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From Pastoralist to Politician: The Problem of a Fulbe “Aristocracy”

Perhaps the most striking revolution in Fulbe culture of the 18th and 19th centuries was the transformation of a handful of pastoralist leaders and teachers into a political stratum ruling over great states. The problem we raise here is the nature of that Fulbe political stratum or, as it is often called, the Fulbe “aristocracy”. The particular aim of this paper, then, is to analyse the different patterns of political office-holding that obtained within the states of the Sokoto Caliphate in relation to the modes of stratification and social composition of the predominantly Fulbe groups which created these political formations. We will argue that it is neither accurate nor particularly useful to label all office-holders in the Sokoto Caliphate as “aristocrats” (or indeed, in some cases, as “Fulbe”); nor, we suggest, is it useful to conceive of political power in the states of the Caliphate as emerging out of a pre-existing aristocratic stratum within Fulbe society. Furthermore, if it transpires that aristocracies in some sense did develop in certain contexts within the Sokoto Caliphate, we need to identify the social conditions and historical period in which they came into being, and what symbols of aristocracy distinguished the “aristocrat” from the commoner.

Our question is prompted in part by the facile use of the label “aristocrat” in some recent works of history and political anthropology. For example, on the map of West Africa showing the “major ethnic groups” in the *History of West Africa* (Ajayi & Crowder 1985: 7), the Fulbe are divided into “aristocrats” and “nomads and semi-nomads”. While these contrasting labels may represent little more than a distortion of the old Fulbe distinction between *Pullo wuro* (Hausa: *Fulanin gida*) and *Pullo ladde* (Hausa: *Fulanin garke*), “aristocrats” is nonetheless a very misleading label, not least in the western areas of West Africa where Fula traders for example are an important feature of everyday life. In practice, these authors may be seeking to do no more than map out the contrast between those areas where Fulbe govern large numbers of people and those areas where Fulbe herd cattle and sheep—one of their authorial assumptions being that the “Fulbe” are usefully treated as a single category consisting of these two subdivisions.

Underlying this academic identification of a Fulbe "aristocracy", however, there is in our opinion a broader political stereotype, developed particularly in the Nigerian context, which typifies the Muslim emirates as conservative and undemocratic—"feudal" even, were this term not so unfashionable now—in the eyes of the opposing Christian communities of southern Nigeria. The stereotype, however, ante-dates modern politics. The identification of Fulani with aristocracy was so attractive to many British colonial officers and writers that it became a stereotype which affected their way of treating Fulbe leaders even in areas where concepts of aristocracy were irrelevant. Indeed it is ironic if not altogether surprising that just at the time that Britain's own aristocracy was in sharp decline, Britons in colonial governments abroad were waxing romantic about "their" new, local aristocrats. The middle-class amongst the British were adept at bringing their notions (and aspirations?) of social rank with them, to northern Nigeria as much as to India.¹ Thus in discussing the term "aristocrat" as it might be applied to the ruling groups of the Sokoto Caliphate in the 19th and 20th centuries, we argue that in some areas the notion of aristocracy was indeed taken seriously—but it was precisely in those areas that the identity of aristocrats as Fulbe (if not Fulani) is most questionable.

Aristocracy also figures prominently in more recent anthropological discussion. Victor Azarya, for example, in his 1978 book entitled *Aristocrats Facing Change: The Fulbe in Guinea, Nigeria and Cameroon*, offers in our view an unsatisfactory analysis of the social composition and internal stratification processes at work in the Sokoto Caliphate. It is our contention that the Fulbe groups that undertook the jihad were not differentiated along aristocratic versus commoner descent lines and that, subsequent to the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate, despite the centralization of power in the hands of the Fulbe rulers and their courts of titled officials, the dominant social cleavage in most of the emirates of the Caliphate remained that between Fulbe freemen and *haabe* slaves or vassals, as opposed to that between so-called aristocrats and commoners.² Only in a few emirates did aristocracies eventually emerge later in the 19th century and then in the context of specific historical forces.

1. TEMPLE 1918. It was not solely a British perception. French colonial officials who dealt with the Fulbe of the Sokoto Caliphate had their own version of the stereotype. For example, de Brazza wrote (RABUT 1989: 230): "Les Foulbés ont conservé à un haut degré le sentiment de la supériorité des races berbères du nord, auxquelles ils semblent devoir leur origine et leur civilisation relativement avancée, et sont très fiers du sang blanc que certaines familles ont gardé dans presque toute sa pureté. Il constituent une aristocratie peu nombreuse par rapport à l'étendue du pays où ils dominant . . .". On some French colonial notions of hierarchy in West Africa, see VAN HOVEN 1990. On the British, see C. L. TEMPLE 1918; R. HEUSSLER 1968. Even a historian like the late Professor Abdullahi (H.F.C.) SMITH referred in his early work to the 19th century "Fulani aristocracy" (1961: 178).
2. In Adamawa it has been said that *haabe* (sing. *kaado*) technically denotes non-Fulbe, whether they be Muslim or not; *maccube* (sing. *maccudo*) denotes non-Mus-

Given how problematic the definition of “aristocracy” has proved to be especially when applied in African history, we propose to use as our baseline here the terminology proposed by Max Weber in his *Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (1947). In Weberian terms, aristocracy can be defined as a (high) status group characterized by *a*) a specific mode of recruitment—usually descent—and *b*) the privileged use of certain symbols. Similarly, according to Weber, a state can be described as patrimonial if its ruler allocates office personally to whomever he wills; in contrast, these offices are described as prebendal when the office-holder’s lifestyle is financed by rents from specific lands or other sources in some way attached to the office. Thus in this schema aristocrats and office-holders are distinct, if potentially overlapping, categories. Office-holders need not be of high status, nor need aristocrats necessarily hold any office. In the Sokoto Caliphate this is an important point since, for the analysis of the political structures that developed in the various emirates of the Caliphate, the balance between office and status is a significant variable.³

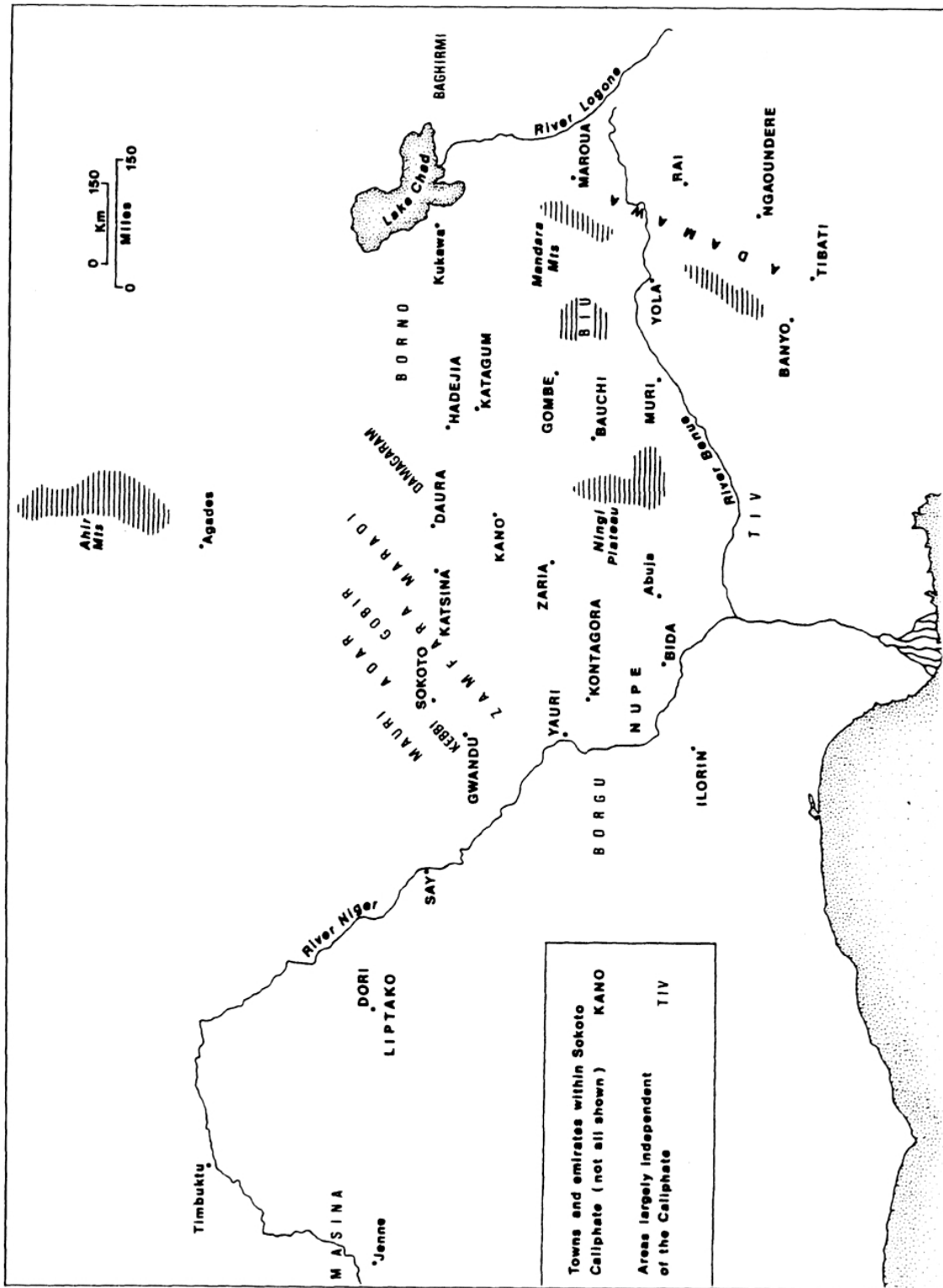
Political Structures: The Model

The origin of the state structures of the Sokoto Caliphate lay, of course, in the jihad of 1804-1808, with its clearly and repeatedly stated objective of setting up an Islamic community governed in accordance with the *shari‘a* law—a community that was to last until the imminent coming of the Mahdi. This last factor is important in that for some it imbued political debate and action with a sense of urgency. But as in other large-scale revolutionary civil wars of the period, the ideas that sparked off the conflict were transformed by attempts to have them put into practice.

