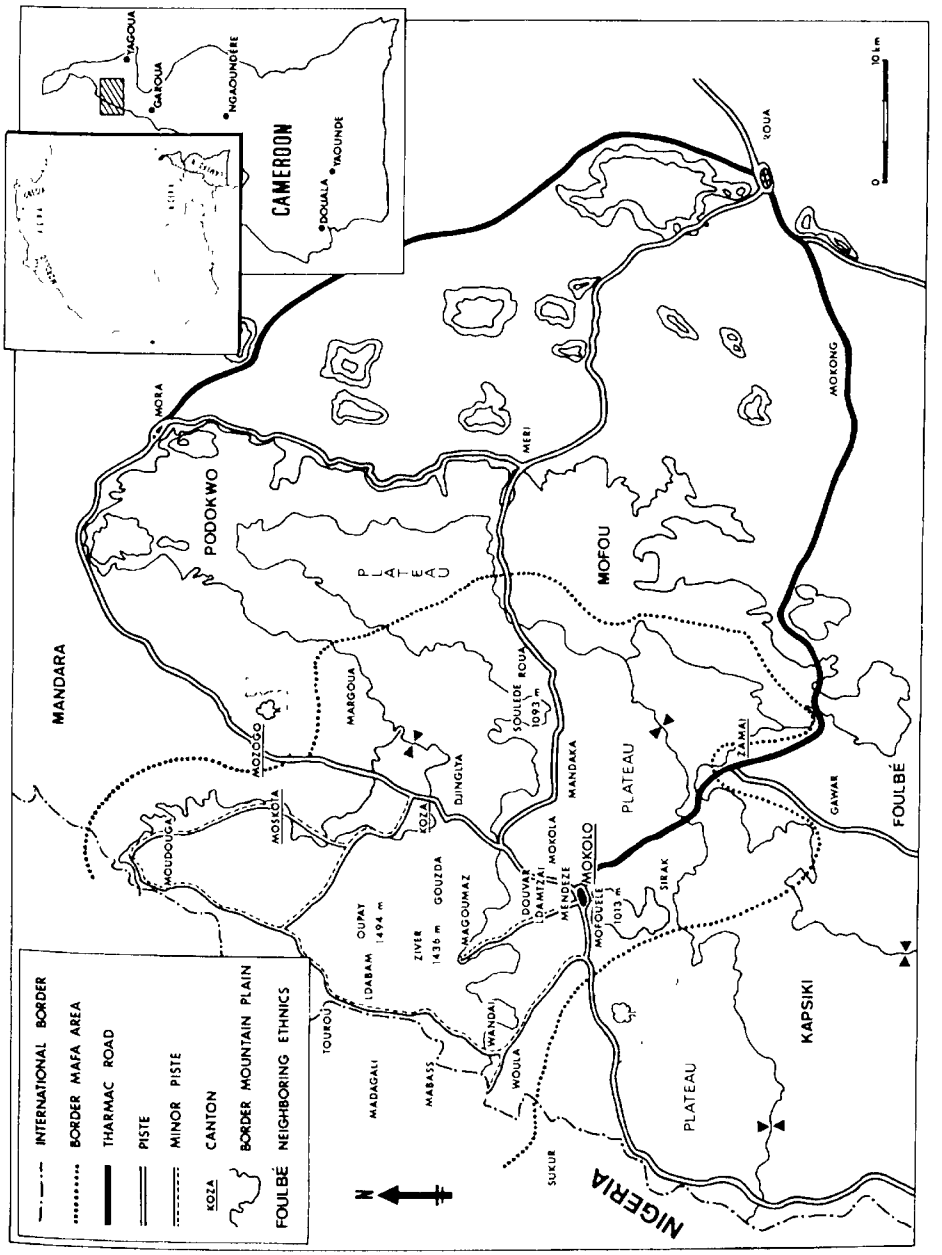
After a while two women remain on the dance floor. One of them is Fatima's mother, the other one her sister, both daughters of the deceased. They carry a calabash in their hands as they go up and down the dance floor repeating "Oooh *mam-gay*, ooooh *mam-gay*" (oooh, mother of the house), and adding other phrases in praise of their dead mother: "Oooooh, mother of the house, why have you left me? Oooooh mother of the house, you have gone, only your calabash remains, why oooh why...".

This extolling of the deceased lasts quite a while. Then the men enter the inner court of the compound and start to cry in the typical way we described before, holding their hands on their heads. The blacksmith picks up the body of the dead woman and places it in the entrance hut on a wet goatskin. Meanwhile, the daughters of the dead person wave bunches of millet straws to prevent the flies from alighting on the body. Everybody watches this and all of us cry; we too are crying. The blacksmith folds the goatskin around the dead woman's loins, like a nappy, and sews it in place.

Before she is carried to her grave, the sky becomes increasingly dark and a strong wind starts to blow. Black clouds seem to be playing a ball game with the sun. It is beautiful to watch, but the Islamic women decide to return home quickly. Bad weather is on the way, and they cannot stay overnight in a non-Islamic compound.

Fatima and the other Muslim women leave with us, and we hurry home. It turns quite cold. I am shivering. Near town the first drops of rain and the darkness catch up with us. When I arrive home I am soaking wet, dead tired,... and again puzzled about this easy interaction between the non-Islamic Mafa and those Mafa who are members of the Islamic community in town.

Map 2



Mafa Area (After Martin 1970: 14)

Chapter I
Mokolo town in the midst of the Mafa area

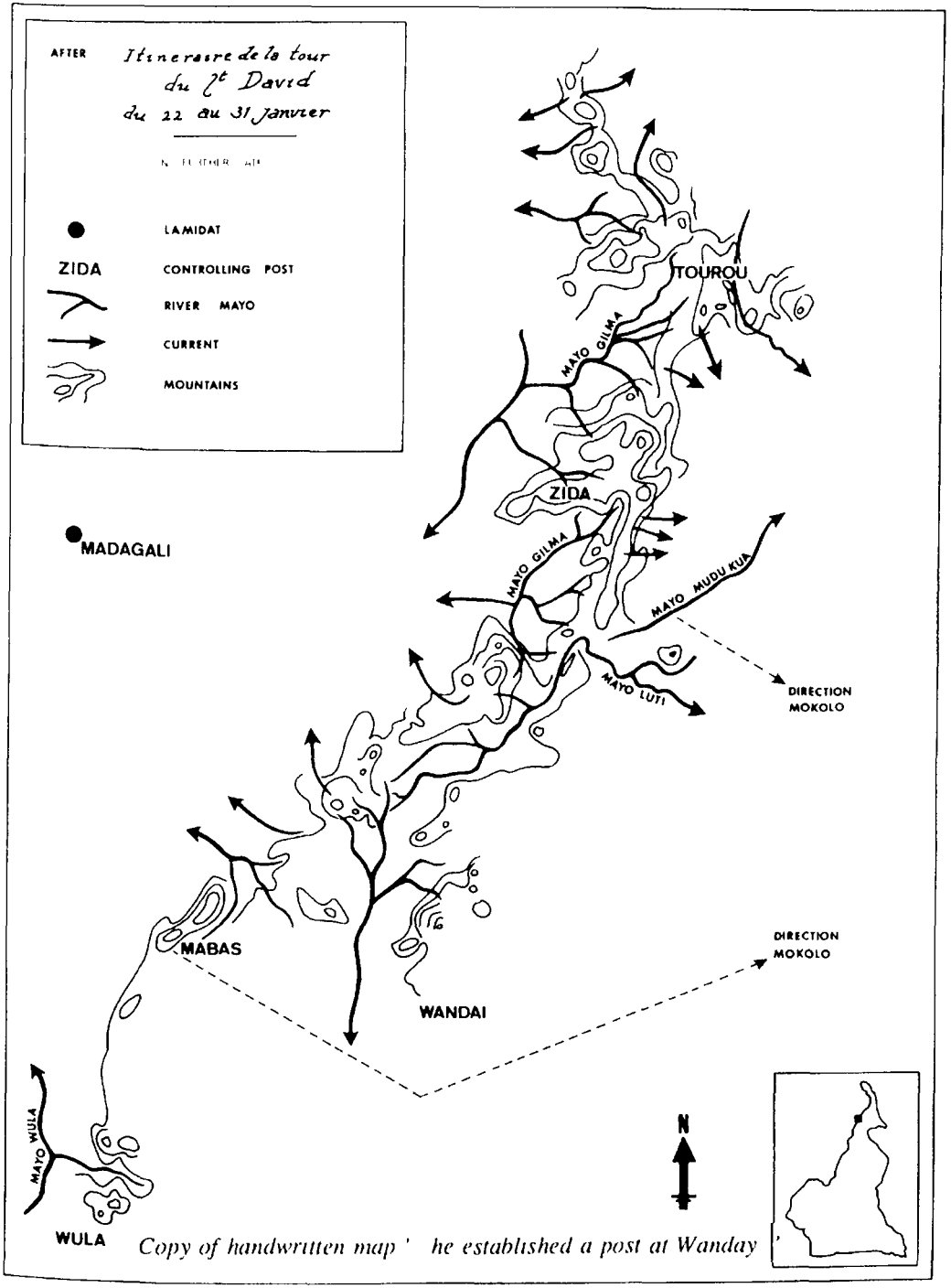
As this introductory story shows in and around Mokolo we find a combination of different life-styles due to the conversion into Islam. The funeral described there took place after I had become adjusted and knew my way around town, knew quite a few people, and had started to understand the differences in households, economics, religion etc. In this first chapter I will give an impression of Mokolo, the town of major interest in our study as Islam in North Cameroon is mainly practiced in urban areas. I will introduce the inhabitants of town and their daily activities, and discuss the different phases within the process of Islamization

I 1 First acquaintance with Mokolo

According to the archives, Mokolo, the town of central interest in our story, was founded in 1918 by Chief, *lamido* (plural: *lamube*) Hamman Yadji, then *lamido* of Madagali, a town that lies just across the border in present-day Nigeria. [5] While the Germans colonized the area (1903-1915), Hamman Yadji often travelled from Madagali to Maroua, where he regularly attended the meetings

[5] Historians among the readers, may get quite annoyed with my reference to Mokolo archives without giving further details. In the sub prefecture of Mokolo, I asked if I could study their archives. This obviously was not an every day question, but I did get permission. A cupboard was opened and all sorts of papers of different origin fell over me. There was no clear order. I sorted out the handwritten documents and the ones I thought important to be kept. For those who ever want to look at them, I put them together in a red folder. Many of the documents were damaged because of humidity or eaten by the mice, so references as 'no further date' mostly means, 'further dates eaten by mice'. Some copies of the typed reports can also be found, as I discoverd years afterwards, in the *Archives d Outre Mer* in Aix en Province', but at that time I did not systematically compare them with the material I photocopied and kept at home.

map 3



Copy of handwritten map ' he established a post at Wanday '

of the German authorities or those occasions he crossed the plateau at the foot of the Mokolay massif which the Fulbe had named Mokolo First he established a post at Wandai (1903) about 20 km from Mokolo which was controlled by a servant named Riskou [6] Later on he decided that Wanday was no longer a good place from which to control the area around the road to Maroua (76 km from Mokolo) He decided to send a servant he could trust to look for a more efficient guidepost in the Mafa country itself He sent
Fassaha a slave originally from Soukour, a village near Madagali, to establish a surveying and controlling post Hamman Yadji himself started to use Mokolo as an overnight stop (Mokolo archives Le probleme du commandement a Mokolo , no date, Eldridge Mohammadou, 1988 282) In order to maintain the place, he sent other people Muslims from Madagali, to stay in Mokolo The nephew (son of the brother) of Fassaha recalls those days

> My father came from Madagali He was *Soukou* They sent him to the mountains to collect taxes in Wanday He was sort of a policeman Then he was noticed by Hamman Yadji who sent him to Mokolo to stay At that time, my father was already married in Madagali to a girl from here a Mafa slave girl who had arrived in Madagali when she was still very young when she did not even have breasts [7] My father was there to survey the village There were a lot of wars in those days, because they took the goods from the mountain people by force They did not buy it then as they do nowadays In Mokolo at that time there were only four groups of houses all the rest was still brush *ladde* We took the land along the road to the hospital of Bozongwai to cultivate We still have that land

I 1.1 Mokolo after the First World War

Our last informant is not exaggerating about the raids as we learn from the diary of Hamman Yadji himself He kept account of them, as well as of how many slaves he captured the amount of cattle he took the number of men he killed

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[6] Referred to in the archives as *ardo* Wuli (Oulis in French) *Ardo* is the Fulfulde term for a servant of a *lamido* so on a lower rung in the political hierarchy
An ardo mostly collected taxes In chapter two we will encounter still another term for chief *lawan* which is basicly the same as *ardo*

[7] This woman was still alive but too old to be interviewed

and described his contacts with the colonizers, or, as he called them, the Christians, *Nasaara'en*. A short impression: [8]

> March 17, 1913. On Monday the 8th of Banjaru Awwal (by the Muslim calendar) I sent Mahawonga to hunt slaves for me from the Pagans called Dugupahi and he found 11 slave girls and one cow
>
> April 8, 1913: On Tuesday the 30th of Banjaru Awwal, Ahmadu and Jaure Abba went off with my people to Mokolo and captured 23 and killed three
>
> April 23, 1913: On Saturday the 20th of Ramadan, the *Oberleutenant* arrived in Madagali and spent five days there
>
> Aug. 28, 1913: On Thursday the 25th of Ramadan he left Madagali and went to Duhu. In the month of Julandu, the Governor and the *Oberleutenant* departed and I took leave of them safely. He sent Kobavin and Riskou to Gour, and God be praised for that.
>
> March 15, 1916. On Wednesday the 10th of Banjaru Turbindu, I made a raid and captured cattle from Mokolo, and on Friday I captured cattle from Lawan and Dubur. The total number of cattle was 167.

During the First World War, the French and English fought the Germans, Hamman Yadji briefly mentioned

> Dec. 12, 1914: On Saturday the 24th of Kubariam Awwal, the French Christians arrived in Madagali and the people of Madagali all ran away. There were four white men
>
> Dec. 16, 1914: On Wednesday the 28th of Haram Awwal, I sent the Frenchman 77 shillings
>
> Febr. 2, 1915: On Tuesday the 18th of Haram Akhir, we raided Kurang and got 100 cattle. Governor "Dur" (Duhring) fought with the English and killed two white men of the English. I raided Hurumzi and captured four slave girls and 20 cattle.
>
> Nov. 1st, 1918: On Friday the 25th of Haram Awwal at night, news about the tax arrived from the Lieutenant. In the morning I sent off Kobo and Buba to Maroua regarding the lying news of a fight between the French and the Germans

Laverge remarks that those military operations did not affect the Mafa population, who remained subjected to the same *lamudo* (Laverge 1949, 1990). Only after the delimitation of 1920, whereby the French and the English split up the territory, Madagali was attached to Nigeria, while Mokolo and Wanday, the two places where Hamman Yadji used to stay overnight, were assigned to

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[8] The diary of Hamman Yadji, written in Arabic has been found and translated into English but it has never been published

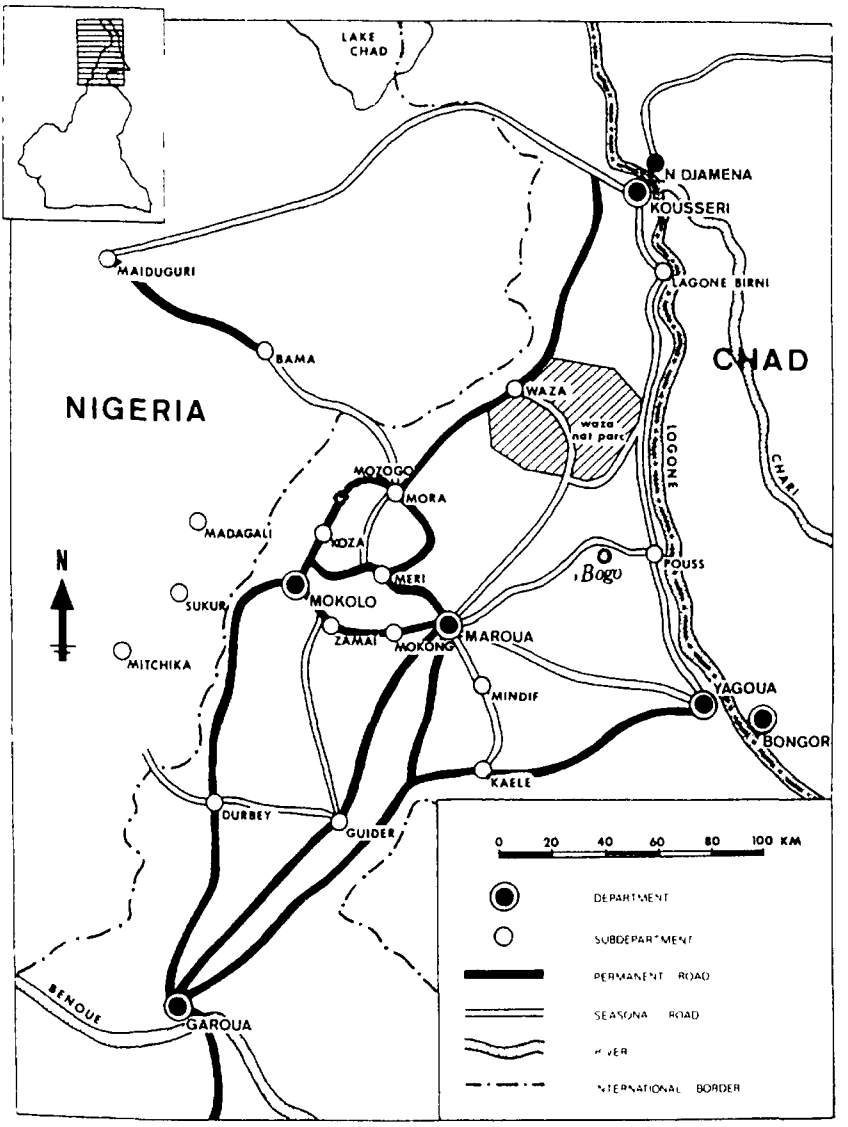
Cameroon The *ardo* of Wanday had to pay tribute to and resort under the *lamido* of Maroua

> August 8 1920 On Monday the 16th of Siutorandu a letter arrived from the Captain saying that the English were coming Then on Wednesday another letter arrived saying that my land has been transferred from the French to the English Let us hope that the French are telling lies
> Sept 10, 1920 On Friday the 26th of Laihaji, between the two hours of prayer in the evening and the sunset, I received two letters one from the Emir of Yola and the other from the Captain They concerned the coming of the English and said that an Englishman from Yerma and the Captain of Maroua were to meet on my land between Waha and Habada in order to fix the boundary of my land
> June 16, 1921 On Thursday the 10th of Juldandu two Christians went out to mark the boundary of my land and they cut off a very large part of it on the Maroua side

In January 1922, a military post was founded by the French It was officially named *subdivision du Mandara chef lieu Mokolo* (department of the Mandaras, chief of the place of Mokolo)
The village whose history we will discuss in more detail in Chapter Two, was appointed as an administrative center by the French colonial government *Lawan* Riskou was invited to install himself in Mokolo His function as chief of the indigenous people consisted of helping the administrators with construction works and accompanying as guide and helper, the French troops who were charged with pacification and tax collection in the Mafa massifs Administration buildings were constructed flanking the quarters of the inhabitants who represented the court of the former *lamido* of Mokolo The village slowly grew Nowadays it is a fairly small town situated in the middle of the terraced Mafa landscape and it can be reached by a tarmac road Until 1930 though the area was virtually impenetrable The first route, a *piste* was constructed in 1931 connecting Mokolo with the route Garoua Guider Maroua via Zamay and Mokong all villages that had a much longer history The second road was built in 1932 connecting Mokolo with Mora via Koza and Mozogo

> I will tell you now in 1930 I worked with my very own hands to make the road from Mokolo to Maroua but there were no small roads So they said a route from Mokolo to Mora was needed So all the Mafa

Map 4



Roads constructed (After Boisseau and Soula 1974)

who were up in the mountains had to come down to build it. They did not pay us any money, you have to be aware of that too. We worked just like that. In those days you had the grasshoppers and also other insects we ate. There was no millet So the chief of the village gave each of us a handful of millet, a handful .. [9]Other roads were constructed later. the one to Maroua via Meri, and the one to Garoua via Kapsiki land In a report on a visit to several roads under construction in September 1936, Captain Maronneau remarked

> Ces indigènes au caractère indépendant, n'avaient jamais travaillé [sic!] Ils ont fait preuve de beaucoup de bonne volonté et surtout ceux de Douvangar qui ont effectué à eux seuls près de 10 km. de piste.. (Mokolo archives. 24 octobre 1936, no file, rapport du chef de la région du Mandara)

The route, constructed in 1931 via Mokong, was hardened in 1984.

I 1.2 After independence

After independence, on the first of January, 1960, the indirect administrative system of the French remained fairly intact. It incorporated the district chiefs (*chefs de subdivisions*), who in pre-colonial Fulbe society had been so important. In the papers of appointment, they are referred to as traditional chiefs but for the local population they are still the most honored. At important festivities and on Friday, music is played in front of their palaces The two palaces for the Fulbe *lamudo* (building K on map) and for the Mafa *lamudo* (building J on map) are situated in the heart of town, next to the marketplace

Mokolo remained a department (*département*), now named *Mayo* Tsanaga. [10] The head of the department resides in the department building (*préfecture* - building C on map), quite near the marketplace, though not as close as the palaces of the *lamube*. Then there is the subdepartment (*arrondissement*, resided in the *sous-préfecture*, building A on map) whose head rules over the

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[9] In 1932 there was again a crop failure as the archives mention " Le Mandara est à subir les dures famines de 1932 et 1933 durant lesquelles les kirdis vendirent leurs troupeaux et meme leurs enfants et se disputaient le mil distribué dans les postes ou la panse des animaux de boucherie (Rapport du Tournée du Lieutenant Laroussinie, Mars 1937, No 7/T)

[10] Under the department Mayo Tsanaga the following sub department (sous prétectures) can be found Mokolo, Hina, Burrha and Koza

who were up in the mountains had to come down to build it. They did not pay us any money, you have to be aware of that too. We worked just like that. In those days you had the grasshoppers and also other insects we ate. There was no millet. So the chief of the village gave each of us a handful of millet, a handful . [9]Other roads were constructed later, the one to Maroua via Meri, and the one to Garoua via Kapsiki land. In a report on a visit to several roads under construction in September 1936, Captain Maronneau remarked.

> Ces indigènes au caractere indépendant, n'avaient jamais travaillé [sic!] Ils ont fait preuve de beaucoup de bonne volonté et surtout ceux de Douvangar qui ont effectué à eux seuls près de 10 km de piste.. (Mokolo archives: 24 octobre 1936, no file; rapport du chef de la région du Mandara)

The route, constructed in 1931 via Mokong, was hardened in 1984

I 1.2 After independence

After independence, on the first of January, 1960, the indirect administrative system of the French remained fairly intact. It incorporated the district chiefs (*chefs de subdivisions*), who in pre-colonial Fulbe society had been so important. In the papers of appointment, they are referred to as traditional chiefs but for the local population they are still the most honored At important festivities and on Friday, music is played in front of their palaces. The two palaces for the Fulbe *lamido* (building K on map) and for the Mafa *lamido* (building J on map) are situated in the heart of town, next to the marketplace

Mokolo remained a department (*département*), now named *Mayo* Tsanaga. [10] The head of the department resides in the department building (*préfecture* - building C on map), quite near the marketplace, though not as close as the palaces of the *lamibe* Then there is the subdepartment (*arrondissement*, resided in the *sous-préfecture*, building A on map) whose head rules over the

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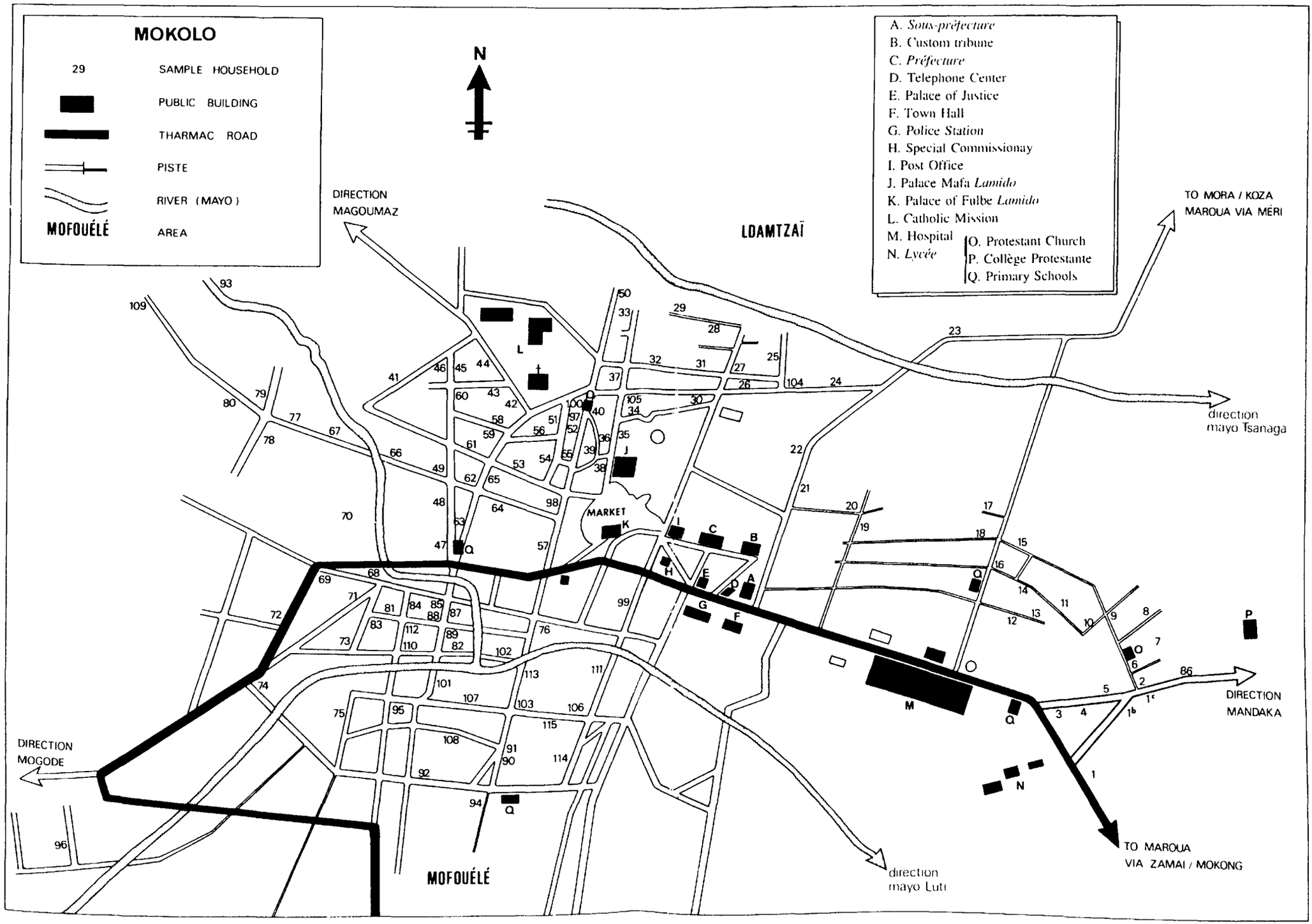
[10] Under the department Mayo Tsanaga the following sub department (sous préfectures) can be found Mokolo, Hina Burtha and Koza



Mokolo town (After Steck 1972: 293)

district chiefs *(Lamibe* or *chefs de Cantons)* That building is even further away from the marketplace and situated near the soccer stadium According to my informants these buildings were constructed in the year Idrissou became *lamido* of the Fulbe in town which was 1948 These buildings are all situated north of the tarmac road

In 1949 the colonial government still believed that the town of Mokolo would never really grow Yet it now has a rapidly growing population The most recent census (1987) shows that the subdivision of Mokolo has a total of 231 939 inhabitants of which 212 337 live in rural areas and 19 602 in the urban quarters [11] The four public primary schools in Mokolo properhave so many children enroled girls as well as boys that they have to teach in shifts One group goes to class in the morning the other group in the afternoon Besides these public schools, there are two private Catholic Mission schools (in the quarters of Mboua and Ouro Lada)

The first official school was opened on May 1 1934 The first mission school [12] was established in 1945 and maintained a leprosy sanatorium south of the tarmac road, 5 km from Mokolo in the direction of Maroua) and another school in 1951 [13]

A man recalls those days

> We were Mafa and had lost our parents we stayed at the *lamido* s court where Captain Lavergne had brought us They asked if we wanted to attend primary school In those days nobody wanted to go to school It was only the children of slaves who went and children whose father and mother had died so children like me and my brother Sometimes they took children to make them go to school by force and then the parents gave a goat to the master and they let the children go again That was because they did not know what a school was There was only one

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[11] The composition of the population is as follows

0 4 years		5 14 years		15 and older	
Men	women	men	women	men	women
24 248	24 167	33 082	29 659	54 126	66 656

[12] Of the Oblats de Marie

[13] A Catholic Mission was installed in Djinglya in 1953 (15 km south of Mokolo) The Mission of the Seventh Day Adventist Church was established at the foot of the Massifs of Koza (about 19 km from Mokolo) in 1946 and has an annex in Mokolo The Sudan United Mission asked permission to settle in Suléde first and afterwards in Mokolo proper (Mokolo archives Le problème du commencement à Mokolo without date also in Martin 1970)

Assistant with her child

Mafa camp and

Maffa potter at work

Dancing Nomad Fulbe Women

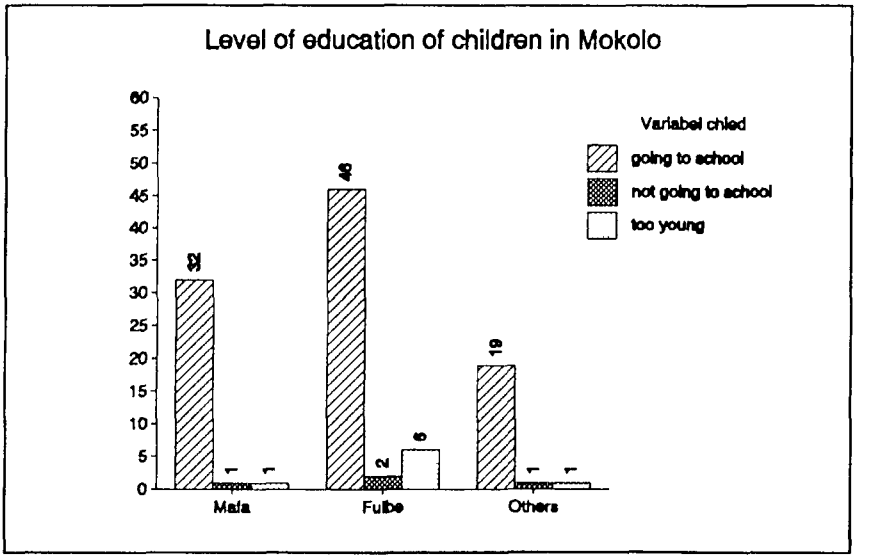
primary school in those days, what is now group 1 (see map page 4). There was one headmaster; his name was Gaston. When he died there came another white person to teach the children; we used to call him *gokla*, which means pipe, because he always used to smoke a pipe. There were only two classes, not six like nowadays. And there was another school in Koza.

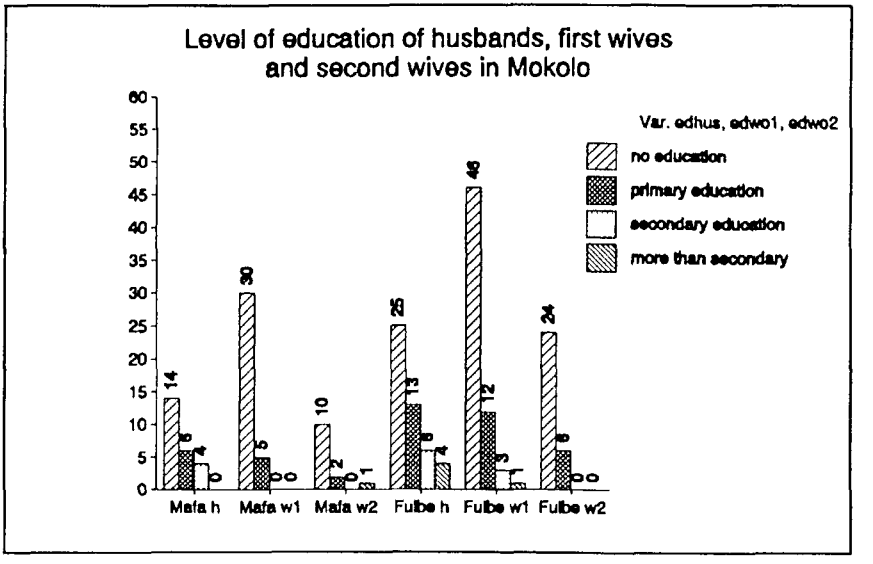
There are also several secondary schools. There is a *Lycée* which has so many pupils that before the school starts in the morning the tarmac road brightens up with all the light blue school uniforms. A teacher informed me that they have around 1,800 pupils. Further, the Protestant Mission runs a college, the C.E.G. (*Collège d'Enseignement Générale*) with about 600 students. There is a higher technical school, the C.E.T.I.C. (*Collège d'Enseignement Technique Industrielle et Commerciale*) with about 1.000 pupils, and a lower technical school, the S.A.R (*Section Artisinal Rurale Section Ménagère*).

From the random sample I took of 115 households (see appendix 1, with questionnaire) it becomes evident that most Mafa Pagan [14]and Christian children in town have school education, and so have the children within the Islamic community and of the other ethnic groups. In a histogram it looks as follows.

Compared with the level of education of the former generation - divided in the level of men and first wives -, the change is enormous.

[14] I realize that the term Pagan is debatable. The French word *Payen*, however, is used by the people in Mokolo themselves to indicate that they or another person, still practice their own religion. It is in this sence that I use the word. It goes without saying that I value this religion as much as Islam or Christianity. For this reason I will write it with a capital letter.





h = husband; w1 = first wife; w2 = second wife.

During Colonial times, the French installed a Customary Court (*tribunal coutumier*, building B on map) After independence, it was flanked by the State court (*Palais de Justice*, building E). The town hall (*Mairie*, building F on map) was constructed about 20 years ago, as my informants declared, thus around 1972. But being so obviously European, the institution of municipal government does not appeal to the population.
The new national institutional cadre includes, of course, the Mobile Police (building G on map), the Special Police (building H on map) and the building of the political party, the *Rassemblement Democratic des Peuples Camerounaises* (R D.P.C , building L on map), the only political party until 1991, though recently opposition parties have opened offices as well. The French constructed the prison and the local hospital - both frequently visited places for different reasons - around 1950

My concern here was with the process of Islamization in Mokolo, which started when the first quarters of the town were erected and people who were Islamized in slavery settled down The question I asked myself was, why would a people women as well as men who had been terrorized enslaved if not murdered, who were only referred to as Pagans *haabe* (sing *kado*) by the Fulbe political invaders, want to accept the religion of the tyrants?

How could I investigate this problem? How could I come to understand the paradox of these two worlds, that could so peacefully co exist as I experienced during the funeral I described in the introduction story, yet were so much different?
Islamization is a process that is difficult to grasp In the area under study it does not involve the same pressure to proselytize, that characterizes Christian conversion processes The Catholic Mission for example, is strongly hierarchical They first send their priests to ask permission to build a church and a school, all financed by their European base They visit people at home and organize groups to teach people the religion They work with a system in which new converts can win awards first medals then crosses Islam is not organized in this way Marabouts, teachers of the Qur'an Allah s holy words, are neither paid nor sent by an institutionalized religious body They settle down wherever they like, start teaching, and may or may not be successful Mosques are built by private parties
Why and how then, did conversion to Islam, a world religion, take place in the area? Where does one begin to look for an answer in a town where one arrives not knowing anybody?

In the introduction I described my impressions upon arrival in Mokolo regarding the difference between the non Islamic Mafa people and the Muslims We, my son of six and I, found temporary accommodation He immediately got acquainted with a nearby purveyor of sweets (an Islamized Mafa as I soon discovered) Whenever I lost him I could find him sitting on the man s lap After one week he was enroled at the Catholic Mission School
In the meantime, I wandered around town After two weeks I knew my way around the quarters near the marketplace, the center of Mokolo At first it seemed that these were all Islamic quarters, but one cannot be sure with so little knowledge of local customs My first informants soon convinced me that this was partly the case

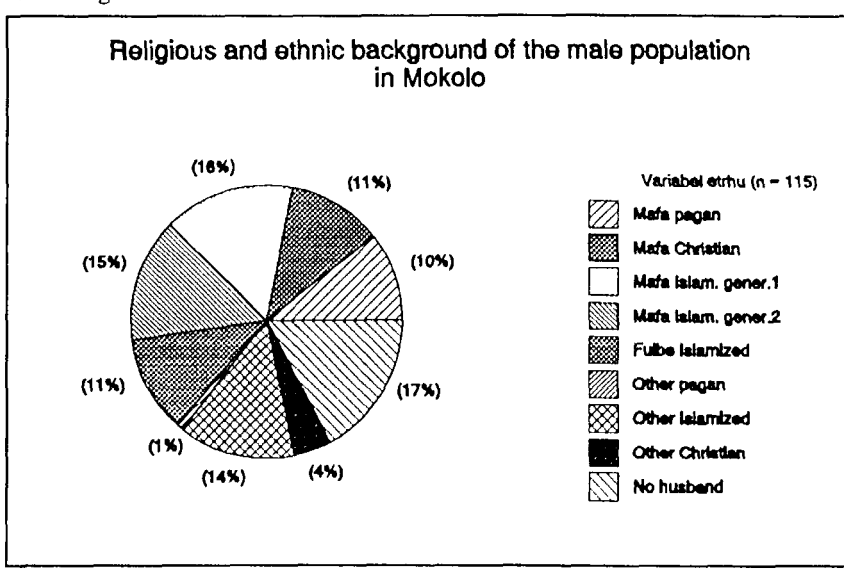
I 1.3 Present-day Mokolo

In the center, the Islamic quarters lie next to the tarmac road that runs south and north. On the north-east side of this road live mainly non-Islamic people of Mafa origin, including a group of Protestants around the Protestant Mission. Around and north of the Catholic Mission, also live mainly non-Islamic Mafa people, many of whom had converted to Catholicism.

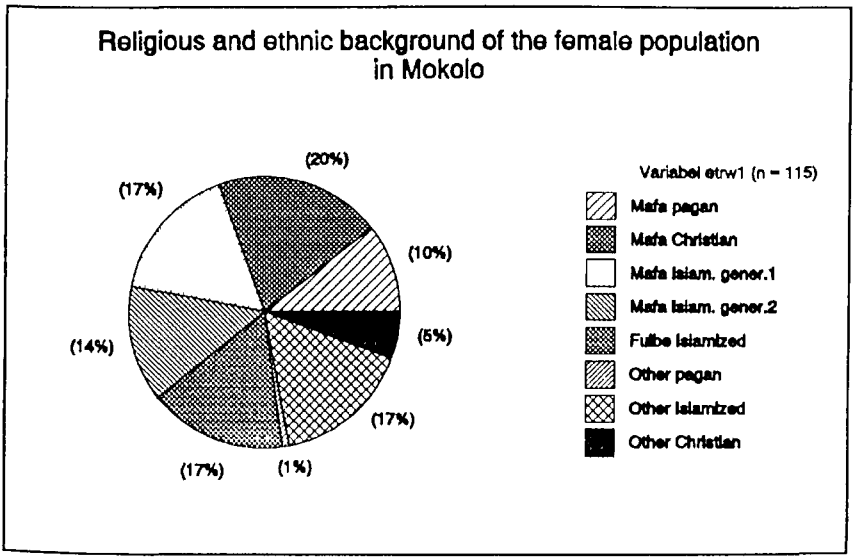
New Islamic quarters arise to the north-west in the direction of Magoumaz. We find new buildings and areas mainly inhabited by non-Islamic people on the north-east side of town in the direction of the Mandaka Mountains.

In an article from 1972 Steck indicates that 70% of the inhabitants of Mokolo were from the area around Mokolo (Mafa, Kapsiki, Hiné, Mabassa, Mofou) and 90% from northern regions in general, meaning North Cameroon or neighboring provinces in Nigeria and Chad (Moundang, Guiziga, Mandara, Tupuri). The remaining 10% of the population came from other areas in Cameroon. They were mostly administrators living in Mokolo on a temporary basis (Steck 1972). Of the 70% of the inhabitants who came from the area, 60% were still involved in agriculture, working fields in a 10 km. radius around Mokolo.

In my own random sample, of the total population 68% is Mafa, 11% is of Fulbe origin and 21% has another ethnic background, of which 17% Islamic. Of the 68% Mafa, 33% is Christian or Pagan and 35% is Islamized. If we take the religion and ethnic background of the men as a point of departure, we get the following:



Remarkable is the fact that 17% of the households are female-headed (indicated in the diagram as 'no husband'.
When we take the ethnic background and religion of women - or to be more precise first wives - as a point of departure, the figures differ slightly: 61% is Mafa, of which 10% Pagan and 20% Christian, 17% is recently Islamized and 14% is Islamized in former generations.



Most of the Mafa population in town is still involved in agriculture, the cultivation of the staple crop millet, though mostly for their own consumption: Of the Mafa Pagans 100%, of the Christian Mafas 85% of recently Islamized Mafa 39%, and of Islamized Mafa in former generations, only 24%.

Table 1 AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATION OF MOKOLO HOUSEHOLDS in Percentages

	MAFA			FULBE		OTHER ETHNIC GR			
	Pagan	Christian	Islamized 1st Gen	2nd Gen		Pagan	Islam	Christian	Female headed
Yes	83	85	17	6	8	0	6	20	35
Products sold	17	0	22	18	23	0	6	0	0
no agr	0	15	61	76	69	0	87	80	60
number of intervie wed	12	13	18	17	13	1	16	5	20

If we look at the people who are still involved in horticulture - by which I have in view the production of vegetables, peanuts, beans, sesame etc., ingredients for sauces, - the percentages are even larger as we see underneath:

Table 2 HORTICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS OF HOUSEHOLDS IN MOKOLO in Percentages

	MAFA			FULBE		OTHER ETHNIC GR			
	Pagan	Christian	Islamized 1st Gen	2nd Gen		Pagan	Islam	Christian	Female headed
Yes	92	85	39	12	15	0	0	20	40
Products sold	8	8	6	6	23	0	6	0	5
no hort	0	8	56	82	62	100	94	80	55
number of inter viewed	12	13	18	17	13	1	16	5	20

The town and the quarters have definitely changed since the seventies The town not only grew but the price of houses and land are also rising
The owner of house no 68 on the map of Mokolo tells us that he bought his piece of land in 1970 for 35,000 cfa.

"They asked 70,000, but I could not afford to spend that much money, so I bought half of the ground. But that was in 1970. Now you would pay at least 300,000 for the same piece of land."

In the non-Islamic outskirts of town, around the Protestant Mission and college, it has become fashionable for Mafa people who can spare some money to buy land to build houses on it. In due time, they can rent them out and in that way earn some money.

It seemed wise to settle in the Muslim quarter, as my aim was to find out about the Mafa women who had converted and the way they combined their new religion with the traditional one. I needed to find out by observation, if asked, they would probably cite the rules from the Qur'an. So after two weeks I settled in the quarter Sarki Fada, south of the tarmac road, near the Arab-French school.[15] I was soon befriended by the granddaughter of the brother of Fassaha, the first 'settler' of Mokolo, though I was not aware of her ancestry at the time. She came to visit me, showed me around, introduced me to other people, and understood all too well the topic of my research. She referred to herself and her family as 'Mokolo'ers', meaning inhabitants of Mokolo, the term crossed existing ethnic boundaries. I found a good assistant, a Mafa woman. Soon after coming to work with me, she gave birth to a child. The three of us often wandered in and out of town, visiting the Mafa rituals and festivities.

I was also befriended by my neighbor, a Fulbe woman born on the plains near Maroua. She had moved to Mokolo after her wedding. As my son got along well with her son, we took down the wall between our compounds. Whenever we were at home, we were mostly together, both doing our own things and talking, talking, talking.

Thus I became acquainted with the main characteristics of the ethnic groups who played the key parts in my study. One of these groups was the Mafa. I was interested in their culture and lifestyle, as well as their religion, because I wanted to find out what cultural baggage they brought along to their new lifestyle after Islamization. The other group was the Fulbe, whose political hegemony during colonial times had influenced the Mafa people in town and brought about the process of conversion in this region.

Last but not least, I wanted to know what this process of syncretism had brought about in Mokolo and how it had affected the position of women. At times I moaned that my goal was impossible. It was as if I were tackling three investigations at once, but I thoroughly enjoyed it!

In the next section, I will briefly summarize the main characteristics of the Fulbe and the Mafa ways of life. Of course, neither Fulbe nor Mafa culture is a static cultural island. These cultures have many variations in different regions, they are constantly in flux and changing. However for this research I want to emphasize the effect of historical processes and these are best observed by taking a snapshot approach.

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[15] Sarki Fada used to be a helper - a lieutenant as people called it - of the *lamido*, fell into disgrace under the short reign of *lamido* Ahmadu, who reigned from 1946 to 1948. The *lamido* beat him up and they were both sent to the court in Maroua (oral communication).

I 2 Two opposing groups

The Fulbe have been at the forefront in spreading the Islamic religion and they themselves divide people into three categories Fulbe, *haabe* (non-believers) and *juulbe* (people who adopted Islam) Thus being a Muslim in North Cameroon means to have a Fulbe way of life After Islamization, people incorporate cultural aspects they consider to be Islamic but that are remnants of a former Fulbe way of life One cannot understand the Islamic community in Mokolo without knowing the main characteristics of Fulbe culture

The literature tends to distinguish between the Fulbe and the fifty or so non-Fulbe groups varying in number from 3,000 to 125,000 persons The Mafa are the largest of them (Steck 1972, Lembezat 1960, Martin 1970) The Fulbe are a West African people numbering about six million They are scattered throughout the savannah, ranging from Senegal and Gambia in the West, to Chad and the Central African Republic in the East (Azarya 1976 9, Murdock 1959 415)

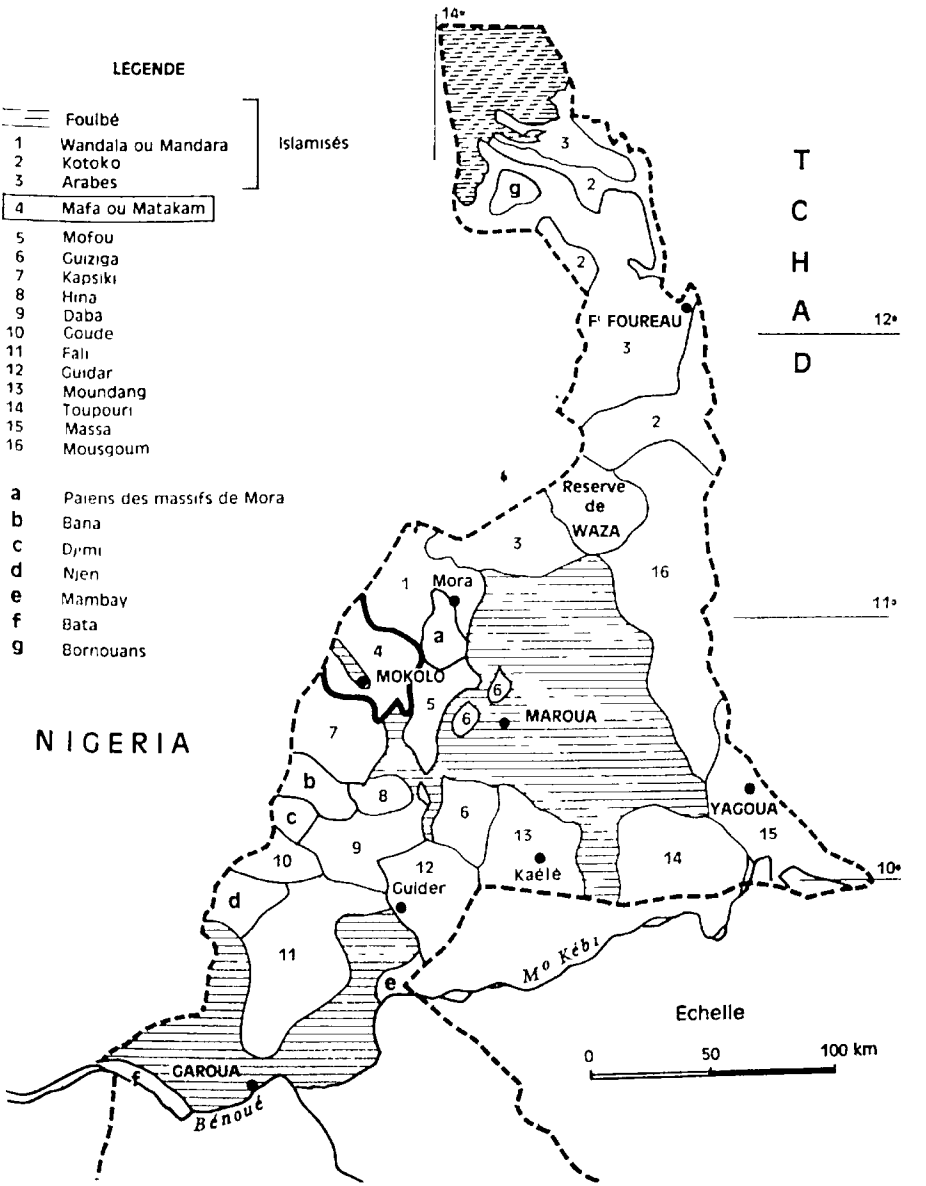
The most important difference between the Fulbe and the other ethnic groups is generally considered to be their means of subsistence Non-Fulbe people are often sedentary Their way of making a living varies from fishing to herding cattle and agriculture (Podlewski 1966)

I 2.1 The Mafa

There is a vivacity much loathed in Fulbe ideology that characterizes the Mafa Their frantic way of waving alongside the road and their drunkenness,as I described in the introduction, are just a few expressions of their vivacious manner It would be fair if I described what identifies a member of Mafa society in terms of an ideological concept defined by themselves Obviously they do not describe themselves as drunkards But this behaviour is connected to the importance of millet which is not only their main crop but also has symbolic implications The beer they brew from it has many ritual functions and should be drunk in ceremonial contexts

The importance of millet for the Mafa is reflected in their many rituals in which millet beer plays an important role and *Irgilé* (God) won't let neglect of his share of the beer go unpunished So there is much more to this drinking behaviour than one is inclined to think on first sight

Map 6



Principal ethnic groups in Mokolo as constructed and distinguished by the French Colonial Government (Podlewski 1966)

I 2.1.1 Ethnic boundaries

Another question to be asked in this context is what in turn defines the ethnic boundaries of the Mafa, who in the literature are often referred to as *Matakam* (Martin 1970). Where this name comes from is still under discussion. H. Clapperton mentioned in 1923 that the Mandara people called the Mafa *Oulla* [16], but they are the only ones that use that name. Lavergne mentioned (1949; 1990) that the term *Matakam* came from the Fulbe. He said

> *"La légende veut qu'un des lieutenants de Lawal, (émir Peul de Yola) devant la nudité de ces primitifs, se soit écrié en les voyant: " Sont-ce là nos si redoutables adversaires?" et les ait traités de Mettayamen, pluriel de Mettayamjo, terme méprisant réservé aux êtres que la nature n'a pas favorisés, l'absence de vêtements étant pour les Peuhls un signe évident de pauvreté, de manque de dignité et d'infériorité. Cela se passa vers 1850 "* (Lavergne 1949; 1990; also Martin 1970:16).

Mettayam became *Mettakam* or *Matakam* and with that name one first indicated the mountains and afterward also the 'tribes' that inhabited those mountains. Mohammadou, however, states that the name *Matakam* denotes a particular clan among the Mafa and cannot at all be considered as a sort of nickname (oral information). The Mafa themselves however loathe the term and consider it more and more as an insult.

At the same time they cannot be distinguished on the basis of criteria like language, religion, production process or culture. Since neighboring groups of the Mafa, have more or less the same features (Martin 1970:15). Podlewski points out a more important socio-demographic criterion: the endogamous marriage system, though within their group they are clan-exogamous. He remarks that 95% of the matrimonial exchanges of a group qualified by the same name take place within that group (Podlewski 1966). Such is still the case as I noticed as well, and is underlined by the people themselves:

> Marie was 17 years old and got pregnant. She thereupon was sent away from the house in which she had been brought up (paternal uncle as her father died when she was young [17]), as a Mafa girl should never give

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[16] (Voyages et découvertes en Afrique septentionale et centrale, trad. francais, Paris, Artus Bertrand 1826. Clapperton H. et Denham (Major).)

[17] Reading this one wonders what happened to her mother. As the Mafa are patrilocal and patrilinear, children ideally remain with the father's clan, also when he dies even when the mother is still alive. She will hardly ever bring her children into a household of another clan. The girl's mother had remarried and lived in Marua. To my knowledge she never came to visit the girl. The latter sometimes went to see a paternal uncle near Marua

birth under the roof of her father's house. She had come to live with an old lady who had been living all by herself and they sort of managed. One day a boy, attending the 'Lycée' in Mokolo but originally from the South of Cameroon - so a total stranger - came and claimed he was the father of the child. I was rather glad and exclaimed that all would be settled, as they could marry and get over and done with her difficult situation now. Then the whole circle of Mafa people around me started to utter in disgust that such could never be the case, because, as they said "Who is going to give away his daughter to a total stranger?" I spoke to her uncle later on and he said the same, so she remained with the old lady and her child by herself, and two years later gave birth to another child, from another 'stranger'.

In the distant and recent past however, they did mix with other ethnic groups. Lavergne (and Martin) distinguishes within, what he calls the *Matakam*, the group called *Boulahay* (a regroupment of Mafa and Mofou people after the latter had been chased from the massif named Gudur), in the South and around Mokolo, the *Mabass* around the village with the same name; the Mafa clans like *Hide*, *Ndave* et *Gélébda*, intermarried with *Marghi* immigrants who came from around Madagali and settled near Tourou; the *Mineo* who intermarried with the Mafa around Roua in the West; and the Mafa, as the most important group in the centre around Roua and Soulédé (regrouped between the compromised massifs of the valleys of Tsanaga, Kerawa and the Madagali plateau after a triple pression from the south , west and east in the former century) (Lavergne 1949, 1990 8 ff.) I consider these differences of minor importance to the topic of my thesis People nowadays north of Mokolo certainly claim to be Mafa and south of Mokolo they will call themselves *Mofouélé* (and not Matakam) They underline and express this identity in song, dance and other cultural performances within state-organized cultural events (see: Van Binsbergen 1992)

On the national day the 21st of May a 'défile' is held.

All the big shots like the *prefect*, *sous prefect*, the burgomaster, head of police, local Catholic priest and Protestant pastors, but also all the chiefs, *lamube* from the villages of the area are invited. They sit for hours to watch not only the school children from primary as well as the secondary schools walk by, but also the workers from all the societies in town, as well as local organizations like the *foyer culturel*, the members of the *maison des femmes*, a group of the - then only - political party, etc. Every year three schools are chosen to perform a special dance. In 1987 a

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and on these occasions visited her mother Her aunt was much more involved in this whole affair and worried about her well being in her difficult situation

primary school in the area performed a dance with the traditional Mafa weapons In 1988 another school sang a song in which one sentence went as follows 'We are Mafa, all proud of our ancestors, but we are also proud to be Cameroonians with the *Kapsiki* the *Mofou*, the Fulbe and all our neighboring tribes '

In this performance they integrated all sorts of Mafa 'gestures' to underline their Mafa identity The most typical however was the imitation, by all the children at the same time, of their special way of waving - which I spoke of in the introduction - with their arms above their heads The result was a sudden burst of laughter from the audience it was so recognizable yet not spoken of in ordinary daily conversation When these performances are over all the *lamibe* ride by their horses, as does the Mafa - Islamized - *lamido* At the same time a group of people - in the Mafa lamido s case, people claiming to be Mafa though not Islamized dance around them The *Kapsiki* and other ethnic groups from the area do the same

It is not clear precisely when people invaded the region The area has probably been inhabited since neolithic times as tools from this period have been found (see P H Chombart de Lauwe 1937) But I agree with Martin that despite this evidence we cannot speculate on the autochthonous character of the inhabitants of today (Martin 1970 25) Many migrations probably took place before Fulbe hegemony Martin considers that in the seventeenth century, ethnic groups like the *Tschede*, *Fali*, *Daba*, *Guidar*, *Kapsiki*, *Mofou* and *Matakam* probably lived in juxtaposition without hegemony of one specific group In the founding histories of various groups within Mafa society as well as within other ethnic groups, the Gudur massif mentioned above, lying south east of Mokolo in present day Mofou territory at the limits of the Diamare plains is the epicentre and is considered sacred It is the source of the river Tsanaga During the inter- and intra- ethnic exchange in which people were chased from the plains, they probably followed the course of this river and dispersed in different directions from this massif as Boisseau et Soula suggested (Boisseau and Soula 1974)

1 2 1 2 Social Organization

The Mafa are a caste-society divided in the blacksmith *ngwalda* and the non-blacksmith *vavay* castes, an essential division running through the whole social structure Blacksmiths occupy a special place within society the men work the iron and bury the dead the women make the pottery and used to be or still are midwives On the one hand they are considered inferior to non-blacksmith

people. Yet at the same time they are indispensable, occupying a place at the center of society because of their irreplaceable tasks (see also Martin 1970 78 ff.; Boisseau et Soula 1974; Podlewski 1966; Gardi 1954).

The Mafa do not live in villages but scattered around the countryside. Yet they do distinguish certain areas - which in the literature are often called villages - where groups from the same lineage operate. Marriage is virilocal; ideally the young men stay in their area of birth, while their wives move in with them. Yet quite a few young men move away to settle in areas where they are considered 'outsiders', *keda*. This literally means 'dog', "because like dogs, they do not have land of their own," as people say (Martin 1970:77). They have been authorized by the *chef de village*, *bi-udam*, to construct their house and work a piece of land, but they will never be owners of that land. According to Martin, the status of *keda* only came into existence two generations ago (Martin 1970:78).

Mafa social organization is very complex. The household, *gay*, is the fundamental social unit. The Mafa distinguish clans (*gwali*, clan of male descent; *kuyuk*, mother's patri clan) and lineages (*godar*) : several households may form a lineage, several lineages form a clan. Clans are indicated with clan names. The Mafa are strictly clan exogamous and caste endogamous. One cannot marry somebody from the same clan in the male line, nor from the mother's patri clan down to the third generation. At the same time it is strictly forbidden for members of the blacksmith caste to marry members from the non-blacksmith caste. Women are transferred from one clan to the other. The clan that is receiving a wife, as Martin puts it (1970:154) leaves the clan that is giving a wife a certain number of items, called *skway*, which is the Mafa word for bridewealth. The most essential elements of the bridewealth are goats, salt, natrium, tobacco, working-days and, nowadays, money.

The bridewealth for the first-born girl is received by her paternal grandfather. If the girl leaves the husband, it will be her father who needs to replace the amount of money. When it is formulated like this, one may get the impression that women are passive objects in the whole transfer. Yet this is not the case, as we will demonstrate in the chapters to come. Mafa women act very independently. They leave their menfolk and husbands whenever they feel like it, without considering all the negotiations that need to be made between their fathers and the eventual former and future husbands to refund the bridewealth. Children always belong to their father's clan. They have important functions upon the death of the latter and during certain rituals.

Boisseau and Soula place the women within Mafa society at the centre of interclan relations, of solidarity factions, of peace, of unity and of balance. Yet a woman remains dependent on the authority of the elders and men in general,

as the society is organized around the 'survival' of the patriarch, the father of the house, *bab-gay* (Boisseau and Soula 1974 159)

1 2 1 3 Political Organization

Martin remarks that by studying the origin of the different ethnic groups, we can reveal a historical process, namely that the Mafa originally refused to be dominated by the kingdoms that surrounded them, be they Mandara or Fulbe There is a large gap between the Islamic centralized societies and the rural segmentary societies and this gap has been maintained to this day (Martin 1970 32) The Mafa have a very decentralized political structure The father of the house, *bab-gay* has often been considered the highest political authority As Martin remarked

> *Chez les Foulbe avec leur système centralisé il suffisait de tuer un chef pour devenir maître de tout son territoire Chez les Matakam on peut tuer un chef sans pour autant réduire la communauté politique qu'il faudrait conquerir gay par gay, jusqu'au dernier Il n'en resterait qu'un seul que le clan, le village et la société seraient toujours vivants et aptes à se perpétuer* (Martin 1970 180) "

Sons become heads of households as soon as they are married, except for the youngest, who will always have land to work He remains in the house of the father but also remains dependent on him The father will eventually move out Mothers remain in the household of their last-born son The first-born son will have a say over the land his father owned after death of the latter, he can either keep it to himself or divide it between the wives of his father and his brothers Yet the rules are not very strict

> "If a younger son is very clever he leaves for his
> father's brothers or an elderly person so that it will be him who inherits and has a say over the land

In short we can say that clans of different status and power settled in different waves on the same mountain They succeeded in living together then built up a common existence, and finally made themselves indispensable to each other In their complementarity they became a community

Colonial reports consider these and similar societies to be anarchic Yet there are certainly people with authority and power in the community A region or a village consists of several groups with different kinship ties Individuals from other regions may have joined them Their life together is not organized by kinship Instead those people who are recognized as authorities resolve the conflicts that may arise on the level of the village, the clan or the lineage This social order is kept independent from the outside world Intervention by the

outside world meant war, as we will see in the chapters to come The society in which one lives is recognized by its inhabitants as the political unit, independent of one's descent So if two villages start fighting with each other people from the same clan may become opponents, Also the outsiders *keda* might have been obliged to fight against members of their own clan

Political authority can depend on age, sex, birth etc but it is not a gerontocratic society Age comes after genealogical proximity and after ritual and conciliatory power (Martin 1970 171 ff) Within every region or village there is one clan - mostly comprising those who first settled and cleaned the land - that is the 'chief-clan , *bi-gwaliba*) The other clans, who in most cases arrived later, came by intermediation of this clan The elders of the chief clan have more power than the members of the other clans' they select by mutual agreement the chief of the village, *bi-udam* The task of the latter is to direct the agricultural cycle (when to start sowing and harvesting), the large communal festivities like the harvest feasts and the feast of the bull, *mara*), and to organize sacrifices that need to be made in the interest of the community Besides this chief of the village there is also a rainmaker (*bi-vam)*, a locust chief (*bi-dzara*)) a chief of the panthers (*bi-jongoya*) These specialists can exercise power in the community by their abilities to make rain keep away the crickets, or chase the panthers [18] New in the political organization is the *Ndosak*, the chief of a quarter a new function in the post-independent political constellation

Women's role in these political activities is reduced to nothing, or so it seems Martin states that a woman only gains political relevance through her husband either because he has it or because she can give him many children Martin contends that women cannot choose their husbands - which is contradictory to my own findings - and that they can only choose wether they want to stay with him or not The only power they have in his opinion is to change husbands He then remarks that they are only free to choose,

> *si l'on nous passe l'expression la sauce a laquelle elles seront mangées', c'est le seul piment de leur existence* (Martin 1970 173)

But as I said above changing husbands is something they do frequently In the past many wars were started through misunderstandings difficulties around women Where the men seem to be only concerned about getting having and keeping women [19], the objects of these male concerns go their own way without taking much notice of these men s affairs

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[18] Though nowadays there are more stories about panthers than there are panthers themselves

[19] An expression I borrow from W L A v an Beek

Boisseau and Soula give women, as we saw above much more importance. They even consider women as the key to understanding the Mafa cosmos. One of my informants, a wise contemplative Mafa man, with four wives and about 15 children, said:

> "Fathers very much like and appreciate their daughters even in former days. They can always count on them. If my wives are giving birth I always hope it will be a girl. It's the mother who prefers sons as they will go and live with them afterwards."

I 2.1.4 Economic occupations

The Mafa are agriculturalists and they can be characterized as subsistence farmers. Millet is their main crop. They sow at the beginning of the rainy season and they harvest at the end of it, using a rotation system of small millet (*n'tumas*) ,sorghum (*dao dao ged*) and other crops (Boisseau 1974.452; Martin 1970:). Most people own sheep and/or goats and poultry, though not in large flocks. The bull one can find in some compounds mainly serves ritual purposes. As Martin remarks

> "If you consider the millet as destined for the subsistence, so the products of cattle-raising are destined for the maintenance and the reproduction of the social structure. Goats and sheep are privileged animals for the bridewealth and sacrifices in favour of the lineage and the clan. Chickens serve the sacrifices in favor of the inhabitants of the house. Bulls are kept to be sacrificed for the bull feast, the *maray*, that ritually reproduces the social structure of the village." (Martin 1970: 128)

The Mafa are remarkable cultivators. They perfectly well know their profession as well as their land. It has been remarked that they have reached the ultimate point of technical perfection. This means that agronomists could not arrive at a better production than the level they obtain. The cattle they have are aligned with their agriculture, the terraces on which they cultivate protect against erosion, they discipline the crops (Sautter 1957; in Boisseau and Soula 1974: 452).

The production unit in Mafa society is strictly related to their social and political organization. The household, *gay*, consisting of the father of the house, his wives and children, is the economic nucleus and basic production group. Besides millet, they cultivate peanuts, beans, weeds, sesame, peas, potatoes, sweet potatoes and various local vegetables. Since colonial times people around town also grow vegetables that the white people might and do buy at the marketplace: lettuce, carrots, cabbage, green beans and tomatoes. It has become fashionable for Muslims to eat these vegetables on special occasions like weddings or religious feasts. Peanuts used to be the cash crop, but nowadays also beans, vegetables,

potatoes, sweet potatoes, fruits, meat, sugar cane and eggs are sold Other products sold by the Mafa are wood and handicraft items like pots, ropes and mats Another important product Mafa women sell on market days is millet beer It is drunk in large quantities, fermented as well as unfermented

I 2 1 5 Gender Division of Labour

Mafa society does not have a very strict division of labour between men and women Millet is cultivated by both; some crops are clearly male, like hot peppers and tobacco, others are exclusively female, like the vegetables used in the sauces, the beans and the weeds To my knowledge it is one of the few societies in which men as well as women fetch water and gather fuel [20] Mafa men near town, in view of their Muslim fellows, do get somewhat embarrassed, though.

> "Of course I am still fetching water, but as I go to the pump nearby the *Lycée*, on the tarmac road clearly visible for the whole town, I always go early in the morning , at four o'clock I fetch a jar of water and my wife will fetch a jar of water during the day "

In the past the Mafa undertook very little trading. Peanuts were sold to be able to pay their taxes But very often and for a very long time taxes used to be paid 'in kind' as well

> *" L'importance des versements d'Impôt faits en numéraire est significative pour qui a connu le dédain total que ces Kirdis primitifs avaient pour l'argent il y a 2 ans encore et l'isolement dans lequel ils vivaient Des versement en nature ont été exigés "*(Mokolo archives, Rapport du Capt Valley, le 4 Avril 1930).

Data from 1972 indicate that both men and women go to the Wednesday market While 75% of the women come to sell something, for men this percentage is only 55% (Steck 1972 298)

I 2.2 The Fulbe

In contrast to the Mafa, The Fulbe were originally a pastoral people They raised and herded cattle as their main occupation and strongly disliked agriculture

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[20] In the overview of tasks of the household members, Martin (1970 p 118) omits the men in regard to fetching the water In my opinion this is a mistake It may be explained by the fact that the men either did not admit they fetched the water though they did to me or by the fact that they mostly fetch water at other times of the day than women

(Azarya 1976 9) Though many of them have become sedentary have their fields and need to work their plots they still have very special ties with their cattle

> Ammadou was an administrator He had always lived in town He had a Western as well as a profound Islamic education His father, a well known Marabout had been to Mecca so he was an Hadji Ammadou s background was unmistakably that of a straightforward Muslim He still had his own herd with that of his father's somewhere *en brousse* cared for by a herdsman (*gaynaako*), who in return for the job got a calf every year When the son of Ammadou was born his father gave the baby his share a cow of his own that was going to have little ones and those in turn would have little ones in that way increasing the child s own herd
>
> Omari had very important political functions in the area and was a member of Parliament When I asked him do you still have cattle? he responded immediately obviously from the bottom of his heart with the following words 'Thank God I have!' (*Usoko Allah mi mari*)

I 2 2 1 Social and Political Organization

The pastoral Fulbe are organized in descent groups Their marriage system is in principal endogamous But to maintain a superior economic social as well as political position a combination of exogamous and endogamous rules were used It allowed them to compete with social units or equivalent lineage segments (Cantrelle et Dupire 1964, Dupire 1970 Dupire 1972 in Dupire 1981) These facts elucidate how they incorporated other ethnic groups in the history of North Cameroon while holding on their own specific identity
In North Cameroon the nomadic Fulbe called *M bororo* by other ethnic groups move with their cattle to the fertile soil where grasses can be found they are very much marginalized in North Cameroonian society As a result of the political organization of the Sokoto Empire in the last century the sedentary Fulbe in North Cameroon have a very centralized political organization Every district is governed by a chief *lamido* and the district pays taxes to his court

I 2 2 2 Economic Occupations

The importance of cattle for the Fulbe is reflected in their pre-Islamic religion (Dupire 1962 53, Balde 1939 630 643) and their language The Fulbe living in the villages of the North Cameroonian plains still own large herds of cattle but they no longer traverse long distances The cattle come home every evening They work the land on which they have settled as they need food to eat or sell to

satisfy new material needs such as clothing and schooling. An example is found in the villages of Meskien and Saalak near Maroua. They are inhabited by Fulbe, Islamic people.

> The father of Aisaathou lives in one of those villages in the plains. He has a large family - four wives, 19 children and a married son and their wives in his compound - and many acres of land. He is a well known Marabout and till 1990 always could pay other people to work his land. After 1989 times became harder and the economic crises struck Cameroon especially in 1990 and 1991. Fortunately that year had a good rainy season. For the first time in his lifetime he had to work the plots himself. He said to his children: "Never in my life had I had so much misfortune, could I have dreamt in my youth, when my father was still taking care of me, that one day I would work these plots with my own hands? Yet Allah has been so good to me, cause we still eat and the harvest will be good".

So the men herd the cattle and work the land. The women take care of the children and do the cooking and the housework. Often they trade from within their household. In towns like Mokolo and Maroua, Fulbe men as well as women have jobs in the administrative centres, banks etc. On the other hand, commercial activities at the market are only undertaken by men. I never came across a female shopkeeper.

I 2.2.3 Fulbe identity

If they are such a dispersed ethnic group, one wonders what defines these people, apart from their attachment to their cattle, as members of this specific ethnic group. Dupire approaches the problem of their identity through analysis of the image they have of themselves and, further, through the stereotypes by which their neighbors characterize them (Dupire 1981: 168). She remarks.

> *"Les Peuls [21] nomades Dageeja du Nord Cameroun connaissent un serment qui en dit long sur la foulanité " Au nom de la sandale de cuir, du pulaaku et du fulfuldé" Une technique liée à la domestication du boeuf et du zébu, une langue le fulfuldé, un code social qui est aussi une éthique, le pulaaku - littéralement "la manière de se comporter en Peul" - tels sont les éléments essentiels qui caractérisent à ses yeux le Peul pasteur et, mis à part la sandale de cuir, le Peul tout court "*

So in the view of the Fulbe themselves, the social distance between them and the local population was, apart from the language, stressed in terms of a special

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[21] Peuls is often used by French speaking people to indicate the Fulbé population. It is derived from the singulier of the word Fulbe, which is *Pullo*

Fulbe way of life, called *pulaaku* This term symbolizes and sets the boundaries of Fulbe identity (Stenning 1960 368-370, St Croix 1945 9 in Azarya 1976 9 Bocquenee 1981, 1987) It concerns a special way of living as well a whole set of qualities among which resignation (*munyal*), intelligence (*hakkillo*) and courage (*cuusal*) These all seem to be based on an introvert temperament and the conditions of pastoral life in particular it concerns withdrawal and reserve called *semteende* (Dupire 1981 169) So the fundamental virtues of *pulaaku* are stoic sobriety and reserve An ideal *Pullo* (plural Fulbe) is gentle proud, introvert but helpful to his (or her) fellow Fulbe He/she attains respectability by keeping physically and socially at a distance from other people and by refraining from a display of joy pain anger or curiosity The ideal Pullo is taciturn conceals his or her real thoughts and despises the common vivacity ascribed to the non Fulbe living around them (Dupire 1962 53 in Azarya 1976 10) Consequently he/she is contemptuous of conspicuous richness and consumption (Riesman 1974) Ideally he/she lives austerely, pays no attention to external signs of material comfort and is content with the little material goods he or she possesses *Pulaaku* is considered something hereditary as well a role one plays

Carrying out my sample survey in Mokolo I tried to find out about this boundary between Fulbe and non Fulbe by asking "Can you explain the word *pulaaku* to me? Non Islamized Mafa looked at me in wonder and did not have the slightest idea what I meant

I speak very good Fulfulde but that word I have never heard before, so I stopped asking them Many of the Islamized population did not know the concept either Of the recently Islamized Mafa 94% did not know what it meant From the Mafa Islamized in former generations 41% did not know (see appendix 1 question 11 1)

Table 3 KNOWLEDGE OF PULAAKU BY DIFFERENT GROUPS in Percentages

	MAFA				FULBE	OTHER ETHNIC GR		
	Pagan	Christian	Islamized 1st Gen	2nd Gen		Pagan	Islam	Christian
yes	0	0	17	50	89	0	53	17
no	100	100	83	50	11	0	47	83
Number of interviewed	12	23	18	16	18	0	19	6

But even if they knew, they would always say it was something of the 'real Fulbe'. Some answers getting close were:

> - It means shame, it is something shameful.
> - I know *semteende*. Isn't that shame? But *pulaaku*? That's a *Pullo*, is it?
> - It is shame, because the Fulbe they know shame, Even if you have seen something, you act as if you never saw it. If you would not know *pulaaku* it is like you could say just anything you want to all the persons in the world. Then you do not have *pulaaku*. If you have it, you just do not say what you mean.
> - *Pulaaku* means...for example, you are a *Pullo*, you get to somebody's place, nearly starving to death. They offer you food, and you say, 'No thanks, I am absolutely not hungry'. It is something of the real Fulbe, you see."

Most numerous were the persons who simply replied that *pulaaku* was a Fulbe and who said:

> - *Pulaaku* is somebody who is born Fulbe".

The latter is a remark of great interest to us. It underlines Dupire's approach to Fulbe ethnic boundaries. Islamized people like the Mafa may have adopted the features of Fulbe life, yet people always remember they are not born Fulbe, even if they have married into a Fulbe household. This means that the Islamized Mafa draw a boundary between themselves and the Fulbe by the concept of *Pulaaku*. If they knew what it meant, they considered it as something that they did not possess themselves. Some people associated it with the Nomadic Fulbe:

> - Those people keep the cows, don't they?

The Fulbe themselves called it respect:

> - It is a form of respect, and by that respect you do not mention your husband by his real name, nor your eldest son. It also means you do not steal, that you do not lie, and that you do not do anything bad. You always need to be good. It is like *semteende*, shame.

The word *semteende* is at the root of the concept of *pulaaku*. It was known more to non-Fulbe people than the concept of *pulaaku*. But whereas in the Fulbe sense it is interpreted as 'reserve' and 'keeping quiet', the words of an Islamized Mafa informant -obviously male, considering his statement - gave the Mafa interpretation of the concept:

> The Mafa also know the concept shame, horai, we call it.... it means... for example when there is a visitor and a husband does not grumble his wife, that is shameful...[sic!].

The way he used the word indicates that he interprets it totally different. He gives the Mafa meaning of the word shame, in which it seems to be a good thing to show you get annoyed with your wife. The Fulbe on the contrary, will never get

angry, either with their wives, their husbands or their children, in front of a visitor or stranger This indicates exactly what the Fulbe see as the difference between the two populations and what they loathe in the non Fulbe extroversion and vivacity Yet, as we will find out in the course of this thesis converts eventually do internalize many Fulbe features, which includes a less extrovert attitude This is most clearly visible in the changing funeral rites, in which people as they indicate themselves cry differently after Islamization Of course we are dealing here with idealized cultural characteristics, or Fulbe ideology which in the literature has been too easily adopted by various authors

The Fulbe also indicated a biological foundation for the difference between themselves and the others They used the term *haabe* (sing *kado*) meaning non-believers to define those populations who did not belong to their ethnic group They like to consider themselves as more white than the black people surrounding them, like the Mafa (Dupire 1981 168) Within the Islamized Fulbe population, this difference between them and the agriculturalists around them is defined in terms of religious differences and used as an ethnic marker between them and the other The Islamic Fulbe were the Fulbe the non-Islamic people were called *haabe*

> It was just before dawn A Fulbe friend and I had been preparing dinner and she was doing her first evening prayers, before we would all eat Laila, her daughter of three asked me Do you not pray? I said I didn t So you re a *kado* (plural *haabe*) then! she immediately replied Her father quietly called from his own quarters 'Laila, if you don't shut up and hold your big mouth, I will slap your bottom later on

The new believers though non-Fulbe, like the Islamized Mafa are defined by the term *Tuulbe* meaning those who pray [from the verb *julugo* to pray]

We may conclude that human beings within Fulbe society are divided into three categories

Fulbe	*Tuulbe*	*Haabe*
ethnically Fulbe	non Fulbe but	non Fulbe
and praying	praying like the	and not praying
	Islamized Mafa	like the Mafa (and me!)

I 3 Islamization and the Process of Civilization

Even if people do not give an exact explanation about how they became involved in the Muslim community they often say When I came down the mountains and civilized Civilized is then synonymous for Islamized When expressed

in Fulfulde, *'nu jippi hoscere mu sibiu,"* it is used in the same sense not as a process someone else drags you into, but something a person adopts and accepts by her or himself

An old lady, Maama Maimouna, who had been taken at the age of six as a slave Islamized and afterwards settled in the Muslim community of Mokolo said

Could I have gone back to the mountain and become a Pagan again?

By that she also meant to say that in that case she would no longer be able to practice her Islamic religion as eating and sanitary habits are so different from those necessary to practice the Islamic religion in the right way Moreover people in the mountains had another life style altogether Some people believed that the origin of the word *Matakam*, long used to indicate the Mafa - as we saw before - traced the Mafa to the category of 'uncivilized wild people' - that is in the eyes of the Muslim community

When people use the word 'civilization' in this way - as an indication of a change of life style - it brings to mind the work of the sociologist Elias, who studied the 'process of civilization as a social process, in European societies (Elias 1935, in Mennell 1989) On the one hand it indicates a process in which certain elite groups took a distance from the people around them It summed up the ways in which Western society considered itself superior to earlier societies or 'more primitive contemporary ones Secondly and considered as much more imporant, it included an increasing process of being able to control onself

> The argument is, to recapitulate, that the i n c r e a s i n g webs of interdependence spun by state-formation and the division of social functions exerts pressures towards i n c r e a s i n g foresight and a change in the balance of controls, the r e l a t i v e weight of self constraint over the impulsive resort to violence (among other things) increases, and becomes more even and all-round and people experience g r e a t e r inner guilt and remorse if the self constraints fail (Mennell 1989 241)

The same attitude is found among Islamic - Fulbe - society in North Cameroon Notwithstanding their slave raids in the past, in which the use of violence was obvious, they were no longer involved in the sort of clan clashes that frequently took place in Mafa society

> *' Le decès d'un habitant du village de Oudrahai est a l origine de la bataille Le 20 decembre les parents du defunt venus de Douvar pour pleurer le mort, entrainaient les gens du village a l attaque de Gouzda qu'ils rendaient responsable du décès, selon une coutume caractéristique des populations encore primitives Les villages voisins se joignaient à eux Le combat se soldait du côte des assaillants par un mort et deux blessés Le 21 decembre vers 12 heures les habitants de Vouzad*

attaquaient a leur tour Gouzda (Rapport du Marechal des Logis Chef Giraud, le 24 Decembre 1957, No 36/4, Mokolo Archives)

In the archives the French use the word *Kirdi*, often used as a synonym for an 'uncivilized human being', somebody without schooling, without sanitary habits etc As wrote Laroussinie in 1937

> *D ailleurs la cadence de leurs évolution, pour un esprit observateur est très rapide en raison de leurs facilité d imitation (sic!) Un example nous en est donne par l école, où les Kirdis tout aussi primitifs que leurs camarades de jeux de la montagne, en trois ans aprennent à comprendre et à parler le français à lire, écrire compter et sont capables de rediger une petite lettre* ' (Rapport du Tournee du Lieutenant Laroussinie, March 1937, Mokolo Archives)

And in 1951 Foures wrote

> *' à voir les surprises revelées par un recensement normal, a voir la pauvreté des renseignements recueillis depuis vingt ans a voir enfin la sauvagerie qui n est pas tellement relative de gens vivant aux portes de Mokolo on mesure le chemin qui reste a faire* (J Foures Mokolo, le 20 Juin 1951, Mokolo archives, 169/Smk)

This has to do with the French concept of *civilization*, which differs from the sociological concept The French term is derived from *civilite* a word courtiers have used since the sixteenth century to describe their own polished manners and courtly modes of behaviour (Mennell 1989 35?) To indicate *civilization* in Fulfulde, the word *neddaaku* is used, which is more connected with *noblesse* or 'someone to be respected' - close to the notion of the original French word *civilité* *Civilization* is also expressed as *defeterinkeewu*, which includes the word *deftere*, book so thus denoting ability to read and write However, the Fulfulde word *kado* denoting *Kirdi* was more applicable to a non-Muslim, than a non-civilized human being so when the expression 'I civilized - by French speaking people expressed as 'je me suis civilise' - is used to indicate 'I Islamized', we must consider this civilization as a social process which among others includes a change of religion Then we can get more to the heart of the matter Islamization is a complex process, it does not just mean exchanging one religion (be it 'traditional' or Christian) for another but it means a complete change of life style With the many cultural features of the Fulbe that are integrated in this new lifestyle, converts to a certain degree and in due time also take over the features of *Pulaaku* a certain introvertness and more control over oneself even when they do not take over the term by which this behavior is indicated

If we consider the changes after Islamization we notice that all these functions are comparable with the changes Elias focused on He considered the most basic

'natural' or 'anomalistic' of human functions - eating drinking defecating sleeping, blowing one s nose making love or having sex - because these are things that humans cannot biologically avoid doing, no matter what society culture or age they live in

Let us listen to Jamila who mentions some of them

> First I was married to a man and I lived in the mountains He was Mafa He had his pottery in which he sacrificed because whether you have a husband, or whether you are alone, everybody has her or his own little jar to do the sacrifice in
>
> I had two children, they both died One child became one month old and the other one lived up till her third year With the first child I did not even go to hospital, with the second child, though I did She seemed to be cured, but then the illness struck her again, this time till death followed
>
> I did go to a diviner who treated the child before she died He said it was an illness that slowly excavates the anus They do not have medicines for such illnesses in hospital, so several times I went back to the diviner but the treatment he suggested could not save my child
>
> "I was my husband s only wife He often left me alone in the mountains He did not give me food or proper clothes [she means even after the government had ordered that the population should be dressed] And I also suffered because of the loss of my children When the last one died I sent for my husband, who was away He ordered me to leave the house Thereupon my father-in law returned me to my father Now my children had died and my husband had sent me away I was furious
>
> "I preferred to leave the mountains and become Muslim So I went away to the mountains near Madagali I went there not knowing anybody On the road there are often thieves and 'bandits who easily kill people But I went away I said to myself Well, what does it really matter if they kill me, perhaps it is even better to die, but if I can continue to live very well, all right so be it I met another woman We stuck together in a village called Loumsi, in Nigeria
>
> "I did not speak Fulfulde in the mountains Even to ask for water *Usom hokkam ndyam*, please give me water [a very necessary phrase to know though] I could not say I stayed with months I also learned to prepare the food like the Fulbe do to wash dishes like the Fulbe do When I had stayed with her for two months a man came who wanted to marry me I became Muslim In the mountains I had left my small jar to do the sacrifices in

I went to a Marabout who taught me how I should learn the Qur an, and I learned to read Little by little, like a kid at school, I learned From that day on I prayed five times a day, but together with somebody else so that I could observe if I did it right But you know the God of the Muslims the God of the Mafa, the God of the Christians isn t it the same God in the end? The Mafa sacrifice and the Muslims pray to Allah but it s still the same God only the name differs From the moment I left my husband in the mountains I no longer prepared or drank millet beer I don t like to see people drink now it is as if I never drank myself In former days when I was still living in the mountains I could never have guessed that one day I would be a Muslim myself If I saw them pray I always thought they did sort of a funny act If I saw the women disappear behind their houses to go to the latrine and to wash themselves I always said mockingly Why do they need to wash their assholes?

And the men I could not stop insulting them oooo see them passing by with their circumcised pricks And I laughed and laughed and laughed

Before I had no clothes not even to attach my child on the back From the moment I became Muslim I always had lots of clothes to wear during parties

When my first Islamic husband married me he gave me three pieces of cloth for the marriage and a fourth one because I Islamized I could eat everything I wanted I had enough clothes, a good place to stay, so why should one leave to suffer anew I did not need to cultivate any more, and even if I did or will do I can sell it all If I raise chickens, I can bring them to the market to sell Everything everything in the house the man has to buy for his wife

I did not stay with my husband in Nigeria, because you know one needs to have children I did not get them any more But as I had them before I told my husband to go and see a Marabout to do something about it I told him I love you you love me we have food and everything but why don t we get children?

'My husband replied If you go elsewhere [meaning search another husband] you think you will find them then? I will not forbid you to leave me you can always visit me if you like, and if you miss anything with your new husband I will come and give it to you So I did leave to another husband I didn t get children though I returned to Mokolo and came to live with still another husband but no children The third Islamic husband went to see a Marabout and a diviner but still we did not find

any children. So I left this husband. He was poor and did not give me enough.

