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Drought and Coping Strategies
in Fulbe Society in the Hayre
(Central Mali):
A Historical Perspective*

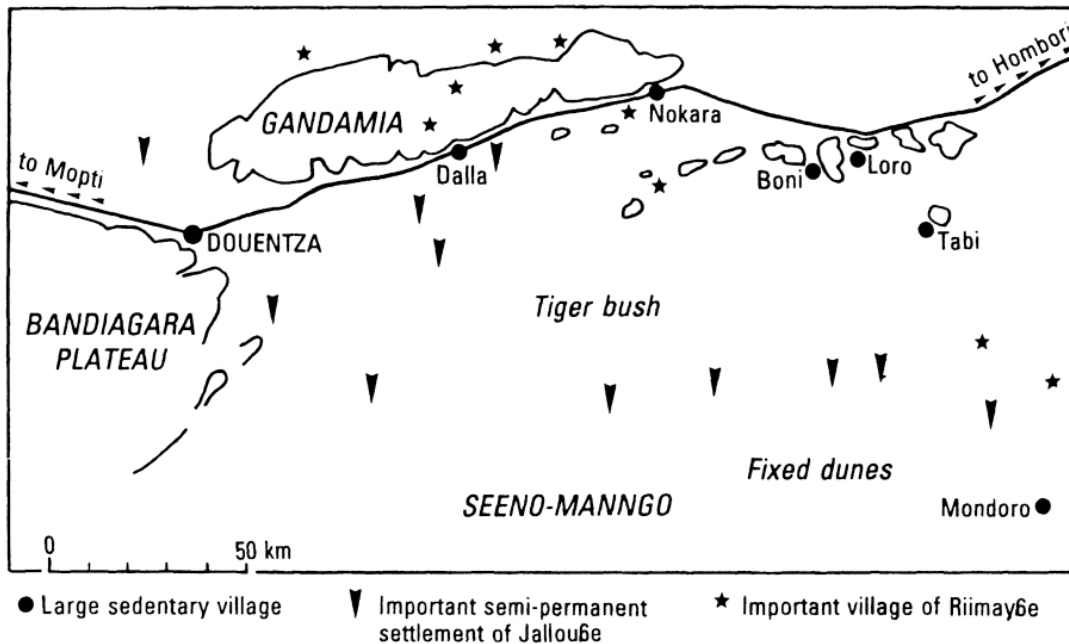
So far the position of Fulbe pastoralists in states and in state formation has received little attention. As we shall see below in the history of Fulbe chiefdoms in central Mali, the links between states and Fulbe pastoralists have always been strained. Historically the formation of states by pastoralists leads to a widening gap between elites and nomadic groups. In this process the elite will eventually lose its affinity with the pastoral way of life, leading to the political marginalisation of pastoralists. The more so when political formations of pastoralists are built into larger political entities, containing sedentary agricultural groups. The requirements of agricultural production, the administration and defense of the territory, and the maintenance of the state apparatus necessitate the reorganisation of the economy and partial sedentarisation (Khazanov 1983). This is illustrated by the reforms under Seeku Aamadu of the Maasina empire in the Inner Delta of the Niger (de Bruijn & van Dijk 1993).

In the Hayre,¹ and in many other regions in West Africa, Fulbe pastoralists have been encapsulated in larger political entities. For the Hayre these

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1. The Hayre refers to the Inselberge and adjacent areas that stretch from the Bandiagara Plateau in the west to Mount Hombori in the east. The region south of these mountains was under the control of Fulbe chiefs. Though the boundaries of the chiefdoms varied over time the area consists more or less of the present Central, Boni and Mondoro arrondissements in the cercle of Douentza, Central Mali. The total area of these arrondissements is 15,479 km², and its population is estimated at 86,933 inhabitants (administrative census 1987) of which more or less 60 % belongs to Fulbe society (HESSE & THERA 1987: 15, 19).

were the Maasina and Toucouleur empire, the French colonial state and the Malian Republic. In each of these periods we see a tension between the requirements of a pastoral way of life, the state, and the most important ideological power in the precolonial political formations, Islam. People orient themselves on these ideological systems in their choices for strategies to cope with the present crisis. Essentially these ideological complexes and the concomitant political hierarchy define until today the social relations between social groups in Fulbe society. These social groups are the political elite (*weheebe*, sg. *beweejo*), the Islamic clergy (*moodibaabe*, sg. *moodibaaajo*), the pastoralists (*jalloube*, sg. *jallo*), the ex-slaves (*riimaybe*, sg. *diimaajo*), the castes (*nyeeybe*, sg. *nyeenyo*) and the merchants (*jaawaambe*, sg. *jaawaando*).²



Sketch map of the Hayre

The droughts of 1972 and 1984 have triggered a process of impoverishment in the Hayre, especially the latter when most cattle in the area per-

2. CHAPMAN McDONALD & TONKIN 1989: 1. The terms *weheebe*, *jalloube*, *moodibaabe* and *riimaybe*, etc., refer to occupational groups (social categories). In some cases, these occupational groups coincide with lineages. The term *jalloube* is not correct in the sense that it refers to a clan, and not to an occupation. We consider the alternative, *egga-hodaabe*, which is sometimes used locally, less appropriate in a text. Of course *weheebe*, *jalloube* and *riimaybe* are not homogeneous groups. While discussing the *weheebe* we will mainly consider the chiefly lineages. The *jalloube* are subdivided in lineages that differ in their closeness to power, access to land, etc. Among the *riimaybe* one might distinguish between so-called "captifs de guerre" (*maccube*) and *riimaybe* descending from the original inhabitants of the region. For the sake of the argument we will leave the role of the *jaawaambe* and the *nyeeybe* aside. Fieldwork was done in the village of Dalla where *weheebe* and *riimaybe* live, and in Serma where a group of settlements of *jalloube* and *riimaybe* in the neighbourhood of Boni can be found.

ished. Combined with declining harvests this has resulted in massive migration and widespread poverty. As a reaction to this situation, the three groups discussed in this article employed different survival strategies. Compared with the *jalloube*, the *riimaybe* and, to a lesser extent, the *weheebe* seemed to be more successful in coping with the crisis. For example, *jalloube* women seemed to prefer being hungry and “to starve” rather than going out in the bush to gather wild grains like fonio and cram-cram, because ideologies with respect to nobleness (*ndimu*) and rules with respect to their behaviour prescribe them not to do this. To understand these reactions and the various coping strategies to the droughts of the groups constituting Fulbe society, we must go back into the history of the Hayre and look into the process of identity formation of the different groups, the behaviour attached to those identities and therefore the attitudes towards labour.