The history of Muslim states offers a wide range of examples of how Islamic principles of good governance have been interpreted and practised.

lims who have submitted to Muslims—that is, they are *ahl al-dhimma* (Fulfulde: *jimmadufiko’en*)—while slaves are *jeyaabe* (“owned”) (BASSORO & MOHAMMADOU 1980: 87). In Hausaland (as also in Masina), however, *haabe* is used, if it is used at all, contemptuously to imply “pagan” or “native” (as well as non-Fulbe), while *Maccudo* is the conventional equivalent of the Arabic *‘Abd* or the Hausa *Bawa*, especially as a personal name. *Bamaguje* (Arabic: *majus*; Fulfulde, *majuu-saajo*) is the term for a *dhimmi*. Therefore, we do not use *haabe* here to denote the pre-jihad governments of Hausaland as the late M. G. SMITH (1960) did; to do so, though perhaps not technically inaccurate, would nonetheless be to adopt the rhetoric of the Fulbe victors in the jihad.

3. Note that in European history, aristocracy is a vaguer category than “nobility”, in that the latter in France, for example, have been specifically and formally ennobled by the king, and, in the Ancien Régime, had no formal share in government; in England by contrast there was no comparable nobility (since kings did not ennoble anyone), though there was an “aristocracy” which did indeed participate in government (CROUCH 1992: 3; DUBY 1977).



The Sokoto Caliphate and its neighbours.

Similarly, there is wide debate among Muslim scholars over the legally correct way for a community to identify and then deal with an unjust ruler. This is not the place to outline that debate (cf. Lewis 1988) or to show how the Sokoto scholars sought to justify their overthrow of the existing Muslim government (Last & al-Hajj 1965). Suffice it to say that they modelled their practice initially on that of the Prophet at Medina, and then later recommended the political structures prescribed in such texts as al-Mawardi's, which were in turn based upon principles derived from Abbasid practice ('Abdullah b. Fodio 1956). In these "constitutions", the person chosen by the Muslim community (usually through a special council for appointments) as *Imam* and *Amir al-mu'minin* has sole responsibility, but he is advised both by his officers—his personal friends or senior men or even servants—and by a wider council. The Imam appoints emirs, as his delegates, to govern and defend provinces. In this, the government is a form of monarchy, but the Imam's power depends nonetheless on the legitimacy of his actions being recognised both by his councillors and by the community at large. A crucial distinction between the government of an Imam and that of a monarch is that the Imam does not "own" his power in the way a king owns or embodies his kingdom: the community might have to obey the Imam, but the *shari'a* law, interpreted by scholars and judges, is above both. These scholars and judges constituted a kind of embryonic bureaucracy with some degree of independence vis à vis the ruler and his staff. But as the century wore on, the influence of these "bureaucratic" elements diminished. This bureaucracy has been described elsewhere (Last 1967, 1970). Here we are concerned with the category of non-scholarly governing officials—who in the past were sometimes described as "feudal" elements.⁴

A further element in the model, at least initially, was the pervasive role of the Sufi brotherhood (Arabic: *tariqa*) in grounding structures of authority

4. Both "feudal" and "caste" imply models with some aristocracy-by-birth on top. Neither seem appropriate here. In many of the theses produced by the school of historiography associated with Ahmadu Bello University in the 1970s and 1980s, the style of government associated with this ruling stratum or "aristocracy" is now referred to as the "*sarauta* system" (USMAN 1981; MAHADI 1982); in the Marxist model it identified the local pre-capitalist mode of production. This usage was introduced not merely to indigenise a political vocabulary: it emphasised the fundamental continuity between the pre- and post-jihad regimes, depicting both regimes as exploitative and thereby calling into question the aura of an Islamic "golden age" that surrounded not only the Sokoto Caliphate but also by extension the modern conservative establishment that claimed to be the heirs of the jihad. Our use of Islamic terminology here follows the practice of the old intelligentsia for whom classical Arabic was the language of learning. In Fulfulde, the *Amir al-mu'minin* was *Lamido Julbe*, in Hausa *Sarkin Musulmi*; only in English was that position termed "Sultan". "Caliph", for the head of "the Caliphate", is something of a neologism in Sokoto; "the Sokoto Caliphate" was introduced in print only in 1966 (by Last then working with H. F. C. Smith) to describe what was otherwise apt to be labelled a "Fulani empire" (H. F. C. SMITH 1960: 16; M. G. SMITH, 1960: 3; H. A. S. JOHNSTON 1967), but it has since become standard usage.

and obedience on the formal relationship between a Shaikh and his disciples. Thus the Qadiriyya endowed the *Amir al-mu'minin* with a particular religious authority over his people (who were conventionally addressed en masse as "Kadirawa"); and, on this principle, quite often the man initially identified locally to lead an emirate was chosen because he was a senior Qadiri scholar, who had once been a disciple of the Shaikh 'Uthman but now had his own *baraka*, and had too the loyalty of his students and perhaps an ability as a mediator—but had little or no clan following to call upon. Yet such authority soon proved to have its limitations: some scholars lost out to men with more mundane support, others who managed to retain power themselves were unable to pass it on to their heirs. By mid-century, when the Qadiriyya seemed to have lost all its early cohesion, a new brotherhood, the Tijaniyya, was taken up by some (notably, for example, in Yola) as a fresh source of *baraka* and perhaps obedience. But the rigours of Sufi recitation appealed, it seems, to relatively few Fulbe men—if the early complaints of the scholars are to be believed.

Given the widely variable circumstances in which the new emirates were established, the implementation of the Islamic model gave rise to a range of political structures and administrative arrangements which themselves evolved in different ways in the course of the century. On one hand there were the ancient great states that succumbed with varying degrees of resistance to the jihad forces—the Hausa states of Kano, Katsina, Zaria, Gobir and Kebbi; in the south, the kingdoms of Oyo and Nupe, the Jukun states of the Benue and Gongola valleys. Borno was defeated but never taken over, nor was Mandara; Ahir became an ally while Jenne and Timbuktu remained outside Sokoto's orbit, despite an initial approach. Of these old states, only Kano, Katsina and Zaria took over from the preceding dynasties both the physical urban structures and some of the political system. On the other hand, there were vast areas where large-scale states had never been established; here the new emirates were planted as a new political system based on new towns. These "green field" sites posed very different problems for those given the authority to establish an Islamic administration in often hostile territory. Hence it is much too facile to assume a single stereotyped form of government that could be taken as the norm for the Sokoto Caliphate; instead, we need to examine the range of structures developed by the new emirs (or *laamiibe* [sing. *laamiido*] to use the Fulfulde term common in Adamawa) in the various regions of the Caliphate.

Political Structures: The Distribution of Power

Given the size of the Sokoto Caliphate—four month's journey East-West, and two months' North-South—it was initially administered in four segments, but very soon these four were amalgamated into two halves: the northern and eastern quadrants came under the *Amir al-mu'minin* based in

Sokoto or Wurno, while the southern and western quadrants were under “The Emir” at Gwandu (the quadrants formed an X whose centre-point was Sokoto). Though the emirs at Gwandu were subordinate to Sokoto, they appointed and supervised the various emirates under their charge in the same way as the *Amir al-mu'minin* at Sokoto managed the much more numerous emirates under his control. For a variety of reasons Gwandu neither greatly expanded nor strengthened its sphere, with two of its emirates—Nupe and Ilorin—only becoming formidable powers late in the century. The Mossi, Gurma and Bariba states set limits to the ambitions of Fulbe in emirates such as Liptako, Say or Illo; and while it was initially expected that the Fulbe of Masina would join the Gwandu/Sokoto system, in the event they did not. Though the Emir of Asben at Agades and some other Tuareg remained Sokoto's ally, the rump states of Gobir and Katsina (at Maradi) in the north, and Borno and Mandara to the east effectively limited Sokoto's territorial expansion, leaving only the south-east and south as areas of new settlement. This region, known as “al-Yaman” (or in Fulfulde, Fombina: “the South”—that is, south of Borno), is the Adamawa whose lamidates under the leadership of the Emir at Yola we discuss below.⁵ The very distance of Yola from Sokoto, the hazards in getting there and the sheer size of its outlying regions, made its position vis à vis its sub-emirates more like that of a Gwandu than, say, close-knit Kano.

The principle underlying appointments was that a local leader be given the command of a distinct area, but that each local commander would be supervised from Sokoto by an emissary who was himself a Sokoto man. Overall, then, at the top levels of administration there was considerable decentralization, with no central, standing army. What held the system together was ultimately the religious authority or *baraka* of the *Amir al-mu'minin* at Sokoto as heir of the Shaikh 'Uthman dan Fodio, and the readiness of emirs to join together at his command and oppose en masse either rebellion or invasion. It is this decentralization, and consequently the relative freedom it gave to different emirates to create their own political structures, that makes it necessary to analyse the variation in the way power was locally distributed.

Despite the initially very wide criteria of eligibility, all emirates but one normally had emirs appointed on principles of heredity and seniority from a single lineage. In some emirates, however, appointments eventually alternated between two or more branches of a “royal” lineage. Only in Zaria did the office of emir rotate round three totally distinct lineages.

The content and distribution of offices under the emir did not follow a single pattern, but broadly the political structures of the emirates fell into two types, each of which consisted of several sub-types:

5. We use the term “lamidate”, as is common now in the modern literature, to refer to the sub-emirates of the Adamawa emirate of Yola.