" I came to live with an uncle, a relative, Islamized long ago. I started to trade, saved money, bought a trading table and earn enough to buy my own clothes now. Then my first Muslim husband from Nigeria came by, he said he was very unhappy, he said he wanted me back. 'When you were there, all went well, but now I am suffering a lot...Please come back', he said. He started to cry and because I did not love my husband in Mokolo any more, I will go back. Besides, my uncle will not marry me out to anybody else, he will always tell me I still have a husband. I did not intend to have so many husbands, it was just because I found no more children. So I will go back to him."

Three days later, we celebrated her wedding in the compound of her uncle. The women gave her gifts to carry along to Nigeria. She left and till this day she did not return.

From her story we can deduce some basic changes that are not directly related to religious affairs. Jamila mentioned that she learned to speak another language, that she learned to wash the dishes like the Fulbe did and to prepare food like the Fulbe. If we take into account her remark on Muslim women who went to the toilet and washed themselves afterwards, we can presume a change in these matters too.

We may wonder in regard to the Mafa if the lack of eating utensils by the Mafa - compared to the Muslims - , or their toilet habits can be explained by poverty or by the absence of sanitary technology, or simple lack of water in the mountains? Elias' answer to these questions for medieval Europe would be that 'material reasons' do not supply simple answers Material conditions are entangled in complex ways with other strands of social development.

Some changes in sanitary habits accompanying the process of Islamization or some matters concerning sex, reflect Islamic religious rules on washing oneself before daily prayers and the ideology in which the genders are much more separated. More recently changes took also place due to Christianity or simply 'modern times', Yet the difference with changes due to Islam can easily be recognized even in a town like Mokolo, where most people - to mention but one example - have toilets (latrines) and where water is available everywhere

We cannot ignore that by the middle of this century, the process of civilization in the area had become synonymous with Islamization, and that these changes certainly included becoming more introvert, - a feature the Fulbe spread as it is an essential part of the concept *pulaaku* - and repression of emotion - an event we can among others, relate to the fact that people are no longer allowed to drink

in public However I feel incapable for the moment to conclude whether the developments within this society are paralel to the processes Elias analyzed for European society This intriguing question remains to be answered after further study but his theory did help me to get hold on the complexity of the process of Islamization

We must also be aware that if we speak of a process of civilization for this particular area, nowadays other choices are included Now enough Mafa people Christianize or consciously and proudly remain Pagans as they express it themselves As shopkeeper, at whom I used to buy said

Mon commerce ça marche bien Je ne me suis jamais islamisés comme on faisait avant Je suis reste Payen je fais mon sacrifice

They nevertheless change their 'manners' sanitary habits or life style in general while they keep on practising their former religious duties The very conscious choice they may have made is illustrated in the following

> Attending the bull feast *Mara* in Mandaka [North East of Mokolo] I came to talk with a neatly dressed Mafa man whom I had seen dancing exuberantly before He told me he worked in Ngaoundere (which is about 600 km from Mokolo) as a doctor, but that he had taken a holiday and returned home to his father's compound to celebrate the festivities as 'I have held on to my own religion which was my ancestors and of which I am proud as he expressed it

Nobody would dare to call this man a *Matakam* or an uncivilized being

For the moment we can only conclude that the process of civilization' as a sociological process, takes on many different forms in the area under study these days, though we will concentrate on the Muslim community Needless to say by using the word civilization we do not imply a moral judgement or consider Mafa society to be inferior or primitive' We simply take the statements of the Muslim community as a point of departure

The Islamic community, be they Mafa or Fulbe, also regard the nomadic Fulbe as 'uncivilized Though both the sedentary and nomadic Fulbe ideologically uphold the concept of *pulaaku* they discriminate among themselves by denying application of the concept to other Fulbe groups As Dupire emphasizes we will find orthodox Muslim Fulbe groups discriminate against those groups who show less interest in a good practice of their religion In this respect we find differences among nomadic and sedentary groups and among diverse nomadic groups (Dupire 1981) Fulbe living in Mokolo denied any congeniality with the nomadic groups, whose women were very much feared for their knowledge of magic and magical use of herbs

One evening two *M'bororo* (Fulbe nomadic) women entered the courtyard of my Fulbe friend. I have long known her opinion about them. They hardly ever turned up in Mokolo because, as Islamized people said:
"... we already chased those filthy human beings away in the seventies and they have not come back since." [22]
She spoke to them in a quiet voice. I noticed how reserved she got while she remained unnaturally friendly and kept smiling.
"We can see that your child is not too well. Does she not have trouble with her ears? We have brought a medicine to cure her. Do you want to buy it?"
She replied that she was most glad that they brought it, and went inside. She came back with some coins which she handed over. She took the bag of herbs in return. Smilingly and making jokes, obviously not in a hurry, they left the courtyard. I said to her that they must know something about it, as in reality the child did often have trouble with her ears. She answered that she had been scared to death, because one never knew what they would be up to with their magical power. She had only bought the medicine to get rid of them as soon as possible. All Fulbe women in town did the same. She then threw the herbs down the toilet.

I 3.1 Fulbe Settlement Pattern in Mokolo

It has become obvious that the Islamic community in Mokolo is not synonymous for Fulbe community. In other areas of North Cameroon, - according to the literature (Schultz 1985) - Islamized populations refer to themselves as Fulbe; I did not encounter this phenomenon in Mokolo. But Fulbe have come to settle within the Islamic community in Mokolo. The first settlements of Fulbe people date from the time Mokolo was founded. They settled around the court of the Fulbe chief, installed in 1918. Others arrived more recently for various reasons. Let's hear some motivations:
Two co-wives told me:

> We originally come from Maroua and Mbogo, a village next to Maroua. We have been living in Mokolo for about a year now because our husband works here as an administrator. We do nothing, just our embroidery, but we do go out sometimes to the market and so on. We do not know many people here, as there are hardly any Fulbe here in town.

A Fulbe man, earning his living as a *Mallumjo* (a Qur'an teacher) told me:

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15 Overpopulation of the area actually seemed to be a more realistic cause of the absence of M'bororo groups around Mokolo.

I come from a Fulbe village, on the road to Mogode, next to the river Sanaga My father and his wives settled there in 1949 They were living a bit outside the village, *en brousse* [these dates were also found in the archives of Mokolo] In those days there were more Fulbe with their herds next to Mokolo but as the town grew they moved away In 1966 I came to Mokolo I came to study the Qur an, to become a *Mallumjo*, Marabout myself I still have my fields near our village If I cannot cultivate them myself I send some money to have it done for me

Another Fulbe woman tells us

I come from Garoua and my husband comes from Gawar [see map] My husband did not want to look after his cows any more and as Gawar is part of Mokolo department we settled here in town That was 20 years ago We bought our piece of land from a Mafa guy because it is their land originally you see So we have already been staying here in town for about 20 years My husband still has his cows in Gawar, and his brother takes care of them He also has land there to cultivate Sometimes he goes over to cultivate, sometimes he pays somebody else to do the job for him

In my sample 17% of the first wives in Mokolo were (or said they were) Fulbe, and 19% of the second wives Of the men 12% were Fulbe These Fulbe come from sedentarized villages in the plains and are not related to the *M'bororo*, the Fulbe nomadic people As one Fulbe woman said, underlining what has been stated in the last section

They are different, those *M'bororo*, they are apart The Fulbe who still have their cows, are also apart So we are the house Fulbe those who stay on the same spot and the *M bororo* stay outside But many of them learn to read and write the Qur an nowadays and sometimes they even go to Mecca We too, we always kept our cattle only we do not wander around with them any more '(also Burnham 1972)

I 3.2 Different Stages in the Process of Islamization

The process of Islamization in Mokolo can be divided into several stages

I 3 2 1 The first stage

At first the captured and freed slaves who had Islamized while in slavery came back to their original area, when the town of Madagali became English territory, around 1920 They preferred to live in the Islamic communities in Mokolo after their return This first wave of Islamization is largely the same for men and women

Maama Maimouna is quite old now, she was captured and taken as a slave by Hammam Yadji, the first *lamido* (chief) of Mokolo, together with the rest of her family. [This must have been around 1910].

"We used to be five in the house. We were all taken by the lamido. [We will hear her complete story in Chapter 2]. They brought us to his house in Madagali and then they sold everybody in Kano, except me, as I had fallen asleep during the night"....."So I stayed and worked for the lamido, until he gave me to his child. She was just a little bit older than I was. When she married I went with her and while I was staying in her house a guy came to ask my hand in marriage. I just started to have my periods. I had already started praying long ago [meaning: I had already converted to Islam]. As I grew up with the Fulbe, I learned to pray like the Fulbe. At first I was still too small, but later on I had told myself 'I better start praying now'. Now the man who came to ask me to marry him was a Mafa from Mofouélé [south of actual Mokolo]. He had been captured by the same *lamido*. He too had started to pray. He was to become the father of my children.

"When the white people came they told all the slaves that they could return home. [This was when the English took over the territory around Madagali]. My mother was waiting for me to take me home, but as I had become a Muslim and was married to an Islamized Mafa, I refused to return to the mountains. She thereupon started to cry and put herself in front of the door of the white man, called 'Wilkinson'. They asked her: 'What do you want?' She said 'I want my daughter back.' Thereupon the gendarme accompanied her to go and get me and they said: 'Well, there you are, there is your daughter.' But I explained to my mother, I have grown up as a Muslim, I already have a child. I cannot return with you back home, back to the mountains, to my natal village." Could I have returned to become a Pagan again? So my mother returned by herself, crying.

Hamman Yadji in his diary mentions a similar, (or perhaps the same?) event:

July 21, 1927: On Thursday the 21st of Mubarram a letter came from the Christian Mr.Wilkinson, saying that Ghadiri had made a complaint against me. He ordered me to return the girl to her mother, but she rejected her parent and said that she would never return to the Pagans.

July, 22, 1927: On the next day, Friday, the Kadi of Madagali, Abba, came into my presence, and she told him the same as she had told me. I therefore wrote a letter to the Judge of the North, Mr.Wilkinson.

Maama Maimouna continues her story:

After that, when the English, the *Nasaara'en* (the whites) and the *Yamii* started to pick up people again [23], and when they wanted to take my husband, we fled to Mokolo, which was French territory We wanted to stay here among the Fulbe. My child, my son had already died by that time.

"Mokolo was not a real town in those days, there was only a small Islamic quarter, but that is where we wanted to live There was no hospital yet, only some offices...and a prison We started to cultivate, you did not yet have to buy the land in those days Where you can find the asphalted road now, we could still fetch our firewood So we cultivated millet and peanuts, which we sold, and again cultivated and again sold My husband married five other women, that is he married and divorced them, married and divorced them, but I, who was his first wife, always stayed with him When he died, I and another woman were left, the two of us So I grew up with the Islamic people, I became old among the Islamic people, and I have given birth to my children : twelve in total, four stayed alive, two sons and two daughters, and all the others lie underneath the earth, five girls and four boys. My two sons married with Mandara women, so Islamic One of them lives and works in K, one of them here in Mokolo. He has his own house, I am living with him My daughters married people from Madagali One of them lives in Mokolo, the other one in G [Her daughter actually married the son of Hamman Yadji, the first lamido of Mokolo, who had captured her before and afterwards for another marriage, the son of the brother of Fassaha]

However not all the slaves automatically became Muslims or kept to the Islamic faith. We read in Hamman Yadji's diary:

August 25, 1922 At Friday the first of Muharram my wife Umm Asta Bolel said that in respect of her being a Muslim she was tired of it, and in respect of her being a Pagan it would be better for her.

1 3 2.2 The second stage

The second stage came when Mokolo was acknowledged as a political centre, with different villages under its jurisdiction The first elements of an administrative infrastructure were created about 1930 This attracted Islamized people from other regions, not only Fulbe but also other ethnic groups. The Muslim community in town grew slowly.

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[23] I do not know which historical event is meant here

Due to several bad harvests many inhabitants from the area Mafa as well as people from other groups moved to town between 1930 and 1940 Mokolo market was created in 1934 Life in town attracted many people, especially those whose relatives already lived there Goggo Mama tells us

> 'I was married in the mountains I got eleven children but ten of them died I had left my husband and lived with an uncle, but he was often mad at me, so I left and went to live with my sister who had become a Muslim As I was living with her in the Muslim quarter I asked myself 'If I die who will bury me? In the mountains they will say, 'Oooh, she does not belong to us any more as she is living with the Muslims And here they will say, 'Oooh she is living with us, but she is not a Muslim ' That would be very awkward, wouldn't it? So I decided to become a Muslim too and so I did '

In this section we heard the stories of some Fulbe inhabitants and their reasons to move to Mokolo But how did the Mafa came to Mokolo? What were their reasons to convert to Islam, after their resistance to foreign influences?

> Baaba Buuba, about sixty years old now tells us I was born in the mountains, but I came to town when I was still a boy I did not pray in the mountains I did my sacrifice But when I was in town I felt in my heart that it was better to pray to Allah, so I went to see a Marabout and started praying '

> Baaba Yaya 69 years old (born 1923) "I came to work as a boy for a white man, when I was still young In 38 he took me to Yaounde He was an engineer he constructed the road from Duala to Yaounde at that time I already saw before that time that the customs in town were different My boss told me that it was better to pray He himself was a Protestant and his wife was a Catholic, but we always made fun of those catholics and said that their priests looked like crows They could not even get married and have children Even my boss advised me to become a Muslim So I went to a Marabout in Yaounde and he taught me all about life and death and the last judgement In '42 I went with my boss to France I worked and travelled a lot I have been to Lille, Monte Carlo and Paris, but everywhere I always looked for the Muslim community, because there were a lot of Moroccans and Algerians working in France, so I joined them in praying and I did the *Ramadan* etc I married a French woman, we had two children and in the fifties we returned to Cameroon I even lived with her in Mokolo Later on when she had left I married three wives, they were all Mafa and converted

His eldest wife (about 55) converted when she was still a little girl

> My father had died I had been adopted by a Muslim family so I learned to pray My first husband was a Fulbe I had seven children with him When he died I married my present husband though we do not live in the same house I had another child with him

Around the Catholic or Protestant churches in the mountains [as Djinglya see map] we find concentrations of Catholic or Protestant converts In this part of the world Islam is a religion that is mostly practised in sedentary settings (Burnham 1972 313 Schultz 1984) so it is connected with a process of urbanization Schultz - not differentiating along gender - considers the process in Guider [about 50 miles away from Mokolo] to be caused by push (lack of land disagreement with the relatives about the bridewealth, etc) and pull factors (looking for jobs in town, economic advantages of being a Muslim attending school in town) To some degree we recognize this in Mokolo An informant tells us

> I was born in Soulede, my clan is *zele* When I was twelve years old I saw the nomads passing by with their cows and I joined them and learned to herd drank the milk from the cows and I left with them We finally arrived in Yola I stayed there for a long time and became a Muslim Afterwards I returned to Mokolo I do go back to the mountains to see my brothers and sisters and for funerals even when it concerns no direct relatives but I do not cultivate there any more I leave that to the people in the mountain I cannot go there to cultivate Even if my father would still be alive could I steal the land from him to cultivate and eat from it?"

This last remarks suggests that a lack of land pushes especially boys who are neither the youngest nor the eldest towards other regions A woman tells us

> My husband came down the mountains you know how it went Children came down to work in town, to work with the Fulbe people so did he and then he Islamized and he married his first wife

Two co-wives tell their story about their husband who Islamized

> Our husband always lived in Zlamtsai clan *Dem mede* (near the Catholic Mission) his parents even lived here He never moved to town the town came to find him [as the town grew they mean] He first was a Catholic but as the old president [Ahidjo they mean] wanted everybody to become a Muslim he said he became a Muslim too He only said so with his mouth but people could hardly notice it because he kept on drinking He told us that we had to tell people that we also became Muslims We are both from Koza, from the clan *Melgudjé*
>
> One woman continues As a young girl I was taken by the *lamido* of Mozogo, who was Mandara [so Islamic] as a wife I was taken by force He sent his people to fetch me though I did not want it but can you refuse somebody who is in command of the village? I did not want to be

a Muslim either I had to stay in and was very unhappy. Then I got a wound on my breasts and asked him to bring me to the hospital and he responded by saying. 'Do I have to bring a Mafa who keeps talking in Mafa to the hospital?' So then I fled, and he asked back what he had given to my parents [bridewealth]. So I do not want to be a Muslim now, and as the new President Paul Biya says such is no longer necessary, we started going to church.

From many stories, we recognize a common feature in the process of Islamization: Mafa children - boys as well as girls - were (and are) often adopted by Islamic families or exchanged for food (see also note 9)

Baaba Rahmani, about 55 of age now tells us: "I was born in the mountains, in Soulédé [see map] in the quarter called *Demdjarai*. My father had left the area because, you see, we used to be with many in our clan, *gwali*, called *zélé*, but then many people died of leper [24] and only a few were left. At the same time we were the chief clan of the area *bi-gwali*, and the other clans wanted to get rid of us to become chief clan instead. So my father had to take to his heels to save his skin. I was four and my brother two We moved next to Mokolo, the quarter called *Uro-tada* When I was six and my little brother four years old, bandits came during the night, a guy from *Shuglé* and a *Mofouélé* and they killed my father - my mother had already died of leprosy -, to take his goats and us to sell But the captain of Mokolo at that time, called Lavergne, captured the thieves and took us. As we were still very young he brought us to the *lamido* (Yacouba). So together with all his children we learned to pray. Then somebody from our clan came to fetch us, but I refused to go with him Then a priest from the Catholic Mission came, but I preferred to stay at the lamido's court "

His younger brother tells.

"I came to live at the court of *lamido* Yacouba when I was five years old and I left him when I was ten, when he had died and *lamido* Ammadou was appointed [so that was in 1948]. We went to Qur'anic school When we were at the court we did not cultivate But when my brother grew up and married (he had worked at the Catholic Mission to earn money to get married with an Islamized Mafa girl), I came to live with him We looked

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[24] He added the following interesting story in regard to the authority of the chief clans and elders Because they were the chief clan they could easily take the peanuts from the fields of other people And even if the latter brought it to court, they could win as they had the authority Now people used to put ashes with chicken feathers on the fields just before the time of harvesting and this is what caused the leprosy in his family

for the fields that belonged to my father and we continue to cultivate them up till now. Millet, potatoes, peanuts, everything. And we eat and sell it."

The elder brother: "Now the three persons who were left over from our clan, gwali, have produced up to a hundred children, who are living in Soulede and here in Mokolo. I myself married many women, all Mafa. Two from the area Mokola kridi, three from Wadahai, two from Shouglé, three from Ziver and two Mofou. I have produced many children, but nine have died and eight are left. All my Mafa wives were Islamized, I chased most of them away, they gossiped too much. You see, the trouble is, Fulbe women know how to behave themselves. They shut up in front of their husbands, but those Mafa women, even if they are Islamized. , you say something, they say something back, and before you know it you are fighting. With the Fulbe, the woman says nothing in return But if the husband is no good, she goes to her father and he is the one who will talk with the husband. But I still have one wife I already know for twenty years "

Many people Islamize because they come to live with their already Islamized relatives in town Such was, is and may continue to be the case for women as well as for men.

The youngest wife of Baaba Rahmani, the eldest brother, has two young children. She always lived in the mountains with her father, as her parents were divorced. By the age of sixteen she came to live with her mother, who Islamized after two marriages in the mountains, when she herself was still a little girl. After having spent some time with her mother she started to 'pray' too.

To give an indication of the language change: this woman spoke Fulfulde with her mother as well as with the daughter-in-law of her co-wife; all of them had been brought up in the mountains [25].

I 3 2.3 The third stage

The following examples represent another phase in the process of Islamization: after independence administrative centres in the Islamic North formed a locus of employment for Islamic people, as national politics in general were dominated by

[25] Recently with the new political changes the Mafa have become much more self conscious which is among other things expressed by the fact that within town - at public places like the market place etc - much more Mafa is spoken As a result the mother and the daughter sometimes spoke Mafa again The granddaughter only speaks Fulfulde

Muslims. This was due to the fact that Ahidjo, the first president of Cameroon after independance, was a Muslim. He partly attained this position, because the French colonials considered the North a homogeneous Islamic area. Had they only read the reports of their own Captains and Lieutenants they would have known better.

As the North was an important basis for his power, Ahidjo did his utmost to promote the Islamic faith (Bayart 1979).

To get a job in the administrative centres or to start a business at the market, one almost had to be a Muslim. This third stage of Islamization is mostly for men. A female informant tells us:

> "My husband left the fields to his brother and came to town. Now he owns a shop and sells oils, soap, slips, etc. I came down the mountain at a very young age and lived with an Islamized family. I did not want to do the work of the Mafa people, and in my heart I wanted to become a Muslim, so I went to live with them and afterwards married my husband. I make doughnuts every morning to sell and save the money for the bridewealth of my children.

And another story of a male informant:

> "I was born in Soulédé; my clan, *gwali*, is *zélé*. When I was still small I went to the Protestant Mission school, so I have been a Christian, since my early childhood. I only know what my father told me about the sacrifices and our Mafa religion. The missionaries sent me to the secondary school in Mokolo. That was in 1963. I was living on the campus. I finished school and I became an administrator. After that I passed the exams [26] and left to work in Maroua, afterwards in X, and now I am sous-prefect in M. I became a Muslim eight years ago, when I was thirty. When I was small I preferred to be Islamic. But as I was with the missionaries, and as my father would never have allowed me because the Fulbe have made us suffer in history so much, I could not do it earlier. So it is true, I was a Christian, but I always wanted to be a Muslim. I spoke about it with my friends and they advised me and told me which steps to undertake. I was already married. At first my wife did not like it much, but the Marabout came to our house and explained all the necessary things to her. So now my whole family is Islamic. I do not read Arabic, but I bought a Qur'an in French so that we could learn what it was all about."

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[26] *Faire un concours*. This system was taken over from the French. To put it simply, Only when you have passed certain exams you are qualified to apply for a job.

It needs to be remarked that this is the only example I have of a man, who Islamized after marriage [27] Another woman explained

> "You can call me Dranglas, but if you prefer to use an Islamic name call me Asta You see, all my brothers became Muslims a long time ago We came to town when my father died. My brothers went to school. one is a trader, the other one became a veterinary doctor. Many times they tried to persuade me to become a Muslim too, but I do not want to. If I need to become anything at all, I prefer to become a Christian. I do not like these Muslim things, like for example the *Ramadan*.. , much too difficult. My mother lives with my Muslim brother, he built her a separate house in his compound "

The latter case concerns a woman who, by her own choice, preferred not to become a Muslim Yet her story underlines her brothers' motives to change religion - and they probably address her by an Islamic name - as well as the fact that women do or do not convert on their own initiative, independent of men. We have already seen that they very often do so at a later age, after several marriages 'in the mountains' Men, also in the case above, mostly convert before marriage [see note 21] Finally I will quote another reason to not convert to Islam·

> "I am still a Pagan, but my husband has gone, my children are all dead, I think I will become a Christian I do not want to become a Muslim, I am to old and stiff to bend down and put my forehead on the ground."

The pressure for men to Islamize decreased after 1982 when Cameroon got a new non-Islamic president and the influence of the Islamic (Fulbe) community declined. It is no longer necessary to be a Muslim to get a job in the administrative centres or to start a shop at the market Many non-Muslim functionaries have been transferred to the area Also the mayor of Mokolo is a Mafa Christian. Women continue to Islamize however.

Most recently, with the new political situation and with many Mafa with a high education there are examples of men who leave Islam behind and become Christians again.

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[27] During my recent stay in 1992 a good informant a Mafa man told me though that he knew other examples of men that islamized with their whole family while already married The example he gave was of a man, who had lost all his immediate family (he came from Magumaz) and there upon had said What s the use of staying here all by myself? He there upon came to town It would be interesting to find out under what circumstances men at a later age Islamize if they do so at all Yet as said in my survey and in all the cases I collected I do not have such examples

Summarizing we can conclude that men in the two last phases often Islamized to get access to the possibilities of a career. As these possibilities underwent drastic changes after 1982, the process of Islamization slowed down after this period Another important discovery from my sample in about 90 households and from the cases I collected, [28] is that I only found one example of a man who Islamized after marriage, while many women Islamize at a later age, even after several marriages 'in the mountains'

[28] See Appendix 3 , Question 3 and further dealt with this matter Nearly all the interviewed Mafa families had an Islamic (or non Islamic in the Muslim community) relative In those cases it was easy to find out, if these relatives Islamized before or after their marriage

Chapter II
Islamization and state formation

In his work on the process of civilization, the sociologist Elias paid considerable attention to the roles played by centralized and non-centralized political authorities. In our research area, this dichotomy runs parallel with the difference between the Fulbe and Mafa political systems. In our study of the process of Islamization in Mokolo we focus on the formation of centralized states and their influence on ordinary people and the non-centralized regions around these states.

In his description of state formation Elias sought to reveal the part played by what he defines as the monopoly mechanism. This entails that the armed forces of the state should be able to keep infringements within reasonable control, and that the central authority of the state reserves the right to confiscate the property or income of individuals. These two types of monopoly are related: the financial resources flowing into the central authority enable it to maintain its monopoly of military force, which in turn sustains its monopoly of taxation (Elias 1939 II 104, in Mennell 1989 68). It goes without saying that the organization of the state and control over recourses in this part of the world differed from Europe, yet a same mechanism is manifest in the spread of Islam. The process of Islamization coincided with the centralization of the Hausa and later the Fulbe states in West Africa. It demonstrates their ability to govern the region. Elias remarked that the interests of the central ruler are never quite identical to those of any other class or group, this certainly applies to the Mafa (Mennell 1989 77).

In this chapter we will describe how in the process of Islamization the new faith was first adopted by the court nobles and merchants. Their customs (as Elias remarked in Court Society (1969a 186) differed markedly from those of all non-court formations. This certainly applied to externals like their way of speaking (remember Jamila's words at the end of the First Chapter) and dressing (remember my impression upon my arrival in Mokolo). However, Islam along with its customs and more intrinsic values eventually found its way through the courts and empires and the central authorities to the ordinary people of North Cameroon and Mokolo. In the process leaders profited from the (probably faked) ignorance of the colonial conquerors: first the Germans, later the English and French. Their indirect rule, making use of the Fulbe political structure entrenched the hegemony of the Islamized Fulbe. The history of Mokolo as a growing Islamic community with a Fulbe chief in de midst of a non-Islamic Mafa area is very recent and still unfolding. Without understanding this development the

complexity and intermingling of the diverse groups cannot be grasped. Circumstances like the slave trade, the colonial conquest and Fulbe hegemony marked the lives of most generations and even got new stimuli with the recent political developments. These episodes were even given new impetus by recent political developments.

II 1 Islamic expansion

II 1.1 Islam and Commerce

West Africa's first contacts with Islam were made in the 7th and 8th centuries, first through slave raids and gold trade (Hogben and Kirk-Greene 1966 15). The Berbers plied these trade routes through the Sahara and played an important role in the introduction of Islam (Levtzion 1971:31). Both the Berbers and the desert formed a barrier against invasions of the Arabs into the *Bilad al Sudan*, the land of the Blacks (Robinson 1985, 1397, Willis 1979) Therefore Islam spread along divergent ways. According to Robinson, this has engendered an Islam in Africa that allows various interpretations and applications within different ethnic groups (Robinson 1985b:1397; Nicolas 1978). Levtzion considers the Africanization of Islam as an explanation for the peaceful process of Islamization (Levtzion 1971:31 e.v.).

During the period 1000 - 1600, the majority of West African converts to Islam came from the ranks of the ruling elite, the merchant class and the townspeople. On the other hand Islam made little impact on the way of life or the beliefs of farmers, fishermen, and the rural populace (Clarke 1982: 28 ff.) This is still the case; it is not the Mafa people living scattered throughout the countryside who become Muslims, but those coming to make their home in town.

In the 13th and 14th centuries the nation of Mali emerged as a great political and economic power. Within this state a new phenomenon emerged: Mande-speaking traders became teachers and preachers of Islam (Clarke 1982, 54-56).

II 1.2 Rulers and Islamic expansion

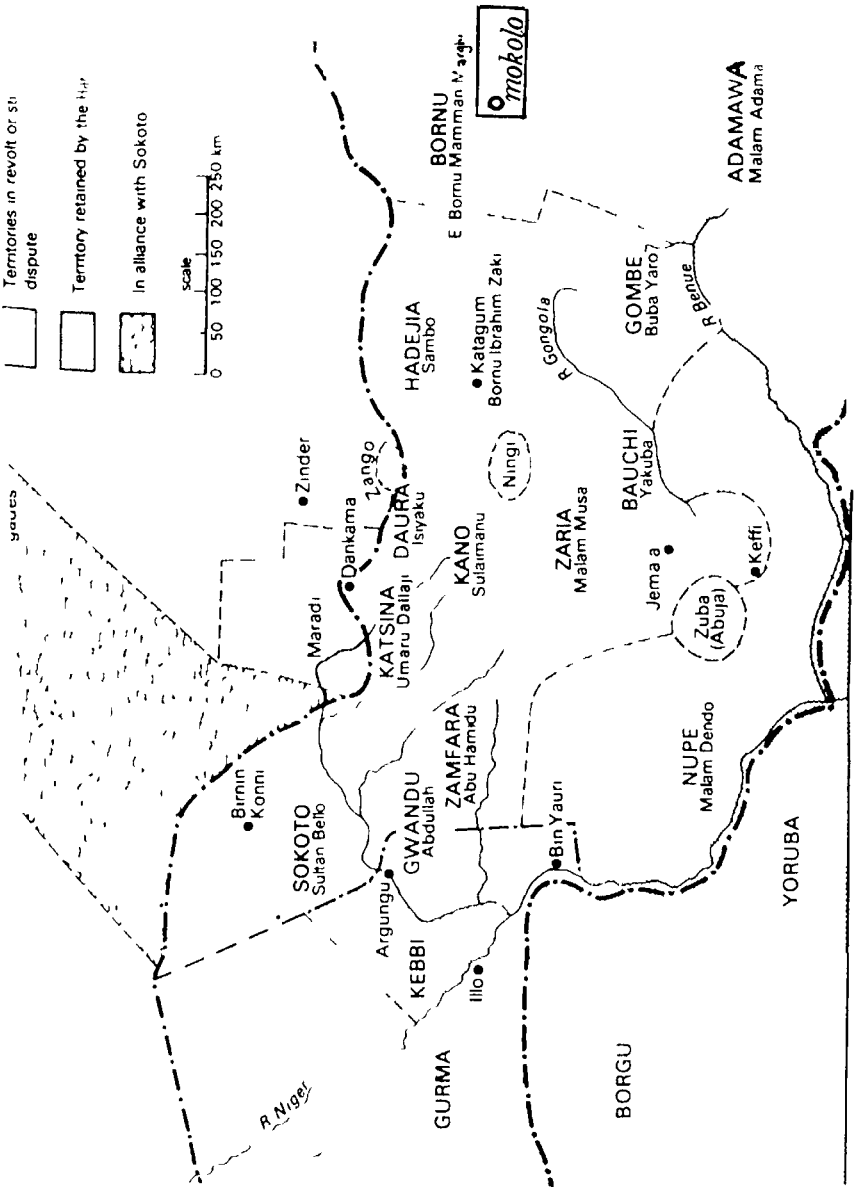
In those days, many Muslim rulers surrounded themselves with Muslim judges, scholars and holy men, but they also paid heed to the philosophers and priests of the traditional religion. Ibn Battuta, a well-known traveller who left many written accounts, noted that the people of Mali were conscientious about attending Friday prayers and learning the Qur'an by heart, but that traditional customs and practices persisted and were even encouraged by the Muslim rulers (Levtzion 1971: 35). Divination was widespread there. A matrilineal system of inheritance

and succession continued long after the rulers had become Muslims This was also the case in the Hausa states, where Islam made faltering progress up to 1600 Muslim rulers were anxious, for political as well as religious reasons, to impose an Islamic system of government Yet their efforts met with stiff resistance So like in Mali in the Hausa states the outcome was a system of government combining aspects of the traditional politic-religious system with Islamic principles and practice In the 16th century Hausa states a balance had to be kept between the influence of Muslim clerics, who were advisers and councillors of the king, and that of the priests of the Hausa religion Both were skilled and knowledgeable the former on account of their Islamic education the latter due to their knowledge of the mysteries of the *iskoki*, the spirits The kings were chiefs of both religions a difficult but inevitable position into which they were thrust by the political situation

II 1.3 Application of Qur'anic law

More Orthodox practices came into use through the missionary work of the Jakhanke and Torodbe groups The Jakhanke produced some outstanding scholars and adopted a peaceful approach to the spread of Islam The Torodbe on the other hand as one of the Fulbe groups were not committed to pacifism Over the centuries they developed into a very important intellectual and religious force in West Africa The Muslim reformer Uthman dan Fodio is descended from the Torodbe (Clarke 1982 34) Originally the Fulbe were concentrated in what today is northern and eastern Senegal, where they led a predominantly pastoral life (Azarya 1976 11) Previous reformers became the religious guides of the Fulbe pastoralists These Torodbe reformers moved with them from the Senegal Valley across the savannah region of West Africa These religious guides also acted as mediators between the migrant pastoralists and other Fulbe and non-Fulbe groups Some Fulbe groups settled in towns gave up their pastoral life and mixed with other Muslims These groups engendered the most learned and respected Muslim religious leaders in West Africa (Spencer Trimingham 1962 Smith 1966)
Due to the political instability the commerce and the slave trade the warrior class the ruling elite and their opponents began to compete more effectively for power In this situation Muslims in the villages began to look to Muslim leaders among the Torodbe for political as well as religious guidance The latter were prepared to defend the interests of their followers by military jihad It is in this context that the military jihads of the 17th and 18th centuries took place

map 7



Fulani Empires of Gwanda and Sokoto (after Robinson & Smith 1979 148)

Islam was emerging as a counter tradition Previously, as Clarke remarks, it had been accommodationist, assimilationist, and prepared to coexist peacefully with the non-Muslim community Meanwhile, the Islamic education system continued to expand It produced numerous numbers of Muslim scholars, who became critical of the 'mixed' Islam prevalent in government circles. So there were two trends: the waning influence of Islam in government circles, and the emergence of a more radically minded Muslim intellectual elite in the former Hausa states

II 1.4 Uthman dan Fodio and the Islamic State

One of these scholars was Uthman dan Fodio, whose ideas and inspiration came from the writings of orthodox scholars such as Al-Maghili He wrote and preached a great deal, continually reminding Muslims in clear, simple language of the orthodox Muslim position on matters such as inheritance, marriage, fasting, prayer, and alms, while pointing out the incorrect practices existing in the Hausa states We will consider his opinion on the situation of women at the end of this chapter

During the last decade of the 18th century and the early years of the 19th century tension mounted between Uthman dan Fodio's community in Gobir and the Hausa rulers of that kingdom He withdraw from Degel to Fudu with many followers Fulbe, Hausa, and Tuareg The *jihad* of the Sword started when the community was attacked by a punitive expedition from Gobir in the early months of 1804 Uthman (50 years of age) was the leader of the jihadists, although he never got involved in the actual fighting (Clarke 1982 113 ff ; Robinson 1985,) He and his successors set out to reform Islam in the Hausa states and extend it far and wide What had began in Gobir as a community of the faithful ended in the establishment of an Islamic state ruled by Uthman dan Fodio, as the former Hausa states were reformed into a confederation of Islamic states, reaching a level of political integration that had not existed before (Robinson and Smith 1979 148) Madagali, an important town in the history of Mokolo, became part of it During the period under discussion one of the more significant changes effected by the Muslim reformers was the installation of an Islamic administration This entailed the creation of a central state, with Sokoto as the main province, though the precise character of this state has been the subject of much discussion (Hogben and Kirk-Greene 1966, Hiskett 1973, Clarke 1982; Robinson 1985) The Sultan of Sokoto became, in theory, the Supreme Commander of all the Muslims in the Hausa states He gave the emirs the task of administering the Caliphate at the provincial level A chief *qadi* or Muslim judge was also appointed to supervise the administration of justice based on Islamic principles throughout the Caliphate The *wazir*, or chief minister of state,

linked the rest of the emirates with Sokoto and acted as moderator in disputes within and between the emirates.

In the educational sphere, the reform movement achieved a good deal. Through it, literacy in Arabic was spread over a much wider area. The reform movement also gave rise to a greater interest in and concern for the education of women. It is credited with the establishment of more Muslim schools and the training of ever-increasing numbers of Muslim teachers.

In one of his books, *Ta'lim al-Ikhwan* [Education of the Brethren] Uthman dan Fodio wrote about non-Muslim religious beliefs and practices. He mentioned and condemned as polytheistic the practice of venerating trees and rocks on which libations were poured or sacrifices made. Precisely these practices play an important role in traditional Mafa religion.

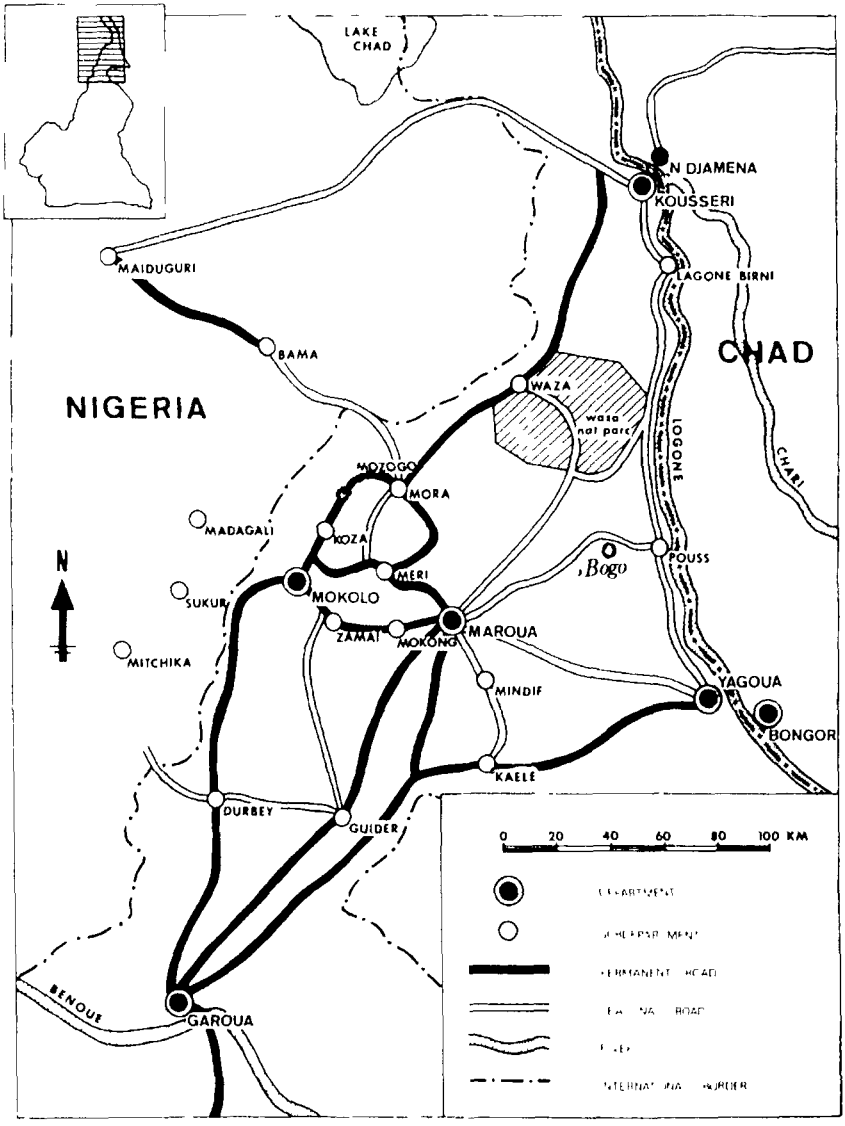
At the end of the 19th century, people continued to be inspired by Uthman dan Fodio's reform movement (Smith 1960). The Fulbe *jihad* had made Islam and all that is connected with it - religiously, socially, and administratively - a state religion.

II 2 Fulbe hegemony in North Cameroon

Upon his death, Uthman dan Fodio split his dominions, leaving his son Muhammad Bello as the Sultan of Sokoto and his brother Abdullai as the ruler of Gwandu. This dual empire ruled most of northern Nigeria until the arrival of the British in 1903 (Johnson 1967). The Fulbe acquired ruling positions within these states. The Eastern province of this state, called Adamawa, includes the Nigerian province by this name and the present area of northern Cameroon. Around 1810, the *jihad* was carried to Adamawa. A young Muslim scholar named Modibo Adama, enjoying the moral support of Uthman dan Fodio, united the local Fulbe leaders (*lamibe*). He succeeded in becoming a political and military leader, conquering several territories to which his followers brought Islam (Kirk Greene 1958; Paques 1978). The Sultanate of Mandara (around Mora) maintained its independence outside the Emirate of Adamawa. Yet it lost many of its dependent territories which became organized as Fulbe districts, for example Mora, Madagali, Mitchiga, Maroua, Bogo, and Mindif (Njeuma 1978. 42). Many non-Fulbe groups were

defeated. Some accepted Islam and the Fulbe chiefs as their rulers. Some were subjected and enslaved, as under other rulers before the Fulbe (see Eldridge 1988). Some groups from the plains fled to the mountains, which were inaccessible to Fulbe cavalry, and either settled there or intermixed with the local population.

map 8



...for example Mora, Madagali, Mitchiga, Maroua, Bogo and Mindif

II 2.1 Reckless invaders

The inhabitants of the mountains, the Mafa, resisted Islam for quite some time Because of their isolation, they were able to defend themselves with bow and arrow against a total invasion by the intruders, though many people were taken as slaves. The following story of an old Mafa man serves as an illustration of an invasion. It must be situated in a later period than where we chronologically are in our history. Yet I assume that his statements would not have differed much from those people would have made who experienced the same reign of terror 50 years earlier in history In both periods the Mafa were the victims of slave raids during which some Fulbe invaders were quite reckless, as we learn from the diary of Hamman Yadji [29] and from the stories that are still common knowledge

> So the chief of the Muslims set fire to the houses They chased people on their horses In passing they also pillaged all sorts of things, even our wives and children, our youngsters, bulls, goats, just everything, even our millet they took For example, in Djinglya they started chasing people, they took my aunt and other women because, you know, those real Fulbe did not give birth to many children, so they needed our wives to give them children
>
> Anyhow, some of our people were hiding in the holes of the mountain and only came out during the night to fetch something to eat When the Fulbe discovered these holes, they took some straw, put it in the entrance and they set it on fire after they had also put hot chili peppers in it and the oil of the calcedra tree (which makes a lot of smoke) So in that way the fire and the smoke would get at the people inside Now it was the ones who were scared that hid in the holes, because, you see, the other ones, the brave ones, stayed outside with their bows and arrows and killed the Fulbe But other people were taken away by them, to their places. If they stopped you, caught you and you did not want to follow them, they killed you, just like that But if you were prepared to follow, they tied your hands on your back so that you could become a slave, so that you could be sold

II 2.2 Political dominance of Yola

Modibo Adama first settled in Gurin Later, he moved to the town of Yola in the Benue Valley and made it his capital The Fulbe chiefs established chiefdoms that

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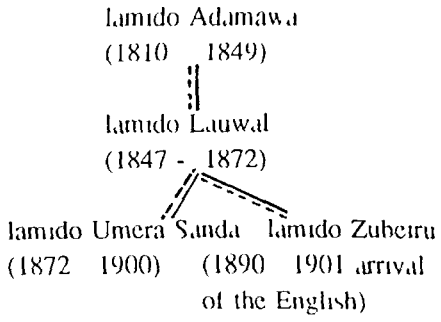
[29] As explained in Chapter I the diary of Hamman Yadji written in Arabic has been found and translated into English but it has never been published

acknowledged the authority of Yola, similar to Yola's acceptance of the paramount sovereignty of Sokoto Adama died in 1847 and was succeeded by his eldest son Muhammad Lauwal Heeding his father's dying words not to abandon the *jihad* he conducted many new campaigns in the area's north from the river Benue These areas were not entirely subjected to the Muslim conquerors (Barth in Njeuma 1978 59) He ravaged many groups The more secure Yola became the freer Muhammad Lauwal felt to organize distant expeditions especially to the North These were intended either to reinforce local troops against incursions by the Mandara and Bornu people, or to help consolidate Fulbe power over partially subdued peoples His two successors, Umaru Sanda and Zubeiru continued the *jihad* (Njeuma 1978 63) The political dominance of Yola lasted until the arrival of the British in 1900 Zubeiru eventually played an important role in resisting the colonizers We will discuss his role later on in this chapter

LAMIBE OF YOLA



-= son___= successor

One of the chiefdoms *lamidat*, to acknowledge the final authority of Yola was Madagali, a *lamidat* of great importance in the history of Islamization in Mokolo It used to be under the influence of the Sultan of Mandara (whose capital was near Mora) before (Vossart ?) The first chiefs of Madagali came from Yadzerum to this region Ardo Bubu and Ardo Dadi were succeeded by Ardo Uthman who was in command during the period of pacific installation (as the installation of *lamube* in new central areas is called in the archives) Madagali was subsequently ruled by a chief called Njidda from 1811 to 1854
He was succeeded by his son Buba Chiuto who was strongly disliked by the elders They asked Lauwal then the ruling chief of Yola to replace him by his twin brother Bakari Lauwal did so (around 1873) whereupon Buba Chioto was

arrested and taken to Yola. He fled once. With the help of Sanda, successor to Lauwal, Bakari captured Buba Chiuto and took him to Yola, where he died in captivity in 1874 (Strumpel 19 : 58-59; in Njeuma 1978: 101) (hand written documents, Mokolo archives) Bakari ruled until the arrival of the Germans in 1903 This affair elucidates the sovereignty of Yola over the region and of Sokoto over Yola.

The ruling *lamido* of Sokoto, Yola, Madagali, and so on down the hierarchy, did not give help (like Sanda gave to Bakari) for free Islamic communities recognized several forms of taxation, which had to be paid to the highest ruler Two of these payments were important in the province of Adamawa, namely the *zakat* (tax: One of the Five Pillars of Islam, obligatory for every individual Muslim) and the *jizya* (tribute: levy on non-Muslim peoples who acquiesced to the laws of Islam and were given the status of *dhimmi*) These payments provided the most important material link between Yola, the districts (such as Madagali) and the villages (such as eventually Mokolo). These payments were also a way of showing one's regard and respect for the *lamido* and ultimately for the *lamido* of Sokoto. Non-payment was a sign of bad relations For example, Njidda of Madagali withheld tribute to Adama for some time, because the latter gave flags to one of the northern districts and made them independent of Madagali At that period, Njidda sent his tribute directly to Sokoto hoping to obtain political advantage in that way (Njeuma 1978: 108)

This political apparatus, including a system of taxation, made it very easy for the colonial governments to take over the administration, which they further stabilized, centralized and turned into a bureaucracy This indirect rule laid the foundation for the submission of people like the Mafa.

II 2.3 Fulbe *jihad* and slavery

As a result of the *jihad*, and state-formation, the Fulbe economy changed. It was previously based entirely on cattle When they settled, it was no longer possible to exchange daily milk from the cattle for agricultural products. So the Fulbe started to get involved in agriculture themselves However, as they loathed cultivating [30], they had the work done by slaves Those Fulbe who participated in the *jihad*, took many slaves from the Pagan non-Fulbe populations (Azarya 1976:14, LaCroix 1952.32-34), among which the Mafa. Maama Maimouna - we already heard a part of her story - tells us:

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[30] In Mali there s even an expression that says *Yo nu remi* which means something like If I don t speak the truth I will cultivate ! Oral communication of A Breedveld

"When I was eight years old, Hamman Yadji (the *lamido* of Madagali, who claimed the Mokolo plains as his territory) took us It was the *lamido* of the Fulbe who used to reign here in the old days They had already taken our father When they did that, we kids cried and screamed, because of that, the people chased us, but finally we were left with our mother This was ten days before Then they returned We had just lit the fire outside to get warm They drew their guns I fled with my big brother But then my big brother took another road, so I lost him They caught me and they made me lie down on the floor and they hit me and they kicked me and then they let me go I returned home When I entered the house someone else just left the house This someone had come back to fetch the people as he had found nobody before that day He stopped me again

Finally they had caught us all my little sister, my two big brothers, my little brother and me We used to be five in the house We were all taken by the *lamido* They brought us to his house in Madagali - which became English territory afterwards - and then they sold everybody

I had fallen asleep during the night Before I woke up, the others left I didn't know very many things I was still too small But my big brother, before I went to sleep, had bent his head down like this and he had cried, cried cried I asked him "Why are you crying like that? He asked me in return, "Where are they going to take us now? Is it not true that they are going to sell us!"

He had been right, they did sell him But me as I said, because I had fallen asleep, the chief had said, "leave her!" but all the others were sold in Kano When I woke up my sister and brother had gone and all the other people from our village as well When I noticed that, I cried too They sold people to get money so that they could buy themselves clothes and things to eat

I had to work hard Who would give me time to play? If you did not work hard, you were hit with the rope So I ground the millet, I swept the courtyard, I fetched water, I washed the dishes "

Male slaves were called *maccudo* (plural *maccube*), female slaves *kordo* (plural *horbe*)

The land on which the slaves worked belonged to their masters, though the slaves usually could pass it on to their own children Their obligation to the master consisted of sending part of the products to him, working parttime on the master's other fields, and generally serving him whenever they were told to do so

Children of slaves who were born in the house of their masters were called *sakkataajo* (plural:*sakkata'en*). Fulbe informants said that you grew up with them like brothers and sisters and considered them as such. So personal ties could develop between the members of the family and those *sakkata'en*.

> The parents of Goggo Amara (about 55 years of age) and her brother originally came from the mountains around Tourou. She grew up at the court of Boula. On several occasions I went with her to visit the lamido and his compound or other former members of the household. She was always treated with the same respect as the other members. Her brother became a *goofa* (plural:*goofa'en*) (formerly, those slaves were on duty at the palace door, to be propitiated before gaining access to the *lamido*) of the *lamido* of Mokolo, a post he has held for about 25 years now. He got this job by magical conjuring. When young he had been befriended by a relative of the *lamido*. Together they had gone to the *Mai about* to ask for a *gri-gri* so that they would do well in life. On this occasion he had uttered his wish to become a *goofa*. His wish had obviously been granted. He married the sister of this friend, a daughter of Fulbe origin So did the daughter of Goggo Amara, the sister of this man.

Slaves could be released from servitude in which case their masters gave them cows. They were then called *dimaajo* (plural. *rimaabe*) (Also Burnham 1972:311). The first generation of Mafa people in the Muslim community can be categorized as such. Female household slaves like Maama Maimouna, often married (or were forced to marry) their masters or sons of their masters. Afterwards they were no longer considered slaves. If they bore children, these were called *kordo dawdo* and had the same status as all the other children of the father. But a man could only marry his own slave, not one of another man, as the offspring would then be considered children of their original masters.

We will continue with the story of Maama Maimouna.

> "So I stayed and worked with the *lamido*, until he gave me to his child She was just a little bit older than I was She was going to get married. [1] That is how they do it in Fulbe customs, you see. If the eldest girl is going to get married, the one who is just a little bit younger, goes with her to stay with her. [She uses the example of her great-grand children, who are two and four, as an example to make me understand]. When I was staying in her house, a man [also once taken as a slave] came to ask my hand in marriage.

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[1] (A slave girl who becomes attendant to a woman is called *mapakawo* (plural *mapakawo'en*), as attendant to a man, she will be called *jekadaajo* (plural *jekadiye'en*)

I just started to have my periods I had already started praying long ago [meaning she had already converted to Islam] As I grew up with the Fulbe, I learned to pray like the Fulbe First I was still too small, but when I had grown a little bit older I said to myself "I better start praying now!" Now the man who came to ask me to marry him was a Mafa from Mofouele He was to become the father of my children I only married once in my life I stayed with him until he died When we were still living in Nigeria, I gave birth to one child, our first son "
[N B the daughter of this woman was to marry the son of Hamman Yadji the *lamido* of Madagali, (the one who had taken her as a slave) later on]

Household slaves were generally the most trusted counsellors and as such held considerable power Riskou and Fassaha, the first chiefs *lawans* of Mokolo had been former slaves We may be critical of a too positive picture of slavery The story of Maama Maimouna is a good example of the tragic lives people led, they could only accept their fate and make the best of it Yet we must not forget that we are dealing with a hierarchical society Children consider it quite normal to act like servants to their older brothers or sisters to whom they owe so much respect that they are not even allowed to pronounce their names Besides most rulers depended upon the willingness of the people they initially subjected and who chose to cooperate with their masters Although slavery has been abolished, many terms for the different kinds of slaves are still used to indicate different professions

II 2.4 Political positions and wealth

Before the *jihad*, Fulbe nomads had to pay a toll to the owners of the land they passed through with their herds After the *jihad* they confiscated land from the local population, putting it under the custody of the head of state and his agents The conquered population then had to pay the above-mentioned taxes or tributes (*zakat* or *jizya*) to the rulers for cultivation rights In this way land in addition to slaves, became another resource for the Fulbe, where their only power base in their nomadic days used to be cattle

In about the same way, they gained control over craftsmanship They reduced the monopoly exercised by closed groups on certain crafts - as, for example blacksmithery by the Mafa and Kapsiki (Van Beek 1978) - by inducing the craftsmen to teach their craft to slaves owned by Fulbe

Political positions could be translated into income Taxes were paid to the direct rulers, who sent part of these taxes higher up while keeping something for themselves In addition to the taxes presents were commonly given Candidates

for 'civil' services had to invest in gifts to those higher up in the hierarchy Being in service the pay off was expected to cover the preliminary investment So the higher a person's position in the political hierarchy the more gifts he received In this way, power resources were transformed into material wealth (Azarya 1976 11-20)

These abilities to have access to wealth when one is a member of the Muslim community have led to the following common statements among non Islamic people A Mafa man, who had become a Christian said to me one day sighing

> Sometimes I wonder if I made the right choice They say you get rich when you become a Muslim
>
> But where does that wealth comes from? It does not start raining coins in your courtyard the day you convert into Islam does it?
>
> I don't know where it comes from I only know Muslims are richer than Mafas'

It is also common knowledge, though, that Muslim people help each other and are inclined to share their wealth

> There was an old Mafa lady Her only son had migrated and hardly ever sent her any money though he did have a regular paid job Being too old to work herself food was given to her every day by a Muslim neighbor an Hadji who could afford it and who considered such his duty She did not give any service whatsoever in return When I asked her about it she sort of shrugged her shoulders and said But that is the way Muslims do their things

One could not enter the political elite by wealth alone Most prestige was reserved for Islamic scholars and clerics reflecting the respect for Islamic knowledge and piety which in principle was open to everybody including non Fulbe Muslims But, as Azarya rightly remarks, it was easier to convert wealth into prestige than the other way around Wealthier people could afford a more thorough Islamic education for themselves or their sons and daughters

II 2.5 The arrival of the colonial power in North Cameroon

When the colonizers arrived the Fulbe chiefs at least those who submitted to the colonizers consolidated their power They could do so due to the fact that as 'tribes' the 'heathen' groups the *haabe*, could hardly be ruled directly by the colonizers The Mafa have no overall political organization So the colonial powers ruled these groups indirectly They gave a mandate to the Lamibe to collect the taxes from the inhabitants First the German and later on the French colonizers had great admiration for the sophisticated colourful culture of the

sedentary Fulbe These factors enhanced and stabilized the dominant position Fulbe culture and religion already had

In our region the Germans arrived around 1900 Let us examine this period more closely and consider its effects on the relations between the Fulbe and the Mafa I will base my treatment of historical events on the work of Njeuma and Eldridge, as well as on items found in Mokolo archives and on oral communications

Njeuma states that the intents of the German invaders was hinged on two principal factors a general feeling that colonial wars were necessary, a feeling shared by all colonial powers and secondly a 'morbid his words- desire by German firms to monopolize all commercial opportunities within the so-called German protectorate' of Cameroon An early experience in Adamawa taught them that its rulers were not prepared to bow to colonial rule unless this was imposed upon them by force During the reign of Zubeiru *lamido* of Adamawa from 1890 to 1901 the force of Adamawa had already weakened as the *lamidat* was cleaved and a Mahdist state had developed within the emirate In June 1885, the German *Reichstag* passed a proposal to enlarge the police force in Cameroon and strengthen its position with trained and well equipped men of the *Schutztruppe* mainly for trade reasons In 1898 intensive campaigns to occupy Adamawa were started by the German Colonial Society A concession for Adamawa was officially granted The Germans got support from the British to carry out their plans

In January of 1899 an expedition started out from Douala (Southern Cameroon) commanded by a lieutenant named Hans Dominik The first attack was on Ngilla They won the battle partly because they were helped by Hausa traders who saw the German actions as a prelude to trade expansion Before the invasion the Germans had presented themselves as friendly people seeking to establish peaceful relations with the Fulbe rulers But after a second less successful invasion in Tibati, they started to worry, afraid that the news of their rude invasion would spread and unite all other *lamidats* up north Due to internal rivalry of different people and *lamidats*, the Germans could soon establish a presence in Ngambe territory In a second invasion, Tibati fell as well As Tibati was once the strongest military power in the area its fall boosted the strength of the Germans in the eyes of the indigenous population and dealt a severe blow to morale in the Muslim armies After that the Germans systematically broke down the authority of the Fulbe rulers in the whole district and came to an agreement with rulers who accepted the German authority as we will describe below for the son of the *lamido* of Madagali who was to become the first *lamido* of Mokolo

During this period, the British invaded the Sokoto Caliphate. There, the Fulbe rulers had a choice between peaceful submission or emigration. Zubeiru, then *lamudo* of Yola would have nothing to do with the British protectorate, neither with their administration nor with anything else of those *haabe* or infidels. He decided to fight the 'whites' and found help in Maroua, where he was at that time to mourn the death of a personal friend. Yola was becoming a threat and was invaded by the British on instructions from Chamberlain. The Yola forces could not withstand the British onslaught. Zubeiru fled from Yola, as he did not want to submit to *Nasaraa'en* (Christians), though his councillors re-entered Yola afterwards.

The possible return of Zubeiru to Yola remained a threat to the British. Zabeiru and his followers had turned north, to Maroua, where they were assured of support. When the Germans found out they fell upon Zubeiru and his defenders. Zubeiru again escaped and went southwest, to Guduk in British Adamawa through Madagali and Kilba. As the rainy season came along, Zabeiru settled for eight months in Guduk. He avoided direct confrontation with the Europeans, but he sent agents to wreak vengeance upon the Germans At Maroua the German Resident and his entire staff were assassinated. Then Dominik invaded Maroua and set up a German administration. Zubeiru became a real threat to the British and German governments; his campaigns confirmed a belief among the local population that Zubeiru had gone on a pilgrimage to Mecca to receive inspiration to keep fighting the Europeans. All *lamibe* were forbidden to maintain any correspondence with Zabeiru. Some reported possible letters of him to the colonials (as *lamudo* Song near Guruk). They thought it was futile and suicidal to fight against guns. Others such as Bakari from Madagali gave passage to Zubeiru. Bakari was then killed by the Germans for not telling them the whereabouts of Zabeiru. Though the colonizers searched for him by roaming the regions and terrorizing the inhabitants, they never caught him Many stories have been offered to explain his final disappearance (Njeuma 1978: 208 - 253)

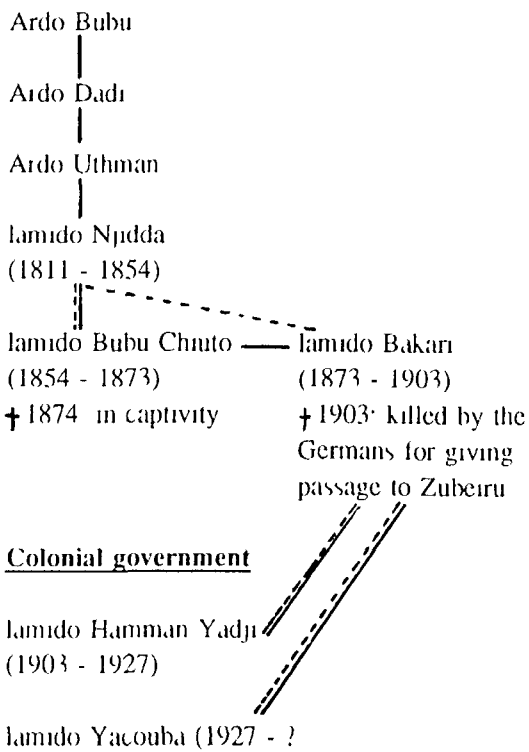
II 2.6 Incorporation of Mokolo in lamidat of Madagali

When the Germans captured Adamawa, Mokolo did not yet exist as a town or *lamidat*. In 1870 the *lamudo* of Zamay, which is 17 kilometres from Mokolo, considered the Mokolo plateau to be under his sphere of influence Its border with Madagali was situated at the source of *mayo* (river) Louti. The right side of the river (Mabas Wanday, Woula) depended on Madagali (now Nigeria) and the left bank on Zamay (Vamay, Gouzda, Baw, Midumsey, Mada, Ldamsay, Douvai, Mendézé, Mokolay; see map 2) (Eldridge 1988:281). In Zamay as well as in Bourha, oral tradition maintains that Madagali never exercised any authority over

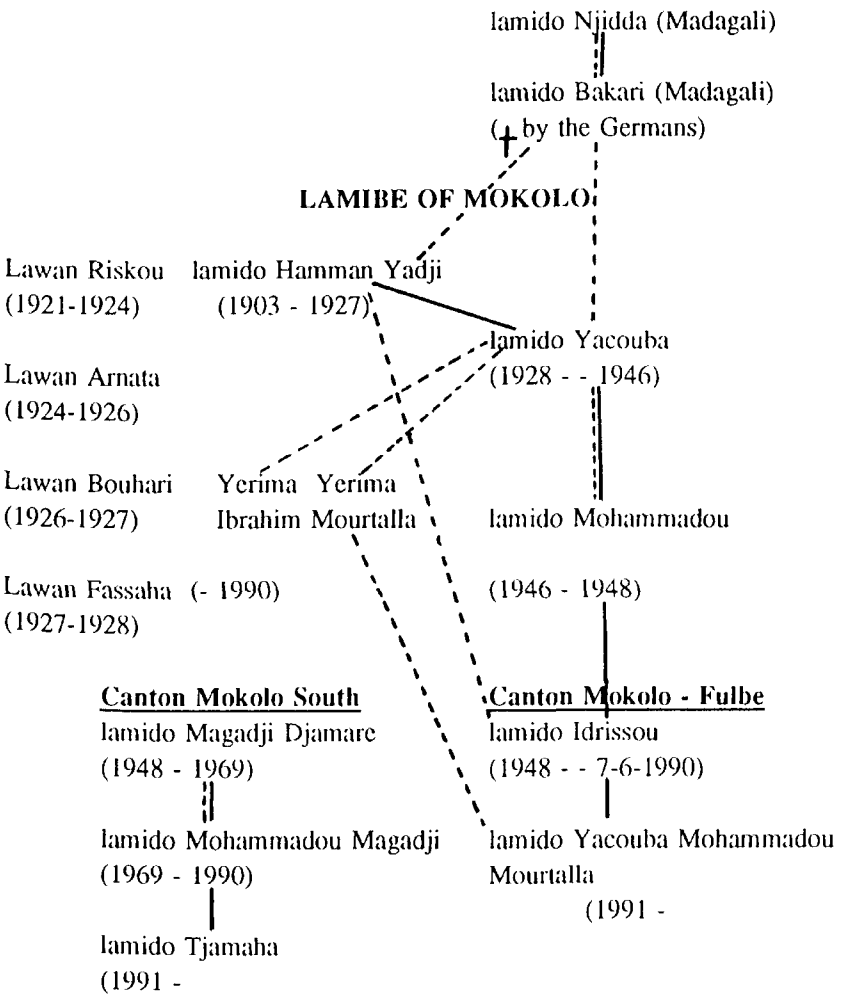
Matakam plateau where the present Mokolo is situated, until the interference of the Germans and the assignment of Madagali to *lamido* Hamman Yadji. The latter was the son of Bakari. He was throned *lamido* by Hans Dominik after the Germans killed his father for supposedly giving passage to Zubeiru. The story goes that Dominik judged the virile capacities of Bakari's son as follows.

> "The day he was throned lamido, the German officer led him before the bleeding corpse of his father *lamido* Bakari, of which they had chopped off the head, and they asked Hamman Yadji:'Are you ready to become *lamido* instead of your father, knowing you will undergo the same treatment if you do not obey the authority of the Germans"? Without blinking an eye he answered, 'Yes, I am ready!'" (Eldridge 1988:282) (handwritten manuscript in archives of Mokolo).

LAMIBE OF MADAGALI



---= son __= Successor



--- = son ___ = successor

Hamman Yadji himself was to surpass the cruelty of the Germans, as we learn from the many oral accounts and from his own diary. At that time, he took advantage of the ignorance of the Germans concerning the borders of the *lamidat* of Madagali, and pretended to have occupied the Central Plateau of Mokolo up to Mayo Mofélé, the border with Zamay.

So the Germans enlarged the borders of the Madagali *Lamidat* on the Matakam plateau east of Mokolo up to Mayo Mofouélé and South West up to Mayo Louti. Thus Madagali became the frontier state of Maroua, as the Germans had also

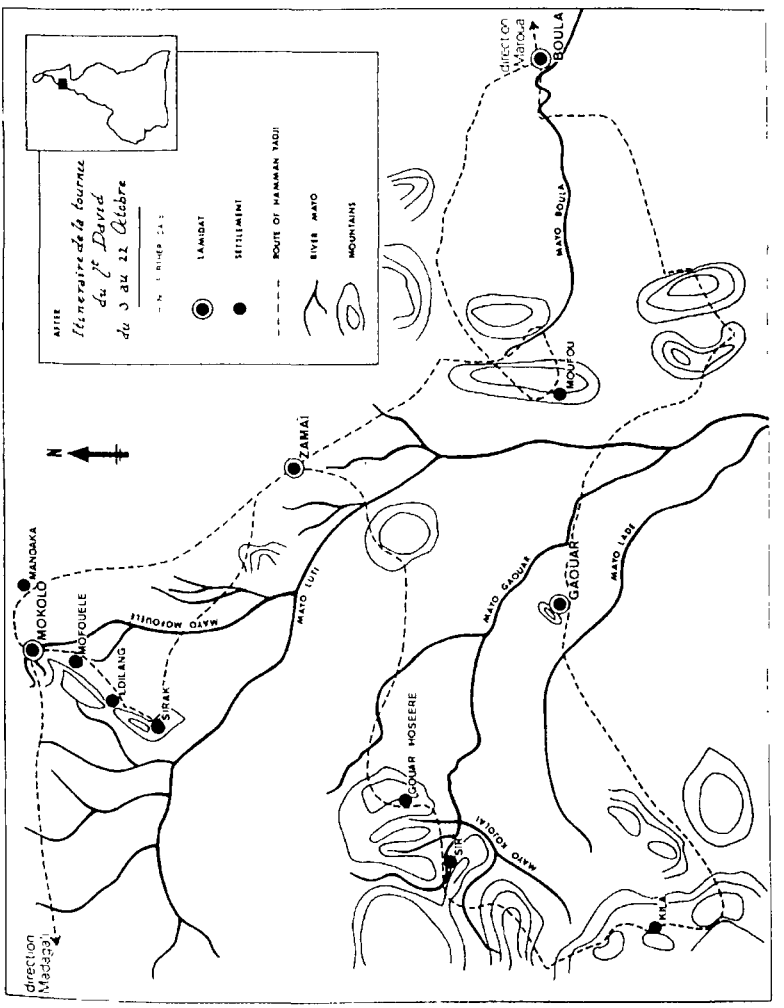
placed Gawar (south-east of Mokolo) and Zamay under the authority of the *lamidat* of Maroua.

II 2.7 The history of Mokolo

In Chapter One we mentioned the founding of Mokolo as a replacement of Wanday, serving as a 'guiding place' and a place for Hamman Yadji to stay overnight when he was travelling from Madagali to Maroua.
His son, who still lived in Mokolo during my first stay and died in 1990, gave 1905 as the founding year, perhaps confusing it with the foundation of Wanday. The archives mention 1918. Let us hear the son's story:

> It is my father who founded Mokolo. I am 74 now. Listen to me carefully. Uthman dan Fodio had come and he taught the kids the religion and he appointed them *Lamibe* (chiefs). He sent them everywhere."You are going over there... and you there, you have to go in that direction ...and you will be going over there..." He gave them a knife. It was the knife to make judgments. For example, if anyone was to be killed, they had to do it with this special knife. They also used it to take food out of the houses or, if anybody had stolen, to chop off his or her hand, or, if they lied, to chop off the mouth. So in this way he gave twelve people a place, among which: Kano, Yola, Kaffu, places even from Ngoundère up to Yagoua. It was Yola who was in command of all these territories. The others were only petty chiefdoms.
>
> My father never met Uthman dan Fodio, because he had not been born yet in that period. But his father, so my grandfather and my own father, were *Lamibe* of Madagali. It is my father who founded Mokolo. He sent the people from Madagali here. At first it was the Germans who told him to stay over here. Because you know occidental and oriental Cameroon at that time was all German territory. It was all commanded by the Germans [so Madagali too]. So my father said, "having to leave to Maroua or to Mora is quite far." So he called the father of Man, whose name is Durie. He came to see this place over here and he constructed a house to stay over during the nights when he passed on his way to Mora or Maroua. It used to be all. Nobody lived here. Then he sent 325 people over to Mokolo with the *seko* [dried grass carpets, to make walls with] and material to thatch roofs with, to make him a place to stay during the nights. Afterwards he took people with him to stay permanently in this area. .

map 9



Copy of hand designed map found in Mokolo archives

II 2 7 1 Hamman Yadji as mean as hot peppers

Now the son did not mention the cruel practices of his father which many other elderly people still remember very well and have become a legend among younger ones Another woman tells her story

> He was as mean as hot peppers! He came to our village with his companions, with their rifles at their ready They took goats sheep peanuts, and the millet to take home They took the straw from the roofs and the dried grasses and took it to the mountains They laid it in front of the holes where the people were hiding added hot peppers and lit it People were coughing slowly dying inside and you saw the blood actually coming out of the holes They never killed the women very quickly they put them together little ones by little ones the young maidens together and the women together Now Hamman Yadji always had his knife in his hands If he saw two girls like for example Aisathu and Karina, and he considered them rich he took them and raised them If not he just killed them with his knife
>
> You know what they did with the men? They put them on the floor they chopped off their heads and they chopped off their pricks Hundreds and hundreds of them Then they took a long stick to prick up these heads Hamman Yadji used to make the fence around his palace with the heads of these people [This fact was told me by several other informants] Now for example if they took your father s head you as a child had to carry this stalk with the head on top of it to his place There he sat down on his throne and thanked these children for bringing the heads of their fathers Up till this day people just can t believe he is dead These cruelties only stopped when the white people arrived If they had not come perhaps he would have killed everybody in the whole world (Case P1, Informant 1)

Hamman Yadji himself made no moral judgements and only wrote down facts From his diary we cite the following

> Dec 10 1912 On Tuesday the 30th Laihaji the Pagans called Shikawn brought me 10 slave girls I also sent soldiers to Kamele but they did not reach Amado s compound and only got a female slave whose hand had been cut off and who was as stupid as a goat This made me very angry with them

After the delimitation of 1920, Madagali was attached to Nigeria, while Mokolo and Wanday, the two places were Hamman Yadji used to stay overnight depended on Cameroon Hamman Yadji was captured in 1927 as he continued to raid the people in the area ignoring that is was French territory Complaints were

raised against him. [32] Oral accounts tell that a woman came to warn him so that he could escape. But he reacted by saying that it was beneath his dignity to listen to women, not to mention follow their advice. In the archives, I found a hand written reference that said: "arreté et déposé le 25-8-1927." Here is an account of these happenings from a Mafa man:

> Now they saw that he had diminished many Mafa, not only the Mafa of Mokolo, but the Mafa in general. All the Mafa had been diminished by the Fulbe, because you see, they were always victorious, because they had been instructed by the Arabs. They all went to Qur'anic schools, there they had learned what life was about, they knew things. The Pagans, on the other hand, did not know all these things, and they took advantage of their ignorance.
>
> Then the French and the English came. We heard all this noise from the cannons. The wife of my father ran outside. She said,"really, there are the guns from the Arabs again!" I told my father, I was only a child. They said it had to be an Arabian coup, but they were no longer the people from Hamman Yadji, because they had captured Hamman Yadji near Rhoumsiki. The whites captured other Fulbe, near Douvar, but some of them hid in the mountains. The whites left and the Mafa thought it was over and came with their sheep and chickens. But then there was still a Fulbe army left in the mountains. They took all the wealth from the Mafa people and that was the last war (Case D 1, Informant 1).

The account of the son about the end of his father's domination over Mokolo has another accent:

> But the mountain people came from the mountains and claimed it was their territory. Then a white man came, a Swiss guy. He was called Captain Vallin. Now the *lamido* of Maroua and of Garoua lodged a complaint against Hamman Yadji. They called a Marabout to judge: "You, you do not lie, who is in command of Mokolo?" So the Marabout said: "You, you are white, where do you come from to claim a right to command us over here. It is Hamman Yadji who commands here because he came here first and took the brousse that only belonged to God before."

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[32] The amount of slaves he mentioned to have captured in his diary, decreases in this period.

II 2 7 2 Arrival of the French colonials

In 1921 Riskou, Hamman Yadji's servant who was in charge of Wanday, was promoted by the French administration to the rank of *Lawan*, representative of Zamay and responsible for the whole Matakam plateau which he was to rule from Wanday (Eldridge 1988 283)

In January of 1922, Mokolo became a military subdivision According to Martin (1970) the French were aware of the difficulty of governing the non-centralized Mafa people They were conscious of the fact that to place them under Fulbe government could only produce results of short duration But the directives from the central colonial government in Yaounde remained the same and favored indirect rule (Martin 1970) The French cadre itself was unstable, inadequate, and too few in number From 1922 to 1939 18 subdivision chiefs subsequently served in only 17 years An officer had only his militia to assist him in his subdivision So they had to make use of the existing political Fulbe structure Due to language problems and the fact that they depended on Fulbe-oriented interpreters they only looked at Mafa affairs through Fulbe eyes

When the village slowly grew *Lawan* Riskou (called *ardo* Woula because he came from Woula) was invited to install himself in Mokolo and to help with the pacification and the tax collecting, for which they used the once enslaved now returned Islamized population

> My father, who was Mafa (from Mofouele) and taken as a slave in his youth was a tax collector, as the Mafa *lamudo* is nowadays He left for the mountains to fetch the millet the peanuts, the goats, the sheep, the chickens They took it all and brought it to the office There was a special millet storehouse, next to the prefecture to store these items They have torn it down now it is the place where you can find the garage nowadays Every father of a household needed to give millet Men and women alike needed to give, like they give money now The whites remained in their offices, one as a commander, one as the head of a subdivision and another one as a captain The whites asked the *lamube* to collect the taxes and the *lamube* gave the order to people like my father

Captain Vallin, 'chef de la circonscription de Mokolo, - already mentioned by the son of Hamman Yadji - wrote in 1925

> *dans toutes ces affaires ce n'est pas l'impôt plus ou moins abondant qui est en jeu mais le principe Le versement de l'impot est le signe de soumission des Matakam et eux mêmes ne s'y trompent pas Tant que le Matakam n'a pas fait ce geste de soumission il se considère*

indépendant de notre autorité" (Mokolo archives, also in Martin 1970:181).

Yet the Mafa did not see the necessity of these taxes and kept resisting them. As a result, *lawan* Riskou was killed (in 1924) by the Mafa chiefs in Ldamsay near Mokolo (see map 2) during one of his tours. Three other servants from the Madagali court were appointed and dismissed as *lawans* of Mokolo by the French administrators. These were Amada (1924-1926), who was soon condemned as a traitor; Bouhari (1926-1927), who was soon dismissed because he kept sending young Mafa kids to the court of Madagali, ignoring the fact that this was British territory (sic!) and Fassaha (1927-1928). Fassaha was the former servant of Hamman Yadji who had been sent by the latter to found Mokolo. But he did not have any positive influence on the Mafa people either, and he was dismissed for that reason (Mokolo archives:Le problème du commandement à Mokolo, no date). Maama Maimouna gives more details on Fassaha:

> "They had given him a Pagan wife, who was still very small, so her father raised a complaint in court and Fassaha was sent to prison. There he had to work and one day he was out fetching wood with two other prisoners. The latter threw a beam upon him which was quite heavy and he died of his injuries."

This fact, as well as the death of *lawan* Riskou underline the resistance and the contempt of the Mafa for the Fulbe and for Fulbe hierarchy.

II 2.7.3 Reign of Yacouba

After that a *Yerima*, prince, of Madagali was appointed as the first *lamido* of Mokolo (Eldridge 1988:283). His name was Yacouba, son of Bakari, the same Bakari whose head had been chopped off by the Germans. He was also a brother of Hamman Yadji, though very different from his brother , as comments on him are all very positive (oral sources). He was to reign from 1928 until 1946, the year of his death. The French colonizers finally seemed to have found the sort of intermediary they were looking for. Captain Vallin *Chef de la Circonscription de Mokolo*, wrote about him:

> *Yacouba est un excellent chef indigène, ayant un son politique indéniable. Tout à fait gagné à hors méthodes, fait preuve d'un [sic!une] rare clairvoyance. D'un loyalisme absolu. Obtient des Kirdis de la région des résultats remarquables. A su se faire admettre et aimer et a actuellement, une autorité reconnue sur l'ensemble de ses villages. Très adroit, est un auxiliaire précieux. lamido comme on voudrait les voir tous.*

In 1937 Captain Dagnas, *chef de la Région du Mandara*, added:

Le lamido Yacouba est toujours un excellent chef de canton Esprit franc et eveillé Robuste et bon cavalier! Le fait [can't be read] *d honneur lors defêtés [?] du 14 Juillet et du 11 Novembre de se soumettre sans hésitations aux nombreux dépenses que nécessite la reception sous son tout de tous les notables et chefs cantons de la ou des subdivisions de Mokolo, Mora Guider, et cela malgré ses faibles ressources*
(Handwritten document, Mokolo archives 1937)

At first he was *lamido* of Mokolo and the Fulbe villages Wanday and Kosséhone Soon he was to be the chief of all the massifs that surrounded Mokolo among which the Mafa areas of Mokola Ldamsay, Mendeze Douvar, Mofouele (and the Kapsiki areas Sirak and Ldilang Kapsiki area) (Eldridge 1988 283, Mokolo archives, oral communication of informants) He got on fairly well with the Mafa population, due to the fact - so the archives mention - that he had a Mafa mother Not that he had any real authority over the Mafa, but he at least succeeded better than his predecessors He had himself surrounded by Mafa of whom he made his 'dignitaries and 'ministers [33] Further, he installed a real Fulbe government quarter chiefs *djouro fattude* in the massifs tax collectors *ardo* or *arnado* [34] and representatives *dogari* [35] in all the villages under his command

Evidently, in this period, Islamization in Mokolo and the Mafa area as a whole proceeded quickly, any court notable needed to be 'civilized , that is become a convert to the true religion

As these new dignitaries were nevertheless Mafa they were tolerated or at least respected by the Mafa who started to get used to the fact that they had to pay taxes instead of killing the tax-collectors with bow and arrow They also learned to settle their disputes at the *lamido* s place

On the fourth of April 1930 captain Vallin made the following remarks

La tournée de M le Sous Lieutenant Chabal sera fructueuse Les Kirdis Matakams visites ont accepte le contact en 1927 Chaque annee permet d enregistrer chez eux des progrès sensibles

But not all the missions proceeded smoothly Chabal wrote about an incident during a tour he made in this period I will quote this report because it not only underlines the independent attitude of the Mafa towards any political subordination - be it Muslim or French - but also reveals the way the colonial conquerors dealt with such an attitude

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[4] *Wajiruku* in Fulfulde called *wakkili* in Mokolo)

[34] (Plural *arnabe*)

[5] Or *wallijo* (plural *walken*)

Danube watching the defile during National Festivities

Maccabe during national festivities

... A Mazei le 24 Mars vers 9 heures un groupe de miliciens se présentait devant le saré d'un homme de ce village. Celui ci avait abandonné son habitation et s'était blotti dans un groupe de rochers situés à environ 30 m. de là.

L'interprète qui guidait le groupe appela l'homme. Il ne répondit pas tout d'abord mais, à la sommation de venir sur le champ sinon son saré serait brulé, il lanca des cailloux dont l'un atteignait le milicier Dioulde. Commendé à nouveau de s'abstenir de cette facon de faire, il sortit des rochers porteur de son arc et d'une provision de flèches et s'avanca résolument sur le groupe de miliciens. Il s'approcha à 20 mètres et lanca une flèche, heureusement non empoisonnee, qui blessa le même milicien au pouce gauche. Celui ci, sous la douleur, arma son fusil et abbatit l'attaquant d'un coup de feu.....

En éxécution des ordres recus du Chef de Subdivision, le groupe Batanga riposta par quelques coups de feu qui dispersèrent les assaillants. Ils s'enfuirent dans les groupes de rochers qui surplombent leur quartier.

Je me rendis immédiatement sur les lieux pour les châtier; je fis brûler les sarés du quartier coupable non sans recevoir encore quelques flèches puis, je leur fis crier que la sanction prise serai renouvellée à brève échéance s'ils ne venaient implorer le pardon.

J'attendis une demie heure sans résultats, enfin deux heures après une délégation d'hommes du quartier en question vint demander pardon: il leur fût accordé...(Mokolo archives: Rapport du sous-lieutenant Chabal:1930).

In 1931 Chabal encountered severe aggression in Djoué near Ziver, a region that no subdivision chief dared to visit for six years to come.

Seven years later Lieutenant Laroussinie mentions in his report of the tax-collecting mission in the Mafa area that this particular region is still very undisciplined:

> *Le village de Ziver [near Magoumaz, about 10 km. from Mokolo] par lequel nous débutâmes, est le plus indiscipliné et même le plus agressif. Des 33 villages de Mokolo, c'est le seul qui se soit toujours refusé de s'acquitter de son impôt et ses habitants vivent en mauvais termes avec tous leurs voisins.* (Mokolo archives: Rapport de tournée 1937).

Incidents like these continued to occur. The reports regularly mention compounds that 'had to be' burnt down [see handwritten copy]. The administrators had about the same problem with the censuses they took. By 1940, the French were aware that only an indigenous government was able to control the population. None the less, this was only put into practice when Mokolo became a civil administration.

Then they started to reorganize the jurisdictions, modify the divisions of the cantons and regroup as many Mafa people as possible under the direct administration of Mokolo subdivision. The French wanted a decentralized homogeneous power structure in which they could use *des chefs de race* Six direct administration groups were formed reflecting the ethnic differences of the Daba, Goude, Bana, Kapsiki and Mafa. But the majority of the Mafa still resorted under the two large cantons of Mokolo and Mozogo (north of Koza), which were under the command of a Fulbe chief (Martin 1970:43).

II 2.7.4 Division of Mokolo in Fulbe and Mafa *lamidat*

In 1946 *lamido* Yacouba died He was succeeded by his son Ammadou As the new *lamido* had a severe drinking problem (oral communication) and was incapable of reigning over the Mafa population as his father did, he was soon dismissed

An informant told me:

> On one occasion he shot at the people of Mofouéle. They were very angry and wondered if the old days of Hamman Yadji had returned They lodged a complaint against him in court. Besides that, he also took people with force from the mountains, so that they would Islamize. Again they lodged a complaint against him On top of that, he also made trouble with one of his captains, Sarkin Fada, and had the latter beaten up. They sent him to Maroua with Sarkin Fada and more people from the court. They all went to prison.

As a result, the Mafa revived their hostile attitudes of the old days and declared.

> *Nous acceptions l'autorité de Yacouba parce que c'était un bon Chef Nous ne voulons rien avoir à faire avec Mohammadou ni avec des représentants Foulbé Nous voulons payer notre impôt directement au poste, porter nos palabres directement devant le Chef de subdivision"*
> (Mokolo archives Problème de commandement de Mokolo, no date).

Mohammadou was succeeded in 1948 by the son of Hamman Yadji, Idrissou (brother of the son who told his story above) Considering the hostile attitude of the Mafa vis a vis the new Fulbe chief, the French accepted another type of administration From then on Idrissou was to take care of Fulbe affairs and was flanked by another *lamido* for the Mafa. The latter was an Islamized Mafa named Magadji Djamare, a *chef de race*, as the French had wanted to appoint long ago but whom was only now available

In 1957 Mokolo was divided officially into a Fulbe canton, with Idrissou as *lamido* and a Mafa Canton with the son of Magadji Djamare as *lamido*.

The French had also installed an administrative system, including a *tribunal coutumier* (customary law tribunal) - where these had previously resorted under the 'village' chiefs and clan elders. The biggest political change for the Mafa, though, has been the organization of canton chiefdoms and 'quarter' chiefdoms. This entailed a change from local village politics to regional politics. The Mafa did not recognize this level before. As mentioned above, the French had taken Fulbe political organization as an example. In this system, the *lamido* of Mokolo gives orders to the 'quarter chiefs', who command the villagers. Obviously these chiefs do not have the same authority as the 'traditional' Mafa village chiefs. Order within the area was no longer maintained exclusively by the latter, as the armed governmental forces intervened more frequently as had been possible before. [36] As wrote Jourdain, chef de la subdivision de Mokolo in 1957, about another clan clash that was about to start due to..."*...une coutume que nous comprenons difficilement...*":

> *Du côté des défenseurs, on notait deux blessés légères, kalda et Hadama, atteint par des flèches. Le lendemain cependant (21 Décembre) les gens de Vouzad, parents du tué, attaquaient à leur tour Gouzda - Le combat à peine commencé était interrompu par l'arrivée du Chef de Brigade et des gardes envoyés sur les lieux...*
>
> *Le 22 Décembre nous nous rendions à Gouzda où la calme régnait, et le 23, tous les protagonistes de l'affaire se trouvaient au bureau de la Subdivision avec le chef Djamaré et Magadji Koussoum, pour y fixer le prix du sang, et régler officiellement la palabre.*"

And he still adds:

> "*Ce conflit, fréquent en saison sèche, période de désoeuvrement n'a pas été provoqué par des rivalités de familles ou de villages, mais bien par une coutume caractéristique de population encore primitives, ne venant que lentement à la civilization.*" (M.Jourdain; Archives de Mokolo No.132/L/SMK, 1957).