Though a large part of this article is devoted to the history of the chiefdoms, we do not pretend to write a true version of history. Most of the data presented here were obtained through oral history. The narratives on the past, as the various members of Fulbe society present it, are as much history, as narratives about the present. They tell us how the past led to the present as well as how the present creates the past.³

In this respect it is important to note that the Hayre does not figure prominently in other interpretations of the past of the region such as presented by Bâ and Daget (1984), Brown (1964, 1969), Sanankoua (1990) and Barry (1993). Apart from isolated references to warlords originating from the Hayre, systematic information on the region is lacking. So it is possible that the narratives presented in this paper serve primarily the purpose of self-promotion and self-identification of the political and religious elite in the Hayre, and refer in first instance to the present. This would also imply that the Hayre was ruled from outside for centuries and that its political institutions were dependencies of larger political entities. On the other hand, it might be argued that the historians writing on this part of West Africa have predominantly presented an interpretation of history of the political elite. In their accounts not only the Hayre is absent, but also the other peripheral provinces of the empire such as Jelgooji and Guimballa.⁴

3. The material presented in this paper concerns both a “real” past deduced from the organisational features of land use by the authors, and interpretations of the actors involved. This need not be “true” history, because the historical aim of oral traditions is often secondary (VANSINA 1985), and “. . . all [historical] messages are social products” (*ibid.*: 94). The oral traditions’ primary goal is “to stress group consciousness, [. . .], they relate the group to the overall worldview of the community” (*ibid.*: 92). Thus oral tradition, and maybe history in general, reflects norms and values and, as we will see in this article, ways of self-identification.
4. Only for Western Burkina Faso (Boobola) there is a geographical monography (BENOIT 1979) and an historical one (DIALLO 1993). There is a thorough geographical study of the Gourma (including the Hayre) by GALLAIS (1975) and the anthropological work of RIESMAN (1974) in Jelgooji. But this is far from sufficient to allow a reinterpretation of the history of 19th-century Central Mali and northwestern Burkina Faso.

The Formation of Fulbe Chiefdoms in the Hayre

The Hayre is characterised by rocky formations that stretch from the Bandiagara Plateau to Mount Hombori. In the mountains live several groups of cultivators, Dogon, Sonrai and some Fulbe pastoralists (*jalloube*). At the foot of the mountains are villages of Fulbe elite (*weheebe*), Dogon, Humbebe, ex-slaves of the Fulbe (*riimaybe*) and Sonrai. Semi-permanent settlements of *jalloube* can be found at the border between the foot of the mountains and the Seeno-Manngo, an area of fixed dunes which is good pasture land in and after the rainy season (see Gallais 1975). Nowadays all groups in the region are engaged in agriculture and cattle keeping in different combinations. The *weheebe*, *riimaybe*, Dogon and Sonrai are mainly cultivators. Their cattle (if they have some) is sometimes herded by *jalloube*, sometimes kept at the homestead or near the village. The *jalloube* regard cattle keeping as their main occupation, although the cultivation of millet has become the most important activity for many of them. In the dry season the pastoralists go on transhumance to barter milk for millet and to search good pastures, since their yearly cycle is partly dictated by the cattle, its need for good pasture, and partly by the quest for millet. It is a typical agro-pastoral economy. In former times the division of occupations between the different groups was far more strict.

Dalla and Boni are the capitals of two Fulbe chiefdoms in the Hayre. Dalla is the oldest, its settlement dates from the first half of the 19th century, whereas Boni's foundation is from the second half. These chiefdoms may be regarded as state-like political structures. The political hierarchy which emerged in the late 18th and the early 19th century was characterised by a complex set of political and social subdivisions in which each and every group was assigned a place and a role. This hierarchy was based on kinship, status differences, ascribed nobility (*ndimu*), exchange of livestock and Islam. All these features figure prominently in the stories we collected from informants in the Hayre.⁵

5. Information on the history of the Hayre was gathered during our fieldwork. An important informant was Aamadu Ba Digi, the griot (*nyeenyo*) of Dalla. He told us the version of history as accepted by the court of Dalla. Other informants were *moodibaabe* (Islamic clergy) of the Dalla and Boni court who are the scribes of the court and as such keep record of history and also copy existing documents on history. Further we gathered stories about the history of the Hayre with old *jalloube*, *weheebe* and *riimaybe* men and women. One remark must be made on the story told by the griot of Dalla: it was not oral tradition in the sense Vansina gives to it. On our request, the story was reconstructed by the griot with the help of *moodibaabe* who possess written documents about the elite's history. In April 1993, Aamadu Ba Digi died. He was the last well-informed griot in the Hayre. We have lost a good friend.

Pastoralists and Warriors

According to a text that was recited to us by the griot of Dalla, we may date the appearance of the *weheebe* in the Hayre in the late 17th, early 18th century. In this period lots of people were wandering around, there was no central political power and cattle and slave raids were an everyday practice.⁶ As the story goes, three *weheebe* came hunting from the Inner Delta into the region; they found different clans of *jalloube* pastoralists with their livestock and exchanged game for the milk of the *jalloube*. Then, the *weheebe* helped the *jalloube* to keep the Twareg out of the area and they became partners. The *jalloube* asked the *weheebe* to stay and they gave them women. This is the basis of the relationship between the *jalloube* herders and the *weheebe*. Through the gift of women, the descendants of *jalloube* and *weheebe* became cross-cousins, *denndiraabe*. In Fulbe society, this is a special relationship marked by openness and friendship.

The *weheebe* became the warlords, *ardo'en*, and they formed three chiefdoms: Dalla, Joonaa and Kanioume. Dalla, the most important, is located in the Hayre proper; the other two, Joonaa and Kanioume, are located to the north-west of Dalla, in the Guimballa. In the 19th century Dalla was split up in two, the off-shoot was called Boni. The *weheebe* led the *jalloube* in raids against the Twareg and the Mossi. The cattle they took as bounty were given to the *jalloube*. In return, the power to rule and the right to claim cattle for their maintenance was given to the *weheebe*.

In this period the Fulbe of the Hayre were not yet converted to Islam. A famous chief in those days named Alu Maana⁷ convinced a wandering marabout to stay at his court to teach his people the doctrines of Islam. This cleric wanted to stay only if he could marry the wife of Alu Maana. The children of this woman and Alu Maana and of the cleric and this woman are thus half-siblings. The descendants of this cleric have become the most important family of *moodibaabe* in Dalla.⁸ They form their own lineage and the Imam (*almaami*) and judge (*alkaali*) of Dalla are selected from it. Islam being the religion of the elite, it became for the *weheebe* an important source of power, which the *moodibaabe* helped to maintain with their magic practices.

6. The Inner Delta of the Niger was in a state of chaos at the end of the regime of the Moroccans (see FAGE 1969, FISHER 1975:69, SWIFT 1983). This can be extended to the Hayre since the region borders on the Inner Delta of the Niger.

7. He is so famous that in Burkina Faso, in the surroundings of Koungoussi, the Hayre is still known as the Hayre Alu Maana.

8. Everyone who has studied the Koran and who proved to be a good student receives the name Cissé and can become marabout or *moodibo* in fulfulde. In the Hayre, there are different *moodibaabe* families, descendants of important *moodibaabe*. Next to the *moodibaabe* family in Dalla, there are *moodibaabe* families in Nokara and Loro (near Boni). Among the *jalloube* there is one lineage that is named "Moodibaabe", whose members are the descendants of Torodbe who migrated into the area in the 19th century (see WILLIS 1978). Not all Islamic scholars are member of the *moodibaabe* lineages. In our article, we label marabouts as well as members of the Torodbe lineage *moodibaabe*.