1. Those emirates that were established with the support of large cohesive groups (*e g* “clans”); some of the major governmental functions and territories were distributed among members of these groups or among those associated with them, and the descendants of the early office-holders maintained their rights in the office and in the property associated with it. These emirates (“lineage-based”) divide into two sub-types:

a) those such as Zaria and Kano where the major office-holders (including the emir’s kin) reside in the capital and form the emir’s council while using delegates of their own to control the territories allocated to the office. In this sub-type one can include a particular category of emirate to be discussed in some detail later in this paper—namely emirates such as Ngaoundere, Tibati and others of the southern Adamawa states which had been established in areas beyond the direct control of pre-existent Muslim states (*e g* Hausa or Borno) and whose structures of administration continued to be based on the pastoral Fulbe concept of the *tokkal* (pl. *tokke*) or political following. Under this system, individual office-holders (some of whom were the *laamiido*’s kin) represented their spatially dispersed followings of both settled and semi-nomadic communities at the *laamiido*’s court, although they themselves might reside either within or within easy reach of the capital. Also often residing outside the capital were titled office-holders of slave status, as well as vassal chiefs of conquered non-Fulbe groups, who played important roles in administering distant vassal communities on behalf of the *laamiido* in these very extensive states.

b) those such as Sokoto and Katagum where the office-holders with territorial responsibilities (including the emir’s kin) reside outside the capital; the emir’s council consists of advisers appointed personally and not linked particularly to specific pressure groups; these advisers act as intermediaries between the emir and the powerful office-holders outside the capital. The political structure of the Yola emirate, in its capacity as overlord of the other Fulbe states of Fombina, can also be analysed under this heading.

2. Those emirates (and they form a small minority) which were not established with the support of one or more large groups but relied instead on a heterogeneous band of individuals attached to the emir either as friends or as slaves. No office-holding dynasties developed, nor therefore did permanent offices with official property (with the exception, of course, of the emir’s). These emirates (“clientage-based”) subdivide into two:

a) an emirate such as Hadejia where power was concentrated in the emir at the capital, with usually a large slave component in the administration; the emir’s council was informal with no balance of power between separate interest groups;

b) an emirate such as Ilorin or Nupe where there was, however short-lived, a dyarchy in which the traditional ruler maintained his court at the same time as the “Mallam” ran a centralized, client-based administration of his own.⁶

6. Borno, though not of course part of the Caliphate, is the best-studied example of this arrangement. After the Mai was defeated and the ancient capital Birni Nga-

The emirates of type 2 usually experienced civil war. Those with a dyarchy eliminated early the traditional ruler, in Ilorin and Nupe by the 1830s. But peace did not necessarily follow. Civil war between claimants within the emir's dynasty broke out in Nupe and Hadejia and neither state established stable governments until c.1860. Nupe then developed a political structure of type 1a (like Zaria, but with the office of emir rotating round related lineages), while Hadejia continued to maintain a client-based government dependent on an emir wielding supreme power and backed by a large body of royal slaves.

The emirates of type 1 are more numerous and so more varied. Centralized or decentralized residence is a quick but superficial criterion for distinguishing between these emirates. Decentralized residence—type 1b—implies a category of intermediaries (*e.g.* a vizier or the office of *beero* or *siimaajo* at Yola) at the capital, who at the outset might be seen as “clients” of the emir. But they, given the lineage idiom of the political system, developed lineages of their own; in consequence, the emir created a further category of clients from those unable to develop lineages, namely palace slaves, but they played a minor role. Centralized residence, in contrast—type 1a—implied no such category of intermediaries between office-holder and emir but in time the emir developed a palace slave retinue to act as his personal agents, and they played an important role in government. Centralized residence, like the *tokkal* administrative systems of many of the southern Adamawa lamidates, also implied that the office-holder could have charge of a number of widely dispersed towns, villages or peoples (thus preventing any territorial blocs of power), whereas decentralized residence usually meant that the office-holder's headquarters were within an area that owed allegiance to him as a whole, with only a few, if any, villages likely to owe extra-territorial allegiance to another office. In practice, dispersed holdings were more common than consolidated estates because the nature of the relationship between a group and their office-holder was more personal than regional or territorial: people identified themselves more by kinship than by residence. Region-wide holdings tended to be the norm where a leader had been allocated a frontier area either for defence or for expansion (“jihad”)—most notably in the south where non-Muslim communities were numerous and posed a threat to trade, pastoralism, or Muslim settlement.

zargamu occupied by “Fellata” (albeit only temporarily), the state of Borno continued in the form of a dyarchy with two capitals further east, the new Mai at Birni Kafela and the Shaikh Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanemi at Kukawa. The arrangement lasted until 1846 when, following an unsuccessful invasion by Wadai, the Mai was executed by Shaikh ‘Umar, the son of Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanemi (d. 1837), thus terminating the thousand-year-old dynasty of the Sayfawa. After a further civil war, ‘Umar ruled with a client—and slave-based administration of his own (*i.e.* of type 2a). The Shehus’ government was destroyed by Rabeh in 1893, but was re-formed by the British after 1902.

Residence as a criterion cannot be applied too strictly. Many emirates modified their residence rules for various offices in the course of the century (for example, the office of Madaki of Bauchi was transferred back to the capital from Wase early in the century); many offices had more than one residence and the exact allocation of time spent in which place is not known, nor is it known how often an office-holder outside the capital might ride in for important meetings. Finally, the relative importance of offices could change, so that in an emirate like Bauchi, power under the emir seems in the course of the century to have oscillated between offices at the centre and offices in some of the territories. But residence does reflect conditions early in the history of each emirate, and draws attention to important economic and political differences between the emirates.

Politically emirates of type 1b (that is, with territorial office-holders residing outside the capital) were responding to the basic requirement of the jihad, which was to establish and maintain frontier posts within which the new emirate's economy might be rebuilt. Lacking their own towns, and lacking concentrated, settled populations on which to base themselves, these emirates were militarily very precarious. Much of the manpower and time in the early decades went in constructing strongholds (the classical Islamic term, *ribat*, pl. *rabut*, was used for these, whose occupants were known as *murabitun*) and in organizing adequate agriculture in the face of attacks or threats of attack. This was even true of Sokoto itself, where the *Amir al-mu'minin* often chose to live not in Sokoto but in his *ribat* at Wurno. In addition, when pastoralists had to be settled or some non-Muslim group was to be incorporated into the emirate, these had to be helped in reorienting themselves to the occupations and rules of Muslim life in the *rabut*. The problems encountered are vividly recorded in the books and letters sent by the reform leaders to each other.

Economically these emirates were chronically short of labour. Trade routes were not yet well established and protected; and the risk of attack from displaced or hostile populations made for a shortage of land safe for farming. In sum, the precariousness of some emirates in the early period should not be underestimated; nor, therefore, should one overestimate the formal nature of government or political organization. Given this basic fluidity, the danger both initially and throughout the century was that a powerful office-holder would seek complete autonomy and appeal to Sokoto for recognition as an independent emirate. In such cases diplomacy was not always able to prevent armed conflict breaking out, as the struggles between Yola and Rei Bouba or Tibati discussed below illustrate.

In the course of the century, the trend in emirates of type 1b was for offices at the capital to become more powerful than all but one or two territorially based offices. In consequence those office-holders outside who sought to maintain their position (especially members of the emir's own lineage with claims to inherit) tended to reside more in the capital. This trend was associated with the growing population and security of the frontiers,

with the gradual absorption of previously distinct groups into the more homogeneous society of the Caliphate and with the formalization of the office of emir as the sole source of power in the emirate.

Emirates of type 1a, with office-holders resident at the capital, had markedly different experiences in the early period of the Caliphate. Only in Kano and Zaria were conditions favourable for a large urban "court" since not only was the city already built but so was the economy, with agricultural production and trade networks well established. Defence too was less of a problem. Existing towns might be renamed *rabut* but the large settled population was not in itself rebellious while the deposed kings of Kano and Zaria posed little threat from their distant places of exile.

The economic strength of these "developed" emirates made them indispensable to the Caliphate's finances, and, if the emir gained sole control in any of them, it might possibly tempt him to rival the caliph. In consequence, the aim both of the caliphal administration and of the groups excluded from the office of emir, was to prevent an excessive concentration of power. In Zaria the problem was solved by rotating the office of emir and other positions round three distinct lineages, by the caliph's readiness to depose an emir, and finally by relatively short periods in office (the longest period, fourteen years, was enjoyed by only two emirs). The cost of this solution was a sometimes ineffective emir. In Kano, by contrast, a protracted civil war which followed the accession of the second emir, Ibrahim Dabo, and the emir's long reign of 27 years (1819-46) both ruled out rotation of offices as a remedy for undue concentration of power. Instead, the territorial strength of the major office-holders and their independence as councillors and "kingmakers" were guaranteed—but only with partial success, since a second 27-year reign (by Dabo's son, the fourth Emir 'Abdullah) resulted in a further concentration of offices and resources in his family. Sokoto had no adequate reason nor possibly the ability to depose the emir in Kano. There was, then, a rapid narrowing down of those eligible for office (since eligibility to hold office depended on one's father having held office); and the cost of being excluded from office was the relative impoverishment and loss of status for oneself, one's descendants and dependents. Competition amongst members of the "royal" lineage therefore was serious, and gave rise in Kano to two years of bitter civil war in 1893-95. The concentration of office-holders at the capital not only increased the costs of maintaining there a rapidly growing, ruling stratum (a cost that perhaps only Kano or Zaria could initially have afforded), but also heightened the risk of eventual conflict at the centre of the emirate. In contrast, the civil wars at the end of the century in emirates of type 1b—Gombe, Katagum—were centrifugal. Paradoxically, in Bauchi, decentralization was necessary again in order to forestall centrifugal revolts. But by further diminishing the value of offices available to the emir's kin at the centre (where after a period of centralization the palace administration with its personal advisers and slave officials had grown rela-

tively strong), decentralization only heightened competition for the sole remaining, really important office, that of emir. The consequence was a disastrous war within and around the capital c.1881-82.