II 2.7.5 Political Situation of Mokolo

After independence, which was instated on the first of January, 1960, the French administrative system was adopted and has been functioning ever since. The Mafa area was assigned the department (*département*) of Marguis-Wandala,

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[36] The French colonizers however wrote that it was no use putting people in prison as they were so much attached to their independence and freedom that they died as soon as you locked them behind four walls. Up till this day the prison has a special reputation in the whole of Cameroon.

governed from Mokolo In 1967 it was redivided into four homogeneous subdepartments (*arrondissements*). Koza, Moskola and Gabua (replacement of the old canton of Mozogo, afterwards called Matakam Nord) and Matakam South, which corresponds with the former Mokolo cantons The *lamibe*, now canton chiefs, answer directly to the head of the subdepartment (*sous-préfet*) of Mokolo They form the administrative link between the subdepartment (sous-prefecture) and the village chiefs In the countryside, the canton chiefs reign over the chiefs of the different quarters They have to maintain the order and uphold the rules of traditional law. They collect taxes and intervene in local disputes men who complain that their women ran away and women complaining about their menfolk, difficulties between the cultivators and the pastoralists, when the cattle of the latter destroy the crops and smuggling [37], they construct schools and recruit pupils

And so we arrive in 1986, the year I discovered Mokolo. From the historical account it became evident that for a long time, the Mafa did not accept intervention from outside They resisted until the inevitable impact of the colonizing powers dragged them into a society ruled by a central state The processes of encapsulation have long favored Islamization

Magadji Djamare, the Mafa *lamido*, had been succeeded by his son Mohammadou Magadji, who died in 1990 Idrissou was still reigning when we arrived in Mokolo He died a few months after Mohammadou Magadji

Up till 1991 Cameroon knew only one political party, the U.C N (*Union des Populations du Cameroun*) under Ahidjo and the R D P C (*Rassemblement Democratic des Peuples Camerounaises*) under Bya. The political party tried to establish itself in the various regions Anybody within the political field needed to be an active member of the party The Muslims in the area had no arguments with that as long as Ahidjo, a Muslim from Garoua, was president Things changed when Cameroon got a Christian president from the south in 1982 Many Muslim department heads, subdepartment heads and other administrative functionaries in the north were replaced by Christian southerners It then became easier for non-Muslim Mafas to get a job in the administration so these changes worked to their advantage

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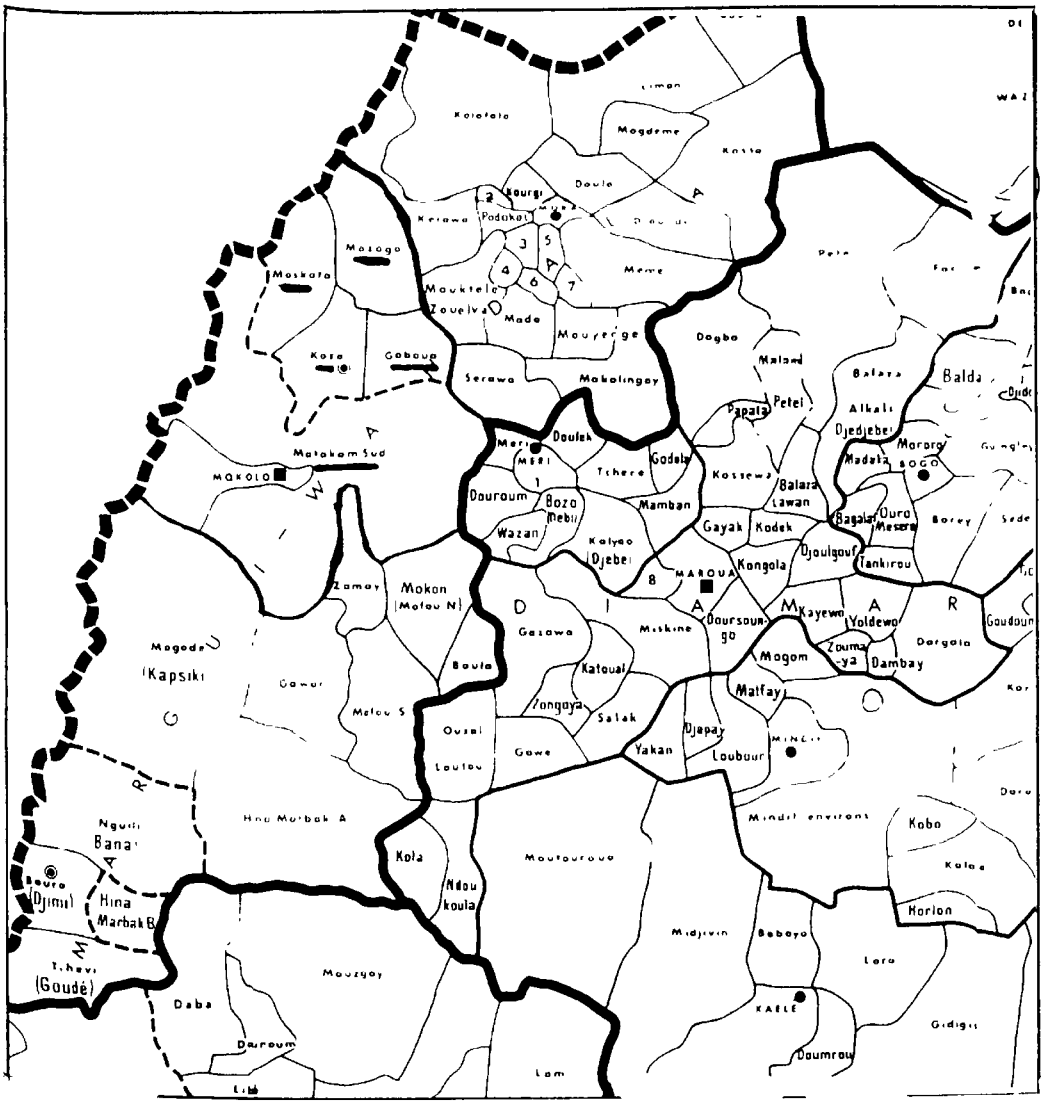
[37] Lately there has been a gathering in Sokoto of all *lamibe* of the area about the frontier problems The (Fulbe) *lamido* of Mokolo raised the question of smuggling the fact that so often women with their petty trade are bothered by the custom officers while the big smuggling trade of drugs is left untouched the problem of youngsters taking drugs has become part of Mokolo s problems

map 10



Atlas Régional Mandara-Logone; Centre O.R.S.T.O.M. de Yaoundé

----state borders	*préfecture*
___department borders	*sous-préfecture*
----borders of sub-departments	district
___district borders	
___borders of cantons	

Cameroon had always be considered as a relatively wealthy, due to the oil, and thus successful country by the Western powers. This changed after the structural adjustment program of the International Monetary Fund (I.M F.). Cameroon got into a bad economic position. The call for Democracy and a National Conference got louder Demonstrations were held, and the opposition parties organized strikes throughout the country, called *villes morts*. This meant that the whole week, no shops should be open or commercial activities undertaken except on Sundays. In Mokolo, the quarter chiefs were intimidated by the cadre of the R.D.P.C. and got the following message:

> We have orders not to shoot in case of riots, but we are not sure ourselves if we will follow that order.

So the quarter chiefs, knowing their population, tried to keep the discontented people, especially the youth, off the streets. Things got out of hand only once, when an angry crowd headed for the customs office and burnt it down. The southerners were pretty frightened in this period

Elections were held for the House of Commons in March 1992. In Mokolo, several political parties took part in the elections, but only three are important in our story: the existing political party, (the R.D.P.C.), and the opposition parties M.D.R. *(Mouvement pour la Défense de la République)*, and the U N.D.P *(Union Démocratic de Peuples Camerounaises)*. The old rivalries between the Islamic community and the Mafa population surfaced in the voting behaviour. Many non-Muslim Mafas voted R.D.P.C.; the Muslim quarters voted U.N.D.P , a party led by a Muslim, a Fulbe, northerner. The M.D.R did not get enough votes, so these votes went to the R.D.P.C. and the U.N.D.P. The result was that these parties could each send three deputies to the *Assemblé National* (House of Commons). Asked about their voting behaviour, Mafa informants said that they did not want the old times back. They associate Buba Bello, the leader of the U.N.D.P. who returned from exile only recently, with the court from Madagali and remember the severe repression from those days. At the same time, the U.N.D.P. repeatedly tries to show that their party should not be associated with the old cadre of the time of Ahidjo, and that they are a totally new party. The Mafa population does not seem convinced yet. An informant said:

> Our vote for R.D.P.C is not a vote for Paul Biya, but we do not want back the old times of Muslim domination.

The M.D.R. political pamphlets in particular referred to the Fulbe political domination.

> *Les KIRDIS sont à nouveau écartés de la prise des décisions sur la gestion des affaires politiques et administratives du pays sous prétexte qu'ils n'ont aucun poids économique et ne constituent pas un groupe de pression politique*

Sinon, comment expliquer l'absence totale et flagrante des Kirdis dans le gouvernement actuel, alors que tous les Ministres Nordistes qui s'y trouvent sont musulmans?

Comment expliquer encore que sur les dix gouverneurs en poste, il y a deux Nordistes et tous les deux sont comme par hasard Musulmans?... Tout récemment, lorsque le Premier Ministre a invité les Lamibe du Nord pour consultation, ceux des Kirdis ont été exclus!...

Nos parents et nous-mêmes avons souffert atrocement et souffrons encore de tout cela; il n'est plus question que nos enfants en souffrent encore! [38]

History left its traces.

Nationally, the M.D.R. went together with the ruling party and appointed an Islamized Mafa Minister of Urbanization and Planning. One may wonder if the revelation of the old days will fall on fertile grounds in Mokolo. In most families one has Pagan as well as Islamized family members. As we learned from several stories and from our sample, people keep in touch.

During recent meetings in which political parties met, I could also observe that the members of different political parties were obviously present, as they wore the garments, *boubou's* with the texts of their political parties. Yet at the same time, they intermixed and discussed with one another in a quite friendly way.

There certainly is much more political openness and discussion in town the last year. I even heard children in the streets singing the following song, an event that would have been impossible up to 1990:

> Paul Bya, he may still be president but soon he will be no more than an ordinary merchant at the market, and his wife...she will soon be nothing more than a seller of fish at the fish market (this was a few days before her sudden death).

In October 1992 Paul Bya claimed to be re-elected as president.

On weddings in the Muslim quarter, where only women are present, the song of the U.N.D.P. opposition party was in 1992 the most popular music to dance on. In 1991 elections were also held among the population of both cantons to choose the new *lamibe*. In principle everyone could be candidate, but of course one

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[38] The pamphlet ends with the following conciliating words

Alors que les jeunes Musulmans ne pensent pas un seul instant que nous serions animés d'un quelconque sentiment de haine ou de vengeance car nous savons qu'ils n'en sont pas responsables. C'est pourquoi nous croyons aussi que seuls le dialogue et la concertation entre les Camerounais peuvent 'abattre les murs d'incompréhension'

needed money to have a *dossier* made There were eight candidates for the Mafa position A remarkable sign of the new political situation was the fact that two of them were Mafa who still practised their own religion (from Mandaka and Mendezje) members of a *bi-gwali*, chief clan, and one a Christian (from Soulede) also a member of a *bi-gwali* The newly chosen Mafa *lamido* is a Muslim though, not related to the former Mafa *lamido* (only the *kuyuk* patri clan on mother s side, is the same) His name is Oumarou Tjamaka, he comes from Ldamzay and is also from a *bi gwali* Asked if there had been any female candidates my informants laughed They said that such was not possible as a woman with the Mafa can never be 'bigger' than her husband

For the Fulbe canton as well, there were several candidates But the seven quarters formerly ruled by Idrissou chose the son of the son of Yacouba (who reigned from 1928 to 1946) called Yacouba Mohammadou Mourtalla Partly due to the new political situation and the growing self confidence of the Mafa population the old contradictions between the Fulbe and the Mafa re emerge the two *lamibe* do not keep as good a relation with each other as the former *lamibe* In 1992 they refused to gather together to pray for the festivities at the end of Ramadan Among the Mafa one hears the argument that they have enough of these *Madagali* Nigerian princes who raided them in the past reigning in Mokolo' The father of the present *lamido* (son of Yacouba) as well as the *lamido* himself, however were born and raised in Mokolo They could be called Mokolo'er as easily as the descendants of Fassaha or many other Muslim inhabitants in town

Women are becoming active in politics in the Muslim community In cooperation with the political parties, the *Maison des Femmes* recently organized, a public discussion forum on Violence against women' Also a new phenomenon is the organization of women s groups, which Mafa as well as Islamized women (together) attend and in which Fulbe women are becoming interested

II 3 Women

Until now we have discussed history in which women hardly and explicitly played an active role though many of the oral accounts were based on their views They certainly will get a more active say in the chapters to come, but before we go over to the second part of this theses I would like to quote the written statements dan Fodio made on women s position As a religion Islam is not only open to members of both sexes It also gives specific rules by which men as well as women not only have the right but also the obligation to be part of the Islamic community In Cameroon Islam is not a state religion Nonetheless Uthman dan Fodio s influence in the Islamic regions like the North is still very

much alive. Despite the fact that Islam is influenced by local Hausa, Fulbe and - in our region - Mala customs. As Smith stated in 1960:

> "The complexion of society in Northern Nigeria today continues to be basically determined by influences originating in the nineteenth century jihad"(H.F.C. Smith 1960:179).

Mallams (In Fulbe *Mallumbe*) in Mokolo know his name, know his ideas, and they know the rules he prescribed. So in this context, it is important to take notice of what Uthman dan Fodio said about women.

II 3.1 Uthman dan Fodio on women's position within Islam

Though he did not write a separate treatise on the status of women, his views can be gleaned from his many writings about reform of society in general (Boyd and Shagari 1978). I will follow Ogunbiyi (1969) in my reproduction of his writings. They deal with many aspects of the status of the Muslim woman from the day she reaches puberty till her death. We can group his writings on the status of women into several broad categories dealing with the most important aspects of their social life, legal rights, religious obligations, and education.
We must bear this ideology in mind when we discuss and analyze the changing position of women after Islamization in the chapters to come. Only then will we be able to determine against what background these changes take place.

Concerning marriage and sexual intercourse:
Uthman dan Fodio exhorted: "Oh company of youths, whoever among you is capable of fulfilling the sexual obligation of marriage, let him marry, for this serves to avert the eyes (from evil deeds, that is) and to preserve the privy parts."[39]

He further stated that no obstacles should be put in the way of girls to prevent them from marrying. This was probably a reaction to the fact that women in the former Hausa states who performed official political functions should not be married. The Qur'anic law that women as well as men have a right to a sexual life, but only within marriage, was clearly stressed and was followed by the Islamic community.
He was also of the opinion that any dowry agreed upon by the prospective husband and the woman's guardian, *(wali)* belonged to her alone and should thus

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11 *Ihya al sunna wa ikhmad al bida* (revival of the Prophet's Sunna and Suppression of Innovations) (Ibadan 82 55, 82/415 & CAD/10 Inst of African Studies, University of Ibadab, Al Bukhari, Muh b Isma ill, Al Jami al Sahih, Cairo 1348 1929/30) in I A Ogunbiyi)

be given to her. This complied with the Qur'anic ruling on dowry (*Ihya*), but not with Fulbe or Mafa custom

Married women's freedom of movement:
In his view, the Qur'an requires that women should be kept in seclusion within the home. He discussed twelve kinds of circumstances under which a woman might wish to get out of her marital home. Six of them concerned religious duties. She should be allowed to go out to the mosque, to Friday prayers, to festival or rain prayers, to burial or marriage ceremonials, on a pilgrimage, to the market, in search of knowledge, etc

A man's obligation to procure his wife's needs
A man had the obligation to take care of his wife's needs Dan Fodio said, "another practice is that of men who remain at home while their wives go to the market where they struggle and rub shoulders with men This is a forbidden innovation according to *ijma* and it is an imitation of Europeans."

A husband's legal rights over his wife:
Concerning recalcitrant women, he repeated the Qur'anic counsel which advises abstention from sexual intercourse and whipping in the case of one's wife (*Surah* 4, vers 34) The abstention should not last longer than one month and the beating should not be so severe as to cause her any physical deformity

Women's legal rights
A regular feature of the post-jihad period was the establishment of law courts Uthman stated that if any judge had cases involving women before him, he should set aside certain days for women's cases.

Pilgrimage.
Uthman dan Fodio would not object to a woman going on pilgrimage He did mention the reservation of some Muslim scholars, who considered old women more eligible for pilgrimage than young ones

Ritual impurity of menstruation:
He stated that menstruation constitutes a ritual impurity It was (is) improper during this period to pray or to fast (during *Ramadan*) A woman can make up for the missed period (of fasting) after her menstruation This fact was seen as an evidence of the defect in their religious service and underlined the inferior status of women.

Women s right to be educated

The most outstanding reform advocated by Uthman dan Fodio within the Hausa and Fulbe community of his time was the education of women (also Hiskett 1984) He inveighed against the *ulama* class for considering it more important to impart knowledge to their students than to teach their household "They treat their wives, daughters, and slaves like household implements which are used until they are broken and then thrown onto the rubbish heap '

Directing his address to Muslim women in this matter, he declared

'O Muslim women do not listen to the words of the misguided ones who seek to lead you astray by ordering you to obey your husbands instead of telling you to obey Allah and his Messenger They tell you that a woman s happiness lies in obeying her husband This is no more than a camouflage to make you satisfy their needs They impose on you duties which neither Allah nor his Messenger imposed on you They make you cook, wash clothes and do other things which they desire while they fail to teach you what Allah and His Apostle have prescribed for you Neither Allah nor His Apostle charges you with such duties [40]

He also stated that a woman ought to be allowed to go out in search of knowledge if her husband could not teach her [41] He not only advocated religious education for women but also emphasized the importance of giving them secular instruction connected with business transactions [42] However he stressed the need for her to be properly educated on the Islamic rules regulating business dealings

Ogunbiyi makes a reference concerning the educational situation It can be deduced from his arguments in favour of educational reform that women in the pre-jihad Hausa society were largely ignorant of Islamic precepts and practices They were only taught to be absolutely obedient to their husbands ' In this respect Dan Fodio's ideas concerning women and education were quite progressive He did not separate theory from practice concerning the education of women The women within his own family serve as good examples of the position women could obtain As Jean Boyd states, In the Fodio family the intellectualism of five generations of women can be traced in part our knowledge

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[40] In *Nur al albab* the Enlightenment of the Intellect In *Irshad al Ikhwan ila ahkam*

[41] (Also in *Irshad al Ikhwan cala jawa* Guidance for Brethern on the permissibility of holding classes for teaching women their individual religious obligations)

[4] In his *Ihya al summa*

is incomplete but there are 59 works written by eight women enough to demonstrate the existence of a group of highly intelligent educated articulate and determined people, some of whom felt motivated enough to set down their ideas in writing (Boyd 1986 127) She further states that the impression one gains from reading their works is that the women found intellectual delight in their writings They wrote in three languages, focusing on the defence of the caliphate which was under attack after Dan Fodio s death in 1817 and had to defend its political and spiritual cohesion, and on education and teaching (Boyd 1986 130 - 131) They taught and preached to men as well as women According to Boyd, it must not be assumed that because they were women their voices were not heard that their writings passed unnoticed their influence was marginal, or their authority did not pass beyond the walls of their rooms For example Asma'u sister of Muhammad Bello (successor to Uthman dan Fodio) had a close community of interest with her brother It is presumed that she had some influence on him (Boyd 1986 140) In an elegy written upon her death her youngest brother wrote

> We Shehu's children followed Ingi s leadership we loved and respected her
> They have written their elegies let me write mine
> Our lamp has been put out
> (Mariya Nana Asma u by Isa dan Fodio (1865) collected from a singer at Tambawal near Sokoto)

Respect for women as expressed in this poem certainly is a feature of Fulbe Islamic society in North Cameroon that cannot go unnoticed

Nowadays the role of Marabout is not by definition reserved for men In Mokolo girls attend to Qur an-schools as much and as young as boys do All my Muslim women friends knew how to read and write in Arabic Sometimes they were better at it than their husbands This just depends on the level of individual education

Only an anthropological perspective can elucidate the integration of Mafa society into the Islamic community the position of women in Mafa Islamized society and their relations with men First we have to trace women s position in pre Islamic society on various levels In doing so we must remember that Islam became a Fulbe ethnic marker and has incorporated aspects of Fulbe pre-Islamic culture that are presented as Islamic To Mafa women, it is absolutely unclear where Fulbe custom stops and Islamic ideology begins In this respect the views of Uthman dan Fodio are revealing as he based his standpoint on Arab scholarship and has had an enormous influence on the Fulbe community over the past 150 years

Part II: Religion, Symbolism and the Economics of Reproduction

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Part II: Religion, Symbolism and the Economics of Reproduction

Maama Laila, a Mafa woman of about 55, who Islamized after two marriages in the mountains, tells us her motives to change religion and the actual changes this brought about in her life

Concerning the view of her own life

> Me, Daada Remout [mother of Remout, my son], I like to trade to find some money. I will buy my own piece of land and I will build my own house there. And then I also like to have a person beside me with whom I can talk [So to have a husband is always nice, she means]. And if one day I will no longer be alive, my daughter, the mother of Laila, can take it together with my trade and then if one day she does no longer get along with her husband, she can live in that house

Life history

> I had several husbands
> The first one had been chosen for me by my father [in the mountains]. It was the father of Daada Laila (her daughter). I got two children with him and then I left. I remarried with somebody else. We stayed together for twelve years without having children. Then I left him. People told me that it was my first husband who caused this [her sterility during this period]
> I Islamized and when I became Muslim I had two more husbands
>
> I was born in Mokola [next to Mokolo, direction Cosa]
> My father's clan was *Datsama zlagam*,
> I do not know my *kuyuk* [mother's patri clan] any more. Perhaps my big brother knows. I never knew my mother. She died when I was still very little.
> When I married for the first time, I already had my periods. It went like this: One day my father said to me, "You will go away to be married." I asked him, "Where?" "At that one's place." I told him that I did not want it. He took the piece of branch and hit me. Then they took me and brought me over to his place. I did not stay with the father of my husband before the marriage [as is usual with the Mafa to learn from the mother-in-law], I went directly to my husband's place. He already had one other wife. I stayed with him for eight years
> So it was with the first husband that I had my daughter Daada Laila, whom you know very well. There was still another girl, but she died at the age of five. When I was with this husband, I worked in the fields and

harvested, I raised chickens, I cut wood, I fetched water, all those things a woman does.
I did my sacrifice in my own personal jar, I prepared the *zom*, the millet beer, and I knew all the things a Mafa woman was supposed to know.
After eight years I left my husband, he made me suffer. When my father saw this he said to him, "It was me who gave you my daughter and now you make her suffer. Give me back my daughter." I went back to live with my father. You see, in those days we still walked around naked and when the white men came they said we ought to put clothes on. He had not given me any.

Bridewealth of the Mafa

My father gave back the bridewealth, but my husband lied and raised the amount. He had given only six goats and he said afterwards that he had given ten. In those days money was not involved yet. Then I got the other husband and it is with him that I stayed for twelve years without having any children. Then I left, because I did not have them. To him we did not pay back the bridewealth.

Magic

My first husband had said: "She will only get more children if she returns to me. If not she will never have children any more." So I wanted to return to my first husband but my father said, "As he lied and raised the bridewealth I do not want you to return to him. There are all sorts of methods to cause sterility like this. You can take the hair of a person, or the dirty clothes. That you mix with the millet, with the peanuts, with the goat fat, with the chicken one eats. Then if you eat it, you do not get any more children. I do not think that here in town, they do those sorts of things. Although, even after my first husband died, I still did not get any children. Both women and men can do those sorts of things.

Concerning the actual process of Islamization

So after I left my second husband, I Islamized. They brought me to the Marabout; I left the house, with the clothes I was wearing at that time. I would not return again in those clothes. I knew that when the Marabout would wash me, he would take those old clothes and that he would give me other new clothes. He showed me how I should wash my hands, my

feet, how I should pray and how I should wash my face, how I should put water into my mouth twice and then start praying...that's all. I Islamized

Concerning the reason to Islamize

I decided to Islamize because I was angry. My second husband had told me, "As you do not get any children, it is better that you return to your first husband who has said that your sterility is caused by him. Otherwise, when you get old, you will blame me for the fact that you do not have any children and that I did not let you go." But when I left to return to my first husband, my brother stopped me. He said "You cannot go back to him, because he lied and raised the bridewealth".
Then I said "All right, if it is like that, I will become Muslim and in that way none of you have any say over me any more."

Concerning the view of the hereafter

If you Islamize, they do not have any influence any more. Because you see, if you were Mafa and become Muslim and let the Mafa influence you, go back to them again, then, when you die, you will no longer be with the Mafa, with the people of the mountains [because you Islamized]. But you will not be with the Muslims either [because you did not completely follow their way]. You will remain somewhere in the middle, you will be wandering around in your grave. It is like it is now. If Mafa women are together to talk and a Muslim woman goes up to them, they will say, "But you are a Muslim woman, what brings you to us" And the Muslim women will say the same thing to a Mafa woman.

Concerning current relations between Mafa and non-Mafa women

A Mafa woman who knows Allah can stay with another Mafa woman. They can eat together (if it has not been prepared by the non-Islamized woman), but they cannot sleep on the same mat. If the Mafa woman takes the piece of cloth of the Muslim woman, she won't be able to use it any more for praying.
For example, if my eldest brother would die now (he is still doing his sacrifices), then I will go to his funeral with the other Muslim women. They give us a special mat to sit on. All the Muslim women who come to mourn will sit on that mat. We get special water, separate from the water other people drink. We will not eat their food, we will not drink

their water We will not sing we will not dance We will only pray for the one who is dead and that is all

This change in life is not difficult Even for me now, I still have my big brother and if I have money, I buy clothes or I prepare something good to eat and I bring it to them If their children come up to me I give them money But I cannot decide to go to my brother and to stay with him for a couple of days because I cannot stay to sleep with them (I cannot stay overnight) People in the mountains always think that the Muslims have more money But if they themselves are rich, they can do the same things give peanuts or millet or a chicken to the one comes to visit them

I wouldn't know if my father would have agreed to me becoming a Muslim He had already died by that time My big brother said he did not care I could choose my own religion it wouldn t make any difference to him if he had a sister with another religion You see my eldest brother does his sacrifice the second brother had become a Christian and I became Muslim

Concerning her actions after her decision to Islamize

When I wanted to Islamize I stayed with another member of my family who lived in town somebody who was already Islamized They as well told me it is better to Islamize

In the same way a Mafa girl can come to live with me if she wants to Islamize Then I go to the Marabout to the *Mallamjo* to tell him and then he will see to it that she will be Islamized But it was also my own will to become Muslim You see I didn't have any more children They always told me to do such and such sacrifice Everybody came to eat with me because of this offering every time they told me to prepare food to prepare millet beer, to cook a chicken or goat Finally I told myself it is better to leave all the sacrifices behind me and Islamize Then I can pray to Allah You see the Mafa call their God *Ngile* the Muslims call him Allah It is always the same God But instead of making an offering if one has become Muslim one prays

Concerning changes in situation

Yes I cannot drink any more but some people who have Islamized still drink the millet beer It is better to stop it though

Before I used to dance I still know it a bit but I have forgotten most of it We can sing now to amuse ourselves but we can no longer drink and sing together I do not want it any more either

Concerning changes in religion

I have thrown away my personal jar You see my jar now is to pray five times a day like the others do

No I never thought that my ancestors would get angry They do not live any more do they?

I cannot write or read in Arabic The Marabout the *Mallumjo* has only taught me to pray Of course if I would have the time I could always go on to read and write But you see we as women we are always very busy I do not find the time

Of course there are also men who are always busy and occupied But for a Marabout it is his work to read and write and to teach the children the Qur an and all the others that want to learn Those who have enough money can take a Marabout only for their own children and at the end of the month give him some money

Concerning the Islamic community

There are many things that have changed since I became Islamized You see in the mountains if you do not have a friend or a family member and you die there is nobody to take care of you Here in town even if you do not have friends or a husband if they see that you pray every day your neighbors or other people can bury you So being a Muslim is better

Concerning the change in inheritance system

That is not why I told my daughter [who was raised with her first husband] to Islamize I never told her anything but she saw it herself and she wanted to become like me And you see how things work out well? When my daughter would still be in the mountains and I die they would not give her anything of mine and I think that is bad [she means she would not inherit] But now as she also Islamized she can take all that belongs to me

If for example I have a house she will be able to take it over with all the other stuff and the business I have With the Mala if a person does not have children the family will take it Otherwise the children will share

it but only the boys, not the girls I think that is not good, wasn t the father who died the father of the girl as well? But with the Muslims they share equally between boys and girls

Concerning the relation between man and wife

It was ten years ago that I Islamized I never stayed longer than three months without a husband so before the present husband I had another one But I divorced him and I remarried with this one Because if a man tells you 'I no longer love you, leave this house,' and you wait for three months and ten days you can remarry again It is not like with the Mafa, where the husband tells his wife to leave, and she stays and afterwards when he has calmed down she can stay

With the Muslims it is better You see there are girls who do not like the men they married First he says ' I love you ' If after some days he says 'I no longer love you," she is very happy to be able to leave

It is true with the Mafa men and women do very many things together like dancing and singing and drinking beer Muslim men and women do not drink beer they do not talk together or leave together to take a walk If a man has two wives and if one of them prepares the food the man cannot stay and talk with the other woman who has not prepared He can only talk to the one who prepares But the next day he will go to the room of the other wife who will be preparing then The turn of the first wife is over then

If a man has his own personal room, the woman will go to his room to spend the night If he does not have a room of his own he comes to sleep with the woman in her room If the man has more wives he gives the key of his own personal room to the wife that prepares that day so that she can sweep the room and wait for him there With the Mafa the man goes to sleep with the wife he likes best even if she has not prepared that day With the Muslims though, if your husband would never sleep with you any more your heart would not like it Everybody knows this rule If my husband has slept with me tonight, he will not enter my room the next day He only greets me If he would do otherwise the other women would start to get jealous If the first wife prepares today and I would start a discussion with my husband the other woman would get angry and may start a serious argument, because you talked to the husband who was for the other wife that day Even if somebody of my family came today to visit him I cannot speak to him if it is not my turn I cannot talk with

him today, nor tomorrow, only the day after tomorrow, when he will come up to my room again.

Concerning the change in bridewealth system

I had two husbands since I Islamized, but I did not have any more children and now I am too old. And as I have my grandchildren, I do not think of having children of my own any more. I can always stay next to them (they live around the corner).

When my daughter married, her father, so my first husband, was still alive. They gave him money as bridewealth, so he could buy what he wanted for himself, and he did not give anything to the girl. As he lived in the mountains, he wanted money in return for his daughter. But he gave her nothing in return, as is the custom with the Muslims. So it was me who gave her the plates and the bed. So did the other members of the family where I stayed when I Islamized. They also gave her plates and things for the wedding. Because now, they consider themselves as her father, since we stayed with them before. For example, if she, my daughter, would get angry [at her husband and leave him, she means], she would go to them. If her father would still have been alive, she could have gone to him, in the mountains. But then he still would not have been able to deal with things like the Fulbe do. So it would always have been better if she would go in such cases to those Islamized members of the family in town.

The father of my daughter absolutely did not like it when he heard she wanted to become a Muslim. He said, "All right, when she Islamizes I want a lot, a lot of money for her." That wasn't very nice, because you see, if he would have been a Muslim himself, he would have been the one who had to give her money and other things so that she could get married.

Concerning the change in economic occupation

I started to trade when I came to live in town. I no longer prepared the millet beer as I did before, so I said to myself, "It is better to start trading, because you need some money." The Mafa women can also prepare millet beer. With the Muslims, if the wife does not make peanut oil, or beignets of bean flower, then there is not much left for her to do than trading. Mafa women can do other things.

Since I Islamized, I have never cultivated any more. I had a Muslim husband and the religion says it is no good for a woman to cultivate.

> My husband also buys the water, so we do not have to fetch it ourselves. We as women, we only prepare. He does not want us to leave to fetch water. My husband is Kapsiki [another ethnic group]. There are Muslim men, though, who leave it to their wives to fetch the water themselves. But that is not good, somewhere there is something they did not understand very well.

From this woman, Maama Laila (grandmother of Laila) we learned that many aspects of daily life change after a woman has converted. In the second part of this thesis, we will deal with the changes in religion, in rituals, in bridewealth and the marriage system and in the ordinary activities of daily life.

Chapter III
"We always used to leave behind our jar": understanding conversion of women

The previous chapter placed conversion to Islam in a historical context as a process of cultural change embedded in the specific history in the area
At the level of the individual as in the example of Maama Laila this process is expressed as a transition from one state of affairs to another (Peel 1990) Maama Laila s life has changed drastically she no longer brews or drinks millet beer, she no longer makes the sacrifices she has started to pray as the Muslims do and has even adopted another name In this chapter we will describe the religious practices of the Mafa people the place of women within these practices and the actual changes that occur after Islamization

We mentioned that the history of the spread of Islam has left out women ignoring the different roles the genders may play within this process The same applies to the history of conversion to other world religion as it takes place in Africa in general Until now no one to our knowledge has ever asked how in these processes women's position has been affected
My attempt to tackle this question in regard to Mafa women will be organized around Horton's theory of African conversion as the general features he describes correspond with the Mafa cosmological and religious order (Horton 1971 1975) I am aware of the critics that have been formulated on his theory but without necessarily agreeing with all the points of departure of the author I recognize the merits of his theory in understanding the process of conversion in this particular area Its value lies in the fact that it focused discussion on the central issue of why conversion to a world religion has taken place on such a large scale over the past century, and that it has helped identify the 'factors relevant to conversion (Peel 1990 338)

III 1. Understanding conversion: the supreme being and lesser spirits

Horton s theory was developed to make sense of a large but puzzling accumulation of data relating to conversion It starts with the idea of a basic African cosmology which has a two tiered structure The first tier is that of the

lesser spirits; the second, that of the Supreme Being (Horton 1971; 1975). The lesser spirits underpin events and processes in the microcosm of the local community and its environment, while the Supreme Being relates to events and processes in the macrocosm - i.e. the world as a whole . As I will elaborate below, this applies to Mafa cosmology.

As the microcosm forms part of the macrocosm, the lesser spirits are conceived to be either manifestions of the Supreme Being or entities ultimately deriving their power from Him. Where subsistence farming dominates the way of life and commerce is poorly developed, social relations are likely to be confined by the boundaries of the microcosm. People will be aware of the wider world, but they will perceive it as an arena that does not directly concern them.

The situation is very different, however, where there is a development of factors allowing wider communication (for instance, long-distance trade; or, as in our case, intrusion into the area by the Fulbe, whereby many Mafa people were taken as slaves and became part of a completely different world). Horton argues that the social life of those involved will no longer be as strongly confined by the boundaries of their microcosm as in the preceding centuries. Indeed, many of their relationships will cut dramatically across these boundaries. Given the same 'basic' cosmology, religious life is likely to take a somewhat different form in this situation. Less attention will be paid to the spirits and more to the Supreme Being. In such case, a change of religion towards Islam for example, is likely, since Islam accords Allah, as the Supreme Being, the most important role.

Horton hopes this scheme will provide a basis for understanding the outcome of exposure to Islam and Christianity. When local communities are encapsulated in larger wholes after conversion, the change of religion will be less drastic; the new adepts will continue to pay attention to the lesser spirits. If the micro boundaries completely disappear, however, the change will be radical.

In a situation where microcosmic boundaries are dissolving, exposure is likely to have more 'positive' consequences, which in this context means that a world religion is more easily accepted. But even then, acceptance of Islamic or Christian patterns will be highly selective. Which elements are accepted or rejected will be largely determined by the structure of the 'basic' cosmology, and by the limits this structure imposes on the cosmology's potential for
response to social change. This view of the reaction to Islam leads Horton to refer to conversion as a catalyst for changes that were 'in the air' anyway.

Horton's argument drew severe criticism. Fisher (Africa 1973: 27-40) objected that the theory did not account for variation in the concept and cult of the Supreme Being in settings not influenced by Islam. In a reaction to this critique, Horton concentrated his attention on Islam in West Africa, taking the Fulbe as

an example He posits that non-militant Islam was embodied in the rulers who adopted Islam because they continued to regard themselves as rulers in traditional religions (and thus combined the Islamic cult of the Supreme Being with the cults of the lesser spirits) These developments never really affected the nomadic Fulbe population who were involved in subsistence economies Those people remained firmly circumscribed by the boundaries of their local microcosms

Members of trading communities broke away to a greater extent from these primal microcosms They became deeply involved in the cult of the Supreme Being Concerning the Fulbe, who were at the forefront of the *jihad* led by Uthman dan Fodio Horton quotes Stenning (1966) who states that as their life was pervasively dualistic so too was their religious life For the corporate affairs of clans and lineages, and of the welfare of the clan and lineage herds, the *Wodaabe* a particular group of Fulbe nomads, [4] rely entirely upon their pre-Islamic cults Equally in the context of the individual s fortunes and of external affairs they depend as strongly on the Islamic cult of the Supreme Being (Stenning 1966 387 - 400 in Horton 1975 378)

Horton thus concludes that the pastoralists appeared to be like the first rulers who adopted Islam they were thoroughgoing Pagans in some contexts and thoroughgoing Muslims in others

The boundaries of Mafa cosmology to use Horton s terminology were opened up when the Fulbe expanded their political arena and were able with the help of the colonial powers, to establish a Muslim community in the midst of a Mafa area The Fulbe extended their influence to North Cameroon and at the beginning of this century the Mokolo plateau In Mokolo from 1948 onwards also a Muslim ruler of Mafa origin was appointed to be in charge of the non-Islamic population next to the *lamido*, who took care of the affairs of the Islamic population

We may assume that at the beginning of this century the political changes did not influence the Mafa living in agrarian settings They continued their lives as before, except that there always was a danger that raiding Fulbe would pass through the area As a preemptive measure they moved their compounds, *gays* to impenetrable places high in the mountains But among those who were taken as slaves, the microcosmic boundaries opened up dramatically to say the least In a later period, Islam offered an alternative to the traditional way of life for many people Those who had relatives in the Muslim community that is in

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4 The Woodabe are a group of Fulbe nomads living in Niger They have been described extensively by Dupire 1960 Stenning 1966 and recently by Bonfiglioli 1988

Mokolo or Koza, could try to make a living different from the way of their parents. Though young men may have moved to these urban centers for economic reasons - for shortage of land, in exchange for food, attracted by stories from their age mates, looking for a different way to earn a living - their change in lifestyle came to include a change of religion. For girls land shortage seldom was a force pushing them in the direction of urban centers, as they never could own land anyhow. But 'going to live with an aunt or uncle' or adoption by Islamic families, were often given as starting points of the individual process of Islamization, and they do in fact still play a role.

Horton concludes that his theory accounts rather nicely for an otherwise puzzling pattern of phenomena. The selective and differential responses become visible as a set of adaptations of religious life. The postulates of the 'basic' cosmology dictate differing degrees of dissolution of microcosmic boundaries. If we follow Horton's lead, we need to find out what the basic Mafa cosmology looks like and whether knowledge of it can explain why Mafa women tend to change religion at a later age then men.

Horton did not differentiate between a process of conversion for men and women. Yet since the structures of the basic cosmology, and its limits, can vary for men and women, we suggest that the catalyst for changes may differ as well and it seems a necessary amplification to differentiate the whole process along gender lines.

The literature on the spread of Islam seems to posit a passive role for women, if it takes account of women at all. Trimingham, who wrote extensively about Islam in West Africa, is the only one to briefly mention the role and position of women in the process of Islamization. The author (1968:47) opines that the conversion process created a division between men and women. Male converts are more inclined to become devoted Muslims, he states, whereas women appeared to hold on to their traditional cults much longer. This could lead to different perspectives of reality. Women, by clinging to ancient cults and practices, ensure that the family makes the best of two worlds (Trimingham 1959: 102 note 105, 110). It is instructive to compare Trimingham's views with those of Edwin and Shirley Ardener (1975). They centered their accounts around the key notion of differential responses by the sexes to economic and social opportunities, although they did not study Islamization or, more general, conversion processes. Edwin Ardener was of opinion that, on the level of observation in fieldwork, the behavior of women has been exhaustively plotted. But he felt there was an imbalance on a second "meta" level, due to the dominance of men in the field. Besides, women could not be as easily reached as men: "They giggle when young, snort when old or reject the question" (1975: 1 ff.).

Edwin Ardener argues that the models of men were accepted in society thus the perspective of men is actualized in society and is dominant Women s views were subdominant not on the surface of social discourse if they wished to express themselves they had to adjust to male models In dominant discourse and on a symbolic level women form a muted' group If an anthropologist wants to find out the vision of women, s/he needs to study the rituals and symbols of women Shirley Ardener adds that members of the muted group are inclined to be more conservative once they have aligned themselves with the dominant system, because they put so much effort and mental energy into adapting In this way systems that may be oppressive to women can be maintained by members of their own sex This could apply specifically to elderly women as they are usually in a better position to adopt male models in society Consequently changes are hard to bring about (S Ardener 1975)

This mutedness' of women may explain their absence in most of the literature To remedy this one has to gain direct access to this section of the population Such an effort pays off the open and articulate responses of women to my queries, as presented in this thesis belie the point of the Ardeners that women would only giggle or snort when questioned However the suggestion of the Ardeners to search for their 'models , is worthwhile pursuing for this type of enquiry

To recover the non hegemonic voices and practices of subject people requires a fundamentally different form of analysis as Scott (1990 18) argues He suggests the concept of hidden transcript to characterize discourse that takes place 'offstage (1990 4) or beyond direct observation by powerholders The prudent subordinate Scott (1990 36) continues will ordinarily conform by speech and gesture to what he (she) knows is expected of him (or her) - even if that conformity masks a quite different offstage opinion

We are concerned here with a society in which women live in a patriarchal power structure In this context the word patriarchal is used to indicate a form of social organization in which the father or the eldest male is recognized as the head of the family and in which descent and kinship is traced through the male line Residence is virilocal How can the fact that women more often convert at a later age than men be understood? To answer this question we will need to explore the basic Mafa cosmology to find out how the positions of the genders are related to this cosmology as we do not expect men and women to be equally involved in it

Can the conversion of women be considered as an act of deviance or protest on the part of a member of a subdominant group? As reasons for their change women often mention the fact that they did not bear any (more) children that their children had died or that some other misfortune had struck them and that

none of the sacrifices they had tried worked anymore. How can it be understood that thereupon the religious and symbolic languages they had espoused before are discarded altogether after conversion; or are perhaps the Islamized Mafa women as dualistic in their religious lives as the Fulbe whom Horton took as an example? If so, are women inclined to be more conservative in their religious practices - before Islamization, by rejecting conversion; and after Islamization, by sticking to their old religious practices longer than men? Do women hold on to traditional cults and rituals, as was suggested by Trimingham? Finally, do we not need to doubt the dualistic character of all the models given as they seem to exclude all other alternative religious combinations?
In the next sections we will concentrate on the findings from this particular area. The actual change in religion is central to the discussion.

III 2. Mafa religious life

The description of the Mafa's cosmological world will elucidate the two tiered structure Horton spoke about. In the society we are concerned with here, the religious system pervades daily life. Religion is interwoven to such an extent with political and economic activities that it is rather artificial to separate these universes. Yet, for analytical reasons, I had to detach the important religious acts from these other levels of social behavior.

III 2.1 Mafa cosmology

Perhaps the first useful distinction is between ordinary decent persons and evil people 'soulcaters', *mide*. Mafa society consists of human beings: women, men and children. But a person of either sex can also be or become an 'evil person' who eats souls, a *mide*. This is never visible on the outside. The victim only knows afterwards that s/he has been struck when s/he slowly 'wastes away'. The *mide* is viewed as an extremely negative force in society against which many religious rites are performed.
A Mafa healing woman explains to us:

> "From the *mide* you may catch diseases people from the hospital are unable to diagnose. The *mide* takes your soul and slowly eats it. But if you go to the blacksmith wife she will find the cause right away. If it had not been induced too long ago, she can still cure it.
> I can take a goat and put it on the chest of the ill person. It will be like a doctor who gives blood to the weak to cure them. By the blood of the goat the heart that had been taken by the *mide* will descend to the place where it ought to be and the person will be cured. Very often *mide* have

a serpent in the belly When they give birth the serpent comes out and they will cry and the blacksmith wife will chase the other people away When the child is born the serpent will lick the child and when the placenta has also been born the serpent will return to the belly If other people would see the serpent they would surely kill it and then the woman would die too The blacksmith wife then needs to promise not to tell anything to other people

As I said, most of these women are *mude* and because she is *mude* she will never give birth to twins, because twins are clairvoyant

Men can also be *mude* but they do not have serpents in their belly as they do not give birth And then you have the *mude* whose teeth grow a little and who can cast the evil eye and you have those *mude* who have the measles in their body they can pass on to others so they will die You have also those who have the snake in their head If they want to give something bad to somebody else and they do not succeed it will turn on themselves and they will die

And then you still have others but of one thing you can be sure the *mude* 's body is always filled with bad things'

In addition the world of the Mafa is inhabited by non human beings the spirits Above all creatures we find the Supreme Being God called *Irgile*

The lesser spirits are *jigile gedfek* and *jegele* who can be considered as protector gods *jigilé ngwazi ri vavai* [the protector god for women] and the *guid pats* the tutelary spirits of every human being The Mafa also worship their ancestors because they protect the living beings Feminine ancestors are *mama* and *djedje*, masculine ancestors are called *baba* and *bab baba* Schematically Mafa cosmology looks as follows

God the Ultimate Being (procreator of the world)
Irgile
lesser spirits (small gods, non hierarchically ordered)
jigilé-gedfek
jégele
Iudara
jigile ngwazi ri vavai
tutelary spirits
guid pats
ancestors
feminine masculine
mama djedje baba, bab baba

The most important feature of Mafa religion is the sacrifice that is offered to *Jigilé*, God. During these sacrifices people request all sorts of help from *Jigilé*. An informant, obviously male, stated that he would ask for women, millet, goats and sheep, peace and rain. Confronted with this statement, my female assistant added a list of things women may ask for: a good husband, millet, a good harvest of peanuts and beans and above all children.
But *Jigilé* is so far away - almost like a *Deus otiosus* - that it is considered better policy to put one's requests to the lesser spirits, who were sent by *Jigilé* and entrusted with the mission to protect the people. Many of these lesser spirits are represented by a jar.

Representation of Jigilé (After Boisseau and Soula 1974)

III 2.2 The different stakes of the genders in religion

Most sacrifices are performed by the father, *bab gay*, as he bears the responsibility for the household. Where the welfare of the clan is concerned sacrifices can be performed by specialists. If the sacrifices are to further the well-being of children and the growth of crops owned by women, the latter perform them. In most of these cases the advice of the diviner is still needed.
The fact that we are dealing with a patriarchal society, with the *gay* as a basic unit, is reflected in the sacrifices that are performed. These are mostly in the interest of the *gay*, though some are in the interest of the clan or serve to strengthen ties between the clan brothers. The burden of sacrificing lies upon the

male population This reflects the fact that women are a transient population By several marriages women can come to live in many different areas during a lifetime They remain members of their own patrilinage and the *gay* of their father [44] We will see that women play a rather passive role in Mafa religious life whereas men have an active role Thus the genders have a totally different stake in Mafa religon

Furthermore every member of society sacrifices to her or his own tutelary spirit The various sacrifices have different names, depending where they are performed In scheme the sacrifices are as follows

Sacrifices made for	performed by
well being of the family (sacrifice in his personal jar *guid pat*)	father
special role for second son *m matslai*	
well-being of the family (sacrifice in jars *jigile jigile gedfek* or near tree in front of the house *woef varmagay* or on the rock in front of the house *godokwom varmagay*)	father
special role for eldest daughter *dem tsava*	
strengthening the ties of brothers (sacrifice in jar *jegéle*)	father
- strengthening the ties with in laws (sacrifice in jar *ludara*)	father
well being of the clan (sacrifice by the eye of God *di mbulom*) and for peace and victory during war for the clan (sacrifice by the (3)[45] eye of the tree, *di woef*, or the (+) eye' of the mountain *di-kokor*) (1)	mountain chief blacksmith male child man repr wife
- well-being of every individual (sacrifice	

[44] The patriclan of the mother the *kuyuk* is also important as we will find out in Chapter 5 Up to the third generation people should not marry within the mother s clan Marriage within the patrilinear clan is always prohibited To my knowledge the importance of the mother s line is only demonstrated in the sacrifice for *mama* the feminine ancestor

[45] These numbers 3 + 1 will be explained later

in personal jar, guid pat)		mother;father; child
- well-being of children and crops (sacrifice		
in personal jar *guid pat*	mother;father	
or jar *ngwazi ri vavai*)	mother	
- well-being of the ancestors *ludargala*		women-men

III 2.2.1 The different roles of women and men

As described in the first chapter, the society concerned here is patriarchal. The house and the household, jointly called *gay* [46], is the most important and basic unit. Every *gay* represents an independent entity and forms about the highest political unit. The father of the household, *bab gay*, is responsible for the welfare of the *gay*. He is related to other households by his clan, the *gwali*. Descent is patrilinear.

Though the father of the household, the *bab gay* is about the highest political power, there is a plethora of diviners who may be consulted.
First of all, there is the *ndo-pikwa*, the diviner, who can tell with the aid of his or her stones what sacrifices are needed in particular sitations. The diviners themselves say that they are clairvoyants. Some people are clairvoyants by definition: twins or those who fall into the same category (like those who were born feet first). Being a diviner is very often also inherited from one of the parents.
The blacksmith, *ngwalda*, has advisory functions especially during funerals. The mountain chief performs the rituals and sacrifices on the mountain that are in the interest of the whole clan. The cricket chief supervises the sacrifices to chase away the crickets or prevent them from eating the millet or from coming at all.

[46] We could compare the *gay* with the *domus*, as described by Le Roy Ladurie in his book Montaillou. "Economically and emotionally as well as in regard to descent, house and family meant everything to the inhabitants. The *domus*, or group of people living together under one roof, was the most essential concept, ruling most other central and additional aspects of this society" (1984:44) (trans.J.v.S)

The rain chief becomes active when the rainy season approaches, because of the importance of rain, this chief can hold considerable power. [47]
Nevertheless, the fact that women play a passive role and the genders have a different stake in Mafa religion, the description of the different sacrifices in the following sections will throw light upon the fact that a woman's role in religious life may be passive but it is still rather important. She needs to prepare the millet beer, a necessary ingredient for a sacrifice. And most importantly, she has to attend.
Men perform most religious acts, they perform the sacrifice, as they are responsible for the well-being of the family and the clan. But a woman's place in rituals and sacrifices is indispensable. She needs to be present, or else misfortune would fall upon the father. But she should literally remain silent - muted - while the men act. She does not bear final responsibilities for the welfare of the whole community, yet she is at the center of the cosmos, as she is related with the inside of the *gay*, which is considered a safe (and sacred) place. Inside one stores the jars, and in the second hut (of the second wife) underneath the granary that is so important and well hidden for the outside world, the jar of the twins is stored.

Before describing the various sacrifices, I will introduce *Irgilé*, the Supreme Being, and the lesser spirits to the reader because of their importance in Mafa life. For linguistic convenience I will refer to God, *Irgilé* in the masculine form. [48]

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[47] In 1987 the rains failed to come. Every sacrifice made by the rain chief that had no effect was spoiled by misbehavior - so he claimed - on the part of the population. At a certain point the rain chief in Mandaka even asked for the sacrifice of children. This could be considered a real abuse of his power. People in the neighborhood kept their children indoors. At this point I went to visit and talk with him. At first the conversation was quite normal. Then at a certain point he started rolling his eyes. He cried that he kept snakes everywhere, near his hut and that he could order them to come in at any time. Then a relative came in and said he could not speak to me about the secrets. The rainchief told me I had to be very careful, as his snakes could always find me wherever I was at any time of the day and that they could easily visit me at my own place. During my fieldwork period I was hardly ever frightened. But when I walked home after that visit I kept looking behind me to see if a snake was following me and unconsciously speeded up. I slept very restlessly that night.

[48] I will write *Irgilé* (God with a capital letter). When I mean the jar *irgilé* I will not use a capital letter.

III 2.2.2 The Supreme Being and the lesser spirits

The Mafa believe that the world was created by a single God. They call him *Jigilé*. He is always interested in his creatures and can do with the world and the people whatever he likes. He is the giver of all life. The Mafa ask him things, no matter of what kind. Everything that happens within the world is the will of *Jigilé*. But he is so far away that belief in him and demands on him are separated into demands on all sorts of lesser spirits that surround the Mafa people. These spirits were entrusted by *Jigilé* with the mission to protect the people. Consequently, in the religious practices of the Mafa it is nearly impossible to differentiate between the spirits and *Jigilé*, the Supreme Being. If the Mafa make a sacrifice to a tutelary god, they will always be inclined to say that it is for *Jigilé*. We could say that through the spirits, the Supreme Being becomes more concrete. *Jigilé* is always represented with his right arm (right is the female, left the male side) in the air. The spirits may be represented with smaller arms, but these do not point in the air.
The sacrifices offered to *Jigilé* are often made indirectly through sacrifices to the spirits or to the ancestors. Nevertheless, we cannot consider the lower spirits as intermediaries between God and human beings; albeit small, they are gods all the same. God guides life by way of the small gods and the dead. Small gods are mainly there to protect people, but if human beings don't carry out the sacrifices as they should, the spirits leave them to their own devices.

III 2.2.3 The tutelary spirits

The identity of the tutelary spirit is exactly the same as that of the person he or she protects. People say this guardian is like a 'shadow':

> "...these are the ones that are always next to you. If you marry, your shadow marries; if you have a child, your shadow has a child; if you are a thief, your shadow is a thief; and if you die, your shadow dies. They are like twins..."

So every person is always a double being, with a visible and an invisible part. Behind everything, every being, there is an entity that is double to support the visible one (Boisseau and Soula 1974:203). Or, as we will see in Chapter IV, this comprises a twin principle (see also van Santen 1989). This double entity is a feature that occurs in other African societies as well. Thomas remarks thus:

> "*La notion de double est particulièrement multivoque. Si l'on entend par double l'animal totémique, la parenté de destin est flagrante entre le sujet et son double symbolique: en vertu de leur participation ontologique et existentielle, la mort de l'un entraine la mort de l'autre. Quand le double*

désigne l'ombre, celle qui est comparable à l'âme légère ou l'âme-oiseau'
(Thomas 1982 88)

This shadow, which we call a tutelary spirit, has given the child to a spirit, who put it in the belly of the mother and will accompany her or him from birth till death. It serves especially to protect people against the *mude*, who can eat human souls.

During the night when people are asleep, the tutelary spirit takes the soul, *mejeb*, with him or her. Now if, for example, my tutelary spirit is not satisfied with me she can leave my soul behind during the night. This means that the *mude* the soul eater can come and easily take my soul and that my tutelary spirit is just leaving me to die. The Mafa call this 'a bad death'. It is never really another human being who harms someone; it is always God who castigates the individual by withholding protection or even a direct action.

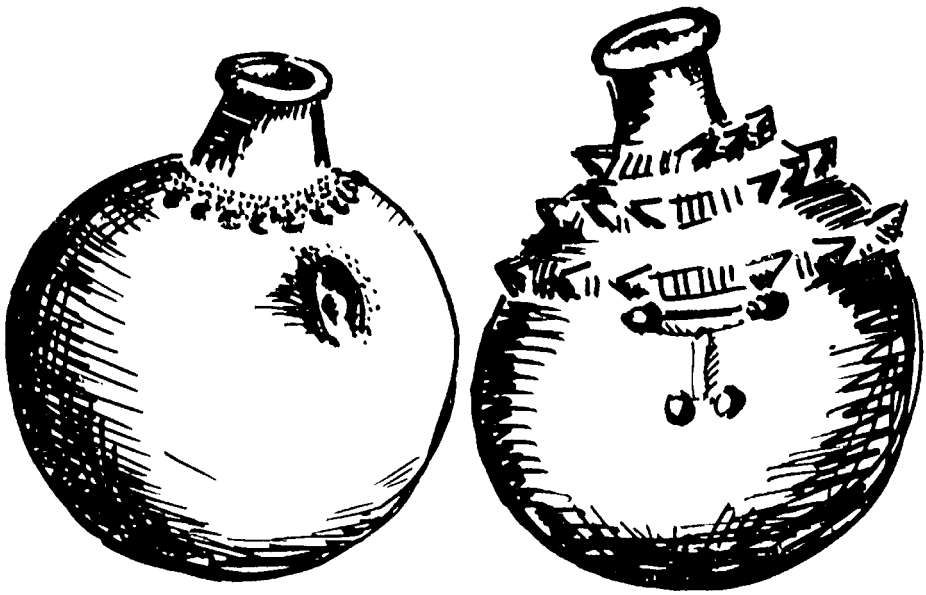
Jigile, the Supreme Being, also has his own tutelary spirit. If he, *Jigile* must make a sacrifice to his own tutelary spirit he offers human beings. In that case he tells the tutelary spirit of those human beings to go and gather some souls. As he is the Supreme Being he can do with life whatever he wants. So the tutelary spirits will do as they were told. They give the souls to *Jigile* who can be so kind as to make them return to the human beings again, in that way continuing the life of those persons on earth. He can also crush them as a sacrifice to his own tutelary spirit. Then the owner of the soul on earth will die a better death than the one described above, though dying remains awkward, as my informants stated.

III 2 2 4 Ancestors

When a person dies, the jar called *guud pat* is broken. But another jar will be made for the deceased by the potter, if the diviner has so instructed. The first-born son will keep the jar of the father, *baba*, the last born son will keep that of the mother, *mama*, as he remains in the compound where he was born. His mother will stay with him, whether she is alive or dead. If a person has no male children his first-born girl will have the jar made for her parents. She will do the sacrifices that need to be performed well. They, the dead, can get angry and cause direct misfortune to children. For example, if a child does not listen to her or his father or if it does not follow the customs, *Jigile* gives permission to bring misfortune.

If the person who performs the sacrifice for his or her parents dies, the jars are broken and thrown onto the path leading to her or his grave. New jars will be made afterwards and the next generation will continue to hold the sacrifice. Then

the eldest child of the youngest son will inherit the grandmother's jar, *mama baba* or *djédjé*. The youngest child of the first-born will inherit the grandfather's jar, *bab'baba*. When they die, the jars will be broken again.



Representations of mama and baba (after Boisseau and Soula 1974)

III 2.2.5 Sacrifices

The reason why people make offerings varies from region to religion and by economic circumstances. However, as van Baaren pointed out (1979:33) some general motives can be distinguished. People can perform a sacrifice to make contact with the Supreme Being in order to get in touch with 'the other world'. They may seek to re-establish the cosmic order. Or people may offer as a way to ask something of God, be it material or spiritual.
These general rules apply to the Mafa. The most important aspect of a sacrifice for the Mafa is to offer something and to beseech something in return. A sacrifice can be made on many occasions: during festivals and rituals, but also after misfortunes like illness or an accident, or to prevent misfortune. The sacrifices need to be carried out correctly.

The Mafa request anything especially the necessities of life The words spoken during a sacrifice include no praise of God *Irgile* There are two major components of a sacrifice One element is the millet and the beer made from it Millet is used in both forms to make a sacrifice The other one is the jar in which the sacrifice is made The jars represent, as we said before the lesser spirits who play a major role in the sacrifice The Mafa distinguish several kinds of jars to make a sacrifice in Also in relation to the dead who are part of the cosmic order, it is important to carry out the sacrifices properly

III 2 2 6 The offering

As we mentioned offerings are most commonly made with millet beer But animals are also sacrificed especially chickens and goats The sacrifices I attended proceeded as follows The beer was put inside the jar The slaughtered goat a leaf [19] and some water were put on top of the jar When the goat made its final shudder before it died they asked *Irgile* to take this goat A small piece of the meat from the sacrificed animal the liver and another good piece of meat were burnt and put on the belly of the jar (side) Some beer was poured into a calabash Then the people who were present ate the meat while expressing their thanks 'thank you father' - and then they drank the beer When people pray to their own tutelary spirit and they do not do this aloud - they may say Do not leave me my god and help me give my children good health don t let them die '
Pieces of sacrificial meat called *n tewelged* can also be placed on the road so that misfortune will quickly go away This meat would then be put on a broken calabash for the men and on a pot for the women It would be turned around the head and passed between the legs before it would be put on the road as my informants told me
A bull is only immolated during the special bull ritual the *mara* which we will discuss in the next chapter or upon the death of a person who at one time in his life had sacrificed a bull during this ritual

III 2 2 7 *Irgile* s refusal of the sacrifice

During any immolation God may make it clear that he refuses it When beer is oblated the calabash is placed underneath the jar The calabash should remain in balance if it does not or if the calabash does not hold up it means that the

[19] What kind of leaf I neglected to ask

sacrifice is not accepted. When a chicken is slaughtered, it must lie with its legs in the direction of the compound after its death struggle. If not, this means that the offer is refused or that the person who had to immolate may die. Before a sheep or goat is slaughtered, water containing millet flour is thrown on the animal. If it does not shake itself, the offer is not accepted; if it licks the person who will slaughter it, misfortune will strike that person. The whole sacrifice will then be cancelled. If no animal eats the sacrificial meat *n'tewelged* that is put on the road, it is said that God has not accepted the offer and it should be performed anew.

III 2.2.8 Sacrifices performed by the *bab gay*, the father of the household

As indicated above most sacrifices are performed by the *bab gay*. We will discuss a few of them here.

Sacrifice for the household:
The first hut, called *dzao-dzao*, belongs to the father of the house. On a shelf called *balak*, he will keep his own *guid pat*. A man will perform the sacrifice to his own tutelary spirit, which is in the interest of the whole family, while sitting on his bed, which is in the same hut. He will do so during celebrations - harvest rituals, twin rituals, funerals, bull ritual - but also on any ordinary day when he feels he needs some extra protection from his *guid pat*.

Not only the Supreme Being is called *Jigilé*. There is also a jar with the same name. Oblations in the jar called *jigilé* serve the whole household. If a man marries and if he begets children, he becomes the master of the household, *bab gay*; the mother is called *mam gay*. The diviner will tell the father that he should make a jar, called *jigilé*, to make the sacrifice for the protector spirit. This jar is placed before the entrance in the hut.
When he oblates, he takes millet flour with water and puts it on the jar; he leaves a bit and tastes some himself. Then he will give it first to the *m'matsai*, his second son, and then to the rest of the family. For this sort of oblation, the permission of the diviner is needed. People will ask the advice of the diviner when the rhythm of everyday life is disturbed by an unforeseen act.

> During the night a panther visited Vawar's compound. It killed three goats and of course he is rather upset about the event. I ask him what the panther looked like, how big it was. He explains to me:
> "When he came in he was as small as a cat, so that we would not notice. He killed the goats and took one of them with him. When he left the compound, he was as big as a bull holding the goat with one leg

underneath his belly By then I knew it was not a real panther but my neighbor who proved to be a *mude* and transformed himself into a panther '

We went to the diviner His place was like a doctor s waiting room in our society People waited their turn, in the meantime discussing their misfortune an illness a dispute among brothers, a wife s curse or an event like the one of Vawar When it was our turn, we entered the diviner's consulting room The man, who had the impressive bearing of a very wise person was sitting on the floor with his stones in front of him He used them as described before and advised an immolation of a chicken and an oblation in the jar *jigile* The meat had to be divided among the children

The offer is mostly eaten by the whole family that is those who actually live in the house If others neighbors or passers by were to eat a share, they could become acquainted with or even friends of the tutelary spirits of the members of the household Such acquaintance may be dangerous, because in that case they could get a hold of each other s souls more easily Since everybody in society can be a potential *mude*, soul eater as pointed out above no one outside the *gay* is really to be trusted In this religious ritual of the sacrifice the fact that every household represents an independent basic entity and at the same time forms the highest political unit is underlined again After the death of the head of the household nobody is allowed to oblate in this jar It is destroyed with his *guid pat*, his personal jar

Sacrifice to protect against the soul-eater

Another jar is called *jigile gedfek* If a man is quite old has a wife and children - necessary conditions to have this jar as well as huts and animals, he must make a bigger sacrifice Then everybody and everything will be even better protected against the penetration of a soul eater *mude* The diviner can tell the father *bab gay*, to make this jar and to oblate in it if he is of opinion that sacrifice in the jar called *jigile* at the entrance to the compound is no longer satisfying

This jar, *jigile gedfek* is placed outside the compound on a stone That is also the place where the oblation is held if the diviner has so decided and during the harvest feasts *n gwalala* The wine that is poured into this jar during the sacrifice should not be drunk by anybody except the eldest daughter of the father of the house and her first child These jars *jigile* and *jigile gedfek* can only be made if the father of the father of the household - so the paternal grandfather - has died

Sacrifice to strengthen the tie among brothers:

If the paternal grandfather is still alive and one needs to make the same sort of sacrifice, there is another sort of jar, called *jégélé*. Not everybody has one. It can be placed just outside the compound, close to the entrance. The oblation done in it is performed primarily to request 'the word of the brothers'. This means that the participants ask that no arguments among brothers will occur. This offer reflects the fact that arguments among brothers can easily arise, especially concerning the land they may inherit. In principle, the youngest son remains in the house of the father with his mother. The eldest son gets a say over the land of his father. Other brothers can only wait to find out which land will be allotted to them. These were (and are) often the brothers who left for the urban centers or, in former days, were exchanged for food during periods of famine. But the position of the eldest son can always be undermined. As an informant told me:

> "If a younger brother is clever he can easily mislead the elderly men of the village and his uncles. He goes to them and starts gossiping and discussing until he gets authority over the land and can divide it or not share it with his other brothers."

In former days, enough land was available in the bush. But having to leave and settle in another area as a *keda*, an outsider, was not a favorable position. *Keda* literally means dog. People can move and settle in other areas other than their clan territory, but they will always remain outsiders in that case.

> I once asked if this meant that women were always *keda*, as they always move into an outside clan after marriage. One man approvingly said, "of course, ...you could never trust a woman, and they were always *keda*." But another man said that this was the biggest nonsense he had ever heard, women were never *keda*.

Nowadays, with the overpopulation of the area it has become less easy to find plots in other areas. It is again the *bab gay*, the master of the household, who performs this sacrifice for the brotherly bond.

Sacrifice to strengthen the ties with in-laws:

Another jar, called *hudara*, is placed between the huts of the women, *hudok* and *hujeb*, who are both from another clan, *gwali*. This specific place has to do with the function of the jar. It is used for a special oblation performed during the rituals. The wine in it should only be drunk by the in-laws. This sacrifice, also for protection against the *nide*, the soul eater, concerns the whole family, because they all profit from good relations with the in-laws.

Sacrifices without jars: 'in front of the compound':

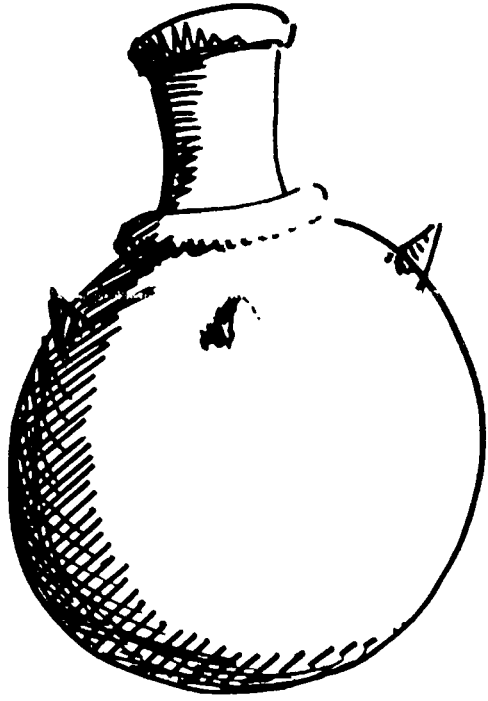
Besides oblations made in the jars, sacrifices can also be performed without pots The Mafa recognize many different ones There is one called *ludara*, as above - which is held just before the harvest It is done with beer and it is carried out in front of the compound in a place called *varmaga* which literally means in front of the compound A millet stick will be put on the special tree in front of the compound After *ludara* they will start cutting the millet
But oblations called *varmaga* can also be performed for other reasons whenever the diviner says so, if a person has been from the harvest, or whenever one feels like it The father performs the sacrifice by pouring some beer on the floor and saying a prayer aloud to God, *Irgilé*, to ask for his welfare It is considered as an important act because with it an individual performs a collective offer
If the mountain chief demands for a sacrifice for *Irgile*, God - and this can be, for example to promote the growth of the millet - it is also performed in front of the house *varmaga* again by the master of the household It is noteworthy that one can request infinitely during the *varmaga* offering

Sacrifice on the tree or the rock in front of the house
In the same way a sacrifice is often done on the tree in front of the house called *woef-varmaga* or on the rock called *godokuom varmaga* For this reason all Mafa compounds are constructed beside a tree In either case the sacrifice is made with the contents of the stomach of a sheep Again, this is to prevent the *mude* the soul eater from entering the compound

III 2 2 9 Sacrifices performed by specialists

We mentioned that though the father of the house performs most sacrifices on some occasions the specialists become active Several such occasions are described below

Sacrifices for the welfare of the clan peace and success during war
Though wars between clans do not occur anymore the sacrifices held near a cluster of trees in the mountains the most ancient trees of the area can still be held It is my impression that, they are performed less frequently I could be wrong as only men may be present so I never witnessed them while I observed all other offerings People told me about them, though They said that for a long time the ancestors did their sacrifices at these places and these trees have thus become sacred They call these sacrifices *di woef*, *di kokor* or *di-mbulom* which literally means the eyes of the tree the mountain or God respectively



Representation of di-mbulom (After Boisseau and Soula 1974)

They started to be held at this particular place after several cries had been heard from an animal they call *di- mbulom*, an animal with long hair that sits in a tree. After he had uttered several cries, all the neighbors gathered to discuss this matter. They then decided that this particular spot was important to the life of the whole community. They told the owner of the field where the tree stood to go and see the diviner, who instructed the owner to have a jar made and oblate in it at the foot of the tree.

They continued to perform this oblation for the whole community under specific circumstances. This included wartime; when too many slaves were captured; when people started to migrate to other areas; when the millet did not grow like it should; when the rains were belated; or in times of other disasters. Only the owner of the tree, nobody else, can have the beer prepared and perform the sacrifice.

The youngest son can continue to oblate, as he inherits his father's house. If he hears the crying in the tree again, he goes to see the diviner to ask what the gods

want now If he does not continue somebody else will take over the responsibility These gods are allied to the clan and even to the whole mountain, this means that they serve in the particular interest of a clan
In former days these gods also kept the peace in the clans and in the mountain They ensured success during war After a war, the captured slaves were carried in front of the mountain before they were sold *Di kokoi* eye of mountain received the first money earned by the sale of these slaves *Di-kokoi* brought peace and victory Another sacrifice in wartime was called *ldaldak* if it was not performed the persons killed would keep bothering the people

Performance of sacrifice for the welfare of the clan
This particular sacrifice is performed by four men the mountain chief a man who represents the wife another one who stands for the male child and the blacksmith The mountain chief actually conducts the sacrifices If the mountain chief were to refuse, he would have to leave the community and another one would be chosen In that case his refusal would indicate that he is a *mude* a soul eater
The man representing the woman must be from the same clan He brings the flour along a normally woman s task when visiting a place where a sacrifice will take place The real wife has to hide in the compound but without this representation the offer cannot be done As they told me

> "The women do not even set a foot beside the tree It is said that they wouldn t bear any more children if they would

We will explore this aspect later when we discuss the role of women in sacrifice All four of them should be from the area An outsider *keda* can never assist During the actual sacrifice the man-woman stands apart so the number of people sacrificing is actually three plus one (see also Boisseau and Soula 1974 720)

III 2 2 10 Sacrifice to tutelary spirit

Besides all the sacrifices performed in the interest of the household and the clan everyone in the Mafa community can perform their own sacrifice for their own personal well-being For this purpose the jar called *guid pat* (literally at the foot of the bed) is used This jar is given to every person at birth and it represents one's tutelary spirit Maama Laila also mentioned this jar
After a baby is born the diviner determines when the jar should be made as they keep up good relations with the spirits The divination usually takes place soon after birth Then the father goes to the potter (who belongs to the blacksmith caste) to order one

The jar *guid pat* is kept under the bed in the room where the sacrifices for the children are performed, mostly upon the diviner's advice. Though men will go more often, also women can consult the diviner. She should not watch him or her throwing the stones, and as long as her husband is still alive she should always sit in a lower position. The same applies to a man whose father is still alive.

While the child is a baby, the mother will keep the jar under the granary. When a sacrifice is needed she will take some millet flour and put it on the baby's mouth.

The difference between the sacrifices we discussed above and the sacrifices to the tutelary spirits is clear. Of one's own tutelary spirit, a person requests objects, welfare, and solutions to problems concerning oneself. The other sacrifices are in the interest of the household or the whole community. It often happens that a parent has taken the personal jar, *guid pat*, of a child who has converted. She may continue sacrificing into it. As one lady told me,

> "I always keep it, one never knows if one day he is going to return to our religion."

If a woman leaves her husband, she leaves her jar, *guid pat*, behind. This fact will prove to be of great importance in the course of this chapter.

III 2.2.11 Sacrifice for the woman and her children

Other than sacrifices to her own tutelary spirit, only one sacrifice is performed by women. It is made in a different jar placed in the kitchen, called *jigilé ngwazi ri vavai*. It is of the feminine sex and has a left arm. Sacrifice in it is performed after consultation with the diviner in case the woman or her children fall ill, if the latter do not find good husbands or wives, or if the crops or livestock tended by women (peanuts, sesame, chickens) do not thrive. The sacrifice is performed in the kitchen, on the spot where the woman sits when she stirs the food. The man should never attend this sacrifice, nor should his wife pray for him during it. If this jar breaks by accident, part of the old jar is integrated in its replacement. If a woman leaves her husband or on the day of her funeral, her kitchen utensils, like the small pots and the calabashes she used to put her beans in, will be broken, along with this jar. She must leave it behind, as the *guid pat*, and will have another one made for in the compound of her new husband. Thus we can infer that it belongs to the compound and serves the welfare of the patrilineage.

III 2 2 12 Sacrifices to the ancestors

A last category of sacrifices are those made for the ancestors The personal jar of a person the guid pat is always broken when a person dies, and a new jar is made by the potter so that sacrifices can be done after a person s death This takes place as follows The blacksmith secretly takes the guid pat of the dead person during the night Food is served but also offered to a broken jar every day After some time millet beer is prepared so the children will not be afraid anymore Then the blacksmith takes the guid pat, wraps it in a goat skin and eats the meat of the same goat Then a new jar is made by the potter The guid-pat with the skin around it will be broken If it is passed on to the next generation it will be broken too and another one will be made The new jar has to be sacrificed before it can be used For such an occasion the millet beer is prepared a goat is slaughtered, the contents of the stomach of the sacrificial animal are taken and put on the jar with the beer and some millet flour
Sacrifices for the ancestors will continue until the third or fourth generation But after the second generation they will be made more in all purpose jars that are no longer related to specific persons (Boisseau and Soula 1974 682 ff) Those who perform these sacrifices are called *ludai gala*
A woman inherits the duty to sacrifice to the parents if she has no brothers when her brothers have died or when the males who could inherit have converted If this woman dies another woman her sister or daughter can take over the responsibility If all the children have converted they have a jar made by the potter when a person dies Then they break it on the grave of that person as the sacrifice cannot be performed anymore
Sacrifices for women should be held in the afternoon (after 3 00 p m) whereas sacrifices for men should be held in the morning around nine regardless of the sex of the person who performs the sacrifice

III 2.3 View of the after-life

We said before that behind every being there is an entity that is its double to support the visible one If a person dies his or her shadow continues to live on in the earth An old lady explains [50]

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[50] The reason why I went to visit and talk with this woman who lived just outside town was curiosity She was way over sixty and nearly the only one of a large family who kept up the sacrifices while all the other members were converted I wondered why She told me she had wanted to convert long ago But time passed by so quickly every spring she realized another year had gone and she still had not converted After further questioning I found a more profound reason As the rest of the family was converted she inherited the

Mafa woman with her jar

fur representing mama

If a human being dies he starts rotting, but it is his or her shadow that is always beside a person, that descends into the earth and continues to live on. There was a white person in Koza who opened up a grave and saw the people actually dancing in it, but they could not come out of the earth anymore. Then a Mafa told the white person that he should never open up a grave again, because people might start thinking that being dead was a much better life than being alive. It was the shadows of the ones living on earth that the white man saw, the ones that are always next to you.

Under the earth, life continues as before. A second invisible being will accompany people again and they will continue procreating; they marry, they have children, they cultivate, and finally they die. Then they continue to live on even deeper in the earth until they die again. This is a feature recognizable in many African religions, as Thomas mentions (1982).

This recurs five times until they have reached the red soil, when life will cease. They literally say:

...that is the end of the earth.

They call it the red soil, because in former days people greased their bodies for festivities with a red powder, called *mbsak*. When people eventually die, they become dust again, and because of this powder that dust will be red. There is no notion whatsoever of resurrection.

By that time, the jars, representing the parents, will be broken and sacrifices will no longer be held for them.

The soul is taken by God after every death. The shadow, who has always taken care of the soul, has gone by that time. If you go on to the next life, you get yet another soul. When we die, we meet the people who lived while we were alive, but we cannot meet the people from the former generation, as they will already have moved on to the next earth.

III 3 The place of women within Mafa religion

This general description of Mafa religion may give the impression that the main religious acts are men's affairs. Is it true, as Martin (1970) asserts for the Mafa, that in this society women are only allowed to choose, the sauce from which they are eaten? (Martin 1970:173), or do they have more to say in religious matters? In this section I will systematically elaborate on the features of Mafa religion sketched above to describe the role of women behind the scenes.

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jars of her father, *baba*, and mother, *mama* to do sacrifices in. So she was the only one left to take care of these responsibilities.

III 3.1 A woman's sacrifice

A woman's sacrifice to her own tutelary god, which she makes in her jar *guid pats ngwaz* (literally, head of the bed of women), is performed by the woman herself. On such an occasion, animals may be immolated, provided they are female. The husband does not take part nor does he eat the sacrificed meat because, as people - women as well as men - explained to me, 'the mentality of women is different". When the woman oblates with crushed millet mixed with water, this should be tasted by her husband before she makes her offering. As one woman told me:

> 'We have moved but in our new residence my husband is so often gone on a journey that I did not yet bother to have a new *guid pat* made. What would be the use, as I can't sacrifice if he is not around? I know of a woman who wanted to sacrifice and awaited her husband. It took quite a while, so, impatiently she started without him. Well, that turned out badly, as she had to leave him because of it. Had she not left him he might have died, just like that."

A woman may pray for herself, her children or her crops, but in general she will never pray for her husband. This may change, as my informants stated, with modern times and after conversion (see Boisseau and Soula 1984: 666). Here is a typical prayer:

> Take it, *guids pat* mine. Make me fresh (meaning, give me happiness, good health, peace, wealth). You have put me in the belly of my mother that they will keep me in the compound (meaning, that they won't chase me away). Give freshness for my children, that I will have peanuts, that I will have sesame, that I will have chickens, that I will 'find' children.'

If the woman takes a new husband, the potter is requested to make a new jar, *guid pat*. If she happens to break it, a replacement must be made the same day. We saw above that these rules are not followed very strictly for very practical reasons.

III 3.2 Women's role in the sacrifices for the well-being of the family

The sacrifices for the well-being of the whole family are made, as we saw, by the father of the household, *bab gay*. An informant literally said: "they don't even talk about the women if it concerns the offers around the huts of the family, because they, the women, do not have any huts." I presumed he meant that besides the oblations to their own personal jar, women don't do any other sacrifices because they are not the head of the compound.

Yet the father of the house is not alone. At any given sacrifice, the mothers of the house, *mam gay*, and all the women married (according to Mafa rule) to a man must be present and inside the compound. Preferably the children should attend as well, but the absence of one of them would not bring the same misfortune as the absence of the women. The latter would strike the husband, and the rules to avoid it are rather complicated. My informants told me:

> "If a woman remained outside, she first has to get married to another man before she can enter the compound again. But before she marries another man, she needs to return to her parents first. They will find a husband for her. Then this man needs to sleep with her. Only after she has been sleeping with another man can she return to her former husband without her presence causing any problems... if she still wants to return, of course, because she can also decide to stay with the new husband. Mostly about three months pass, before she returns to her husband again. If she did not marry (meaning sleep with) another man before entering the compound of the former husband, the latter would die. If by chance, she got pregnant during this period, she would stay with the new husband."

If a child is absent, it can be symbolically replaced by a piece of millet straw for a girl, or a piece of straw of a wild grass called *vandzal* (Cymbopogon giganteus) for a boy. The symbolic meanings of these materials will be discussed in another chapter.

III 3.2.1 Women during sacrifice: muted attendants

We know that the father of the household performs the sacrifices in the interest of all, and that women need to be present. But what then is their role? Women and children stay in the farthest hut of the compound during the sacrifice and should speak in very very low voices or not at all. The same goes for offerings to *mama*, *baba*, or other ancestors. During offerings to the ancestors, the women share the food.

If offerings are made for *jigilé*, or *jigilé gedʃek*, the women should remain completely silent and not share the food that is offered. The father of the house and his second male child will eat it.

The first wife prepares the offering, be it millet beer, *zom* or millet porridge, sauce or whatever. Without these foodstuffs, no sacrifice can be performed. Before sacrifice she brings it to her husband while she kneels in a prescribed position. Only if a goat is immolated will it be a boy who brings it to the father. We may conclude, that even though a woman plays a subordinate role during sacrifice, her presence is indispensable.

Oblations to the 'eye of the tree mountain or God are all made by men If women were to perform them they and the future of the whole clan would be in jeopardy as no offspring would follow During these offerings the wife of the owner of the field where the sacrifice is made should remain inside the compound and keep silent

III 3 2 2 Women s symbolic presence during the sacrifice

As no sacrifice can be done without the presence of a woman she needs to be symbolically replaced even when she must be absent So during the offerings to the eye of the mountain or God , she is replaced by a man who represents her This man-woman' should also remain silent and not ask any questions or utter a sound The number of people present during the oblation to the eye of the mountain or God is noteworthy, two, four and eight are female numbers three, five and nine (three times three) are male numbers In the sacrifice we observed four people (female), yet they were grouped as three (masculine) plus one during the actual sacrifice
Numbering is very important in Mafa society These numbers occur again and again We will elaborate on their symbolic meaning later on [51]

III 3 2 3 Sex of the jars

We discussed the different jars above It is noteworthy that the jar called *jigile*, in which sacrifice is made for the well-being of the whole family can be feminine as well as masculine [52] It always has a neck and a head with an open mouth But if it is masculine it also has a beard, a right arm (which is the feminine side), testicles on the belly and a penis in erection If it is a woman it has a left arm (masculine side) or none at all, a vagina and breasts Other jars, like *di-mbulom* (eye of God) or *jigile gedfek* are neuter, meaning that no sex is represented
Can we infer from this that God, the Supreme Being is not necessarily an Overlord but can also be an Overlady as there is a balance of feminine and masculine features on the jars that represent him/her ? When asked this question, the Mafa said that *Jigile* the Supreme Being is male

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[51] For example if a man s first born child is male he will have three towers built on the wall that surrounds his threshing floor If the first born is a girl there will be two

[52] I do not know under what circumstances it is feminine or masculine It certainly is worthwhile to find that out

The jar called *ngwazi ri vavai*, which is placed in the kitchen and in which sacrifices are made for the woman and her children, has the feminine sex and a left (the masculine side) arm. Again, femininity and masculinity are in balance.

III 3.2.4 Division of labor within religious practices

We may conclude by now that in general, women do not have an active religious role in regard to the well-being of the clan, which is logical, as the clan is patrilinear. Yet we cannot ignore the fact that their presence and their roles in preparation of the offerings are indispensable. Most sacrifices, certainly those made outside the compound and during the bull ritual, *mavay*, the twin ritual, or the harvest rituals, require millet beer. Only women can prepare beer; no millet beer, no ritual, no sacrifice.

The sacrifices to *di-kokor* and *di-woef*, respectively the eyes of the mountain and of the tree, which are intended to ensure success in war and protection of the millet, display a sexual division of labor. Warfare is associated with men and millet with women.

Concerning inheritance, the jar that represents the ancestors is inherited by the eldest and the youngest son. Yet if there are no male children available, a woman can inherit it. With it she inherits the same burden and responsibilities as the male members of society when they take care of their ancestors.

> "This is my father, *baba* - the old lady points to a jar - and that is my mother, *mama*, who had married my father. I got their jars to do the sacrifices in. Whenever this is done my 'brothers' (cousins) and sisters come to sacrifice for their parents at my house. We are four."

When a woman has inherited a jar, because no men were available - lack of male births, death, or conversion -, other people, men as well as women, must approach her in the same way that men, or important persons, are normally approached, that is, in a crouching position.

Oblations in the jar for the dead father or mother are held after the diviner gives consent. In such a case, the brothers (cousins) or sisters will bring the chicken or the goat, while the woman leads the sacrifice. Then the in-laws need to be present, but not necessarily the husband of the wife. Furthermore, the boys born of the women of the father's clan must attend. The sacrifice is performed in the hut where the mother used to live.

If a woman has inherited a jar, upon her death a daughter as well as a son could inherit the jar representing the ancestors. In the case we just mentioned, it would be the little sister's task to take over and perform the sacrifice for her father. If she would not be around anymore, it would be performed by the eldest girl of her youngest son, or by her own youngest son.