The Maasina Empire (Diina)

The Jihad, led by the Pullo (pl. Fulbe) Seeku Aamadu (Bâ & Daget 1984; Brown 1969), concentrated in the Inner Delta, but its influence also extended to the Hayre. This Jihad resulted in the foundation of the Maasina empire (1818-1862). Bâ and Daget (1984: 59) mention the Hayre-Seeno as a province of the Maasina empire. In the story of the griot, it is told that the chief of Dalla did not want to submit to Seeku Aamadu on the grounds that he was as good a Moslem as Seeku Aamadu. Seeku Aamadu forced him to leave the area, and his son, who studied the Koran in Tombouctou and joined the army of Seeku Aamadu, took over. He was appointed chief of the vassal state of the Maasina empire, the Hayre, as a reward for his services. His successors were also followers of Seeku Aamadu. Under the reign of Maasina, the court of the Hayre settled in Dalla. The character of the chieftdom and the way of governing changed. From warlords (*ardo'en*), the *weheebe* became sedentary rulers (*amiiru'en*). The *tubal* ("war drum"), the *pilkol* ("turban") were the symbols of the chief's power, and Islam was the religion of the court (Kintz 1985). Slave labour grew more important.⁹ The *weheebe* and their *moodibaabe* became part of the elite of the larger Islamic empire of Seeku Aamadu. This, plus the fact that from now on the chief of Dalla was appointed by the ruler of the Maasina empire, meant that they directed their attention towards the elite of the empire and no longer relied on their *jalloube* herders for support (in war and politics). Maasina also furnished them with horses and soldiers. Cattle and slave raids were still important but not as before and the cooperation of *weheebe* with *jalloube* in wars must have diminished. In this period Islam was gradually spreading in rural areas via wandering marabouts and the founding of Koranic schools in the capitals of provinces or cantons. Slaves, however, were not islamised, only courtslaves were allowed to learn how to pray. These policies were all copied from those designed at the core of the Maasina empire (Bâ & Daget 1984: 63-64).

With the sedentarisation of the court in Dalla, land-use patterns were reorganised in accordance with the rules of the Diina of Seeku Aamadu. Around the village of Dalla, an area, labelled the *harima*, was set aside for the young animals. The fields that were worked by slaves of the court and the *moodibaabe* were located around the *harima*. Access to the village for the herds was through three cattle routes (*burti*, sg. *burtol*), in northern, southeastern and southwestern direction. The pastures for the herds were located farther away from the village, as far as the Seeno-Manngo, thirty kilometres south of Dalla. In the rainy season, the majority of the herds were

9. In his story the griot tells us that, during the reign of the Maasina empire, the villages of cultivators in the mountains were all enslaved, and became slave estates producing grains for the court. Another category of slaves were war-captives who were mainly employed by the *weheebe* and the *jalloube* in their households.

pastured on the Seeno-Manngo and near the salt-licks at Durgama, with only small milk herds at Dalla. In the dry season, the herds returned to the village to be pastured in the neighbourhood and were corralled at night in the fields around Dalla, to have them fertilised for the next rainy season millet crop. In the mountains, there were two special pasture areas for the horses of the cavalry.

In Boni, which was founded when the Maasina empire was already in decline, this organisation of land use is absent. The elite of Boni also denies any attachment to the Maasina empire in the past.

Rebellions

A normal feature of pastoral states are rebellions on the fringes of the empire and growing internal weakness. A pastoral state either collapses because of its internal contradictions and rebellions of pastoralists who feel marginalised or it develops into a political formation based on sedentarity (Khazanov 1983: 301). In the second half of the 19th century, the Maasina empire weakened because of economic problems and rebellions of Twareg and Fulbe (see Johnson 1976; Brown 1969). According to Sanankoua (1990) there was also some disagreement at the centre over the succession of the ruler and government style of the Maasina empire. She explains this disagreement as a conflict between pastoral and Islamic modes of succession and governance. In the end the Maasina empire was crushed by another Jihad which started in Senegal and was led by a Toucouleur, Umar Tall (Robinson 1985).

During the reign of the Toucouleur who set up their headquarters in Bandiagara there were constant rebellions out of discontent with their administration. In the Hayre, a rebellious warlord, Maamudu Nduuldi Dikko, settled near what is nowadays Boni.¹⁰ He was the son of a former Beweejo chief of Dalla, but left the court because of internal strife. The *weheebe* of Dalla were no longer interested in the well-being of the pastoralists because of the encapsulation in the Maasina and the Toucouleur empire. Under the regime of the Toucouleur, exploitation of the pastoralists and cultivators became more severe. The resulting discontent formed the basis of a movement against the *weheebe* elite of Dalla. Together with the *jalloube* of the Boni area, Maamudu Nduuldi organized raids against the Mossi and the Twareg. From these raids he returned with cattle for the *jalloube*.¹¹ He

10. This story was read to us by a *moodibo* in Boni from a document he kept in his house. The document was probably written during his son's reign, Allaay Maamudu Dikko, who, according to the court of Boni version, was a rebellion leader. The *weheebe* of Dalla interpret his actions quite differently, as became clear after the investigations made by the griot of Dalla.

11. The *jalloube* around Boni still claim this cattle to be the origin of their herds.

nearly staged a campaign against Dalla, but the rebellion was suppressed when the Toucouleur gave him control over the best part of that chiefdom. With the division of Dalla, the Toucouleur hoped to break a potential opponent in their empire.

Moreover, Maamudu Nduuldi was married with a *jallo* woman, and thus his descendants and those of the *jalloube* were tied by relations of close kinship.¹² In Boni, a political hierarchy similar to that of Dalla developed, but the relationship between *jalloube* and *weheebe* was much better because of the close kinship ties and the successful wars they fought together. And also Islam was less important as a binding ideology in the chiefdom.

Thus, in the 19th century, distinct political hierarchies in the Hayre as well as in the neighbouring chiefdoms of Joonaa and Kanioume emerged. *Jalloube*, *moodibaabe* and *weheebe* formed the upper strata in the political hierarchy, they had *ndimu* (noblesse), they were *rimbe* (noblemen). This hierarchy was imposed upon non-Muslim groups of cultivators who were turned into slaves. As a result, a precise division of labour and ideological differences came into existence. The *weheebe* were associated with power (*laamu*). Their craft was to rule, warfare and the provision of their vassals with cattle and a reservoir of cheap labour. Their preferred food, unsurprisingly, was meat. The *jalloube* were associated with the bush, the herding of cattle and the drinking of milk. They supported the *weheebe* in warfare and shared in the bounty (cattle and slaves). The *moodibaabe* were associated with the maintenance of power. They provided the *weheebe* with charms and magic necessary to pursue their raids successfully and to remain in power. Islam and the rules of the Diina provided the ideological frame to fit both the *jalloube* and the *weheebe* in this endeavour and moulded a collective identity of being part of the nobility, *ndimaaku*. Finally, the *riimaybe* were set in opposition to the nobles,¹³ as a non-Muslim pagan population which could be exploited. Their craft was to till the soil, a task considered unworthy for nobles. Their food was millet, sorghum and bush-products.