In the case of Katsina, the original, rather limited lineage-based centralization gave way, in the face of militarism, to an increasingly autocratic palace government. These changes occurred without civil strife, in part because there had always been considerable autonomy in outlying districts, the growing prosperity of which made office at the capital less important. Katsina in the 19th century was smaller than it is today, with the broad hinterland around Birnin Katsina as the core of the emirate. Far to the south, linked by a corridor of land, was a large, ill-defined (and rather ill-controlled) area, the rulers of which necessarily had an autonomy of action that was denied to others. The pattern, of a centralized hinterland in the north and a frontier sub-state in the south, is widely replicated in Muslim savanna polities and reflects the old north-south drive to islamise and incorporate the pagan "middle belt". "The south"—variously called Kanem, Fombina, al-Yaman, Kudu, Katuka, Ngala or Agala—becomes synonymous not just with non-Muslim opposition but also with a frontier of opportunity for ambitious young Muslims to find their fame and fortune.⁷ In which case, the existence of a "southern" sub-state under an emirate's jurisdiction cannot necessarily be taken as indicating a general principle of political decentralization at work.

The southern Adamawa (Fombina) lamidates of type 1a, such as Ngaoundere, Tibati, Rei Bouba or Banyo, largely owed their distinctive social and administrative structures to having been created in such totally pagan "southern" regions beyond the ambit of the Muslim states of Hausaland or Borno. The Adamawa extension of the jihad was undertaken by numerous relatively small groups of Fulbe who were substantially outnumbered by the autochthonous pagan groups of the region. Our limited historical information concerning the life-style of the Fulbe clans that carried out these wars of conquest indicates that they were living a semi-nomadic existence at the time of their conquest of Adamawa, practising a mixed economy dominated by cattle herding. The social structure of these pre-jihad Fulbe groups was already stratified into free and slave strata, and it is likely that the annual transhumances of the Fulbe herds were undertaken from a settled village base where agricultural production was carried out by slaves.

At least a rudimentary system of political offices, with titles for both free-men and slaves, was in operation among the Adamawa Fulbe prior to the jihad and had probably been adopted by the Wolarbe and Illaga clans during earlier periods of residence in Borno and Hausaland. On the other hand, *pace* Azarya (1978), there is no evidence for any significant degree of

7. The life story of Mai Gashin Baki (FLEGEL 1885; DUFFILL 1985), a caravan leader to the frontier zone of southern Adamawa, illustrates the rewards and the risks of such a life-style.

descent-based differentiation of social status within the Fulbe freeman category at that time. Indeed, it is instructive to note that the leaders of the Fulbe clans in Adamawa were referred to in the early period of the jihad by the term "*Ardo*", a title indicative of a much more limited centralization of powers and institutionalization of political succession than their later designation as "*laamiido*" implied. Beneath the level of the *laamiido*, the number of specialized political titles attached to the courts of the Fulbe rulers of the states of Adamawa that were reserved for Fulbe freemen was relatively small, although in keeping with the *tokkal* concept of leadership derived from their experience of a mobile pastoral existence, Fulbe freemen could establish themselves as leaders of settled (in which case they were termed *jaoro'en*, sing. *jaoro*, or *lawan*) or semi-nomadic (in which case they were termed *ardo'en*) agro-pastoral communities and thereby play a role in the life of the court and the state government.

The rapid integration of conquered pagan peoples such as the Mbum, Duru, Dama, Kutin, Vute, etc., into the Fulbe states of Adamawa, which transformed large numbers of former enemies into effective elements of the state political and economic apparatus, was the key to the lamidates' remarkable political success.⁸ This integration owed much to the system of titled office and the substantial authority delegated to slave office-holders by many of the Fulbe rulers. The Fulbe military conquests, along with the legitimacy of their rule, were also assisted by the progressive incorporation of pagan elements into their armies, which provided substantial opportunities for these Fulbe vassals to enrich themselves via captured booty and slaves (Burnham 1980a, 1980b; Copet-Rougier 1987). Contrary to Azarya's contention (1978: 30), titled slave officials were numerous and important in many of the southern Adamawa states including Ngaoundere and Banyo (and not just in Tibati and Rei Bouba), and the court officials of slave status were utilized by the *laamiido* to counteract oppositional tendencies among Fulbe competitors for power. Additionally, the rulers of southern Adamawa lamidates such as Ngaoundere and Rei Bouba made it a regular practice to take wives and concubines from among the vassal peoples of their realms, and many of these rulers were therefore of ethnically mixed parentage.

In conclusion, taking into consideration the full range of state structures within the Sokoto Caliphate, our argument is that, at least in the key, rich emirates, there were definite policies to maintain competition for office at the centre and inhibit the growth of centralized, monocratic power. In other emirates which were new and exposed to attack, centralized power was in principle accepted. In the dyarchies, it was the old governing group associated with the traditional ruler that was phased out and replaced by the supporters of the reformist Shaikh.

8. See fn 7.

This broad division of the emirates into two contrasting types, each with two sub-types, has been of use at the outset as a means of highlighting the varying demographic and political conditions affecting the states of the Sokoto Caliphate at the time of their creation via jihad. In the decades following their creation, however, the processes of social recruitment, ethnic transformation, and internal stratification differed significantly from one emirate to another. In order to illustrate these varying historical trajectories, while at the same time discussing the social conditions that gave rise to aristocracies in a few of the core states of the Caliphate, we shall now look in more detail at two contrasting cases—those of Kano and Adamawa.

From Fulbe to Fulani: The Process of Urbanization

Cities

While the jihad was not, from the perspective of its leadership, fought as a Fulbe jihad, to its Muslim opponents, whether in Borno or in Hausaland or in Nupe, it was a “Fellata affair”. Although the Shaikh ‘Uthman tried hard to welcome into the *jama’a* non-Fulbe men like Ya‘qub of Bauchi, Agali of Konni, ‘Abd al-Salam in Kebbi or Jatau Sarkin Zazzau—as the jihad wore on it became harder in practice to keep everyone satisfied. In the extant lists of Sokoto participants, some 80 % appear to have been Fulbe; some were Tuareg. Some we know were ex-slaves, and these are likely to have been from south of Hausaland. In this essay we are looking specifically at the Fulbe component of the jihad forces, and the kind of transformations they brought about once the jihad put them in positions of power. Almost every emirate was headed by a Fulfulde-speaker (and Ya‘qub, who governed Bauchi, almost certainly spoke Fulfulde even though he was not a Pullo by birth); and it would seem that the bulk of the forces that finally won the jihad were Fulbe, and usually pastoralists by background. The scholars and students, who had predominated in the early stages of the war, were outnumbered by the end. It was this fact—and the indiscipline and materialism that it implies—that caused the Shaikh and his brother ‘Abdullah such heart-searching; it underlies too, we believe, their policy over urbanization.

As far as we know, very few if any of the jihad leaders actually were city residents though most presumably had stayed for varying lengths of time in towns. Traditionally many scholars lived in a rural *tsangaya*, a temporary “camp” for students and their teacher, since urban life was considered inimical to study—and the Qur’an too “potent” to keep in town. Otherwise many simply kept travelling, only to settle once their learning and their reputation was established. The Shaikh ‘Uthman’s final settlement before the fighting started was a small hamlet; previously he had lived in a camp (*ruga*). There were scholars in the cities, but they tended to be Wangara or Hausa, who also provided the various religious services the ruler and his court

required. Merchants also retained scholars for their services—some merchants were themselves learned—so that a small trading town like Yandoto was renowned for its teachers over a period of perhaps two centuries. Fulbe scholars might go to these towns to learn or get books, but few took up permanent residence or employment there.

The success of the jihad therefore posed two distinct questions for the Fulbe. First, should they take over the great cities—Birnin Kano, Birnin Katsina, Birnin Kebbi, Birnin Zazzau, Birni Ngazargamu—and move into the abandoned palaces of the Hausa kings and their councillors? Second, where there were no such great ancient cities, should the jihad forces now build new ones? The answer to both questions was an unequivocal “yes”. The development of a distinct urban Fulbe (“Fulani”) culture should not be seen as the inevitable concomitant of the success of the jihad. It was a matter of policy, consciously promoted. Shaikh ‘Uthman dan Fodio’s intention to urbanize the Fulbe members of his *jama‘a* was quite explicit, as was his support early in the jihad for uniting the whole Fulbe community through inter-marriage between the various Fulbe sub-groups and statuses. Not only were all equally Muslim, but an essential characteristic of Muslim culture was urban life. It was in cities that Islam flourished best. By settling the Fulbe and Tuareg pastoralists, ‘Uthman’s son Muhammad Bello sought not only to secure the perimeter of the new state with a line of strongholds (*ribat*; *thagr*) which could be permanently manned; he also expected to create, through education for a cadre now freed from herding and other manual work by an abundance of slaves, the administrative, judicial and military staff required to run the new Caliphate. Women, similarly freed from drudgery, were to be educated, and purdah enforced. At the same time they were to partake in religious groups and make visitations to holy places. A new economy was to be created after the jihad, with all the crafts necessary for urban living.⁹

We do not know how in general Fulbe women, brought up in pastoralist camps, reacted to this radical change in living—an incident is recorded, though, when the Shaikh’s senior wife resisted his ban on her going to market. Manners of dress and entertainments had to change too; again we only hear of a few incidents when the new rules were broken. Nor do we know how willingly men gave up the business of transhumance and herding. Slaves brought an ease, but did it bring boredom too? We know men enjoyed their new gardens, and wore the finery they had acquired as booty; a

9. Some non-Muslim Fulbe pastoralists, especially the Rahazawa in Sokoto (who were eventually ordered to pay the *jizya* tax), stayed aloof both from the jihad and the later state. To the pastoralists newly settled in villages, Bello gave orders to reduce the size of their herds and concentrate on breeding horses and camels for military use; they were also to increase their flocks of sheep and goats. In the initial years at least, escorts were provided for herds on their transhumance; also, long-distance hedged tracks were laid out to enable herds to pass through farmland without damage to crops.

prince kept civet cats for their perfume. We know too that the number of concubines increased, and births of children soared. But whether wives were happier with this huge increase in the size of their household we do not know. The keeping of cattle continued, with cows in the courtyards of city houses going out to graze in the morning and returning on their own in the evening. So too the small livestock that women raise are not incompatible with urban life. Cities also offered security from raids, though there was always the risk of a catastrophic fire. Epidemics of smallpox were another hazard, though again we do not know whether mortality was, in fact, higher in the city than in the countryside. Certainly cities had been badly hit by epidemics during the jihad—more people died from illness and starvation overall during the war than from the fighting. Herds too had been decimated by an epizootic (presumably not rinderpest), and it is possible that many Fulbe—men and women—having lost their cattle, were pleased to have such an easy new lifestyle open to them.