The only sacrifice women are explicitly excluded from so not symbolically present either is the sacrifice to *zlazlak* the sacrifice for the soul of a man killed during warfare

III 3 2 5 Sacrifice for the women s clan *kuyuk*

When the moon is full the Mafa commemorate their ancestors Then they also make an offering to *mama* whether she is dead or still alive The sacrifice is made with raw millet mixed with water, of which they make five or seven little balls around one big one Here we find the male numbering It can also be done with the meat of a chicken or goat sometimes upon the advice of the diviner If the mother is still alive she will eat the porridge if she is dead it will be thrown on the ground while they say '*n kede movar ngava na*' or 'take your food Beer a chicken or a goat is never offered on these occasions

III 3 2 6 Sex of the religious specialist

Finally we should mention a positive role both sexes can perform the important role of diviner can be performed by men as well as women We will cite a conversation with one of them later on

III 3 2 7 Sex of the mude the soul eater

The *mude* soul eater is a negative being Many religious rites are performed to protect people from it We should note that both sexes can be a *mude* men as well as women

Women may become a *mude* by their procreative function A diviner tells us

> When women in the mountains give birth (that is not in the hospital as is preferred in town nowadays) a snake can enter after the placenta has come out This snake feeds itself with the blood after birth gets into the woman s belly and nestles itself there comfortably Sometimes a woman says beforehand 'I do not want anybody next to me during my labor Then you know already that a snake wants to enter When she has to give birth again the snake comes out with the child and re enters afterwards We know of a woman who gave birth in the hospital in Cosa The snake came out as well and they killed it The woman died immediately afterwards So you see this snake protects a woman in a sort of way, but on the other hand it can also turn her into a *mude* But not all *mude* have a snake inside and not every woman with a snake inside is by definition a *mude* Men can also be a *mude* They can transform themselves into a

panther [a capacity somebody told us about before] and in that way eat the souls of their victims. But on the other hand, not all men who have the capacity to transform into a panther are *mide*. They can also use it to protect their own household."

So what goes for the women goes for the men. This emphasizes that not only women are associated with the evil beings in this society. Nevertheless, one may wonder if men or women are more often accused, but I found no evidence for such suspicion.

III 3.3 Women's role in Mafa religious life: a conclusion

Concerning the sacrifices, we can conclude that the preparations of a sacrifice (preparing of beer and food) are made by women when the sacrifices themselves are made by men.

If we put women's role during sacrifices in a diagram, it looks like this:

Sacrifices to:	
-tutelary spirit of women	men not present men do not share the food
-tutelary spirit of men	women symbolically present in the *ni'matsai* (second son, so female numbering) food shared by all family members
-the ancestors	women are present women speak in low voices women share the food
- jigile - jigile gedfek	women are present women remain completely silent women do not share the food eldest daughter (One, thus male numbering) shares beer
-eye of the tree or mountain	women are symbolically present

	women remain completely silent women do not share the food
zldazlak (war)	women not present at all

We can conclude that women play an important role in the preparation of the sacrifice and they need to be present for all sorts of sacrifices except for the sacrifice of war

Yet three things are remarkable Whenever rules are not followed as they should be harm will always fall upon a male the father or the clan Such is also visible in the menstruation taboos If these are not respected it is the man who is harmed and will become sick just as if his soul was taken by a *mude* the women and children incur no harm If a woman has her period when a sacrifice is done she remains in the kitchen and the mixture of a special flour and millet-flour must be prepared by a girl, or when there is no girl the father of the family During the actual sacrifice she remains in the kitchen

In daily life whenever a woman has her period she should not prepare food If there is no other woman the man can do it In that case the woman can fetch the water and the firewoord get some vegetables and light the fire She cannot enter into the granary though to fetch the millet She cannot crush or grind the millet nor stir it during the coocking process If a man would eat what a woman has prepared while she has her period it would influence his bodily processes He will not be able to walk properly he will be tired easily etc If she herself eats whatever she has prepared while having her period it will not influence her nor her children s physical conditions

Secondly although sacrifices are made for the bad word of the brother it is common knowledge that the curse of the wife's lineage is very much feared Women have real power by their actual words a power that originates in maternity She can equally bless No sacrifices for protection against these words are made though Only after the harm is done can a person go to the diviner and ask for advice concerning the gift to assuage the cursing woman hoping she will change it into a blessing (see Boisseau and Soula 1974 675)

> Back in the field after one and a half years I went to visit Godak s compound I did not find him at home but had a long conversation with his wife who said she felt miserable She told me she had become very frightened of her husband, as he beat her every single day She had left but as her father had died long ago she stayed with her brother He was

bothered by her in-laws all the time, so she returned to her husband. She even thought of committing suicide. I had promised her, though, that I would not tell her husband she had accused him.

I asked the advice of a wise Mafa man who knew the situation, and thereupon invited Godak to have a beer and engaged in a long discussion with him too. I raised the subject of wife-beating. He admitted that on occasions he had beaten his wife but assured me he had always had reasons to do so. She had cursed him so often and many times he had found the remnants of ingredients of her bad spell and that made him nearly mad out of fear." [53]

Underlying this problem lies the thought that even if a woman curses inadvertently and her husband is kind enough to say nothing about it, he will die. If she does it on purpose and he loses his temper with her over and over again, and she still continues and he keeps losing his temper, she will be the one who will die.

A man needs to go to his mother's clan, *kuvuk*, to ask advice in similar situations, only they can have a bad spell undone.

Thirdly, woman's place in ritual and sacrifice is indispensable. She is needed in her role as a wife and mother. Yet in most cases, she is obliged to remain silent and does not seem to bear the final responsibility for the offering. If her husband oblates, she should not even touch the jars, nor get them or put them back on the shelves, nor fill them with millet beer.

The fact that she is important but does not play a responsible role will be underlined again afterwards, when we analyze the different rituals. We have observed that women have a special position, derived from the need for their presence and from the power they wield by their mere physical absence at sacrifices, thus being able to harm the father of the house as well as the whole clan on a higher level. Yet women have no direct responsibilities for sacrifices in the interest of the whole society; A woman's offering is only in the interest of herself and her children. Her personal jar as well as the jar *jigilé ngwazi vivavi*, kept in the kitchen, are left behind and broken when she leaves her husband. She

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53 One may wonder how the story ended. It did not, for the Mafa, life goes on just as in our society. I told Godak that these situations turned around like a circle, that if my husband would beat me I would also curse him so that he should first stop beating her and then she would probably stop cursing him. Further, I told him that he would be in a very awkward position if he would be left with six small kids, as she had threatened to leave him several times. Probably because he still owed me something, he promised to better his attitude towards her.

is 'literally' muted in religious affairs. It is this fact, as I will argue, that has far-reaching consequences.

Before we go further I will sum up those aspects of human beings we came upon in this chapter as we will need them for our analysis in the next chapter

women	-	**men**
inside		outside
even (two)		not even (three)
right		left
life		war
millet		wild grasses (*vandzal*)
vegetables		meat
second son (*m'matsfai*)		first daughter (*dem tsava*)
fields/kitchen		house (*gay*)
inside of the house		compound/entrance
curse/blessing		
snake		panther
low		high
(smith caste: pottery, earth, midwife)		(smith caste iron death, burial)

III 4 'None of you men will have a say over me': after Islamization

The story of Maama Laila in this part of the thesis and of Jamila in the first chapter reveal some of the changes they underwent after Islamization they started to speak another language, they adopted a new name and habits, and, most importantly, they started praying to Allah, the Supreme Being, five times a day As we mentioned in chapter I, several authors have underlined the fact that Islam south of the Sahara has become Africanized and has adapted to the local communities, much more so than in areas where the spread of Islam was brought by Arabs (Levtzion 1971) The existing status quo in a society can be maintained as long as it does not conflict with Islamic law (Anderson 1954) The Mafa take over customs that are originally Fulbe rather than Islamic That is the reason why

Islamization in this area is mostly referred to as Fulbenzation At the same time, however, the Mafa also integrate customs from their own culture into Islamic society in Mokolo We will elaborate on this below

We know that an important feature of Islamization is the centralized pattern of residence In the study area Islam is hardly ever practiced by people who live outside the town of Mokolo Centralization - and in our case urbanization - and Islamization are concomitant processes in West Africa Hence, some of the changes in lifestyle also derive from the fact that life in town is different from life 'in the mountains' Coming to live in town and Islamize has a strong connotation of 'becoming civilized', as we mentioned in the first chapter

The rationale for the decision to Islamize varies We know Jamila s reasons she was furious, desperate and ready to take any opportunity to quit her miserable situation We know Maama Laila's story she was fed up doing sacrifices to beget children None of these led to the demanded results so she felt ready to try another religion Let us consider another motivation Daada Degol now about sixty tells us

> 'I was divorced and lived with my uncle, as my father had died He treated me badly So one day I broke my *guid pat* and I left secretly I went to my sister and never came back My sister had Islamized when she married her husband I was living with her, and one day I thought "I am still a Pagan, but I live in a Muslim neighborhood What happens if I die? The people from the mountain won t come to fetch me to bury me The people in the neighborhood won't bury me since I am not a Muslim I had better Islamize then they will " So I stopped drinking, because you cannot follow two ways [following Mafa religion and being Muslim she means] I pray to Allah now, whom I used to call *Jigilé* before "

What does change in religion mean for the daily religious practices of these women?

III 4.1 Basic features of Islam in the region

To recite the basic creed before witnesses *'La ilaha illa llaha wa Muhammadun rasulu'llah'*[54] or 'I testify that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is his Messenger', is enough to become a Muslim But being a Muslim means that one needs to live by the rules of the *sharia Islamic laws* and adopt the five Islamic pillars, which I reiterate here, using the Fulfulde terminology

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[54] This is the Basic Creed as w is written down for me in Mokolo Mommersteeg gave me the following basic creed *Ashadu alla ilaha illa llah wa ashadu anna Muhammadun rasulu llah*

Adopt the basic creed [55]
- Do the ritual prayers *salaatu*
- Attend the fasts *summaayre*
Give alms to the poor *sakka* or *sadaka* [56]
Attend the Pilgrimage to Mecca if within reach *Hijja* [57]

In the second chapter we paid attention to the introduction of Islam in the region and the rules described by Uthman dan Fodio Here we are concerned with the acceptance of these rules in Mokolo within the Islamized community

III 4 1 1 Allah Jigile or Dieu what s in a name?

Concerning the adoption of the basic creed Jamila as well as Maama Laila said that in the end it was the same God whether he was named Allah *Jigile* or *Dieu* This was expressed to me very often within the region So this basic creed is not the greatest obstacle to overcome if one is attracted by the Muslim religion Once it is recited one is considered to be a Muslim As a Marabout told me when I had a long conversation with him

> Suppose while we are having this discussion now, a Mafa comes down from the mountains comes up to me and stops in front of my door calls me by my name Sali and adds 'I would like to become a Muslim ' I will say to you Listen madam you have to wait for me for a moment because if he was to die ten seconds afterwards I want him to die as a Muslim So right on the spot I will leave you for what you are and go up to him And what will I tell him first? Repeat my words La ilaha illa llah and if he has repeated my words he will be a Muslim and die as a Muslim even if he has never prayed before never fasted before he will die as a Muslim and be buried like a Muslim following the rules as have been prescribed in the Qur an

Does this however mean that the new Muslim convert no longer pays attention to the spirits of the microcosm?

The converted women we quoted told us that they had abandoned sacrifices to their personal jar *guud pat* Is that done so easily? I often asked if the ancestors would not mind if the sacrifices were no longer performed they answered that

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[55] Called *shahada* though this word was not given to me in Mokolo

[56] *Sakka* is probably derived from *Sakkat* the gift needs to be given once a year if one is rich and that should be one tenth of one s income *Sadaka* is the alms that needs to be given on the day of Prayer Friday This difference was not stated in Mokolo

[57] In Arabic the terminology is respectively shahada salat saum sadaka hadj

the ancestors were long dead and gone And whenever they leave their husband, they also break their personal jar, *guid pat*, so what for them is the difference? They just don't have another one made But what about the tutelary spirits? Do they no longer require sacrifice after Islamization? We said before that it was difficult to differentiate between prayers to the Supreme Being *Ngile* and the lesser spirits, as people would be inclined to say it was for *Ngile* This, in combination with the fact that they needed to break their women s jars anyhow makes it much easier for women to leave then for men, to have no new jars made, and to adopt the basic creed

During my stay in the area I could not believe that people could so easily drop their old habits and leave their old religion behind I always searched for traces of Mafa religion within the Islam of Islamized Mafa in Mokolo But I never found a jar hidden underneath the bed or in a dark corner of the kitchen Nevertheless the following example shows that this is not necessary for the female converts In the first generation they have another way to incorporate elements of Mafa religion in their new lifestyle Though Orthodox Fulbe claim to never do so most people of the Islamic community continue to visit traditional (non Muslim) healers and diviners men as well as women (as we saw in the example of Jamila) If a diviner asks for a sacrifice Islamized men would have to perform it themselves Although Islam in Africa has largely adapted to local customs, such reversion was strongly condemned by Uthman dan Fodio, the religious leader of the 19th century jihad, whose influence is still pervasive in the area

But if the diviner tells a woman to sacrifice, she can do as Fatima did Her husband is Mafa He came down from the mountains at the age of six, worked for the whites in the thirties and Islamized Fatima Islamized about ten years ago because, as she said she loved her husband though her parents objected She told me

> If I or my children are ill I go to a diviner and if he tells me to make a sacrifice I go to my father, and he will do it for me

So she can continue to live according to Qur anic rules, yet also have her sacrifice done in cases of misfortune This example suggests that it is easier for women to change their religious habits drastically, yet profit from the old tradition without other people noticing I did not find a similar situation among the second generation of converted women, but they did not grow up in surroundings in which sacrifices were part of daily existence

III 4 1 2 My jar is to pray five times a day now

Maama Laila expressively said "My jar is to pray five times a day now' The Marabout said

> When she or he has repeated my words I will take water so that she or he, as it will be the same for both women and men can wash her or himself In the Christian church they call that 'baptism And after that I will teach the person some basic *surahs* from the Qur'an and I will show him how you have to pray and how you have to act before you pray
>
> 1 You first fetch fresh and proper water 2 You say *'Bismillah - Rahmani - Rahimi'* 3 You wash your hands until the pulses thrice 4 You rinse your mouth thrice 5 You inhale and exhale water thrice 6 You wash your face from the hairline to the chin, from one ear up to the other, thrice 7 You wash your arms to the elbows thrice 8 Put water in your hands and pass them from the forehead to the neck once 9 Put water in your hands and rinse the interior and the exterior of your ears with it once 10 Wash your two feet up to the ankles thrice
>
> Then I will tell them they have to show their good will to God by praying five times a day At dawn *subana*, during this prayer people need to bend four times At one o clock when the sun leaves no shadow *juma* one needs to bend six times At three o'clock *asra* one needs to bend four times After sunset *mangariba* one needs to bend five times and finally at eight o'clock at night *eshahi* one needs to bend seven times
>
> When new converts want to pray but do not yet know the *surahs* by heart, they can simply say *"Allah akbar, Allah akbar, Allah akbar*, Allah is great", and then say in their own language *"Sanu Muhammad*, Goodday Muhammad", and then pray to God and tell him what she or he has to say ask him to excuse her or his bad deeds One can do so until one knows the *surahs*
>
> During the prostration they ought to say 'Purity to God, the greatest' and when they bend down they ought to say Purity to God the highest"

The daily rhythm in the Muslim quarter in Mokolo is set by the time of prayer Dinner is always served between the two evening prayers Most of my female friends prayed regularly on the appointed hours though interpreting them perhaps more flexibly because of their maternal duties

> When the children are finally all asleep at ten o clock my friend and I are exhausted She had lain down beside the baby to make him go to sleep 'I better get up to do the prayers before I fall completely asleep' she sighs and with great difficulty leaves her sleeping place Before she starts

bending down I say to her: "I better say good night to you then, that Allah may guide you for the night, because I am afraid that by the time you are finished I will have fallen asleep too."

On Friday men would go to the mosque, though not very frequently, as they did not have a large mosque in Mokolo till 1990, [58] Women never went to public places to pray. They would only gather to pray together during the fasting, *suumaayre* on Friday evenings.

III 4.1.3 The fasting, *summaayre*

It is determined that the month of ramadan, *sumaayre*, the ninth month of the lunar year, is to be observed as a period of fasting, with complete abstinence from food and drink during the hours of daylight. Those sick or on a journey at this time are exempted, but must make compensation by fasting an equal number of days later (Gibb 1978: 44). The same goes for those who are impure, like menstruating women.

The fasting period is quite obvious in Mokolo. The offices and schools change their opening hours, so that nobody needs to work in the afternoon, the most difficult hours to fast. 'This common suffering', as people express it, is one of the most important features by which the conversion of a person can be recognized, by which one becomes a real member of the Islamic community.

Even those who do not pray at the fixed hours, or those who one hardly ever observe praying, will keep to the rules of fasting in public. Of course it is difficult to judge what all the members of the Islamic community are doing in private, but one hardly has any privacy and social control is considerable. Even if one is not a member of the Islamic community, it is very much appreciated if one fasts with the other people, as I experienced myself when I joined. Everywhere in town the local greetings are accompanied by the question: "*Noy sumaayre hande?*", "How is the fasting today?"

When the Imam has announced his '*Allah akbar*' from the mosque after sunset, the mouth is rinsed thrice and one sips a tiny bit of water. Then one washes ritually and prays. Only after the prayers does one drink the porridge, *ngari*, and then ordinary cold water.

If it is very hot during the fasting, when it is really difficult, than the spirit and the body are really cleansed. As people say: "*A yaran bonne bee sumaayre, a yarata bonne feere*", which means "If you suffer during the ramadan, you will not suffer elsewhere."

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[58] When I visited Mokolo in 1992 the building had been finished and the tarmac road was crowded after *juma* prayers.

During this period, the marketplace in the late afternoon is a colorful spot All sorts of food - many more varieties than during the rest of the year - are prepared by the women of the Islamic community, mostly sold by their children, sitting in long lines The food is bought by men who take it home to surprise the rest of the family

I could observe that many Islamic women new converts as well as converts of the second generation did make up for the fasting days they missed Elderly women, past their menopause often fasted outside the month of *sumaaya* to cleanse their souls , and they are also inclined to pray more often and longer As they explained to me, this has to do with the idea that elderly people are nearer already on their way to Allah

III 4 1 4 Give alms to the poor - *sakka*

Sakka is not to be regarded as a tax but as making a loan to God It should be one fortieth of the annual revenue in money or kind (Gibb 1978 44) Voluntary offerings are also a means of expiating offences and are to be given to relations orphans the needy, and travellers

I never heard this Qur'anic rule explicitly stated in Mokolo but almsgiving was considered a necessary part of life

> It s Friday morning The neighbor s son comes to attend his Qur'an classes at my friend s place "My father awaits you', he tells my son and his friends 'to fetch your *sakka*" The message needs not to be told twice

Everybody was sure to be judged for their compliance with this rule after death We may remember the words of Maama Laila

> 'I still have my big brother and if I have money I buy clothes or I prepare something good to eat and bring it to them If their children come up to me I give them money

We may also remember from the last chapter that many people Islamize because they first came to live with their family in town in order to attend school or for any other reason I have many examples of Muslim families helping out their non-Islamic and Islamic relatives by giving them housing and food - we may remember Daada Degol s story, we may remember Jamila s case - while it is very rare in Mafa compounds to lodge people who do not belong to the immediate family It can also be noticed that within the Islamic community, people without relatives be they Muslim or Christian are taken care of

> When Hamma lost her husband things turned out very badly for her She had never had children with him but they had been a stable couple They had adopted a Mafa girl who went to school and stayed with her But now the man s children told her she had no right whatsoever to his

belongings While she had led a good though poor life before she was left all of a sudden without any money The neighbors a large family of whom the father only had a poor position gave her enough millet every month to eat Other neighbors added other necessities None of them were relatives, not even from the same ethnic group Nobody spoke about it it was just done

We also saw that people often Islamize when they as a child had been given or sent to people in town to work as a boy or had been adopted as the girl above

Three Mafa boys live within the compound of Hammadou and Fatima who are certainly not wealthy citizens They wash the clothes and they fetch the water for the family which consists of only five persons so there is not that much work to do They have been given a push car so that they can also fetch water for other people in town and earn some money They have a sleeping place in the compound their food and a small monthly wage Whenever the father of one of the boys comes to town to visit the market he will pass by he will get food and if he wants to stay for the night he will also get a sleeping place [59]

III 4 1 5 The pilgrimage to Mecca Hajji

In Mokolo everybody knows about this Islamic pillar but of course few can afford to fulfill this duty and those few are mostly men

Daada Aisaathu s mother had been taken as a slave at the beginning of this century like so many others She had returned to Mokolo as did many others and Daada Aisaathu grew up in the Mokolo Islamic community She married several times went into commerce to be able to save a good bridepriee for her daughters (a feature we will discuss in Chapter 7) and continued to run her own affairs She started smuggling and did fairly well Last year she went to Mecca so now she is a highly respected Muslim woman She told me it had been wonderful and that she had thoroughly enjoyed her visit to the land of the Arabs It cost her a fortune Cfa 600 000 for the journey and another Cfa 200 000 for the stay (Cfa 800 000 = Hfl 4 200) To be able to afford this she had to sell at least half of her investment capital But she is an El Hadja now a woman of high status

[59] Of course there are families where such boys are badly treated but they will easily leave them

III 4.2 Cosmology in the Islamic community

If we make a diagram - not necessarily hierarchical - of the cosmological beings of the Islamic community, like we did for Mafa society, it looks as follows:

Supreme Being / Allah
- *Annabijo*, prophet Muhammad
- *Malaaika'en*, angels
- *Annaboo'en*, prophets
- *Ginaadjo'en*, spirits
- Wallo'en, saints [60]

I will discuss these beings below, based on the perceptions of the Islamic community in Mokolo

III 4.2.1 The Supreme Being

As we said above the notion of Islam within the region contends that there is only one God, Allah, and Muhammad is his Prophet. Allah is the Ultimate being. Life is in his hands and he knows what people want and need. The new converts emphasize that he is exactly the same Being they called *Irgilé* before. But unlike Mafa religion, prayers can be addressed to him directly and contain words of praise for him: Allah the Greatest, Allah the Highest.

III 4.2.2 Muhammad

Muhammad has been the most important messenger of Allah on earth. He was sent to bring Gods word. The Marabout, *mallumjo* tells me:

> The Fulbe did not find the word of Muhammad themselves. The Fulbe descend from a noble, an Arab. From the moment Muhammad was in Mecca he said to this noble: "Listen you, there will be a race who will descend from you, but you will not know this race yourself. You will not know them and if you would, you would not be able to understand them because they will speak a language that does not yet exist. By that time I will no longer be on this earth. You will cross the river of Mecca, there

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[60] Prophet, *annabijo (or annaboojo) (plur annaboo en)* comes from the Arabic word for prophet *An nabuy*. Angel, *Malaa ikaajo* (plur, *malaa ika en*) comes from the Arabic word for angel *malaa ika*. The word for spirits seems to have been derived from the word *djinns* as used in North Africa, who can cause evil and good things. They further know the Devil called *Saydaanu*, which has been derived from the Arabic *shaiTaan*. *Walloyo* (pl *wallo en*) are known in the Arab world by the name *waludju* or *wali*

Children at Qur'an school

you will find a quarter in town where you will stay. You will get married there and your children will be named Fulbe."

III 4.2.3 Other prophets

Besides Muhammad there are other prophets, *annabo'en*. These were the ones who were there before Muhammad, in the past. Their existence is quite important For the people in the region their existence affirms the same roots of the different religions. They emphasized again and again that it concerns the same Ultimate Being and the same Prophets

> My Islamic friend and I were visiting a Christian woman who had given birth. In the room there is a large poster with the angel Gabriel on one side and the devil on the other. In the middle sits Jesus with children around him. My son is fascinated by the devil and started imagining all sorts of things about this being. To prevent him from getting nightmares I said that people just imagine him to look like that "But God, does he not look like he does on the picture either?" I said they think he looks like that. Then he said:"Who says God is white? Perhaps he is black . You know, I think that there are two Gods, a white God and a black God " "Certainly not, my Islamic friend quickly corrects him, "there is only one God for sure, but there are different prophets. Muhammad is our Prophet. Within other religions they have other prophets they consider the most important one. The Christians have Isa (Jesus). The Jews have Ibrahim The Mafa too have their prophet, because they also believe in only one God. It is because of their prophet that they do not pray but sacrifice, but believe in one God they do " The Christian Mafa woman agreed with this notion.

The friend quoted above was a woman of Mafa origin who had never been to school and could copy Arabic writing but not really read it The learned Marabouts have the same notion of the roots of the three religions This knowledge of the resemblance between the different religions adds, in my opinion, to the acceptance of the fact that members of one family may have adopted Christianity or continue to do their Mafa sacrifices. Don't they finally all pray to the same God?

III 4.2.4 Saints

Even nowadays, one finds holy people, friends of God; they are called *wallojo* (pl.*wallo'en*) A Fulbe woman told me:

> Before one could find many more of them than in these days. You hardly find them in Mokolo or Marua. Uthman dan Fodio was one for sure. These are mostly people that do not mix with the ordinary crowd. If you want to see them, you could only succeed on Fridays, the day of praying. My grandmother's grandmother (hence a woman!) used to be one, so my grandmother told me. God gives these prophets messages: what they should do or not do, and what they should tell to other people. They can also look into the future...she had very white hair, this great-grandmother of mine, like a *Nasaara*, a white person, but hardly anybody saw her.

III 4.2.5 Angels

God has angels to help him, guards and soldiers.
Besides that, every human being has two guarding angels next to her or him. They are called Malaaika (pl.Malaaika'en):

> No matter what you say, no matter what you do, they are always next to you to notice it. One on your left side, one on your right side. If you are of Muslim religion and you speak falsely, the one who is on your right hand will write it down, and if your good words or deeds turn out evil it will be written down by the one on your left side. They are always there, they see what you eat, drink, where you walk and till the very last day of your life they will notice everything. You cannot see them, but if they would not be there, you would not even be able to stand upright! During the final judgements, the words of your guarding angels will be considered.

The angel that takes your soul after death is called *Malaaika mouwtum*. Many more angels, people emphasized, are described in the books of the religious scholars.

III 4.2.6 Spirits and Devils

All sorts of devils are known. The spirit called *ginaadjo*, or - by the 'French' name [61] - *mammy wata*, hides near rivers, puddles and pools but also next to huge trees and mountains. It is the spirit of the water. For the Islamized Mafa it is not just a bad character. An Islamized Mafa man explains that this spirit brings

[61] They said it was the French name, but the term *mammy water* is known throughout West Africa. It is derived from the English Mama water or mother of the water. My promotor H.U.E. Thoden van Velzen told me that it is even known in Surinam.

the cattle But in telling his story, this informant remembers his youth when he was still a small Mafa boy

> After the arrival of the Europeans, they caught the *Mammy wata* and all those places have become dry now The water cannot do without this spirit In the custom of this land (he means in Mafa custom) they also give the cattle the chickens, the goats to the human beings People got caught by these spirits too they simply disappear In Mafa they call them *Nhad* and the Fulbe call them *Gmaadjo* The M bororo the ones that go around with their cows and sell the milk, the real Fulbe (according to his categories), have their large cows with these large horns They have all caught them out of the water not only their cattle but also their medicines These are the things one cannot explain It is like a mystery like the guy I saw in France in the theatre who opened up his hand and many many pigeons came out of it and took to the sky And in the same hand he held a rose that started growing and growing These are the mysteries of life

Another sort of devil *saydaanu mazaaga* in Mafa hides next to people The Marabout explains

> You just sit and talk with friends and everybody agrees on everything Then suddenly *saydaanu* takes a seat next to you and starts telling contradictory things which you will say aloud and before you know it you have large arguments and fights with your friends If you wash yourself before the prayers he says don t pray If you sleep well in the morning and have to get up for the early prayers he says why don t you stay in your bed? You can only protect yourself against these devils by praying to God

III 4.3 View of religious similarities

It is remarkable that the similarities between the different religions in Mokolo are not underlined by the priests and pastors within the Christian churches On the contrary On several occasions I heard them preaching about the intolerance of the Islamic religion Yet many Islamic people - like my illiterate friend above and the Marabouts explained to me that the Islamic and Christian religion differ only on three basic points I quote the words of one Marabout

> The difference between Christianity and Islam is very small It is a question of the difference of some words in the Old Testament and the Qur an What they tell in the Old Testament they also tell in the Qur an Only the New Testament is different There we can find some passages that do not correspond with the Old Testament In the Christian religion

for example they say that Jesus is the Son of God That does not exist in our Qur'an Jesus was sent by God but he is not his son Like the other prophets, he has brought God's word, but he is not his son This belief we, Muslims will not accept

While the first difference is based on a theological question, the second one concerns the rituals

> The second difference is the following Take for example an event or get-together, where people need to assemble God does this as well He invites people to church or to mosque Now the Christians, on their way they are allowed to urinate to go to the toilet and not wash themselves afterwards Is that dirty or not?
>
> He obviously asks me for an answer
>
> 'That's dirty!
>
> So that's why we say you should first wash all those parts of the body where the bodily fluids came from before you present yourself before God
>
> That makes two differences Now there is a third one

The last difference has to do with religious authority The Marabout continues

> They say that the sisters [he means nuns] should not marry But if your father and your mother do not contract a marriage for their daughter can she get any children? A woman has to get married because her parents were married as well and that is how she herself exists If she would not marry, if she would not get any children, when she dies who would still speak of her afterwards? The prohibition for people [he means the nuns and the priests] to marry like one finds within the Christian religion therefore is bad
>
> So these are the only three things where we differ For the rest it is all the same!

III 4.4 View of the after-life within the Muslim community

When people convert the jars are broken Then sacrifices to their own tutelary spirit to the lower spirits and to the ancestors are no longer made After death the soul *vonki* of a person who has kept strictly to Islamic rules and has led the good life of a Muslim will be taken by the angel *Malaaika mountum* or *Mungaric* immediately after her or his death When buried one will be visited by the Prophet, who will say - as an informant tells us

> "Get up and write down on the white garment they have enwrapped you in what you have done on earth The hairs on your body will start growing and judge your good and bad deeds during life Then Allah's

guardians make a noise, like the noise of a gun so you get frightened and return to earth They come again and bring you a pot to put the bodily fluids in Then the body is taken to heaven and when you arrive there your soul will be returned to it You stay in a very large house called *daŋgal*, which has electricity and there is a lot of food God will give you in return all that you have given to your fellow men and women during your lifetime If you have never given anything to anybody you can eat your own knees once you arrive in *daŋgal* There you have to wait for the final judgement, *nyande kuta daŋgal* of God During this judgement which takes place on a very large terrain people will return to life and get up like termits and God will divide human beings into three groups A group of Muslims a group of the people who followed Isa (Jesus) and a group of Pagans The members of these groups will each be weighed and thereafter divided into two groups the good people and the bad people The good people of each of these groups will go to their own heaven, *Saare aljanna* [1] The bad people go to hell *Saare wute* (lit house of fire)

We may notice the reference within this story to the obligation of alms giving We also note the fact that people who are not Islamic are not doomed be they Christian or Pagan but just go to another heaven

I jokingly remarked I was hoping visits could be paid to the other heavens as I would like to see my Islamic and Pagan friends again after death She seriously responded that that would not be possible

> Each territory will be well locked and God's soldiers (angels) will keep guard Their chief is called *zelataodi* You have to choose in this life A change of mind in the life hereafter is virtually impossible You see the people of Isa think that they are right that Muslims do not do the things God asks of human beings so they claim to be the ones who go to Paradise after death People who do not pray at all [she means those who are neither Christians nor Muslims] claim their religion is the only right one Who is right? Nobody knows for sure Only Allah knows because he knows more than any human soul or being If one does the right thing, he will take care of things There are also people who will say that those who have just started to pray [she means those who have just converted] will not go to heaven and get as high a place as the others Other people claim the contrary is true, that if you have descended the mountain' [this means have come to town] go straight to a Marabout and

[1] Derived from the Arab word *Al jannah*

tell him you would like to pray too like the Muslims and the Marabout grants the request washes you and does the necessary prayers you will get as good a place in heaven as those who have been praying all their lives even if you die at that very moment Allah will give those new converts even larger presents than all the other persons Oh well we ll find out what it is all like in due time

The pastor told me that Muslims were cheating when they converted people because they did not tell new converts that going to paradise was out of the question for them However, the Marabout was quite clear about the position of recently Islamized people

When a Mafa who has not found the Islamic religion within his family by birth and who voluntarily leaves to Islamize arrives in front of the good God the latter will give him double quantities of the goods he gives to people who were born in the religion For example if God gives me one packet of cigarets the recently Islamized will get two

III 4.5 Soul eater: *mysterio* or *karamajo*

Within the Muslim community there is like within Mafa society, also a belief in the soul eater He or she is called *mysterio* It is not a spirit but a human being who in theory at least can be male as well as female though all the people I knew to be accused were female The other word for a soul eater is *karamajo* which means to be able to fly like a bird

We may recall the image of a snake in the Mafa belief system The snake gets into the belly of a woman who can thereafter turn out to be a soul eater *mide* though not neccesseraly so When I discussed this fact with a Mafa woman a Fulbe friend entered the room She said that by Fulbe custom a woman who had a snake or a bird inside her belly was definitely a *mysterio*

Why can it also be a bird?

'It can be something else too!

An elephant?

'No of course not

A fish?

No it is always a bird or a snake!

So being possessed by a snake shifts from an image that could be negative as well as positive in the Mafa belief system, to something that is definitely negative Another Islamized woman (second generation) told me that a woman who is a *mysterio* does not want to give birth in the hospital because during labor the snake comes out first to drink the blood and she added

but then it can be birds too

The soul eater in the Muslim community can also take the soul away and eat it According to the following conversation, one gets ill and slowly dies

"My mother had a pain over here " my son s friend remarks and pointing to his chest at the place where his heart is

"So it was obvious that somebody was eating her '

"But how did your mother know exactly?' my son asks "One simply knows," he replies

"We think it is the old lady who lives on the other side of town near x '

"But why would she do a thing like that, is she hungry or what?'

His friend shrugs his shoulders

"Is she very poor?" He obviously tries to find a reason for such an act "Doesn't she have money to buy meat? Is that why she eats other people?"

His friend shruggs again his shoulder his face expresses his thoughts stupid questions!

"How exactly does she do it then?' That, at least is a question that can be answered "She starts with the hearth that's why you get a pain there So my mother went to a woman who knew a remedy against it She took it away '

'You mean her heart?

'No stupid the pain

'How should I know but if she would not have found a remedy would she have died?"

"For sure, she slowly eats you away! '

"Does the *mysterio* like white people too?

When I told my (Mafa Islamized) friend Maimuna the story afterwards she laughed whole heartedly

"No," she said "it has nothing to do with being poor or wanting to eat meat It is God It is through him that some people are *mysterio* and others are not

This view comes very close to the Mafa view of the role of God Jigile, it is due to his policy as we have seen in a previous section that people act badly Such a deed would be very unworthy of Allah, so here we seem to have come across a remnant of the old belief system

I also told her whom the friend of my son had accused

"Oooh, for sure she is one too!" she immediately reacted

"But how can you know?" I asked, and explained 'You remember the argument you had with the wife of your father, that she called you *mysterio* and how angry you got and how furiously you reacted? We

know you are not But if we accuse somebody else who says we are not wrong too?

"For sure, being called a *mysterio* is one of the worse insults that exist Certainly if it is not true When my mother heard about the insult, she arrived the next morning and blamed my father's wife 'How dare you call my daughter a *mysterio*?' But as for the woman you mentioned we are certain I will tell you why There was a girl, living close by her, who had grown up in the plains She had come to Mokolo, because they wanted to marry her out to somebody Then it started She got the most horrible headaches and one day she spontaneously started to scream and called the name of this woman She screamed return my heart please return my heart!' She went to the woman's compound but the latter closed the door in front of her She knocked but they didn't answer Then she started eating the sand in front of the woman's door and screamed I have my heart back I have my heart back That is how we know and that is why everybody is really careful when they pass by her door " [In the sand she had found her lost heart]

Many people were convinced that this woman was to be blamed even my son

We are passing by her compound and the kids all of a sudden make very funny faces I look at them in wonder and ask what for Christ sake they are doing? "*Maman* he says *tu as crocque ta langue?* ('did you bite your tongue?') What for? 'She is a mysterio and if you bite your tongue she cannot get at you!

Protection against *mysterios* is not only obtained beforehand by biting the tip of your tongue, but also with the help of amulets, *layaayu* (pl *layaayi*) [63] These are prescribed by the Qur'an-teacher, the *Mallumjo* They are sewn in a pouch of leather and hung around the necks of children who are especially vulnerable Adults, though, may also wear them It has been argued that due to this popular widespread use of amulets Islamization scored its early successes (Mommersteeg 1988)

The remedy the children spoke about can be obtained by Qur'anic texts written on a board The text is washed away, the water retained and drunk This can be done at home by men as well as women

Aisaathu is the daughter of a well known Marabout in the plains She is Fulbe and moved to Mokolo when she married She reads and writes perfectly in Arabic My son was ill She visited me in the evening with her board and started writing a text When another visitor came in she

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[63] Derived from the Arabic word *Al-aayah* Paradise

grasped the board and left quickly without saying a word Much later when my visitor had left and the rest of the town seemed asleep she knocked at my door "I did not want to say it in front of anybody else but his illness is certainly due to a *mysterio* People are always jealous and harm other people But I have written a Qur an text for him and washed it Give it when you have turned down the light because I know him if he would see the colour of the drink he will refuse but it is very important " She handed me a small bowl with black water I did as she told me and woke him up in the dark "Drink this it will do you good " He was too sleepy to notice anything but when he had drunk it he remarked before falling asleep again "Jughh does that water taste awful ' The next day we went to the hospital where malaria in combination with angina was diagnosed They did not consider this visit a denial of their healing methods, the hospital s medicine is additional to their own

III 4.6 Other uses of Qur'anic texts

Qur'anic texts can be used for all sorts of purposes (Mommersteeg 1988) The woman mentioned above had many friends in town of Mafa origin As she was also considered to be a Marabout - children came to her everyday to learn to write and read in Arabic she exchanged texts with other people or gave examples of different texts for different purposes This always took place secretly as was the case above She always emphasized though that a Marabout was not supposed to use her or his capacities to write texts that could harm people black magic, *sahaari* As she said

> It can be used to make marriages fail, a woman can ask for it for example when she no longer loves her husband She can have him drink the text she got from the *Mallumjo* Such is wicked though I would never do it It's making abuse of the gifts Allah has given you I mean in that way I could kill many people but how could one do such a thing? If ever they ask such things from me, I tell them to go to those Marabouts who did not understand Allah's word

Every Marabout has his or her own secret ways (see also Mommersteeg 1991) They do not tell other people for the simple reason that they can make money out of it

> I went with a friend - Islamized Mafa - to a Marabout quite far from Mokolo in the direction of the plains He was known for his skills When we arrived, we first got dinner Then they talked a long time about how everything was and finally they started discussing the subject for which

we had undertaken the journey Only after he had given her the remedy was the price discussed which started off with cfa 50 000 (f 350) The minimum monthly wage for an employee is cfa 30 000 but few people really earn that much This indicates that the amount was enormous I was quite shocked Finally the price was fixed at cfa 20 000 still an enormous amount

III 4.7 Women's position and role within Muslim religion

The Marabout said

> Within the Muslim religion men and women need to go the same road and they have to listen to the same words (he meant the Qur an)

It is obvious that we cannot make the same division of labor within religion as we did for the Mafa Men and women pray in the same way should act the same way and can both become learned scholars who can read and write the Qur an In reality however most of the *Mallumbe* are men If a woman is more learned than her husband she will be very discreet about it and not show off
But all the religious moves are done separately The rules concerning segregation also underlined by Uthman dan Fodio result in two separate life spheres those of men and those of women This also expresses itself on an economic level which we will discuss in a following chapter

III 4.8 Remnants of the old religion

We said above that we supposed Mafa customs to be absorbed into Islam Was that assumption correct? The ancestors have been abandoned the jars have been left behind But there is one jar that is taken along in the Islamic community even though it has lost its religious connotations In the Mafa community the afterbirth is buried in a jar Whenever a child is ill a sacrifice needs to be made on the grave of this jar Muslim women in Mokolo (of Mafa origin) continue to bury the afterbirth in a jar (up to the third generation now), not realizing that this is a Mafa custom that they took along Further we may remember Maimuna s remark concerning the power behind the soul eater, *mystere* She said it was ultimately Allah Such a remark would never have been made by a Fulbe woman Apparently subtle cosmological differences do emerge as a result of a different religious background
Soul eaters and water spirits can be found throughout Cameroon and West Africa We may recall how an Islamized Mafa informant gently mixed his knowledge concerning the water spirits he discussed this spirit in the Islamic community connecting it with knowledge from his childhood, before Islamization This can

be done quite easily, without harm to the Muslim belief system, as long as no sacrifices are required which is not the case for spirits

Finally, the help required in cases of misfortune has remained very flexible too During my survey within the Islamized community I asked people whom they would go to for help (see Appendix 1, Question 4) Most of them simply replied that they went either to hospital or visited a Marabout Near the end of the survey one woman, Islamized in the second generation, admitted that traditional diviners were still visited

> Well, I may go to the hospital, if that does not work I will go to the Marabout, and if that does not work I will go to the blacksmith or the diviner

Noticing my doubtful and at the same time relieved expression as I had had the experience with close friends that this indeed happened she continued

> Yes, the Mafa diviner or blacksmith — well I mean can you wait and do nothing in cases of illness or misfortune, when there are still some alternatives around? The ones I visit can be male as well as female And if the remedies of one do not work, I continue on to the next one with a clear state of mind Was it not God who gave them their gifts? So why not use them? Isn't it natural that everybody makes use of the possibilities that exist? The Islamized people go to the diviners and the Mafa people go to the Islamic Marabouts if their remedies can help them out And all those people who told you that they would never do such a thing, well believe me they are simply lying Of course you keep it a secret, you do not tell your neighbor, you may even remain silent about it in front of your own children If someone openly advises "go and see such and such diviner " you will say 'Oh, no I could never do that, yet go we all do, believe me! Would you refuse treatment for an illness, which you know would cure you, because the whites have all their medicines? You wouldn't! Well, it s the same with the Muslims!

The conversation with the Mafa diviner woman I cited earlier reveals the same The following visit I made along with two Islamized women to another Mafa female diviner also speaks for itself

> On the 31st of October Maimouna, an Islamized Mafa woman in the second generation asked me if I wanted to join her on a visit to a healing woman She had trouble with a *gildie*, literally worm that was wandering around in her body I said I would gladly come along Another Islamized neighbor came with us too, as she had severe pain in her belly When we arrived it appeared that the healing woman living on the outskirts of town, a Mafa area had her own hand in bandages and she said she could not do very much but would we please come back two days later 'But

I can see , she added, "that many *nudes* or *mysterios* must be active in your part of town Ooh, don't bring it up' replied my friend in agreement So two days later we went back four of us that time as another Muslim woman had said she would like to come along

The healing woman a Mafa, did not speak *Fulfulde* so my friend served as an interpreter for the other women, as none of them spoke Mafa anymore We all sat down at her place She was a woman of about sixty She had a very reassuring smile and kind eyes She told me that even Maimouna's grandmother already came to see her mother to be cured whenever she had problems [Maimuna's grandmother once taken as a slave as we may remember, belonged to the first inhabitants of the Muslim quarter in town]

She put a mat on the floor somewhere apart on which the Muslim woman was supposed to sit after she has unwrapped the upper part of the body She sat with her back towards me The healing woman took a small jar and some leaves She took the leaves and put them in the jar, which contained some oil Then she mashed the leaves between her fingers She put her hand first on the stomach then on the belly of the woman She rubbed quite hard while she kept the other hand on the back of the woman She asked Are you all coming from the same compound?' She asked this because she was sure it must be the same soul eater, *mysterio* who had been active When Maimouna translated the phrase they all started laughing She concluded that there was a baby in the belly of the woman Maimouna translated and the woman obviously relieved, started nodding with her head 'I knew it,' she exclaimed "I knew it even my breast contains milk at times!' The child had been there for a while and did not grow With the juice of the leaves the woman struck the toe and a spot just above the knees of the woman, then between and under her breasts On this spot she also spit and rubbed again, and then she still rubbed the forehead Above the head she made circling gestures, while in the meantime she prayed very intensively Finally she rubbed the belly again It lasted quite a while When she was ready, the patient couldn't stop thanking the woman *Use mam gay, usoko mam gay use use use'* Then it was the other woman s turn She said it was already better than last time she came to visit her The treatment differed slightly but the procedures were the same During this treatment her granddaughter came in who speaks very good French and Fulfulde Maimouna handed over a schoolbook she had bought for her in Maroua during our last visit to this town [an event which underlines that they keep up good relations with each other] The grandchild took over the translation When we left the

healing woman said we should come back again a few days afterwards so that she could treat the women again

The day we returned I had a long conversation with her

'My name is Vaydam I was born in Mokola of the *gwali Datsama* and *kuvuk Soulede* I am from the blacksmith caste About 19 years ago when my husband with whom I lived in Ldamtzai died another man took me over here and gave me this house in which I live with my daughter

I have the gift to cure people When I was still very young I was not aware of that It was only after I had given birth to my daughter and when my mother noticed that I did not get a second child that my mother gave me the calabash That is what you need to cure people with, as all the medicines one uses are in there My mother had gotten it from my grandmother

These gifts are exclusively for the blacksmith caste, though not necessarily every member of it My father was also a diviner My mother already had these gifts and many people came to her to be cured like they come to me now My grandmother already had medicines in the calabash she had searched for in the bush I search too, in the mountains The best ones you can find on the spots where people most preferably *mude* are buried When two persons are buried there, like a father and a son for example it is even better Especially on the spot where their heads are rotting you can find the best medicines growing, the miracle medicine, which is called *'madzaf nzekdai* in Mafa Other plants grow in other places like the medicines against the casting of the evil eye called *madzaf dai* and other medicines against the *mude*

The woman you came with the other day has a child that stayed in her belly and stopped growing It is caused by her husband who said something that got on God s nerves and affected this situation So I need to speak to God so that he will put his saliva on her belly so that it can go to the child so that it will start growing again And she returned home will also pray to God and ask him the same things I asked

Yes, I am a Mafa woman and she is a Muslim woman and we both pray to the God, I call Jigile and she calls Allah, but it is the same God so we can both pray to him

If a child is lost in the belly like that we call it *kra nzena hud* If she would not pray and if it stays like that it finally may start rotting, especially when a *mude* intervenes but then she will abort the child It may happen that the child will be born one year for example, after the father had died or has gone away If the child is a boy we call that *dikgai* in Mafa and if it is a girl we call her *dohtsad* They know this

phenomenon among the Fulbe as well as among the Mafa (comp Jansen 1982)

> I possess all the remedies against those bad things of the *mude* So whenever somebody Islamic or Mafa, thinks the *mude* is getting at him or her they can come to me and I will cure them But the *mude* can also get at me and then I need to use my own medicines
> The Mafa used to have their amulets, like the Fulbe only we put it in a cord of millet stick but now those near town go to the Marabout to fetch it and he will put it in a leather pouch
> I have taught my skills to my daughter Yes I do get many people here Mafa and Muslims also Fulbe people even from Bukla from Marua and from Garua Even southerners I get Only the whites do not come, except for you thank you my daughter "

Thus it became evident to me that the Mafa curing system remains generally accepted

III 5 "But we always used to leave behind our *guid pat* when we left to another husband": a conclusion

In the introduction we posed several questions Can they now be answered? In regard to the theological readjustments that took place after Islamization, we can conclude that the cosmology underwent a major change
Let us repeat the scheme of the ordering of the Islamic cosmos and community

		Allah Supreme Being
		Muhammad
		other prophets
Human Being		Spirits
birth life		
people	*mystery*	guarding angels
		devils
		soldiers

believers	non-believers	Islamized people
Fulbe	*Haabe* (Christians and Pagans)	*Juulbe* [64]

Death: P a r a d i s e or H e l l

Islam has a linear view of life and the after-life. Everything lies in the hands of Allah, demands are made directly upon him. Within the Islamic community, the ancestors no longer play a role. One needs no longer take them into account. People go to heaven or hell after this life and continue to live for ever after. The Mafa take a more circular view; they re-incarnate in a next life.

Supreme Being
Jigilé (and his *guid pat*)

Not human
tutelary spirit: put child in womb of mother

Birth: l i f e

Human Beings		lesser spirits
People (and *guid pat*)	*Mide* (and *guid pat*)	

Death: l i f e c o n t i n u e s u n d e r n e a t h t h i s e a r t h

ancestors

tutelary spirits: put child in womb of mother

Birth: n e x t l i f e
the cycle is repeated

[64] *Juulbe* islamized people who were not ethnically categorized as Fulbe, as we may remember

It should be clear that Mafa cosmology is not based on a dualistic pattern whereby humans are found on one level with non humans or spirits and above them the Supreme Being It is more like a continuum not in the form of a circle but more like a spiral as one gets deeper underneath the earth after every death At the same time in Mafa religion *Ngile*, the Ultimate Being and the human beings have a common feature They are both double beings (the person or God and his or her tutelary spirit) yet they are different Within Islamic society it is clear that Allah has no similarity to mortal human beings

In Mafa religion the difference between God and humans is bridged by the lesser spirits There are tutelary spirits and small gods who are of the same order yet different The tutelary spirits are double and related to humans whereas the small gods are single and not related

In Islamic religion the angels are helpers of God They have no intermediary function, as one can only pray directly to God

In the Mafa cosmological system, a person and a *mude* are opposite - ordinary and evil beings yet both humans This remains the same after Islamization

How quickly people integrate this new theological system depends on whether they consider integration an advantage The view of the religious world described here is derived from Islamized Mafa people most of whom were of the second generation If new converts appreciate the new religious possibilities they accept it like Maama Laila did Some though remain doubtful as a recently Islamized woman remarked

> Well I don t know where the soul is going to when I die and as we do not get an immediate answer from God one never knows Yes of course the Marabout told us we will go to paradise, but who would know if he is lying?
>
> As a motivation for her conversion she said that her sister and brother both did the same before She had been married twice in the mountains I found out that she did not have any more children and that she preferred the much less heavy work load We will deal with economic advantages or disadvantages in Chapter VI

We remarked that there are obvious facts that facilitate change of religion First of all the Supreme Being of the different religions is considered to be the same Secondly the character of the evil beings that eat souls has hardly changed except that after Islamization they are more often women I did not come upon a male *mvsterio* during my stay Yet many features remain that make the change remarkable Honoring the tutelary spirits the different spirits and the ancestors is no longer considered important and no longer paid

Let us return to Horton's theory to see if it can help us to understand the conversion process in Mokolo If we consider the Islamization of men we cannot say - if we recall the different stages of Islamization in the area - that they have travelled far and wide and in doing so extended the boundaries of their microcosm Only those who had been taken along as slaves actually crossed a cultural divide

Islam penetrated the microcosmos of Mafa society when Mokolo was established as an Islamic center and not as a result of people's sojourns to widen their horizons Before this actually happened they kept resisting Islam as did many afterwards This certainly had something to do with the rudeness of the Fulbe tax collectors at the beginning of this century and with the responsibility men have for the continuance of the community

Young Mafa men could more easily go to town because they did not yet have the responsibilities older men have in society They thus became part - be it for economic reasons or otherwise - of the Islamic community We noted that Islamization and urbanization were concomitant processes People did not need to travel far but once they were in the Islamic community in Mokolo they were in a different religious environment the boundaries of the microcosm were extended Many of them subsequently Islamized Nowadays people can move to these urban settings and yet stay in the Mafa community In combination with the new political situation this resulted in a slow down of the process of Islamization

What about the remarkable fact that women not only Islamize and change their lifestyle when young, but also do so very often at a later age while I did not come upon such examples for men in my sample and the cases I gathered? When men stick to their traditional religion they condemn their daughters when they change religion A Mafa man *bab gay* Godoka tells us

> If we have a daughter who marries a Fulbe we just do not mention it We pretend she is not getting married we pretend as if she does not exist anymore We can curse them and say they will never set foot in the house anymore But then perhaps she may come secretly and curse her father and then we [he means fathers] might die So finally she will come to visit but only after I have calmed down my anger But will her husband come to help me on my fields or with other things? He is a good-for-nothing

In regard to Mafa women the situation is more complicated If we consider their motives to Islamize we note that many of them hardly ever left the area to widen their horizons Yet many of them decided to search for an alternative way of life at a later age In doing so they dropped the whole microcosm Can we

conclude that women accepted the Supreme Being of Islam because the structure of the Mafa basic cosmology showed no potential for response to women s longing for a social change? But where does their need to change come from if they have not widened the boundaries of their microcosm before they change? We can say that women have been aware of the wider world They occasionally go to market and may see relatives in town But so do the men, and more regularly too Horton s theory fails to provide a basis for understanding this process It does not look at the different positions men and women have within the structure of the basic cosmology'

Mafa men and women pray to God Requests directed toward God are channeled through the small gods yet the main sacrifices for these small gods are performed by the men Islamized women continue to pray to what they consider to be the same God As they were never responsible for the sacrifices they can easily leave that behind They used to leave behind the jar for their tutelary god their *guud pat*, anyhow when they ran off The fact that women do not have responsibilities in their old religious tradition may facilitate an easy departure as Jamila put it what do they have to lose? - Of course they have to leave their children behind But they also have to leave them if they go to live with another husband, or if their husband dies Another important factor is connected with women s motives While they gave all sorts of reasons conversion was often connected with illness or loss of their children or the fact that they did not have any more children The men have the responsibility to go to the diviner and sacrifice in many of these cases Women just wait for men s actions When these bear no results, women experience the failure of the religious system, the less they can do about it the deeper their disappointment

From Islamized relatives, they may already have heard about a ready alternative To leave then becomes a smaller step since those relatives or friends kindly help them as we discovered, in most cases But this only works if the women themselves are ready to adopt a new religion In a previous chapter we heard the example of a woman whose relatives wanted her to convert but she did not see the need for it In this matter I want to cite another example to underline the active choice women make

> All my children Islamized but not me It was only two years ago that the girls decided to do so One year later the boys followed They never told me anything One evening I just noticed that they were praying like the Muslims They were still living at home then I did not like it a bit that they became Muslims but what could I do? So let them go on doing their own things (*Ils n ont qu a continuer leurs choses*) Their father had died before they converted They did not dare do it when he was still alive as they did the sacrifice together with him Now they told me 'If

we are to find wives you will have to follow us in religion But that I refused and will always refuse I would not be able to do the things anymore that I do now And would they be able to feed me? I will stick to my own life

Now, when I sacrifice they no longer eat with me they no longer sacrifice But if they would ask me to do it for them I would But they did not ask that of me Yet they wanted me to go to the diviner for them, because they did not find wives quickly enough If they ask for a sacrifice, I will do it for them

Finally, what about the Ardeners view that the genders have different perspectives - that women are muted and when older are more conservative, because they have more knowledge of the dominant system? In this respect is Trimingham's view right - that women are inclined to hold on longer to former cults when Islamized?

In traditional Mafa community the lives of men and women are not much segregated Yet I think we can take the difference in perspective for granted, as men and women have so many different interests The fact that women never pray for their husband is just one example

What about Mafa women being a subdominant 'muted group? We saw that in religious life women are literally muted they speak in very low voices or not at all in the kitchen during a sacrifice Yet on a symbolic level they are represented in the sacrifices (and in rituals by the even numbering) and their curses are greatly feared But all this takes place in a man's world through men's actions, at what we may call an overt level Women have no responsibilities for the well-being of the community on a direct level

Can we consider women more conservative because they put so much energy in adapting themselves to the men s system? They know about it but never become part of it as the two levels remain complementary and the whole society is aware of the two levels

In regard to the attitudes towards Islamization women are less apt to stick to their Mafa religious and cultural interests Examples demonstrate that they do change easily if they think conversion is in their interest In many cases, it was because they were fed up with the men having all say on an overt level We may recall Maama Laila s remark concerning the situation after conversion "They didn t have a say over me anymore '

We also mentioned Trimingham s argument that women are not only inclined to stick longer to traditional religious attitudes but also integrate aspects of their former religion thus a difference occurs between the world of women and men

after conversion to Islam? Women hardly maintained relations with the small gods so why should they continue to sacrifice to them after Islamization? In Mafa religion they were indispensable, yet dependent After Islamization they become independent They can pray five times a day on their own initiative Before, whenever a child was ill, they always had to act through their husband, he would go to the diviner he would lead the necessary sacrifices After Islamization women can consult a Marabout or continue to see a diviner yet they act on their own they can act on the 'overt' level This is another reason why women do not stick to former religious traditions or that they do not maintain former cults, as Spencer Trimingham suggested

The fact that existing theories considered women more conservative shows that these remarks are based on a generalized idea that does not take into account the difference in religious practices of women in different societies Being more or less conservative is intimately connected with the benefits it yields

Of course there are examples of societies where women do retain non-Islamic, or less orthodox religious habits This was found in the Bori Cults of Hausa women (Nicolas 1978) or in women's ties with the saints (maraboutism) in Nort Africa (van Santen 1983) In those cases, though women do benefit from these activities their perspective is based on former religious acts

In this chapter I have focused on women and made a conscious effort to overlook their direct interests These may be economic as is often thought but why not religious too? We should consider remarks like the following, voiced by an old lady, mam gay Dorkas

> "Those who believe in Allah go to him after their death, those who make the sacrifices will go underneath the earth forever to die five times I still do the sacrifice for my mother but if you ask me I would prefer to go forever to God All my children have already converted only I still do my sacrifice And every year after the harvest when I have done the sacrifice I tell myself I will convert too, because I would like to go to God after my death and be with my children but then time passes so quickly I still have not done it But I will "

This woman performs the sacrifice for her mother Is that the reason she has not converted yet? Or is it because she does have immediate responsibilities within the old religious practices? Very likely When I confronted my informants with my view on the difference in conversion practices, they argued that women sometimes do return to their former religion and jars They literally added

> "When they still have their mothers or fathers to sacrifice to, because they are afraid those will get angry

The words of the woman quoted above underline anew how accutely aware women are of the difference in cosmology between the different religions. The mutedness seems to remain restricted to the traditional religious rituals.
By now, we have referred several times to women's important role on a symbolic level. In the next chapter we will elaborate on that. We will discuss some important rituals in Mafa society and how these are, or are not, integrated in the Islamic community.

Chapter IV
From God as 'two' to God as 'one': changes in ritual life

In the previous chapter we concluded that the religious roles of men and women in Mafa society differ markedly The question is whether we can see this difference reflected in Mafa rituals What position do women occupy in such rites? We will also look at the ritual encumbrances that will continue to demand time and investment after conversion Thus central to our inquiry remains the nature of the relationship between conversion and the position of women

Non Islamized Mafa people have a most active ritual life They may take advantage of these festivities to drink millet beer Yet no matter how inebriated they may on occasion be they have to abide by the rules and restrictions that are connected with the important symbols of their society [5]

It has recently been argued that rituals ought to be regarded as mere actions without any meaning or aim having only intrinsic value (Staal 1989 304) According to this author within rituals rules count and not results while in ordinary life the contrary is true The author based his argument on a single ritual Within Mafa society one cannot oppose ritualized actions to daily life Both are related to the complex of rules There is no clear break The different rituals should also be regarded as linked to one another

Many years ago Douglas (1971 21) stated that even in modern societies it was illogical to despise all symbolic action as if it were dead weight or ritualized ritual Use of the word ritual to mean empty symbols of conformity leaving us with no word to stand for symbols of genuine conformity was in her opinion seriously hampering the development of sociology of religion For Douglas the problem of empty symbols concerns the relation of symbols to social life I agree with her position Mafa society can be categorized as a rather 'small scale (though not 'closed) one in which hypothetically there is less discrepancy between external symbolic forms and internal states The rituals I will describe in this analysis are still performed as frequently as custom requires All of them were attended by me often more than once, in different regions But even where this society is encompassed in a more modernized world - as part of the

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5 This relation allows us to consider these festivities as rituals if at least we agree with the definition of rituals as behavior complexes built around ceremonial symbolic actions and/or ceremonial processions with symbols accompanied by speeches and formulas (Tennekes 1982 89 transl J v S)

Cameroonian State - there is a relation between these symbols and social life in general. Mafa rituals are rife with practices that must be performed as the ancestors have dictated, reflecting the symbolic order. They cannot be separated from daily life. Rituals and the categorization inherent in the symbolic order express the power structures in general (Oosten 1991: 9). By implication they also express those of the genders.

Finally, we should draw attention to an observation by Trimingham. He stated that although Islam may be characterized as a 'way of living', conversion to Islam does imply an important change in categorization of the world (Trimingham 1968: 56).

What changes take place within the symbolic order and the classifications of the Mafa, and how do these changes affect the gender relations after Islamization? I will try to answer these questions by following the proceedings within some important rituals.

The study of rituals generally begins with two questions: why is a ritual performed? And why is it performed in this specific form (Tennekes 1982: 109). In regard to the aim of this study, I above added another question: what does a ritual tell us about gender relations and the status of women? In other words: what do rituals tell us about women as a category (see Moore 1988: 12 ff.) and can this position help us to understand her motives to change religion?

IV.1 Mafa ritual life

Before delving in the rituals we may recall to mind the characteristic surroundings in which they are enacted. The mountainsides strewn with contour terraces, huge and less huge boulders scattered all around, which serve as seats for the Mafa populations. One has to look well to discover the compounds, *gays*, like small fortresses even far up on the most unaccessible slops. Every *gay*, compound is always constructed beside a tree, which will be the tree of the house. It should protect the house, and during any sacrifice held for whatever reason, the tree is never forgotten. If we find large boulders next to the gay, the inhabitants most probably have cleared the place off with four poles and a roof so that it can serve as a place where one can sit down in the shadow and chat or gossip with neighbors and passers by, without having to invite them inside the *gay*, which is rarely done. Guests for a ritual will also be received here when they come to attend.

For the reader's convenience we will also pass by the classifications we came upon in the previous chapters. These must not be viewed upon as opposed and mutually exclusive spheres. They are systematically interrelated and the task of

an analysis is as Needham (1973) remarked to connect them into an ideological whole

women	**men**
inside	outside
even (two)	not even (three)
right	left
life	war
millet	wild grasses (*vandzal*)
vegetables	meat
second son (*mi mastlai*)	first daughter (*dem tsava*)
fields/kitchen (furthest inside)	entrance of compound (*ga*)
curse/blessing	sacrifice
snake	panther
low	high
(smith caste pottery earth midwife)	(smith caste iron death burial)

There are several important rituals in the lives of Mafa people we will discuss The descriptions are based on my own observations as I attended them all several times unless it is said otherwise in the text After observation I always discussed them thoroughly with several informants at a time which sometimes led to contradictory explanations and thus a debate among them or additions of aspects that escaped my observations or were not carried out in the region I attended the rituals

The ritual for twins and the associated symbols can be considered as one of the pillars of Mafa symbolic order as twins are so we will demonstrate, the ultimate manifestation of the double person that every human being is It will be categorized as a ritual that underlines the importance of the female species Thereafter we will discuss the bull ritual which undeniably emphasizes the weighty of maleness The harvest rituals will turn out to be community rituals which must be performed in the interests of the patrilineage

I will start with the twin ritual Attending it for the first time I was amazed by a part of the ritual during which women in a mock fight acted as if they defeated

the men, apparently because the latter tried - also in play - to prevent them from sowing millet. The men also tried to keep them from entering the compound, but the women fought their way through the entrance and always managed to get in. To my questions, the informants responded that this performance reflected the strength of women.

It brings to mind Gluckman's (1963) 'rituals of rebellion' although this specific ritual was centered around twins and not around women.[66] Nor did it seem to be an inversion of real relations in society. In real life, women are indeed associated with millet, the staple crop, though both men and women sow, cultivate, harvest and thresh it. This association is most clearly stressed by the fact that a girl's umbilical cord is cut with a straw of millet and those of boys with a piece of 'wild grasses'.

Then, months afterwards, I was able to attend another Mafa ritual that was described by informants as a men's ritual. During this feast, the *mana*, a bull is slaughtered for ritual purposes and the person who can afford the outlay of having bought and raised a bull is considered an important person. We will analyze these intriguing rituals more closely to learn what clues they present on the role and position of women. This will also be on focus when we pay attention to the harvest rituals and the funeral rites.

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[66] I think that rereading Gluckman's article from a feminist anthropological point of view could lead to a different interpretation. It seems that in a patrilineal and virilocal society women exhibit subordinate behavior. Yet they pose a constant threat to men. Zulu society has no pantheon of Deities but they do have an important Goddess whom Gluckman consequently names Princess. She symbolizes the changes of the seasons. The entire harvest and social life depend on these changes. This Princess links social life with the natural life in which social interaction takes place. She is only partly human she is also the forest, the grasses, the river and the gardens. She is a woman, virgin, unmarried, and yet fertile. She makes the rain and teaches all the necessary arts of life. She gives laws to women who cannot make laws themselves. Women maintain the contact with her and derive from her their creative and life giving forces. With their magic powers women can, like in Mafa society, harm men in their importance and their status as herdsmen or warriors (Gluckman 1963).
Having read this I think another interpretation of these rituals is possible. Despite their subordinate position, women very well know that they are the mainspring of society. It is the Goddess who reminds them of this all the time. Without them, society would come to an end. From their perspective they may give a totally different definition of the importance of society as a whole. Perhaps with these rituals women not only put forward their own perspectives, but they remind men of the preconditions for social relations.

IV 1.1 Twins in Mafa society

The twin ritual cannot be understood without knowing the special place twins, *tsakalay* occupy within society at large How I came to appreciate the important function of twins is evident in the following story At that time I used to attend all twin rituals that were brought to my notice Afterwards I had long conversations about twins with several informants [67] Nic David kindly commented on an earlier draft of this section On my return to Mokolo I was thus able to check his comments with my informants [68]

> The past few days it has been very misty, unusually so for this time of the year It started on Wednesday Large clouds of dust block out the sunshine and prevent people from seeing very far The cause of the mist comes to my knowledge after two days "A man has died His wife has given birth to four twins during the lifetime of her husband But the latter did not organize the necessary rituals nor did he make the special sacrifices that are needed for twins Not all the twins stayed alive His death is the revenge of these dead children for neglecting the rituals for them
>
> On Saturday the family performs a ritual and the necessary sacrifices On Sunday the mist slowly disappears

IV 1 1 1 They look with two eyes the position of twins

As in many African societies twins, *tsakalay*, have a special position in Mafa society Their arrival in the world is much appreciated, several informants assured me that they were certain to have twins as it 'ran in the family', and they were obviously proud of that fact They added

> one can be sure to get many presents at the birth of twins, given by kinsmen out of joy it is difficult to keep them (the twins) though

On the other hand they are also feared and sacred

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[67] Back from the field I was able to confirm that most of my findings matched those of Boisseau and Soula (1974) They wrote a three volume ethnography which has never been published and was only brought to my notice after my field work period In their work we can find many intriguing ethnological details These reveal a great admiration and love for the people under study Unfortunately no analyses are presented in their thesis that however places women at the center of Mafa cosmology

[68] Judy and Nic David did archeological research among the Mafa He commented on an earlier draft of the twin ritual after conversations with his informant Mr I Isa Kawalde

Turner pointed out that the physiological fact of twinship present humans with anomalies The birth of twins is an exuberance of fertility that results in biological and economic distress The *Ndembu*, whose rituals Turner analyzed extensively have no cattle, sheep or goats that can be milked for human consumption So it is difficult for a mother, relying on her own milk to supply twins with adequate nourishment This is allegedly the reason that twins are symbolically represented in the rites as a charge of the community (Turner 1969 40)

The Mafa have no cattle either However there is also more to it than the economies of nutrition The Mafa themselves say it is hard to raise and keep twins, because they are so jealous of each other And although the birth of twins is welcomed, dangerous powers are ascribed to them They can make their parents go blind or mad or even kill them or they may kill each other They can also make their parents lose their way as explained

> suppose you have visited some other area and you want to return home You will just not be able to find your way back any more! It is because twins can 'look with two eyes' which means that they are clairvoyants and by reason of this special gift cause such effects ' So people say that twins look with two eyes and that this is related to clairvoyancy and being able to make someone loose her or his way The significance of the figure two and the related aspects will become apparent in later sections

In the previous chapter we also learned that a woman who is believed to be *nude*, a soul-eater, cannot give birth to twins

Schoffeleers (1991) recently reformulated the argument [1] that symmetry often seems to symbolize anomie or lawlessness This and the related viewpoints of dual classifications in general had been discussed before by Needham (1980 1973) In the volume of 1973 the article of Hertz (1909) considering the pre-eminence of the right hand had been taken as a point of departure to discuss for various societies the Pythagorean table of contraries (Hertz 1909, note 50) or dual symbolic classifications in general (Needham 1971 XXII XXX) in which finite and infinite odd and even right and left, male and female stable and changing straight and curved good and evil high and low balance each other Conversely

[1] These appeared after my paper on twins for the Sutherthwaithe Colloquium (England 1989) and after I wrote this chapter so I was not able to fully integrate his views

Schoffeleers states, people resort to corporeal asymmetry to symbolize social order. [70]

I have criticized (Van Santen 1984) the rigidness of the female position within these dual classifications before. They conform the western human norm in which human is male of which female as a category is derived, (also Tempelman 1993), 'just as Eve was born from Adam's side', to quote Schoffeleers (1991a:368; 1991 b:23). Consequently, they not only differentiate and construct the male and female category, but the associative categories always comprise a hierarchy. These 'classical' dual classifications, as presented in Needham (1973) and in Schoffeleers (1991 a en b), certainly contradict the Mafa's association of right with femineity, [71] but the view that the link between symmetry and lawlessness is provided by human twinship, throws light upon the ambiguity of twins in the society under study

IV 1.1 2 The category of twins

Children who are born feet-first fall into the same category as twins They are also called *tsakalay* and receive the same treatment during their life. So will triplets. Similar notions in 'Nyakyusa' society led Monica Wilson to conclude that this indicates the abnormality of dual birth (1957: 152).

IV 1 1 3 The engendering of twins

In Mafa society twins are, as Turner formulated it, more than human but also less than human (Turner 1969: 42). They are not engendered by their fathers My informants explained this to me in the following way.

> "Twins have a close relation with spirits, especially the water spirits, *nuhed*. They choose their own mother. Suppose a woman is walking alongside the road and the twins see her passing by. They may say: "she

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[70] He bases his view on Plato's symposium in which he described early mankind as consisting solely of pairs of aggressive twins Twins are associated with rivalry and generalized social strife It is by no means accidental so he argues, that twins, symmetrical individuals and unilaterals of various kinds co figure in mythical stories more particularly those pertaining to man's creation fall and redemption (1991 348)

[71] Which contradicts the general statements made by Wieschhoff (1938) concerning concepts of right and left in African Cultures in which he mentions the classifications found in various areas of right side with men left with women, right equivalent to good left to bad and inferior right connected with good luck left with misfortune left representing fortune and right misfortune, right side preferred and left considered inferior,

looks all right for a mother!". That means that they want to be born by her. Then they enter her belly. But originally they reside in huge trees, the forest, the grass, the mist."

This statement would imply that twins come into existence by mediation of 'water spirits'. Boisseau and Soula (1974:204) mention that disabled children - those who are blind or lame, for instance - are considered to be children of the water spirit and are called *kɪe-nehed*. Upon birth, those children are laid near the river bank and taken home afterwards. If they die within a few days, it is said that the water spirit has taken them back.

IV 1.1.4 The birth of twins

The birth of twins is not made public. One has to keep quiet about it and pretend they have not been born yet.

The husband leaves to fetch an egg, a special sort of herb called *guro tsakalay* that grows on the bank of the river, and the branch of a particular tree called *guure tsakalay*. In the meantime, the twins lie on the floor and are not to be touched, as my informants said:

> "...if you touch them they leave again. They do not breathe and the umbilical cord is not cut. They pretend not to be alive. But they observe their parents carefully to see how they are acting. They just know what they want between themselves."

Such a reaction to the birth of twins is in line with the data we have from other societies. [72]

The chance that twins in Mafa society will die is greater than for other children. Twins are left on the floor with the umbilical cord intact until the father has returned from the river. This may sometimes be a long walk, and the delay obviously does not enhance the vitality of the babies

People also mention the fact that the husband will postpone sexual intercourse with his other wives until the wife who gave birth to the twins has another baby. This may cause her to become pregnant sooner than usual, as most Mafa used to abstain from sexual intercourse for about two years after giving birth When a

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In many places twins are put to death, as among the *Nyoro* (Beattie 1962) the *Nuer* (Evans Pritchard 1956 129), and the *Ganda* (Roscoe 1911 125 5, Nsimbi 1956 32), and it is said that they have become like birds again

In other societies one of them is put to death, so their birth is reduced to the normality of a single birth (Venda Transvaal, Kalanga Botswana) Within some tribes this may be the female twin (Kakwa), in other ones the male twin (Kung Bushmen, Bergdama) There is an example which resembles the custom of the Mafa the *Pojulu* expose the twins to the elements for one night and keep them if they survive

woman gets pregnant again she terminates breast-feeding Hence this may cause her to wean the twins earlier than other babies, thus further diminishing their life chances

When the father returns he beats (carefully, I presume) the twins with the branch of the tree, to teach them to listen, as twins are very stubborn in life

Then they can be touched The cord made from the plant on the river bank will be used during all the rituals the father has the duty to organize for his twins From now on he will always carry around a special calabash from which to drink his beer It is attached to his left wrist with a piece of rope

IV 1 1 5 Attitude towards the twins

Throughout their life one has to give in to the twins desires and should always offer both the same objects People say

> If you give one a new piece of cloth, you have to give the other one exactly the same quality

IV 1 1 6 The personal jar and plate of the twins

The first twin ritual is held about a year after the twins are born though there may be some variation in time and the children may have passed their second birthday The father goes to the smith both the male blacksmith and the female potter belong to the blacksmith caste and asks her to make a special jar It should be kept in mind that all members of Mafa society have their own jar It represents the tutelary spirit who is always next to a person *guid pat* the one who should protect her or him during life especially against the soul eaters In other words everybody is always part of a twin the visible part is the person, the invisible part is the *guid pat* Every person has two souls one in her or his own body, one in the *guid pat* (Boisseau and Soula 1974 203)

Twins get a jar with two heads and one belly This jar called *doullak tsakalay* or *tsakalay* [illegible] has to remain inside the house at all times it can never bear sunlight If the sun would shine on it by accident, harm will fall upon the twins or the mother or father The potter also makes two small plates, called *dede tsakalay* which literally means one who is watching over the children It is a small beer pot decorated with twisted strip roulettes [73] The ritual I will now describe has to be performed every year even if one twin or both of them have died

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[73] Personal communication of Prof N David

IV 1.2 The twin ritual

In the case I observed two months after my arrival in Mokolo, and which I take as an example, the ritual is going to be performed for the first time for newly born twins.

IV 1.2.1 Preparations for the twin ritual

The potter, the *ngwazla*, has received the request to make the special, personal jar and the small circular earthen plates, *dédé*. Her husband will make special bracelets for the parents of the twins, which the man will wear on his left wrist and the woman on her right wrist during the ritual. They also have to wear this bracelet when they go to visit other places to avoid getting lost on their way back. [74]

Without beer, any ritual would be impracticable with the Mafa. Therefore, the women, whose job it is to ferment the beer, start making it for four or six neighbouring households. It is significant that this is an even number. The mother's clan, *kuyuk*, and the paternal clan, *gwali*, are sent messages that the ritual is going to take place. [75] From the day they start grinding the millet to make the wine, the parents are not allowed to cross the river where they obtained the herb, a bermuda grass, *guro tsakalay*. [76] As was explained to me:

> "That is because the twins have a special relation with the water spirits. Through their mediation the twins came into the world. If you would neglect this rule you would start feeling dizzy inside your head. As they have fetched the grass from this river they should not cross it."

The head of the mother is shaven. This hair should not get lost, and it is taken away by the potter. Afterwards the potter will say: "I have something for sale!" And the parents have to give her a jar of beer in return. Then the potter gives them the jar she made. Again beer must be given to her, whereupon she returns

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74 If they would get lost they would be obliged to spend the night 'outside'. To sleep outdoors has a double connotation. One should avoid it. Children born out of extramarital relations are said to have been conceived 'outside'. Women or men whom people presume to have sexual relations other than with their legal spouse (meaning a bride price has been paid), are said to 'sleep outdoors'.

75 We may remember that the Mafa are exogamous, patrilocal, and patrilinear. One inherits the name of the father's clan, one's *gwali*, but there is also a prohibition to marry into the mother's clan, one's *kuyuk* up to the fourth generation.

76 N.David called it *guure tsakazlam*; regional differences can be large.

the hair Until the parents die the hair will remain in the same spot underneath the granary

The night before the ritual is to be held the father has to have intercourse with the mother of the twins unless two years have not passed since their birth Otherwise both can become sterile Guests at the ritual however are not allowed to have sexual intercourse that night If they break this rule and then enter the compound of the twins those persons will become sterile

IV 1 2 2 People present at the ritual

The day of the ritual has arrived Parents of other twins have come to assist, as they are supposed to know the ritual from former occasions The obligatory guests are the close friend of the husband called *m maslai* the close friend of the wife called *gwoda* and the *maslawda*, the special neighbor friend [77] Every person in Mafa society woman as well as man, always have a close friend who will be next to them during important ceremonies during their wedding etc These persons will remain the same during their whole lifetime The intimate neighbor the *maslawda* with whom one exchanges for example the throats of goats killed will be changed if the residence is changed They serve as masters of ceremony Other people present include the potter *nguazla* and her husband or another male blacksmith who knows the ceremony Thus five persons in all are really responsible [78]

The guests from neighboring households arrive As a present they all bring millet which is emptied into a special basket

The potter had arrived before the other guests Like a thief in the night she sneaked the special jar for twins (one head two bellies) and the plates *dćde* she made for the twins into the compound covered with a piece of cloth

IV 1 2 3 Ornaments to wear at the twin ritual

The mother is dressed in a goatskin Another person comes with the bermuda grass that was picked from the river banks the *guro tsakalay* Two lengths of this grass are taken representing the twins together with a small branch of borassus called *ganga* which represents the *dede tsakalay* Thus the two become three A cord is made from it The parents of the twins and those who assist them and

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13 Here my information was supplemented with N David's personal comments

* Communication of N David

the twins themselves too if they are still alive and are big enough have to kneel down First the cord is tied around the foreheads then around their necks

IV 1 2 4 Drinking of the beer

Inside the hut of the second wife where the jar of the twins is always placed underneath the granary beer is poured, first into the twin jar then into a calabash People drink it in a kneeling position near those who are wearing the cord The calabash is filled three times if the firstborn of the father is a boy two times if it is a girl After that the jar of the twins is filled again and left like that because during the ritual it should never remain empty
Afterwards two jars of beer are carried outside for the visitors who remain outside the compound The elderly people and the very important persons as for example the mountain chief the blacksmith and the diviner sit together They will be the first to taste and drink the beer One of the jars carried outside is for the elderly men Elderly women who know the ceremony well are considered very important for the duration of the ritual yet they will not eat and drink together with the men The other jar is for the other guests including the anthropologist and her son Everybody starts drinking We sit together in small groups and talk and laugh profusely

IV 1 2 5 Sacrifice

Meanwhile a chicken is sacrificed inside the compound at the entrance to the first hut that of the first wife It is done by the male master of ceremonies along with two other males This job could never be done by women as they cannot sacrifice an animal or prepare sacrificed meat The job is done by the *m maslat*, the close friend the *maslawda* the neighbor and a brother of the twins They also wear the cord The chicken is cleaned and prepared and some of it is placed next to the twin jar On the jar they smear some blood and on top of it put some burned liver This will be eaten by those who wear the cord The rest is taken outside and given to the mountain chief *bi dzva* who will choose which elderly persons may eat with him The women serve the food approaching in a crouching position without their knees touching the ground the way they are always supposed to serve elderly persons and their husbands They put the pot with the chicken about two meters from the very important guests
The sacrifice in the jar of the twins is most important during this ceremony There is plenty of beer and much more is poured into jars that will be taken outside Every time beer is served some is also poured into the jar of the twins

To increase the wealth of those who perform the sacrifice, straw of millet is carried outside and inside again.

By then, the time has come to sacrifice a sheep. Its throat is cut by the masters of ceremony. They let the blood drip into the black pot, as well as into the basket holding the millet brought by the guests. When they skin the animal, millet flour is used. This is a typical Mafa custom.

> our elderly people say that if you do not do it this way, it will taste like a sheep of the Fulbe...[79]

Another sacrifice is made with the contents of the stomach of the sheep: they smear it on the twin jar, where they leave the liver as well. The contents of the stomach and some blood of the sheep is smeared on every door of the house, as well as on the granary and the tree beside the house. A rope and a millet stalk are also attached to the tree. Then the meat of the sheep is cooked. In this case all the different parts are cooked at the same time. The intestines and the blood are put together in the stomach and in this way cooked with the other meat. Usually, though, the stuffed stomach is cooked apart earlier during the day. During the preparation for ritual purposes, no salt is added, nor any herbs.[80]

IV 1.2.6 Preparation of the food

The masters of ceremony - the five responsible persons we mentioned - are preparing the meat in the courtyard of the compound, outside the kitchen. In the

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79 During funerals the blacksmith sacrifices a goat as well on the road that leads to the grave. In that case he does not use millet flour during the slaughtering process.

80 Normally the juice is given to the children. People say it makes them strong. So they have to drink it instead of water. On such an occasion every calabash in the house is locked away, so the children are obliged to drink this juice. If they start vomiting after they drink it, it means that they have been playing around (that is, have had sexual intercourse). In former days they were tied up and compelled to tell whom they had been playing with. In that case the father tried to arrange a marriage - also if the delinquent was his son - before any signs of pregnancy would be visible.
Mafa used to be very strict about pregnancy before marriage. It was considered very bad for a girl living under her father's roof to become pregnant. In former days, the young couple could be put on top of each other on an ant hill, pierced with a stalk, and their remains left to the ants. The same thing happened if two persons from the same clan or somebody from an ordinary clan and a blacksmith clan had a sexual relation with each other.
Informants told me that nowadays people were far less strict. Complaining about the decaying state of morality one informant added: Sisters sleep with brothers [meaning people from the same clan]. Girls get pregnant before marriage. We have become nothing more or less than sheep and goats. We will elaborate on these aspects in the next Chapter.

kitchen sauce and millet porridge has been prepared by an elderly lady, the woman who had an advisory function or women of the household. The sauce is put into a black pot and the millet porridge into a calabash. Afterwards they again prepare millet porridge, but then in combination with beans and the 'weed'.[81] Also a grease sauce is prepared with some beans added to it for the elderly people. During this ritual, people have to eat out of the same pot all the time. It should not be washed in between courses. The millet porridge should not be eaten with meat sauce, only with the beans and the weed. The important persons and the people who are wearing the cord eat the food. When they do so, they are careful to take an even number of bites - two, four, or six - never an uneven number.

IV 1.2.7 Blessing

Inside the compound, those who are wearing the cords start to eat. Afterwards they queue up two by two. A master of ceremonies has a bowl with millet flour. With two fingers he puts some flour on the jar of the twins. Everybody asks aloud: "give me some, give me some." The master of ceremony dips his two fingers in the flour and then puts them on the foreheads of every person who has queued up saying: *shéw*, which means: "what you have eaten has been good." Later on, when the meat is done, it is consumed as well.

IV 1.2.8 The symbolic strength of women

Then another activity captivates our attention outside the compound: three men pretend to ride a horse while holding a millet stalk in their hands. With another stalk they hit the imaginary horse on its imaginary bottom to make it run faster. They enact a fight on horseback with each other. While they perform this act, the father of the twins is led outside by a master of ceremonies and the blacksmith. They put a dark cloth on his head, which hangs down to the floor. Four women clothed in goatskin follow: the mother of the twins, her mother, the potter and another elderly lady, chosen by the mother.
The excitement among the guests is obviously growing. Everybody comes closer so they will not miss a single part of the proceedings, laughing heartily as they watch. The three men on chimerical horseback, pretending the millet stalk is their horse, turn toward the other side of the compound. The procession of women in

[81] In the area french speaking people called them *chien dents* dog's teeth. When it grows it looks like wild grasses, it yields small black fruit that can be dried and are used especially for ritual purposes. It is a woman's plant.

goatskin returns to the entrance of the compound, to continue along the other side as well, having gathered more women in their trail They move towards a tree So do the three men on 'horseback' The procession stops at one side of the tree, the 'horsemen' stop on the other side It was suggested afterwards that the 'horsemen were supposed to be Fulbe people [82] One person gestures as if he has an axe and is going to chop down the tree, but the three men on 'horseback' try to stop him and a mock fight ensues among the four As people explained to me

> " it symbolizes deforestation, the ground is cleared so that millet will be able to grow there "

Then the women in goatskin bend down and pretend to sow millet The other women follow suit The three men run after them and try to stop them from sowing While they continue to make the gesture of sowing, they flee from the men in the direction of the entrance to the compound The guests scream and encourage the women, especially when the men fall off their 'horses' and hit the dust several times

The women also have to fight their way back into the compound Men try to stop them, but it is considered propitious if the women fight and win They all do, and as a reward each woman gets beer to drink once she is inside They say of her

> ' she is a real woman because she has strength "

This is the end of an exciting part of the ceremony exciting for the people as well as for the anthropologist

Night is starting to fall The mother has changed from her goatskin into a wrap of cloth The official part of the ceremony is over The guests exchange more millet for beer Women and men start to dance to the rhythm of their own

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[82] N David commented on this This is a game played by children two are the horse and the third the rider There are several teams and they play at being Fulbe This game is not an integral part of the *tsakalay* ceremony and on the occasion seen by JvS is likely to have been an interlude

I watched this part of the ceremony near Djinglya My informants told me it depended on the region if this was played In the twin ceremony I observed in a later period near Mokola this part of the ceremony did not take place

What David said is very true disagreement between your and Kawalde s version does not mean that either is wrong Indeed if only more people realized that there is not one Mafa truth Mafa anthropology would be better developed

singing The moon comes out The festivities will continue deep into the night [83]

IV 1 2 9 Marriage of a twin

There is one more interesting performance that may be described in the context of the twin ritual It concerns an act that I observed when one twin a girl was going to get married

If the twins are a boy and a girl the latter should not get married before the boy As boys marry at a later age than girls, this means that the twin girl marries rather late Twins should also marry other persons who are clairvoyant but not necessarily other twins

The day that such a couple is going to live together a twin ritual has to be performed For this occasion another performance is added when night falls The girl has to run away and be captured by a group of friends of her future husband The groom does not play any role At the same time another group of men who act as enemies try to capture her as well If the latter succeed the one who captured her can keep the girl for free This means that the bridewealth has already been paid by the husband (*fiance*) and that he gets nothing in return for it When I attended it it went as follows the girl inside the house gets all sorts of instructions before the performance takes place

> Do this do that Run to the group that belongs to your future husband otherwise the men from the other group will capture you

Then the ritual starts The blacksmith the maternal uncle of the girl the mother and the girl go to the river to cross it This is the river where the bermuda grass the *guro tsakalas* had been gathered Many people are crowded around the girl They move forwards but every time they stop again The atmosphere is very tense The night is black

While moving forward slowly they ask the girl 'It is the blacksmith that has instructed us do you know this area?' The girl answers No They walk in the

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[83] Personal communication N David According to Kawade it is the sheep that is left overnight on the millet brought by the guests that is slaughtered It is skinned and cooked on the following day

The twin ceremony lasts three days

1 Sacrifice and drinking

2 Eating sheep and more drinking (five ceremonial portions for the ministers of ceremonies) fewer guests take part mainly kin

3 Guests return for last time more drinking The *tsakalas* pots including *dada* are replaced under the granary

The ceremony I watched took place in one day but had the same elements

direction of the river They ask her, "Can you cross it?" Again she answers, "No, I can't " "Well," the others say, "let us go back then " Then they return
The blacksmith says "The water in the river has disappeared, we can cross it now ' A man says "I am afraid to cross it " But the blacksmith repeats "There is the river, you can cross it now!"