The reorganisation of land use and society had important consequences for the nomadic way of life of the *jalloube*. Although they were associated with the bush and the herding of cattle, the rules of the Diina required that they gave up part of their nomadic existence. While in the past they were trekking with the whole family, they became now partly sedentarised, *i e* only the young men and their families transhumed with the herds to the pastures on the Seeno-Manngo and near Durgama. The elders and their women were settled in sedentary camps and villages. The rebellion in Boni indi-

12. A descendant of Maamudu Nduuldi is still chief of Boni.

13. In fact the story is more complicated than presented here. For a full representation of the political hierarchy we should also take the position of craftsmen (*nyeeybe*) and traders (*jaawambe*) into consideration, because theirs is somewhat an intermediate position. For the sake of the present argument we will skip this issue.

cates that this transformation was not uncontested. The *weheebe* of Dalla were probably so immersed in their power games and their relations with the centre of power in Hamdallaaye, the capital of the Maasina empire, that they forgot their tasks as nomadic warlords, to provide the *jalloube* with cattle and slave-labour, a duty which, according to oral tradition, Maamudu Nduuldi performed with a lot more success.

The concept *ndimu*, that can be translated roughly as noblesse, *i e* what it takes to be noble, is associated with the herding of cattle, to the extent that the *jalloube* as pastoralists are regarded as more noble and “purer” than the *weheebe*.¹⁴ Moreover, *ndimu* is associated with the following of Islam and an Islamic way of life and, perhaps most important, it refers to the position people have in the political hierarchy. So *ndimu* is essentially a concept to describe social relations between people. This is clearly reflected in the norms and values with respect to the position and work of women. According to the griot of Dalla, the women of the *weheebe* were in *pardah* (veiled), in accordance with the rules of Islam and the Diina.¹⁵ They should remain idle, not leave the compound and certainly not engage in physical work like cultivation. *Riimaybe* women performed the household work and the agricultural tasks. We do not know if *jalloube* women were in *pardah*, but they certainly did not engage in agricultural work. This example also shows that *ndimu* is an ambiguous concept, since, in practice, it is difficult to combine an Islamic and a pastoral way of life. The paradox is that, to create a political organisation to maintain their pastoral way of life, the Fulbe needed Islam.

French Colonialism and Independence

Jalloube and *weheebe* grew further apart under the French colonial regime. The position of slaves changed gradually. These developments were partly the result of French politics. Pacification of the colonies, the abolition of slavery, the collection of poll-tax and other kinds of taxes, and the control of Islam were the most important undertakings of the French colonial government.

The French had a stereotyped idea about the Fulbe's character. They considered the Fulbe as a noble and powerful people, but at the same time lazy and stubborn (Harrison 1988: 71-73). This attitude we also found in reports of French administrators of the Hayre.

« Les Foulbés de Dalla, appartiennent en majorité à une sorte de caste de nobles, les Bérébés. Ces Bérébés ne font absolument rien et vivent uniquement du produit de

14. The *jalloube* are indeed “purer” than the *weheebe* in the sense that they do not marry with Sonrai and *riimaybe* women. The *weheebe* regularly take *riimaybe* women as wives or as concubines, mostly for political reasons.

15. Even to the extent that a chief, who showed slackness on this point, was removed in the beginning of the Maasina empire.

leurs captifs, qu'ils exploitent le plus qu'ils peuvent. Voici pourquoi la question de captivité et celle de partage de *diakka* est si importante ; c'est pour eux une affaire de vie ou de mort ». ¹⁶

In this quotation the ambivalent attitude of the French administrators to the Fulbe chiefs in the Hayre appears. In the beginning, the French were mainly concerned with law and order and the collection of taxes, for which they badly needed the *wehebe* and the Islamic clergy. So they followed a policy of keeping them quiet and loyal to the colonial administration. Chiefs who did not function were removed. The chief of Boni at the beginning of the French regime, Allaay Dikko, son of Maamudu Nduuldi Dikko, because he caused too much unrest with his oppressive regime, suffered this fate. He was replaced by his nephew who was more moderate.¹⁷ This policy worked well as is witnessed by the fact that in both Dalla and Boni the longest reigning period of a chief was under the French colonial regime: in Dalla, Yerowal Nuhum Dikko, 1911-1966; in Boni, Hammadou Yero Dikko, 1899-1952.

The French chose not to interfere with Islam, but instead to tolerate and control it from a distance. They intervened only when law and order was at stake.¹⁸ The only control was registration of Koranic schools in the Hayre.¹⁹ The chief of Dalla, Yerowal, was appointed Islamic judge at the Douentza court.²⁰ In the first half of the 20th century, the *jalloube* in the bush started to study the Koran and became *moodibaabe* themselves. Islam developed into a folk religion, although the political function of Islam remained important for the *wehebe*. Up to today, the *moodibaabe* of the historical religious centres in the Hayre (Dalla, Nokara, Loro) are deemed better and holier than those among the *jalloube*.

The same law-and-order considerations led the French to let the *wehebe* continue to exploit their former slaves. Slave raids and trade were however forbidden effectively. The *jalloube* gradually lost power over their slaves,

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16. "Rapport du Lieutenant Gateau, Commandant de la poste de Hombori, à M. le Commandant de cercle du Macina au sujet des réclamations des Foulbés de Dal-lah, 12 avril 1903", Fonds ancien, dossier 2E-4, Politique indigène: Correspondances Cercle de Bandiagara, 1899-1907, Archives nationales du Mali, Bamako, Koulouba. The Bérébés are obviously the *wehebe* (sg. *bewejo*).
 17. "Rapport Destenave, 1895", Fonds ancien, dossier 1E-23, Rapports politiques: Bandiagara, 1893-1920; and Fonds récent, dossier 2E-17, Renseignements des chefs de canton: Douentza, 1908-1957, Archives nationales du Mali.
 18. Cf. AUDOUIN & DENIEL 1975, BRENNER 1984, HARRISON 1988. We found no records of any activity undertaken against Islam by the French in the Hayre. But in Bandiagara and Jelgooji the French did undertake action against Hammalist preachers who were opposing French rule (RIESMAN 1974, BRENNER 1984).
 19. "Rapports sur les écoles coraniques", Fonds ancien, dossier 1G-111, Cercle de Bandiagara, 1903-1915; and "Statistiques des écoles coraniques", Fonds récent, dossier 1G-198, Cercle de Bandiagara, 1921-1924, Archives nationales du Mali.
 20. This was told by one of his sons.

who just left or died and could not be replaced under the new political circumstances. Especially in 1913-14, when a drought hit the region, many slaves died or left the area, not to return (cf. Marchal 1974). In Dalla, the domestic slaves of the chief's family regained their freedom only after World War II, when more autonomy was given to the colonies and political parties strived for political rights. The chief of Dalla decided to free his slaves in order not to lose the political battle. He symbolised this by building a wall separating the houses of the slaves from the houses of his family in his courtyard.