Cities thus had their disadvantages. The more senior men had residences elsewhere to use—often built on the estates their slaves cultivated for them; here stood their extra granaries. Others had kin and affines to visit in villages. In general, cities were not the sites for mustering armies: at the start of a military campaign, forces foregathered at a rendezvous well beyond the city walls. Similarly merchants were apt to keep their transport animals—horses, donkeys, mules, camels—in their settlements outside the city, if only for breeding purposes. Given that men kept stallions tethered in the courtyards of their houses ready for emergencies, it was imperative to keep mares outside the city. There were therefore camps outside the cities, as well as suburbs; though the walls of most cities enclosed large areas of farmland, living outside the gates not only avoided the nuisance of the nightly curfew but also possibly some of the tolls: walls were as much to keep some people in as to keep others out. Furthermore, the gates were often too narrow for, say, a loaded camel to pass through. Some people therefore took refuge within the walls only at times of danger but otherwise stayed on their farms or in their cattle camps outside; others stayed out during the farming season and moved into the city to take advantage of the social and trading opportunities there in the dry season. In short, many were reluctant to become permanent inner-city residents and take on the urban style of a *dan birni*. It is this reluctance, then, that is perhaps responsible for causing those Fulbe who did move into the cities to keep themselves so separate from their fellow citizens.

The great, ancient cities of 18th-century Hausaland—Birnin Kano, Birnin Katsina, Birnin Kebbi, Birnin Zazzau—had been the royal capitals, the palace cities of ancient states, whose power had been built in part on providing merchants of the trans-Saharan trade with the support—food, security, markets—they need in the savanna. Hence the descriptive name: Birnin (kasar) Kano, the city (of the land) of Kano. The place itself was simply called Dalla. Like cities in Songhai and Mali, Kano was in two segments:

the merchant half of the city, and the royal half, with a stream running in-between. When the Muslim Fulbe took Kano over, it was only the rulers' segment that they occupied. Like a harem, the city itself had not taken part in the actual fighting: it was the prize. The ruler and his court, along with his slave retinue, had evacuated the city in order to confront the rebels. Defeated in open battle, they sought exile; they did not attempt to shut themselves up in a city that was not wholly theirs. Rarely was a major city sacked by the jihad and then permanently abandoned: the Borno capital Birni Ngazargamu was one of the few; another was the Yoruba royal city of Old Oyo, a third was Alkalawa, Gobir's royal town (never formally a Birni, it seems; Birnin Gobir, like Birnin Zamfara, had been abandoned in earlier struggles). Some old towns were simply eclipsed (like Gbara and Nupeko in Nupe). Other victims were the purely merchant towns of Yandoto and Kurmin Dan Ranko. Birnin Zazzau fell almost without a fight, seized by a small contingent—less than a hundred—while the Sarki was resident but caught unprepared; he fled, and the city was taken unharmed.

Since these cities were functional centres as well as entrepôts crucial to the economy, the decision was taken to keep them as the emirate capitals. Other emirate capitals were built up from nothing: both Sokoto and Gwandu were transformed from camps into capitals, with Wurno becoming an alternative capital to Sokoto. Birnin Kebbi, which could have been 'Abdullahi dan Fodio's headquarters instead of Gwandu, was left to be ruled by a Muslim member of the old dynasty. The siting of the new headquarters town varied. Some like Gombe Aba were not far from an old centre; others like Bauchi or Bida were some distance from the older established parts of their region, since they had been developed from old war camps. Sometimes the original site proved unsuitable, and the headquarters of the emirate moved (for example, Wurno replaced Sokoto for many years; Yola permanently replaced Ribado).

It is important to remember that the scale of the early jihad states was small. The frontier strongholds were rarely very far from the capital: even Sokoto, the headquarters of the Caliphate, had a relatively small hinterland—perhaps some 25 miles long by 15 miles wide or 2 days' journey north-south, a day's walk east-west. Katsina or Zaria were little larger (their southern extensions being due to later expansion); even Kano's secure hinterland was not much more than the "close-settled zone", with the outlying towns all requiring to be conquered some fifteen years after the initial jihad was over. Large areas within the Caliphate remained unsubdued: the watersheds that separated emirates even in central Hausaland were no-man's-land of great danger to Caliphal officials having to traverse them on government business, while the Jos plateau or the Tangale hills were simply no-go areas. Furthermore, the numbers involved on both sides seem to have been relatively small too, with fatal casualties in the fighting low. A few key figures in the jihad leadership did die—some, like Malam 'Abd al-Rahman Chacha in Nupe, at the hands of fellow jihadists. Lists of

martyrs survive; they belie claims for high losses (*e g* the two thousand who are said to have died at Alwassa).

In short, we should not over-estimate in hindsight the sense of confidence and overwhelming mastery possessed by the victors in the jihad. They had to consolidate what they had won—and to that end they either established walled towns or took over where possible the existing cities. A complete return to camp life, and governing the new Caliphate from there, was simply impracticable, however distasteful it might be to the purists. A new urban Fulbe culture was called for. If in the process the Fulbe pastoralist supporters of the jihad became proper urbane Muslims, one of the reformers' original goals would have been achieved: the Shaikh 'Uthman's preaching and poetry from his earliest days had been aimed more at his fellow Fulbe, both the Muslim and the scarcely Muslim, than at the "pagans". He was not out to save pastoralism.

Becoming "Fulani"

The policy of urbanizing the Fulbe supporters of the jihad and creating a new urban Muslim culture has given rise to the phenomenon of yet another grouping of Fulbe—in this case, the "Fulani" (or "Hausa-Fulani") as they have become known in Hausaland and the English-speaking world. Nowadays they do not speak Fulfulde and though some may still keep a few cattle they know nothing of pastoralist culture. In the early 19th century their numbers overall were relatively few, but by the 1860s—that is, when the second post-jihad generation came into power—Fulfulde was already ceasing to become the ordinary language of instruction. Fulfulde poems had to be translated into Hausa, even one or two prose works of religious instruction were also composed in Hausa. The shift from Fulbe to Fulani culture is important for understanding the development of a distinct status group that might be identified as a kind of "aristocracy".

Returning, then, to our earlier distinction between aristocrats as a status group and office-holders, we find that type 2 emirates were least likely to form any kind of aristocracy, given the nature of the jihad leader's original entourage there. At the other extreme, emirates of type 1a were best placed to permit the development of an aristocratic culture, although in the particular social conditions that obtained in Adamawa discussed below, this did not occur. The presence of large, competing "clans" coming together in the metropolitan city to share out the spoils of war permitted a "critical mass" of young men to create an identity of their own which was essentially "royal" in lifestyle. Brought up by slaves and financed from the revenues of their families' private estates and public offices, their interests lay neither in Islamic learning nor in large-scale commerce, but in adventures of various kinds. They were finely dressed and were well mounted. Despising commoners (Hausa: *talakawa*, "the poor") and always liable to appropriate the

wives, daughters or goods of commoners, they were the butt of folk stories as well as the target of complaints to the Emir, who was then apt to send them on dangerous missions taking the war to the “pagans” of the south. It was these young “bloods” who fueled the civil wars as they fought to maintain their hold on the rewards of high office. It was their antics, too, that caused the outcry of scholars and the more pious, giving rise both to angry poetry against them and to messianic expectations; these in turn provoked the periodic emigrations eastwards towards Mecca.

Such a category of the “titled young”, drawn as they were from a number of emirates to take part in adventures and expeditions or to join in establishing a new frontier state, constituted a kind of Caliphate-wide “aristocracy”, a free-lance military often with little long-term hope of a major office at home or indeed a chance of enjoying much established wealth. In emirates where the offices rotated among “clans” and where the emir’s brother was as likely to inherit as a son, many were at least eligible for office, and the turn-over of office-holders was relatively high; by contrast, where there was a dominant lineage, office-holders might be appointed quite young and stay in office for twenty years or more. In the hundred years the Caliphate was independent, there were only two periods (of about ten years each, 1845-55; 1890-1900), when one generation seemed to be handing over to another after some 35 years in power.

Some of these young “princes” had chosen instead to go off on pilgrimage east via North Africa and Egypt, coming back with new ideas and experience of the modern Middle East. Still more, however, following on the British conquest of northern Nigeria in 1903, made the *hijra* to the Sudan. Others then took advantage of the new “colonial Caliphate” to take office in the “native authorities” of the Indirect Rule system. The emirs of the independent Caliphate by and large either emigrated or were deposed; their offices were taken by close kin with a legitimate claim to the throne, but as “new men” they had in the usual way to build up a whole new staff of their own and a network of clients drawn often from people who had been “out” under previous regimes. The key was to appoint relatively young men, irrespective of background but with the ambition and flexibility to succeed in the new circumstances. These then were not necessarily “aristocrats” in the normal sense of the term—but they were men who would become aristocrats. Those who lost out in the re-shuffle became poor, taking up crafts to ensure survival yet with a tradition of respect for learning which resulted in their sending their sons to school—the new Christian-run schools.