Then suddenly everybody starts running after the girl The one who catches her first will marry her if he does not belong to the clan of her husband I notice that her clothes are torn apart
But this is a lucky night, she is captured by her future husband's crowd Now she walks in between a girlfriend and a neighbor to her future husband's compound The husband will arrive later with his friends to continue with the ceremonies they perform at ordinary weddings
My informants assure me that this performance formerly often ended in a way in which twenty people or more could be killed This time the tension was high, but friendly, and everybody seemed to have great confidence in the fact that she was going to be captured by the right group The husband had been teased for days that his happiness could be so easily captured during this performance [84]
When twins marry, they leave the twin jar with the parents, who have to keep on doing the ritual every year The twins, if alive, should always attend the ritual

IV 1.3 The twin ritual; an analysis

Before we analyze this ritual complex in regard to our particular aims, - what can it tell us about the gender relations - we must first draw some conclusions from the twin ritual concerning the symbolic structure of Mafa society
I will organize my analysis as well as the ones I will describe later around the three dimensions that Turner distinguishes The first is the exegetic dimension,

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[84] Personal communication of N David This has nothing specifically to do with *tsakalay* In earlier times the powerful e g the *biyam* s or *budza* s family might seize (*arrêter*) a girl and force her to marry one of their number In JvS description this appears to have been ritualized A variant of the trip to the river does take place in Mokola when a man marries a *tsakalay* girl
This ceremony was watched near Mokola My informants assured me it had to do with the fact that she was part of a twin and they underlined that these rituals could end in wars in former days I have no idea until which period such was still the case
A methodological question to be asked is if it is acceptable to make these variations from different regions into a monolithic whole I chose to do so as I consider these parts to be variants on a same theme They do not change the symbolic pattern we try to analyze here

the interpretation of the explanation given to the investigator by the informants The second is the operational dimension, in which the investigator equates a symbol's meaning with its use, in which she or he records the gestures expressions and other nonverbal aspects The third is the positional dimension in which the observer tries to find an important source of its meaning in the relations between one symbol and other symbols or group of symbols (Turner 1977 149)

IV 1 3 1 The exegetic dimension

The first dimension concerns the Mafa exegesis We know that twins have both negative and positive aspects We have mentioned some of the negative powers making their parents go blind or mad or even causing their death They came into the world through the mediation of the water spirit *nched* but they originally came from the trees the forest the grasses and the mist They must be treated carefully and specific rituals are needed to avoid unpleasant occurrences We may wonder what sort of spirit *nched* is as it also brings deformed children It is certain that the spirit causes irregularities in society

The bracelet the blacksmith made has to be worn by women on the right wrist men wear it on the left wrist where they also hang the special drinking calabash The association of the feminine with right and the masculine with left seems obvious It is easy to buttress this observation with statements made on other occasions

> 'If a woman and a man sleep or make love together which is preferably done while lying on the side [85] the woman will lie on her left side and the man on his right side because a woman should never put her left arm around a man, as this is the male side In this way she can put her right arm around the man and the man can put his left arm around the woman

The association of women with the number two and of men with the number three is also explicit If a man has a girl as a first child the jar for the *tsakalay* is filled and emptied two times if it is a boy three times This association is also visible on the wall of the threshing floor If it has two small towers it means the firstborn is a girl, if it has three the firstborn is a boy

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[85] When I told this woman that a classic position in Western societies was the woman underneath and the man on top she first looked at me in amazement and then started laughing her head off tears actually rolled down her cheeks from laughter She thought it the most ridiculous thing she had ever heard and said she could not understand that women accepted this

In the performance, women were sowing millet while men tried to prevent a person from felling a tree. Without jumping to conclusions I want to compare this with another statement of a healing woman:

> "Now if the newborn baby is a girl, the umbilical cord is cut through with a millet stalk. If it is a boy, a 'piece of wild grass' is used."

David adds that this is a stiff grass (Cymbopogon giganteus) called *vandzal*. [86] It is stronger, due to its thickness, than the piece of millet stalk used to cut the cord of a baby girl. [87] This stiff grass also plays a role in the bull ritual, the *maray*. We infer that women are associated with millet, men with 'wild grasses' Another woman said:

> "The world is upside down nowadays. When children are born in the hospital all the umbilical cords are cut with an iron razor blade. They do not respect the rules any more. Those of a girl should be cut with a millet stalk and those of a boy with an iron object." [88]

Within the blacksmith clan it is the men who make the iron tools and take care of the funerals (as we will find out later on). As demonstrated in this ritual, the women make the pottery and are the midwives. These positions allowed me to conclude that women are associated with life (midwife) and the transformation of earth (pottery), and men with death (war) and the transformation of iron. Further the strength of women was symbolized, when she defeated the men on horseback

IV 1.3.2 The operational dimension

The association of women with millet can also be derived from the following:

> If a man beats his wife, she can hit him back when she is on her own territory. In such cases she will run to the kitchen, the *huced*, as she can beat him there. If he is wise, he won't follow her. However, she should never touch her husband with the stick used for turning the porridge. Men cannot be touched with this stick, nor with the fibers of *gonokwad*, a tree in the same category as the papaya, or with a millet stalk. If a

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[86] It appears that elsewhere in the region it is also very important (Kapsiki, Mofu) and used as a symbol for war and maleness (v Beek?)

[87] Personal communication of N. David. I used the literal translation of the French *une espece de l'herbe sauvage*

[88] For my research it was most interesting to hear this remark from an elderly woman who was born as a Muslim though her ethnic origin was Mafa. By iron object she meant a small round knife that is used to make baskets

woman has worked with these materials she should wash her hands first before touching her husband A woman can also run to the fields as that is her domain too

I know cases of wives and their husbands who beat each other till they both ended up in hospital

These aspects can be observed in daily life We on this operational dimension deduce the connection women - millet

An evident instrumental symbol in the ritual is the piece of rope and the millet stalk that is hung in the tree beside the house [8] It symbolizes the complementarity of the sexes If we look at the division of labor we notice that it is only the men who twine the ropes If a house were built with the rope a woman had twisted the man would be sure to die one day or another Millet is as we said before strongly associated with women The millet stalk that symbolizes horses does seem like an inversion of reality There are no horses in the area Only the Fulbe who used to hold slave raids in the mountains in former days came on horseback As I said people informed me that this part of the performance is only held in certain areas

Concerning the ritual meal the normal division of labour is followed men can prepare meals with meat but never millet porridge or vegetable sauces In the consumption pattern it is obvious that food prepared by the females should not be mixed with that made by males

In the twin girl s wedding the connection with the water spirit is clear again though the girl seems to deny it When she states that she does not know the area, we can interpret this as a denial of her non humanity If she would have admitted she knew the river she would have acknowledged that her origin lay there The reason why she risks being taken away without the payment of the bridewealth (which in former days must have caused the wars people spoke about) may be related to the same fact a person who is only half human can escape the ordinary laws of society The fact that people always need to give twins things that are exactly the same indicates that twins are associated with rivalry and generalized social strife

From these observations I tentatively conclude that there are two dominant symbols The dominance implies that those symbols tend to be ends in themselves (Turner 1968 45) within the lives of Mafa people The first of these symbols is millet which appeared consistently throughout the ritual Millet is the staple food crop of the Mafa As I said before, women as well as men sow cultivate harvest and thresh it In ordinary life it serves as food it also serves

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8 The term instrumental symbol is also derived from Turner (1967 46) It serves as a means to explicit or implicit goals of the given ritual

as drink when beer is made out of it In the twin ritual the sacrifices were made with beer Guests brought millet as a gift When they stripped the skin of the sacrificed animal they used millet flour They brought the straw of the millet outside hoping they would gain wealth through it The millet was offered with the dripping blood of the sacrificed animal On other occasions, it also serves ritual purposes offerings for the male ancestors are made with the beer from the millet for the female ancestors millet porridge is used (Boisseau and Soula 1974 604)

The other dominant symbol in Mafa society I want to emphasize is 'doubleness As such the number two acts as a principle for a symbolic ordering, I will back up my statement with facts from various religious practices As mentioned before a human being in Mafa society has two souls and this comprises a twin principle The one is visible the other invisible and represented by the jar *guid pat* [20]

IV 1 3 3 The positional dimension

If we recognize the number two or doubleness, as a dominant symbolic structuring principle in Mafa society we can take a different perspective on the phenomenon of twins the rituals they demand and the reason why they are regarded as both positive and negative

We first have to ask the question of the number two or evenness is associated with changing curved or infinite as in the Pythagorean table of contraries? Does the pair of twins establish the corporal symmetry which symbolizes anomaly or lawlessness as suggested by Schoffeleers on basis of anthropological dates from different areas and Plato s Symposium? The continuous efforts to make two into three do point in that direction But why would twins or symmetrical individuals and unilaterals of various kinds co figure in myth particularly in the stories pertaining to man s creation fall and redemption? Has it all to do with the asymmetric structure of the nervous centers as was suggested by several authors in the last century Wilson 1891 183 Baldwin 1891 67 van Biervliet 1899 276 in Hertz 1909)? And why would they be associated with rivalry and generalized

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[20] Boisseau and Soula mention that this repetition the doubleness is also expressed in language in the composition of certain forms of verbs (for example *n gegede* saying *gede* to say) names adjectives (for example *linglingee* fresh *kwa kwa aa* hard as a stone) and adverbs (for example *yew yew* quick *a maya maya* softly) (Boisseau and Soula 1974 203) Repetition though is common in other languages so it is difficult to use it as evidence

social strife? Could this be due to the fear of that which cannot be grasped? Let us explore further

I would like to stress that twins are the manifestation of a main symbolic ordering principle of Mafa life The doubleness of ordinary human beings is invisible Among twins however the shadow, the *guid pat* has become visible But since this would be virtually impossible, twins can only be half human Thus their father is not their progenitor though their mother is

At the same time twins are the ultimate manifestation of fertility This observation is supported by the fact that they came into the world through the mediation of the water spirit In this respect would it be accurate to see the river as a symbol of fluidity of fertility? And when the twins are born the father has to fetch an egg Does that egg also symbolize fertility or does it refer to the origin of the twin soul in a special tree?

In this context David adds an important event a struggle similar to the one we observed in the ritual takes place if a woman has had a spontaneous abortion Friends and neighbors go off to catch a small bird it is caught by hand usually after a long chase Meanwhile the husband and wife remain in bed in the *dzadzaw*, the first hut of the compound When at last the bird is caught all return to the compound the *gay* waving sticks and yelling as if they had killed a leopard The husband barricades himself in the *gala* taking up his shield to protect himself while the company beats on the (mat) door [11]

The abortion stands for loss of fertility A bird is needed to restore fertility as a bird procreates by laying eggs and lives in a tree where the twins also come from Here again the relation birds - twin - fertility seems to be underlined Turner pointed out that many twins are considered birds this also seems to be the case in Mafa society (1969 40 ff) [12]

However since not only trees are implicated in the origin of twins but also grasses and mist I think we also have to look in another direction Wild grasses trees, mist and water do these not symbolize wilderness? Where there are trees one cannot plant millet (remember that in the ritual the effort to chop down the tree was interpreted literally as deforestation) Wild grasses grew before millet was cultivated In the mist one can get lost We could suggest that twins come from that which preceded society from what Levi Strauss marked off as nature

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11 Personal communication from N David

12 Renee Hirt pointed to the following resemblance Also in Western society double but is the soul not is twins is associated with birds The poems Onweer in het moeras Phoenix I and Phoenix II of Vasalis or Byzantium by W B Yeats serve as an example

They come from the primordial past, from that which came before human existence [93] Thus, doubleness, two, lies at the source of 'being' Now, in human existence in society, everything is always 'two', though not visibly, so twins cross the borderline between "nature and culture" - again, in Lévi-Strauss' terminology (Lévi-Strauss 1958: 254-5, 1968) -.
Let us consider the egg as a symbol of fertility, and water as well The water spirit plays an intermediary role in the manifestation of the divine principle of 'two' Twins also symbolize fertility, which is needed for human existence to continue, and it is the water spirit who mediates The father, who is not the real begetter of the twins, apparently has to control the earthly gestures, notions, and laws

Twins are sacred and feared not only do they come from the same source as society itself, but they have crossed the borderline between 'nature' and 'culture' Twins are thus considered anomalies and lawless because that which preceded society did not have laws. They are also sacred because they came from the origin of humankind
The purpose of making sacrifices for twins now seems clear. If people don't perform the sacrifices, they get lost, lost in the mist (literally, as we may remember from the beginning of the description of the ritual) or in blindness, or may go mad These plights replicate the chaos of the origin, the origin of doubleness, the doubleness of the divine
All this complements one of Schoffeleers' remarks He noticed a grass-iron opposition in a God in Masai society (Schoffeleers 1981:349) and he suggests that it may refer to the godhead as mediating between 'nature' and 'culture' and that the same contrast may also serve as a basis for further oppositions (Schoffeleers 1981). Perhaps we are dealing here with a variation on the same theme Mafa

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[93] In this respect it would be nice to make a comparison of the twins with Gluckman's Princess'on which I commented in an earlier footnote He described her as follows
The women no longer perform the ritual to honour the Goddess *Nomkubulwana*, so I did not observe it during my own work in Zululand But the Goddess herself still visits the pleasant land She moves in the mists which mark the end of the dry season and which presage the beginning of the rains From their homes on the hills the Zulu look over the mists which lie in the valleys touched by the light of the rising sun and they comment on the Princess of heaven s beauty (Gluckman 1963 112 113)
It seems that the Zulu perceive a 'gentle presence in the mist or base a river grass that is incontestably associated with feminity
With thanks to Rene van der Haar who pointed out this resemblance

twins may be mediators between 'nature (where they came from wild grasses and trees) and culture (patrilineal society in which they are living) [94]
We may recall the cord that the parents, the twins themselves and the masters of ceremony wore during the ritual It was made from two lengths of bermuda grass *guro tsakalay* and one of borassus representing the *déde* the plate of the twins Through this symbol two and one are put together so make three [95]
Thus two the evenness is turned into three , unevenness again on this and other occasions, thus restoring the order of the living of society!
A further opposition derived from the grass-iron opposition could be as Schoffeleers argues that between the indigenous people and the invaders or that between clans as mutual wife givers and wife takers (as among the Mang anja of Malawi) (Schoffeleers 1981 349) As a twin marriage partner is only half human she has no patrilineal clan so who is the wife giver? The water spirit herself? This is stressed in the ceremony for twins who are getting married the water spirit needs to be satisfied lest she cease to perform her intermediary function

IV 1 3 4 The number two and women gender relations within the ritual

I would like to turn to the main object of this whole exercition gender relations in the ritual Although they were present all along they can now be made explicit We may recall that the number three is associated with masculinity and the number two with femininity
Since femininity is associated with a main symbolic ordering principle of this society, namely the number two evenness, can we conclude now that women are also related to the origin of human existence as the twins were? And can we conclude that women may be associated with this main ordering principle which on a symbolic level structures the whole society? But what about the association of symmetry and potential chaos as Schoffeleers suggested? If such an association proved to be true would that also mean that women are considered as an anomaly that they are associated with lawlessness? But we cannot bypass the particular aspect that in Mafa society women are associated with right Hertz (1909) and in imitation of him many authors afterwards among which Needham (1973), argued in regard to the pre eminence of the right hand that in nearly all

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[94] The whole nature culture dichotomy is worth a discussion with data from Mafa society women s association with the primordial past (nature) at the same time with millet (culture) their association with two and twins who cross these borderlines (see Ortner 1974 Mac Cormack and Strathern 1980) but this topic goes beyong the scope of the present manuscript I will reserve it for a future article

[95] With thanks to N David who made this suggestion Personal communication

societies women and children form an essentially profane class, as they are always (!) associated with left [96] Yet, contradictory to ethnological data from many different societies which matched the Pythagorean table of balance, here we have come across a society in which women are associated with 'right' Are they thus also regarded as sacred? And are they therefore feared on the same level as twins?

Are women associated with the primordial state of society, the number 'two' and twins, which need to be restored to normal proportions by rituals in which two becomes 'three', thus male, again in this patrilinear society?

Can we in regard to gender relations make the following scheme:

o	oo	=	ooo
- mastery	fertility		society
- principle of order	potential chaos		male dominated fertility?

But why is the strength of women demonstrated in the performance? Or does the performance of the struggle we watched during the ritual have more to do with her association with millet and fertility?

Let us turn to what was introduced as a man's ritual By placing these questions in a wider ritual context, we may be able to formulate an answer.

IV 1.4 *Maray* or bull feast

As we know, every Mafa compound consists of several huts To get into the inner side of the compound one has to pass through the hut of the father of the household, the entrance hut.

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[96] Hertz sympathetically opened his article with the following Every social hierarchy claims to be founded on the nature of things, *physei ou nomo* it thus accords itself eternity it escapes change and the attacks of innovators Aristotle justified slavery by the ethnic superiority of the Greek over the barbarians, and today the man who is annoyed by feminist claims [we write history, the first feminist wave] alleges that woman is *naturally* inferior Similarly, according to common opinion, the pre eminance of the right hand results directly from the organism and owes nothing to convention or to men's changing beliefs But in spite of appearances the testimony of nature is no more clear or decisive when it is a question of ascribing attributes to the two hands than in the conflict of races or sexes I have not come across any reference to such particular statements concerning gender relations in the work of his imitators

The hut of the first wife has its entrance in the inner courtyard Every wife has a separate hut, but as these are built in a row, this means that to enter the hut of the third wife, one has to pass by the huts of the first and second wives At the end of this line of huts for the wives, we find the kitchen The girls of the household have a separate hut, and so do the boys

Next to the hut of the first wife, a small hut is attached with no entrance from the inner circle of the compound One can only get through there via the hut of the first wife That annexa is the hut of the goats and sheep And then there is still another hut that looks into the courtyard inside the compound It is a hut, called *kudam zla*, with a special significance and a very special inhabitant the sacred bull Ideally, every compound has such a bull The animal should not leave its hut from the day he is bought until the day he is slaughtered during the special festivity we are concerned with here called *maray*

The compounds that have a sacred bull can decide to join the festivities but only those men can join whose father and elderly brother(s) have already slaughtered a bull during another *maray* Within an area, people move from one compound to the next, over a period of several days and within every compound the festivities take place as described below The total number of days the festivities take place should be even mostly four or six days

The skull of the slaughtered bull will be hung in the tree next to the house We mentioned above that when sacrifices are made, the tree also gets its share Having many skulls in it gives much status to the owner of the house the *bab gay*

I attended this ritual several times in different areas in Mokola (thus very near town), in Midre and in Soulede This ritual is not a thing of the past The *maray* is still regularly held

IV 1 4 1 Decision to have a *maray*

The *maray* takes place every third year It is the mountain chief *bi dzva*, who decides when the *maray* in his area is going to be held He is a member of a chief clan, *bi-gwah* As it takes place in a special month he studies the moon, counts the days, and makes his decision Even if it is not the right year to have a *maray*, people group together in front of the house of the *bi dzva* Then he will tell them

> ' if God, *Jigilé* so decides a maray will be held next year so we must buy a small bull, so that it can grow until the day the maray will be held "

The festivities will start in the compound of the *bi dzva* the mountain chief Therefore his wife starts brewing the beer During the two days it takes to

prepare the beer, she cannot have sexual intercourse with her husband. The third day, when the beer is ready, this prohibition is lifted. [97] The women also make flour from the weed, or make porridge from it. From this moment on, the mountain chief is not allowed to wander around any more.

IV 1.4.2 The role of the counsellors

The mountain chief, *bi dzva*, chooses a group of men who will act as his counsellors, called *bi hay*. They include the person who can represent the chief, the *nslasltum bay*, as the *bi dzva* is not allowed to walk around any more until the *maray* has come to an end. Further there are representatives from the main clans of the area (*kr bi gwali*), and the blacksmith of the area, *bi ngwazla*. They come together and say:

> "Let's put the millet in the water on such and such a day, let's peel the millet on such and such a day...." Or in other words: "let us start brewing the beer."

Every day the counsellors pass by the compound that will celebrate the *maray*, but they will always stay outside. Their task is to ensure that an even number of compounds - two, four or six - celebrate the *maray* each day. They sleep next to the compound where the festivities will start the next morning. The counsellors should not wash themselves during the *maray*, and they put some excrement on their foreheads.

IV 1.4.3. The purifiers of the maray, the *zugula*

Beside the counsellors, there are other persons who are important during the festivity. These include the men called *zugula*, who should be even-numbered as well; there should always be six of them. The *zugula* also represent the main clans and they follow the counsellors on their rounds at a distance. [98] *Zugula* must always be people with special gifts. They are not really sorcerers, like the *mide* who can eat one's soul, but they are clairvoyant, *méslége*. So a *zugula* is able to see what sorcerers, *mide*, are up to. If they intend to do harm, the *zugula* will immediately be aware of this and take precautions. Thus they neutralize the evil that could be caused by the *mide*. They are the purifiers of the *maray*; the

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[97] My informants added that this is always the case during the preparation of the beer.

[98] Personal communication N. David

white magicians who fight the black magic. They themselves abstain from sex for the duration of the *maray*. Women avoid them or crouch humbly before them. [99] Nobody really likes to be a *zugula*, as my informants said, because they have to grease their bodies with goat excrement. David adds to this that they also rub their bodies with a kind of *shuweD* called *ziy nkwete pelesh*. The latter has a consistency like daf and is found in the tripe (third stomach or *omasum*) of ruminants. [100] They are not allowed to wear proper clothes, nor to wash themselves; in former days, they had to go naked.
The zugula are chosen by the *zugula* of the last *maray*,

> "and if you would hide, they come and would get you with force. You just have to face your task."

IV. 1.4.4 The 'female' and the 'male' cord of the *zugula*

These *zugula* have a cord, *teba*, which has magical power and which is reinforced by special medicines. Its power is supposed to subdue the violence and anger of the bull. This rope is wound within an ordinary rope of 'Hibiscus cannabinus', *zungwal*, that is formed into a ring or loop and is carried like that by the *zugula*. There are two sorts of magical cords: one is 'female' and is 'found' by the *zugula*; the other one is 'male' and is inherited. The 'female' one is used during the *maray*. It is said that the 'female' cord had been found together with *shuweD* (so in the third stomach), in the belly of a bovine. [101] If the *zugula* notice many *mide* in a special area, they do not take out these cords, because that would cause the death of many people, as my informants added.

IV 1.4.5 Sleeping place of counsellors and zugula

The counsellors and the *zugula* always sleep in or at a compound that will hold their *maray* the following day. The counsellors eat and sleep at the compound that is going to give its bull feast first. The *zugula* sleep in another compound, not the one that is going to have the second feast the next day. A space of one compound is left to insulate the counsellors from the *zugula*. Then comes a

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99 Additional information from N. David, personal communication.

100 Personal communication of N. Davids, which was confirmed by my informants.

101 In zoology a genus that includes the common ox, the bison, the buffalo, and other species. Here my information was complemented with N. David's findings, personal communication.

compound with *zugula* having the female cord, *teba*, finally comes the fourth compound where the *zugula* with the male cord, *teba* sleep [102]
The counsellors are not allowed to sleep indoors In every house where the counsellors sleep, the owner has to slaughter a goat, which will be eaten by them in the morning The breast of the animal is to be sent to the mountain chief In the morning the counsellors go to the place where the *zugula* stayed, they had been given a small hut or some other spot to sleep Together they go to the first house where the *maray* is going to be held that day When they pass, women have to fall to their knees Women should never cross the path in front of the *zugula*, to do so would cause the women to become sterile If the counsellors have eaten they move on to the next compound while the *zugula* still have tasks to perform The counsellors should never cross the path of the bull either inside or outside the compound If they would stay until the bull is released there would be a good chance that the bull would cross their path outside in that case they believe a certain death is awaiting them

IV 1 4 6 The festivities

The festivities can then begin The owner of the bull the man who is giving the feast waits until the young people arrive with their instruments For the *maray* they use the drum called *ganga* and the flute called *tolom* Outside the compound a small crowd has gathered the people have come from all over the area Men and women dance to the music in a circle Some women dance gaily while carrying a heavy stone above their heads They are the 'daughters' of the family The stone symbolizes the meat they are going to get after the bull has been slaughtered

IV 1 4 7 The 'devils', *matsame*

There are special figures who are also dancing around, ridiculing and insulting the guests They are devils, called *matsame* or, in the Mokolo area, *tengleke* Any male can decide to become one, they do not need to be even numbered [103]
They are dressed up in ludicrous items and pieces of cloth They wear spears and weapons They dance and jump around and pretend to fight with each other They stop in front of people and try to scare them Many people shriek with horror at

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[102] Here again my information was complemented by N David

[103] N David added the even numbering to my own observations

Mafa scenery during bull feast

Mafa women dancing with stone symbolizing the meat she will get from her father for the bull feast

the sight and smell of these *matsame*, who are not allowed to wash themselves for the duration of the *maray*, but they can normally sleep in their own houses.

IV 1.4.8 Sacrifice in front of the bull's hut

Meanwhile, inside the compound, the *zugula* make an offering in front of the bull's hut. Jars filled with beer are brought outside for the guests. While the people outside are drinking, the chief of the *zugula* performs another ceremony. The chief *zugula* has laid his rope, *teba*, in front of the entrance of the bull's hut, *kudam thla*, overnight. During that night the husband and wife of this compound have not slept together because of the presence of this cord, which could make them sterile. In the morning, after they have entered the compound again and have been given food and drink, all but the two *zugula* leave the compound. [104] Those remaining thrice carry out straw or other debris from the floor of the bull's hut, *kudam thla*, and throw it out in front of the compound at a special place called *gwjévèd*, which means ash pile. This is the spot where they will lay the bull after it has been slaughtered. The owner of the bull will pass the place the *zugula* pass with their straw on his own day of burial. [105] Only after this ceremony can they open the door of the bull's hut and drive the bull out.

IV 1.4.9 The release of the bull

Outside the guests are getting restless, hoping the bull will be released soon. The festivity nears its height.

The *zugula* take a sip of beer in their mouth, then spit it out over the bull. If he reacts they remove the two poles that blocked the entrance to the hut.
The moment has arrived. The bull is free to run out; he looks to the right, to the left, obviously scared of all the people staring expectantly in his direction. Everybody is waiting, hardly making a sound. Then the bull slowly, nervously leaves the place he has never left before. When he emerges, bean flour and flour from the weed is thrown over the bull's back, next to his hump, and

104 Here too my observation and information was filled in with those of N. David. Personal communication.

105 N. David remarks that near Mokola the bull is neither slaughtered nor laid out on the *gwéjèved*. I observed this as well during another *maray* in Roua, but during the *maray* I am describing here, which took place in Soulede, the bull was captured and slaughtered. As we both remarked before, there are many regional varieties.

simultaneously over the heads of the children of the owner of the bull, girls as well as boys. The guests shriek with excitement. The bull tastes his freedom and suddenly starts running. People start screaming.
The in-laws have the task of catching him, so they run as fast as they can, followed by the other people. They all run up and down the terraces, jumping easily over the obstacles in their way. Depending on the temperament of the bull, this part of the festivity can be very tense. [106] But mostly, the freedom of the bull is short-lived. He is soon captured again. The brothers-in-law hold him tight and bring him home again [107]

IV 1.4.10 Another compound, another bull

The party now moves on to the next compound. Singing and making music, in long lines, all the guests proceed to another place where a bull is to be slaughtered. In the houses that the counsellors pass but don't sleep in, they will be given a cock to eat as well as beans and sesame, and they will have beer to drink
When they eat they have to take an even number of bites. If they do not count well and by accident take nine or eleven bites of food, they will fall ill. If they consult a diviner afterwards, he or she will easily diagnose that they counted wrongly.

IV 1.4.11 The end of the *maray*

The bull is not actually slaughtered on the day the *maray* is held. If the ritual has taken place in all the compounds, the real *maray* is over. The *zugula* and the counsellors return to the mountain chief. They wash themselves.

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106 As the bull has been fed during his life by the children of the owner, or by the owner himself, he is generally used to people and comfortable with them. The wife of the owner supplies him with water. On several occasions I saw her caress the bull very gently and warmly. So we should not have in mind the sort of bull they use at bullfights in Spain.

107 The course of the *maray* can differ from one area to the next. As said I celebrated it in different areas. In Soulede it proceeded as described here. In another region, Midre, they did not chase the bull. They had put some female companions for him in the neighborhood. Obviously when they let him out, the bull was not interested in the human beings at all: he ran straight to his own species and did not bother anybody. They let him stay there, graze and do his other things, until the moment arrived to take him to the slaughter.
The bull should be carried home by the in-laws with his legs up in the air. In Soulede they did not do this.

"they wash themselves well"

my informants even added. The *zugula* put away the magical cord, *teba*, and with the counsellors they drink the 'beer of the magical cord', the *zum teba*, and set the date for the slaughter of the bull of the mountain chief [108].

IV 1.4.12 The actual slaughtering of the bull

The mountain chief will be the first to slaughter his bull. The whole family should be present for this event. The chief of the compound has to do the job; he may be assisted by his son, but never by the in-laws. The meat has to be divided in a prescribed way; all the members of the family get their share, including the out-married daughters. The day the bull will be slaughtered water is put in a black jar along with the leaves of a tree that bears black fruit, called *zkad*. They add beans and flour to it. When the animal has been slaughtered, they put some of this mixture on the left leg of the bull. Then they put the pot back at the same place and leave it there for about thirty minutes. Many people will come to get their share of the animal. They drink beer - not the beer that is left from the *maray*, but newly brewed beer. When the animal is slaughtered the flowing blood will be caught in the black pot. It will be prepared with bean flour and eaten separately.

> "The father of the owner will say when he arrives: "where is my bull, where is my bull, where is my bull?" But even when he actually sees the bull he will not say: "ooh, there it is!" No, again he will say thrice: "Where is my bull?" He does so three times like the *zugula* on the day of the festivity. The third time he adds: "Who killed my bull? Who killed my bull? Who killed my bull?" And he continues "oh my bull, my bull, my bull, now they have ended your life!"

After the mountain chief has slaughtered his bull, the other families who participated in the *maray* slaughter their bull.

IV 1.4.13 The distribution of the meat

The owner of the bull, the master of the house, *bab gay*, gets the intestines, the stomach and the fat, and everything else from inside the belly. They will put it into the tree or the granary, let it dry, and eat it two or three months later. The brains and the bones of the head are for the children. The rest of the head will

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[108] Here my information was filled in with findings of N. David, personal communication.

be for the *m'matslai*, the second son of the father of the house. [119] The back of the animal is for the eldest daughter. If the latter has died, the eldest daughter of the brother will get it. In any case, it should always be an eldest daughter. The left back leg is for the brother of the owner of the bull, who has the same mother and father. The under-side of one leg, no matter which one, will be for the blacksmith, because he will be the one to bury the owner of the bull in due time. The tail will be for the mother of the owner of the bull. If she has died, it will be for those who do the sacrifice for her in the jar called *mama*. The neck will be for the child that has always fed the bull and taken care of it. Also the son of the eldest daughter gets a piece of meat.

IV 1.5 The bull ritual, an analysis

As we saw above, the bull has his own important place inside the compound. Related to this fact is another important division in Mafa society: the inside is considered feminine, the outside masculine. The house is a safe place where one is protected. They say "*i ndzi t'hwud gi*", I am in the belly of the house (Boisseau and Soula 1974:122). All sacrifices are made in the 'belly' of the house.
Do women have a role at all in this 'men's ritual'? When people told me it was a 'men's ritual', I asked them if women had a special ritual too. They started laughing and said:

> "No, but aren't women allowed to enjoy all the festivities and do they not get their share of the drinks and the meat?"

They are right. Mafa women and men always celebrate together: there is no clear-cut division in their dancing and drinking. But the honor of slaughtering the bull is reserved for men. They become important persons if they can hang the skull of one or more bulls in the tree next to the house in clear view of visitors.
Following Von Graffenried (1980: 303) who made an extensive study of similar rituals among neighboring peoples, we can tentatively say that on an exegetic dimension the bull seems to represent the master of the house, *bah gay*, and his relatives, male as well as female. They all get a share of the meat. The in-laws should only catch the animal when it has been released but not be present during the slaughter.

On the operational dimension, Von Graffenried sees that the representative role of the bull is stressed in rituals such as libation and the ceremony of the bull's head. But we need to take other obvious symbols into account.

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[119] As we may remember *m'matslai* means second son. At the same time the closest friend of a male person is called *m matslai*.

The mountain chief, the *bi dzva*, who is the initiator of all the aspects of this ritual, needs to stay inside and is represented by somebody else. We should keep in mind that inside is the female domain. The counsellors, *bi hay*, must be 'even'-numbered (female), but need to stay outside the different compounds (male domain). The purifiers of the ritual, *zugula*, have to be even-numbered (female). The days of the ritual must be even, as well as the number of compounds that celebrate the ritual in one day.

We may conclude that an important structuring principle of the ritual is the even numbering. We know the connotations of 'even' in regard to the number 'two', doubleness, and femininity. Hence this ritual which is crucial to the interest of the patrilineage, is interlaced with a symbolic structuring principle that in its turn is associated with femineity.

At another level, a balance between even, the feminine number and three, the male number, thoroughly imbues this 'men's ritual', as became clear from the following fact:

If we look at the compounds where the counsellors and the purifiers stay overnight, we observe the following:

1. the counsellors stay in the first (male) house
2. nobody sleeps in the second (female) compound
3. the purifiers with the female cord stay in the third (male) house
4. the purifiers with the male cord stay in the fourth (female) house.

The food of the counsellors shows a balance. The rooster and the goat are male (meat in general is male), whereas the beans and the sesame are female. While eating they need to take an even number (female) of bites.

The purifiers, *zugula*

- need to be 'clairvoyant' (relation with twins?)
- neutralize the evil of the sorcerers, *nide*
- need to rub their bodies with *shuweD* (three-male) found in the belly (inside-female) and goat excrement
- carry the straw outside thrice (male)
- sleep outside (male domain)

So in the numbering, balance is pursued.

The use of *shuweD* and faeces in the context of creation can point to an anal masculine way of giving birth (Dundes 1962: 1032-1051) [110] We will come back to this aspect later on Only the devils, *matsame*, differ in this matter They can be evenly or unevenly numbered

On the positional dimension, as Von Graffenried concludes, the bull ritual shows the relationship between death, life and fertility (Von Graffenried 1980,305).
I would like to add that the ritual also underlines the fact that the men have the earthly powers They make the sacrifices - though these can never be made in the absence of the women of the household Men fulfil the important positions in society (mountain chief, cricket chief, rainmaker), and men control the entrance to the house.
But the presence of a main symbolic ordering, which is associated with femininity and the balance of 'even' and 'uneven' in this male ritual suggests that nothing can be done in this patriarchal society, without taking into account the presence of the ordering principle 'two', which stands for the primordial past and femininity, but not for potential chaos It seems that in Mafa society, which people express by symbols, existence would be placed in jeopardy if the feminine principle were not given due expression Though femineity cannot clearly be associated with sacredness, it certainly is not profane

The bull ritual, *mara*, on a social level stresses the fact that we are dealing with a patrilinear clan society, in which the mountain chief is about the highest political unit This fact becomes clear again if we look at the following symbols From the cord *teba* used by the purifiers, *zugula*, we see that

female cord	male cord
is found in the belly	is inherited
(female) of bovine together	
with *shuweD*, which is	
found in the third	
stomach (male)	

This symbolically underlines the fact that male members of Mafa society stay in one place while female members are a floating population. They marry out from their father's house and sometimes wander from one husband to the next

[110] With thanks to Rene v an der Haar

Considering the origin of the most important actor in this male ritual, we may remember that the bull was given to human beings by the water spirit, *nihed*. Stories in which the bull rises out of the water are numerous. This connection reiterates its fertile power and its intermediary role between 'what preceded society' (nature?) and society (culture?). Hence the water spirit is able to create the physical manifestation of the dominant symbolic structuring principle 'two', embodied in twins of flesh and blood, and the sacred bull, who symbolizes fertility and the continuity of the patrilinear clan.
It may be concluded that

the birth of twins	: offering of bull ::
feminine creation	: masculine creation
(giving birth to twins -	(giving birth to bull -
association with preceding	association with
past - fertility)	male dominated
	fertility. [111]

As said, the shuweD and the faeces with which the *zugula* rub their bodies can be regarded as an anal, masculine birth (Dundes 1962: 1032-1051). They should not wash themselves for the duration of the ritual. Women adopt a submissive attitude towards them. The *zugula* have the task to take the bull out of his hut, which he never left before, for the offering. They are the mid-men (variation of mid-wives) for the birth of the bull as the sacrificial animal - being death, as meat - in society. Their presence make this birth an anal, male affair.

To conclude, we agreed about the association of women with two, evenness, fertility and the preceding past (sacredness?), but rejected the association of femineity with potential chaos, as it seems not logic that chaos would be used to structure a ritual. Yet the fact that men control society on an overt level and thereby have to take 'two' and the primordial past in account, is stressed. The genders seem to be mutually symmetrically interdependent. At this point I will give a brief impression of the other rituals in the lives of Mafa people.

IV 1.6 Ungwalala or harvest rituals

The harvest rituals will be held every year when the harvest is in and taken into the granary. By then, the dry season has begun and it will be December or even

[111] With many thanks to Rene van der Haar, who made these suggestions on an earlier draft

January This is a festivity for all the members of society men women and children as they said I attended these rituals several times in different regions which resulted in the following description Like the bull feast the festivities move from one compound to the next Therefore it is important to first go to the compound of the elderly men and afterwards to those of their sons and then to those of younger persons in general

Beer has been prepared by the women of the household during the days before the festivities In this description I relate the case of a father who has several wives and many out married daughters and sons His youngest son lives nearby in the former compound of his father with his mother It is the custom in Mafa society that the mother goes to live with her youngest son

IV 1 6 1 The night before

> The night before the festivities at about six o' clock, they lit a beam post with a burning piece of straw in the compound of the father Then all the people present ran out of the compound The father of the house, the *bab gay* held the straw and the beam post in his hand, crying very loudly for everybody to hear He left both burning objects at the place where the ashes are usually put (same place as used within the bull-ritual the *gwepevel*)

IV 1 6 2 Early in the morning

> 'Early in the morning all the sons and the daughters of the father come to his place The first-born girl of the father fetches the beam post that had been left the night before and she takes it back into the house After her the boys arrive in the house of the father It must always be a girl who brings in this beam post The first wife of the father has cooked a meal When the cooking is done it is brought to the father Afterwards it is given to the girls the youngsters and the father again and they all eat separately
>
> even when the girl has not yet arrived her share will be kept for her in the kitchen '
>
> After the meal the father gives a speech He says
>
> Don t behave today like children, who just play and do not think Stay calm Don't drink after you felt you have had enough Do not get involved in a fight and certainly don t attack other people

Then he offers some words on the course of the festivities that day and asks his first wife to bring a calabash of beer. So she does. He pours it in the jar of his father, called *baba*. After that everyone present is obliged to drink, ('even when they would have changed into another religion,' my informant adds in my direction), as it is strictly forbidden to refuse this drink. After everybody drank, those who want to can finish what has been left in the jar. The girls though, go to get some millet from the neighboring compounds, at least if they are from the same patrilineage, *gwali*, or mother's patrilineage, *kuyuk*. The men get ready to leave for the festivities with their musical instruments. They take the iron percussion instrument called *dassal* and the small drum called *dézlézlew*, which can also be used by the women. The latter use a percussion instrument called *kwets kwejer*.

IV 1.6.3 The actual festivities

Before leaving, the father makes an offering for his compound with the dregs of the millet beer that remained in the jar, *baba*. He smears a bit on the tree beside the house, and the door post of every room. [112] Then he leaves his compound. He is obliged to go first to the compound of his eldest son to drink the beer that the wife of his son has prepared. There another sacrifice is made. After that he goes to the compound of his other sons, at least if their wives have prepared beer.
When all the fathers have visited the compounds of their sons, they reunite and go to the mountain chief, the *bi dzva*. The elderly men walk in front. The elderly women may mix with them or go with the young people, men as well as women, who follow a few yards behind. The elders enter in first while the others gather and start to play the drums, then slowly approach. Near the compound is a place that has been swept properly where they can sit down. The elderly men drink first, using the calabashes they brought along; then the groups of women drink, and the young men and children. All of them brought their own calabashes along. Only when the elders leave do the youngsters enter the compound. They stay for about twenty minutes, making music and dancing; then they move on to the next compound. After visiting many compounds, the elderly people get tired. They tell the younger ones: "Move on to the other compounds, we will stay behind and rest. Go to

[112] It depends on the region where one makes the sacrifice. It may also be the rock besides the house, the pot near the entrance to the concession, etc.

all the compounds and have a drink but please do not fight' To the women they say Go to the compounds and drink but please do not harm the children of other persons with your jealousy by using evil eyes ' The young ones go on and on from one compound to the next even when night has fallen It is one o' clock at night when the last young people return home The next day the festivities start again and they may continue for four days especially

> when beer has been prepared with white millet as we like that much better than the beer from the red millet Then the festivities may end sooner'

IV 1.7 The harvest ritual: an analysis

On an exegetic dimension the superior position is represented of the father of the house, the *bab gay* and the elderly men in the society On an operational dimension the importance of the staple crop millet is stressed As this concerns both men and women and as they celebrate together there seems to be less necessity to symbolically balance the genders Even numbering does not play a role Only when the daughter brings in the beam post to chase away the evil spirits, and needs to enter first do we recognize the importance of the feminine gender Yet this does not denote an association with evenness' here as it concerns the first (male) daughter of the house from the patrilinear clan It is more likely that this event stresses the important relation of the father of the house the *bab gay* with this daughter *dem tsava*
On a positional dimension the ritual shows the relationship between life and millet Socially it stresses the importance of the patrilineage in which the sons as well as the daughters count

IV 1.8 Other festivities in Mafa life

The Mafa hold several other festivities but we need not describe those extensively as they do not add to our analysis of the Mafa symbolic system They do underline how the cycle revolves around the staple crop millet By this I mean that the alternation of the seasons as expressed in the activities that characterize the different periods determine which rituals will take place
These other festivities underline that in this patrilineal society the *bab gay* is the master of the house who takes care of the continuity of society although the sexes are not much segregated Men and women celebrate together These other festivities can be characterized as communal rituals
We will just mention them

There are the well known feasts that are held at the full moon These appeal to the romanticism of the Western visitors in the area stimulate their use of neo colonial stereotypes idealizing the 'noble savage These feasts called *zovaad* are held in the rainy season in September and October During the day the girls prepare food to offer to the boys they really like made from prepared *peas* and beans, millet porridge and non-prepared peanuts These are freshly harvested female vegetables partly cooked partly raw Girls and boys dance in the moonlight to the music of a flute, *zovaad* and the flute made from the horns of the bull called *tolom* During the rainy season, no drums can be used
In March April and May before the rainy season they also hold these feasts but then they are called *houdok* after the flute used then accompanied by a medium-sized drum called *zorok* and sometimes by a drum called *ganga* and percussion instruments for women *kwets kwejer* and for men *dassal*
In January there is a large feast called *dhalinga* It is as people explain to wish each other a happy new year The feasts by the light of the moon held in January are also called *dhalinga* so these are probably a modern variant of an old festivity

> 'Four girls dance in a circle while two boys are beating the drums If after about 15 minutes they get tired, they go up to a male person and they greet him while kneeling down Then these male persons have to dance in a circle When in turn they become tired they choose a woman by putting a finger of their right hand on her forehead

During the months of June July and August

> 'we don t have any festivities because then we are tired at night from work

This seems quite logical as everybody is busy sowing weeding and harvesting Yet they do have the feast of the light', *wandat* which is held after they have weeded for the first time and put heaps around the small plants so at the end of June early July

> Two boys take each other by the arms until one falls on the floor The girls fight too They put their arms around each other over their back until one of them falls down These are not serious fights it is just to have a laugh people say When a boy has won he must be given a chicken by his father, If the winner is a girl the chicken is given by her mother "

Then all participants, young and old, drink beer, except for those who fought They just eat a little millet porridge No salt is added to the sauce that accompanies the porridge, because

> ' the salt would take away their strength '

During the period without festivities they still have *Nyek ngwat*

> When there is a lot of rain in June or July and one day no work can be done we prepare the beer, we just take the flute and make music and fun

These festivities emphasize the cyclical view of the Mafa They follow the rhythm of the seasons and the growth of their crops
If I had been able to grasp the meaning and the symbolic associations of the different instruments an analysis at a deeper level surely would have been possible For the moment, I have to leave this aside

IV 2 'I simply stopped counting': after Islamization

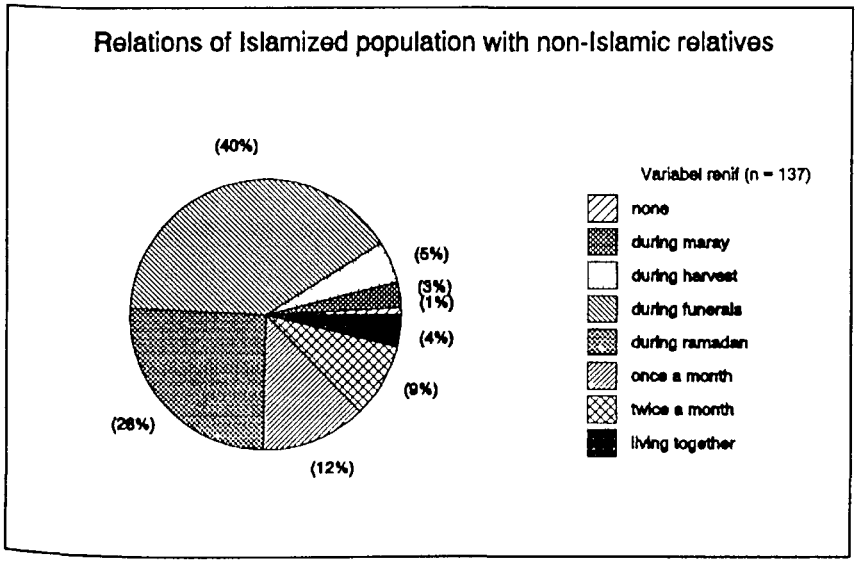
When I asked Maama I afa whose story I cited at the beginning of this part of the thesis during my second stay in the area about the even numbering within Mafa society she laughed and replied

'I simply stopped counting'

After these long descriptions of the rich Mafa rituals with so many symbols attached to them and in which such profound human archetypes could be traced, this section seems poor and lacking in detail Of course I could make an exegesis and find many symbolic meanings and features in the Qur'an and the use of it However my aim was not to take general written Islamic texts but the daily existence of the Islamized Mafa population as my source
What aspects of the symbolic system did they bring into their new religion? How important is it to continue these aspects? Do these rituals refer to the relation between the genders?

IV 2.1 Rituals within the Islamic community

Unfortunately we have to be brief here As I said before Uthman dan Fodio s rules concerning the libations are rather strictly followed whereas festivities without beer are impossible within Mafa society This leads to the remarkable fact that within the Catholic community some rituals like the harvest rituals and the season festivities easily continue But once people have converted to Islam they no longer perform them
In the survey held in Mokolo one of the questions concerned whether people still contributed to rituals like the bull feast the *maray* (Question 4 3) or the harvest rituals (Question 4 8) The outcome was that only 3 % of the Islamized population still visited their parents during these festivities



IV 2.1.1 Twins: still ambivalent, but human

Within the Islamic community, twins are still considered to have special gifts, but no rituals are performed for them. A Mafa Islamic woman, whose family Islamized two generations ago, explained to me:

> "They are special as they are clairvoyant. They can cause blindness or other illnesses of the eye especially to the parents. You need to give in to them. Always give them the same objects."

The Marabout considers these beliefs as Pagan remnants. As he states:

> "There are those who say they have special gifts. Others tell other things about them Allah has never ever mentioned. For example, they say that if you have twins, *ciwtube* (sing.*ciwto*), you need to have bracelets made for them, you always need to give them the same material goods, but all these beliefs are inventions of human beings. I have twins myself, I never did anything special for them. My father had twins, he never did anything special for them. I have a maternal aunt, her first twins were a girl and a boy, the second pair two boys, the third pair two girls, the fourth pair three children, but they never performed any ritual. If you would be afraid they would hurt you, perhaps they will, because what is in your head, God may give you in reality: that's the whole problem! There even was a prophet, *anabijo*, called Elia, who had twins

during his lifetime One of them was called Hassan and the other Hussein [113] They grew up and the father never had any pain in the eyes nor any other illness caused by his twins I can assure you that he did not wear bracelets nor did he ever in his whole life sacrifice a sheep because of his twins The invention of these beliefs afterwards can be considered as a sin '

The judgement is quite clear so I was quite surprised to hear the following gossip about another Marabout living on the other side of town He was a wise man and I knew him well, a Fulbe originally from Nigeria He too had a pair of twins I had had discussions with him on several occasions

He too had clearly stated the above rules Then I learned that he had been lost for years It was the classic story he went out to do some shopping - let s say a pack of cigarettes and did not return He left his wife and children among which a pair of twins It was common knowledge though that he was lost because his twins had cursed him His wife and many women often prayed at the Marabouts place Then, one evening three years later he suddenly turned up and took his place in front of the house like nothing had happened They went on with their lives and his wife continued to have children, among which another pair of twins Due to the magical powers of the Marabout the curse had been taken away and he had returned

Much later during another conversation this same person was much less strict in his opinion about the magical powers concerning twins and other problems in life

One of the twin girls got married but soon afterwards she felt seriously ill This time it was not her father who got lost It was she who lost her surroundings as she did not recognize her father any more The father had been sure that the co wife was jealous and was using magical powers He searched and searched - he told me outright - until he had found the cause and soon afterwards his daughter was doing much better '

In conclusion we can say that twins are still to be feared They still can make people get lost by their doings or behavior Yet evidence that they originate from some primordial past can no longer be found They may be clairvoyant and cause illnesses but they have become human contrary to the twins in Mafa society

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113 In Fulfulde language the boy of a mixed twin is called *haasaani* the girl *hasanatu* When both are boys they are called *haasaani bee seeni* when both are girls they are called *haasaana toe hoesenaaty*

When they cause misfortune, prayers can be said to Allah and the Marabout may help to find a remedy to take away curses or bad magical powers. What symbols figure in the texts of her or his amulets, *layaaru* (plur. *layaaji*), or what herbs she or he uses to eliminate the danger, they will not tell overtly, as they earn their money with these secrets.

IV 2.1.2 The bull and the river

The bull ritual, *naray*, is no longer performed. But people still believe the bull was brought by the water spirits, as we learned in the former chapter. Many members of the Islamic community in Mokolo believe that a good knowledge of magical powers like the nomadic Fulbe, the *M'bororo* have, results in the accumulation of a large herd. They, the *M'bororo*, are able to keep up good contacts with these spirits, so they have many cattle, but people within the Islamic community will deny having such magical powers themselves.
The Islamized population pay regular visits to the non-Islamic relatives, as we heard from Maama Laila. They also attend funerals, as we will see later. But they claim that these visits are not paid during the bull ritual. They cannot drink, they cannot dance, they cannot eat or sacrifice with the family, so why attend the festivities? Of course there can be great differences between what people say and what they actually do. But on all occasions I observed these rituals, I never came across an Islamic inhabitant of town.
A Mafa woman who was born as a Muslim because her father had Islamized, but whose grandparents were still Pagans, told me:

> "If parents have a daughter who Islamized, but they still want to give her the share of the bull she is entitled to, they call for a Muslim to slaughter the animal. Then they can give it to the daughter and the daughter can eat it."

IV 2.1.3 The women's dance in the street: *Laila Tuure*

Three or four nights before the end of the Ramadan - one never knows beforehand when exactly the Ramadan will be over, so there is no significance to the number of days - there is a festivity the women refer to as 'a dance in the street'.
In the evening, the children walk through the streets while carrying their lamps and singing the name of the Prophet Muhammad:

> '*Allah la ilaha Illalahu, Mohammadoun Rassoulu lahi ...*' 'There is but one God and Muhammad is his Messenger',
> '*Walla gooto sey Allah*'

'There is no other God but Allah
'Walla lamido sey Allah'
There is no other chief but Allah'

and making much noise They go from street to street from quarter to quarter The boys shoot with catapults and may sing

Laila tuwe laili mo summaaki semti'
The one who does not feel embarrassed must be ashamed'
Suumu do yottini
mo summaaki semti
'The one who feels embarrassed has done everything
one who did not he feels ashamed

In this song the modesty for Fulbe people so evident by the concept of *pulaaku* - in front of the One God seems to be underlined and if one has forgotten this modesty one needs to feel deeply ashamed

A more materialistic song that children but also women sing is

Ijibiritu Khalifa baaba bikoy
Khalifa jaulde yotti
himre timi (wooda)'
Ijibiritu Khalifa (name of someone) father of the children
Khalifa the feast is approaching
my clothes are all worn out (or I don t even have any left)

This song refers to the responsibility of the father of the house to give his wives and his children new clothes for the feast after the Ramadam, *summaayre*

When the children have gone to bed, the female adults go out, also passing from street to street, while singing The words of the song are

'Fulorewbe Mokolo haander suudu
be don mbaali haander danki
bana dombi suudu
The old women of Mokolo stay inside,
they sleep under the hangovers,
they are like mice!'

They will sing this because as people explained, they do not want women to stay indoors They want them to come out and dance as well So the elderly women will dance just for a while in front of their compounds and then go inside and pray

One could argue that here we find a remnant of a former ritual women who seize the opportunity to dance again But as the Fulbe people also have this festivity (though I do not know if it is celebrated in the same way in other North Cameroonian areas) and the songs it is certainly not exclusively Mafa

Concluding we can say of this ritual that on an earthy level it celebrates the approach of the end of Ramadan, *summaayre*. It seems to stress the responsibility of the father to feed and dress his wives and children. Further it points out that only Allah should be praised. Earthy chiefs, *lamibe*, should not be worshipped.

IV 2.1.4 The blessings of Allah: *Juulde Summaayre*

The day after the end of the Ramadan is joyful. All the children are dressed up in bright new clothes. Children I had never seen in proper clothes were wearing new ones on that day. They go from door to door saying '*Baraka des Allah*', 'blessings from God'. People are supposed to give them sweets or a coin. It reminded me of the celebration of Saint Martin in our society. They explained,

> 'It is to thank people, '*Usoko en juuli jam*', that they are praying, that they are praying well to Allah. Everybody gives something. It is like a big *sakka* (the giving of alms, one of the Islamic duties). People give presents to children. Men give presents to the women, and people stop one another in the street, to wish that: 'the blessings of the lord be with you'.

The women prepare many sweets and cakes and have them sent over to friends and relatives.

IV 2.1.5 The feast of the sheep: *Juulde Leihadji*

Precisely two 'moons' after the end of Ramadan, the feast of the sheep will be held. The men go out in the morning and gather in a large open area. There they will all pray. It is fascinating to watch them all bend down at the same moment in their bright new garments. When they are back home, the men will slaughter, not sacrifice, a sheep if they can afford it. Some of the meat is given away as a present. The leg in particular will be given to a father, a sister or a brother (or the local anthropologist). Some meat will be dried for later on. When you have a daughter living quite far away you can keep her share for her in this way. The rest will be prepared and eaten by the members of the households and their guests, as people are inclined to visit each other during these days. Of course it would have been nice had I found some regularity, a pattern of gift giving corresponding to that after the bull feast, but I did not. It very much depends on individual contacts. Islamic relatives do give part of their slaughtered animal to their non-islamic relatives though.
This celebration can be regarded as a communal festivity in which membership of the Islamic community - no matter the former ethnic background - is stressed.

IV 2 1 6 Name giving *inden*

Another important ritual in the community that receives much attention is the giving of a name to a new born citizen This is done on the seventh day after birth Early in the morning the women come to the house of the mother of the new born They bring along presents money, soap oil and other things for the baby They sit and chat inside Outside the men gather When the Marabout, *Mallumjo*, arrives he will take the initiative to pray which will be followed by all the participants men outside and women inside Then he will take the Holy Book, the Qur'an and open it at an arbitrary page The name he comes upon on the page he opened will be given to the new-born Afterwards the men pray anew Before returning home the guests will receive some sweets and cola nuts That is the end of the ceremony

Lately, due to the economic crisis in Cameroon, it has become common to leave out the presents as people have no money any more Those who still want to give do it secretly, so as not to embarrass those who cannot afford it If people have enough money a sheep will also be slaughtered

Prayers are the most important elements of this ritual Further there is a clear geographic division in which men remain outside and women inside the courtyard But this division is so common in daily life as well as during other festivities in the Islamic community that one is inclined not to consider it as something special any more The ritual stresses the entrance of the new-born into the Islamic community

IV 2 1 7 Circumcision or *nasuridu* an initiation rite

No initiation rites are held in Mafa society Men are not circumcised But this changes after Islamization An obvious inference would be that men are not likely to convert when older because they would have to be circumcised They may fear the operation I simply forgot to ask about this due to my female biased blind spot during my research Afterwards I learned that when men convert they usually have the circumcision done in hospital They did not indicate that it was an extra threshold to not convert

Within the Islamic community boys are circumcised at an early age, which may vary from five to nine years old As this is a men's ritual which women cannot attend, I can only describe the report given to me by a family I knew well when the ritual was carried out in their compound

A number of boys seven in this particular case get together in the man s room The Marabout *Mallumjo* used to perform the operation, though nowadays it is often done in the hospital as well Afterwards the boys remain with the father of

the house, who takes care of them like they were babies. During the night, when they need to urinate, he carries them to the toilet. He brings them food and talks to them to make them feel comfortable. At the end of this month the period is closed with a large feast. People are invited and sit and chat and eat sweets and cola nuts.
The ritual can be characterized as a ritual of passage. Boys enter a new stage of their life and although they are not yet regarded as adults, they need to be more aware of the religious duties. Women are not circumcised and do not have an equivalent ritual.

IV 2.1.9 *Do'ordo*: the feast of finishing the Qur'an

There is another feast when children have studied the whole Qur'an and finished all the Suras. It is called *Do'ordo* in Mokolo (*Tubeerdum* in Maroua). As with the other festivities, people come to pay a visit to the household where the children live. They sit together, they pray together, they eat some sweets and occasionally drink some juices, and they return home again.[114]

IV 2.2 Former rituals and present attitudes

Why do rituals, those rituals that were essential for the communal life, stop all of a sudden when people accept another religion? To be able to understand this, we refer to the different phases of Islamization and give some examples.

IV 2.2.1 Returned from slavery

The impressive story of Maama Maimouna provides an illustration. She had been taken as a slave to the court of Hamman Yadji, when about seven years of age (Chapter I and II). She Islamized in slavery and returned to Mokolo in the 1920s.

> Maama Maimouna herself married - while still in slavery - a Mafa man from Mofuéle. They returned to Mokolo and settled in the Islamic community. Neither of them had been brought up in the rules and restrictions of the Mafa community, and to be part of the Islamic community they had to abide by the rules of this community. So they did.

[114] A final type of ritual that could take place is the ritual to ask for rain. People just gather together and pray to Allah. As I did not touch upon these rituals for the Mafa community I will leave them aside here too.

Her daughter married the son of the first Lamido of Mokolo, a Fulbe by origin. Her sons took Mandara wives. The Mandara, coming from an area north of the Mafa area, Islamized centuries ago. Though 'Mokolo' people claim that the Mandara have different customs, they intermarry frequently with people from Mokolo.

Her daughter, after having divorced her Fulbe husband, married a man who had a Toukour father and a Mafa mother. The daughter got children with him. Her son (hence the grandson of Maama Maimouna) married a Mandara wife, and the daughters married respectively Fulbe and Kapsiki husbands.

That Mafa rituals are no longer performed seems quite logical in this context. They had never learned them, having grown up in another system of beliefs. And why should the rituals be performed if people marry sons and daughters from other ethnic groups? In whose interest would the rituals be? We concluded that on a social level, Mafa rituals serve the continuity of the patrilineal clan. But as the clan system is no longer intact, the rituals have become useless. Harvest rituals are performed to emphasize the circle of the seasons. Though Maama Maimouna and her husband still cultivated when they had returned to Mokolo, many Muslims no longer do or they use other people (servants) to work the land. People rather take part in the activities that underline their membership of the Islamic community.

IV 2.2 2 Islamization by adoption, push and pull factors

The second stage of Islamization is connected with Mokolo as an administrative center. Boys and girls were either adopted by Fulbe or Islamic families or else came to live with their relatives.

We may recall here the story of Baaba Rahmani and his brother, who came to live in the court of the Fulbe *lamido* at the ages of four and six, when their father was murdered. Baaba Rahmani's first wife was Mafa and had been brought up with an Islamized aunt, who lived in Koza. This aunt had been married to a Mandara man. Thus no rituals were performed in their household.

His latest wife had grown up in the mountains, in the presence of her Pagan father. Therefore she knows the rituals quite well. She became a Muslim at the age of 16 when she came to live with her Islamized mother, who had married a Kapsiki, who had also converted.

Again: Baaba Rahmani and his brother became part of a totally different community. Who would have taught them the rules of a system they no longer participated in? Neither of the women could have continued to perform the

rituals. To do so they would have needed a man as well as a community, in which to perform the rituals - that is if the rituals are to make sense. Women had never been responsible for the continuity of the Mafa community on an 'overt' level. They exchanged one community for another. It is by the rules of the new community that they choose to live.

When young men convert before marriage, they do not yet have a deep knowledge of the complicated Mafa belief system. The masters of ceremony at a twin ritual discovering that I wanted to learn all the rules, stayed conscientiously beside me and said:

> We do not know the rules either, so we stay right next to you so that we can both learn them.

When a man is not the youngest, the eldest, or the second son (the second son performs ritual functions) there is - like for the women - also less necessity to stay in their community.

For elderly men who were already married when they converted, it is much more difficult not to return to their old rituals, as with the Mafa they are responsible for the welfare of the community. As mentioned above one of the few examples I know of, concerns an educated man who has a good job far from the Mandara mountains. As Mafa rituals underline the symbolic and patrilinear structure of the society acting them out individually cannot be done. Only performance of the personal sacrifice would make sense in these cases. So if we would search for converts who are still active in rituals or sacrifices derived from their former religion we would most likely find them in the category of men who converted after marriage.

IV 2.2.3 The last stage

The last stage, the current period, is still taking place. Women and men are free to either change or not change their religion. Since 1984 economic or political advantages of being a Muslim no longer count as heavily as during the second stage.

> The last wife of Baaba Rahmani earlier in this account served as an example. We may also recall the case of Jamila. She deliberately - and desperately - left the Mafa community in search of an alternative, as she had lost her children and was treated badly by her husband. She ended up in totally different surroundings in Nigeria. After marriages with non-Mafa men in the mountains, she married Muslim men in Nigeria and then came to Mokolo and stayed in the compound of an uncle, who had Islamized in a former generation.

She left her *guid pat*, she left behind the fields that had never been hers; they would never have been hers as she is a woman. What rituals could she have performed on her own in her new surroundings? She had no children, let alone twins. The bull ritual is a men's ritual. She no longer harvested. Had she been the eldest daughter of a father who was still alive, she probably would not have left the area. The father would have been interested in her staying close by him, and she would have been able to count on his support for negotiations with a new husband. Such was not the case though.

In the previous section, we stated that women who inherited the jars of their parents or ancestors convert less easily. We thereafter got acquainted with some implications of the ritual context. We may now add the assumption that eldest daughters whose fathers are still alive, women in possession of twins and those who are twins themselves also convert less easily.
What about women who moved less far from their area than Jamila did and whose fathers are still alive? This section will be closed with the story of another recently converted woman.

> I am the third wife of my husband. I grew up with my parents and went to school and followed courses after primary school. My husband earns a good living, he has a job in the administration. He used to be a Pagan before, did his sacrifice and all, but I did not know him at that time. When he descended from the mountains he Islamized...well, you know how it went. These boys, they came to work with the Fulbe and it became their wish to convert. So he did. He married after he had become a Muslim. His first wife was also a Pagan. When she wanted to marry him, he converted her [!] too. With the second wife it went the same and then I came two years ago. I used to be a Christian, as I lived for some time with my sister in South Cameroon. As I loved him, I Islamized too. Besides, a Christian, a Muslim... in my opinion it comes down to the same. In the Bible they tell you about the same things as in the Qur'an. It is only the language that changes. A Marabout taught me to read the Qur'an. My husband sent for him. He comes in the courtyard a few days a week and is paid for that.
>
> I read it in French, the Qur'an, as Arabic is very difficult. So for two years now I have joined in the Ramadan.
>
> My father is still a Pagan, still sacrifices. I go to see him quite often, about six times a month, I could not neglect them, my parents, could I? When he celebrates the harvest rituals, it would have been my duty to brew beer for him. I ask somebody else to do it and I send it over to him. Not only to my parents...we also buy it and send it to the parents

of the other wives When we celebrate the feast of the sheep we sent a leg to my parents and to his parents

If one of the children is ill and we cannot find a remedy we go to our parents They may go to the diviner who can ask for a sacrifice of a chicken or a goat Then we will pay it and have it done by our parents

If somebody dies in the family, I go for the funeral but I will not dance

It is clear that a woman can more easily live in the new religious system, still fulfil her responsibilities towards her father by sending him beer or benefit from his sacrifice if necessary We may also notice that this converted man, her husband abides by the rules described by Uthman dan Fodio in giving his wife the opportunity to learn the Qur anic rules I have come upon other such examples

IV 2.3 Changes of rituals: Concluding remarks

It is perhaps unnecessary to say so but we should realize that the Islamized youngsters will stop dancing in the moonlight the men will stop playing the drums and the flute and the women will stop playing the percussion instruments Is it a sad end to the story? Are the poor Islamized women strictly forbidden to dance? It would be if one has the image of the 'happy savage' in mind The Islamized women themselves see the advantages of their new life

But what about the duties the young people have towards their parents? Daughters who need to brew beer for their father and his mates for the harvest rituals can have this done for them and then send it over to their father Fathers who want to continue to give their daughters part of the ritual bull can have it slaughtered by an Islamic butcher, who will say the necessary prayers

Festivities within the Islamic communities are much less ritualized than the ceremonies we described for the Mafa What symbolic features can be distilled? Daada Maimouna, who Islamized in the former generation, said

"No, we do not count like the Mafa did Two and three have no meaning Only the number 'seven' perhaps It occurs a lot This was not written down in the Qur an People already knew it before that period so they continued with it In the prayers the number three is important

The importance of even and uneven numbering has disappeared The numbers seven and three both uneven play a role We may call to mind what we wrote in the last chapter Before prayers - and these occur often in the rituals as we have noticed - people need to wash the different parts of their bodies three times After having sexual intercourse people need to ritually wash themselves and rinse the private parts of their bodies thrice However we have not yet discovered an association of unevenness with masculinity

Further, the association of women with the inside of the compound and men with the outside is all too obvious This is not a continuation of Mafa ideology Uthman dan Fodio was clear about the space that women and men should occupy Islamized women considered the fact that they could remain inside the compound because men needed to provide for the family as an advantages compared to their former situation

In regard to the rituals in the Mafa community, especially the bull ritual and the harvest rituals we mentioned above that they underlined the continuity of the clan Concerning this matter we found that the opposition wife-givers versus wife-takers was important If we regard the rituals of the Islamic community, we see that the exchange of gifts play a role in many of them Baraka des Allah, feast of the sheep name giving for instance But the gift exchanges are made in the name of *Allah* the greatest, the only one who can be worshipped They are not exchanged along clan lines Ultimately these rituals strengthen the feeling of belonging to the Islamic community in which former ethnic boundaries no longer play a role The rituals can thus be characterized as communal rituals
The marriage system in the Islamic community differs as we will find out in a subsequent chapter Accordingly the opposition bride-giver - bride-taker has a completely different nature Ideally, in Fulbe society a person marries within one s clan and cross-cousin marriage is favored This never happens in Mokolo but within the Islamic community ethnic boundaries no longer prevail
Another important feature is the fact underlined over and over again during all the rituals that God is <u>One</u> Here in my view lies the main change of categorization as will be demonstrated in the last section of this Chapter

The next section contains the final analysis concerning the change in the cosmological order There we will turn to another type of ritual namely the funeral rites I have set these apart because of their special character

IV 3 We attend but no longer dance: funeral practices

We may recall the introductory story in which we witnessed one day of a Mafa funeral
This section deals with Mafa funeral practices and the changes that take place after conversion to Islam The rituals practices after the death of a person usually last many days and nights They are rather complicated
The rituals performed during Mafa funerals exhibit a unique pattern of actions Yet like people in many African societies the Mafa perceive death as the bridge

between one life and the next. Their present life is just one among many others. As Thomas stated:

> *"Le système de croyances refuse la brutalité des faits et par le médiat du symbolique renverse la situation: la mort n'est plus la fin irréversible de la vie mais un moment particulier de celle-ci, source de régénérescence (1982:72)."*

I start this discussion with a short overview of religious beliefs and practices concerning the after-life. After that I give a more detailed description of a Mafa funeral in the non-Islamic community. Van Gennep (1960) divided rituals of passage - and we may classify funeral rites as such - into three categories. Mourning, he stated, is a transitional period for the survivors. They enter it through rites of separation and emerge from it through rites of reintegration into society (Van Gennep 1960:18).

First there are rites of separation to accompany the dead person in his or her next life. Second, there are rites of transition (p 18 ff.), which place various restrictions upon the mourning relatives and require special behavior during the mourning period. Finally, there are rites of reintegration (p.147), which help the mourning persons return to normal life and bring the mourning period to a close. Thomas divides funeral rites into separation rites and reintegration rites (Thomas 1983:75).

I will follow van Gennep's categories in my description. After that I will discuss the funerals of Islamized Mafa people in Mokolo.

IV 3.1 Death in Mafa society

Death is often conceived as different for women, children, men and for young and old people; moreover 'good' or 'bad' depends on the kind of death. All these factors may influence the length of the mourning period (Thomas 1982:101). Among the Mafa, funeral rites for a highly respected person who died a good death may last up to ten days. People stated that the period was shorter for women. But for an ordinary man, the funeral rites did not last that long either, and could be shorter than the rites for a highly respected elderly lady.

The Mafa distinguished the good and the bad death as follows:

Men		women	
good	bad	good	bad
-elderly	-young	-elderly	-young

-having had children(male and female	-no children	-having had children(male and female	- no
<u>soul crushed by</u> -*ligile* -*mide* -having done *maray*		<u>soul crushed by</u> -*ligile* -*mide*	

The acts surrounding Mafa funerals are both complicated and numerous. If they are not performed right, they can harm the deceased. Then the dead person will keep wandering around and in turn harm the next of kin and other relations.
In my description I will relate the rituals that take place after the death of an elderly man. We will describe the case of a father of seven sons, *bab gav* Mania, a generous and highly respected person who had been able to attend the *maray*, the bull feast several times, during which he was able to sacrifice a bull. As we saw before, this act gives a man considerable status and affects the length of the mourning rituals and how he will be buried.
Before he died he spent some time in hospital, but his case was hopeless. They had told him it had something to do with the liver. He had been returned to his compound on a hand-cart, because his brother said he wanted to make a sacrifice on his behalf at his own place. But after the sacrifice, the man said he preferred to be taken to his son's home to die there. "When I die at my own place," he had said, "those who have died before me will bother me too much." So he died at his child's home.
It is important that the relatives and close friends and neighbors of the deceased attend the funeral. During the rites the drums should be beaten, as a Mafa man said,

> "with all the force that is left in you. The forefathers have said that you should cry aloud and beat the drums, so that the dead father will overhear and will be able to say 'Oooh listen to my children, how they love me because they are beating the drums for me'."

IV 3.1.1 Rites of separation

Rites of separation are the procedures by which the corpse is transported outside the compound, and the tools of the deceased are burnt. But they also include the physical manifestations of separation like the grave, or the periodic collective rites to expel souls from the house (Van Gennep 1960.164).

Bab-gay Mania died on the 24th of April 1988. Some of his children were around. So were the neighbors, who called for the other children. When they arrived the little sister of the dead person was next to him, representing his eldest daughter. The first-born daughter of a man is supposed to stay next to her dead father, and she has an important role in the funeral rites. In this case she lived too far away, so she could not arrive in time.

The little sister washed the body. This should always be done by a female, preferably his first-born daughter. If he did not have any sisters, they would have taken the first-born girl of his first-born child. If that would not have been possible, it could have been his wife who would wash the body. The wife also remains next to the one who washes the body, as she should not stay on her own while doing this.[115]

On the first day, the drums are taken out and beaten. All the people from the *kuyuk*, the patrician of the mother of the deceased, his children, and the neighbors were present that morning. They left for a place they call *wam* in Mafa, after a special tree that stands, as they expressed it, on a particular spot. They took a piece of bark from this tree and buried it. Then they returned home again.

The blacksmith looked at the stones like a diviner, to find out if the dead person holds any grudges against one of the living. Then a cock was slaughtered and eaten by the blacksmith. He belongs to the smith caste, whose wives are potters and midwives. It is his task to dig the grave and carry the body to it. On the second day they called for the blacksmith again. He then had to kill a goat, which should be provided by the eldest son of the deceased and serves as payment for the blacksmith's work.

The sheep or goat should not bleat while being killed. Therefore it is slaughtered in a special way. They close the mouth while the animal is standing upright and they stick the knife right into its throat. The blood should flow into its belly. When the animal dies, they take it outside the house and strip off the skin on a stone lying to the right outside the house. It has to be the right side, as the male body was brought in from that side. A female body would be taken in from the left side. This is a reversal of the ordinary situation in which left is associated with masculinity and right with femininity.

Normally the head of the deceased person will be wrapped in the goat skin. The rest of the dead body will be wound in a white piece of cloth, with strips of goat skin around the wrists and ankles. But this man had killed a bull for the bull feast, so he was wrapped in a bull skin.

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[115] Women are washed by their youngest daughter or their close friend *yowda*. Children are washed by their mother or the sister of their mother.

Inside the house the blacksmith and the relatives speak to the dead body and they tell him that they are going to fetch the jar that represents the father of the dead person. Afterwards this jar will be broken. The blacksmith's wife, the potter, will make a new one. It will be given to the brother of the dead man, so that in the future he will be able to make the sacrifices for the deceased. If the brothers are no longer around, it will be given to his sons. The *guid pat* of the deceased, the jar that represents his second being, will also be taken outside. If the deceased had twins, which is the case, the special twin pot called *tsakalay*, in which the yearly twin rituals have been carried out, need to be well covered.

Beside the body a fire is built with the dung of a sheep, the wood of a tree called *wanday* (jujubes), and another piece of wood called *ga aad* (a tree that loses its leaves during the dry season). People explained to me that they use the dung of sheep to prevent people from smelling the body; they use these special trees because otherwise the body will start to swell.

A man will lie in state in the fourth hut; if one starts counting from the kitchen, a woman will lie in the second hut, the one that also contains the granary.

If one – they added to the explanation – were to burn this tree *ga aad* after a child was born, the baby would remain tiny.

The eldest daughter, in this case the younger sister who represents her, takes her place beside the body to chase away the flies. The other sisters who have arrived to attend the funeral bring along a calabash with millet, peanuts, weed (chiendents), or beans; all these are female crops.

When the bull skin has been brought into the hut of the dead man, he is taken to the entrance. Then all his children, his sisters, and his brothers must sing while the blacksmith wraps his head in this skin. The neighbors and other people who attend the funeral remain outside, where the men beat the drums. The women dance and sing whatever they want concerning the dead person and their grief, for instance:

ooh *bab gay* (father of the house), why did you leave us?

When the deceased is wrapped up, they take him outside by the right hand side door. They prop him up on a large stone outside the hut but inside the courtyard, while the blacksmith stays behind him to hold him up. Everybody approaches one by one, and kneels down in front of the body. Then the first born girl, his eldest daughter, leaves the compound, her calabash filled with pebbles; she throws these in the direction of the grave.[1]

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1 One version of an informant told that the dead person will now leave for a last visit to the compounds of his male children and his close friends. The blacksmith will carry him along the way. First the house of his dearest friend called *matslai*, like the second child, afterwards to his eldest son and the other sons. Doing this he should be

Before he is brought to the cemetery, the deceased, his wives and his children make a round about the compound, two times if the first-born was a girl, three [117] times if the first-born was a boy. They can make this roundabout now, but they should never do so while the father of the house is still alive. Never should the wives and female children of a man go round about the compound. If, for example, one of his wives needs to pick up something on the other side of the compound, she should return halfway and reach the particular spot passing by the entrance of the house again. If she does go round it is said that it would kill her husband. The second child (two - female) of female twins cannot even make this roundabout in the funeral period, though the first one (one - male) can. If the *kala-yam*, the next child to be born after twins, is a girl, she cannot make this circle around the compound either. If the *kala-yam* is a boy, he can. When the female twin or *kala-yam* are married, their mother-in-law can make this roundabout for them.

The numbering remains important. If the deceased's first-born child is male, they will bury him after two days; if the first-born is female, they will bury him after three days. But, people added, if the children live far away and have not arrived yet, they may still wait. The blacksmith will carry the body to its grave and bury it. When that time comes the first-born daughter leaves first. The blacksmith walks behind her, carrying the body to the grave. They immediately return to the compound again. They do so three times if the first-born was a boy and twice if the first-born of the deceased was a girl.

Bab gay Mania is put in his grave sitting up straight. That is because during his lifetime he sacrificed a bull for the bull feast, the *maray*. Otherwise he would have been buried lying down on his side. Male bodies are laid on the right side and female bodies on their left side; here again we see the inversion of normal practice.

Stones are put at the back and the front of the body, so it will not fall on its belly or its back. If that should happen, it could cause another person's death. In the case of the burial of a child, the mother of the child could become sterile and not be able to give birth to another child. If a person is buried sitting up, they put a

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accompanied by his eldest daughter. But he should not leave the compound by the door; a hole must be made in his hut, through which he can leave the house for the last time. Returning from this last visit, he enters again by the same hole. At a later date, when I was back in the field other people told me that paying a last visit was only done by the Kapsiki people, and that leaving the hut through a hole was something only done for the mountain chief. Regional differences probably explain these different accounts.

[117] Here too the accounts of people differed. Others told me that for funerals it was just the other way around. In that case it would mean another inversion of the ordinary situation.

flat stone on the grave If she or he is laid down, they bury her or him with sand and earth In the case of children, the blacksmith puts the body in the grave, turns his back towards the grave and, standing turned around, puts the sand on the grave

If it is filled with sand, stones are put on the grave When the blacksmith has finished his job, a black pot is put on top of the grave It contains a bit of food with a sauce of fat that has gone bad. Once the black pot is put on the grave the blacksmith is not supposed to look back any more If he would, it is said that he will die

There are more dangers confronting the blacksmith If, while carrying the body, the head falls backwards, the blacksmith will die The same is true if the body starts jumping up and down as he carries it on his shoulders The blacksmith will drop the body, flee far away from the homestead and look for a diviner, who will be able to tell him what sacrifice has to be made to undo the harm In such cases he needs to go to another quarter of the area, for which one needs to cross a river Another blacksmith will finish the job in that case

Vawar tells us

> "Once a body fell down in that way I came back from school, they had left it just like that, I only heard the cries and the shouts from other people I saw the wrapped-up body I didn't know it was a body I thought it was my father I started to call for him "*bab gay, bab gay*' I cried aloud Than people came to tell me it was the body of a dead person I told them ' liars, you are lying " I touched the body It moved then I realized and started to cry, I fled People said it was because he was a sorcerer, a *mude* He did not want to be buried by the blacksmith who was supposed to bury him, so he moved his body provokingly to have another blacksmith finish the job, finish his burial But the blacksmith he preferred wasn't around, so that's why they had left him like that Then a diviner arrived and they threw stones to ask the body by whom he wanted to be carried to his grave The body answered that he wanted to be carried by his first-born son This wish was fulfilled, and the body was at ease '

The blacksmith should not wash himself for the burial

Before he carries the body to its grave he undresses himself and wears only a goat skin around his loins He throws sand over his nearly naked body as if it were water After the actual burial, when he has put the body in the grave, he turns his back towards the grave and takes off the skin around his loins Being completely naked, he washes himself in front of everybody The wet sand beside the burial place is put on the grave The blacksmith should not look back, another

blacksmith will put the stone on the grave. They will fetch the meat from the slaughtered goat, which they left in a tree, and they will return home. [118]
When the body has been buried, the *guid pat* - the pot representing the second being of the deceased - that had been taken outside, as well as the pot called *baba*, the father, and the pot called *tsakalay* representing the twins - though this one remains inside -, will be questioned: who will be taking care of them in the future? The diviner throws the pebbles to divine and find the answer. He sacrifices a cock on the stones, whose blood is put on the pots. Then the pots will be broken. The blacksmith's wife, the potter, will make new ones. They will be given to the brother of the deceased, so that in the future he will be able to make the necessary sacrifices. If no male is available, the offerings to *baba* may be done by women, but the sacrifice for the twins should never ever be performed by women.
His bed (a wooden shelf people sleep on), called *pat*, is thrown outside.

IV 3.1.2 Rites of transition

Rites of transition are described by Van Gennep as the ceremonies that accompany the passage from one social and magic-religious position to another, when one is wavering between two worlds (Van Gennep 1960: 18). Before and after the actual burial, the family, friends and neighbors will continue to beat the drums, dance and sing. This may last for days, up to ten days for a very respected person and at least two days for an ordinary one. Those who come to attend the funeral festivities will bring food along. For the duration of these festivities the women should not wash themselves. Also during the night the male relatives beat the drums and sing.

> Night falls early, as the sky is covered with clouds. We sit and listen to the drum beat. It will be the last night of the first part of the mourning period. Food has been prepared by the daughter of the deceased to be eaten by the sons-in-law. To light the fire, the wife or the eldest daughter may walk around the house and take a piece of straw from the roof to light the fire with. This is something they would never do during the lifetime of the father of the house.

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[118] If the grave collapses after the funeral, the blacksmith will repair it. But if it continues to cave in, this means that the dead person wants one of his children with him, and you can be sure that one of them will die. To find out which person the deceased wants, they will pay a visit to the fetishist to ask for advice.

During the dances the first-born sons and the first-born daughters of all his wives dance with the material belongings of the dead father, like his shield, his bow and arrow, his hat, his spear, etc

The second son, called m'*matslat*, went off with the blacksmith to get a piece of wood, from the jujube tree, the *wandat*. As we know this second son has had a special place in his father's life. Whenever there was a special occasion, for example when their father got married again, this second son had to be next to his father. That is because the second son represents the female, whereas the first son represents the male.[119] During sacrifices or during the bull ritual he used to get the largest part of the slaughtered animal. During the funeral dances the first son dances with the bow that has a rope, as he represents the male. The second son dances with the bow without a rope, as he represents the female.

Members of the *kuyuk*, mother's patri clan, pierce some potsherds from the pot that used to represent the father of the deceased.[120] They put a string in it, made from the tree called *wam*, and they hang it around the neck of the children of the dead father. The beam that enclosed the door of the hut for the ritual bull is taken out and put on the fire. The warmth is very welcome as the night is unbearably cold.[121]

Beer has been prepared. It is taken out and put on the right side of the compound on the spot where the body had been put before it was buried. Only the daughters and the sisters of the dead father are allowed to drink this brew.[122]

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[119] It is not only this son who has this function but every first and every second son of each of the wives a father of the house ever had in his life and who bore him children.

[120] If it would have been a person who took care of the pot called *mama* his mother the same would have happened.

[121] For those who never killed a ritual bull another piece of wood will be taken from the *calcedra* tree.

[122] Early in the morning just before dawn the anthropologist being exhausted and drugged by the sound of the beating drums fell asleep. I had very pleasant dreams. When they woke me up when the sun had arrived it was as if I had visited another world and abruptly had to return to this one.

Dancing at the funeral

[illegible] the tree in front of the house

As the women drank the beer, the blacksmith was the only male who drank with them. He did so from his own calabash. [123]

IV 3.1.3 Death outside the region

If a person dies in another area and the body cannot be taken home, usually the little finger is cut off the body, - from the left hand for a male and from the right hand for a female - and taken home. This little finger will be buried as if it were the dead person. Vawar tells us:

> "My brother had been run over by a car in M. We did not have money to pay for a taxi to bring him home. So he was buried over there. Prisoners had to dig the hole, and the guy who had run over him had to do most of the work as it was him who had killed my brother. My father was full of grief. He had brought his bow and arrow ready to kill the guy who had killed his son, though nobody knew of his intention. He was quiet at first, but when he saw the body of his son, he pulled out an arrow and shot. The guy was hurt. They had to take out the arrow, and the other arrows they took away from my father and they had to calm him down. He said, "If my son is no longer alive, the one who had killed him should not be alive either." They offered him money but he refused. He said, "Does that bring my son to life, or what?"
>
> When my brother was put into the grave, my mother jumped in as well. She was so full of grief that she wanted to be buried with her son. We had to take her out by force and console her.
>
> Then we took his little finger and took it home and the funeral rites started."