The chiefs were particularly important for the French because they collected the taxes. They already exacted the Islamic tax (*zakat/diakka*) with the *jalloube* for the Maasina and Toucouleur empires. On top of that, the head tax was introduced. The *riimaybe* were registered as part of the family of their former masters (in the beginning) and they paid taxes via their masters. Because of this tax collection, and the importance of cattle tax for the French, nothing was done to hinder the pastoral activities of the *jalloube*, with whom the French had no direct contact. The *jalloube*, for their part, preferred to maintain as little contact as possible with the administration, which they considered a threat to their pastoral way of life. They let the chiefs handle their administrative affairs such as the evasion of schooling, or enlistment in the army and court cases. They paid the *weheebe* with cattle for these services.

Perhaps more important in forging a coalition of interests between the French administration and the *weheebe* was the fact that the latter were allowed to keep part of the taxes (5 %).²¹ When complaints were deposited with the administration against *weheebe* concerning abuse of tax money and illegal appropriation of *zakat* taxes, the French reacted reluctantly or not at all.²²

The French intervened little in the economy of the Hayre and then only in an indirect way. They promoted the selling and export of cattle to the coastal colonies of Britain and France, and for this relied mainly on traders. The trade did not flourish because of the levying of high duties and taxes by the French administration.²³

Even so patterns of land use in the Hayre changed drastically, but for different reasons. *Jalloube*, *weheebe* and *moodibaabe* were forced to engage in agriculture themselves as they gradually lost the labour of their slaves. This did not mean that slaves and masters became equal. The ideology of the past was very strong and the relations between the groups were still defined

21. Lettre datée du 9 janvier 1903, Fonds ancien, dossier 2E-4, Politique indigène: Correspondance Cercle de Bandiagara, 1899-1907, Archives nationales du Mali.

22. "Rapport du Lieutenant Gateau . . ." (see *supra* fn 16).

23. "Régime fiscal du bétail, 1934", Fonds récent, dossier 6D-6; "Exportations du bétail, 1931-1953", Fonds récent, dossier 1Q-125; and "Essai d'organisation des exportations des animaux, 1934-1935", Fonds récent, dossier 1Q-126, Archives nationales du Mali.

along precolonial lines. However, the content of these relations changed drastically. In the Hayre, *jalloube* as well as *riimaybe* developed an agro-pastoral land-use system, in which the herding of livestock and the cultivation of millet were combined. The *jalloube* relied predominantly on livestock. They were helped in this respect by more favourable climatic circumstances.²⁴ Their herds prospered and their cows yielded a lot of milk. They undertook the cultivation of millet to support the growth of the herd and to reduce the period in which they were absent from the village. In this way they were able to increase the productivity of their fields with the manure produced by their animals. The *riimaybe*, on the other hand, relied more exclusively on the cultivation of millet. The surpluses they produced were invested in livestock, mostly small ruminants but also cattle. They also increased the productivity of their fields by corralling their own livestock or that of the *jalloube* on their fields during the dry season.

The abolition of slavery had also an indirect effect. Areas that were hitherto closed to cultivators like the Dogon and Sonrai, because of the risk of being captured by the Fulbe, were now open (Gallais 1975: 111). The French administration did not prevent this encroachment on Fulbe areas, although to our knowledge they neither actively promoted it,²⁵ except for the resettlement of rebellious villages of Dogon at Tabi²⁶ and the Bandiagara escarpment (Suret-Canale 1964: 143-144). It indicates however, that the pastoralists lost control over one of their main resources, pasture land.

After independence, the official power of the chief of Dalla declined because the *canton* of Dalla was abolished and became part of the larger *arrondissement central* of Douentza. As a result the chief was reduced to the status of village chief. The same happened to the chief of Boni, with the difference that his village became the capital of the *arrondissement* of Boni, corresponding rightly to the central area of his former chiefdom. Offices of government services were installed in Boni, which advanced the power of the chief of Boni who was then able to directly control the interactions of the population and the administration.

24. This should not be overestimated; archival sources and more detailed questioning of informants indicate that there were several periods of drought and famine in the 20th century: in 1913-1914, in 1942 and 1946-1947 (see "Rapport politique, février 1914", Fonds ancien, dossier 1E-24, Rapports politiques et rapports de tournées: Cercle de Bandiagara, 1896-1920; "Rapport de tournée, Mondoro, Houmbebe et les Peuhls de Boni, 11-12 avril 1942", Fonds récent, dossier 1Q-335, Rapports économiques: Cercle de Douentza, 1922-1942; and "Arrêté interdisant la sortie du mil et du riz hors des limites du cercle de Douentza, 1947", Fonds récent, dossier 1Q-228, Archives nationales du Mali). Nevertheless, during the 1950s and 1960s, the period people often refer to, there were no droughts or famines.

25. "L'administrateur des colonies, commandant du cercle de Bandiagara à M. le gouverneur du Haut-Sénégal-Niger, 21 novembre 1913", Fonds ancien, dossier 1E-24, Rapports politiques et rapports de tournées: Cercle de Bandiagara, 1896-1920, Archives nationales du Mali.

26. "Rapport d'ensemble politique, administratif et militaire au Lieutenant-Colonel Mangeot, commandant de la région de Tombouctou, sur les opérations dirigées contre le village de Tabi, canton de Boni, cercle de Gourma, octobre-novembre 1920", Fonds ancien, dossier 1N-6, Archives nationales du Mali.

A second important change after independence was the introduction of secular law, instead of Islamic law, for the administration of justice. The role of *moodibaabe* as scribes and judges was thus rendered obsolete. At the same time however, *riimaybe* started to send their children to Islamic schools. More *moodibaabe* from *jalloube* villages began to practice in their village in the bush.

The Drought

Around 1968, a period of drought set in that hit Fulbe society in the Hayre very hard. In the minds of the inhabitants of the Hayre, the period of independence is very closely associated with the drought. For them, prosperity was lost and the colonial period is often remembered with nostalgia. It is clear that, with the drought, a fundamental change in the political and economic system took place, a change which began under colonialism and perhaps even before that. The drought and its aftermath uncovered a deeper reality which had not been noticed because of the period of prosperity just before and after independence.

The process of ecological deterioration culminated in the dry season of 1984-85. The *jalloube* seemed to have no power to defend their territory. Herders from the north came into the area with their cattle. The chief of Boni had no means and no interest anymore in stopping this movement. The pastures were exhausted and the herds of the *jalloube* were decimated. In the years following this dry season, climatic and political circumstances did not permit the pastoralists to rebuild their herd. The harvests remained well below subsistence level and the reconstitution of herds was thus made impossible. The growth of the herd has to be sold each year in order to feed the family. The *riimaybe* also lost lots of livestock, but they have other options for recovery.