The common language of these “titled young” and their companions who were even farther from gaining any office, was Hausa, not Fulfulde. Brought up by servants, they nonetheless kept their identity as “Fulani”, lived in the city quarters associated with the Fulani “clans”, and took as their first wives the daughters of other “Fulani”. They went usually to Qur’anic schools and later did their further Islamic studies with Fulani scholars, and might hear Fulfulde used in exegesis, a practice (if one were needed) that

excluded non-Fulani students, who had their own schools and their specialists in another part of the city. They took little or no part in transport or commerce (unless it was linked to Islamic scholarship or to the craft skills, such as sewing caps, associated with Islamic students financing their advanced studies). In this way there was sustained a distinct identity, associated with “governing”, *sarauta*. Such terms as *sarakai* are sometimes used to denote the broader category of royals—of people that are not quite *masu sarauta* (“office-holders”) or ‘*yan sarki* (“princes”) but who like to identify themselves with that stratum, and assume the air of authority and distinction when among the undistinguished.¹⁰ Holding themselves aloof and conscious of their genealogy, they have lent substance to the popular Nigerian stereotype of the young Fulani aristocrat. Given the way all men have a craft, usually inherited but occasionally newly acquired, “governing” is seen merely as one such craft, an occupational specialism no different intrinsically from, say, blacksmithing or scholarship. In such a context, “governing” is conceptualised not as the mark of an “aristocrat” but as a family trade, in this instance associated with Muslims—and with Fulani especially.

In these circumstances, then, the only emirates with the potential for an aristocracy to emerge were the key, rich emirates—Kano, Zaria, Katsina, Sokoto, and possibly Bauchi. The other emirates may have developed “royals”, as did a number of important palace-towns, that is to say a small ruling group developed around or out of a single lineage. Given the demographic explosion among royals,¹¹ the potential for a rapid development of a ruling family into a ruling “class” is not surprising.

Historically, then, in some of the core “Hausa-Fulani” states we can speak of an office-oriented stratum (Fulfulde: *saraki'en*, in Hausa *sarakai*, being a term broader than *sarakuna* or *masu sarauta*) that is quite separate in its interests from ordinary people (*talakawa*) and the headmen required in their local administration. Among the latter, the office of head (*sarki*, *magaji*, *mukoshi*, etc.) is not so much concerned with power over people as with being both the representative of the local community at court and a conduit giving access to it. In this context, *sarauta* is concerned with maintaining relations with the world beyond the local community, and can be treated as a specialist occupation (*sana'a*) open to outsiders if necessary. It requires a specialist expertise—diplomacy, recognition (say, as a good Muslim), language skills—that usually does not include the power to enforce or even a military capacity.

10. Among the office-oriented (and sometimes confused in the countryside with *sarakai*), were courtiers (Hausa: *fadawa*). They may include some *sarakai*, but being a courtier (*fadanci*) implied actually serving the official whose court you regularly attended. It would be difficult to describe the behaviour or mien appropriate to *fadanci* as “aristocratic”, though *fadawa* can certainly behave arrogantly in rural areas.

11. For example, ‘Uthman dan Fodio himself had 37 children, his son and successor, Bello, 73, his son-in-law, Gidado, 48; such numbers were not unusual.

In the office-oriented stratum we include not just the office-holders themselves but their retinue (*yaran sarki*), their relatives and all those who would work in that milieu in some function or other, whether as scholars, judges and religious specialists or as cavalymen and armourers. Thus slaves and eunuchs who are owned by this stratum are identified with it—they are, in a broad sense, ‘*yan birni*, men of the city. Nor is wealth, or belonging-to-wealth, a criterion for being part of this office-oriented stratum; some men of free birth in the city are very poor and quite outside the ranks of potential office-holders, despite their connections to powerful families—it is they who are sometimes picked up as clients by, say, a new and controversial emir who lacks an established base, or by a colonial regime desperate for allies and agents.

While it might seem appropriate to call an office-oriented stratum such as this “an aristocracy”, especially since this stratum is apt to label itself as “Fulani” and to label the stratum below as “Hausa” (both strata are Muslim), “aristocracies” of this kind are largely confined to such populous emirates as Kano or Katsina or Zaria. In these Muslim Hausa states, there had of course been before the jihad a complex administrative system whose political structures were taken over by the new elite of Islamic reformers. The new elite were aristocrats in the sense that they set themselves apart: they were identified by others if not by themselves as a distinct, almost alien group, preferring endogamy, speaking a language of its own and making claims to superiority as better Muslims than those they dominated.

Thus society in the Caliphate broadly divided into two: the office-oriented, comprising the title-holders, their kinsmen, scholars, clients and their household slaves; and those who were not office-oriented, but were occupied in farming, trading and all the various craft occupations that characterized the complex, productive economy of the Caliphate, along with their slaves. The boundary between the two was never clear-cut, and allowed for movement both ways. In particular, scholars and slaves could be associated with either category. But attitudes of scholars, for example, were by no means uniformly in favour of the office-oriented, resulting in an ideal of office-shunning piety that drew its inspiration from the founder of the Caliphate, the Shaikh ‘Uthman dan Fodio.

Merchants are another ambiguous category in their relations with the office-oriented group. The large-scale merchants (*attajirai*) who ran the caravans and acted as wholesalers and brokers constituted the other major sector of Muslim urban society, a sector that was explicitly non-Fulbe, often very learned and almost as self-contained as the “palace” sector. In no sense were such men commoners nor were they office-holders, yet they were often close associates of the emirs and their officials, sustaining and sustained by government. The relationship was usually private and the transactions seldom public, being done at night or indirectly, as if “office” should not be seen to consort with commerce. As a group which was part of a wider trade network, merchants were powerful as well as wealthy: in some

cities such as Kano one might well speak of them as forming a kind of “merchant aristocracy” with their own local leaders and title system independent of the state. Until very recently Fulbe were no part of this merchant world; “it was not our *sana‘a*”, they say.

An Aristocratic Culture?

Early in this essay we defined aristocracy as being a (high) status group characterized by *a*) a specific mode of recruitment—usually descent—and *b*) the privileged use of certain symbols. Here we wish to consider briefly the privileged use of certain symbols, to see what kind of aristocratic culture (if any) developed in emirates like Kano during the 19th century. Clearly the symbols associated with the Emir of Kano were deliberately retained as a matter of policy from Sokoto: the new post-jihad emir had to be seen to possess all the old powers and more. But what of the others, the *sarakai*?

The ethos of the Caliphate, as shown in the writings of its founders and in the popular, vernacular poetry of its scholars, was sceptical about the ultimate value of great wealth and its consumption. And indeed consumption by the office-oriented segment of society appears, compared to some states, not very conspicuous. Apart from horses and clothes, the most obvious signs of wealth were the number of men in attendance “doing nothing” and the amount of charity dispensed. Food was therefore needed in large quantities but apart from extra spices, meat, honey and kola, the food was not particularly elaborate. Nor were there expensive accoutrements of office, even for the caliph—no thrones or stools of gold, no crowns or precious jewels, not even an extravagance like Asante cloth. Instead, plain white was the approved symbol of high office (though some in fact wore blue); and the cloth used for flags was similarly plain, inscribed by hand with a prayer. The houses were large, but on the outside remarkably plain and furnished inside rather simply. Rugs and any fine materials had to be imported; rare skins such as were used by royals in Borno were not, it seems, favoured in Sokoto where a wealth-shunning piety long remained the rule (a “good” caliph, for example, was meant to weave ropes as a contribution to his upkeep).

Office-holders’ income was derived from a share of the taxes they collected, from a share of the booty and from gifts, but their maintenance was probably provided largely by surpluses from farms manned by slaves and belonging some to the office, some to the lineage. Office-holders paid much of their tax to the emir in the form of inheritance levies, in taxes on their accession to office and in a series of gifts due on the appointment of an emir or caliph. There were, however, large variations in wealth, not only between official households and commoners but also between commoners. One obvious indicator is the way slaves were distributed throughout the population, with some farmers (and some slaves) owning a hundred or more; but

prices were low enough for most households probably to own one or two, and by the end of the century, slaves were so much a glut on the market that it was difficult to find buyers. Numbers of concubines maintained are not a simple indicator either: many were simply elderly women servants inherited from others. Nonetheless the size of a household and the numbers of people it fed each night demonstrated status, if only by virtue of the network of generosity it all implied—the quantity of gifts received as much as gifts given.

Another indicator of status was the quality and number of horses a man had, and the fineness of their gear; few commoners would risk riding openly in such style—and maintaining a horse in town was a costly business. Both Berber and Dongola breeds were prized, but as horses were of strategic importance, imports were restricted—hence, the rarity value of a really fine mount. There were no carriages, of course, nor other exclusive modes of travel; no royal roads were cut, nor were there state barges or the like for river work. Symbolism therefore focused on mounts: the Shaikh 'Uthman, as a (non-combattant) scholar, rode a mare; another notable leader rode a black donkey. Camels, oxen, mules, ponies had little status. Furthermore, weaponry and armour were seldom distinctive: professional soldiers wore armour and helmets but they do not seem to have been objects of extravagant display. Nor were swords or daggers, while fire-arms tended to be reserved for slave soldiers; pistols, though prized, were a rarity, and of limited use—good powder and shot were always in short supply, it seems. In short, apart some exclusively royal emblems, material symbols of high status were not significant.

A distinctive feature of the office-oriented was, however, their concern for genealogies, for dynastic marriage alliances and relatively strict rules of patrilineal inheritance. By contrast, commoners maintained a generalized identity with a particular area or ethnic group by facial marks and distinctive traditions but they ignored the minute detail of genealogy. Though commoners usually continued in their father's occupations, there was no rigid caste-like system as elsewhere in West Africa. Furthermore, whereas wives of the major office-holders were kept in purdah, dominating large polygynous households staffed with concubines and servants, the wives of others were not so restricted and, in most parts of the Caliphate, participated in trade, in producing goods for sale and in agriculture.

A further distinctive feature of the office-oriented was their relative immobility. If they left the emirate where they had rights to office, these rights were not transferred to their place of exile, though they might retain their title as a courtesy. By comparison, both merchants and ordinary people were free to move from emirate to emirate, and did so if they felt excessively oppressed. As slaves could not easily move of their own accord without being taken as runaways, free commoners dominated petty trade, transport and all crafts requiring journeymen, if necessary taking their slaves with them as assistants or porters.