IV 3.1.4 Rites of reintegration

These are the rites that lift all the regulations and prohibitions of mourning. The survivors enter the transitional period through rites of separation and emerge from it through rites of reintegration into society (Van Gennep 1960:147).
During mourning, the living mourners and the deceased constitute a special group, situated between the world of the living and the world of the dead. They leave this special world only through appropriate rites and only at a moment

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[123] People from the blacksmith caste and the ordinary caste should never drink or eat together. Nor should they eat from the same plate. His millet porridge is put in a calabash, unusual for ordinary people, and the sauce that goes with it in a black pot.

when even a physical relationship is no longer discernible Meals shared after funerals and at commemoration celebrations can be considered rites of reintegration

In the case of *bab gay* Mania one month later beer is prepared anew A goat is sacrificed in the morning and all the meat is prepared except for the front legs They will be given to the blacksmith Six millet porridge balls are prepared and then put in small black pots After the meal has been eaten the wives of the deceased and her children are put on the road and the blacksmith shaves their heads completely bald When he has done so they return home to drink the beer The blacksmith takes the skin off the goat that has been sacrificed and he gives it to the eldest daughter of the deceased She puts it into his calabash She will carry this calabash along with the hat and the lance of the dead body and will return home
One and a half months afterwards a bit of the millet porridge that has been prepared for the everyday meal will be put at a mourner s foot for which purpose they have constructed something that looks like a little hut It will be the second son, in *matslai* who does so For women it is put on the right side for men on the left side
The first day the blacksmith does the offering, if at least it contains meat If the deceased was a man he does so at the foot of the wife of the deceased and at the foot of his last daughter or the second son *in matslai* If it would have been a woman if would have been her first daughter and her youngest son
Afterwards the services of the blacksmith will no longer be needed, they can do it themselves during the time of mourning This time varies In the case of *bab gay* Mania the final mourning rituals were held nearly one year later After the first phase of the mourning rituals the wife can go to the brother of her dead husband or find herself another husband

IV 3 1 5 The end of the mourning period

Tuesday April 10 1989 Beer has been prepared In the evening the relatives start to play the flute Some men pretend they were fighting while one man carries the pot that contains the beer on his head for people to drink
Music is made with all sorts of instruments flutes percussion instruments like *ganzaval* and *dassal* and drums People argue Pots loaded with beer are taken out of the house and divided People drink till early in the morning

Wednesday, April 11 1989: This morning, only the flute is played In the afternoon the blacksmith, the brother, the youngest son [124] and the wife of the deceased drink some beer. They have put it in a small pot They drink under the eaves. They pour out some beer on the ground The blacksmith says aloud to the dead father, "Take this beer and drink it with your friends and those family members who have died before."

When the evening draws near they put the meat of a bull on the fire. The blacksmith and the brother and children of the deceased divide this. Had they not been able to find bull meat, they would have taken the skin of a bull, prepared it and pretended it was meat

Then people leave for the 'bushes', they come back; they leave for the mountains, they come back; they leave for the neighboring compounds, and they come back By then night has fallen. Everybody will return home. It is the end of the mourning period for *bab gay* Mania. For at least two generations, sacrifices will be made for him. He will be remembered.

> I once sighed. "How complicated your system is, how did you learn all this? "Our parents told us," one informant said. "They tell us all these things, especially after the evening meals, if the full moon is out!"
>
> Another informant, a Christian woman, said "Even my mother, who was baptized long ago, tells me so that her children will not forget the Mafa customs, but she also tells us that we do not have to live up to all these rules anymore. I will also tell my son when he gets older if I have not forgotten by that time and still remember all the rules."

In the next section we will give a description of a funeral of an Islamized Mafa family to find out if they have forgotten about their former customs or that these are still of importance. Then I will give an analysis of Mafa funerals and elaborate on the changes after Islamization to finally arrive at my conclusions.

IV 3.2 Funeral after Islamization

> It's early in the morning. We are heading towards the outskirts of town on our way to the compound of a cousin of the first wife of Baaba Rahmani. That cousin died two days ago; Americans landed that day by

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[124] As set out in the first chapter, among the Mafa it is the youngest son who will inherit the house of his father Women will always stay in the house of their youngest sons The eldest son will stay near the land and build himself a new house If the father is still alive and the youngest son is old enough to found his own household, the father may build himself a house quite near his old house and stay there with his other wives (whom may be much younger) while the mother of the youngest son stays with him

helicopter Without any warning they had come to carry out a project to inoculate children in town The road to Mokolo is one of the best roads in the country though not good enough for them The helicopter scared the people in town Nobody knew what was going on and every body hastened to see what was happening, including the police In the rush the police car ran over the cousin, who was on his motorbike The poor guy had been a butcher He Islamized eight years ago As a butcher you cannot make a decent living unless you slaughter animals in the Islamic way

We take off our shoes by the entrance hut and pass the men who sit together and mourn in front of as well as inside the first hut They talk in low voices We pass them with our heads bent certainly not looking at them They pretend they did not see us
We enter the inner courtyard In one of the huts some women are sitting They are mourning, crying at times while saying aloud, "There is but one God and Muhammad is his Messenger " They too converse in low voices The atmosphere is tense The poor guy was still young with a lifetime ahead of him His mother who is not Islamized is sitting quietly Occasionally she wipes a tear from her eyes with a corner of her clothes People do not dance they do not sing nothing of the kind The body has been buried Relatives, friends and people from the Islamic community will regularly drop in during the week following the death At intervals the men start a prayer, they recite a verse from the Qur an The women respond from the inside, by praying too After we have been sitting for a while, we leave again We cannot help but pass the men again While kneeling our eyes cast down we greet them and express our sympathy Only when we have left the compound do we put on our shoes again

IV 3 2 1 Rites of Separation

This funeral concerned a Mafa man who had Islamized eight years before His family is partly Islamized and partly keeps to their own religion, yet the funeral is totally adapted to Fulbe Islamic customs This funeral and the one we described in the introduction also a funeral in which Islamized as well as non-Islamized people participated - served as example to show that funeral practices follow the religion of the deceased In regard to the Islamic rules this

means that the body was buried the same evening at the local burial ground. [125]

During my last stay, when I again visited a funeral in the mountains with Islamic female friends, I observed that Islamized sons may bury their Pagan father the same evening, according to Islamic customs, while the funeral rites are carried out according to Mafa customs.

If it is a man who dies, the Marabout will come to say the prayers. The body will be washed by men. Everybody will start crying and calling aloud. If it is a woman who dies, the body will be washed by a female member of the community. She has to be able to read and write in Arabic, as it is important that prayers are said during the washing ceremony. The body is wrapped in white garments: a skirt, a blouse and a veil for women; trousers, a shirt and veil for men; for both, an additional garment to wrap around the body. When the body is carried outside, women as well as men pray. Then the body will be taken to the place of burial to be buried before sunset. Men will do this job. Even if it concerns a woman's or a child's body, women will not be present. When the body is carried outside and leaves - often by a car that will be hired - the women sit inside and cry and scream aloud.

The men take it to the funeral grounds. The body is put near the grave while the men pray standing up. They do not kneel down as they would for the daily prayers, and they pray the special suras. When they have finished praying the Marabout puts the body, which lies on a plain reed mat, into a grave the size of the body. Men, women and children are buried in the same position: the head towards the north, towards Mecca, the holy city. So the face is turned towards the sun. The head of the body will rest on the left hand. The earth is not put directly on the body. They first thatch over the body with wood and leaves so that it becomes 'like a house'. [126] Only then is sand put in the grave. As the body is buried, prayers are said aloud while the men's faces are turned towards the sun.

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125 In 1992 I went back to Mokolo to check my data. I went over all the funeral rites again with my Mafa informant. When I wanted to do the same for the funeral rites in town, my friend said we would, though she did not like to talk about death. We never got around to it. Then the day before I left, a neighbor died. He had been a Marabout, a kind and quiet person and I had spoken with him a lot during my former visits. He had been ill for a while. So I hardly discussed the Islamic funeral again, but instead was very much involved in its actual rites.

I thank him in memoriam. May Allah bless his soul.

126 I watched this 'making of a house around the body' also at a funeral of an African - Islamic friend in Holland.

The women who came to pay a visit will each prepare the meal in turn. They may prepare it at home and then bring it to the house of the deceased Or they may make it in the kitchen of the compound of the deceased

IV 3.2.2 Rites of transition

The week afterwards, people will pay a visit to the house of the deceased to offer their sympathy to the next of kin and to mourn. All through this period, other women within the Islamic community will prepare the meals. After a week, life goes back to normal for all except the wife or the husband of the deceased and their children.
In total, mourning will last 40 days During this period, the deceased will visit the next of kin in their dreams at night to give them consolation.

> "A man, for example, can tell his wife what he likes to eat She prepares it for him She thinks of him a lot "

During this time a woman should wear the same articles of clothing.

IV 3.2.3 Rites of reintegration

After 40 days people gather again to pray for the deceased After that period, a widow or a widower can marry again

> "By that time the body has rotted in its grave By that time you also know if a woman is pregnant or not, so who the father is I mean, if she would marry again too soon you would never know, because some children resemble their fathers but others do not at all "

In the next section we will try to analyze the different funeral rites and draw some conclusions.

IV 3.3 Conclusions concerning funeral rites

As we said before, a main symbolic ordering in Mafa society is doubleness, and twins are the ultimate manifestation of this principle. Women have a strong relation with doubleness, they are associated with even numbering. This fact is also apparent in some parts of the ritual. The first son represents the male; he dances with the bow with a rope The second son dances with the bow without a rope, as he represents the female During the funeral rites we have seen many inversions of the cosmological order The numbering is reversed several times During my last visits, when I discussed it with my informants, some doubt has

risen in my mind about some of these inversions, as I mentioned in an earlier footnote. This could be due to divergent interpretations in different regions.
Some reversions remained clear though; left and right is reversed as well; a woman is buried on her left side, a man on his right side. When the deceased was taken out of the house to make his last rounds, he was set on the right side of the entrance hut, a place reserved for women in ordinary situations.
There are more reversals during the ceremonies. Things that are normally forbidden, like walking around the compound or taking straws out of the hut to light the fire, can now be done. [127] To explain the significance of these reversals, we may point out that in many African societies the spirit of the dead persons has to be led astray. By doing so they hope he will not return to the living world to bother the next of kin and other relations. These reversals of the classifying principles are summarized in the following scheme.

separation		*transition*		*reintegration*	
walk around hut [128]		*straw from roof*			
millet meal with vegetables (feminine)		*millet meal with vegetables (feminine)*		*meat of bull (masculine)*	
feminine	masculine	feminine	masculine	feminine	masculine
left	right	left	right	right	left
uneven	even (two)	uneven	even (two)	even (two)	uneven
		sacrificial drinking		sacrificial drinking	
musical instruments					
drums		drums and percussion		flute and percussion	
singing dancing with belongings		singing dancing with belongings		fighting	

127 And in some areas to pay the last visit, the deceased cannot leave by the door A hole should be made in the wall of the hut to allow the body to leave

128 Not a normal entrance, see footnotes above

trees used

wam (buried)	wam (string with potsherd baba)
wandar (burnt)	caleedra (burnt)
ga agd (burnt)	

The reversals concerning left and right and even and uneven are obvious in the rites of separation and transition During the rites of reintegration, the normal order is restored, which respectively means, right and left even and uneven associated with female and male

The significance of the musical instruments still has to be analyzed For example, in the rainy seasons drums (or certain drums) cannot be used The iron percussion instruments used during the rites of integration are only used by men I do not know if or why the female percussion instruments are not used The flute is never played by women

Further research is also needed concerning the significance of the different trees and their functions At this point no conclusions can be drawn on these subjects

In regard to the changes that took place after Islamization, we can conclude that the cosmology and the symbols attached to it have changed drastically From analyzing the rituals, no associations related to male and female can be discovered, other than the inside - outside dichotomy Considering funeral rites, the obvious reversals that existed in Mafa rituals have disappeared The rites are sober People only pray they no longer dance or sing

Concerning death in Africa in general (if this is at all feasible) Thomas remarked that the individual s death was not an end in itself

> *qui clot une duree de vie inscrite sur un temps linéaire mais un moment du temps circulaire, repetitif, codifié par ce referentiel capital que constitue le mythe et controle par les ancêtres dont les patriarches sont ici-bas les représentants (1982 12)*

We previously concluded that whereas Mafa religion takes a circular view of the universe They dy five times and take up life underneath the earth Islam has a linear view of life and the after-life The dead go to Allah to be judged from there to go to either paradise or hell At any rate they do not return to earth Therefore they do not need to be led astray during the funeral rites The memory of the dead person is no longer feared as informants stated The fact that they come to visit the mourners in dreams is seen as a consolation a release and is by no means considered a threat

V 4 From plurality to unity: concluding remarks

Our first aim was to find out if the positions of men and women in rituals differed as much as they do within religious life.
In the twin ritual the structuring of Mafa society became evident. Twins are the ultimate manifestation of the double (divine) principle in society. Twins have special powers and need to be respected. They are the direct offspring of the divine world. They can cause harm if the rules are not respected. We found out that women are associated with the number 'two', with evenness, and hence are also associated with the primordial past. Through the ritual, the ordering of society, associated with three, 'unevenness' and male, was restored.
When we connected the symbols that became evident from the twin ritual, with the analysis of the bull ritual, a men's ritual, the outcome was striking. This men's ritual was interspersed with the structuring principle of two. However, given the fact that we undeniably dealt with a male ritual, we concluded that a balance between unevenness and evenness was pursued. We finally concluded that 'the birth of twins:offering of the bull' :: 'feminine creation:masculine creation'. So these rituals underline the importance of the number 'two'. It represents the main ordering principle of the Mafa community. The rituals demonstrate the relation of the number 'two', or 'evenness', with femininity. In the classificatory principles the importance of the female gender is stressed.
We concluded that evenness is associated with the primordial past, which in the literature is often called 'chaos', but we rejected this term. Evenness is the source of all living beings in this society where God and human beings are always two. Evenness is sacred. This is emphasized by the expression that 'twins look with two eyes' and the fact that twins can never be born from a *mide*, an evil being. But sacredness cannot reign the profane world. The water spirit, *nihed*, plays an intermediary role between the sources of being and human society. Within the rituals, the unevenness - associated with human society and masculinity - is restored.
In the harvest rituals and the other festivities that take place in Mafa society, the importance of the patrilineage is stressed. These are rituals in which the importance of the sons as well as the daughters is expressed.

From all that has been said, we may conclude that gender relations within Mafa society must be analyzed on two different levels. These levels are very much complementary. The genders are fundamentally symmetrical and interdependent. We could only have made this discovery by analyzing the rituals. Without belaboring this argument, it is clear that rituals in Mafa society cannot be regarded as mere actions without any intrinsic value. On the contrary; Mafa

society cannot be understood without knowledge of its rituals neither can the process of conversion

On a overt' [1] level women are subordinated to men in this patrilinear society As Boisseau and Soula stated (1974 122) Mafa women's dependent condition is clearly shown in the position of the hut of the head of the compound the father *bab gay* who day and night, controls the entrance to the house and the coming and going of all members of the household

But the analysis of the Mafa symbolic system reveals that the female structuring symbolized by evenness is very important Men cannot perform the necessary rituals without constantly taking it into account

The symbolic order does express the power relations of the genders Not only a balance between female and male classificatory aspects is important but on a more overt level men depend on women for the continuity of the patrilineage Not because she bears him children - that speaks for itself but because the sacred aspects that by symbolic classification were related to femineity and need to be controlled are the source of life in general In daily life this and the fact that women can curse can even be a constant threat which causes that husbands continually mistrust their wives from other patrilineages Only on daughters you can count

Boisseau and Soula rightly considered Mafa women to be the key to Mafa cosmology If women are absent, the Mafa compound is isolated and can no longer be regarded as the center of the world the image of the universe From the symbolic associations it became clear that women have a direct connection with the primordial past Nevertheless men are responsible for the here and now , for society and its continuity and thus have earthy power This responsability includes that men need to take women on a symbolic level as well as literally in account and not the other way around These positions explain why women are so much independent from their menfolk and why they change husbands so easily

We could argue again as in the previous chapter that because a woman is not directly responsible she can easily leave the sauce before she is eaten - to paraphrase Martin s (1970) remark which struck me as quite odd

With the conclusions of the previous chapter in mind we tried to understand why people - and here we found a difference between men and women - not only leave their old life behind but also abandon the rituals that are intertwined with Mafa society at large

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[1] Public level does not seem an appropriate term for Mafa society Women are publicly as much present as the men This changes in Islamic society though

We found that the structured aspects of this society are reflected in the main rituals. They underline, on the 'overt' and political level, the fact that it is a patriarchal society in which women are more or less subordinated. This is demonstrated in the bull ritual as well as the harvest rituals.
Another question concerned which rituals were taken along in the new Islamic life after conversion. We concluded that the Islamic community had several festivities but that these were far less ritualized than those in Mafa society. People no longer attended the rituals of the Mafa community. We tried to reason how such a break could be understood, by reviewing the stages of Islamization, as we mentioned in the first chapter.
We concluded that after Islamization, people not only leave this patrilinear clan society behind. They also abandon the cosmological order in which 'doubleness', associated with the primordial past, is an important ordering principle. The spiral view of life, dying five times and taking up life underneath the earth, is exchanged for a linear view of life, dying and leaving for paradise. If people no longer need to underline the cohesion of the patrilineage, it is no longer necessary to perform the rituals made for them. Islamized people no longer need a bull to represent the landlord and his relatives. Within Islam, death life and fertility are in the hands of Allah. After Islamization, the converts still believe that twins have special powers, but the twins are no longer alienated with the universe, they are no longer the ultimate manifestation of the source of human existence. People need to beware of them, but no longer have to perform rituals for them. The same applies to the water spirit. It is still important but does not play an intermediary role between this life and the time before birth.
Islamization and urbanization are concomitant processes, as we suggested before. In town not many people have access to land. However this is not the real reason that harvest rituals are no longer performed, as in the former generation there was still enough land around town. In this ritual, the relation between the patriarch and his relatives, male as well as female, is stressed. This relationship is no longer necessary in the Islamic community, because the whole clan system no longer counts. We will elaborate on the newly adopted lineage and marriage system in the next chapter. Millet is no longer a dominant symbol within the Islamic community of Mokolo.

We saw that elderly men who have been married and have fulfilled their responsibilities toward the society often objected to the Islamization of their daughters. We can understand this. The father has a special relation with his eldest daughter. This girl and his other daughters have important functions in the various rituals, especially in taking care of their fathers in the funeral rites.

The master of the house, *bab gay*, on an overt level can expect all sorts of signs of respect from their sons-in-law They must come and help during the harvest During the bull ritual they must catch the bull During the funeral rites, the in laws have to come to pay their respects This could be the reason why *bab gay* Godoka called his Islamic son-in law a good for nothing
In a way acceptation of the fact that their sons Islamize may be easier as long as the eldest son does not The same applies to the second son or the youngest son Yet women can act on their own They do so when they change husbands within the community and let their fathers deal with the problems Of course it is a fact that Islamization is easier when the fathers are no longer around
Islamic society is also patrilineal but it lacks the two intertwined levels Though the public life of the genders is very much segregated both men and women can act on their own on a religious - and ritual as far as it still exists - level Thus we begin to understand why people no longer perform the rituals after Islamization

Yet we may search further In an article mentioned above Schotteleers states that one can regard the number two in itself as being representative of all forms of plurality as opposed to unity Two represents the Many as opposed to the One as derived from it or as fused with it again (Schotteleers 1991 357)
These features have been the topic of a debate in feminist studies which criticized the model of dualistic analysis whereby ultimately all that is duality two, plurality was derived from the One the male God Those aspects that were associated with femininity were always considered inferior As stated by Vincenot The binary ordering of the genders does not respect duality it is self evident that the genders are opposites or mirror-images a couple or possessed by each other or an articulated unity It seems that Two is too much, by the relations they have the reassuring One is being restored (Vincenot 1981 38 in van Santen 1984 17 45) A feminist author like Irigaray wanted to expose the *'hom(m)osexuality* of Western metaphysics which is their tendency to dichotomize the ordering of subordination of the other to the One She made a problematic out of the difference (Vincenot and v d Haegen 1980 109 ff in van Santen 1983 37) It was argued that this tendency was related to the coming into existence of the one Christian patriarchal God in Western society (van Santen 1983)
Indeed I would object in this particular context to regard two twins, femininity the primordial past as entities derived from One Who is One here? God, Jigilé? We may remember that Jigile also has his *guid pat* thus ultimately was Two *Jigile* was represented as a male and had male (a beard) as well as female

features (a right arm); yet when represented as female, Jigilé had a vagina and breasts.
Can't we simply conclude that Mafa society, on the 'overt' - social if you like - level ruled by men, finds its origin in 'doubleness', 'femininity', which is still considered to lie at the base of society and thus constantly needs to be taken into account?

We concluded above that conversion is easy because the Mafa have one God whom they consider to be the same as Allah. What's in a name? It is not the name that turns out to be important but the nature of God. God, *Jigilé*, who was two - him (her)self and his (her) *guid pat* - has become One, as 'there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Messenger'. Though the selection of another name for God may seem superficial, it is fundamentally different on a 'submerged' level.
Simultaneously, we may conclude that the Islamized community has no need to count. The infinity of what preceded society has melted away in the linear view of the new religion. Allah made heaven and hell, is taking care of birth and death, of the sick and the poor. Everything is in his hands and one no longer has to balance between uneven - the order of society - and even - the infinite of the primordial past.
Herein lies the answer to another question. What changes in the categorization after people embrace Islam? The world of the primordial past changes from 'plurality' into 'unity', and on a submerged level, from 'feminine' to 'masculine'. In Mafa society, on this submerged level the female associations needed to be taken into account. In the Islamic community such is no longer the case. The sexes are no longer symmetrically interdependent. In daily life women are less feared, and in Fulbe community women are certainly more respected by men, a feature that is slowly taken over in the Islamic community of Mokolo. However, on a deeper level the importance of femineity slowly vanishes.
The fact remains that Islam is more than a religion. Trimingham rightly remarked that it is also 'a way of life'. It has far-reaching consequences on 4other areas of life, like the marriage systems, marriage payments and prestations and economic activities. We will elaborate on these aspects in the last chapters.

Chapter V
Marriage decision making and prestations

In Mafa society, marriage is clan exogamous and caste endogamous. The Mafa are obliged to marry out of their patri clan, their *gwali*, and are forbidden to marry their mother's patrilineal relatives up to the third generation. The clans of the blacksmith form a caste apart. A member of one blacksmith clan should always marry a member of another blacksmith clan. But blacksmiths and non-blacksmiths, should and in fact never marry.

In contrast, from the literature it became clear that in nomadic Fulbe society the marriage system tended to be endogamous and they knew a preferential cousin marriage (Durnham 1972).[130] In the course of history in which different groups sedentarized, a combination of exogamous and endogamous rules have been applied. Through these rules the Fulbe incorporated groups that had converted to Islam, while maintaining their superior position. In Fulbe society in Mokolo cross cousin marriages are favored.

Marriage systems and their functions in society have for long been the focus of anthropological debate. The theory of Levi-Strauss (1949) concerning the 'exchange of women' has been severely criticized for defining women as mere 'objects' of communication or exchange (see van Baal 1970, Leacock 1977, 1981, 1983, Postel Coster 1985 174, 1988 245-258). Taking an active contribution of women to social and economic life as a matter of fact I see little need to delve into these debates again. The discussions in this chapter will be based on 'the voices of women', on their points of view, their sentiments about marriage transactions in patriarchal Mafa society and within the Islamic community in Mokolo.

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130 Definitions of the terms exogamy and endogamy are derived from Keesing 1966 260 ff. Exogamie means that ego is marrying out of his or her (her is my addition) clan (out marriage), endogamie means that ego is marrying in his or her clan (in marriage). In the 1971 edition Keesing and Keesing added that in fact all societies are exogamous in that closest relatives are non marriageable (1971 184). That is also the case in Fulbe society but when I label this society as endogamous I mean that they tend to marry within their own family or clan.
So In Fulbe society they not necessarily favor a parallel cousin marriage in which ego female (my addition) marries father's brother's son so a direct endogamous exchange (Keesing and Keesing 1971 192). Neither do they just know cross cousin marriage so marriage with first cousins (Keesing 1966 259).

Both systems cannot be considered separately, as the process of Islamization does have an impact on marriage relations in 'traditional' Mafa community. The non-Islamized relatives may continue to hold traditional expectations towards their Islamized in-laws or their daughters or sons who married into the Islamic community. On one point or another, both Islamic and Mafa societies are confronted with the old and new possibilities of the marriage system.
In Mafa society women actively participate in decision making whereas in the Islamic community they are the main participators in the system of marriage prestations. In Mafa society marriage prestations can be categorized as bridewealth. The transactions are dominated by men: marriage goods are given by the (male) kin of a bridegroom to the male kin of the bride. [131] In addition the groom also owes his father-in-law bride service. [132] The nomadic Fulbe, however, have a much more complicated exchange system, which has a strong tendency towards dowry, a type of ante-mortem inheritance transferred to the bride [133]. This system has partly been taken over by the sedentarized Fulbe and is common in the Islamic community in Mokolo. In this system procurement of the marriage gifts is almost exclusively a female affair. The adoption of the Fulbe system of marriage payments involves the converts, the women of the Islamic community, into a system of exchange, in which a network they are able to build around themselves, becomes an indispensable element. At least four types of marriage gifts can be distinguished in Mokolo:

1. *dowry*, property transferred to the bride;
2. *indirect dowry*, gifts from the groom, which go first to the bride's father; the ultimate recipient of these gifts is the bride and not her kin; [134]
3. *bridewealth*, a transaction between the kin of the groom and the kin of the bride; and
3. goods and sometimes money, given by the bride's family to the groom and his family, which I will call *groomwealth*.

In this chapter Mafa en Muslim marriage systems will be compared, which are subsequently divided in decision making and payments prestations, both regarded

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131 Definition of bridewealth is derived from Duncan Mitchell 1968:20.

132 Keesing and Keesing definition of bride service is as follows: the suitor or groom resides with the girl's people and works for them for some specified period (Keesing and Keesing 1971: 188).

133 Definition of dowry derived from Goody and Tambiah 1973:1.

134 Definition of indirect dorwy derived from Goody and Tambiah 1973:2.

from women's perspective. Within these systems the difference between marriage payments is the most striking aspect on which we will focus in detail. Other questions we will elaborate on are: if new converts adopt the endogamous marriage system, even though in Mafa society marriages within one's patriclan were severely punished? How do converts accept the marriage prestations of the Fulbe and what do they gain by these exchange practices? How do they accumulate the necessary wealth?

V 1 Marriage systems

V 1.1 'She wasn't Vawar's sister', Mafa marriage system

Two informants of mine, Vawai and Stephan, provoked by my continuous questioning, are having a conversation.

> Vawai explains to Stephan that before the latter married his third wife he, Vawai, had been interested in her. But then they told me that she belonged to my *kuyuk* [his mother's patri clan] and for that reason a marriage would be out of the question.'
>
> I interrupt the conversation by asking: 'But didn't you both have the same *gwali* [patri clan], so was she not forbidden to you, Stephan?'
>
> Stephan replies with slight contempt: 'Vawai does not know the rules concerning the marriage system well enough. That is not very bright, not handy, because in this way he missed a wife who turns out to be very nice. He should not have accepted what other people said, but he should have tried to find out by himself whether the marriage was really forbidden. I found out that she was not my sister.'

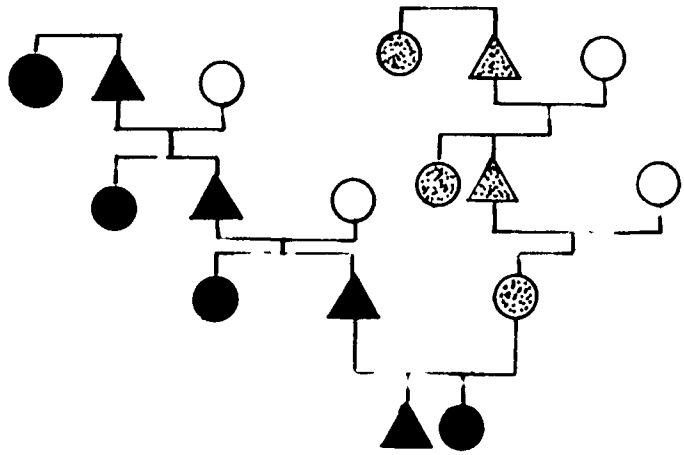
This conversation indicates that even the inhabitants of Mafa society find it hard to know exactly who they can or cannot marry. Membership of the father's patriclan is indicated by the clan name. It is clear that a man or a woman cannot marry a person with the same clan name, but to find out who is a (classificatory) 'sister' or brother on the side of the patri clan or mother's side, the *kuvuk* is much more complicated and genealogical knowledge is indispensable. If a person does not have that, s/he not only needs to ask simple advice to another member of the community, but a second opinion is demanded, as this example taught us. Stephan continued:

> 'And then, to have the same *gwali* does not mean that one also had the same *kuyuk*. It is true we are of the same clan. Our *kuvuk* is different though, and so is our lineage, as our *gwali* clan from father's side, consists of six different lineages or *vuzi* [called *godau* in the literature].

Martin 1970: 75]. But she wasn't Vawar's 'sister' either, he could have married her!"

Several households form a lineage, *godar*, and several lineages with a traceable ancestor form a patri clan, *gwali*. You cannot marry somebody from the same clan nor somebody from the patri clan of your mother, *kuyuk*, as the descendants are considered to be brothers and sisters.
Below we see a diagram of what we should consider as patri clan, *gwali*, and mother's patri clan, *kuyuk*.

figure 1



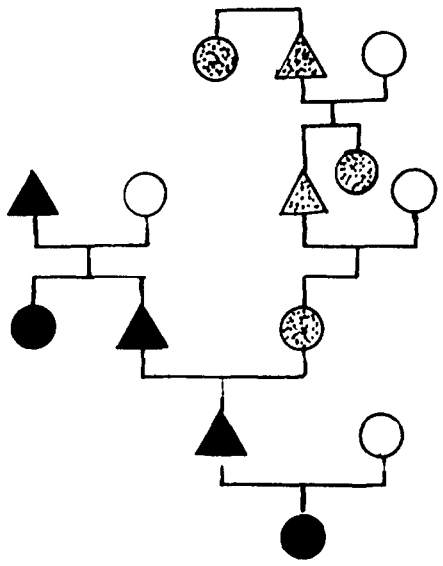
gwali

kuyuk

One cannot marry a person of the same *gwali*. Up to the third generation one cannot marry somebody from the same *kuyuk*. To explain the system, I will return to Vawar and Stéphan and add the case of another Mafa woman.

Vawar is a recently married Mafa man. His *vuzi* (lineage) name is *Feija*. His *gwali* (patri clan) is *Demejen*. his *kuyuk* (mother's patri clan) is *moelaai*.he was born in the village *Mendézé*. He has one daughter now. Her *gwali* is *Demejen*. Her *kuyuk*, and those of his future children, will depend on the name of the *gwali* of their mother, his wives.

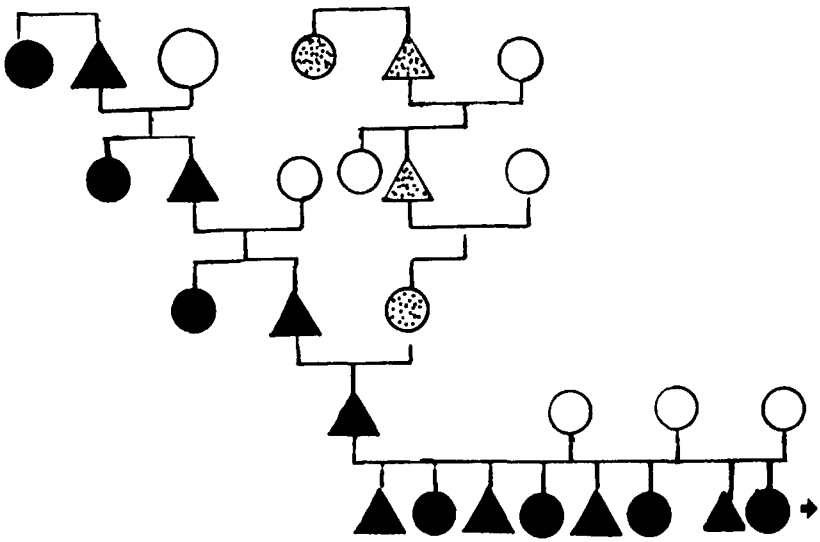
figure 2
VAWAR



gwali Demejen
kuyuk Moelaais
Marie's *gwali Demejen*

Stéphan has been married for quite a few years. He has had five wives and 24 children, of which 13 are still alive. His *vuzi* (lineage) is called *Gogwé*, his *gwali* (patri clan) *Demejen*. (So he has the same clan as Vawar, though not the same lineage, as the clan is divided into six lineages). His *kuyuk* (mother's clan) is *Zele* His village of birth is called *Borogo*. The *gwali* of all his children is *Demejen*. But his 13 children have five different *kuyuk* names, depending on the *gwali* of their respective mothers.

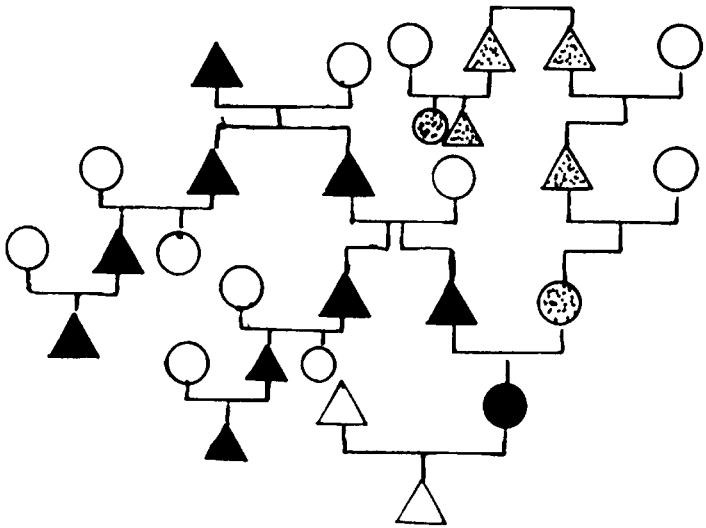
figure 3
STéPHAN



gwali: Demejen
kuyuk: Zelé
his children's *gwali*: *Demejen*

Mania, a recently married woman with one son, is of the *vuzi or* lineage of *Roua*. Her *gwali* (patri clan) is *Metzel*, and her *kuyuk* (the clan of her mother) is *Moelaai*. So she has the same *kuyuk* as Vawar. Her child bears the clan name of her husband. The *kuyuk* of her child is *Metzel*, which is her (so, his mother's) *gwali*, patri clan. She too was born in *Borogo*.

figure 4
MANIA



gwalr Metzel
kuyuk Moelaai
Vanawa's *kuyuk Metzel*

Marie marrying Vanawa: forbidden, same *kuyuk*
Marie marrying the son of Stéphan: forbidden, same *gwali*
Vanawa marrying the daughter of Stéphan: not forbidden

Following Mafa rules, this means that the children of Vawai and Stéphan cannot marry each other because they have the same patri clan. The children of Vawar and Yacadam cannot marry each other either because they share the same clan, *kuyuk*, on their mother's side to be taken into consideration for up to three generations. This means that a woman cannot marry the men of the patri clan of her mother, nor of the patri clan of her grandmother, nor of her great grandmother's or great grandmother's patri clan on mother's side In this particular case it is only the first generation. The children of Stéphan and Mania can marry each other, as they both have different patri clans and clans on their

mothers' side. The fact that they were born in the same region or village is of no consequence. [135]

V 1.2 Mafa marriage negotiations: the mother's voice and the girl's desire.

In Mafa society, a household, *gay*, needs to maintain relations with the outside world. The prohibition to marry within one's clan, whether *gwah* or *kuvuk* can be regarded as an incest prohibition. It implies (in Lévi-Strauss' terminology) the inherent presence of the group that has 'given' the sister or daughter. It will become clear that the in-laws play important roles in the life of Mafa men.
In structuralism, the elementary unit of alliance always includes the brother of a woman. In Lévi-Strauss work (1949; 1973) the core unit of analysis is the so-called 'atom af alliance', which consists of father, mother, child, and mother's brother. Between those persons, relations can be either negative or positive. De Ruyter (1977: 45 ff.) argues that Lévi Strauss missed a good opportunity to clarify the significance of women by means of this 'atom of alliance' In this atom, 'child' always stands for 'son' Postel-Coster remarks that as a result of this form of representation the mother-child relation draws not enough attention (Postel-Coster 1985: 174) Had these observations not already been made, we would have to make them again for Mafa society Our data reveal that the relation between father and daughters, is a most important one This is even more so the case with his first-born daughter(s). So is the relation between a mother and her youngest son, as we already remarked in the previous chapters. Let us consider the marriage negotiations. Who plays a role in them? What relations do the members of an 'atom of alliance' maintain with each other in the course of these negotiations?

Martin (1970 147) remarks that marriage relations are allied with interclan relations of production and politics. He considers the girl to be part of her husband's clan after marriage, which relation he probably has in view when he uses the term 'interclan'. By marriage a woman's own *gwah*, patriclan, is related to the one of her husband. However, in the previous chapter we have found out that a married woman remains important to her father and to her own patriclan, yet we can still consider the term interclan appropriate On an economic level,

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[135] Martin (1970) does not mention the clan of the mother in this context According to him, the women of the lineage of a man's mother, the lineage of his maternal grandmother and the lineage of his paternal grandmother are forbidden, as are the daughters of his sister Thus would mean that a man could marry somebody with the same clan name on the mother's side but a different lineage name I have never heard any reference to this rule

every household, *gay* produces its own crops in a rather individualistic way, but the men of different compounds get together during the harvest rituals by the intermediary function of the daughter, as her father will come to drink at her compound with his friends. With this ritual drinking the relation between the clan of the father of the girl, and the clan of her children is emphasized. For the daughter's children the father's clan will be *kuyuk*, bridegiver, and in this way interclan relations become political as well, as a person always needs to respect the kuyuk. In former days when wars were still frequent due to all sorts of difficulties that arose in the community, these interclan relations were even more important as a man needed the support of other clans.[136]

At the same time, so Martin continues (1970: 147), these relations allies the production with biological and social reproduction. He probably has in view the fact that the father of the bride can count on the help of his sons-in-law when labor is needed. These marriage prestations form part of the bridewealth. The son-in-law gives away his labor and some of his property, but in return receives the children his wife will give birth to, as they are ascribed to his group. They will usually be raised in and always form part of his patri clan.[137]

From our own observations and information, we know that nowadays girls and boys, women and men choose their own partner. When asked about former days, an elderly man replied:

> "It was always the young ones who chose their own wives! You just went over to the girl you preferred and you told her she had to love you" (sic!)

Martin notes that ideally a girl could always refuse the man her father proposed if she did not like him (Martin 1970: 148). However, the important role of the mother has not been mentioned before. Without me asking about it, in the conversation quoted below her role was mentioned.

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136 Wars are no longer an ordinary topic of discussion. Martin (1970: 172) mentions that there were numerous causes for a war: accusations that other clans caused periods of drought or tornados that had passed [I still heard these accusations but they no longer cause wars] disagreements about marriages and bridewealth etc. To start a war a man needed the support of befriended clans. They mostly lasted only one day and stopped when there was a casualty on both sides and ended with a sacrifice inside the two camps. During the period of Fulbe raids prisoners made were sold to the Fulbe.
Lavergne (1949) shows two pictures of interclan wars, but no comment is given.

137 Bousseau and Soula treat the matter in a more romantic vein. They recount a very touching conversation of the courtmaking of a young couple. This literal record reveals how the couple finds out if they really love each other (Bousseau and Soula 1974: 331-354).

V 1 2 1 We love your daughter', about arguments and disagreement

If a (young) man is quite certain that a girl wants to marry him, he will go and talk to the father on neutral territory, such as the marketplace There he tries to win the favors of the man he hopes will be his future father-in-law Stephan, whom we mentioned above, has five wives He is thus a good informant concerning these matters He re-enacts the procedure for pre-Islamic Mafa marriage arrangement with his friend One may wonder why I have not given the account of women concerning these arrangements The fact that men emphasize the important role of the mother of the bride only strengthens our argument as it underlines the importance of her role in dominant discourse During the re-enactment my female assistant was present to verify the facts Let s listen to their amusing, and very true story

Stephan 'A young woman is called *bidalav* A young man *gola*

So when I see a very nice *bidalav* I am going to ask her if she loves me And even if she does not answer affirmatively she will tell another woman she knows and likes well so that it may come to my knowledge She does not say it in front of me because she does not know me too well and is ashamed

Suppose I know I love her and she loves me then I will ask a friend Duvrai to come along I propose to take a certain road (which passes the house of the girl of course) '

Duvrai 'And passing by the girl may even come to talk with me "

Stéphan We first go to see her father because you do not know him yet, nor the mother And in this way '

Duvrai 'They will know me '

Stephan 'And they come to know me

I will go with Duvrai to see the mother She will say There you are, my children, but what did you come for, as I do not know either of you? The girl will understand and leave the compound Then I can talk with the mother Duvrai will talk with the girl herself and I will only briefly say hello to her On our way home he will tell me in detail all the things she said

Another day my friend "

Duvrai still me of course '

Stephan "will return to the mother and say to her Listen I have a friend and we both very much like your daughter over there She did not really tell us she loves us but we for sure love her That is why we came to ask for her

Now if he arranges it well which I expect my best friend to do for me we return to the mother with a small gift for her Then she goes to fetch her daughter and she poses the question Of those two who do you like?' The girl will answer But they just passed by because they were taking a walk, didn't they? even if she loves me passionately

The mother will then say to Duvrai Well listen I will ask her friend! and from that day on I will leave these negotiations to Duvrai and I will hide "

Duvrai I am the messenger, you see who does all the work!

Stephan I just give the orders 'go and see her mother with such and such present and Duvrai goes and if the mother accepts even if the father does not agree '

Duvrai If the mother wants it the case is closed '

Stephan The mother will say to her daughter It is those people who bother me [she means to say that her husband and his friends and relatives keep talking to her about the daughter's choice and that she gets fed up with them], so arrange the case with the children' themselves because I understand that your father does not like those people and prefers to give you away to somebody else If though you prefer them (she always uses the plural) pretend as if you are going to leave for the market and arrange the matters It s the voice of her mother that counts

This last phrase hardly needs comment The mother plainly goes against an eventual wish of the father in the interest of her daughter If we connect this fact with the knowledge that in former days such events easily caused war the women's voices behind what is considered as exclusively male affairs get in sight Let us continue with my informant's explanation of the marriage decision making

Duvrai In such a case it is no longer me who leaves for the marketplace

Stéphan 'but it will be my father or my grandfather even in the middle of the night

Duvrai 'or early in the morning'

Stephan By that time the girl is already in my father s house and they will tell the girl s father We have stolen something that belongs to you Have you heard about it? I am sure you know nothing about it but I stole something from your household *gas* perhaps for this reason in the future you will refuse all food to me

And if the father does not like it, he will say: 'Bring back my daughter I want...I want to know how she could have taken such a decision .without warning me'.

Duvrai: "He says it like that, but he does not really expect you to return the girl..."

Stéphan: "He goes home and asks the mother if she knew about these people that wanted his daughter..." Of course the mother will answer that she knew nothing about it, but that somebody already posed her the question if she married out her daughter and 'did she know those people...'[with those people she means the future in-laws]

Within two days my parents will return to the father of the girl If he has agreed, he will say: 'As you have not brought back my girl and as it is not me who has given her to you, bring back what you have stolen from me or pay me my 'tax'."

Duvrai: "Having uttered these words you know your father-in-law 'loves' you.. He says he wants you to pay 'tax', his wife has said she never knew you Then you know that they have put their words together again, that their mouths have become one again.. "

So the fact that the mother denies knowing the future-in-laws means that the case is settled. She has played her important role in the matter of decision making The bargaining of the bridewealth is not of any interest to her, nor to her daughter, the bride-to-be

In short, if a young man thinks he has succeeded, he will send his own father or an elderly paternal family member (such as father's brother) if the father is no longer alive, who will go with his best friend as a witness He does this in case disagreements or arguments arise over whether a woman would ever 'leave' this particular husband When they use the word 'leave' they have a divorce in view, but that term is never used. Either a woman leaves her husband, or he 'chases' her In both cases she goes of to the next husband and leaves the bargaining about an eventual return of the bridewealth to her male kin. As women often expressed, "we know nothing about it, let the men handle their affairs."

Negotiations involving the girl take the form of arguments and disagreements There are several symbolic formulas to propose to the father, but they all come down to a phrase like. We would like to start an argument with you today! We saw that the father of the girl will answer in the same contentious way As with all the phrases spoken by Stephan and Duvrai, everybody then knows that a proposal is at hand

With such an exchange of phrases, the stage is set for the relations that the parties involved will have with each other Stephan and Duvrai use the word

love to describe how their father in law behaves towards them Nevertheless the relation between the clan of the bride and the clan of the groom will remain one of distrust The reason is that the *kuyuk* of the future children, so the groom s in laws can easily curse the groom or his family This can have far reaching consequences as we discussed in Chapter III and IV In those cases the groom in his turn needs to seek advice within his own *kuyuk*

V 1 2 3 Find out if she has not fallen from the back of her mother

From the continuation of their story it becomes clear that if the two fathers agree the mother of the groom - even when he already has some wives - prepares the beer and sends it to the compound of the father of the bride who will drink it with other family members neighbors friends etc But before this (the preparation of the beer takes at least two days so they have ample time) both parties will have discussed with people around them - whether the other party is suitable Neither the groom's uncles on his father's side nor his uncles in his mother s patri clan or aunts have specific functions here Uncles from one s patri clan only play a role if the father is no longer alive (like in the case of Monique the unwed pregnant girl described in the first chapter)
Before the marriage is consummated the girl goes to the house of her future father in law This became clear from the reconstruction of Stephan and Duvrai She remains in the house for two or three months

Stephan Even if she is my third wife even if she has been married before she will get a hut in the *gay* household of my father If he would no longer be alive she would go to his brother or my own big brother and if I have nobody she could go to she would come to my own *gay* and be watched by my other wives Of course in that case it would not really last three months but much shorter but if it concerns a young man and a young woman then for sure it is three months

Duvrai 'This is to find out if she had not fallen from the back of her mother when young [meaning if her brains work allright]

Stephan 'She has to stay indoors all the time She should not show her face to her father in law nor to her mother in law not even to her future husband That is shameful you see

Duvrai 'Even if she has to pee she can't go out Then she has to 'steal the road when the in laws are somewhere else for a moment If she needs anything the kids serve as intermediaries In the meantime the house for the future couple will be constructed '

V 1 2 3 To chat with the wife , the new-wed couple

The father of the groom gives his son a piece of land and points out a hillside usually lower than his own habitation, where the son is to construct a new household, *gav* He will help his son building it Then the marriage is consummated

'They, her best friend or her mother-in-law, put a mixture of red powder with the oil of *calcedra*, *msak*, on the body of the woman Then the man comes in to 'chat' with his wife "

I ask "what do you mean, 'chat' with his wife, during the night they just 'chat'?

' ha ha ha no of course not it s just a way of saying to make love with his wife Anyhow the man comes in to 'chat with his wife and so he will get the red *msak* on his body too, so afterwards everybody can see the marriage has been consummated Sometimes the wife does not have a 'lawn' [meaning hair on the pubic area , or as was expressed he did not notice a 'lawn' with his wife] A woman like that is called *mundrekwè* That can bring bad luck to the man In that case he needs to put on a loincloth, *wouthlaf* Otherwise it may cause the man to start wandering around or even to drown in a river [138]

At a certain point during the night the girl s closest friend will throw a burning stick into the hut If the girl throws it back it means that the marriage has not yet been consummated If she accepts it, she will take some millet straws which she will light in the kitchen with the beam stick and she will make a porridge of weeds (*chien dents*)

Stephan But sometimes it happens that this night lasts I was scared to death the first time I was still quite young So I stayed with her in the hut for two weeks We chatted I mean really chatted Then people started to get worried and told me I had to lay down next to her When they told me that, the same night I came to know her

The period during which the girl is ashamed to speak to her mother-in-law ends with the following ritual

Duvrau She takes millet flour and a bowl with clean water

The millet flour she makes little balls and one of them she throws in the bowl of water Then she goes to look for her mother in-law She kneels in front of her She does not say anything She takes her right hand and she gives the bowl to the mother-in-law The mother-in-law accepts it

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[138] This reminded me of the features of twins though no further relation was expressed between a woman called mundrekwè and twins

with her left hand while saying, 'Thank you my girl.' Then she looks in the bowl and says 'But do you want to poison me?', because of the ball of millet flour, you see."

Stéphan: "...she of course does not really think the girl wants to poison the mother. She looks in the bowl and says, 'Oh, sorry mother, I did not realize'. And the mother-in-law says: 'Thank you, my daughter' and they greet each other and they embrace each other. And from that day on they can always freely chat with each other..."

Duvrat:"The mother-in-law, in turn, takes from the jar a very nice bowl and other nice tools that a woman works with. And the girl says: 'Oooh thank you' And they embrace each other again.

There is a similar ceremony which underlines the respect the girl needs to pay to her father-in-law. She cooks food for him and offers it to him while approaching him in a kneeling position, a typical posture for the Mafa to express respect.

Summarizing the events described above, which are in accordance with the general features of Mafa wedding negotiations, we see that the groom and a close friend first approach the girl and her mother. Only when they are sure of her love and the mother's agreement, does the bargaining start with the father. If the father does not concur but the mother does, they continue to confer. It is noteworthy that the negotiations with the father always take the form of an argument. If the groom and the father-in-law have agreed, the mother of the groom will prepare beer and the father of the bride will come and drink, together with his friends and neighbors.

Before the marriage is 'consummated' the girl stays for two or three months in the house of her future in-laws, and she has an avoidance relation with the groom's parents. Relations with both parents-in-law are followed by a ritual in which the bride expresses her respect to each of them.

Summarizing, the voice of the mother of the bride-to-be in wedding negotiations is crucial. She thereby considers the wishes of her daughter.In the following section we will look at the marriage system within the Islamic community and subsequently how decision-making takes place.

VI 1.3 'We can marry anybody we like'; Fulbe marriage 'exchanges'

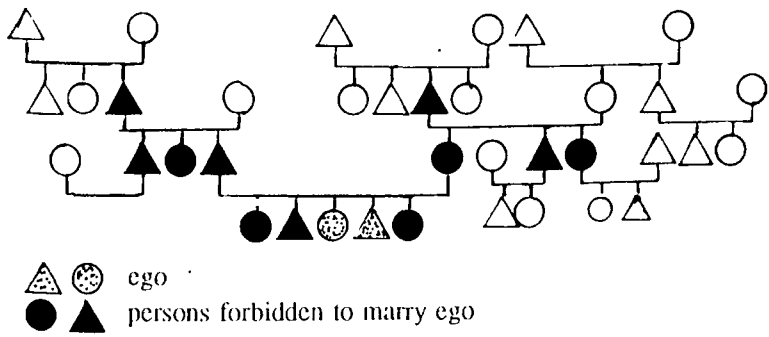
To understand the marriage system in Mokolo we have to mention briefly the endogamous 'exchange' system the Fulbe had. Does a woman's voice count as much in this system, so totally different from Mafa exogamous marriage system and secondly, has it been incorporated by the Islamized population of Mokolo?

The Nomadic Fulbe are divided into many different groups and clans, with divergent marriage customs. Generalization is therefore hazardous. In regard to Fulbe customs I will, unless mentioned otherwise, refer to the situation of the Islamized Fulbe in the plains near the Mandara Mountains, whose situation I know best.

V 1.3.1 Marriage in Fulbe society

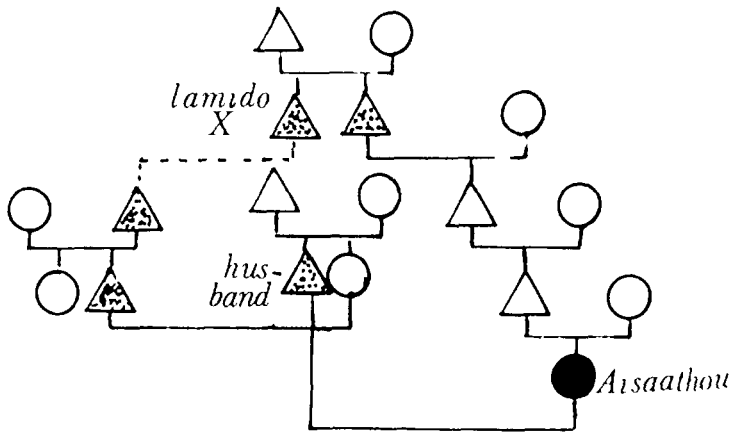
The sedentarized Fulbe are endogamous. This means they must marry within the clan. The preferred marriage is the cross-cousin marriage. Parallel-cousin marriage, that is marriage of a girl to her father's brother's son (Keesing 1966: 259), may occur, but also cross-cousins frequently marry. When asked in Mokolo, Fulbe people indicate that they may marry 'anybody' they like, comparing it with the exogamous system of the Mafa. Following this exclamation they give the exceptions as there are; the children of the same father or the same mother cannot marry; nor may one marry paternal uncle, *bappa* or *bappanyo* (father's brother), as he can always represent the father. Paternal aunts, *goggo* (father's sister), are also forbidden, and so are maternal uncles, *kaaw* or *kaawu* (mother's brother). Maternal aunts, *yaapenndo* (mother's sister) are also out of the question.

figure 5



Aisaathu, a Fulbe from the plains, is married to the son of the brother of her paternal grandfather

figure 6



---- -----adopted children (Islamized Mafa)

In nomadic Fulbe society, marriage in the same clan had the advantage that the wedding gift *sadaki* remained in the family In former days this consisted of a cow and her calf, which were eventually for the future children (Dupire 1960 63) In this way a clan could enlarge its herds In sedentarized Fulbe society, however, these arguments count less Some families still own large herds but other people have only a few cows

V 1 3 2 Marriage with slaves

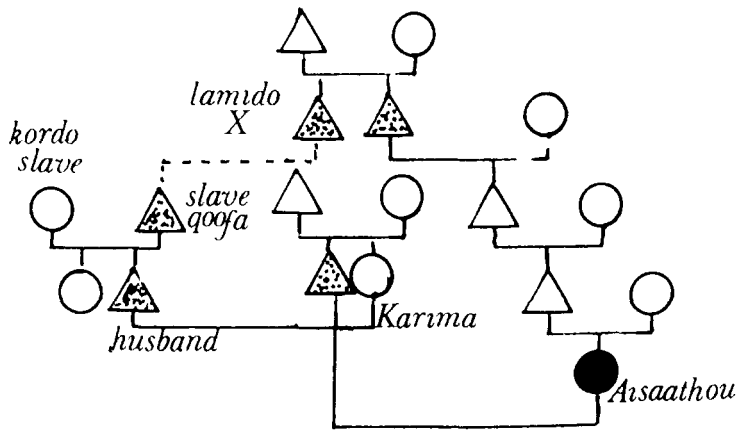
In the plains, many new converts were integrated into the Fulbe population, and so were many former slaves People nowadays still cite the rule that one cannot marry slaves, though adding "but slavery no longer exists" In Mokolo, that rule certainly had far-reaching implications, as many people had been born in slavery A Fulbe woman tells

"My grandfather had many slaves, but when we were young we grew up like brothers and sisters and regarded them as such When my grandfather died they were all emancipated, which was a common thing to do One simply said "*mi rimete*', 'I free you' and the person was a freed slave, a *dimaajo* (pl *rimaybe*)."

A master could marry his own slave girl, which they frequently did In that case she was automatically freed. When she had given birth, she was called *kordo daydo*, and her children became part of the clan of their father A man could only marry his own slaves and not those of someone else, because in that case the children belonged to the patri clan of the master of the slave We may remember the case of Maama Maimouna Her daughter married the son of the *lamido*, who possessed her. She had been freed by that time, but otherwise this marriage would have freed her daughter

The case of Aisaathu again demonstrates these implications Her husband's sister Karima, who is Fulbe, married the son of a slave of the *lamido* of X This slave was a *goofa*, on duty at the palace door However, the father was freed The son, in turn, when married to his Fulbe wife, also served as a goofa for the *lamido* of Y. These relations may be sketched as follows:

figure 7



Daada Maimouna tells us:

> "Even when slavery no longer existed because the whites had come, in times when the harvests failed because of the crickets, the Mafa father would bring his child to the Fulbe and leave it. In exchange he got a bowl of millet to fill his sacks with or to nibble on the road. The children were raised with the others. Girls when they had reached the age of marriage, were either married off by the father of the house to someone else, in which cases he provided the gifts needed, or, if a girl preferred to stay, he could marry her himself."

Marriages of Fulbe with non-Fulbe are not regarded as inferior.

Fulbe men marry non-Fulbe women. In Mokolo this means that the children, who belong to the patriclan of their father, are considered to be ethnically Fulbe. Fulbe women also marry non-Fulbe men, but then the men are obliged to be Islamic. The children belong to the patri clan of their non-Fulbe father. If we look at the results of my survey in Mokolo concerning marriage partners, we notice that many people have mixed marriages.

Table . MARRIAGES IN MOKOLO ALONG ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS IN percentages (Horizontal first wives, vertical husbands)

	MAFA				FULBE	OTHER ETHNIC GR.			
	Pagan	Christian	Islamized			Pagan	Islam	Christian	number of men interv.
			1st Gen	2nd Gen.					
Mafa Pagan	58	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Mafa Christ	8	92	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
Islamized Mafa 1s.gen.	0	6	55	17	16	0	6	0	18
Islamized Mafa 2d.gen.	0	0	23	35	12	0	30	0	17
Fulbe Isl.	0	0	8	16	62	0	15	0	13
Other Pagan	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	0	1
Other Islam	0	0	12	0	31	0	50	6	16
Other Christ.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	5
no husb.	20	25	10	25	5	0	15	0	20
numb.of women interv.	12	23	19	16	19	1	19	6	115

V 1.3.3 'You cannot follow all the rules': First generation

The question to be answered in this context is, whether the Mafa take over the endogamous system, coming from an exogamous system in which marriage within one's clan bore the sanction of death of the couple [139]. In my sample, the question whom converts married, was always asked (Appendix 1 Question 6.3.). Although everyone mentioned the Fulbe marriage system as guiding their behavior, they diverged from it in practice. An Islamized Mafa man tells us:

> "With the Muslims, one can marry one of his brothers [meaning one of the same clan]. They do not give away their girls to somebody from another race [meaning somebody from another clan]. They 'take' their own girls. For example, if I have a daughter and my brother has a son, then they will marry together. Did you not notice the light color of the skin of the Fulbe? Well that is because they are all of the same race [meaning clan], and they do not give away their daughter to somebody of another *gwali* or *kuyuk*.
>
> We Mafa, once we have Islamized, we could do the same, but you cannot follow just any custom when you convert."

Baaba Rahmani told me the same.

> "I would never allow my daughters to marry someone from the same clan. Someone from the clan of blacksmith is totally out of the question. Even though I Islamized a long time ago, these things remain forbidden."

This means that they must find out about the clan their future wife and they themselves come from. The brother of Baaba Rahmani said.

> "I have been raised with the Fulbe, but of course I still knew my *kuyuk* When I married my first wife, who was Mafa and Islamized, I did try to find out, of course, if she was from another *gwali* and *kuyuk*".

Indeed, I never came upon a marriage of Islamized Mafa within one's former patri clan, *gwali*, nor in the patri clan of one's mother, *kuyuk*.

V 1.3.4 To marry far out: the second generation

By the second generation after Islamization, people have, or say they have, forgotten the name of their clan. It seems that a regular pattern of matrimonial

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139 In former days such a couple was put on top of each other on an anthill. Then they were pierced with a stick and left to the elements without being buried. The ants would eat them, the vultures would eat their flesh, and the dogs would probably also get their share. This also happened to a mixed couple belonging to the blacksmith and the non blacksmith caste.

exchange has disappeared. Still, people tend to avoid marriage within one clan. Contrary to the Fulbe system, they tend in increasing numbers to marry people in distant places, such as *Kapsiki*, *Mandara* etc. This was hardly ever done in pre-Islamic Mafa society. This preference has the effect that daughters often move away to other areas in North Cameroon. Moreover sons get wives from other parts and bring them to live in Mokolo town.

> The daughter of Maama Maimouna [the daughter of the woman who had been taken as a slave at the beginning of this century], gave birth to one son and two daughters. The son lives in a large compound with his father, who in turn is the son of an Islamized Mafa woman and an Islamized Tourou father and has a Muslim wife of Kapsiki origin. The son married a Mandara woman [the Mandara Islamized from the 17th century onward] and an Islamized Mafa woman.[140] The eldest daughter married a Mafa man who had Islamized at a young age. The second daughter married a Fulbe man.

These inter-ethnic relations are depicted in the table above. 58% of Islamized Mafa men married women from other ethnic groups, and 28% of the Islamized Mafa women, who are first wives, married men from other ethnic groups. For second and third wives this percentage is considerably larger, 86% and 75%.

V 1.4 'It is all right if I love your daughter?' decision making in the Muslim community.

In nomadic society, a girl was often promised to her cousin at a very young age. There were thus two types of marriage. The marriage arranged by the family was called *koowal*, and the other type was designated *teegal*.[141] Dupire (1960) calls the first one exclusively 'sociocentric' and the second one profoundly 'egocentric'. The former totally disregards the personality of the individuals in question. The second one ridicules all principles of social reciprocity as no rules nor structures are followed. The women just marry the person they like (Dupire 1960: 62). In the *koowal* variant the girl was already promised at a very young

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[140] During my last visit to Mokolo (1992), we went to the funeral of the Pagan grandfather of this second wife. In these cases also the Mandara wives come along to offer their sympathy to the family of the deceased.

[141] Dupire's manner of writing these words is *kobgal* (1960) or *koobgal koogal* (1970) and respectively *tegal*. This is certainly due to regional differences. I follow the spelling of '*An English Fulfulde dictionary*' by Kazushisa Iguchi (Tokyo 1986). Some expressions used in Mokolo cannot be found in this dictionary or anywhere else. In those cases I just invented my own way of spelling.

age Women thus married could be socially more valued and could enjoy the confidence of the head of the family, but among her co-wives her prestige and influence was almost zero (Dupire 1960 69) In nomadic society according to Dupire women attach more value to having been chosen by their husbands even if they are less socially valued Divorce is frequent in the first type of marriage Women just abandon their husbands in which case they have no right to take their dowry, *sadaki*, along Dupire mentions that in one faction of a clan 46 women of all ages 25% had left their first husband and only 10% were rejected in which case they are allowed to take their dowry *sadaki*, along (Dupire 1960 70)

This pattern continued in sedentarized Fulbe society, where arranged marriages are still more valued The word *koowal*, however, is no longer used in reference to marriage When the negotiations start about a marriage in which a girl has been promised to her partner (nowadays this usually happens at a much later age of the girl than formerly), this type is always referred to as *teegal* Girls may be perhaps less often promised to a husband their father chooses, yet this still happens frequently By mediation of a maternal aunt (mo-si) most girls can refuse if they consider the partner unsuitable Divorces in Fulbe and in Mokolo s Islamic society are still frequent As Daada Maimouna said

> 'Well if you do not love your first husband you just give him a child and then off you go "

V 1 4 1 Request of the groom

The request by the groom for the hand of a girl is called *yamde* (derived from the verb *yamugo*, to ask in Maroua also called *muuya*) Let us listen to Aisaathu s story

> 'My parents lived in D My husband had gone to my father to ask him if he could marry my eldest sister *adda-am* My father told him I cannot give you my eldest daughter as I have already promised her to someone else, and my other daughter is still too young He kept coming back though, always bringing presents for my father and me When these presents arrived in the village I kept saying *mi yidaa kuuje, mi yidaa kuuje makko mi yidaa mo* , 'I do not want the things I do not want his things and I do not love him I had seen him twice when I was a little girl of about the age of six My elder sister knew him though and she told me he was a suitable marriage partner I did not even want to listen to her words And the people in the village all said to me Now look what nice presents he brings you I would like to have such a husband

Yet I did not want it but I could no longer object to my father s wishes so I finally had to accept I was 13 at that time he was nearly 30 He is a good husband We get along fine '

In Mokolo most girls choose their own partners nowadays This means that they mostly go by the looks of somebody they have heard others talking about Perhaps they have seen the man a couple of times and they think they like him But the two should never be seen together Whenever the girl meets the man she likes by chance she should cast down her eyes and quickly run away Whether she actually does so depends on the individual character of the girl So in reality 'chosing' mostly means to be able to refuse or accept a partner The groom takes the initiative to ask for his future wife s hand He will send an intimate friend with kola nuts to the house of the father of the girl As Daada Maimouna said

These are to open the doors of the house

Sometimes money is given as well an amount of cfa 5 000 (HH 35) was mentioned

'The five thousand is to ask the father of the girl if it is all right to love his daughter

The money can be used to buy a piece of cloth soap or perfume for the girl This part of the proposal is called *mornego hinge* the gift included is indicated as *tanorde*

If a girl refuses the gifts are returned to the man who asked her hand in marriage If she accepts however the message will be given to the intermediary who will then go to the future groom He will ask him Do you really love the girl? Are you sure you want to marry her?' If the future groom insists he does the marriage, *teegal*, will be arranged and the future wedding announced People in town, in the neigborhood and relatives will be told and get a small present, which consists of some sweets or kola nuts

V 1 4 2 Marriage settlement

At the *teegal* several persons need to be present The paternal uncle *bappa* (brother of her father) of the bride her eldest brother *hamma* friends of her father, the brother of the future groom, and the brother of the groom's father They will all go to the house of either the father of the bride or to the house of the marabout to announce the wedding Then the ceremony called *habbode teegal* takes place (derived from the verb *habbugo* attacher, of the wedding, *teegal*) All the men pray together in front of the compound and the women inside the

compound Neither the bride nor the groom is present for this ceremony My informants explained

> 'When the father of the bride has publicly declared I have given my daughter to this or that person, everybody who ever presented their gifts *tanorde* to the father in order to obtain this girl can give up any hope Their gifts will be returned With this ceremony the wedding is final It can only be undone by the husband who can say to his wife *mi seeri ma mi seeri ma, mi hamun ma* I let you free I let you free, you are free to go [142] Then she can marry someone else But even if she is very angry has left her husband and returned to her father nobody will ask for her hand unless they are sure her former husband has spoken these words

In practice a woman and her husband can agree to leave each other as in the case of Jamila Then the man pronounces these words and the woman can go Once the wedding ceremony *teegal* has taken place out of respect neither the bride nor the groom will pronounce each other's name ever again This was already the case in nomadic society It is the case in Fulbe sedentarized society and the custom has been taken over by the Islamic community in Mokolo

These events are followed by several days of festivities called *bannga!* during which the marriage prestations are exchanged We will describe these festivities in a subsequent section

Having compared the two marriage systems we can conclude that the Mafa were clan exogamous and the Fulbe clan endogamous The preference for the cross cousin system is not taken over by the Islamized community in Mokolo In Mafa society the bridetakers owe respect to the bridegivers This relation changes in an avoidance relation after Islamization The decision of marriage partner within Mafa society is mainly taken by the mother of the bride in the Islamic community it is the father of the bride who has the final say

V 2 Marriage prestations and payments

To understand women s new situation in the Islamic community it is now necessary to look at the pre Islamic situation which includes the marriage payments in Mafa society as well as in nomadic Fulbe society It became soon obvious that concerning these payments the influence of the system of marriage prestations of the nomadic Fulbe definitely left its traces This tends to take the

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142 Concerning these matters my mostly female informants made a clear distinction between the pronouncement of the phrase *mi seeri ma* I set you free and the phrase *mi fartu ma* I chase you away

form of a dowry, which must be accumulated by the women and seems to be related to women's traditional possession of cattle. However, we will first pay attention to the bridewealth in Mafa society, which the women spoke of as "Let the man handle their male affairs."

V 2.1 'To offer things for women', Mafa marriage prestations

The bridewealth is called *skwaay* (literally 'things') or *N pi skwa a ngwaz* (literally 'to offer things for women'). Boisseau and Soula interpret the full and correct delivery of marriage prestations as a positive sign that a girl is treasured by her own family as well as by her future spouse (Boisseau and Soula 1974: 362). I agree with this attitude towards the bridewealth.
If it is offered to the father of the girl, and if she really wants to marry the man in question, she simply tells her father: "You can take what he offers you." It is interesting that the bridewealth of the first daughter is not given to her father but to her paternal grandfather (father's father).

V 2.1.1 'Bring over three goats': marriage payment

Let us once more return to Stéphan and Duvrai.
Stephan: 'He [the future father-in-law] will ask you for an amount of money.
> If you have brought it, he will say it isn't much. But he will always say that even if you have put in more and more. He himself will send somebody to you with the message: If that guy really loves me as he pretends he does, well, he better bring over three goats then.
> And if you are satisfied with the father, you prepare the beer, and he will call for his neighbors, and tell them: Listen, somebody sent me this beer, so you would know he wants to marry my girl. Even though I do not really like it, I must drink it now, as it is already in my compound, so let's just drink.

The bridewealth consists of goats, salt, natron, tobacco, iron objects (implements to work the land, like a hoe, knife, or hatchet, or - in former days - a spear for warfare), and perhaps some millet. The number of goats for a bridewealth, varying from two to five, has not really increased since 1900. Nowadays, a piece of cloth for the bride as well as her mother is added, and money is also involved, ranging from Cfa 6,000 cfa to Cfa 50 000 (= Hfl 42,-- = Hfl 350,-). In the latter case, no goats were involved.

V 2 1 2 'See my son-in law has arrived bride service

Besides these payments the son-in-law owes his father in law working days

Duvrai "Now afterwards if you have actually married the girl and it is three or four months later and the rainy season has arrived Stephan will ask me and some of my friends and he will ask some more friends and their friends, and we will be off to the fields of his father-in-law If I have enough money I may also bring wine along for the people I have invited to work Now you divide the parcel and you decide among your friends for example first we work the size of well let's say your garden in one go Then you drink a bit and you may do another parcel of the same size Then the food arrives you eat you drink you finish still another parcel

Stephan 'Until the job is done!

Duvrai And the father-in-law will be proud and say See my son-in-law did arrive the work has been done!"

Now when the harvest is done and has been taken in there will be harvest feasts My wife so his daughter will leave early in the morning to go to her father She will get food in his household and then will leave with her brothers to go to the neighbors first one, who will give her some millet, then another one who may give her some beans another one dried vegetables and so on And she will return home loaded with staples

Stephan Then the father-in law will come to my house to drink the beer I will have to make sure that he gets what he wants but I do not stay in the house Me myself I go off with my group of friends or even with my parents and the musical instruments to visit my mother-in-law '

We mentioned that the marriage payments according to the literature did not change much One element has increased though the number of working days the son-in-law owes his father in law He can work alone or with a group of friends as described above This important part of the bridewealth includes work in the fields as well as repairing of roofs of the father in-law s houses Whereas this obligation ranged from four to twenty days in 1900 in 1960 it varied from 7 to 110 days according to Boisseau and Soula (1974 361 365) I myself never heard such a great number of days mentioned but most people stated that it could vary from ten to thirty, that it remained flexible and that a man could always add to the days he worked for his father-in law

The fact that a daughter receives gifts from the compound of her father as well as his neighbors and friends during the harvest rituals may be considered as an exceptional addition in an ordinary system of marriage payments It for sure

emphasizes the relation a woman upholds with her father s compound and his immediate surroundings

V 2 1 3 Father s and mother s gift to the husband and bride to be

In general the father pays the bridewealth If he has daughters who have recently married the bridewealth is not much of a problem If he has more sons he has to marry off, the young men will have to earn at least part of the bridewealth themselves [143] For this reason many of them go to work in town, and some change religion at that point, thus prior to marriage
The father will help to build the new compound, *gay* along with many other friends and relatives In addition the son will receive two female goats from his father a small bull (if he can afford it) a hoe and millet seed to cultivate and eat till the next harvest The mother in turn gives him chickens which he can sell to buy presents for his future mother-in law and his fiancee When a girl gets married her mother will give her the seeds of women s crops ingredients to make sauces until the next harvest and jars and pottery for the kitchen As Martin puts it The parents furnish their children with the necessary conditions to start an autonomous household productively as well as reproductively (Martin 1970 148 my translation)

V 2 1 4 When a woman leaves her husband

The most common marriage practice is to exchange a woman for the bridewealth If she leaves so divorces her husband which occurs quite often and nearly always on the initiative of the woman her father has to return the bridewealth to the husband However a woman never returns to the house of her father, if she leaves her husband she usually goes to her next husband, who will have to give bridewealth through her father to her former husband In these negotiations, her brother(s) may play an active part as we learned from the story of Maama Laila Martin mentions another type of preferred marriage but I have not seen any examples of it It concerns what he calls direct exchange' *mahombede* The girl is exchanged for the sister of her future husband and the latter will be the wife of her brother (Martin 1970 150) Martin remarks that this type of marriage was disappearing When I discussed it with my informants my female assistant got quite annoyed when I stated this rule which she did not know herself 'If you

[143] I do not know if there exists a system of fundraising within the patriclan to be able to amass the bridewealth but given the individualistic character of the Mafa this seems very unlikely

men," she angrily said to the other informants, 'think you can exchange us as if we were goats, you are completely wrong " Here again women s space is clearly underlined

If a woman leaves her husband can always reclaim the bridewealth An elderly man explained

> 'Even if she has already had five children I will tell you even if she is already old only when a new house is constructed and when she comes to live with her youngest son her husband cannot reclaim anything anymore "

If a first daughter leaves her husband the bridewealth needs not be returned by her grandfather, who had received it, but by her father On my asking if brideswealth augments when it concerns a virgin, people started laughing The elderly man did not answer directly but only said

> Now if we take goats there is a young one and an old one You cannot mistake one for the other can you? And which one is preferred? Of course the younger one so the younger one also has more value Do you not prefer a young man above his father?
>
> If the young woman leaves, for example after five days of marriage, for another husband the latter will have to return the same bridewealth to the former husband If she goes back to her father he is the one who will have to give back the bridewealth So if there is no new husband or if the new husband does not want to give the same amount of goods he will try to persuade her to go back to the first husband '

I concluded that it is not virginity that counts Rather the bridewealth depends on the age of the bride Indeed informants later stated that the Mafa do not require the girl to be a virgin though a girl should never become pregnant when she still lives under the roof of her father If a girl starts playing around , they will advise her to look for a husband

V 2.2 The status of the daughter and the respect of the in-laws

In the previous chapter it became clear that in many rituals the daughter remains important in her father's life We may call to mind the twin ritual Whether the child is a boy or a girl the father needs to continue this ritual and his daughter needs to be present even when she is married

During the bull ritual, the *maray*, the girl will come to celebrate She dances during the festivities with a stone in her hand, symbolizing the meat she will get as her share of her father s bull Every year at the harvest rituals the father goes over to his son-in-law to drink the beer his daughter has prepared It is a continuation of an earlier event people drank beer when they agreed upon the

bridewealth A Mafa man with many children expressed the relation with daughters as follows

> Even in former days a father already liked to get daughters He can always count on them Is it not your daughter who visits you when you would be ill? Is it not your daughter who will fetch you water when you are ill? Is it not your daughter who will make you food when you are ill? It is the daughter who helps you it is the daughter on whom you can always count Boys they come and go whenever they like They are just everywhere When you need them you cannot find them and when it is dinner time they turn up again But what do they finally do for their fathers? Whenever my wives need to give birth I always hope it will be a girl But the women themselves on the contrary hope they will get boys because they will go and live with them afterwards [144]

But she is not only important to her father The eldest daughter is also important to the grandfather as he gets her bridewealth This again underlines her general attachment to her own patri clan It is her importance that leads to a special relation with the in laws As the bridetaker they owe respect to the bridegivers Therefore they the in-laws need to be present for all sorts of occasions This is shown in the following example

> Early in the morning Vawar came to my door to tell me that his father was very ill Did I want to take him to hospital? His father was waiting in the mountains with two of his wives who supported him Earlier that morning the wives had already had a goat sacrificed and the meat was divided among the neighbors They knew who had caused the illness but could not accuse someone aloud
>
> I took him in the car One of his wives came along The other one had the task to go a long way and fetch the in-laws which meant the husbands of his daughters If they would not come the wives would be taken back In this case of severe illness they would be obliged to come and offer their sympathy
>
> In the hospital we had to wait a long time for the doctor Hours later when the father had finally had his check up and we came out of the doctor s office the in laws were waiting in line The doctor had decided he should be hospitalized So in a long procession we traversed the terrain of the hospital The room was crowded with all the in laws they all watched while he was put to bed

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[144] These last phrases were also quoted in the first chapter

During a man's funeral the daughter must be present and at his side The in-laws need to be present as well Nevertheless there is a deep mistrust of the members of a man's wives' *kuvuk*, his wives' mother's patriclan, but also for the *kuvuk* in general As an old lady puts it

> "The *kuvuk* of one's father and one's own *kuvuk* well you always need to be aware of them and fear them If you do not fear them enough, they are going to curse you, or the whole *gwali*, because of your disrespect It may be just a small thing For example, if you do not understand a small thing, they only say 'hai'...and you are already cursed Very simply 'hai' and you may lose your senses for the rest of your life
> And if they have already cursed you, the only thing you can do is go to the diviner and ask him what to do He will mostly tell you to go and make an offering at the place of the *kuvuk* under concern "

This respect is not only paid to the family of the wife. Men also owe it to the family of their mother

> "If something is wrong, you pay something, for example a bit of tobacco for the pipe You go off to the father of your mother and you offer it to him If you do not take care of these relatives, they curse you As a result you most probably will not have any more children The men as well as the women from your *kuvuk* can curse you Your wife cannot really curse your clan, *gwali*, but she can do bad things to her husband A man can never curse the *kuvuk* or the *gwali* of his wife "

It is in view of the fear that exists for the *kuvuk* in general, that we conclude that the group of the bridetaker owes respect to the bridegiver, as is often the case in polygynous society, where a lack of women can easily occur [145] The alliance between the two clans is important, regarding the working days the son-in-law owes his father-in-law The son-in-law remains in continual debt to the family of the bride, which he pays off by his labor and his assistance during special events

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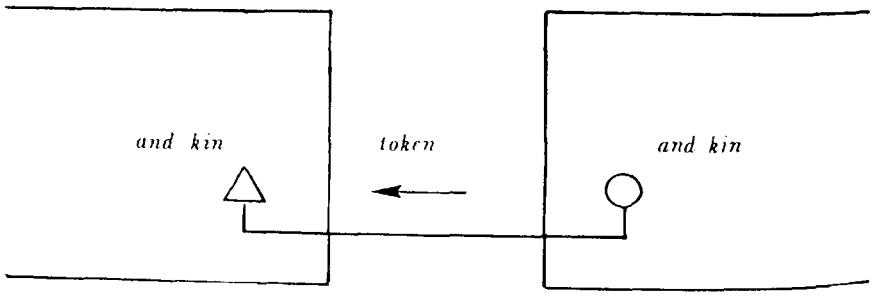
[145] This is clearly shown in Richard s Price study on Saramaka emigration and marriage patterns and the social changes the emigration caused (Price 1970) He states The extreme asymmetry of the man to affine relationship 100 years ago gradually e ised as the proportion of marriageable women increased Many of the duties which a *bee* had formerly imposed on its sons in law such as work service were later honored largely symbolically or even disappeared completely (Price 1970 178) When because of emigration of men there are more wives available this has consequences for her status A more subtle effect of the changing sex ratio seems to h ive been s shift tow ard gre ter asymmetry in the conjugal relationship itself I must attentively follow Mafa society in the future to observe the important role of the daughter in view of the increasing monogamous marriages propagated by the Christian churches With many thanks to H U I Thoden van Velzen who brought these aspects under my attention

In the beginning the bride has an avoidance relation with her father-in-law and mother-in-law, but these relations are restored by a small ritual.
The father maintains good relations with his daughter and she with him and her patri clan in general. Whenever she has trouble with the family of her husband, she should be able to count on her father and her brothers to help her or to take her away. Girls with no father are pitied, as they get less protection. This is illustrated by the story of Godak's wife, who nearly committed suicide when she was badly treated by her husband and had no father to return to.
We concluded that the patri clan remains important for a woman. The patri clan on the female side, the *kuyuk* of the future children, so the clans of the in-laws always need to be respected and feared.
Concludingly, though the bridewealth sytem emphasizes women's important role in the patrilineage she has no active role in the bridewealth system. Let us turn to the system of marriage prestations and payments in the Islamic community.

V 2.3 Marriage prestations in Fulbe society

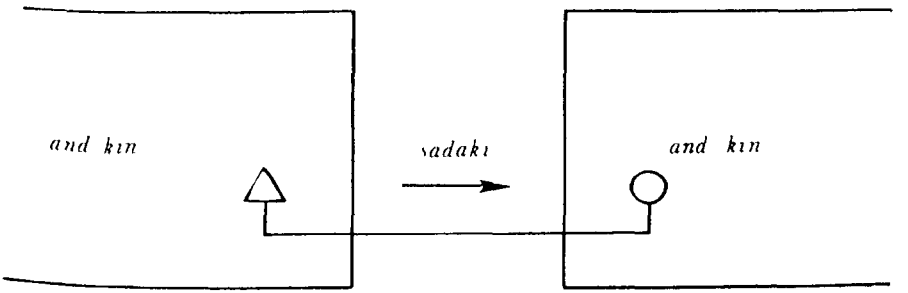
We again pass by the pre-Islamic society. Referring to the nomadic Fulbe of northern Nigeria, St. Croix remarks that when a woman marries, she takes along the cattle given to her by her father, perhaps 10 or 20 animals. These will eventually belong to her children. The elder and younger brother of the wife, that is the future child's uncles on the mother's side, *kawirabe*, each present the child with a cow if they have cattle (St. Croix 1945: 42). Dupire (1970), being more precise, distinguishes among the Woodaabe (one of the Fulbe groups living in Niger) four categories of gifts for the first marriage, *koowal*. The first category is provided by the group of the future bride. It consists of slaughtered animals that will be consumed by the two families. We can consider this present as a 'token' (Goody and Tambiah 1973: 16).

Figure 8



The second category is cattle or something of equivalence attached to the wife and 'her house' The day on which the last bull given by the group of the bride has been eaten by the two families, representatives of the groom offer cattle to the representatives of the bride. These animals proceed fromthe groom's stock and will serve the future couple. The wife will have their usufruct. How this category should be classified is hard to say. It is not bridewealth, as it serves the bride and not her kin. But it will be ultimately for their future children We cannot call it indirect dowry, as it is not given to her father So I will indicate it by the Fulbe term, *sadaki* [146].

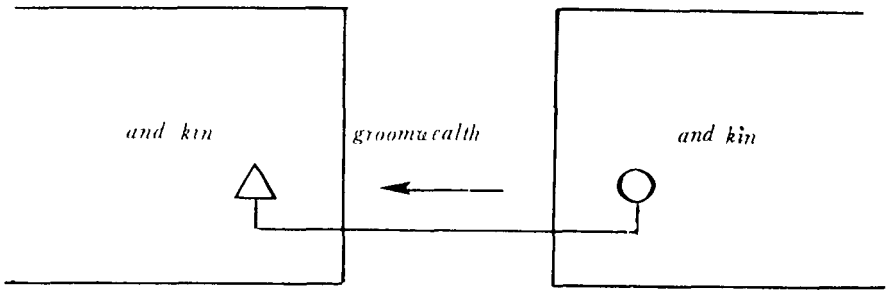
Figure 9



The third category includes presents from the family of the bride to the family of the groom We will call this groomwealth

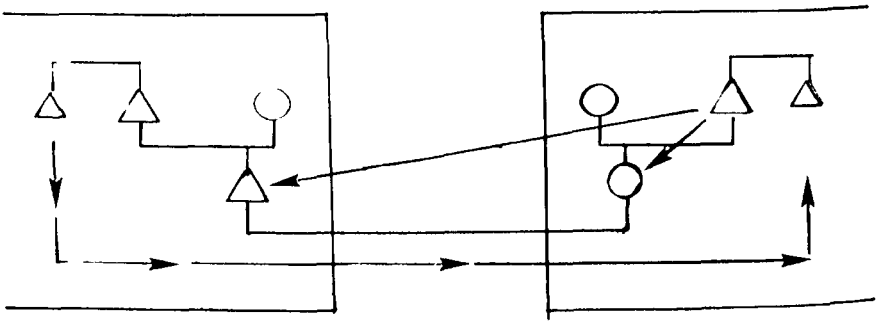
[146] Not to be confounded with the islamic term sadaq The latter is a gift exclusively for the bride and is no part of any exchange gift system between the families

Figure 10



The fourth category is provided by the virilocal group In nomadic society this refers to those who live in the same camp and transit their herds together This concerns presents from the family of the groom to the family of the bride They serve the domestic needs of the couple We can call this bridewealth as it consists of marriage prestations made by the groom or his kin to the bride (Goody and Tambiah 1973 2) Yet these gifts will not be consumed by the bride's kin as they serve the interests of the newly wed couple It is debatable whether the term indirect dowry is appropriate for these marriage payments

Figure 11



The young bride also gets a dowry from her own family if she definitely returns to her husband's house after the birth of her first child, an event for which she went back to stay with her parents [147]. The dowry includes domestic goods, implements to process the milk, and some presents for her in-laws (Dupire 1970: 25 ff.).

Obviously we are dealing with a complicated system. Goody (1973) argued that bridewealth is primarily significant in cattle-keeping societies of the savannas and of less importance in Muslim areas. However, among the nomadic Fulbe, pre-eminently a cattle-keeping society, we find all sorts of gift exchanges but not the bridewealth; there is no money given by the father of the groom to the father of the bride that they can spend to get wives. The money that is given is used to provide goods for the bride's new home.