Many families who have lost all their animals migrated and did not return. Those who stayed behind don't have enough animals to live on.²⁷ It means that some families can no longer take care of the people they are responsible of, for example, one's old mother or father, a paternal aunt, a paternal uncle, children of brothers. Kindred who in normal times would depend on each other are nowadays living separately and sometimes do not

27. For example, from a cattle camp in the neighbourhood of Boni, out of 27 family Fheads (who almost all died) with 33 sons, 14 sons have left the area, 7 without wives or children (they divorced or were unmarried) and 7 with wives and children. Often they left their old mother behind, sometimes with a very poor brother, or with no children at all to look after her. Data from a wealth ranking exercise we did in eight settlements (see GRANDIN 1988 for the methodology) indicate that only 2 out of 63 *jalloube* families in this area possessed sufficient cattle to meet their needs.

even know where their relatives are and what occupations they have. The young men who migrate often leave their mother and families behind without anyone to care for them.

In reaction to the drought and because of the large amounts of aid money that poured into the country, the Malian administration began to intervene in land use. Projects were identified for upgrading the pastoral, agricultural and forestry sector (Gallais 1984, Kliest *et al.* 1982). In 1986, the Code forestier and the Code foncier were revised. Control on the activities of the population became more severe, particularly in the domain of forestry. In the Hayre, offices of the livestock service were improved and more forest agents were assigned to the region.

When nowadays cultivators want to clear land in pastoral areas, the state is free to give out this land without consulting the pastoralists, except when the prospective field is near a water point or on a *burtol* for livestock dating from the Maasina empire. When, for example, the veterinary service of Douentza started to dig wells to improve the water situation on the Seeno-Mango for the pastoralists, the land around these wells was soon occupied by Humbebe cultivators. In Dalla, even the *burti* and the *harima*, and land near ponds was not safe. After 1985, *riimaybe* and impoverished *nyeeybe* and *jaawambe* started clearing fields in the lower lying areas south of Dalla where *jalloube* pastoralists used to water their animals. In Dalla itself, the chief started cultivating on the *harima* and gave out all the other land to *weheebe*, *moodibaabe* and *riimaybe*. The *burti* were gradually occupied by cultivators who added them to their fields next to the cattle routes. The *jalloube* were powerless, and, in the course of the 20th century, they lost their representation at the court. Their only other source of power, cattle, with which they would be able to bribe the administration in their favour, perished in the drought. The only option left was to retreat on the Seeno-Mango, where access to water was hindered by the fields around the newly established government wells. At present the *jaawambe* and *nyeeybe* who have invested the revenues of their trade in livestock, herded by impoverished *jalloube*, begin to exert pressure on the chief to reopen the *harima* and the *burti* for livestock, a project strongly resisted by the *riimaybe*.

The functioning of the forest service in Boni provides another example of the transformation of the old political hierarchy and of the more prominent role of the state in land use. The office consists of one forest agent. He has a motorbike with which he is expected to go to the villages to control infractions on the forestry code. The *weheebe* of Boni persuaded the forest agent not to go into the bush alone but to be accompanied by a son or nephew of the chief. Not only he would not lose his way but his task would be made easier since the Beweejo who would be with him knows the people and where to find them. They divide the money. The Beweejo very clearly chooses the side of the administration and places himself in opposition of the *jalloube* in this way. This system is simply a continuation of the controlling system of the colonial period, when the colonial adminis-

tration gave local chiefs the authority to enforce the forestry code in their territory in the absence of sufficient forest agents. It also illustrates the distance that has grown between the *jalloube-riimaybe* and the *weheebe*.

Coping Strategies and Ideologies

We have seen that in the course of history the content and nature of the political hierarchies in the Hayre have changed. The pastoral way of life has become more and more marginal from the foundation of the Maasina empire to the present; and with it the position of the pastoralists, the *jalloube*, declined. The *riimaybe* were freed of their slave bonds. As a group they have become an integral part of Fulbe society, although ethnically composed of such diverse backgrounds as Sonrai, Dogon, Bambara and Kurminkoobe. The most prominent *weheebe*, the chiefs and their families, took up an intermediary role between *jalloube* and rulers from outside. The distance between the *weheebe* and the *jalloube* grew as the former became more and more immersed in the politics of the state that was increasingly dominated by urban and agricultural interests. This development resembles closely what Khazanov (1983) describes as being the fate of the pastoral way of life in Central Asian pastoral state formations.

In other respects, *jalloube*, *weheebe* and *riimaybe* grew more alike. *Jalloube* and *weheebe* took up cereal cultivation in the colonial period. Their source of labour dried up when the *riimaybe* became free cultivators. At the same time, the *riimaybe*, and other non-stock owning groups including non-Fulbe, began to accumulate livestock to provide themselves with manure on their fields and cash for cereals when the harvest failed. In this process, social groups in Fulbe society were integrated in the markets and economy, though in different ways.

Social groups in Fulbe society also grew more alike with respect to Islam. For a long time the *weheebe* have adhered to Islam as an ideology of power, and, as the importance of pastoralism declined, it gradually penetrated the daily life of the *jalloube*, thus replacing the loss of identity (*ndimu*) associated with the decline of their pastoral way of life. For the *riimaybe*, conversion and adherence to Islam contributed to their social status. When becoming pious Moslems, they acquire more *ndimu*.

This picture of history, of course far from complete, is our reconstruction out of different narratives. However incomplete our sources, what makes these narratives relevant is the fact that informants constantly refer to history when explaining their present activities to cope with the crisis. The political hierarchy and the related ideologies define, until today, the relations between the social groups in Fulbe society and the strategies people develop to cope with the drought. This becomes clear when we compare *jalloube*, *riimaybe* and *weheebe*.

Jalloube

With respect to land use the strategies of *jalloube* and *riimaybe* differ considerably. Despite the fact that they own more or less the same combination of assets, such as land and livestock, they follow quite distinct strategies with respect to labour input and investment strategies. The herder, expecting to feed his family in the dry season on the revenues from the sales of milk or livestock, works as little as possible on his land. The *diimaajo*, on the other hand, wants to produce as much millet as possible in order not to deplete his stock of animals and save them for hard times. So the *jallo* cultivates as an insurance against crisis and the *diimaajo* keeps livestock for the same purpose. This indicates that the *jallo* clings to livestock keeping and abhors the idea of cultivating or working with his hands in general because it means a loss of *ndimu*. The paradox being that he is probably more integrated in the cash economy than the *diimaajo*.