Lastly, one of the most striking features of power in this society is its very invisibility. The powerful ruler remains concealed, behind veils, within the recesses of the palace, the sound of his voice unheard. Although the jihad reforms sought to change that—the emir was to be both visible and accessible—nonetheless some of the ethos remained. It was therefore the young who in fact went out and about: they represented the powerful, carried out their commands and fought their campaigns.¹² The culture of the young, so conspicuous by comparison to that of their powerful parents, might be called “aristocratic”, particularly in contrast to that of the other category who were to be seen out in the world whatever their age—the poor man and woman, the client, the slave. Hence perhaps the paradox: the ultimate sign of power and status (for both sexes) was to be well known but unseen.

The Social Composition of the Fulbe States of Adamawa

As for the creation of the states of Adamawa (also known as Fombina), the legitimation of their rulers either by reference to Modibbo Adama, who had been delegated to extend the jihad by ‘Uthman dan Fodio, or by direct reference to Sokoto, was standard practice. In fact, the Shaikh’s choice of Adama as leader seems to have been resented by some of the more powerful Fulbe *ardo’en* in Adamawa, since he did not hail from a locally dominant clan and had not been an *ardo* prior to his appointment (Bassoro & Mohammadou 1980: 38-40). However, none of these powerful competitors enjoyed a reputation as an Islamic scholar. Indeed, in most of Adamawa at the time of the jihad, Islamic learning appears to have been less developed than in Sokoto and others of the core Hausa-Fulani emirates and, of the major leaders of the Adamawa jihad, only Modibbo Adama and Modibbo Hamman Danraka of Maroua owed their positions to their reputations for Islamic knowledge.¹³ *Inter alia*, it is apparent that the fame of Maroua for its particular devotion to Islam was the result of the long sojourn of the Maroua Fulbe in Borno, a preeminent centre of Muslim scholarship, prior to the 19th century. So too can it be said that many of the titles of the political offices of the Adamawa states derived from this Borno influence. It is also interesting to note in this context that the branch of the Wolarbe Fulbe who established the Ngaoundere state utilised personnel from Borno as religious specialists (Mohammadou 1978: 273-274; see also Froelich 1954: 36, Bassoro &

12. In the jihad, a large proportion of those given “flags” of command were young men in their twenties; older supporters of the jihad (*e.g.* forty years old), who might be called “Shaikh” out of respect, tended to be by-passed for appointments (LAST 1993: 379-380).

13. See also BASSORO & MOHAMMADOU (1980: 58-59) concerning the contrast in meaning and prestige between the titles of *ardo* and *modibbo* and the scholarly reputation of Modibbo Hamman Njoundi, second ruler of Garoua.

Mohammadou 1980: 59), probably reflecting both the relatively weak development of Islamic learning among the Wolarbe of Ngaoundere as well as their prior contacts with Borno.¹⁴

The evident jealousy in some quarters over Adama's recognition by Sokoto led to several incidents in which Fulbe leaders in Adamawa, reluctant to accept investiture from Adama's hand, sought to receive their flag directly from Sokoto (Strümpell 1912). In the case of both Rei Bouba (Abdoullaye & Mohammadou 1972: 154-155; Shimada 1993; Bassoro & Mohammadou 1980: 40) and Chamba/Tibati (East 1935; Mohammadou 1978), this eventually provoked confrontations with Yola. Yola's forces were not sufficiently strong to bring these powerful opponents to heel, but the Sultan of Sokoto supported Yola in these disputes by not granting separate flags in either case.

The fact that the Adamawa jihad was conducted by Fulbe in a region and against peoples with no prior tradition of Islam meant that the newly-created states of Fombina displayed a somewhat different political culture than that of the core states of the Sokoto Caliphate, despite numerous structural similarities. Given the weaker development of Islamic scholarship in Adamawa, the impact of classical Muslim models of good government appears to have been less strong, although our sources on this point are (perhaps inevitably) primarily oral.¹⁵ The Adamawa jihad was also a more uniformly and explicitly ethnicity-based Fulbe political movement than that in Sokoto, even though the Islamic legitimation for these conquests was still prominent. At the same time, as the jihad was extended into far-flung territories inhabited by uniformly non-Muslim peoples (some of whom possessed complex ritualized chieftaincy structures nonetheless), certain of the Fulbe lamidates (Rei Bouba and Ngaoundere, for example) relied for their local political legitimacy not only on Islamic models but also on symbols derived from their pagan vassals, such as the Dama and the Mbum.

The memberships of the semi-sedentary agro-pastoral Fulbe groups that created the states of Adamawa were relatively small in comparison to the non-Fulbe "pagan" population of the regions that they conquered. As already mentioned above, this meant that during the early years of the Adamawa jihad, and in some cases much longer, the military situation of the new

14. In the course of his expedition of 1891-94 to the Haute-Sangha and southern Adamawa, Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza utilized literate Fula from Senegal and French officers with North African experience to conduct a correspondence in Arabic with the *laamiido* of Ngaoundere. However, the French were very negatively impressed by the degree of Arabic literacy among the courtiers at Ngaoundere (RABUT 1989: 241-242).

15. BASSORO & MOHAMMADOU (1980: 39, 59) indicate that, on the whole, the Wolarbe Fulbe possessed a somewhat higher degree of Islamic learning than the Illaga (*i.e.* at Rei Bouba), "who were only interested in power and conquests". They give a list of the manuscripts in Arabic and Fulfulde in the possession Modibbo Bassoro of Garoua, which includes most of the works of 'Uthman dan Fodio, his brother 'Abdullah, and his son Muhammad Bello. However, such personal libraries were quite rare in Adamawa.

Fulbe states was quite tenuous. However, once the initial victories had been achieved, the influx of conquered peoples into the jihad states uniformly necessitated the development of effective mechanisms for their incorporation. But the various Adamawa states did differ in the mode and scale of this incorporation, a key factor in this regard being the variable spatial extent of the different lamidates' expansion. Thus, on the southern and eastern margins of Fombina, the states of Ngaoundere, Rei Bouba, Tibati and, to a lesser degree, Banyo had vast regions into which they could expand. These states had few cohesively organized opponents or natural geographical barriers on their marches (except for Baguirmi in the case of Rei and the Bamum in the case of Banyo), and the problems that this situation imposed were primarily logistical and organizational ones of controlling large territories and effectively utilizing large numbers of non-Fulbe to extend, administer, and exploit these conquests. These issues will be discussed more fully below for the Ngaoundere state.

On the other hand, many of the Fulbe states in the Diamare, as well as the numerous minor lamidates of the Benue valley (see Mohammadou 1983), were more spatially circumscribed. In part, this was the product of active competition between the Fulbe themselves, with the larger lamidates blocking the expansion of the smaller states. It was also due, in part, to the barriers imposed by the difficult terrain of the Mandara and Atlantika mountains which could be successfully defended by the hill tribes. In these hilly areas, the mounted Fulbe forces were largely restricted to harassment and small-scale slave raiding rather than to large-scale and more permanent conquests of territory. A third important factor was the opposition of the well-organized neighbouring groups, both the non-Muslim political formations of the Mayo Kebi and Logone valleys such as the Moundang of Lere (Adler 1981) as well as the Muslim states of Borno, Baguirmi and, most significantly, Mandara. These opponents constituted a great threat, especially to the Fulbe states of the Diamare, and on more than one occasion inflicted defeats on armies from Maroua, Pette, Bogo, Bindir, and other northern Fulbe states of Adamawa (Barkindo 1989; Mohammadou 1976, 1988; Strümpell 1912). It was especially via the military alliance of Modibbo Hamman Danraka of Maroua with Modibbo Adama's forces from Yola that the Mandara and Borno armies were held at bay. These struggles preoccupied the northern Adamawa states throughout the 19th century and can be viewed as a part of the ultimately unsuccessful effort by Goni Muktar to extend 'Uthman dan Fodio's jihad to Borno.

The case of Yola, already referred to briefly above, is a rather special one in this context. Although Yola continued to enjoy at least a formal preeminence as overlord of Fombina throughout the precolonial period and, on this basis, was owed an annual tribute by the other states of Adamawa, in territorial extent, in military power and (probably) in wealth, it was not on a par with its nominal subordinates such as Ngaoundere or Rei Bouba (cf. Bassoro & Mohammadou 1980: 84). The structure of administrative offices in Yola

reflected this situation. The Yola political system placed particular emphasis on the roles of the court officials who acted as intermediaries between the Fombina states and the Yola court, and also in relations with Sokoto and other major Muslim powers.¹⁶ In this sense, the political structure of Yola can be classed as type 1b in our typology and compared with that of Sokoto, in which the office of the vizier was of particular importance in relations with other states. On the other hand, in regard to the governance of Yola's own domains, the system of office holding was more comparable to that of type 1a, with a relatively small suite of major Fulbe office-holders who resided in the capital and were responsible for district administration. The slave officials in the emir's household did not exercise as much power as in several of the larger Adamawa states, reflecting the smaller size of Yola's own territory and the lesser use made of *haabe* officials to administer conquered territories and to counterbalance the influence of Fulbe title-holders. The political system of the Ngaoundere state offers a contrasting case to that of Yola, in that it illustrates clearly how the conquest of vast territories and large populations was accommodated within the Fulbe states of southern Adamawa.

In common with the other jihad states, the early phase of the Fulbe conquest of Mbum chiefdoms in the Ngaoundere region was very hard fought, and the Fulbe victory was only achieved with the support of the neighbouring Fulbe states of Rei Bouba and Tibati (Mohammadou 1978). In the few years that remained in Ardo Njobdi's reign (d. 1849) following the defeat of the Mbum, he consolidated his power; the Fulbe became more sedentary during this period, setting up a more elaborate system of territorial administration and establishing a sizable capital city at Ngaoundere. Defeated pagan village populations located near Ngaoundere town were often allowed to remain on their traditional lands (*ibid.*: 280). Their chiefs were awarded titles, and the whole village unit was allocated to the *tokkal* (political following) of a titled Fulbe or slave official in the Ngaoundere court, who became responsible for collecting annual taxes and raising levies of soldiers for Fulbe war expeditions.¹⁷ In return, the "pagan" group's loyalty to Ngaoundere was rewarded principally by opportunities to obtain booty in war, and this incentive was probably the primary factor which allowed the Fulbe to secure the allegiance of conquered groups so rapidly.