V 2.3.1 After Islamization

Dupire remarks that the first two categories of exchange diminish after Islamization. For sedentarized Fulbe, the exchange of cattle declined as well. In an urban environment, most Fulbe still own cattle. But herdsmen, *gawaabe*, take care of it, and the animals are much less part of daily existence. Sedentary Islamic Fulbe women do not necessarily sell milk, like the nomads did. [148] Many of them still own cows, though, which were given to them at marriage. We mentioned that some of the cattle given to the new household had to be invested in the future of their children. This custom persisted when the Fulbe sedentarized. Women invest their cattle, their capital, in the dowry of their daughters and in the dowries of the daughters of their relatives and female friends. Here again an important feature emerges concerning women's role in relation to the marriage payment system in these societies.

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147 Among the Fulbe, it is customary for the wife to return to the house of her mother when she is 7 months pregnant. She will have her child within her father's compound. About seven months afterwards, she will return to her husband's group when her husband comes to fetch her. In Nomadic society, the first child was sometimes raised exclusively by the grandparents. In that case, the wife sometimes remained in her mother's compound for a much longer period. The custom to have the first child in the mother's home is still common for the Fulbe population in Mokolo. Islamized Mafa women have not adopted this practice, though. In many cases, their parents are non-islamic, so they cannot live with them for a longer period and at the same time follow the muslim rules.

148 It very much depends on the region. Those Fulbe women I knew in the plains, in villages such as Salak or Meskime, did not sell milk, while the compounds I have in view did have large herds. Their cattle returned in the village and the compound nearly every night. Yet the women of the Fulbe villages near Mokolo do come to the market during the rainy seasons to sell milk.

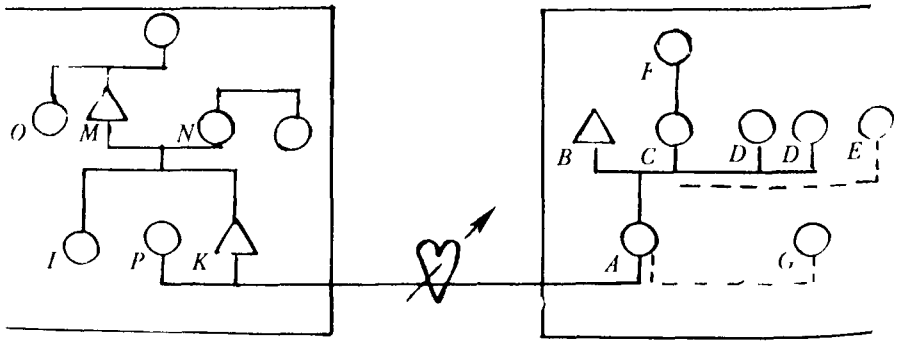
Not all sedentarized Fulbe could keep their cattle. Lack of grazing land forced many groups into agriculture. Others intermarried and mixed with Islamized non-Fulbe people who did not keep cattle. Yet the complicated system of gift-exchange and women's important contribution to it persisted

V 2.4 Marriage prestations in Mokolo

Nowadays in Mokolo, no cattle are involved in marriage gift exchange But as I noticed during the many weddings I witnessed, there is still a large flow of goods - and money - from the kin of the bride and from the groom. Below, we give a diagram and a description of the flow of material wealth that secures a girl's first marriage, as I witnessed in Mokolo. The quantity depends on the wealth of the two families, but the ingredients are the same for Fulbe and Islamized Mafa.

V 2.4.1 A. and K are getting married

Figure 12



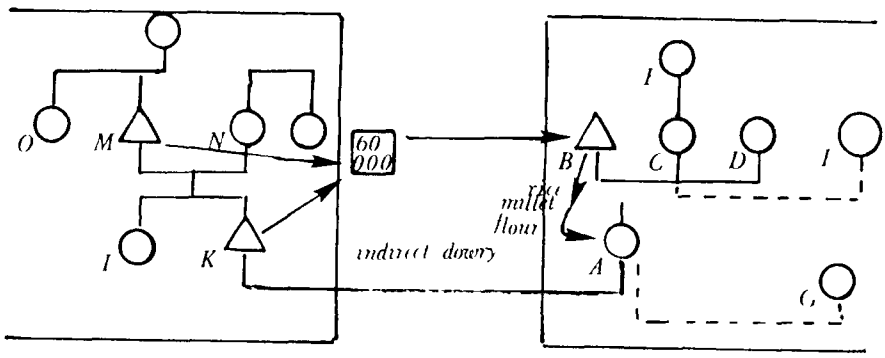
A is the **bride**
B is the father of the bride
C is the mother of the bride and the sisters of the mother of the bride
D are the co wives of the mother of the bride
E are the women friends of the mother of the bride
F is the bride's mother's mother
G are the girlfriends of the bride

K is the **groom**
L are the sisters of the groom
M is the father of the groom
N is the mother of the groom and the sisters of the mother of the groom
O are the sisters of the father of the groom
P is the co-wife of the bride to be

V 2 4 2 Within the groom s family

K and M the groom and his father will give money to B the father of the bride In this case it amounts to Cfa 60 000 (Hfl 420) The father of the bride does not keep the money to invest in brides for his sons as was previously the case in Mafa society Instead B the father of the bride purchased some things for his daughter (a bed a cupboard etc , a sack of millet and a sack of rice) The total value of these goods is more than the amount given to him by the groom's father So this gift can partly be considered as an indirect dowry, but part of it has the features of a dowry The money is used to invest in the welfare of the daughter herself I this actually happens will be in plain sight for the whole community if the goods will be transported to the compound of the groom

Figure 13



see also design 16

K (the groom) L (his sisters), N (his mother and her sisters), and O (the sisters of the father of the groom) will buy pieces of cloth, soap, underwear, shoes body oil etc The division in this case was as follows K bought eight pieces of cloth, varying in price from Cfa 30,000 (Hfl 210,-) to Cfa 6 000 (Hfl 42,-), (which gives a total amount of ± Hfl 1 000,)

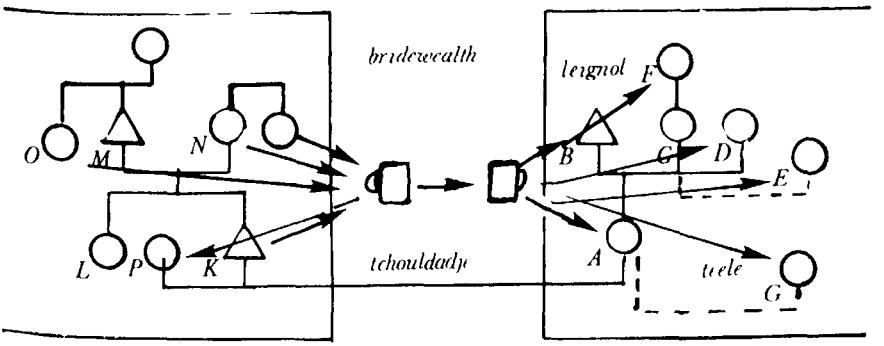
L, N and O (the female kin of the groom), bought 22 pieces of cloth, with the same range in price, and other gifts, like shoes, perfume, soap, jewelry etc I can only guess the total amount, but it could be as much as Hfl 3 500,--

Everything is laid out in the compound of M , the father of the groom The gifts are displayed separately, so that every visitor can see the contribution each individual has made

Afterwards everything is put together and divided over several suit-cases There is a suitcase for A the bride We may label its contents as *sadaki* the gift that in former Fulbe society was for the future children of the couple As the clothes will be worn out by the time her children are

grown, it seems more appropriate to consider it as *sadaq*, the gift that exclusively serves the wife, as the Qur'an prescribes. In Mokolo this gift is called *tchouldadjé*. However, there are also suitcases for C. (the mother of the bride; sometimes also for her sisters), a suitcase for F. (the mother of the mother of the bride), and suitcases for D. (the co-wives) In Mokolo these gifts are called *leignol*. Further, there are also presents, called *teele* for those people who assisted during the wedding ceremony. [149] In wealthy families there is also a suitcase for B. (the father of the bride) containing pieces of men's cloth, kola nuts, as well as perfume and soap Labelling these gifts with anthropological terms seems quite difficult We can consider many of these gifts as bridewealth, as they go to the bride's kin.

Figure 14



Leignol and Tchouldadjé

[149] No matter how small, everyone who participated needs to get something, even the local anthropologist Once they came to bring me a shawl another time 50 francs, sometimes kola nuts, but always something

The equal division of the items over the different suitcases takes a great deal of time and democratic negotiation among the female members of the family O, a sister of the father, has the final say in the matter The decisive role is not necessarily played by a sister of the father, but it is always an elderly female with much experience in such affairs

When the women have finished the job, K (the groom) and M (his father) come to give their approval of the equal division They then thank the women for their efforts in dividing the material
The next day, O (a sister of the father of the groom) and N (sisters of the mother of the groom) will carry the suitcases to the compound of B There C (the mother of the bride and her sisters), E (the women friends of the mother of the bride), and F (the bride's mother's mother) will carefully check the contents If the distribution is not satisfactory, a new round of bargaining will begin

V 2 4 3 Within the bride's family

Meanwhile, much activity has been going on in the compound of B (the father of the bride) On the first day of the wedding ceremony, *banngal*, millet is ground by all female members of the family, neighbors, female friends and other participants (like the local anthropologist) This is the millet that was bought by B (father of the bride) with money he received from M (father of the groom) It will eventually be brought over, together with a sack of rice, to the compound, where the bride will live with her husband [150] It is meant for the bride, so that she will not have to do these heavy tasks herself during her first year of marriage
Elderly women separate the grain from the chaff The ground millet is then put in large bags The second day, sweets, *nakante*, and biscuits, *bedoeson lafaai* are made with honey, sugar, flour etc These are put in large trays, and will also be taken to the future compound of the new bride, so that she will have things to offer to the guests who will come to

[150] The price of a sack of millet varies depending on the season from about Cfa 5 000 Cfa 8 000 (Hfl 35 Hfl 56) A sack of rice may easily come up to Cfa 8 000 Cfa 10 000 (Hfl 56 Hfl 80)

visit after the wedding [151] The ingredients are also paid for by B the father again with money from M (the groom s father)

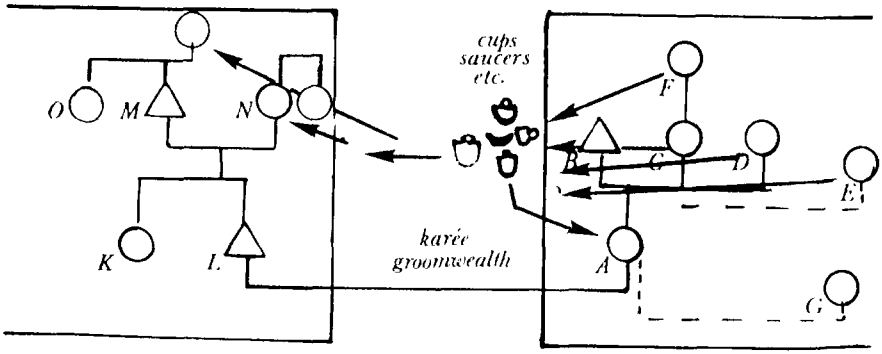
The bride does not take part in any of these activities She sits in one of the huts of the compound She hides there feeling embarrassed *semteende* about the events to come, the intimate encounter with her future husband [*Semteende* is the concept with which in the first chapter we indicated the shame one has toward one s husband and in regard to intimate affairs] She is surrounded by E her female friends and her hands and feet have been put in the henna porridge with nice decorations Because of this porridge she cannot even move On several occasions I saw a bride to be crying When this is noticed the radio which may be a gift from her future husband will be turned up very loud and her unmarried female friends dance and clap their hands Children from the whole neighborhood gather at her door and dance too if space allows it can get quite crowded on such occasions

Outside the married women have gathered water pitchers calabashes and their covers *beddou* s to close them when they are filled with milk goods that should never be absent with the marriage gifts Further there are more modern objects like casseroles saucepans plates cups drinking cups bowls spoons forks knives buckets everything a bride could possibly need in her future home has been collected in the compound of B (the father of the bride) The organization is in the hands of C (the mother of the bride and her sister) They are assisted by D (her co-wives) and E (the female friends of the mother) by G (the female friends of the bride herself), and F (the mother of the mother of the bride and her sisters) If a mother had been separated from the father of the bride these events take place in the new compound of C the mother of the bride while the bride remains in the compound of B her father
After the houseware has been displayed it is distributed Part of it is for A the bride Yet the amount of goods included is far too great She could never use it all in her entire life time the enormous casseroles will just be stored in her new room in her future husband s house The older a woman gets, the less she retains of these things She will give them away at the weddings she participates in not only those of her own children but also those of daughters of relatives or female friends Eventually the

[151] During one wedding I have seen about five trays the size (content) of at least two buckets loaded with biscuits and sweets

stock will not be sufficient though. This is a reason why women need to accumulate capital. These issues will be dealt with in the last chapter.
So part of these gifts that go to the bride will eventually end up in other households. They can be considered as a mixture of the Fulbe *sadaki* - - gifts that go to the bride but are intended for future children - - and the Islamic *sadaq*. In this context we may refer to Uthman dan Fodio's writings we quoted in chapter II, concerning a woman's dowry that should be agreed upon by the prospective husband and the woman's guardian, and should be given to her.
Some of the marriage goods go to L., the mother of the groom, and to O., the mother of the father of the groom. The groom, who often lives near or in the same compound as his father, since residence is patrilocal among the Fulbe and in Mokolo's Islamic community. All the gifts that go to the compound of the groom are called *Karée* in Mokolo. These gifts can also be large quantities, depending on the wealth of the family. I would like to refer to these gifts as groomwealth.

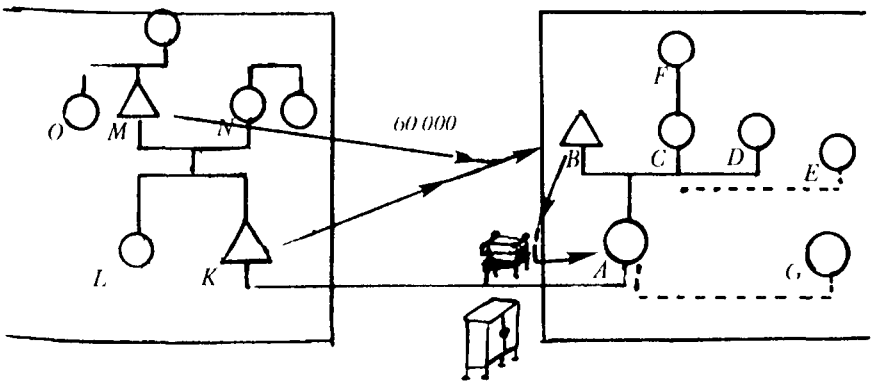
Figure 15



groomwealth; karée

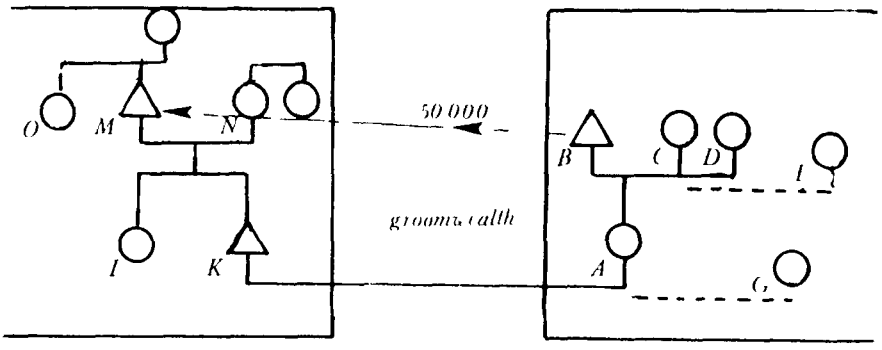
There are special gifts for A., the bride, to be given by B., her father. These include her bed, the mattress, couches, armchairs (nowadays), cupboards, etc. depending on the wealth of the family. As mentioned above, costs of these items is partly covered by the money that was given to the father of the bride by K. and M., the groom and his father.

Figure 16



In rich families, B., the father of the bride, may return an amount of money nearly as large as that given to him (never an equal amount). In our case, Cfa 50,000 (Hfl 350,) was returned.
This money can also be considered as groomwealth.

Figure 17



The female kin and friends carry all the goods from the house of B the father of the bride, to the house of K , the groom, or that of M , the father of the groom if the couple intends to live there The women go forth in a long line, exhibiting the wealth on their heads, while singing and dancing, sometimes dangerously balancing a tray with cups and saucers I never saw anything fall or break, though

The bags of ground millet the large casseroles of sweets the bags of rice the bed, the cupboard, and other household goods too heavy to be carried on the head will be brought by boys , servants in a push car If the girl is going to live in another town it is transported by bus

As I said, sometimes money is returned In this particular case the money was brought back by F , (the mother of the mother of the bride) when the goods were carried across the streets She had it in her hands in plain sight It was given to her by B the father of the bride to be passed on to M , the father of the groom As Daada Maimouna said

> They only do this when the father of the bride is rich and the father of the groom is rich If the father of the bride would have been poor they would not have given anything '

From all this we may conclude that the gift exchange system of the nomadic Fulbe remained, though the appearance of the gifts has changed Only in the cattle owning villages of sedentary Fulbe will cattle still be given with the

household implements and cloths. In that case, the gifts often represent a *sadaki*, as the cattle will be for the future children.
Where as in former society the gifts were partly provided by the capital women derived from the cows, nowadays most of the expenses of the wedding need to be covered by the females. For example, the bridewealth - cloth, soap, oil, shoes, underwear, etc. - from the groom's family to the bride's is collected by the female relatives of the groom. Before we discuss the problem how women pay the expenses of these gifts, we will first turn to the following days of the wedding ceremony, as the *banngal*, is not finished yet with the receipt of these gifts.

V 2.5 The continuation of the ceremony

We are in the third day of the wedding, *banngal*, now. On the evening of the day the *karée*, the groomwealth, has been brought over to the new house of the bride and to those of the parents of the groom - which are often situated in the same compound - the festivities will continue there. That same day, festivities have been going on in the compound of the groom, the future husband, as well. There is loud music.

V 2.5.1 ' don't show your misery'; The grief of the co-wives

The co-wives are kept company by their neighbors and intimate friends. A co-wife should certainly not show any sign of jealousy or grief. When the guests from the other compound come in, a co-wife will get her suitcase, which should contain half of the contents - an amount mostly known to her - of the suitcase of the bride.
If this is not the case, she may get upset.

> This appeared to be the case during one of the weddings I witnessed. The co-wife got very angry and shed ample tears. She was immediately reprimanded by all her friends and her mother. They told her she should address her husband on these matters afterwards, but for now, with the new family-in-law coming along, not show any sign of discontent or misery. Those present, all females of course, turned the music up even louder and told the kids to dance even more exuberantly. For children, weddings are great fun.

V 2 5 2 'She always denies she likes it', the bride's journey to her new compound

The time has come to bring the bride along to her future home She leaves the house of her father with a cloth around her face as she is not to be seen Just before she leaves the compound, everybody inside and outside will sit and they will all pray together She is taken by car, in most cases She enters the compound of her new husband with the cloth around her face It will only be taken off when she is inside the hut that is to be hers in the future She will be nicely dressed with one of the garments she just received in the suitcase, though as people expressed

> She will always deny that she likes any of it That is because of the shame, *semteende*

Then she will be brought over to humbly greet her new co-wife In Mokolo's Islamic community the new wife is accompanied by her *yaapennde* mother's sister, who will stay with her for one or two weeks to keep her company to give her advice, and to console her in her new surroundings She stays with her that night There is no sign of the husband yet

The next day the aunts and friends help to decorate the bride's room The bed has been set up and they put nice clean sheets on it, part of the gift from the father of the bride

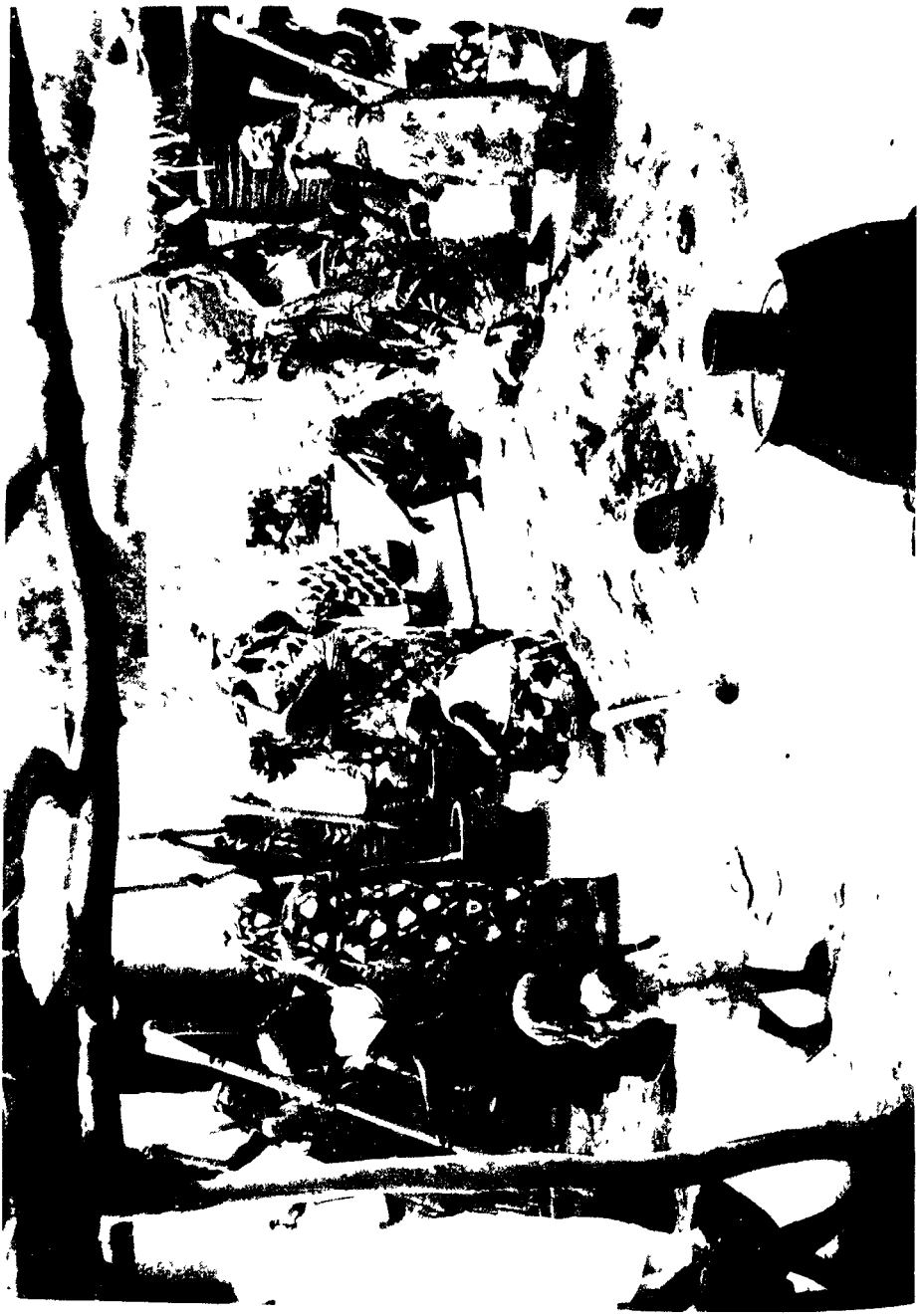
In rich families, food will be prepared These preparations may take all day long and will be offered to all the guests present On one occasion I watched an intimate friend of the groom come over to the female quarters of the compound to encourage and thank the women for all the work they were doing In the course of the day, the women may get nervous because of all the male guests who will arrive, though the men will sit in their own rooms and be served there During this whole period, there is no sign of the groom anywhere

V 2 5 3 'Good for her, she was a virgin', Defloration of the bride

That evening the bride will sleep with her husband, who will sneak into the compound, not to be seen by anybody In pre-Islamic Fulbe society, a girl could have free sexual relations before marriage This was allowed even though she knew she was promised to her cousin, whose name she could not pronounce any reference to marriage with him made her blush shamefully With the sedentarized Fulbe, a newly wed girl should preferably be virgin (also Schildkrout 1983 109)

The day after the wedding to which I referred above I asked the neighbors of the girl if the white garment with the blood had been shown They responded that they heard nothing yet but after midday they dropped by again It had been

Participation in the wedding — making biscuits



Grinding millet at a wedding

discussed in town. I will relate their account of this event, which in our society evokes so much resistance:

"Yes indeed, it has been shown this morning, so we are sure now she was a virgin. Good for her. It is not necessarily the first night the husband will sleep with his wife. If there are still too many guests or relatives around, he can wait too, because of shame, *semteende*. But he passed by last night alright. Well, they knew each other, she choose him herself. He must have sneaked in around eleven...Does he sleep with her all night long, you ask? I don't think they slept very much. In most cases the newly wed couple is dead tired the next day. The virgin is very scared. She will not give in by herself. What it comes down to is that they fight all night. He to be able to get her, and she to prevent him from getting at her. He will try to persuade her with kind words, with promises But that will not help with most girls. So finally, when she is exhausted by the fight, he will grab her by the wrists and take her, with force...and she will scream, scream "ow ow ow ow.. " and everybody knows that she is no longer a virgin. That is another reason why a girl should not be too old when she marries. Suppose she is already 17 or 20, she could be stronger than her husband... now just imagine..., the fight could last forever.

The next day she will be carried away from the room of her husband by her aunt (mother's sister) and other people who stay with her Of course, she cannot walk herself, because of the wound, which will take time to cure. For a week she will get delicious food to give her strength. The day afterwards, when the bride has proved to be a virgin, the man will tell her she can just ask him for anything she likes. She for sure will get a radio tape recorder, or a television.

And the mothers...they cry in their own houses, because, of course, they think of their first time, but at the same time they are proud of their daughters if they prove to be virgins. You wouldn't like your daughter to be a whore who just sleeps around, would you?

One of the women continues Nowadays many girls marry at a late age...who is still a virgin then? In former days [here they do not refer to Mala society but to the rules within the Islamic community], if you proved not to be one, and you had a bad husband, he beat you up and you were sent back to your father, who would beat you again until your whole body was swollen. Then afterwards you may return to your husband.

The other woman adds: Sometimes though, if it is just the two of you, I mean if there are no other wives, the two of you can go easy about it..

My aunt, *goggo* stayed with me for two weeks and a younger sister came to stay as well, as mostly is the case. So the first weeks, my aunt did the

cooking and she brought it to my husband When he came around to me I just hid and covered my face My younger sister stayed much longer Then I did the cooking and brought it over to my husband and told him Here is your food it is absolutely horrid and he would say it smelled delicious and that he was sure it would taste fine too I did not talk He talked He did not force me He waited He gave me presents all the time I was like a baby whom you need to spoil and persuade with presents and to whom you need to be kind It was only after many months that we sat down together on the bed "

As within many societies so it seems - the character of individual women and men has tremendous influence on such events that are nevertheless embedded in the structures of society, It may have become clear that resistance of the bride should always be acted out by her as it emphasizes also her pure status

V 2 5 4 After marriage

A woman who is married for the first time needs to stay inside the compound of her husband for 12 months She is not allowed to go out at all After this period, her husband will buy kola nuts sweets and sometimes a garment for her mother She then goes to visit her mother for one week Her mother will distribute these presents among her neighbors and friends while expressing her happiness that her daughter has returned She is not allowed to visit her daughter during that year

When a girl is seven months pregnant for the first time she will also return to her mother She will give birth while staying with her and the mother will do everything for her and explain how to take care of a baby The young mother only needs to breastfeed the newborn She returns to her husband s compound when he comes to fetch her again bringing lots of presents along like garments soap, cloths for the baby etc This habit which has also been taken over from nomadic Fulbe society, [15] creates some difficulties in Mokolo Recently Islamized girls cannot return to compounds of mothers who are still Pagan Returning to the relatives with whom you stayed before islamizing is not done either Consequently within the Islamic Mafa community they did not take over this custom

[15] This too is a remnant from nomadic society where the young bride used to stay with her parents until the child was weaned For the husband this period was important If he had a successor he could separate his herd from his father and install himself separately (Dupire 1960 65)

V 2.5.5 In case of repudiation

If a woman leaves her husband after he has repudiated her officially, she can take everything along that belongs to her. Her relatives can also keep their gifts. The groomwealth remains with the relatives of her in-laws. If she would like to have a divorce and her husband does not agree, she can leave but cannot take anything along. She would then, as said, be considered to be a *bordel*. *Bordel* could be translated as whore. Yet the word does not have the same connotation as in our society. It denotes someone who sleeps 'outside', meaning not in the house where she (or he) ought to sleep. Yet every sexual relationship, within and outside marriage, needs to be paid off by gifts, also those of a *bordel*. So if we apply the definition of a prostitute in which payment for sexual services is a criterion, we get nowhere in this society. As women expressed: "You can love your husband or friend an awful lot, but if he has nothing to offer you, the love will die...you cannot eat love, can you?"

Gifts will still be given when a woman marries for the second or third time, though in far smaller quantities. The weddings can then be arranged between the husband and wife themselves, as with the wedding type called *teegal* in nomadic societies. The arrangements are then made by an intermediary, a close friend of both.

Thus, in marriage payments and prestations women play the main role in the Islamic community. Through this exchange system women become part of a network of friends on whom they can count for their daughter's (also adopted daughter's) weddings.

V 2.6 Adaptation to the new system

Let us turn from the description of the wedding [153] to address a final question that remains to be asked in this chapter. How do Mafa women or men enter this system in which one depends so much on the Islamic community, not only relatives but also friends, for the procurement of gifts?

Let us listen to an elderly Pagan Mafa man

> "One of my boys Islamized because he wanted to. His jar, in which he used to sacrifice next to me, is still in the house. But no sacrifices are done in it any more. Now when he comes to visit me, he prays and he even goes to Qur'anic school. If I have to do a sacrifice in which he needs to attend, I simply put his share on the road. Well, anyhow, then he

[153] Which could fill a book, if amplified upon all these events with the data from my notebook and diary.

wanted to get married The girl was Mafa from L damtzai and also Islamized Her father was already a Muslim So as I am not rich I came to offer three goats as a bridewealth for his marriage The in-laws and my son sold the goats to buy goods in return as is the custom with the Muslims The father and the mother of the girl also provided her with things, but I know nothing of it all, as I am not of their religion They only brought me food here in the house and I gladly ate it "

This example indicates that people may have difficulty to getting married properly, when they have recently Islamized Yet we must remember that many youngsters came to town to live with their relatives If they Islamized and decided to get married, the relatives with whom they live would provide at least part of the gifts The quantities will remain small Much less money will be involved But they will try to imitate the existing customs of marriage prestation as much as possible

Many Islamized men marry Mafa girls who recently converted In these cases they negotiate with the Pagan father Let us listen to the daughter of Maama Laila, who Islamized at a later period than her mother

I was the only daughter of my mother At a certain time, when I was old enough, I went down the mountains to go and live with my mother My father did not agree at first He suggested that I should marry a man in the mountains but I did not want to I refused

When I stayed with my mother one of my uncles, who Islamized long ago, said it was no good staying in the mountains where people committed so much sin He had a Marabout sent over, who taught me how to pray and read in Arabic

Now when I was still in the mountains, my father had made lots of debts, of over Cfa 200 000 (Hfl 1,400) Whenever somebody went over to him to ask my hand in marriage and the bridewealth needed to be discussed, he simply told them he wanted Cfa 200,000 Everyone said that was far too much, till my present husband came along He said he was ready to give the amount demanded My mother advised me to accept, so I did Only my mother bought me plates cups and all that Her neighbors and friends came to grind the millet and make sweets, but my husband did not buy me many pieces of cloth

My father hardly comes to visit me He still feels ashamed he asked for so much money If I had money, I would prepare him a meal and bring it over to him But I cannot afford to buy meat myself "

From this story we can deduce that the relatives with whom the girl lives provide her with the necessary material, but in small quantities There are also cases where the husband gives money to the girl so she can buy the items which are

normally given by relatives and friends Once women have entered the Islamic community they will make every effort to enter into these gift exchange relations They will contribute to weddings of other members of the community In due time, when the daughters of new converts have grown up they expect these gifts to be returned for their daughters They themselves call it a saving-system Maama Laila for example is very active at weddings hoping in this way to save up for her granddaughter who lives with her and she started to save items when the granddaughter was only four years of age

If we consider the man s perspective we may wonder whether it is more economical for a man to wed a recently Islamized girl, as much less money is involved I discussed the issue with several men As Baaba Rahmani who Islamized when young explains

> 'I married many women Most of them were Mafa For men it is cheaper If her father wants goats, well you give goats When he wants some money as well you add it Further, you buy the plates and cups for the girl as these items will not be provided by her own family Then you also buy some garments and the bed of course, as is the custom with the Fulbe Some day if she decides to leave you she will take everything along In the end Fulbe women are much more expensive because they do not return anything If an Islamized Mafa wife leaves you you can always go to her father and reclaim the bridewealth *sikaa* Even Fulbe men who had married Islamized Mafa wives who then ran off can always decide to make an effort to reclaim the bridewealth
>
> But even so Fulbe women are better They have more respect for their husbands and they know shame *semteende* If you marry a converted Mafa woman, and you shout at her, she shouts back, if you beat her she beats back They just never leave you alone with your thoughts

In conclusion new converts try to adopt the new marriage exchange system as soon as possible When this is not yet possible they imitate the existing system by furnishing the bride with saucepans cups a suitcase with contents and a bed for the bride An additional garment will be given to her mother By the next generation, they will have taken over the new system We will finally elaborate upon the relations within the family, or the atom of alliance Do they change too after conversion?

V 2.7 Alliance in the Muslim community

In nomadic Fulbe society a father and his daughter maintain an avoidance relation (Dupire 1960 59) The relation is not affectionate They remain at a

distance physically And the girl needs to obey to her father under all circumstances The same goes for her eldest brother as he is the representative of the father for all the younger brothers and sisters A woman has an avoidance relation with her parallel cousins, as these are potential marriage partners It is forbidden for the eldest brother to visit the house of his younger sisters because they are on the same level as the wives of his younger brothers (Dupire 1960 60)

First-born children boys as well as girls, do not even live in the immediate surroundings of their fathers for the first years of their life since the mother gives birth to her first child in the group of her mother These children are often raised by their grandparents with whom they do maintain an affectionate relationship This pattern continues with the sedentarized Fulbe A woman owes much respect to her husband and to her eldest son whose name she should not pronounce A girl cannot speak the name of her eldest brother she simply calls him *hamma* eldest brother But also the eldest daughter in the family gets this respect Her name should not be mentioned by younger brothers and sisters either, she will always be called *adda* eldest sister

So girls as well as boys have an avoidance relation with father and his brothers A girl has an avoidance relation with her eldest brother and with her parallel cousins, as well as cross cousins When she has reached puberty but also after marriage she should always avoid them She must greet them in a kneeling position while casting down her eyes A girl has good relations with her mother s sisters and brothers and with her grandparents and with those she is forbidden to marry with and cannot be the representative of her father The mother of the bride and her son in-law also have an avoidance relation They will never speak to each other She will greet him face covered in a kneeling position

> In one particular case after a year the mother did not even know what her son in-law looked like physically while they were living in the same city When I visited her daughter she took the opportunity to peep at him while hiding in my car

The son in-law owes respect to the father in law They will never visit each other

This system has largely been taken over in Mokolo within the Muslim community Yet the account of Baaba Rahmani concerning Mafa wives reveals that they are far less strict in following these rules What he forgot to tell is that husbands need to respect their wives as well The Fulbe conception of *pulaaku* dictates an introvert behavior, also when a man is angry with his wife, or the other way around In Mokolo they will teach their children how to behave' which includes these signs of respect However also in Fulbe society some rules get less strict and on many occasions I could observe the affection fathers show

Women carrying the wedding gifts to the bride's home

In front of the wedding gifts

to their children, boys as well as girls The important thing is that it should not be shown in public But the same goes, of course for the affectionate relations between lovers, or husbands and wives under the surface of respectful behavior As Goggo expressed

> 'It is nice when you get a sofa as a wedding present Your husband can rest on it when he comes home from work and is tired You can spoil him with such a piece of furniture Men don't talk much to women because of shame *semteende* But at night, when everybody has gone and nobody will enter the compound any more, you close the door, sit down on the sofa together and chat and laugh and have fun

V 3 Marriage systems and prestation: a conclusion

In this chapter we reviewed the clan-exogamous marriage system of the Mafa and the endogamous system of the Fulbe Our object was to discover what women s role and voice was within these systems and how the systems changed in the course of Islamization

We discovered that the mother of the bride in Mafa society has the final say in the proceedings during which she continuously exchanges information with her daughter the bride to be In former Fulbe society the husband was chosen by the father though nowadays most girls can refuse the partner their father has agreed upon In Mokolo the Islamized Mafa population maintains the former prohibitions From my sample and from all my conversations with women, as well as men, it became evident that they very much object to marrying a classificatory 'brother or sister', as clan members are indicated

In the second generation many Islamized Mafa have forgotten the name of their patri clan and their mother s patri clan In these cases they are inclined to marry far away often with someone from another region and ethnic background Mafa Islamic men marry Fulbe and women from other ethnic backgrounds Mafa Islamic women marry men from other ethnic background Remarkable in these percentages was the fact that Islamic men from other ethnic backgrounds take more often Mafa Islamic women as second or third wives then as first wives

The complicated system of marriage prestations which already existed in nomadic Fulbe society is taken over as quickly as possible when a person man or woman, enters the Islamic community by conversion

In Mafa society, bridewealth is given to the father or in case of a first daughter to the father s father It is provided by the groom and his kin It should be returned when the girl leaves her husband In the Islamic community they have taken over the complicated marriage exchange system of the nomadic Fulbe whereby the contents of the gifts have changed In this system we can still

recognize the *sadaki*, called *tchouldadjé* in Mokolo, the gift for the bride that ultimately is in the interest of the future children. Further it consists of a bridewealth, leignol, gifts to the kin of the bride, as well as groomwealth, karée, gifts to the kin of the groom. In this system also the features of dowry as well as indirect dowry can be recognized, as money is given by the father of the groom to the father of the bride, with which he needs to pay affairs for the bride. As this amount is not sufficient he the father of the bride, needs to add to the amount of money involved.

Dowry, as obligatory part of the wedding gifts has been prescribed by Uthman dan Fodio in the last century. It is also due to the girl after official divorce. She can take along all her gifts into a next marriage. Another question arises upon formulating this conclusion. We may wonder if it is the large quantities of material goods a bride may get which forms the impetus for her to convert. However, we also noticed that newly converted brides get far fewer goods as they are not yet completely integrated in this new exchange system. I never heard this as a motivation from any of the women I spoke with. And besides, once part of the community, they will have to contribute their share to this exchange system if they want to supply their own daughters as future brides with the necessary wealth.

The large flows of goods for marriage prestations, cannot be considered as 'tokens'. Much money is involved. Even with much calculation and knowledge of prices it is impossible to give exact estimates of the amount of money involved. But roughly speaking, a relatively simple wedding - the one I gave as an example was more exuberant - could easily involve Cfa 500.000 (Hfl 3,500).

In my field notes of the first of January 1988, after just having witnessed another wedding, I desperately added: "where oh where does the money come from to defray the costs of all this material?"

In the last chapter, we hope to clarify this question to the reader. There we will discuss how capital is accumulated to provide the necessary wedding goods. Through that subject, we will deal with the economic activities of Mafa women, new converts, and the population within the Islamic community.

Chapter VI
Trade and smuggling: accumulation strategies of women in Mokolo [154]

In the first chapter, we briefly mentioned that the occupations of Mafa women are different from those of women in the Islamic community of Mokolo. The new system of marriage payments and prestations in Mokolo compels them to take up various other activities. Muslim women are expected to contribute to their children's weddings, as well as those of their friends and relatives. [155] Only by making such contributions will they gain acceptance into the Muslim community. But unlike Fulbe women, Islamized Mafa women have no cattle to sell. After conversion to Islam Mafa women will therefore have to take up gainful occupations. To meet such requirements Mafa women in Mokolo engage in petty trading. As Mokolo is situated quite near the Nigerian border, they may occasionally make fairly large amounts of money by smuggling. Recent debates concerning the relation between state and society in Sub-Saharan Africa can help us to discuss these economic strategies in a wider context.

VI 1 State, society and autonomous economic spheres

Mbembe (1989:12) argued that the African post-colonial economy is less of an autonomous sphere than elsewhere in the world. The author continues to assert that the post-colonial state is no mere reflection of economic and social interests within its borders. It is the state apparatus that has successfully established itself as the supreme arbiter in matters concerning the appropriation of resources. Such assets, however, are not channelled into fields of productive accumulation, but are rather employed to obtain the allegiance of subordinate groups. These resources, in other words, are distributed to secure political control and not for enhancing the viability of the economy.

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[154] This chapter and parts of the previous one will be published as an article entitled: 'Dot, Commerce et Contrebande: Strategies d'Accumulation chez les femmes islamisées de Mokolo', in: *Political Economics of Cameroon*, eds. P.Geschiere and P.Konings. Several colleagues have offered advice on this article. I am especially grateful to Roch Mongbo for his stimulating remarks and wish to thank Piet Konings as well as Peter Geschiere for their critical comments.

[155] That is, if the latter have become Muslims too.

Other scholars look at the relationship between state and economy somewhat differently. Chazan (1989: 121), for example, suggests an approach that focuses less narrowly on the issue of 'state dominance'. She states a clear preference for what she calls the 'society based approach' and seeks to focus more squarely on survival strategies in changing economic and political circumstances. The author points out that females are underrepresented in central institutions and have been systematically neglected in current research. Such marginalization of women has frequently enhanced their sense of community. Perhaps more than any other social category, women have resisted incorporation and avoided too close association with the state apparatus. In recent years, African women increasingly exemplified processes of disengagement from state centralism, assisted no doubt by the fact that the distinction between public (state) and private (household) spheres overlaps to a large extent with a gender division (Chazan 1989: 135 ff). Parpart's (1989: 224) contribution to this debate tends to underscore that of Chazan. The former is of the opinion that the present decline of the state may be to the advantage of women. Having always been underrepresented in organs of the state, women have little to lose. But as their tasks remain crucial for the survival of functioning subunits within shattered polities, they may even benefit from the present malaise. In brief, women's disengagement from the state may provide a source of strength in the present situation.

Several of such observations seem to apply to the Muslim women of Mokolo. Their petty trading mostly takes place outside the formal economic system, and naturally this is even more clearly the case for those women engaged in smuggling (Chazan 1989: 126). The profit women make is used for dowry and bridewealth obligations. These facts seem to make their economy an autonomous sphere uncontrolled by the state. Secondly, the remarks made about the decline of the state refer to present day Cameroon. It is thus important to find out if women's aloofness from the state really allows them to benefit from its present decline. In this respect, the Chazan's remarks about the distinction between the public and the private spheres are pertinent. Economic occupations of Mafa women need to be in harmony with the ideology of gender relations in an Islamic community.[156] In that ideology, and here we recognize one of Uthman dan

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[156] Using the word ideology in this context is asking for trouble, considering the endless definitions and discussions of the concept. I previously defined ideology (Van Santen 1986: 56), using Bourdieu's terminology (Bourdieu 1979), as follows:
Ideology consists of three elements:
a. Doxa: experiences, behaviors that society takes for granted, of which the underlying ideas that legitimize them, is expressed. Imbiek (Suske und Wiske), a well known Flemish comic strip character, are known although the actors in a given society do not realize that they know them.

Fodio's statements - men must provide for the material welfare of their wives and children, and married women should not be too involved in activities outside of the home. Consequently, women have to find a way to cope with both ideology and the cultural demands made upon them; more specifically they need to accumulate capital in order to comply with the marriage payments. For this purpose they often need the help of children or young Mafa 'boys'.[157] This seems to resemble a form of domestic slavery, a well known phenomenon in the former Fulbe economy

VI 2 Agriculture, Islamization and trade

A striking feature of Mokolo market is that, until recently, the Mafa came to sell their products and returned home afterwards Yet trade in the urban market, buying and selling of products with profit, was in the hands of either the Fulbe or the Islamic Mafa As we have seen in the previous chapters, the economic occupations of Mafa and the Muslims are totally different, certainly as far as women's place within these systems is concerned

b Heterodoxy ideological production on a conscious level, which certain actors like to change because they work to the advantage or disadvantage of a certain group class or gender within society

c Orthodoxy ideological production on a conscious level in order to maintain existing ideas that may work to the advantage of a certain group, class or gender in society

When I speak of ideology here, I refer to this whole complex of ideas and lived experiences, about what is considered as correct or incorrect behavior for women The fact that the society expects women not to become too involved in outdoor activities might be labeled as an expression of 'Islamic' ideology But to do so would deny our point of departure, which was to regard Islam from a syncretistic point of view Even the fact that Uthman dan Fodio prescribed this behavior does not necessarily make this particular set of ideas 'Islamic' For now I would like to avoid this particular discussion as it does not add to the points raised in this chapter

157 Boys here does not only refer to their juvenile status but also has the connotation of servant, as derived from the practice encountered at the Madagali Court which used to be English colonial territory The term has probably been introduced by the members of the islamic community, who had been enslaved in Madagali in Nigeria during colonial times and returned to Mokolo Strangely enough the English usage remains common in a formerly French colonial area It still means a young man whom you can send for all sorts of jobs

VI 2.1 The difference in economic systems

Mafa economy can be regarded as an example of a self-subsistence economy that approaches Boserup's model of a 'female farming system' (Boserup 1970). It resembles the model quite closely, but not completely. Compared to many other African agricultural societies, Mafa men share equally in the work of millet cultivation, the prime farming activity. But they also pull their weight in many other agricultural activities. In fact, this is one of the few societies where men also fetch water and collect and bring home firewood. On the basis of such examples, we may infer that women's economic activities and those of men are not much separated in Mafa life. [158]
After Islamization women adopt another economic range of activities, in which agriculture is of minor importance. Furthermore, within Muslim society, the segregation of men's and women's domains, also in economic activities, is undeniable. On an ideological level, women become more associated with the reproductive processes within society and less or not at all with the productive processes. [159] Nevertheless the economic affairs of women within the Muslim society of Mokolo appear to form an autonomous sphere. This phenomenon must be considered in relation to women's necessity to fulfil their duties concerning marriage payments.

The difference in economic activities of non-islamized and islamized Mafa women is shown in the table below. Reading them, we must realize that the figures concern the economic activities of non-islamized Mafa women in the immediate surroundings and suburbs of Mokolo town. It is obvious that an

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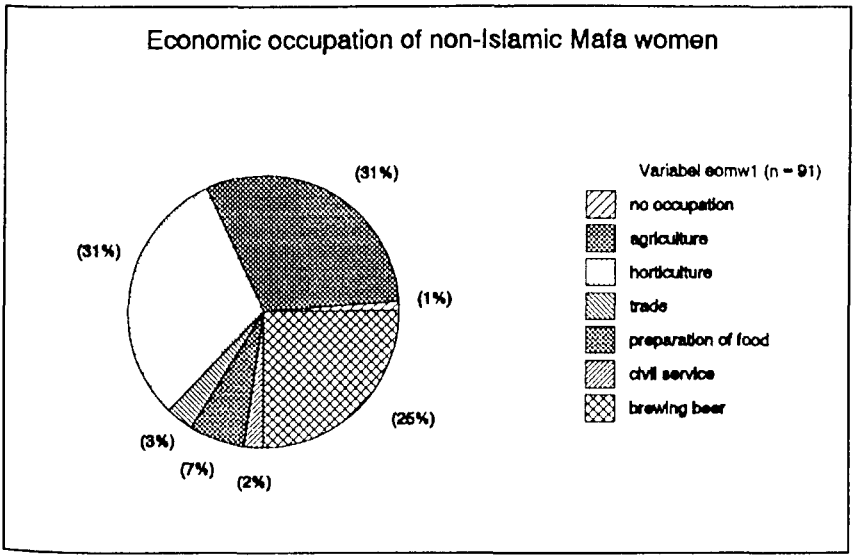
158 In the literature is has been suggested that when women participate in productive activities and have the disposal of their own labor, their land and their means of production (Sacks 1976, Sanday 1982, Friedl 1975), the relations between the genders are inclined to be more equal. Such is partly the case in Mafa society, though women depend on men for access to land. Men and women share many agricultural tasks. But it is important to consider who has a say over what sort of affairs. This is pertinent to understanding the outcome of decision making in this patriarchal society. Thus the question remains what consequences this has on the autonomy of women. Particularly, we could wonder whether this leads, as suggested by others, to a more elevated position for women. I will leave this discussion aside for the moment.

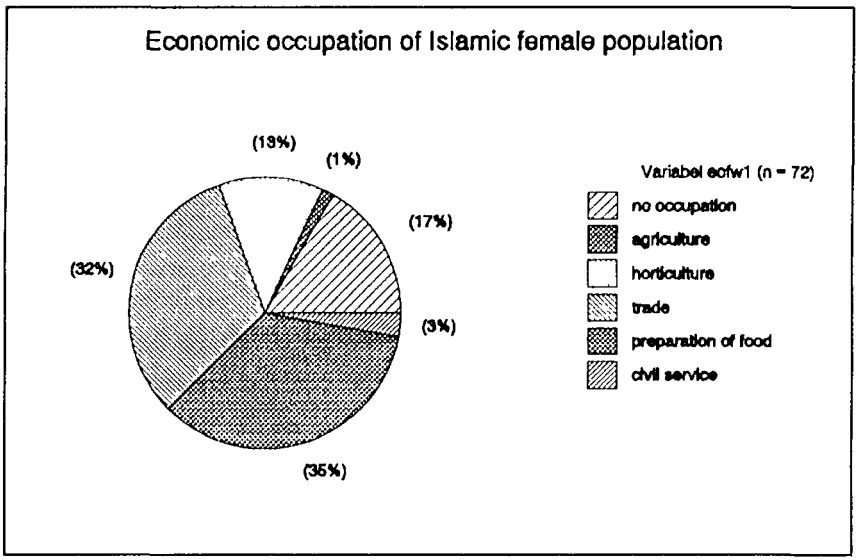
159 Many authors considered this transition as the origin of the subordination of women (Leacock 1975, Edholm ed. al. 1977). A long time ago I abandoned the term 'subordination of women' and chose to speak of asymmetrical relations between the genders (Van Santen 1985). Furthermore I am of opinion that whenever we take economic transition as a point of departure to study the changing position between the genders it must be related to other levels in society.

important economic activity for non-islamic women is brewing beer, a way of earning an income that completely disappears after islamization. The difference in economic activities of Mafa women and women within the Islamic community is shown below:



Through their trading activities the latter are not only more involved in a market system but are also much more aware of the opportunities that arise when access to money becomes a distinct possibility. These differences are becoming less rigid. We will return to this point at the end of this chapter.

Several products, like potatoes, onions, peanuts, millet, etc., are bought by Muslim men and resold later with profit either in Mokolo, or at other markets. The trading of other products, like hot peppers, garlic, and vegetables, and the processing of many foodstuffs is done by Muslim women. They may buy peanuts and make peanut oil and 'bakurum' (peanut sticks). They buy hot peppers, grind them and sell the powder. They also purchase eggs, cook them and sell them at a profit in the streets. The same goes for many other products.



Not only do the economic occupations of non-islamized Mafa women and Muslim women differ very much, but the same holds true for consumption patterns. The revenues of Mafa women are mostly used to cover the expenses of daily existence. They themselves emphasize that both men and women consider the household (meaning the inhabitants of a compound) as a single unit (Dwyer & Bruce 1988). Each wife still has her own granary to stock the millet for the family's own consumption, but the income from products sold is shared and used for household expenses such as there are, food, school fees, clothes for the children, health care etc.. In most cases such does not mean that woman 1 provides the clothes for the children of woman 2 (though sometimes this happens), but it may mean that she buys food ingredients which are cooked and eaten by all the inhabitants of a compound. The table below shows in percentages the degree to which husband and wife use their separate earnings in a joint budget for household consumption. It clearly distinguishes income sharing among non-islamized Mafa women from that of women within the Islamic community.

Table 2 SHARED BUDGETS OF FIRST WIVES AND THEIR HUSBANDS IN MOKOLO in Percentages

	MAFA			FULBE		OTHER ETHNIC GR			
	Pagan	Christian	Islamized 1st Gen	2nd Gen		Pagan	Islam	Christian	
unknown	8	15	0	6	8	0	0	60	
yes	75	54	17	12	8	100	6	40	
no	17	31	78	76	62	0	75	0	
unapplic	0	0	6	6	22	0	19	0	
number of women interviewed	12	23	19	16	19	1	19	6	115

VI 2.2 A man should never eat what his wife has cultivated

Muslim households are organized quite differently. In his written statements, Uthman dan Fodio, the founder of the Sokoto Empire, was clear about the fact that a man had the obligation to provide for his wives' needs. He said, "Another practice is that of men who remain at home while their wives go to the market where they struggle and rub shoulders with men. This is a forbidden innovation to 'ijma' and it is an imitation of Europeans." Yet he also stated that a woman ought to be allowed to go out in search of knowledge if her husband can not teach her. And he not only advocated religious education for women but also emphasized the importance of giving them secular instruction connected with business transactions (Ogunbiyi 1969).

The former statement of Uthman dan Fodio implies that a man should never eat what his wife has cultivated, nor should he drink the water she has fetched. It is simply considered improper to make her do these things. If women cultivate at all, the yields are for the women. This implicates that the budgets of the Islamized women and men are no longer shared. In sedentary Fulbe societies, where Muslim Fulbe are obliged to cultivate, the work on the plots is never done by women.

> The father of Aisaathu is a sedentarized Islamic Fulbe and he lives in a compound with his extended family. He is head of a household in a small village in the plains. He still has much cattle, which his son is herding. The cows come home every evening. He also cultivates many acres with muskwari and he grows many different vegetables, onions, tomatoes and manioc. The muskwari was all for the family's own consumption.

' because I have a large family But the vegetables I can sell to have some money If I need money for special occasions like Ramadan or a wedding when one needs to provide the whole family with new clothes I sell my cattle The work on the plots I do all by myself Fulbe women do not work in agriculture "

His land was very well kept When I asked him how many acres he had he started walking and made a tour along the border of his land at a pace I could hardly keep up with He was obviously very proud of the fruits of his labor This somewhat surprised me as I had always thought that Fulbe loathed agriculture He was way over sixty and claimed that the family had owned the land from about the start of this century

In Mokolo few Muslim women have access to land But to get a clear picture of this it is useful to review the different stages in the process of Islamization The freed slaves that came back to Mokolo and settled in the Muslim community continued to work the land they simply took *en brousse* Adopted children and young women who came to town either to study or live with a relative do not have access to land For women it depends on the husband they marry if they eventually obtain land The following case elucidates several variables of importance

First, it concerns two Mafa islamized men Baaba Rahmani and his brother who were adopted by a former lamido in Mokolo and grew up at court and who are still engaged in cultivation Secondly in spite of the ideology that a man should provide for the needs of his wives Islamic women though they hardly grow foodstuffs still take on economic activities It is very rare to find a woman who just sticks to her household activities Most women trade in one way or another or make household utensils to sell Thirdly if women cultivate they can sell their products and keep the fruits of their labor for themselves The brothers recounts

> When we were at court we did not cultivate But when my brother grew up and had married [he had worked at the Catholic Mission to earn money to get married with an Islamised Mafa girl] we looked for the fields that belonged to my father and we continued to work them up till this day

Apart from his fields Baaba Rahmani has a regular paid job as a night watchman

He has married and divorced many women during his lifetime

> so many that I have forgotten the number

Nearly all of those were Islamized Mafa. When I came to know the family he had four wives. His first wife was an islamized Mafa woman he had married twenty years before; though they lived separately, they were not divorced

> "When I came to know him I lived with an islamized aunt in Kosa My aunt had already told me that it was better to pray so when I met him, I started to 'pray' Up till today my father and brothers are still Pagans. Baaba Rahmani brings me the money for the food I buy and he provides me with clothes. I know the fields he has but I never cultivated there. I tress ornaments of wool, that Islamic women put up in their houses to make them look nice The Fulbe women taught me how to do this and I sell them to make money."

She has one son. He is a civil servant in another town but regularly lives at his father's house. He recently married a Mafa woman who islamized, but whose parents are still pagans.

Baaba Rahmani's youngest wife - the daughter of Maama Laila, (see pp) has two young children She always lived in the mountains with her father, as her parents were divorced By the age of sixteen she came to live with her mother, who became a Muslim after two marriages in the mountains After having spent some time with her mother she started to 'pray' too.

> "My father did not agree, because I had refused to marry the man he had chosen for me in the mountains. When I islamized my husband came to ask me to marry him. My father had many debts, so he asked a lot of money for me My husband accepted the amount, so then my father agreed with the fact that I had started to pray. I cultivate sometimes, but only peanuts Not for my husband but for myself on the fields we visited the other day, together with the wife of Harouna (the son of Baaba Rahmani), you remember? We picked the goyaves from the trees to sell Fulbe women never work in the fields for their husbands."

I had actually been very surprised on this occasion: those 'neat, well-dressed' obviously urban Islamic women came to the fields, took of their outer clothing and climbed in trees to pick the fruit they were going to sell in the street in front of their house, afterwards. [160]

VI 2.3 Petty trade and landlordism

Very often women who Islamize prefer to end their hard work on the plot, like the first wife of Baaba Rahmani. Sometimes they just do not have access to land through their husbands.
Let us recall the story of Maama Laila, mother of the last wife of Baaba Rahmani, (p. ..). That story imparts the impression that she is an intelligent woman, completely conscious of her motives to islamize, of all the changes in her present life. She made full use of the economic advantages of her new situation. Several times we stressed the necessity for women to earn money. The examples we have given can be regarded as 'petty trade'. Making utensils to decorate the house takes lots of time and does not pay that well. Picking goyaves, like the women in our previous example and selling them in the streets only brings in a pittance. Other petty trade includes processing foodstuffs, for example grilling and selling peanuts, cooking and selling beignets, grinding and selling hot peppers, etc. Nearly every woman with children will be involved in some such activity. There is also an age division in these occupations. The preparation of *beignets*, for example, cannot be done by older women, [161] but they grind and sell hot peppers. These women can more easily go to the market to sell their own products. In the appendix we indicate how much money can be earned with these petty trade activities. From our random sample we saw the difference of economic activity of Mafa women and Islamic women. Only Islamic women who are just married, have to stay in the compound for one year, so they will sit at home and do nothing for a while.

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[160] To give an indication of the language change: this Mafa woman spoke Fulfulde with her mother as well as with the daughter-in-law of her co-wife, and all of them had been brought up in the mountains.

[161] One may wonder why. Women state that elderly women are less fastidious than young women. Supposedly they would allow dirt to fall into the batter while cooking. Further analysis concerning the division of labor between the genders as well as between different age groups, particularly in the context of their religious and symbolic grounds, would probably reveal more profound reasons. I will leave such an analysis aside for the moment.

Many women will arrange to have these products sold by the young children or by a Mafa 'boy'. At a young age many male Mafa children come to town 'to make some money', to be able to afford their own marriage payments. In a way Mafa 'boys' and Islamic women are mutually dependent on each other for their ability to accumulate the means for their respective marriage payments. The youngsters need a place to sleep and eat. Many Muslim households make use of the labor of these Mafa 'boys'. They are fed by a family, sleep in their courtyards, and do odd jobs like selling the products their mistresses make. At the same time they can accept work from other women who do not have permanent 'boys'. Most of these 'boys' are very independent. They come and go whenever they like, and often when they are needed to do a job, they cannot be found. If they are treated badly, they just leave. If their parents pass by because, for example, they have come to visit the important Wednesday market, they are sure to get a meal in the household their sons work.

Another way for women to earn money is through becoming landlords. They may buy a house - often using their husbands as intermediaries - and then let it, thus deriving a (relatively easy) income from it every month. This, of course, is only possible when a woman has been able to accumulate a tidy sum of money or when she has received an inheritance. As these are unusual circumstances, landlording cannot be considered as an ordinary economic activity. When it does occur, a woman's husband or brother will take care of the expenses and collect the rent. Yet he will discuss the management of the property in detail with the owner, the woman. It is self-evident to the population in Mokolo that the profit should go to her.

Of course the petty trade does not bring in large amounts of money. I made an estimate of the income of all the men and women I interviewed and from the cases I gathered. I never asked my informants to give exact amounts, as I considered this to be impertinent. I also didn't expect to get correct answers. My assistant and I just made rough estimates on the basis of their occupations. [162] The income of men and women per month for the different ethnic groups in percentages is as follows.

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[162] When there is a comparable occupation elsewhere, we based our estimation on the known wage level. Otherwise we calculated the cost of raw materials of these activities to arrive at a reasonable income for these particular occupations.
As an example serves making *beignets*. They are consummated for breakfast in most households in town. A bag of flour costs Cfa 8.000, oil Cfa 7.500, salt Cfa 200. A woman who cooks *beignets* every morning, needs one bag a week. One *beignet* costs Cfa 5. She earns Cfa 20.000, which gives her a profit of Cfa 4.300 (HH: 30.10).

Table 2

INCOME FIRST WIVES/HUSBANDS in MOKOLO in Percentages

	MAFA			FULBE	OTHER ETHNIC GR		
	Pagan	Christian	Islamized 1st Gen/2nd Gen		Pagan	Islam	Christian
unknown	17/ 8	0/ 7	11/16	0/17	5/23	0 / 0	0/16	0/0
Cfa4,000	8/17	14/ 8	37/ 5	30/ 0	32/0	0 / 0	0/ 0	28/0
' 5 9	17/ 8	35/ 7	26/ 11	30/ 0	18/0	0 / 0	33/ 0	7/0
10 14	33/25	30/ 0	5/ 11	18/ 5	5/0	0 / 0	0/ 0	0/0
"15-10	25/ 8	0/ 7	5/17	0/18	0/23	0 / 0	17/19	17/0
20 24	0/25	9/23	0/ 6	6/ 6	0/30	0 / 0	0/13	0/20
25 29	0/ 0	4/15	0/ 6	0/ 0	0/ 8	0 / 0	0/ 7	0/20
> 30	0/ 8	0/23	0/28	6/54	0/ 8	0 / 0	0/44	0/40
women no inc men		8	16	6	42	100	50	20
>Cfa35	0	8	0	0	5	0	0	0
no husband	0	8	0	0	5	100	0	0
numb of women/ men inter viewed	12/12	23/13	19/18	16/17	19/13	1/1	9/16	6/5

Where the men need to provide for the daily necessities, women will try to keep this money apart. They save it to fulfil their bridewealth obligations. They would be looked down upon if they would not be able to do so. It is considered bad manners to ask the husband for this money.

In a cross-table which unveils the way women spend their earnings, it becomes clear, that quite a percentage of it is used for the marriage prestations.

Table

PERSONAL INCOME EXPENDITURE PATTERN OF FIRST AND SECOND WIVES FROM DIFFERENT ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS in Percentages first/second wife

	MAKA			FULBE		OTHER ETHNIC GR		
	Pagan	Christian	Islamized 1st Gen	2nd Gen		Pagan	Islam	Christian	Female headed
personal items	9/34	10/20	33/37	29/40	32/42	0/0	41/43	33/
marriage payments	0/0	0/0	27/42	27/50	30/33	0/0	30/33	0/
food for family	28/17	32/30	12/	15/	3/ 0	0/0	7/ 0	11/
clothes f children	28/33	22/30	10/16	11/	3/ 0	0/0	7/ 8	22/
school fees of childr	20/16	16/ 5	6/0	10/	7/ 0	0/0	4/ 0	0/
health care	12/0	18/10	6/0	8/	0/ 0	0/0	9/ 0	0/
other	0/	1/00	0/	0/	0/	0/	3/ 0	33/
no cash income	3/0	1/ 5	6/5	0/10	25/25	0/0	2/17	17/

The profit-making by petty trade and the efforts to accumulate a small capital in this way, in order to fulfil the obligations of the marriage payments, is obviously not state-controlled The women maintain no relation with state-civil servants For example, they pay no tax

VI 2.4 Smuggling

Women are not only involved in petty trade though Smuggling in the area started at the end of the 1960 's during the period of the Biafra War [163] Smuggling

[163] Oral information from W E A van Beek First food staples were transferred from Cameroon to Nigeria Soon after that the production of enamel utensils started on a huge scale in Nigeria and came to Cameroon with other iron products In the seventies smuggling activities increased especially bottled beer from Cameroon to Nigeria From 1984 onwards when oil prices went up Nigeria kept its own lower prices which provided

became profitable due to the unstable Nigerian currency, the naira, while the Cameroonian franc is related to the French franc, and therefore much more stable Many women engage in smuggling trade at a much larger scale This is a recent phenomenon To be able to smuggle, one needs a capital to start As Maama Laila said

> Of course I would like to smuggle, but I do not have the strength now [as she had been seriously ill] And if I had the strength, where would I find the money to start to smuggle? You need a capital to cross the border, to buy things and to pay for the journey "

I know of no Fulbe women who engaged in this larger more profitable trade Most of the women in Mokolo involved in smuggling were islamized, be they Mafa or from another ethnic group Often they had already changed religion in the former generation

Daada Abdelgader explains how she started with petty trade and got involved in smuggling

> "You want to know how one trades? You just buy things alongside the road in large quantities You take it home, and you sell it again in parts in little plastic bags If you bought it for fifty francs, you sell it for sixty francs If you have sold it all, you separate the *daada ceede* (literally 'Mother money') from the *riba* (profits) With the mother money' you can buy new things to sell If you notice that the prices are going down you just find another product to buy and sell I started with colanuts After that I bought peanuts and made oil out of them Then I started to go to Nigeria This was all before I was married When my children were off my back, I left again You see, the husbands do not always provide everything a woman needs or wants, so you just want to make some money of your own Not every man would allow his wife to do so, though Some think their wives need to stay at home Some are jealous But others even stimulate their wives to trade They think it is better than just to sit at home So you make appointments with other women to go together You pay the customs officer here And when you have arrived in Nigeria, you pay the customs officer there three or four Nairas (Nigerian money) You first go by car to M There you cross the

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1984 onwards when oil prices went up Nigeria kept its own lower prices which provided a reason to start smuggling gasoline and petrol Now many other products produced at lower cost in Nigeria are smuggled for instance radios bikes beds

Three years ago a customs office was erected in Mogode 40 km from Mokolo right along the border In Mokolo the customs office has existed much longer As we may remember from the first chapter it was burnt down by an angry crowd before the elections of 1991

Inhabitants of Mokolo

A Mokole family: three generations of women

border by foot That takes about an hour On the other side taxis are waiting and you continue by car If you return with goods you pass again If the customs officers have noticed you you give them some money and then you pass Or you leave your goods with somebody in M and come back to fetch them later on during the night If you cannot avoid the customs officers in these ways you leave your goods at M Then you go to customs to get the papers that are needed to import I also take goods along to Nigeria Right now I buy beans and peanuts here and sell them there Beans for example, I buy for Cfa 7 000 a bag I can sell them there for about Cfa 10 000 Doesn't that give me profit? So then I buy oranges and cola nuts and flour over there and sell them here to make more profit When I was young I started out smuggling grain then ignames After that it was cola nuts And they finally caught me when I was smuggling gasoline You can make a lot of profit with gasoline If you buy ten jerrycans of it you have a profit of Cfa 50 000 I had already done it five times before they caught me I had Cfa 900 000 when they caught me They took all my money and I had to pay the same amount again to them because the smuggling of gasoline is forbidden [sic!] I already paid them another Cfa 540 000 So that leaves me with about Cfa 360,000 to pay But before they caught me I had already married out my daughter like I wanted to with lots of goods You see for a girl you can start buying kitchen utensils sheets etc while she is growing up For a boy you need to save money to buy nice pieces of cloth for his future wife to give at their wedding And as the fashion changes you cannot buy those beforehand

From her story we may conclude that some trade takes place in a formal circuit as custom duties are occasionally paid But most of the time the trade is illegal and the custom officers are bribed Almost everything one can think of is smuggled All sorts of foodstuffs and not only pots and pans clothes and gasoline but also petrol furniture cars carpets and many more articles Most goods are much cheaper in Nigeria But as Daada Abdelgader tells, she also takes along goods from Cameroon that are cheaper here The amount of money involved in her case is substantial But she was an extraordinary woman She was well known in the neighborhood for her trading activities Many children were regularly sent to her house to buy a missing ingredient for the daily meal Other women would make jokes about her though with an undertone of envy She had really just smuggled about everything

Let us hear another case a recently islamized Mafa woman Fatima who got involved in smuggling She started it after she islamized

"I learned to trade by watching the Muslim women My mother had only worked her fields"

This woman's husband is Mafa He came "down the mountains at the age of six, worked for the 'whites' in the thirties and islamized Fatima islamized about ten years ago because, as she said she loved her husband, though her parents objected She must have been about eighteen years of age then She lived in town Looking around, she saw all the women involved in trading activities and learned to do it quickly herself Her husband's first wife is a genius in trading, as the husband praisingly said and she watched her activities attentively It has been some years now since she started crossing the border with other women

"I had started out making *beignets* I saved the profit Then I bought things at the market and sold them on a 'trading table' in front of the house You make ten or fifteen francs profit on a tin of tomato sauce People will buy it from you when they need it instead of running to the market Then if you have saved enough money it just needs the decision to leave to Nigeria I did it for the first time about three years ago" [this means she started the end of 1986]

First she bought pots and pans in Nigeria to sell them in Cameroon These items are in high demand as components of a dowry She has been doing quite well But as she explains, it is quite a nuisance to travel with these goods, as the casseroles break easily, take much space, and are very difficult to carry She prefers to trade pieces of clothes and children's dresses nowadays She still trades in the streets sugar sweets, cola nuts etc As her husband is quite old too old to work himself, she also uses the money for household affairs Her income is definitely lower than that of Daada Abdelgader, whose trading activity is described above She saves a large part of the profit to pay for her daughter's dowry later on And she already invests in dishes and saucepans which she keeps in a secret place Also a large amount of the money is used to buy goods and to participate in the weddings of the children of her co-wives or her female friends She did not mention how much profit she made exactly but we can make a guess She is also involved in the 'tontine', the saving system so well known in Cameroon Every member pays an amount of money every week or month If for example you are with four person and give money every week once in every four weeks the other members pay you their amount Fatima pays Cfa 2,000 a week in one 'tontine' and Cfa 5,000 every fortnight in another She has an income of about Cfa 5 000 with her trade

The above examples demonstrate that some women are able to accumulate enough capital from petty trade to start smuggling

Men, of course, smuggle too, but they deal in other goods then women do They smuggle cars, bicycles or construction material. When men smuggle the same products as women, they will rather sell their commodities in shops at the market place. Women do not own shops in the market place because, as Fatima explains

> "It would not be honorable for a woman to sell her products in the market. Only elderly women can sell their pepper and salt. Besides, they bother you a lot if you sell at the market. You have to pay fees and you would have to start paying taxes on the profit you make "

Women sell their products in the street or they go directly to other people's homes Through participating in female circles women learn who is going to get married, so they are informed about who needs certain goods The reversal also takes place Women also know who is involved in smuggling activities So whenever they need certain objects, they can ask these women to buy the goods they want when they cross the border again

At first sight these smuggling activities seem to take place in the informal circuit, just like the petty trade activities. Chazan (1989 126) regards smuggling as one of the first signs of the emergence of an informal economy Informal economy, in turn, is a manifestation of economic separation of state and social groups. If we take a closer look at the development from petty trade to smuggling in Mokolo we could argue that the reversal takes place. Women start to interact with state representatives when they start smuggling. Do they not need to bribe the customs officers, or else pay them? Do they not acquire economic resources, part of which they redistribute to bribe the customs officers? Before we delve more deeply into this matter, we will consider how the accumulated capital is invested, once it has been earned through either petty trade or smuggling

VI 3 Investment in marriage payments

As we have mentioned several times, the capital women accumulate is invested in the marriage payments From the cases of Daada Abdelgader and Fatima, we learn that women start to save utensils for their daughter's weddings when they are still young [164]. As pointed out in the previous chapter, they invest not only

[164] Meaning about the age of four Girls marry at quite an early age As we know from the previous chapter it used to be twelve or thirteen Many women agree nowadays that this is too young and say they will wait awhile They say they will only marry their daughters out when they have reached the age of fourteen or fifteen

money in their own daughter s weddings They need to be able to contribute to the wedding of friends and it is a necessity to contribute to those of relatives

VI 3.1 Women's savings system

The investment in the dowry of female friends and relatives is an important savings account for the wedding of one's own daughter The women literally call it a banking system

> 'Even if you are not very rich, you give a little It is like bank credit If you give, people will give you in return when your own daughter is going to get married If you are poor, they will understand that you cannot give much People who have money can give a present of a larger amount of money in return If you have given a large present to somebody and your own daughter is going to get married and they do not have very much money at that moment you will understand and accept a gift that has less value That does not really matter But you should never return something of an equal value that is an insult [165] The value may, of course, be higher too So you give and give during the time your daughters grow up to have it returned when they get married '

The fact that they actually describe it as a banking system is of course, very interesting considering our point of departure economic occupations and the accumulation of resources, the autonomy of these processes and the eventual relationship to 'the state When discussing an alternative saving system we need to mention again the *tontine* that is so popular in West Africa The women I mentioned in this article were all involved in a *tontine* relation It works as follows, for example four women made an agreement, that they will each give cfa 1 000 a week which will be given to one of the four This means that once in every four weeks, they themselves get this amount of money
We already mentioned the amount in Fatima's case, she saves Cfa 4 500 (Hfl 31,50) a week The woman in the other case saved Cfa 2 000 (Hfl 14,) every week with eleven other people So once every three months she will get Cfa 24 000 (Hfl 168,-) Nearly all the women (and men) we met make use of a *tontine* So one can imagine how much money is involved in this alternative system which is obviously not controlled by the state

The state is not involved in these 'saving-systems' From the cases we described and the results of research we may conclude that most of the women's profit is

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[165] We may recall from the previous chapter that the same was the case when money is returned by the father of the bride to the father of the groom

made in the illegal sector through smuggling or in the informal sector by petty trading. Much of their money is used again to buy material that is traded in the illegal or informal circles. The only relation with the state seems to take place in negotiations with the customs officers.

VI 3.2 An unproductive form of accumulation?

Taking all this into consideration, we may conclude that the women's economy in Mokolo is very much an autonomous sphere. At first, the necessity to accumulate capital comes from within, from the urge to invest in marriage payments. According to the neo-classical economic viewpoint, this would be called non-productive activity, since both these activities and the acquired resources are not reinvested in economically productive, efficient, and profitable enterprises. What then do women gain from this 'process of non-accumulation'? The answer is quite simple, status. This may be concluded from the fact that the wealth is so conspicuously displayed In the house of the bride as well as in the house of the groom, the collected material is exhibited to the visitors When the female relatives of the groom have transferred the suitcases with cloth to the bride's house, the contents are carefully counted. The utensils from the house of the bride are carried to the house of the groom on the women's heads, to be seen by all passers-by. The women are yodelling as they walk and obviously attract the attention of the people in town

This whole circulation of goods and capital in the informal and illegal sectors looks like a closed circuit Yet we should keep in mind that status pays in hierarchical Fulbe society: status means profit. A woman who is known to make a lot of profit, like Daada Abdelgader, is supposed to contribute a lot to weddings Yet she gets even more in return. For example, people will buy at her place more readily. The importance of status in this system of non-accumulation is illustrated by our last case.

VI 3.3 State-related economic activities and status

Women can also get involved in the official economic system. That happens if the investment in the dowry pattern reaches the saturation point while women continue to trade or smuggle. Many women stop accumulating capital at this point They no longer feel the necessity to continue. Their daughters are married, and they have a stock of goods given to them by the groom's family They can use it to fulfil further obligations, and they prefer to sit quietly at home

Yet the following case is a good example of a woman who continued to accumulate capital by her trading activities and who invested this money in a productive way

This is the case of Daada Maimouna, (whose mother had been captured as a slave p) About 1925 the mother returned to Mokolo with her husband and started to cultivate

> She earned enough money to invest in the marriage payments of her daughter who recounts
>
> In those days [her first marriage must have taken place about 35 years ago] the amount was not as much as it is now You did not have these modern plates dishes casseroles and bowls Just the oldfashioned calabashes and *beddou* s (lids for the calabashes) and some plates My mother taught me how to trade She herself cultivated But from the peanuts she made oil So I learned because as a girl I left for the market to sell this oil for her She herself always found some time to trade too even up to now The first year after I married I did nothing just the household affairs It was lovely not having to think of anything to have no worries just to sit and cook and eat But when I got children I thought it was better to start doing something because my child would need materials later on So I started to trade cola nuts First I bought small quantities from the people who went to Madagali and had bought them there I sold them again in Mokolo Then I started to travel to Madagali myself to buy them and sell large quantities here in Mokolo [This must have been about ten to fifteen years ago] I got double the price here Afterwards I bought large quantities of peppers I ground them and sold them at the market Then I started to trade the dishes and plates I bought them in Mobi in Nigeria and sold them here My daughter also did some of this trading for me She did not need permission of her husband as she was divorced and lived in the household of her father [not with her though as she had long ago divorced him] By that time my children were married already so I could save quite a bit of money
>
> What happened was that she reinvested the money she accumulated in some larger enterprises [166] She got the amount needed to start the enterprise through the 'tontine When she established these enterprises she had to start paying normal customs and taxes on the money she earns This woman did well with her enterprises She has again accumulated capital enough to fulfil one of the five duties also mentioned by Uthman

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[166] Which are not described here in detail for reasons of privacy

dan Fodio of the Islamic religion she made the pilgrimage to Mecca When she returned she had become *Hadja* a person who had been to Mecca somebody with high status

This example shows that when a saturation point has been reached concerning investment in the marriage payments or when women get older and have married their daughters out they can enter the official economic system In the official economic system this woman accumulated more capital Though she still had to pay off the investments she had made in her enterprise she found enough money to go to Mecca The pilgrimage made her a very important woman in town and she will be highly respected in the community This fact leads us to conclude that status is what women gain in these process of non-accumulation

Yet there is more to it As we said status pays When people go to Mecca they go there to fulfil their religious duty but they also trade They take goods along on their way They will certainly come back with silver coins that can be melted and made into jewelry and when sold bring new profit This woman though she was making good money still continued with her own petty trade She went to the market nearly every day to sell her ground pepper She also contributed to a *tontine* With twelve other people she paid an amount of Cfa 12 000 a month which will give each of the members a payment of Cfa 200 000 (Hfl 1 400) once a year In the last section we will consider how these economic activities of women are related to the ideology with which we are concerned here

VI 3.4 Women's activity, gender ideology and marriage payments of 'boys'

The cases cited above demonstrate that women can and must accumulate capital in Mokolo by various activities In most cases these profits are not used for daily household needs or food as Muslim men have the duty to provide these Of course in poor families or when the men are becoming too old like in the case of Fatima or have died as in the case of Daada Abdelgader this is not always possible Whenever women start to contribute money to household affairs men have less authority over their economically active wives If he asks her to remain inside the courtyard she can always ignore his demand pointing out that she must provide for the family

How do women manage when their husbands provide them with all the necessities and thus ideally need to remain inside the home? How do they cope with the gender role Uthman dan Fodio prescribed?

There is a division of the things men and women can trade The petty trade of women is very often limited to food that can be traded from the house *Beignets* made from flour that is bought will often be sold from the house In other cases

the selling will be done by young children or Mafa boys who come to town to find' some money They are a necessary feature of women s economic life in Mokolo at least in the area of petty trade These 'boys need the money just as much as the women need their help if at least they do not want to violate the rules Uthman dan Fodio described concerning women s activities Thus they provide a reciprocal service to each other But what about smuggling?

We must keep in mind that islamized women in Mokolo were not used to remaining inside in their pre Islamic period Though they will all cite the rules when asked many of them take them more lightly than Fulbe women As Fatima's husband complained

> 'The Mafa women in the mountains they are nice They take care their husband doesn t hit the road with an empty stomach in the morning, like the women of the white men That is how it should be Now Fulbe women are also nice They get up early in the morning to prepare 'porridge' *gari* for their husbands But the Mafa women who are islamized they are the ones that cause trouble because they do not know any rule right anymore '
>
> Yet at the same time he was very proud of the capacities of his first wife in particular She made much profit and was able to trade about nearly everything as he said

Smuggling is done by the women themselves The one step further case of Daada Maimouna indicates that in larger enterprises the boys are needed again

> Daada Maimouna could not possibly run her enterprises on her own She hired Mafa boys to assist her She paid them a weekly salary of cfa 5 000 (Ftl 35,) When asked What if there were no boys how would you manage?' Daada Maimouna replied that there always were and will be Mafa 'boys to help women out

The last remark emphasizes that Muslim women are aware that Mafa youngsters in turn have to earn money for their eventual marriage payments Mafa boys and Muslim women provide reciprocal service to each other in regard to enhancing the ability to save for their respective marriage payments

VI 3.5 The fruits of civilization

We should finally mention the latest development concerning women s economic occupations As the hegemony of the Fulbe decreased since 1984 non-Islamic men started to occupy official functions in the state apparatus At the same time they also took important places in the Mokolo market Mafa women are getting more and more involved in other economic activities besides selling their home

grown vegetables, especially as many of them came to live on the outskirts of town where they have hardly any access to land. The majority of non-Islamic Mafa women in town still make a living by selling home-made beer. But they increasingly discover the profits that can be made in trade, in processing of foodstuffs, and in smuggling. The Fulbe women, who note these changes in the occupations of non-Islamic women, explain them as the fruits of 'civilization'. Mafa women, however, do not have to invest their profits in their daughter's marriage payments. Let us offer a cautious suggestion that these changes may eventually lead to a breakthrough in women's autonomous economy in Mokolo. By "breakthrough" I mean that in the future Mafa women might be able to accumulate capital and that they might apply it to more economically profitable enterprises as they do not need to invest it in marriage payments. But this will only be possible if the current 'crisis' does not devastate Cameroon.

Our last example therefore is from a non-islamized Mafa woman. She earned money in the formal economic system by a paid job and saved Cfa 100,000,- (Hfl 700,-) through the *tontine*. It is interesting to find out how she invested her money, as she has no dowry to take care of.

> "I bought a bull for Cfa. 50,000 (Hfl 350,-).[167] For the other Cfa 50,000,- I bought the material for the roof of the new house I wanted to construct. I slaughtered the bull and sold the meat. By that I made a profit of Cfa 20,000,- (Hfl 140,-) With these twenty thousand I paid the people to construct the walls and I had money left to pay the hospital bill for my mother.
>
> But I also helped my brother to get married.[168] I was angry at first because I thought he was too young to get married, but I ended up buying him things. So you see, we also invest in marriages. I bought clothes for his wife, so did my mother, not because we want to copy the Fulbe customs. It is just that we need to dress well when we are living in town."

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[167] That is an interesting feature too, as the bull in Mafa society is so much associated with masculinity. Apparently much remains to be researched in this society!

[168] That again is an interesting new feature. Mafa women helping their brothers to fulfil their marriage payments.

VI 4 Marriage payments and accumulation: a conclusion

In this chapter we wished to find out how women accumulate the capital for the marriage payments in this Islamic community. At first we indicated the difference in economic activities between the non Islamic and Islamic women which was revealed by some of the results of my census. The activities of women in the Muslim community consist of petty trade, landlordism on a very small scale and smuggling.

This overview of the economic affairs of women in Mokolo allows us to draw some conclusions. Most of the occupations of women lie outside the formal economy. Few of them have regular paid jobs or are involved in a formal business. That is they do not have shops - or access to the means to establish such shops at the market place, like the men have. These shops can be controlled by the state officials however. Women buy and sell their products in an informal circuit that is difficult to control and is often related to smuggling activities. Chazan considered these female operated enterprises as one of the first signs of the emergence of an informal economy and as a manifestation of the economic separation of the state and social groups.

Further women's accumulation is not invested in state controlled projects. Instead it is invested in marriage payments. They themselves describe this pattern as a banking system and it mainly serves the female half of society.

Thirdly whenever women need credit they never go to an official bank, many women are involved in the popular alternative savings system known in West Africa as *tontines*.[169]

All these aspects make the women's economy in Mokolo very much an autonomous sphere within the economy of Cameroon. To analyze women's economic activities a society based approach is not only more appropriate but also a necessity. We would never have been able to grasp women's activities had we used a state-centric approach. Women's activities are hardly visible without detailed ethnographic anthropological knowledge, such as the insight into the intricacies of the marriage prestations.

Women can operate within the existing gender ideology which prescribes that they remain inside the courtyard by enlisting the help of Mafa boys. These are

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[169] As I briefly mentioned in the first chapter lately women groups have been formed in Mokolo town in which non islamized as well as islamized Mafa women interact. They form new credit systems for women. As this developments is still very recent I have not been able to consider its impact in these conclusions. It will be one of my topics for a next research.

male youngsters who came to town to earn money for their own future marriage payment We could regard this as a new form of slavery a well known phenomenon in the former Fulbe society, yet these boys need the money just as much as the women need their help Thus we concluded that young Mafa men and Muslim women provide a reciprocal service to each other by enhancing the ability to save for their respective marriage payments

However, we may wonder if Chazan and Parpart are not exaggerating African women's aloofness from state affairs Their economic activities include smuggling even though they operate in the informal sector of the economy they do enter into a relation with the state Don't they need to bribe the custom officers to be able to smuggle? An interesting comparison concerns the acquisition and utilization of resources as Mbembe described them for the African post colonial state in general Women acquire economic resources (by smuggling), part of which they have to redistribute to bribe the custom officers to be able to continue their activities In regard to the utilization of these resources this would imply a system of non-production or non-accumulation Women do not seem to invest their capital in economically productive affairs but in the obligations they have to contribute to marriage payments Where the state gains political control through this process of non accumulation, women gain status from their investment in the system of marriage payments which eventually pays off

Finally what about Chazan and Parpan s argument that women benefit from the state's decline? Is it right to suggest as they do that women are hardly affected by the current 'crisis' that has struck Cameroon as a state? Unfortunately, the answer is no An increase in men s income influences the whole economic conjuncture, so also women's trade In the Islamic society of Mokolo the man needs to provide for his wives and children But he may have less money because of a change in public expenditure which may influence his direct income if he has a job paid by the state (as Baaba Rahmani had) Then the women will also get less At the same time women are confronted with rising costs of living higher school fees, etc In that event women will probably need to help their husbands out sooner than they do if they follow the rule prescribed by Uthman dan Fodio that men need to provide for their wives and children If the men have less money, they will spend less on the items they buy from the women in the street like processed food If a man gives his wives less they will buy less from the other women For example, they may drop the oranges they usually buy from Daada Abdelgader as additional ingredients of the daily menu As a result women will not be able to make as much profit as before

All the women in Mokolo know about the current crisis of the state Lately it is even used as an argument when they are not able to contribute sufficiently to

marriage payments. Consequently, a decline in the material wealth given to the young girls may occur. This will affect the quantity and quality of goods needed for weddings. Those items will thus less be smuggled or traded by women, leading anew to declining profits. The downward spiral seems to have only just started.