However, most *jalloube* have no choice but to cultivate because their animals perished in the droughts. In 1984-85, only some herders managed to save their herd because they were, by chance, transhuming in areas where the situation was not so bad. Nowadays they have the largest herds. Inequality among the *jalloube* is nothing new. They say: "One day Allah makes you rich, the other day he leaves you with nothing. But if he wants, you will be rich again" (cf. Iliffe 1987). However, at this moment there are so few cattle that even the reproduction of the way of life of the *jalloube* is threatened. The circulation of livestock, and in particular cattle, ensured the attachment of individuals to society and to their families, since the animals embody an individual's social relations (Ingold 1986: 168). Normally every child is given a few head of cattle at birth by his or her parents. Nowadays a lot of children, most often girls, do not receive any livestock at all. A lot of adolescents have lost their animals in the drought. An old man, whose sons left for the Inner Delta to look for work, explained to us that he could not force his sons to stay with him because he had no animals, he had nothing to offer them for the future except a life as a cultivator.

Seasonal migration is very normal for the *jalloube* since they go on transhumance. They still do so nowadays, but it is to look for work, *e.g.* to herd the cattle of the Dogon or the Humbebe or even *riimaybe*, or that of urban cattle owners in the Inner Delta. *Jalloube* very seldom engage in other work. As our assistant (himself a *diimaajo*) remarked in reaction to *jalloube* herders working on the fields in Douentza: "They must be very poor indeed, otherwise a Pullo will never work on someone else's field".

We heard of *jalloube* men sneaking away at night to be never heard of again. Some old women asked us to write a letter to Radio Mali with a call for their sons who left some years ago and never sent any message. But in most cases people knew where their kin or neighbours had gone. They had left to look for work elsewhere and were engaged mostly in the herding of Dogon's cattle near Bankass, on the Bandiagara plateau, in the Inner Delta

of the Niger or in Ivory Coast. Some became assistants of big traders at the cattle markets. Others set themselves up as marabouts in Douentza, Banamba in the region of Koulikoro or Abidjan in Ivory Coast. They left their village in the Hayre and never returned. They never return because if they do come back home poor, it is not in accordance with their status, *ndimu*, or if they have made a fortune, coming back would mean spending it on their family.

Jalloube women, themselves owners of cattle, are the milk-managers. In former times, they fed their families with the bartering of milk for millet (the staple food) during the dry season. Now herds are very small. The cattle that women owned died first and the one they receive from their husband with marriage (*fute*) is reduced to one cow or some goats.²⁸ The milk economy of the women has become marginal in the household economy, only a few women can rely on the milk revenues and can be regarded as economically autonomous from their husbands.

What possibilities do other *jalloube* women explore to keep their autonomy? They weave mats, some women gather grasses in the bush and sell them. These grasses are used as construction materials for huts and for making sleeping mats. *Jalloube* women do not engage in agriculture, this is men's work. In extreme cases, women move to town where they are involved in the selling of powdered milk, the tressing of hair, and prostitution.

Some *jalloube* women, however, eventually turn to the work of *riimaybe*, but in that case they become real destitute or deviant individuals, *e g* they are accused of sorcery. If *jalloube* women move into so-called *diimaajo* work, they can only engage in this work outside their cattle camp. Agriculture is in all cases no alternative for them. Strong pressure is exerted on them not to engage in agricultural work, so they have to hire labourers or ask a relative to cultivate for them.

Jalloube women only rarely gather bush-products. It is mostly the children (boys) who are sent to gather wild fonio and the fruits of *Boscia senegalensis*. If the women dispose of cash, they may buy these bush-products (including wild rice) from *riimaybe* women. Among the *riimaybe* as well as the *jalloube* themselves there are strong ideological prejudices against gathering by the latter, because, for *jalloube* to gather bush-products is to show that one is really poor and to expose oneself to outsiders in a way that is regarded as shameful and not *ndimu*. On the other hand, the *riimaybe* consider it a violation of their rights. Probably these opinions go back to the past, when the *riimaybe* were sent into the bush by the *weheebe* and the *jalloube* to gather bush-products in times of scarcity.

28. Women who married after 1985 only received one cow or bull as *fute* or no animals at all (11 marriages were recorded). From the 68 marriages recorded before 1985, only in 5 cases a *fute* of one cow or bull was given, in the other cases it varied from two (4 cases) to nine (2 cases) head of cattle.

Riimaybe

The contrast with the coping strategies of the *riimaybe* and the *weheebe* is in many respects striking. The *riimaybe* have also suffered from the droughts, and experienced a substantial loss of livestock and impoverishment, but they have been more successful in maintaining a certain level of millet production. Their political position has improved as a result of the droughts. They have become more important for the chiefs as political clients, because they are supplying more to the *weheebe* than the *jalloube*. They have also become inclined to demand their political rights after the droughts and, as we saw in Dalla, access to natural resources (land). They cannot deny being part of Fulbe society, which is oriented towards pastoralism as a way of life, but they are proud of the fact that they are cultivators.

Most illustrating, however, is the fact that *riimaybe* women have totally different strategies to cope with the situation after 1985 than *jalloube* women. They work on the family land and they cultivate small fields for themselves, the harvest of which belongs to them. In former times yields were abundant, and it was not really necessary to undertake other activities, which did not mean that they were idle. On the contrary, they were always active in small scale trade. After 1985, the petty trade of *riimaybe* women became more important for their families. During the dry season the *riimaybe* women can be found in the bush, gathering wild fruits, wild rice and wild fonio. Some of them also managed to rebuilt a herd of small-ruminants, which is herded by one of their children. In general, *riimaybe* women do succeed in keeping an economic autonomy from their husbands in times of crisis, and even in making an important contribution to household income, while the *jalloube* women in most cases do not. Instead *riimaybe* women supply *jalloube* settlements with all kinds of products, and are the core of important redistribution networks, caring for the poor, *riimaybe* and *jalloube* alike.

Riimaybe also migrate for longer periods. But as far as we know, they always return to their village. Sometimes after a few years, sometimes only after 20 years. When they migrate they engage in all kind of work, mainly in construction work (building of houses, fabrication of bricks) or as agricultural labourer. Migration out of the region has not really been an option for them after 1985, because of the declining economy in the rest of West Africa.²⁹

29. The difference in migration patterns between *jalloube* and *riimaybe* can be linked to the ideology (norms and values) concerning labour, and their interpretation of wealth. On the other hand, the type of employment which is offered to migrants also depends on the prejudices of employers. The *jalloube* meet with prejudices concerning their capacity for manual labour. The *riimaybe* will not be employed as herders for the same reason.

Ideologically the *riimaybe* have developed a more self-conscious attitude towards the nobility, which amounts to a genuine re-interpretation of the "official" (*weheebe*) version of history. They claim, for example, that slavery was not imposed by force but that they were cheated into it by the *jalloube* and the *weheebe*. It is only because the *moodibaabe* wrote down their names as belonging to certain Fulbe that they have become slaves. In Boni, the *riimaybe* are also contesting the *weheebe* version of history; they deny having been subjugated by Maamudu Nduuldi but instead assert that they came to help him in his wars against the Twareg. With respect to land they have developed a counterideology. They claim to be the descendants of the first inhabitants of the Hayre and therefore to be entitled to the land now in use as pastures. In Dalla they laid this claim on the bush near deserted settlements of the paleo-negritic population which can be found in a number of locations.