The son of the author with friends

Author at work in the field

Chapter VII
From Muted Witnesses to Traders. Summary and Conclusions

The aim of this book was to depict the Mafa's process of conversion to Islam Specifically the intention was to discuss the effects of conversion on gender relations, to elucidate the motives of women, and to describe the actual changes conversion brought about An anthropological approach allowed us to understand Islamization as a historical process and to consider in what ways Islam had been adopted and integrated into Mafa society We chose to focus on women when looking at this process Our overall objective was to make a modest contribution to the understanding of women's role in the process of Islamization in sub Saharan Africa by analyzing women s position in a particular Islamic society We sought to discover how Islam affected the former tribal' tradition of Mafa women To this end, it seemed best to review the traditional positions of Mafa women on a religious a ritual and an economic level Then marriage decisions and bridewealth arrangements were also taken into account As the concept of gender includes the female as well as the male part of the population women's roles could not be isolated from those of men Thus they were considered in connection with the religious and economic activities of men Accordingly also the voices of men are given attention and thought to be important

VII 1 Mokolo and its history

In the first part of the thesis we got acquainted with the context of the Mafa people their environment their area and their historical background In this context Islam appeared as an alternative one could adapt to

We elaborated on the background of the Fulbe, the people who more or less conquered the Mafa and brought about the process of Islamization at the beginning of this century The Fulbe used Islam as an ethnic marker whereby aspects of their pre-Islamic culture were incorporated in their new religious life Therefore it proved necessary to occasionally delve into their pre Islamic past It seemed also pertinent to provide a snapshot description of Mafa life Then we went on to analyze the different waves of their conversion to Islam in this century In doing so we considered whether the actual process of conversion that constituted these waves was different for men and women

After the First World War the English and French took over the territory from the Germans At that time many slaves who had been captured and adopted

Islam as their religion returned to their original surroundings They came to live in Mokolo next to the residential areas of the Fulbe In this first wave of Islamization the process for men and women proved to be the same The fact that Mokolo was acknowledged as a political center a *lamudat* with different villages under its jurisdiction attracted other Islamized people This occurred especially after the French colonial occupation when it became a French administrative center A second wave of Islamization followed Here a division emerged between the motives for Islamization of men and women Both were often adopted by or given to Islamic families But men were also drawn to town to find a job and earn money During the colonial period but especially afterwards the well known push and pull factors to urbanize and Islamize played an increasing role The process of Islamization increased after independence An important reason was that Islam was the religion of the first president of Cameroon Ahidjo and the politically dominant elite in the North This was the third wave of Islamization Here again a difference emerged between the adoption of Islam by men and women As women were not seeking jobs in the public sector, they had far less of an economic motive to Islamize But they often came to live with Islamic relatives and consequently Islamized Women more often Islamized at a later age men changed religion before marriage but once married they were not likely to convert any more

It became evident that the creation of Mokolo could only be understood against the background of the political and ethnic history of North Cameroon At the beginning of this century the region became a more centralized state society This along with the fact that members of the Islamic community regard Islamization as synonymous with civilization brought to mind the work of the sociologist Elias Naturally, we were careful to make a clear distinction between the society under study and the process in the European societies on which he based his theories

We then investigated the history of Mokolo in the context of the spread of Islam in West Africa including the role of Uthman dan Fodio the founder of the Sokoto empire This empire also influenced North Cameroon and eventually led to Fulbe hegemony in this area In depicting the reckless invasions in the region, we listened to the stories of the Mafa people In this way we tried to get an image of how they experienced invasion slavery and domination by the Fulbe The relation between Mokolo Madagali and Yola was described in the context of the Sokoto empire From the beginning of this century onwards Mokolo was politically incorporated by the Madagali court *lamudat* until the German colonial invaders were defeated by the French and the English Mokolo then came under French colonial reign and Madagali was taken by the English colonizers We

pointed out that the *lamubé* in Mokolo were closely related to the Madagali court and described how the Mafa kept rejecting this Fulbe domination in the course of this century Also the French met with great resistance when they tried to dominate the Mafa people until they appointed a Mafa *lamido* a *chef de race* as they called it This new chieftancy attracted more Mafa people - men directly and women more indirectly - to town The fact that this Mafa lamido was Islamic and not one of the former oppressors certainly made it easier for these newcomers to subsequently islamize
We looked at recent political developments The sentiments of Mafa people concerning the former slave raids and Fulbe domination got new impetus and were used in political pamphlets from certain political parties A clear division in voting behavior seems to emerge between the Islamized and the non-Islamized Mafa population Further research concerning these topics is needed

Finally we reviewed Uthman dan Fodio s statements concerning women within the Islamic community Several aspects - which we as Westerners tend to interpret as negative or positive - were worth our attention The inferior status of women is underlined by their impure status during menstruation the fact that recalcitrant women could be punished and their freedom of movement
More positive is the fact that husbands were obliged to provide for their wives and children Moreover women had a right to go to court to plead their own cases They could go on a pilgrimage and had a right to religious as well as secular education Most revolutionary was his advice to women to disobey or even leave their husbands if they were refused these rights A woman had a right to dowry and property which should be hers and hers alone

Thus we came to the second part of the thesis which dealt with the motives for change among the Mafa people and women in particular During the anthropological fieldwork to the results of which we in the second part devoted our attention we tried to get a close look at the processes that actually took place on a religious level within the important rituals of the society, between bride givers and bridetakers within economic activities and in individual lives

VII 2 We left out jars behind

In regard to the theological readjustments that took place after Islamization we concluded that the cosmology underwent a major change The Mafa take a circular view of existence they believe in re incarnation in a life after death underneath the earth Islam has a linear view of life and the after-life Everything

lies in the hands of Allah and demands are made directly upon him People go to heaven or hell after this life and continue to live forever after

In Mafa religion the difference between God and humans is bridged by the lesser spirits There are tutelary spirits - called *guid pat* and represented by a jar and minor gods who are of the same order yet different The tutelary spirits have a dual nature They are related to humans all persons in society children included, personally sacrifice to them The minor gods are single and not related to humans In Islamic religion angels have no intermediary function as one can only pray directly to God
In the Mafa cosmological system, a person and a soul-eater *nude*, are opposite - ordinary and evil - beings yet both humans This remains the same after Islamization though the name of the soul-eater changes After Islamization, both the Marabouts and the traditional healer are visited in cases of misfortune When a Mafa healer demands a sacrifice a woman can ask her father - if he has not converted to perform it in her stead since she has lost her ritual status by converting to Islam

We remarked that there are obvious elements of belief that facilitate change of religion First of all, the Supreme Being of the different religions *Ngile* and *Allah*, is considered to be the same Secondly the character of the evil beings that eat souls has hardly changed except that after Islamization they are believed to be women Yet many features remain that make the change remarkable Honoring the tutelary spirits the different spirits and the ancestors is no longer considered relevant the rites are therefore abandoned

Using Horton s terminology we stated that Islam penetrated the microcosm of Mafa society when Mokolo was established as an Islamic center and not as a result of people's sojourns to widen their horizons Before this actually happened they kept resisting Islam as did many afterwards We noted that Islamization and urbanization were concomitant processes Young Mafa men easily left to town, because they did not yet have the responsibilities older men have in society They thus became part - be it for economic reasons or otherwise - of the Islamic community Once they were in the Islamic community in Mokolo they were in a different religious environment the boundaries of the microcosm were extended Many of them subsequently Islamized Nowadays people can move to these urban settings and yet stay in the Mafa community In combination with the new political situation this resulted in a slow down of the process of Islamization

That did not explain the remarkable fact that women not only Islamize and change their lifestyle when young, but also do so very often at a later age When men stick to their traditional religion, they condemn their daughters if they decide to change religion When women Islamize, they relinquish their whole microcosm We concluded that Horton's theory failed to provide a basis for understanding women s conversion as it did not look at the different positions men and women have within the structure of the basic cosmology

From the analyses of the Mafa religious system, we saw that the female presence in religious affairs is indispensable Men cannot perform the necessary sacrifices without the physical presence of women Yet they are literally muted witnesses while men perform the necessary sacrifices

In this particular context conversion was easier for women because they always had been less concerned with the minor gods Moreover performance of their religious acts implied no responsibility for the whole community Women also used to leave behind the jar for their tutelary god, their *guid pat* when they ran off to another husband These conditions facilitated an easy departure

Another important factor is connected with women s motives While they gave all sorts of reasons conversion was often connected with illness or loss of their children, or the fact that they did not bear any more children In such cases according to traditional religion they were dependent on their husbands to undertake action go to a diviner etc In the new religion Islam they can pray by themselves, go to the diviner themselves, simply act on their own

We posited that the processes of conversion about which Horton theorized can be better understood if these are differentiated along gender lines Women's and men's interactions, roles and symbolic presence within traditional non-Islamic culture are different We thus found that once Mafa men became head of a household they had a different stake in 'traditional' religion than women

Our findings also contradicted the views of Trimingham For Hausa society he suggested that women were inclined to hold on longer to former cults after Islamization and that the worlds of men and women diverge as far as religion is concerned Mafa women are less apt to stick to their Mafa religious and cultural roles They change easily if they think conversion is in their interest In many cases it was because they were fed up with the men s monopoly of authority on an 'overt' level We may recall Maama Laila s remark 'They didn t have a say over me any more

If attention was still paid to the microcosm after conversion it would be much more likely for men to be more conservative than women Women are not conservative by the fact that in some societies they are symbolically related to 'nature', as Ardener seem to suggest If they stick to old traditions it is because

those forms serve their immediate interests, or because women perform concrete activities in the old religion. If not, as in the case of Mafa women, they change readily. Being more or less conservative is intimately connected with the benefits it yields.

In Mafa religion, women were indispensable, yet dependent. After Islamization, they become independent. They can pray five times a day on their own initiative.

VII.3 From God as 'Two' to God as 'One'

In this chapter we considered the many rituals of the Mafa, the position of women within these rituals, whether this position influenced their process of conversion, and if they were still performed after people adopted the Islamic faith.

We discussed the twin ritual and the associated symbols as one of the pillars of Mafa symbolic order. Twins are considered the ultimate manifestation of the 'double person' (divine principle) that every human being is. We analyzed this ritual with help of the three dimensions distinguished by Turner. The conclusion was reached that the structuring of Mafa society is reflected in the twin ritual. Twins are 'two' and have special powers. They must be respected. They are the direct offspring of the divine world and can cause harm if the rules of behavior towards them are not followed.

Not only twins but also women are associated with the number 'two', with evenness, and hence are also associated with the primordial past. Through the ritual, the ordering of society, which is dominated by men, who in turn are associated with three, 'unevenness' was restored.

The symbols that became evident from the twin ritual were then brought into connection with the bull ritual, a men's ritual. The outcome was striking. This men's ritual was interspersed with the structuring principle of two. In other words, a balance between unevenness and evenness, or here and now society and the primordial past was pursued. We finally concluded that the birth of twins stands to the offering of the bull as feminine creation to masculine creation.

Evenness is associated with the primordial past, which we refused to call 'chaos'. This past is the source of all living beings and thus is sacred. This is emphasized by the expression that 'twins look with two eyes'. In other words they have supernatural powers. By implication twins can never be born of a *nude*, an evil being. The water spirit, *nihed*, plays an intermediary role between the sources of being and human society.

Harvest rituals and other festivities that take place in Mafa society, underscored the importance of the patrilineage for sons as well as for daughters. By analyzing the various rituals of Mafa society we found that gender relations are expressed

on two different levels an overt level, which is associated with society here and now, and a hidden level These levels are complementary Relations between the genders are fundamentally symmetrical and interdependent Moreover the positions held by women and men are as different within the symbolic system as within religion Yet women can be considered the key to Mafa cosmology If women are absent the Mafa compound is isolated It can no longer be regarded as the center of the world the image of the universe From their symbolic association, it became clear that women are symbolically connected with the primordial past But men are responsible for the here and now for society and its continuity Again this suggests that women convert more easily after being married and having had children in the Mafa community because they have no responsibility on an overt level

After Islamization women and men no longer perform any of the rituals We find less ritualized festivities within the Muslim community where instead it is emphasized over and over again that there is but One God and that is Allah
To understand why all these rituals are abandoned after Islamization we reviewed the different waves of Islamization again Apart from the fact that libations of beer - important ingredients in the rituals were heavily condemned by Uthman dan Fodio the Mafa rituals are so closely intertwined with Mafa society at large that there is no need for them in a totally different community one in which the patriclan and the patrilineal descent system no longer count After Islamization Mafa people also abandon the cosmological order in which doubleness, associated with the primordial past, is an important ordering principle The spiral view of life, dying five times and taking up life underneath the earth is exchanged for a linear view of life, dying and leaving for paradise
According to Islam, death life and fertility are in the hands of Allah After Islamization, the converts still believe that twins have special powers, but they are no longer aligned with powers of the universe Human beings must beware of them but rituals to restore the social order no longer need to be performed The same applies to the water spirit It is important but does not play an intermediary role between this life and the time before birth
The harvest rituals stressed the relation between the patriarch and his relatives, male as well as female This relationship is no longer necessary in the Islamic community, because the whole clan system has lost its relevance At the same time, millet is no longer a dominant symbol Thus, the rituals no longer need to be performed
Elderly men often objected to the Islamization of their daughter because of the special relation a father has with his eldest daughter We found that she and his other daughters have important functions in the various rituals especially in

taking care of their father's funeral rites Besides that he can also expect all sorts of signs of respect from his sons-in-law Yet women can and do act on their own They also do so when they change husbands though conversion is definitely easier after death of their father

Like Mafa society Islamic society is also patrilineal However it lacks the two intertwined levels the importance of men on an overt level and the importance of femininity on a hidden level Though the 'public life of the genders is very much segregated both men and women can act on their own on a religious level - and a ritual one as far as it still exists

We searched further Though conversion may be easy because the Mafa have one God whom they consider to be the same as Allah the nature of God changed God, *Ngile* who was two him (her)self and his (her) tutelary spirit *guud pat* became One, as 'there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Messenger' The selection of another name for God seemed to be a superficial act But it turned out to be profound on a submerged level We looked at the associations that exist of two with plurality evenness femininity in opposition to Unity Within the Islamic community the infinite of what preceded society has melted away in the linear view of the new religion A person no longer needs to balance the uneven (male) representing the order of society and the even (female) the sacredness of the primordial past

Here we also found the answer to another question After people embrace Islam, the world of the primordial past changes from plurality into unity and on a submerged level, from 'feminine' to 'masculine' In Mafa society women needed to be taken into account because of the implications of this submerged level In the Islamic community such is no longer the case Though women are more respected on the 'overt level the sexes are no longer symmetrically interdependent as Islamic men no longer need not to take evenness related to women into account

VII 4 Marriage decision making and prestations

Several times we referred to the changes in the clan system after Islamization In this chapter we made a comparison between the Mafa marriage system and prestations and the corresponding rules in the Islamic community We wished to find out what women s roles and voices were in these matters

In the clan exogamous marriage system of the Mafa the voice of the mother concerning the marriage partner of her daughter proved to be the most important one The Fulbe marriage system was ideologically endogamous though in the history of Mokolo they frequently intermarried with other ethnic groups or slaves

We reviewed the preference and though all Islamized Mafa people referred to the endogamous system nobody actually did marry someone of the same clan The important voice of the mother seemed to have disappeared However in the Islamic community, the marriage prestations and payments are taken over by the women of the community whereas in the Mafa community this was a male affair We elaborated on this complicated gift-exchange system in the Islamic community This is taken over by the new converts and their affines as soon as they can afford it, because by doing so they find acceptance within the community

We further discovered that virginity in Mafa society is not considered important - though a girl should never become pregnant while living under the roof of her father In the Islamic community, however virginity is much appreciated

In Mafa society, the father and the daughter maintain a relation with each other that is ritually structured This is embedded in the rituals Consequently the bridetakers owe much respect to the bridegivers In Fulbe society the father and his daughter maintain an avoidance relation though she does keep in contact with him The father in-law and the son in law have no contact at all with each other The mother of the bride and her daughter have warm relations but the son in law will avoid the mother as much as possible because of shame *semteende* She in turn, will approach him in a respectful way

In cases of divorce when a Mafa woman leaves to go to her next husband nothing is taken along She cannot even take her children with her In the Islamic community a woman is entitled to take all the possessions she received upon marriage with her Her children remain part of the father s patrilineage But when her partner is a parallel cousin she is too Depending on the husband, she can take her children along or have them raised with her mother s relatives as a woman may fear ill treatment by a co wife In most cases they however stay in the compound of their father

By contributing to weddings women gain acceptance in the Islamic community

VII 5 Dowry, Trade and Smuggling

The survey revealed the difference in economic activities between non Islamic and Islamic women This is partly due to the new system of marriage payments and prestations in Mokolo The system compels Muslim women to take up various other activities since they are expected to contribute to their children s weddings as well as those of their friends and relatives Unlike Fulbe women Islamized Mafa women have no cattle to sell the proceeds of which may then be

invested in the dowry After conversion to Islam, Mafa women will therefore have to take up gainful occupations To meet such requirements, Mafa women in Mokolo engage in petty trade landlordism on a small scale and smuggling Most of the occupations of women lie outside the formal economy Women buy and sell their products in an informal circuit that is difficult to control by state agents and is often related to smuggling activities

We used recent debates concerning the relation between state and society in sub Saharan Africa to help us to discuss these economic strategies in a wider context We found out that women s economy in Mokolo appeared to be an autonomous sphere within the economy of Cameroon Several reasons we identified for this autonomy

Smuggling can be considered as one of the first signs that an informal economy is emerging It is a manifestation of the economic separation of the state and social groups Further women s accumulation is not invested in state-controlled projects but in marriage payments Women themselves describe this as a banking system Thirdly when women need credit, they never go to an official bank Instead they take part in the popular alternative savings system known in West Africa as *tontine*

Had we not used a society based approach we would not have been able to analyze women s economic activities These are hardly visible without detailed anthropological knowledge such as insight into the intricacies of marriage prestations

Women can operate within the existing gender ideology which prescribes that they remain inside the courtyard by enlisting the help of Mafa boys These are male youngsters who came to town to earn money for their own future marriage payment We concluded that young Mafa men and Muslim women provide a reciprocal service to each other by enhancing the ability to save for their respective marriage payments

However we considered the idea of African women s aloofness from state affairs exaggerated Even though women operate in the informal sector of the economy when they smuggle, they do enter into a relation with the state by having to bribe the customs officers Through this process of non accumulation women gain status, which eventually pays off

Women do not benefit from the state s decline Muslim women too are affected by the current crisis that has struck the state of Cameroon Their menfolk need to provide for them as wives and children When less money can be earned in the public sector this has a negative affect on women s income and material position Subsequently it has repercussions on the whole autonomous sphere of earning and investing in the marriage p ryments

VII 6 Final conclusions

Due to historical events Islam developed into a valid alternative for Mafa people reason why we gave due attention to the recent history of Mafa people With conversion people underwent a radical change in lifestyle Mafa as an ethnic marker came to be replaced by Islam as a religious marker We never encountered Mafa people who claimed to be ethnically Fulbe Their former clan system imbued them with a deep feeling not to marry into one s own clan By implication one must not marry a person from the same clan And by extension one cannot accept the clan system of the Fulbe in which the endogamous marriage system is preferred Thus one could not claim to be Fulbe
We presented many arguments of why Mafa people changed religion It seems impossible to distil one clear cut reason from the plethora of motivations

We did discover why the antecedents and the processes differ for men and women In Mafa religion and ritual life men and women occupy different positions Men are responsible for the well being of society and need to perform sacrifices Though women had to be present during sacrifices they were muted attendants During the men s rituals or special male sacrifices in the interest of warfare they were present on a symbolic level Men had to take women into account literally by counting two four eight
We found that men change religion often less after adulthood than women do The reason lies in the division of labor within religious and ritual affairs In these areas women have no direct responsibilities for the welfare of the whole community
In Mafa society a woman could harm the community though not by the evil she causes All evil comes from *Irgilé* the Supreme Being Rather she can harm the community by not being respected according to the rules of behavior towards her - counting wrong during rituals for example or by her curse The latter was very much related to the patrilineal clan system and the relations fathers maintained with their daughters Bride takers owed respect to bride givers and the patriclan of the wife the mother to be of the future children always had to be respected
The Mafa do not have an overall political system Yet the important public functions within traditional society like mountain chief cricket chief and rainmaker - were performed by men Also new political functions like quarter chief chief of a sub division of the political party and *lamido* are assigned to men

In this particular context, conversion appeared to be easier for women They had always been, contrarily to men less concerned with the minor gods Their religious acts entailed no responsibility for the community as a whole
Within Islam, there is no active public role for women Yet their religious life and experiences become more independent from men
We may argue that Mafa men have a lot to lose on an overt level when they Islamize The concept of *Pulaaku*, brought into the religion by the Fulbe, denotes a demand for introvert behavior and no overt sign of emotion, be it anger or happiness To comply with this demand, Islamized Mafa men need to respect their womenfolk more yet can fear them less as they no longer can be cursed by them
But can we find advantages that give women reason to Islamize? We could argue that they gain the right to education which they can put to use, they can become religious teachers or employ their skills in offices just as men Yet this was never mentioned as a reason to Islamize
It may be considered an anticlimax to conclude that we cannot give one clear-cut answer Yet it is not We have given various reasons why women Islamized more easily than men We have given literal statements and we have been reiterating the main reason all along this thesis Women change religion when they consider this to be to their advantage Often this was as we saw because they could not bear any more children or most of their children died Mafa women without sons will end up all alone They will have nobody to live with when they get old Yet in the Islamic community they will be taken care of even when they have not Islamized, as some examples demonstrated Having no children is less of an issue in the Islamic community as they easily adopt other children This was the start of a total new life for many Mafa youngsters as described in the historical chapters
When women Islamized at a younger age before marriage so having no children could not be the cause of their search for an alternative the reasons also varied They did not like the heavy workload they were attracted by a male member of the Islamic society, or as one young woman said Women within the Islamic community are prettier I like to be pretty!
This argument is part of another reason we encountered all along in the thesis It is the fact that throughout history Islamization was associated with Civilization It was presented as such not only by the Islamic community but also by the Colonial Government and the Government of the Cameroonian State after Independence Ethnic affiliations disappeared when people became part of the Islamic community This could initially have buttressed the nation building activities of the state Only recently has Mafa lifestyle been accepted as equally

valuable This is because it suits the efforts of some political parties to get more votes

We sometimes heard women say 'We did not get any clothes even when the government had proclaimed that we should wear them Not only was clothing a sign of civilization also the possessions the newly wed wives could store in their house reflected their civilized status As said earlier the new system of marriage payments was never mentioned as a reason to Islamize The informants were sincere, it was not the gifts that counted but the fact that it was a sign of civilization And wanting to be civilized certainly was a reason to convert for those girls or women who already had family in the Islamic community

These reasons on an overt level were complemented with our analysis of religion and rituals Women had a different stake in traditional religion Therefore they could more easily adopt the alternative lying on their path without stumbling over an immediate religious obstacle

There is one question so many colleagues and friends have asked that will have to remain unanswered Has the situation of women within the Islamic community in Mokolo improved? Or did it get worse compared to the position of women in Mafa society? I never expected to be able to answer such a question at the end of my research I did not consider that to be the aim of my fieldwork either Yet I did of course pose the question to the women During my most recent visit to the area, when I discussed it again with Maama Laila she laughed But at the same time she looked at me in sort of despair as if to say but don't you want to understand ? Then she sighed and started to explain again She said

> "Yes to me it is much better Don t I look well? Do I not have a nice house of my own? Do I not have a kind husband who came to live with me? [By then she had remarried an elderly Mafa man from Gouzda who had Islamized at the age of ten] Am I not part of the community?

I nodded and realized that the question could never be answered on the level the inquisitive persons expected Besides for this particular region we have heard enough stories of women who refused to Islamize because they did not consider it an advantage Thus we can draw a final conclusion In the introduction we stated that women were not dragged in the new religion but entered it by their own free will, therefore the word Islamize seemed appropriate In the course of this thesis this proposition has not proven to be false

As an anthropologist I took the distance Maama Laila cannot take So we discovered using Horton's theory as an analytical tool that Mafa women had different roles and stakes in traditional society Though they were given significant place in the symbolic order they had no political and economic assets

that were added to this symbolic capital. For a small number of Mafa women their position was weak from the start as they could not bear children or sons, whom to live with when they would be old.
For a greater number prospects in traditional society may be dismal in the long run. The Muslim society guarantees a more stable economic position, in which saving systems as tontine come within reach. In some compounds the help of young Mafa boys is available In the Muslim community they enter a network which is based on the system of marriage payments, and which provides a safety net and guarantee, not available in traditional society

In the longer term, it may be significant that the genders are no longer symmetrically dependent, as they were within Mafa society For the time being the fact that they are more respected is what counts to them
The attentive reader will have noticed that Maama Laila, when she quoted the Islamic rules, mentioned that she had to wash her mouth 'twice', while this should be done thrice. Though she said that she simply stopped counting, it looks as if the concept of evenness is still present This link to the primordial past also links her to the time before she "came down the mountain", and before she left the terraced, inaccessible rocky slopes which were so hard to cultivate

Appendix I

Petty trade activities of women in Mokolo and the profit margins [1]

Salt peanuts (*mandawa*):
One buys a heap of peanuts. They are prepared with salt and sold again, in little tins (recycled from the tomato sauce) for Cfa.10 each.
If you have bought for Cfa. 1,500, you can make a profit of Cfa. 500.

Sweet peanuts (*caramel*):
A heap of peanuts and sugar. The procedure is as with salt peanuts, only it takes a bit more work. The profit is also a little higher.

Peanut butter:
Again a heap of peanuts. They need to be sorted out, and are brought to the mill to be grinded. Profit not known.

Beignets of flour (*makala*):
One needs to buy oil, yeast, and salt. The batter is made. The oil is put on the fire and the beignets are cooked in the oil.
A bag of flour costs Cfa. 8,000, oil Cfa 7,500, salt Cfa 200. Using all these ingredients, the income will be Cfa. 20,000 in one week. Profit: Cfa 4,300.

Beignets of beans (*cose*):
One pile (*tai*) of beans for Cfa 500 Cfa, two liter of oil for Cfa 1,050, salt for Cfa 50, peppers for Cfa 100. Grind the beans (5 piles for Cfa 50). Sold for Cfa 2,000. Profit: Cfa 300.

Cakes (*waaina*):
Made like *makala*, but sugar is added.

Cakes of rice flour (*waaina*):
One Kilo rice for Cfa 200, grind for Cfa 15, half a liter of oil, Cfa 265, sugar Cfa 50. Sold for Cfa. 700. Profit: Cfa 180.

Salt (*manda*):

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[1] One could argue that these profit margins have no significance because the labor investment has not been included. Labor of women and men in this society is not a remunerative input. Prices are discussed all the time and are a common topic of conversation, yet the time of investment is not. Given this fact, it would not have been possible to include labor costs.

Bought in large quantities, one bag Cfa 1,400 It is put in little pieces of paper and sold A profit of 2 000 Cfa can be made

Sugar (*sokkor*)
A bag of 100 kilo can be bought for Cfa 12 to 14 000 It is sold in little plastic bags
A profit can be made of Cfa 2 500 or 1,500 (depending on the price the sugar is bought for)

Peanut oil (*nebbam beeree*)
Peanuts are sold One pile *tar*, is Cfa 1 400 to Cfa 1 500 One can make 4 liter of oil, to be sold for Cfa 500 Profit Cfa 600

Peanut stalks (*bakuum*)
This is the residue of the procedurefor making peanut oil They can be sold for 1 00 Cfa

Sesame sweets (*Famare bee sokor*)
A pile *tar* of sesame costs Cfa 800 Cfa sugar for Cfa 325 Sesame is washed in the peeling bowl *unordu* sugar is added with water Afterwards it is put on the fire When it cools off little balls are made and sold afterwards Profit Cfa 1,500

Sweet potatoes (*Dankali*)
A pile, *tar* that is bought for Cfa 100 Cfa at the market can be cooked and resold at a profit of Cfa 50

Cola nuts (*gooro*)
A calabash bought for Cfa 2 000 can be resold at a profit of Cfa 1 000

Hot pepper
Bought in large quantities ground and sold as powder Profit not known

Sugar sticks (*allèwa*)
Packet of sugar lemon cooked together made into sticks Resold for Cfa 500 to Cfa 600

Sugar cane (*reeke*)
Bought and resold at profit

Sweets
Can be bought for Cfa 75 to Cfa 100 and resold by the piece for Cfa 120 Profit Cfa 40

Cooked eggs (*geeraade*)
An egg is bought for Cfa 20 Cfa When cooked it can be sold for Cfa 30 Profit Cfa 7

Cigarettes
Can be bought at the market and resold at a profit of about Cfa 100 per packet

Meat (*kusèl*)
If bought for Cfa 500, cut in little pieces of Cfa 10 each Sold with pepper and salt and cooked in oil it can be resold for Cfa 1,500 Profit Cfa 1 000

Non-fermented white wine (*roenoe*) porridge (*gari*) made of millet Potatoes are dried, ground and put in the porridge *Tamai* (a fruit that gives a citron-like taste) is added, as well as pepper and sugar

Non-fermented wine (*almee*)
Sugar, a green vegetable called *folère* a bit of pepper and water, boil it and put it into bottles

Non-fermented wine of millet
A pile of millet of Cfa 75 sugar for Cfa 50, wood for Cfa 75 Fill a small pot It can be sold for Cfa 600

Appendix 2

Words used in the course of this thesis

Mafa

baba	masculin ancestor, 1st generation
bab'baba	masculin ancestor, 2nd generation
bab gay	father of the household
balak	shelf where the father of the house stores his jars
bi-dzaray	locast chief
bi-dzva	mountain chief
bidza	powerful families
biyam	"
bi gwalibay	chief clan
bi gwali	"
bi hay	councellor during bull feast
bidalay	a young woman
di jongyoya	chief of the panthers
bi-udam	village chief
daba	neighboring ethnic group
dao dao ged	sorghum
dassal	iron percussion instrument for men
dédé tsakalay	small plates for twins
dem tsava	eldest daughter of a man
dézlézlew	small drums
dhalinga	feast held in january
dikgay	male child sleeping in belly of mother
di kokor	sacrifice by the 'eye' of the mountain
di mbulom	lit eye of God, sacrifice for the well being of the clan
djédjé	feminine ancestor, 2nd generation
dohtsad	sleeping female child in the belly of mother
doullak tsakalay	twin jar
dzaodzao	first hut of the compound

	which is the hut of the father of the house
edingei	drums used at funerals
Fali	neighboring ethnic group
ga'agd	tree that looses its leaves during dry season, used for ritual purposes
ganga	drums
ganzaval	percussion instrument
gay	Mafa compound
gede	to say
godar	lineage
godokwom varmagay	sacrifice on the rock in front of the house
gola	young men about to marry
gokla	pipe
Guidar	neighboring ethnic group
guid pat	tutelary spirit
guid pat ngwaz	head of the bed of a woman personal jar of a woman
guro tsakalay	bermuda grass used in twin ritual
guure tsakalay	branche of particular tree used in twin ritual
gwali	father's patriclan
gwéjèved	places where ashes are usually put
gwoda	close friend of a woman
Hide	Neighboring ethnic group
horai	shame
houdok	flute and also feasts at the full moon
hudok	hut of a woman
hujeb	hut of a woman
'i ndzi t'hwudgi	I am in the belly of the house

jégélé	protector god
Jigilé	God
jigilé	jar representing God
jigilé gedlek	spirit, protector god especially against soul-eater
jigilé ngwazi ri vavai	protector god for women
Kala yam	next child, born after twins
Kapsiki	neighboring ethnic group
keda	lit dog, means also outsider coming from another Mafa area
kr bi gwali	main clans of the area
kra nzena hud	child lost in the belly
kudam thla	hut of the 'sacred'bull
kuyuk	mother's patri clan
kwakwa aa	hard as a stone
ldaldak	sacrifice in wartime
linglingee	fresh
ludara	sacrifice without jars, also jar placed between huts of the wives, used for oblation to strenghten ties with in-laws
ludargala	sacrifice for well being of the ancestors
madzaf dai	medicine against the casting of the evil eye
madzaf nkiedai	miracle medicine
mahombédé	direct 'exchange' of marriage partners
mama	feminine ancestor, 1st generation
mam-gay	mother of the house
maray	bull feast
Marghi	ethnic groups around Madaghali and settled around Tourou
maslawda	special neighbor friend
mazaaga	devil
maya maya	softly

mejeb	soul
meslége	people who are clairvoyant
mide	soul eater
mindrekwè	woman without pubic hair
Mineo	ethnic group that intermarried Mafa people
m'matslai	second son of a father
Mofouélé	Mafa group south of Mokolo
Mofou	neighboring ethnic group
Ndare	Mafa group
ndo pikwa	diviner
ndosak	chief of a quarter
ngwalda	blacksmith (caste)
ngwazi ri vavay	jar for sacrifice for well being of woman and her children
ngwazla	potter (blacksmith caste)
n'gegede	saying
nihed	waterspirit
n'kede movar ngaya	take your food
nslastum bay	representative of mountain-chief during bull feast
n'tewelged	piece of sacrificial meat
pat	wooden shelf, serving as bed
shew	phrase expressed during blessing meaning: what you have eaten has been good
shuweD	contenance of the third stomach of ruminants
skway	lit. certain numbers of items indicating bridewealth
teba	female cord used during bull feast
tolom	flute
tsakalay	twins
tsakalay cecew	jar for twins
Tschede	neighboring ethnic group

udam	village
ungwalala	harvest rituals
vandzai	wild grasses
varmagay	sacrifice in front of the compound
vavay	non-blacksmith (caste)
vuzi	lineage
wam	special tree, used for funerals, also pierced potshelves used during funerals
wandar	jujubes tree
wanday	feast after the first weeding
woef varmagay	sacrifice on the tree in front of the house
wouthlaf	special loincloth a man needs to wear when his wife turns out to be a midrekwè
yew yew	quick
zıy nkwete pelesh	contenance of third stomach of ruminants
zkad	a tree that bears black fruits
zlazlak	sacrifice for the soul of a man killed during warfare
zorok	medium size drum
zovaad	feasts held at the fool moon
zugulay	purifiers of the maray
zungwal	rope of hibiscus cannabinus used by zugulay during bull feast

Fulfulde

adda	eldest sister
annabiijo	prophet
pl. annabo'en	
ardo	servant of chief, *lamido*
arnado	collector of tax
pl arnabe	
baaba	father
banngal	wedding ceremony
bedoesor lafaai	biscuits made at weddings
beddoe's	covers for calabashes
bil bil	word for local Mafa beer
bori	Hausa word, cultus in which women played an active role
ciwtube	twins
sing ciwto	
cuusal	courage
daada	mother
daada ceede	start capital
damgal	waiting house for heaven
deftere	book
pl defte	
defterinkeewu	civilization
dimaajo	slave released from servitude
pl. riimaabe	
djouro fattude	quarter chief
dogari	representative
do'ordo	feast of finishing the Qur'an
eshahi	prayer at eight o'clock at night
fartugo	chase away
gari	porridge
gaynaako	herdsman

pl.gaynaabe	
gildie	worm in body that wanders around
goggo	maternal aunt
haabe	heathens, infidels
sing.kado	
haasaani	boy of a mixed twin
haasaani bee seeni	twins of boys
habbode teegal	attachement of the wedding
hakkillo	intelligence
hamma	eldest brother
hande	today
hoesanatu	girl of a mixed twin
hoesenaaty	twins of girls
hokkam	give me
hokkugo	to give
horbe	female slaves
hoseere	mountain
huunde	thing
pl.kuuje	
inde	name
inderi	feast of namegiving
isoki	Hausa word, meaning spirit
jam	well
jekadaajo	slave girl attendant to a man
jippugo	come down, out
julugo	to pray
juulbe	people who adopted Islam but are not ethnically Fulbe
juulde sumaayre	feast at the end of ramadan
juulde leihadji	feast of the sheep
juura	prayer at midday
kado	heathen, unbeliever
pl.haabe	

kawirabe	elder and younger brother
karée	groomwealth
koowal	first marriage in Fulbe nomadic society
kordo daydo	girl slave married to the master or his son, and thus freed
kuuje	things
ladde	brushes
laila tuure	women's dance in the street before the end of the ramadan
lamidat	chiefdom
Lamido	chief
pl.Lamibe	
lawan	servant of chief, tax-collector, as ardo
layaayi	amulets
sing. layaayu	
leignol	gifts from groom's kin to bride's kin
maccube	male slaves
sing.maccudo	
malaaika'en	angels
malaaika mouwtum and malaaika mungarie	angels that take a person after her or his death
Mallumbe	Marabouts
sing.Mallumjo	
mangariba	prayer after sunset
mapakasawo	slavegirl who becomes attendant to a woman
pl.mapakasaw'en	
mari	own, posess
Matakam	Fulbe nickname for Mafa people
mayo	river
M'bororo	Name given to pastoral Fulbe in North Cameroon

mi	I
mornego bingel	marriage proposal of a virgin
munyal	resignation
mysterio	soul eater
nakarre	sweets made at weddings
nasaara en	Christians, white people
sing nassaara	
nastirdu	initiation rite
ndyam	water
nebbam	oil
neddaaku	respect
noy	how (much)
nyande kitta darngal	day of final judgement
pulaaku	special Fulbe way of living
	manners
Pullo	sing of Fulbe
qadi	Muslim judge
Qoofa	slave of duty at palace door
pl Qoofa'en	
riba	profit
rumaabe	slaved released from
	servitude
saare	compound
saare aljanna	heaven
saare yiite	hell
sadaka	
sakka	giving alms to the poor
sadaki	dowry exclusively for the
	bride
sahaari	black magic
sakkataajo	children of slaves
	born in the house of
	the master
pl sakkata en	
salaatu	ritual prayers

sanu	goodday
saydaanu	devil satan
semteende (in Mokolo also pronounced as Semtidum)	withdrawal, reserve, shame
silmugo	to Islamize
subana	prayer at dawn
tchouldadje	gift for the bride
teegal	Arranged (or first) marriage in Fulbe society
teele assisted at a wedding	gifts for the people that
tubeerdum	feast of finishing the Qur'an
Useni	please
Usoko	thanks
wajiriiku	
wakkili	dignitaries and ministers
wali'en sing wali	a woman s guardian
wallijo	representative
wallojo pl wallo'en	saint
Wodaabe	Fulbe nomadic people in Niger and North Cameroon
yaapendo	mother s sister
yerima	prince
yidaa	not like
yiite	fire
yonki	soul
zelataodi	chief angel

Appendix 3

Questionnaire enquête a Mokolo

Generale:

1.1. a. Combien de personnes habitent dans cette concession?
b. Le nom du pere?
c. Combien d'enfants ont-elles chacune?

1.2 a. A quelle ethnie le père de la famille appartient-il?
b. A quelle ethnie la ou Les femmes appartiennent-elles?

1.3 a. Pour les femmes: est-ce leur premier mari?
b. Si our Quand elles se sont mariees avaient-elles deja eu leurs règles?
c. Si non Combien de maris ont-elles eu auparavant?
d Combien d'enfants sont venus des autres mariages?
e. A Quelle ethnie le(s) homme(s) qu'elle(s) a (ont) eu avant, appartenaient-ils?

1.4 Quelle langue parle-t-on dans la famille?

Sur le plan économique

2.1 a Le pére de la famille, a-t-il fréquenté à l'école
b Combien d'années
c Parle-t-il le francais?
d. Parle-t-il le fulfuldé?

2.2 a. La ou les femmes ont-elle(s) fréquenté(s) à l'école?
b. Combien d'années
c. Parle(nt)-t-elle(s) le francais?
d. Parle(nt)-t-elle(s) le fulfuldé

2.3 a. Est-ce que les enfants fréquentent l'école?

2.4 a Que fait le pere de la famille pour gagner sa vie?

25 a Est-ce que lui et/ou sa (ses) femme(s) cultivent encore?
b Ou se trouvent les champs?
c Comment a-t-il obtenu ses champs heritage familial, achete et de qui? Cherche en brousse?
d Est ce qu'on a encore des terrains à l'intérieur/loin de la ville?
e Ou?

26 Qu'est ce qu on cultive et qui cultive?
a Le mil cultive par qui?
b les harachides cultives par qui?
c Les haricots cultivé par qui?
d Autre chose cultive par qui?

27 a La récolte est-elle suffisante pour toute l annee?
b Si oui, en reste-t-il a vendre?
c Si non, combien doit-on ajouter/acheter par annee?

28 a Cultive-t-on encore differentes sortes de legumes?
b Qui les cultive?
c Est ce pour la consommation ou pour la vente?
d Si on les vends qui les vends, la femme ou l'homme?
e Les recoltes sont-elles suffisantes pour toute une annee ou doit-t-on encore acheter?

29 Que fait on pour gagner de l'argent?
a On fait du commerce? On achete des choses et on les revends?
b On prepare des beignets pour les vendre?
c On prepare le 'zom pour le vendre?
d On tresse des paniers ou des couvercles pour les vendre?
e Autre chose ?

210 Que fait-on de l argent gagne?
a Les femmes le gardent pour leurs propres besoins ca veut dire pour acheter des assiettes, des vêtements etc ?
b On l'utilise pour acheter de la nouriture?
c On l'utilise pour acheter des vêtements pour les enfants?
d Ou pour des medicaments pour les enfants
e Effets scolaires pour les enfants?
f ou bien ???

2.11 a. Si on cultive encore, organise-t-on la fête de récolte?
b. Pourquoi oui ou non?

2.12 Estimation de revenue.

Religion

3.1 Quelle réligion pratique-t-on?

3.2 Depuis quand? Avant Paul Bya ou bien aprés?

3.3 Quelle est la réligion des parents?

3.4 Si on est devenu chretien, est-ce qu'on peut en donner la raison?

3.5 D'après eux, qu'est ce que ce changement a apporté dans leur vie?

3.6 Si on est devenu Musulman, est ce qu'on peut en donner la raison?

3.7 Si les femmes se sont islamisées par le mariage:
a Est ce qu'on a visité un Marabout avant de s'islamiser?
b. Combien de mois, semaines, temps?
c. Qui leurs a enseigné?

3.8 a. Prie-t-on cinq fois par jour?
b Toute la famille?

3.9 Fait-t-on le Ramadan?

3.10 a. Les enfants vont-ils à l'école coranique?
b. Combien de fois par semaine?

3.11 a. Est ce qu'on sait lire et écrire en Arabe?
b. Combien de sura connait-on par coeur?

3.12 D'après eux qu'est ce que ce changement a apporté dans leur vie?

Relations familiales

Les questions suivantes on peut aussi demander aux gens Mafa islamises mais dans l'autre sens

Si on est Mafa-Paien ou Chretien

4 1 a Est ce qu'on a de la famille c v d frère soeurs fils filles qui se sont islamises
b Ou habitent-elles (ils)?
c Quand se sont elles (ils) islamisées?
d Peut-on en donner la raison?

4 2 a Est ce qu'on se rend visite?
b Combien de fois par semaine/mois?
c Pour quelle occasion?

4 3 a Est ce qu'on leurs donnent de la viande a l occasion de la fête du boeuf?
Pour quelle raison oui ou non?

4 4 a Les familles islamisees donnent-elles de la viande pour la fête du mouton?
b Quelle partie de la viande?

4 5 a La famille leurs rend-elle visite a l occasion de la fête de Baraka des Allah a la fin du Ramadan?

4 6 a Que pense-t-on de la famille qui s est islamisee?
b Etait-t-on content d'apprendre qu on voulait changer la religion?

4 7 Que fait-on si un adulte ou un enfant - est malade
a Rend-on visite a l indigene? Auquel?
b Rend-on visite au féticheur?
c Rend-on visite au Marabout?
d Se rend on a l hopital? Apres ou avant les autres choses?

4 8 a Quand ca concerne un fils ou une fille qui s ai islamise que faisait-on avec sa canarie (guid-pat). A-t-on la cassee? gardee?
b Si c'est une fille le père part t-il chez elle pendant la fête de récolte?
c Si non est ce que c est grave?

Urbanisation

5.1 Combien de temps habite-t-on ici à cet endroit, dans cette rue?
a.L'homme?
b. Les femmes?
c. A-t-on fait construire la maison?
d. L'a-t-on louee?

5.2 a. D'où venait-on?
b. Pour quelle raison est-on venu ici?

5.3 a. Combien de temps est-on resté en ville avant de s'islamiser?

Système de marriage

Quand Mafa ou Mafa islamise:

6.1 a. A quel *gwali* appartient l'homme?
b. A quelle *kuyuk*?

6.2 a. A quel *gwali* appartient la femme?
b. A quelle *kuyuk*?

S'il agit des Mafas islamisés:

6.3 a. Les enfants se marient-ils avec quelqu'un d'un autre *gwali*?
b. D'un autre *kuyuk*?
c S'adapte-t-on au systeme de mariage des gens Foulbé?
d. Les enfants peuvent-ils se marier avec un homme/une femme d'un autre ethnie?

Système de dot

Essayer de trouver un dot dans la famille. Si on parle avec une femme Mafa ce sera plus difficile, car elle n'y connaît pas grand chose

7.1 a. Si un homme dans la concession a une nouvelle femme, que donnait-il?
b. S'agit-t-il d'un premier mariage pour elle ou bien d'un deuxième?

7.2 S'il s'agit d'une fille ou bien un fils:qu'est ce qu'on a eu, donné pour elle, lui?

7 3 S'il s'agit d une fille Mafa Qu'est ce que la mere a donne a sa fille pour amener dans la maison de son nouveau mari?

7 4 Si c'est chez les Musulmans qu'est ce que la mere et le pere ont donné a leur fille pour amener dans la maison de son nouveau mari?

7 5 a Quand il s'agit d'une femme qui est nouvellement venue dans la concession lui a-t on donne des objets (les assiettes les draps etc)?
b Qui lui donne ces choses?
c Ou bien, a-t-elle acheté elle même ces objets avec son propre argent

Grossesses

8 1 a La (les) femme a-t-elle(s) deja donne naissance a des enfants?
b Combien?

8 2 Les enfants sont nes
a A la maison?
b Ou bien a l'hopital?

8 3 Qui était à cote de la femme pendant l'accouchement
a des voisins?
b des co-epouses?
c La famille du mari?
d La famille de la femme? (*mère ou soeur*)?

8 4 Qu est ce qu on fait avec le placenta
a Enterre dans un canari?
b Enterre dans la terre?

8 5 a Combien faudrait-il de temps entre deux accouchements
b Si on ne veut pas d enfants trop rapproche en âge, qu'est ce qu'on fait?
- Des contraceptifs?
l Homme ne doit pas avec sa femme?
c Doit-il avec ses autres femmes a ce moment la?

Rituels de Funerailles

Chez les Mafa islamisés:

9.1 a. Sera-t-on enterré ici en ville?
b. Veut-t-on être enterré dans l'endroit de son *gwali*?
c. Est ce que l'homme/femme peut se remarier toute suit apres la mort de son époux ou sa épouse?
d. Combien de temps faut-il respecter le deuil?

Respect

Chez les Marriages Foulbes - Mafa
Mafas islamisés - Mafa islamisés

10.1 a. Est ce que la femme prononce le nom de son mari?
b. De son premier né?

Probablement c'est pas nécessaire de poser cette question. Ceux qui ne prononcent pas le nom de leur mari, ont probablement déjà hésité au début de questionnaire.

Construction de concession
Observer comment la maison est construite

Difference de milieu etc.
Quel difference entre milieu Mafa et Fulbe. Si on est dans la maison des femmes, est ce qu'il y a du sable propre par terre etc?

Pour Mafa islamisés

11.1 Connait-on le terme '*pulaaku*'?
11.2 Connait-on '*semteende (cemtidum)*'?

Appendix 4

Code-book

Enq.vraag		var.nr	naam	antw.	code
1.1.a.	1	nrhoh	pers. hh.	unknown	0
				0-4	1
				5-9	2
				10-14	3
				15-19	4
				20-24	5
				25-29	6
				>30	7
				-	8
1.1.c.	2	numwo	nr.women	unknown	0
				Mata P 1	1
				Mata P >1	2
				Mata C 1	3
				Mata C>1	4
				Mata Isl1	5
				Mata Isl>	16
				Fulbe 1	7
				Fulbe>1	8
				other	9
1.1.d.	3	nch1	nr.cldn.	unknown	0
				no child	1
			woman 1	1 child	2
				2 child	3
				3 child	4
				4 child	5
				5 child	6
				6 child	7
				more chil	8
				unapplica	9
	4	nch2	numb.children	idem	
			woman 2	no2nw/unap	9
	5	nch3	numb.children	idem	
			woman 3	no2nw/unap	9

1.2.a.	6	ethu	ethnic/ relig. husband	unknown	0
				Mafa P	1
				Mafa Ch	2
				Isl.Ma 1g	3
				Isl.Ma 2g	4
				Fulbe Isl	5
				Other P. 6	
				Other Isl.	7
				otherChr	8
				nohu/unap	9
	7	ethw1	ethnic religion woman 1	idem	
				other Chr.	8
				unapplicab	9
	8	ethw2	ethnic religion woman 2	idem	
				other Chr	8
				no2nw/unap	9
	9	ethw3	ethnic religion woman 3	idem	
				other Chr.	8
				no3dw/unap	9
1.3.a.	10	erfh1	ethnic/religion former husband woman1	idem	
				no form husb	8
				unapplicab	9
	11	erfh2	ethnic/religion former husband woman2	idem	
				no form husb.	8
				no2nw/unap	9
	12	erfh3	ethnic/religion former husband woman3	idem	
				no form husb.	8
				no3dw/unap	9

2 1.a	13	edhus	school education husband	other etn	0
				Mat no ed	1
				Mat prim	2
				Maf secon	3
				Mat furth	4
				Isl/Fulb no ed	5
				Isl/Fulb prim	6
				Isl/Fulb seco	7
				Isl/Fulb furt	8
				no husb	9
2.2 a.	14	edwo1	school education woman 1	idem	
				unapplicab	9
	15	edwo2	school education woman 2	idem	
				no2nw/unap	9
	16	edwo3	school education woman 3	idem	
				no3dw/unap	9
2 3 a	17	chied	children school educated	no children	0
				Mafa yes	1
				Mafa no	2
				M too you	3
				Isl/Fulbe yes	4
				Isl/Fulbe no	5
				Isl/Fulb t you	6
				other yes	7
				other no	8
				oth too yo	9
2 4.a.	18	eomhu	economic occupation husband	Mafa/non-Isl	
				agricult	1
				horticult	2
				cattle her	3
				trade	4
				beerbrew	5
				prep food	6
				civ/or other servic	7
				no occupat	8
				Non Mafa/ unapcab	9

2.9.a.	19	eomw1	econ.occ.Mafa non-Isl. woman 1	idem	
				non Mafa/unapp	9
	20	eomw2	econ.occ.Mafa non-Isl. woman 2	idem	
				non Mafa/unapp.	9
	21	eomw3	econ.occ.Mafa non-Isl. woman 3	idem	
				non Mafa/unapp.	9
	22	eofhu	econ.occ.Fulbe/Isl husband	idem	
				Non Fulb/unapp.	9
	23	eofw1	econ occ.Fulbe/Isl woman 1	idem	
				non Fulb/unapp.	9
	24	eofw2	econ occ.Fulbe/Isl woman 2	idem	
				non Fulb/unapp.	9
	25	eofw3	econ.occ. Fulbe/Isl woman 3	idem	
				non Fulb/unapp.	9
	26	eoohu	econ.occ. other ethnic	idem	
				unapplicab.	9
	27	eoowo	econ.occ women other ethnic	idem	
				unapplicab.	9
2.7 a.	28	agaut	agriculture for autoconsumption	unknown	0
				yes	1
				sold	2
				no agricult	3
2.8.c.	29	hoaut	horticulture for autocons.	unknown	0
				yes	1
				sold	2
				no horticult.	3

2 8 e	30	butoo	buy additional food		
				unknown	0
				yes	1
				no	2
2 11	31	shbud	shared budget of man/woman		
				unknown	0
				yes	1
				no	2
				not applicab	3
2 11 a	32	budw1	budget woman1	autocons	1
				bridepr	2
				food fam	3
				cloth ch	4
				school ch	5
				health	6
				other	7
				no income	8
				unapplicab	9
	33	budw2	budget woman2	no2nw/unap	9
	34	budw3	budget woman3	no3dw/unap	9
2 13	35	mchu	estimated monthly income husband	unknown	0
				1-4 cfa	1
				5 9 cfa	2
				10 14 cfa	3
				15-19 cfa	4
				20 24 cfa	5
				25 29 cfa	6
				30 34 cfa	7
				>35000 cfa	8
				unap/nohu	9
	36	mwo1	est income woman 1		
				>30000cfa	7
				no income	8
				unapplicab	9
	37	mwo2	est income woman 2	idem	
	38	mwo3	est income woman 3	idem	
	39	mfhu	leeg		
	40	mfw1	leeg		
	41	mfw2	leeg		
	42	mohu	leeg		

3 10	43	hukoe	husband koran educated	unknown	0
				yes	1
				no	2
				nonIsl/unap	3
	44	w1koe	woman 1 koran educated	unknown	0
				yes	1
				no	2
				nonIsl/unap	3
	45	w2koe	woman 2 koran educated	unknown	0
				yes	1
				no	2
				nonIsl/unap	3
	46	w3koe	woman 3 koran educated	unknown	0
				yes	1
				no	2
				nonIsl/unap	3
	47	chkoe	children koran educated	unknown	0
				yes	1
				no	2
				nonIsl/unap	3
				unapplicab	4
3 1	48	famis	(family) islamized and since when	broth<bya	1
				broth>bya	2
				sister<bya	3
				sister>bya	4
				husband<bya	5
				husband>bya	6
				wife<bya	7
				wife>bya	8
				nonIsl/unap /Isl	9

6.2	49	chisl	children isla mized and since when		fem<bya	1
					fem>bya	2
					masc<bya	3
					masc>bya	4
					not	5
					too young	6
					unknown	7
					not relevant because Fulbe Isl household	8
					unapplicab	9
					unknown	6
3.8	50	march	marriage of Mafa/Isl relat /person with		Mafa pagan	1
					mafa islam recent	2
					mafa islam form gen	3
					Fulbe	4
					other isl	5
					unknown	6
					unmarried	7
					not relevant because Fulbe household	8
					unapplicab	9
4 1.	51		remf	relation with Isl or non-Islamized family members	none	1
					maray	2
					harvest	3
					funerals	4
					ramadam	5
					once a m	6
					twice a m	7
					living together	8
					no non Isl family/ unapplicab	9
6.3 a	52		marie	marriage in same clan of isl family	unknown	0
					yes	1
					no	2
					unapplicab	3

6.3.d.	53	maroe	marriage in other ethnie in case of Islamization	unknown	0
				yes	1
				no	2
				unapplicab.	3
11.1.	54	knopu	knowledge of pulaaku		
				yes	1
				no	2
	55	knose	knowledge of semteende		
				yes	1
				no	2

56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, en 64 leeg.

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Zij laten hun kruiken achter: De bekering van Mafa vrouwen tot de Islam. Een samenvatting

Dit proefschrift gaat over de situatie van Mafa-vrouwen in Mokolo, een kleine stad in het Mandara gebergte van Noord Kameroen. In de urbane context ruilden en ruilen zij in grote getale hun eigen religie in voor de Islam. Het doel van mijn boek is om dit proces van Islamisering in beeld te krijgen en met name de effecten van deze bekering op de situatie van vrouwen en op de relatie tussen de genera te bespreken. In de literatuur wordt er vaak van uitgegaan dat vrouwen zich bekeren omdat hun vader is overgegaan tot de Islam of omdat ze een Islamitische man trouwen. Er is tot nu toe onvoldoende aandacht besteed aan hun werkelijke motivatie en aan de vraag of en waar dit bekeringsproces van vrouwen verschilt van dat van mannen.

Een antropologische analyse leek daarvoor de meest geeigende methode, omdat het ons in staat stelt Islamisering te begrijpen als een historisch proces en van daaruit te bezien op welke wijze de Islam is opgenomen en geintegreerd in de Mafa-samenleving. Met de analyse van de veranderende positie van vrouwen in deze specifieke samenleving hoop ik een bescheiden bijdrage te leveren aan kennis over de rol van vrouwen in het proces van Islamisering in Afrika bezuiden de Sahara.

Het ging er mij eveneens om te ontdekken welk effect de Islam heeft gehad op de bestaande traditie van Mafa vrouwen. Daartoe bleek het noodzakelijk haar positie te bekijken op religieus en symbolisch niveau, evenals op het niveau van de economie van de reproductie in de niet-geislamiseerde Mafa-samenleving. Het concept genus omvat echter niet alleen de vrouwelijke maar ook de mannelijke helft van de bevolking. De rollen van vrouwen kunnen daarom niet worden geisoleerd en ze worden besproken in relatie tot de activiteiten van mannen op de genoemde terreinen. Ook aan het perspectief van mannen is ruimte gegeven.

In de eerste helft van het boek maken we kennis met de context van de Mafa, een landbouwende bevolking, die gierst als belangrijkste voedselgewas verbouwt We besteden ook aandacht aan de achtergronden van de Fulbe, de van oorsprong nomadische bevolkingsgroep die sinds de 17e eeuw zijn gesedentariseerd en geïslamiseerd. De Fulbe gebruikten de Islam als een etnische 'marker', waarbij zij echter aspecten van hun pre-Islamitische cultuur opnamen in de Islam-variant die de Mafa uiteindelijk kregen aangeboden
De Fulbe vestigden aan het begin van de 19e eeuw een groot rijk, het Sokoto-rijk, waartoe ook het gebied dat tegenwoordig onder Noord-Kameroen valt, behoorde Het ontstaan van Mokolo kan slechts worden begrepen tegen de achtergrond van de politieke en etnische geschiedenis van Noord-Kameroen Daarom wordt deze in de context van de spreiding van de Islam in West-Afrika beschouwd, waarbij aandacht wordt besteed aan de rol van Uthman dan Fodio, de stichter van dit Sokoto-rijk Omdat zijn ideeen tot op de dag van vandaag invloed uitoefenen, wordt ook aan zijn visie op de rol van vrouwen in de Islam aandacht besteed De inferieure status van vrouwen benadrukt hij door te stellen dat recalcitrante vrouwen gestraft mogen worden en dat ze niet zomaar behoren te gaan en staan waar ze willen. Meer positief was zijn uitspraak dat mannen de plicht hadden om vrouwen te onderhouden, dat vrouwen te allen tijde recht hadden op onderwijs en dat ze wanneer hen dit recht werd ontzegd, tegenover haar echtgenoot geen enkele verplichting hadden Opmerkelijk was verder zijn pleidooi dat vrouwen in de gelegenheid moesten worden gesteld in de rechtzaal hun gelijk te halen, en dat vrouwen recht hadden op een bruidschat die uitsluitend voor hen was bestemd

De Fulbe veroverden in het begin van deze eeuw het gebied van de Mafa met behulp van de Duitse koloniale macht, waarbij Mokolo als Islamitisch centrum werd gevestigd temidden van een niet-Islamitische bevolkingsgroep Dit zette het proces van Islamisering in gang.
Ik onderscheid in dit proces verschillende stadia Mokolo als politiek centrum is nauw verbonden geweest met Madagali, een politiek centrum, *lamudat*, in het huidige Nigeria, dat deel uitmaakte van het Sokoto-rijk De politieke leiders, *lamube*, in Mokolo waren en zijn nauw verwant aan dit hof
De eerste vorst van Mokolo was een wreedaard over wiens gruweldaden nog steeds wordt verhaald. Hij haalde veel slaven uit het gebied die werden meegenomen naar Madagali, het centrum van het gebied dat hij destijds als vorst claimde Mokolo werd voor hem een pleisterplaats om te overnachten wanneer hij voor onderhandeling van Madagali naar Maroua moest reizen Een deel van zijn manschappen - met hun veelal geïslamiseerde Mafa-vrouwen, buitgemaakt tijdens rooftochten - vestigde er zich op zijn commando

permanent Na de eerste wereldoorlog, toen de Engelsen en Fransen het gebied op de Duitsers hadden veroverd, keerden veel slaven terug naar het gebied waar ze oorspronkelijk vandaan kwamen, maar tijdens hun periode als slaaf waren ze wel geïslamiseerd Ze sloten zich dus aan bij de bestaande Islamitische gemeenschap in Mokolo Dit eerste stadium van Islamisering is voor mannen en vrouwen gelijk In het boek zijn veel verhalen te vinden over de wijze waarop de mensen de slavernij en de brute invasie van het gebied ervaarden

Het tweede stadium van Islamisering begon toen Mokolo onder het Franse koloniale bewind een politiek centrum werd Hier verschilde het proces duidelijk voor mannen en vrouwen Jonge mannen zochten baantjes in de stad toen de eerste trekken van een staatsstructuur rond 1930 duidelijker werden Deze structuur trok ook Islamitische mensen aan van andere dan Fulbe bevolkingsgroepen De Islamitische gemeenschap en de stad groeiden langzaam Vaak ook werden Mafa kinderen - jongens zowel als meisjes door Islamitische families geadopteerd, soms ook in tijden van hongersnood geruild tegen voedsel Omdat de Mafa de dominantie van de Fulbe niet wilden accepteren is er in 1948 ook een Mafa *lamido* aangesteld een chef van eigen ras', zoals de Franse overheersers deze noemden Deze was eveneens overgegaan tot de Islam Omdat hij niet werd geassocieerd met de 'wrede overheersers van weleer vergemakkelijkte dit voor velen de overgang tot de Islam

Na de onafhankelijkheid nam het proces van Islamisering toe omdat de Islam de religie was van de eerste Kameroense president Ahidjo, en de politieke en economische elite in het Noorden overwegend Islamitisch was Ook wanneer men een nering wilde openen op de markt moést men bijna wel Islamitisch zijn Deze economische druk in het derde stadium van Islamisering geldt met name voor mannen Vrouwen trokken vaak in bij geïslamiseerde familieleden en gingen vandaaruit zelf over tot de Islam

De noodzaak om Islamitisch te worden nam na 1984 af toen Kameroen een nieuwe niet-islamitische president kreeg en de politieke dominantie van de Islamitische Fulbe verminderde Nu is het niet meer nodig om Islamitisch te zijn wanneer je solliciteert naar een baan, maar het proces van Islamisering van vrouwen gaat nog steeds door Inmiddels telt de stad 19 602 inwoners 63 procent van de vrouwen in de stad is momenteel Islamitisch waarvan 30 procent Mafa is Van deze 30 procent is 16,5 procent recent en 14 procent in de vorige generatie geïslamiseerd

De sentimenten van de Mafa betreffende de voormalige slavenjachten kregen onlangs met het proces van democratisering en het meer-partijenstelsel nieuwe stimulans, doordat oude tegenstellingen als een politiek issue werden opgepakt

Islamiseren werd tot voor kort beschouwd als synoniem voor civiliseren. De manier waarop er over wordt gesproken impliceert ook dat het iets is waar men zelf toe besluit. Men wordt niet bekeerd, men gaat zelf over tot bekering. Tijdens mijn onderzoek werd al spoedig duidelijk dat vrouwen uiteenlopende redenen hebben om te Islamiseren, dat het meestal op eigen initiatief gebeurt en vaak op oudere leeftijd nadat ze 'reeds een aantal malen in de bergen getrouwd zijn geweest', dit wil zeggen toen ze nog niet in de stad woonden. Mannen daarentegen bekeren zich in de meeste mij bekende gevallen [1] voordat zij huwen. In alle gevallen is de breuk met de aanvankelijke levensstijl en denkbeelden radicaal en zijn de concrete veranderingen enorm. Deze staan centraal in het tweede deel van mijn boek.

'We lieten altijd al onze kruiken achter'

De cosmologie van de geïslamiseerden ondergaat een belangrijke wijziging. De niet-geïslamiseerde Mafa geloven in 'reïncarnatie', in een zelfde soort leven na de dood, alleen dan een laag onder de huidige aarde. De Islam heeft een duidelijk lineaire kijk op het leven na de dood. Alles ligt in de Handen van Allah en verzoeken in de vorm van gebeden worden direct aan hem gericht. Na dit leven leeft de mens voor eeuwig voort in het Paradijs.

In de Mafa-religie wordt het verschil tussen een Opperwezen, God, en de mensen overbrugd door mindere goden. Deze kunnen worden onderverdeeld in beschermgoden - *guid pat* genaamd - en lagere goden. Bijna alle goden worden gerepresenteerd door middel van een kruik. De beschermgoden zijn eigenlijk de schaduw van ieder individueel mens. Ieder lid van de samenleving, inclusief kinderen, offert daarom in haar of zijn eigen kruik, die de eigen beschermgod vertegenwoordigt. De andere goden zijn niet 'dubbel' maar 'enkel' en niet op speciale wijze met de mensen verbonden. Binnen de Islam kent men deze goden van een lagere orde niet. Men kent wel engelen maar die hebben geen bemiddelende functies omdat men direct tot God bidt.
In het Mafa cosmologisch systeem onderscheidt men verder de slechte personen, die zielen van anderen eten, de *mide*. Gewone mensen en ziele-eters (en dat kan iedereen zijn, zowel je eigen man of vrouw als je buurman) zijn aan elkaar tegengesteld - gewoon en slecht -, maar beiden zijn ze mens. Dit

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[1] Tijdens mijn onderzoeksperiode heb ik 40 uitgebreide cases opgetekend en een steekproef enquete gehouden bij 90 huishoudens in de stad, waarbij niet alleen werd gekeken naar het eigen proces van bekering, maar ook naar dat van familieleden.

beeld (ideologie) blijft hetzelfde nadat men is overgegaan tot de Islam, alleen de naam verandert.
Na Islamisering bezoekt men bij ziekte en tegenspoed zowel de Koran-geleerde, *mallumjo*, als de Mafa-genezeres die gebruik maakt van de middelen vanuit de voormalige religie. Wanneer ze een offer vraagt kan men, wanneer men is geïslamiseerd, dat niet meer zelf brengen, maar vrouwen kunnen wel hun vaders als deze nog leven, vragen dit voor hen te doen.
Er zijn aspecten die maken dat de overgang van de ene religie naar de andere niet te moeilijk is. Beide erkennen een opperwezen, God, die ze als nog steeds dezelfde beschouwen, wanneer ze overgaan tot de Islam. Alleen de naam verandert van *Jigilé* in Allah. Ook het karakter van de ziele-eter verandert niet wezenlijk na overgang tot de Islam, alleen zijn het na Islamisering vaker vrouwen.
Toch zijn er evenveel aspecten die de radicale religieuze omslag opmerkelijk maken. Aan de beschermgoden, de lagere goden en de voorouders wordt niet langer geofferd. De kruiken en de rituelen er omheen worden na Islamisering respectievelijk achter en achterwege gelaten.

Ik maak gebruik van Horton's terminologie om deze bekeringsprocessen te begrijpen. Hij stelt dat een religieuze omslag inzichtelijker wordt wanneer men kijkt naar de verhouding tussen macrocosmos (het bestaan van een Opperwezen, God) en microcosmos (het hele scala van lagere goden). Wanneer de buitenwereld zich aan mensen opdringt - en dat gebeurde door de invasie van de Fulbe -, wordt de microcosmos steeds minder belangrijk en het Opperwezen steeds belangrijker, wat ook een religieuze overgang naar een van de wereldgodsdiensten vergemakkelijkt. Het opmerkelijke feit dat vrouwen zich vaker op latere leeftijd bekeren terwijl mannen na hun huwelijk vasthouden aan hun eigen religie en hun dochters die Islamiseren veroordelen, kan niet worden begrepen vanuit deze terminologie omdat het geen rekening houdt met mogelijke verschillen in religieuze beleving van de generas.
Een analyse van de religie van de Mafa maakt duidelijk dat vrouwen altijd aanwezig moeten zijn bij religieuze handelingen. Mannen kunnen bijvoorbeeld niet offeren als hun vrouwen afwezig zouden zijn. Maar ze zijn daarbij letterlijk 'muted', monddood. Ze moeten zwijgend toehoren en toezien. Zelf offeren ze alleen in hun eigen kruiken, om welzijn voor zichzelf of hun kinderen af te dwingen, maar niet in het belang van de gehele gemeenschap, in tegenstelling tot gehuwde mannen. Dit brengt mij tot de conclusie dat vrouwen gemakkelijker op latere leeftijd van religie kunnen veranderen omdat ze toch geen verantwoordelijkheid dragen voor het welzijn (en dus voortbestaan) van de gehele gemeenschap. Bovendien laten ze ook hun persoonlijke kruik achter

wanneer ze van echtgenoot veranderen, iets wat in de Mafa-samenleving veelvuldig voorkomt. Wanneer ze bij een nieuwe echtgenoot zijn ingetrokken laten ze een nieuwe kruik maken.
Een ander aspect hangt samen met de motieven van vrouwen. Allerlei verschillende redenen om te Islamiseren kwamen mij ter ore. Toch bleek dat het vaak vrouwen betrof die geen kinderen (meer) konden krijgen. In die gevallen zijn zij in hun eigen religie afhankelijk van de man die de religieuze specialist om advies moet vragen en vervolgens moet offeren. In de nieuwe religie, de Islam, kunnen ze zelf het initiatief nemen en zelf handelen.
In de Mafa religie is de fysieke aanwezigheid van vrouwen dus onontbeerlijk maar zijn ze afhankelijk, binnen de Islam worden ze onafhankelijk. Ze kunnen op eigen initiatief vijf maal per dag bidden

Van God als 'Twee' tot God als 'Een'

In een volgend hoofdstuk staan de vele rituelen die men in de Mafa-samenleving onderscheidt centraal, omdat ik wil nagaan wat de positie van vrouwen binnen die rituelen is, of deze positie de overgang tot de Islam beïnvloedt en of de rituelen nog worden uitgevoerd na overgang tot de Islam.
Het tweelingen-ritueel en de symbolen die ermee zijn geassocieerd blijken de pilaren van de symbolische ordening van de Mafa samenleving te zijn. Tweelingen worden beschouwd als de uiteindelijke openbaring van de 'dubbele persoon' (en het heilige principe) die ieder mens eigenlijk is. De structuur van de Mafa-samenleving reflecteert zich in het tweelingen-ritueel Tweelingen hebben speciale krachten en moeten worden gerespecteerd. Ze zijn direct afkomstig van de wereld die aan de huidige voorafgaat en kunnen kwaad doen wanneer de gedragsregels ten aanzien van hen niet in acht worden genomen.
Niet alleen tweelingen, ook vrouwen worden met 'twee' geassocieerd, en ook zij worden dientengevolge geassocieerd met dat wat aan het leven voorafgaat. Door het ritueel wordt de orde van de samenleving, die door de mannen wordt gedomineerd, en die op hun beurt juist met 'drie', met 'oneven' worden geassocieerd, weer hersteld.
Intrigerend is de uitkomst, wanneer de symbolen die duidelijk uit het tweelingen-ritueel te voorschijn komen in verband worden gebracht met het stieren-ritueel, een ritueel voor mannen. Dit mannenritueel is doorspekt met het structurerende principe van 'twee', met andere woorden, er is een voortdurend evenwicht tussen 'even' en 'oneven', tussen de 'hier-en-nu-samenleving' en 'datgene dat aan het leven voorafging'. Ik concludeer na analyse dat de geboorte van de tweelingen staat tot het offeren van het stier als

vrouwelijke creatie zich verhoudt tot mannelijke creatie.
Bij de oogst-rituelen en andere geritualiseerde festiviteiten in de Mafa-samenleving blijkt het belang van de patrilinie voor zowel zonen als dochters. Uit analyse van de verschillende rituelen blijkt dat verhoudingen tussen de genera tot uitdrukking komen op twee verschillende niveaus: een openlijk niveau, geassocieerd met de hier-en-nu samenleving en een verborgen niveau. Deze niveaus zijn complementair. De relaties tussen de genera zijn fundamenteel symmetrisch en afhankelijk. Aldus concludeer ik dat de positie die vrouwen in het symbolisch systeem innemen net zo verschilt van die van mannen als dat bij de religie het geval was. Ze kunnen worden beschouwd als de sleutel tot de Mafa-cosmologie. Wanneer ze afwezig zijn is het Mafa-huis leeg en kan niet langer worden beschouwd als het centrum van de wereld, het imago van het universum. Vanuit hun symbolische associaties wordt duidelijk dat vrouwen verbonden zijn met datgene wat aan het leven voorafgaat. De mannen echter zijn verantwoordelijk voor het hier-en-nu. Dit doet opnieuw vermoeden dat vrouwen gemakkelijker overgaan tot een andere religie omdat ze geen verantwoordelijkheid hebben voor het welzijn van de totale samenleving - dit wil zeggen, van de clan, de regio, voor een goede regenbui, etc. - en haar voortbestaan.
Binnen de Islamitische gemeenschap treffen we minder geritualiseerde festiviteiten aan, waarin steeds opnieuw wordt benadrukt dat er maar één God is en dat Mohammed zijn Profeet is. De Mafa-rituelen worden na Islamisering niet langer uitgeoefend. Los van het feit dat offers met bier - een belangrijke ingredient in de rituelen - streng werden veroordeeld door Uthman dan Fodio, zijn deze rituelen zo verbonden met de totaliteit van de niet-geïslamiseerde Mafa-samenleving, dat de noodzaak om ze uit te oefenen wegvalt in een totaal anders georienteerde en gestructureerde samenleving, waarin de patriclan en het patrilineaire afstammingssysteem niet langer meer tellen. Na Islamisering laten de Mafa de cosmologische orde, met 'dubbelheid' als organiserend principe, en gierst als belangrijk symbool, achter zich. Volgens de Islam zijn dood, leven en vruchtbaarheid in de handen van Allah. Binnen de Islamitische gemeenschap gelooft men nog wel dat tweelingen speciale krachten hebben, maar ze worden niet langer geassocieerd met datgene dat aan dit leven vooraf gaat. De mensen moeten zich van hun krachten wel bewust zijn, maar er hoeven geen rituelen meer voor hen te worden uitgevoerd. Hetzelfde geldt voor de watergeesten. Ze blijven belangrijk maar ze spelen niet meer hun bemiddelende rol. Uit de oogstrituelen bleek het belang van de patriarch, de vader van het huis, en zijn familie, mannelijke zowel als vrouwelijke leden. Deze relatie hoeft niet langer te worden benadrukt binnen de Islamitische gemeenschap, omdat het Mafa-clansysteem niet belangrijk meer is. Vaders

uiten vaak bezwaar tegen het feit dat hun dochters hadden besloten over te gaan tot de Islam Dit was begrijpelijk vanuit de de speciale band die vaders met name met hun oudste dochters hebben Dochters hebben een belangrijke functie in verschillende rituelen, met name in de begrafenis-rituelen voor hun vader Een vader kan ook allerlei soorten respect van zijn schoonzoon verwachten Islamiseren wordt daardoor gemakkelijker voor dochters na de dood van een vader

Wanneer we verder zoeken komen we tot de ontdekking dat, alhoewel bekering eenvoudig lijkt omdat men aangeeft dat het Opperwezen uiteindelijk dezelfde blijft het karakter van de God wel degelijk veranderd God *Igile* die 'twee is - zich (of haar) zelf en zijn (of haar) beschermgod, *guid pat* - wordt 'een na Islamisering, want er is maar eén God en Mohammed is zijn Profeet De aanname van een andere naam voor het Opperwezen lijkt een daad met een oppervlakkige consequentie, maar deze is diepgaander dan op het eerste gezicht lijkt In de Islamitische samenleving is het oneindige van wat vooraf ging aan de samenleving van alledag versmolten in de lineaire visie van de nieuwe religie Niemand hoeft meer rekening te houden met de balans van 'oneven (mannelijk) die de orde van het hier en nu vertegenwoordigt en even (vrouwelijk), het heilige, dat wat voorafging aan het hier en nu In de Mafa samenleving moest er rekening worden gehouden met het vrouwelijk principe vanwege het bestaan van een niet direct zichtbare werkelijkheid, die wel duidelijk invloed kan uitoefenen op het leven van alledag in de vorm van rampspoed of gunstiger zaken als bijvoorbeeld een goede oogst Dit is niet langer nodig in de Islamitische gemeenschap Alhoewel vrouwen op een meer zichtbaar niveau zeker meer worden gerespecteerd zijn de genera niet langer symmetrisch afhankelijk van elkaar omdat Islamitische mannen niet langer rekening hoeven te houden met even , geassocieerd met vrouwen

Besluitvorming bij huwelijken en huwelijksgiften

Er is een duidelijk verschil in het huwelijks- en giftensysteem van de Mafa en de regels die daarvoor bestaan in de Islamitische gemeenschap Ik ga na wat de rol van vrouwen in deze is Het huwelijkssysteem van de Mafa is clan-exogaam Men mag niet huwen met iemand die tot dezelfde clan behoort De stem van de moeder betreffende de huwelijkspartner van haar dochter is doorslaggevend Het Fulbe-huwelijkssysteem is idealiter endogaam dat wil zeggen dat men het liefst met een directe neef of nicht trouwt Wanneer we kijken naar de geschiedenis van Mokolo zien we echter dat er regelmatig met (eigen) slaven werd getrouwd Na Islamisering refereert men naar dit endogame systeem maar in de praktijk trouwen de geïslamiseerde Mafa niet

met iemand uit hun voormalige clan. Het giftensysteem zoals dat bestaat binnen de Islamitische gemeenschap, wordt wel overgenomen.
Bij de Mafa is het bruidsprijzensysteem een aangelegenheid van mannen onder elkaar. De mannelijke verwanten van de bruidegom geven giften aan de mannelijke verwanten van de bruid. In de Islamitische gemeenschap kennen ze een ingewikkelde giftenuitwisseling bij huwelijken, die bijna uitsluitend onder de verantwoordelijkheid van vrouwen valt. Recent geïslamiseerde vrouwen nemen dit systeem zo spoedig mogelijk over omdat deelname de acceptatie in de Islamitische gemeenschap vergroot.
Verder blijkt aan maagdelijkheid in de Islamitische gemeenschap meer belang te worden gehecht dan bij de Mafa, alhoewel ook daar een dochter nooit zwanger mag worden als ze nog onder het dak van haar vader woont.
In de Mafa-samenleving onderhoudt de vader een goede, ritueel verankerde relatie met zijn dochters. Dit heeft onder andere tot gevolg dat de bruidnemers, de familie van de echtgenoten van zijn dochters, aan hem, de bruidgever, respect zijn verschuldigd. Dat alles raakt hij kwijt als zijn dochter overgaat tot de Islam. In de Fulbe-samenleving hebben een vader en zijn dochter een relatie van elkaar mijden, alhoewel ze wel met elkaar in contact blijven. De vader en zijn schoonzoon mijden elkaar daadwerkelijk en de moeder van de bruid vermijdt haar schoonzoon eveneens of benadert hem in een respect tonende houding, vanwege het belang van het concept 'schaamte'. Moeder en dochter onderhouden een warme band met elkaar.
Bij scheiding moet de vrouw in de Mafa-samenleving alles achter laten wat ze bezit, zelfs haar kruik en haar kinderen. In de Islamitische gemeenschap mag een vrouw al haar huwelijksgiften meenemen. Haar kinderen blijven deel uitmaken van de patrilinie van de echtgenoot - die vaak ook die van de vrouw is - en na onderling overleg kunnen de kinderen worden opgevoed bij een verwante van de vrouw, als ze vreest dat ze anders slecht zullen worden behandeld door een van haar co-vrouwen.

Bruidschat, handel en smokkel

De activiteiten van geïslamiseerden en niet-geïslamiseerden verschilt aanzienlijk. Dit heeft ten dele te maken met het nieuwe bruidsprijzen-systeem na Islamisering. Wanneer een recent geïslamiseerde vrouw daaraan wil deelnemen, wil dit zeggen dat ze moet bijdragen aan de bruidsprijs van dochters van vriendinnen en eventuele familieleden. Daarvoor moet ze kapitaal vergaren. Maar in tegenstelling tot de Fulbe-vrouwen, heeft ze geen vee om te verkopen en de opbrengst daarvan vervolgens te gebruiken voor de bruidschat. Om toch aan hun verplichtingen in deze te kunnen voldoen, zetten Mafa-

vrouwen allerlei kleine handeltjes op, heel soms investeren ze in huizen, zodat de huurprijs hen ten goede komt, en vaak ook houden ze zich bezig met smokkelen De meeste van deze activiteiten vallen buiten het formele economische circuit Ze kopen en verkopen hun produkten in het informele circuit. Om deze strategieen van vrouwen in de context van de relatie macro- en micro economische processen te plaatsen, maak ik gebruik van recente debatten aangaande de relatie tussen staat en samenleving in Africa bezuiden de Sahara

De economie van vrouwen in Mokolo kan als een autonoom onderdeel worden beschouwd van de totale economie van Kameroen Smokkelen kan als een van de belangrijkste uitdrukkingen worden gezien van de economische scheiding tussen de staat en sociale groepen Het feit dat vrouwen hun kapitaal investeren in bruidschatten en niet in projecten waarover belasting wordt betaald en die door de staat verder kunnen worden gecontroleerd, versterkt dit beeld *van een autonoom onderdeel alleen maar* Vrouwen beschrijven het systeem zelf als een 'banksysteem', een 'spaarsysteem'. Ze investeren in de bruidschat van de dochters van anderen en als de eigen dochter gaat huwen, vloeit de jarenlange investering vanzelf weer terug

Wanneer vrouwen krediet willen zullen ze nooit naar een officiele bank gaan, maar gebruik maken van een informeel systeem, namelijk de tontine, het populaire spaarsysteem in West-Afrika Deze economische aspecten kwamen aan het licht door gebruik van een antropologische analyse die inzicht gaf in de ingewikkelde aspecten van het giftensysteem rond het huwelijk.

Vrouwen kunnen aan de verplichtingen ten aanzien van dit systeem voldoen zonder de ideologie omtrent gedragsregels ten aanzien van vrouwen geweld aan te doen, door bij hun handeltjes gebruik te maken van Mafa-jongens, die weer naar de stad zijn gekomen om hun eigen bruidsprijs bij elkaar te sparen Islamitische vrouwen in Mokolo en deze Mafa-jongens verlenen elkaar dus wederzijdse diensten tengevolge van twee verschillende bruidsprijssystemen.

Uiteindelijke conclusie

Mijn uiteindelijke conclusie is dat Islam zich in de loop van de geschiedenis voordeed als een alternatieve leefwijze Het proces van bekering gaat gepaard met een radicale verandering in levensstijl Het lijkt bijna onmogelijk om één duidelijke reden te destilleren waarom Mafa-vrouwen overgaan tot de Islam, alhoewel wel duidelijk wordt waarom het voor haar gemakkelijker is om ook op latere leeftijd nog van religie te veranderen

De voordelen die we vanuit onze westerse visie kunnen bedenken voor deze overgang tot de Islam - ik denk aan recht op opleiding, het verkrijgen van een

grote bruidschat of het recht op rechtzittingen - werden door vrouwen zelf nooit genoemd.
Er is geen eenduidige reden aan te wijzen, maar uit de vele verhalen van de vrouwen die in het boek worden weergegeven komt duidelijk naar voren dat vrouwen alleen maar Islamiseren als ze daar voordelen in zien voor hun eigen concrete situatie. Wanneer vrouwen op jongere leeftijd Islamiseren heeft het vaak te maken met de associatie van Islamisering met civilisering, een associatie die zowel door de veroveraars aan het begin van deze eeuw als door de houding van kolonisatoren werd versterkt.
Wanneer vrouwen op oudere leeftijd Islamiseren blijkt het vaak om vrouwen te gaan die geen zonen hebben. In de Mafa-samenleving gaan vrouwen op latere leeftijd bij hun jongste zoon wonen. Vrouwen zonder zonen lopen het risico alleen de oude dag in te gaan. Binnen de Islamitische gemeenschap heeft men de plicht voor elkaar te zorgen. Vrouwen zonder zonen zijn dus beter af in deze gemeenschap. Geen kinderen hebben is in de Islamitische gemeenschap minder een halszaak, omdat kinderen daar vaak worden geadopteerd.
De vraag die ik onbeantwoord laat, alhoewel veel collega's en vrienden me ernaar hebben gevraagd, is of de positie van vrouwen verbetert of verslechtert na Islamisering. Natuurlijk heb ik haar tijdens het onderzoek wel gesteld. Een goede informante en wijze vrouw zei daarover de laatste keer, dat het toch overduidelijk was dat haar situatie duidelijk was verbeterd sinds ze tien jaar geleden op ongeveer 45-jarige leeftijd was overgegaan tot de Islam. Eens te meer werd het me duidelijk dat alleen vrouwen die er zelf duidelijk voordeel bij hebben, Islamiseren. Dat voordeel kan zowel religieus als materieel, of anderszins zijn.
Toch kon ik, als antropoloog die noodgedwongen professionele afstand moest nemen, concluderen dat dit voordeel te maken had met het feit dat ze geen zonen had gebaard, en dat Mafa-vrouwen ondanks het religieuze en symbolische kapitaal dat ze in de Mafa-samenleving hebben, politieke en economische vooruitzichten missen die aan dat symbolische kapitaal kunnen worden toegevoegd.
Op de lange termijn kan het feit dat de genera niet langer meer symmetrisch afhankelijk van elkaar zijn een rol gaan spelen in de nieuwe positie van vrouwen binnen de Islamitische gemeenschap. Vooreerst telt voor de vrouwen zelf het feit dat ze binnen deze gemeenschap op het direct zichtbare niveau meer worden gerespecteerd.