Weheebe

The *weheebe* follow a mixed strategy. A considerable number of *weheebe* have been educated and moved to town to take up government jobs. Some impoverished members of the chiefly lineages have become cultivators; others have set up small enterprises such as tailoring. The chiefs and those close to power still live of the contributions and exactions of the population.

Weheebe women are still confined to the compound, except when their families are living in the bush. Outdoor household chores such as fetching water and gathering wood are done by their unmarried daughters and, to a limited extent, by *riimaybe* women, with whom they have good relationships, in return for some money or food. Their husbands should provide them with food and clothing. Next to this they earn some money with the weaving of mats, though the profitability of these activities has dropped considerably.

Islam

Islam plays a peculiar role in this contest for ideological supremacy. In the past, Islam was primarily a religion for the political centre, the *weheebe*, closely associated with the nobility. Knowledge of Islam was denied to the *riimaybe*. In the course of history Islam has developed into a folk-religion. In the bush, *riimaybe* and *jalloube*, men and women, all perform the basic Islamic duties such as the daily prayers and the Ramadan fasts. Because of the bad situation, life cycle rituals such as name-giving ceremonies and marriages are no longer accompanied with the traditional non-Islamic festivities. They are however still performed according to the rules of Islam.

From the beginning of the colonial period initially the *jalloube* and later on, after World War II, the *riimaybe* entered Koranic education. The *jalloube*

now dispose of their own Islamic clergy. To our knowledge, there are no practising *riimaybe moodibaabe* yet. At this moment there are a number of centres for Islamic education and *moodibaabe* in general. The *moodibaabe*, who are attached to the *weheebe*, are still the religious core of Fulbe society. For example, in Dalla, the former Imam is the focus of religious life. His compound is always filled with the inhabitants of the village, *weheebe*, *jaawambe*, *riimaybe* alike. *Jalloube* camping in the neighbourhood may be found there every day to receive his blessings. He is frequently consulted in political matters and about the proper way of handling them, and he serves as a mediator in conflicts. Though we would not grant him with the characteristics of a saint, he is regarded as such by quite a number of people. His fame is however limited to the surroundings of Dalla. Outside the Hayre he is not known at all.

The study of the Koran is nowadays clearly linked to the crisis, as is made clear by the statements of *jalloube* women: "In the future he will earn a lot as *moodibo*, if he is lucky", and "being a *moodibo* is better than a herder without cattle". Some *moodibaabe* we have interviewed expressed the fear that their craft is inflating. Nowadays too many *moodibaabe* try to earn a living with their craft ("maraboutage") and in the future there will be even more *moodibaabe*. However in the bush being a *moodibo* was not such a bad option. Many people ask marabouts for help against the various pests attacking the millet on their fields, or to cure them in case of illness. People's health may have worsened due to the crisis, especially so because the health situation was already bad.³⁰

Old women, who studied the Koran a little, or widows of *moodibaabe* can earn a living with these attributes. A number of women go to town during the dry season where they recite Koranic verses for the people, often for those they know fairly well, *e g* from the time they were still transhuming with the cattle, or their old *weheebe* or *riimaybe*. This recitation will bring fortune and health, and thus people willingly give the old woman money or some food. We would interpret this action as begging, but these *jalloube* women consider it differently. They help people in a spiritual way and show how good a Muslim they are, which is positively sanctioned by others.

The examples illustrate that Islam has by now become one of the most important ideological forces, perhaps the central force of Fulbe society as a whole. Notwithstanding all the centrifugal forces that cause the disintegration of society, Islam links all the groups to each other and provides them with a common ideological frame, while interpretations of history have become vehicles for the promotion of group interests.³¹ Political relations

30. HILDERBRAND (1985) already mentions the bad health situation of Fulbe in the Seeno-Manngo (a little north of our research area) before 1985. After the drought the health situation will surely not have improved.

31. In his article on Sonrai society and drought, NIEZEN (1990: 421) states: "Drought in the Sahel made villages more dependent on each other for mutual aid but at the same time traditional kinship ties and other bounds of reciprocity were weak, making the religious community a strong alternative focus of solidarity."

have deteriorated with growing competition over land and other natural resources. Cattle as a means of social integration perished in the droughts. Kinship relations have become less important because the redistributive networks of cattle and other commodities ceased to function.

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In this article we have described the transformations that Fulbe society in the Hayre went through. In this process the political hierarchy, which was created in the 19th century under the influence of the Maasina empire, gradually weakened. To a large extent, traditional bonds of mutual support between the *weheebe* elite and the *jalloube* pastoralists disappeared. Moreover, the dominant pastoral sector in the chiefdoms lost control over natural resources because of colonial legislation which centralised control over land and forests into the hands of the colonial state. And the slaves, *riimaybe*, were emancipated. As a result, in the 20th century a new division of labour developed into a system no longer based on herding and farming as mutual exclusive occupations for *jalloube* and *riimaybe*, but into one in which all groups became agro-pastoralists and were growing more alike with respect to land use.

It was shown that, in the ecological crisis of the last two decennia, the choices for different coping strategies are strongly guided by the ideologies which were linked to the old political hierarchies, with the *riimaybe* aiming at a reinterpretation of history that reflects their newly acquired status as free cultivators. At the level of society, traditional bonds based on political relations, kinship, cattle and ideologies concerning status (*ndimu*) have lost much of their practical importance. Instead Islam, which in the past was functioning as an ideology of power, now seems to take over as a common frame of reference and a common ideology.

Jalloube and *weheebe* still consider themselves to be superior to the *riimaybe*, and to be noble; they have *ndimu*, and respectively regard the herding of cattle (*jawdi tan min njidi*) and power (*laamu tan min njidi*) as their ideal way of living. Cattle and kinship are still binding forces between the *jalloube* and the *weheebe*. Cattle was the focal point of their undertakings in the past, hence the value that is attached to the consumption of livestock products and their dislike for agricultural work and manual labour in general and the limitations imposed upon the activities of women. Devoting oneself to manual labour and having your wife work in cultivation would mean the loss of *ndimu*.

For the *jalloube* relations with the *weheebe* have become ambiguous. On the one hand they are a point of reference with respect to *ndimu*. On the other hand, it is clear for the *jalloube* that the *weheebe* are not and can no longer be the guardians of their interests any more.

This article further provides information on the history of the periphery of the Fulbe empires in this part of West Africa, which, up to now, was lack-

ing. In general these empires are seen as the defenders of pastoral interests. As is illustrated by the history of the Hayre this is only partly true. Once an empire begins to settle, the pastoralists must also settle, and this undermines their political position and the flexibility and viability of their pastoral way of life.

Though it is difficult to assess the historical value of the narratives on the history of the Hayre, the messages these stories contain are shown to be relevant to the present. They stress the solidarity between the *weheebe* and *jalloube* as nobles, the role of the Islamic clergy and the subordinate status of the *riimaybe*. Further, they pinpoint the ideal ways of living for each group in Fulbe society that still play a role as models for behaviour and self-identification in the situation of today.

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