It was Ardo Njobdi's successors, his sons Ardo Lawan Hamman (1849-1854) and then Ardo Issa (1854-1878), who were principally responsible for the great expansion of Ngaoundere's territories during the middle decades of the 19th century (Mohammadou 1981). As the state's military forces

16. NJEUMA 1978. BASSORO & MOHAMMADOU (1980: 63, 81) criticize Njeuma for focusing on the *beero* title and failing to mention the titles of *siimaajo* or *nelaado*, which they consider to be the key officials involved in inter-state relations within the Adamawa emirate.

17. FROELICH 1954. BASSORO & MOHAMMADOU (1980: 57-58) also present useful data on the operation of the *tokkal* system at Garoua.

expanded with the addition of levies drawn from the non-Fulbe servile population, they were able to carry out lengthy campaigns which reached more than 300 kilometres to the south and east. In these more far-flung conquests, Ngaoundere's aim was not one of instituting a thorough-going system of territorial administration like that in operation nearer the capital. Rather, following their victories over the Gbaya and other politically uncensitized peoples of these regions, they established a network of tributary settlements, under the command of titled vassal chiefs and war leaders, that maintained a local military presence when major Fulbe military expeditions were not in the field and continued to funnel lucrative trade goods and slaves back through the system to Ngaoundere and beyond (Burnham 1980b; Copet-Rougier 1987). Large communities of itinerant non-Fulbe Muslim traders tended to congregate in these towns, where they settled in separate residential quarters under their own titled officials. Since there were no significant opposing states competing for territory on Ngaoundere's southern and eastern marches, the principal aim was simply to extract wealth from these large regions, and this could be achieved indirectly, with periodic large raiding forces sent from Ngaoundere as a reminder of Fulbe power and a support to Ngaoundere's vassals.

The military conquests of the Fulbe rulers of southern Adamawa greatly increased their reputations, their wealth (especially in slaves and slave estates) and their power.¹⁸ Throughout the 19th century, the rulers of Ngaoundere continued to stand in a loose relation of vassalage to the Emir of Fombina at Yola, and through him to the Sultan of Sokoto, owing to Yola an annual tribute of 1,000 slaves, 1,000 cattle and 10 large elephant tusks (Abdoullaye & Mohammadou 1972; Mohammadou 1978; see also Lacroix 1952: 34). However, Ngaoundere was sufficiently strong and distant from Yola so that, during large periods of its history, Ngaoundere only paid this tribute when it suited it to do so.

This rapid expansion in the wealth of many of the larger Adamawa lami-dates during the second half of the 19th century was not restricted to the Fulbe rulers and their state treasuries but was also available to titled officials, both freemen and slaves, and to private individuals (many of whom, such as Hausa and Kanuri traders, were not of Fulbe ethnicity) active in both warfare and trade. As is apparent from contemporary accounts such as that of the caravan leader, Madugu Mai Gashin Baki (Flegel 1883; 1885; Duffill 1985; Bassoro & Mohammadou 1980: 84-86 *sq.*), the long-distance trading network in Adamawa operated in only a loose relation with the administrative structure of the jihad states, although trading opportunities were much augmented by the military conquests of the jihad. In general, the Fulbe were not traders and remained committed to pastoral, military and governmental occupations, although they extracted tolls and other taxes from the merchants.

18. See BASSORO & MOHAMMADOU (1980: 84-86) for a view, from Garoua, of Ngaoundere's great wealth.

This relative fluidity of economic status was also enhanced by the operation of the system of titled offices in the Ngaoundere state, which was effectively more prebendal than patrimonial. Even in the offices reserved for Fulbe freemen, where the succession to titles usually ran in patriline, the presence of many competing claimants in large families made loyalty to the *laamiido* an important additional qualification for office. On the other hand, in Ngaoundere as in the other large lamidates of southern Adamawa in the later half of the 19th century, the importance of slave officials in the *laamiido*'s court grew steadily (Briesen 1914), probably reflecting the fact that titled slaves, who lacked the support of a descent group, were more reliable followers (see Bassoro & Mohammadou 1980: 86-87; Shimada 1993: 102).

Making use of M. G. Smith's terminology (1969: 108-109, 133-134), we can describe the state structure of Ngaoundere as being characterized by clearcut patterns of differential incorporation, reflecting the systematic, codified principles of legal advantage that routinely applied to Fulbe and other categories of freemen as opposed to the legal disabilities attaching to the various socially differentiated categories of tributary or servile status. Thus, conquered non-Muslim and non-Fulbe peoples (*haabe*) were relegated to the tributary or servile status categories prescribed by Islamic law (Ruxton 1916; see also Mohammadou 1978: 280).

As for "freemen" (*rimbe*, sing. *dimo*) in Ngaoundere and the other Fulbe states of Adamawa, it is important for us to consider the social composition of this category in more detail at this point, in order to comprehend the political structure and sources of legitimacy of these polities. Unfortunately, the main published work to deal with these questions to date, Victor Azarya's *Aristocrats Facing Change: The Fulbe in Guinea, Nigeria and Cameroon* (1978), offers an unsatisfactory analysis in this regard. The nub of the issue revolves around the question of the analytical benefits of regarding the category of Fulbe "freemen", or any significant part of that category in the precolonial Fulbe states of northern Cameroon, as an "aristocracy" as Azarya does.

Azarya seems aware that it would be pointless to define aristocratic status among the Fulbe of Adamawa on the basis of state office holding, since this would be tantamount to saying that state structures emerged once states had been created following the jihad. The analytical focus of Azarya's work would then have had to be shifted away from aristocracy and onto state formation. In order to establish the existence of an aristocracy which was in some way distinguishable from the political leadership in the Fulbe states of Adamawa, therefore, Azarya (*ibid.*: 208) needs to resort to some other criterion, which he explains as follows: "It should be also pointed out that this study's focus was not the position of 'chiefs' or 'rulers' as holders of specific governmental or political offices, but rather a wider stratum of people, not all of whom were actual rulers but who were usually related to one of the ruling dynasties by blood ties, were legitimate candidates to ascriptive political office, and whose dominance was based also on nonpolitical resources."

Unfortunately for his analysis, when Azarya considers the relevant evidence for the precolonial Fulbe states of northern Cameroon, especially those on the Adamawa plateau, his concept of an aristocratic stratum within Fulbe society distinct from its political leadership proves to have little relevance (*ibid.*: 31): "In Adamawa, sedentary Fulbe not belonging to the ruling aristocracy still kept their distance from the non-Fulbe populations and were clearly visible in the Benue valley and on the plain of the Diamare. On the Adamawa plateau, on the other hand, there were few sedentary Fulbe commoners. Almost all the Fulbe not holding political and religious positions were pastoral cattle herdsman."

Azarya's own data, then, along with information available from more extended, first-hand contact and research (Froelich 1954; Mohammadou 1978; Lacroix 1952; Bassoro & Mohammadou 1980), indicate that there are two levels of corporate political organization which are relevant for an understanding of the operation of the precolonial Adamawan states. First, there was the ruler and his court of titled officials, many of whom were not freemen nor were they ethnically Fulbe. Secondly, there were the ethnically defined categories of freemen including, of course, the Fulbe but also Hausa and Bornuans (collectively known as *kambari*) whose interests were separately represented, within the Ngaoundere court for example, by individuals holding the titles of *sarki hausawa* and *mai borno*. As suggested above, the first level is best analyzed with reference to theories of state formation and functioning, while the second must be understood in relation to the social structural mechanisms and cultural logics which maintained the distinctiveness of *Fulbe* ethnic status within the freeman category. In other words, while social processes within the core Hausa-Fulani states of the Caliphate led to a reduction in the ethnic distinctiveness of the Fulbe conquerors and the development of a broad, office-oriented aristocratic stratum in the complex urban economies of Kano, Katsina and Zaria, the social and demographic conditions within the Adamawa states tended to accentuate Fulbe ethnicity and ensure that the Fulbe versus *haabe* distinction remained the dominant social cleavage, firmly anchored in the legally defined system of differential incorporation.

Concluding Remarks

Over a period of a hundred years, the leaders of the Fulbe groups who participated in the jihad of 1804-1808 found themselves exchanging pastoralism for the life of a political administrator and military campaigner. These Fulbe participants in the jihad carried over to their new role, as rulers vis à vis those they ruled, the existing distinction between themselves as pastoralists and their agricultural neighbours, categorizing the latter as *haabe*—non-Muslim, unfree and subordinate. But to label this new ruling stratum of office-holders as "aristocrats" is to miss a crucial point: that many office-holders were

recruited from the *haabe*, who were not, at least initially, free men. If however the ruler who as their patron appointed them to office governed for a long enough period of time, these *haabe* might become assimilated and be treated as Fulbe. Such a process of recruitment is more accurately described as assimilation rather than, say, ennoblement (which might justify the label “aristocrat”), in part because their new-found status was liable to be lost once their patron died. Furthermore we suggest that a Hausa term like *masu sarauta* describes this category more accurately than “aristocrat”, in so far as office (*sarauta*) denotes an occupation or craft (*sana'a*), albeit one of a higher than average status. Only in a relatively few (if notorious) contexts was this craft marked out by a definite set of exclusive symbols and rituals, and included within it the families and sometimes the staff of the *mai sarauta*, thus giving rise to a specific culture that might be called “aristocratic”. One reason for this refusal to use the exclusive symbols of an aristocracy (let alone monarchy, of the kind enjoyed by the Asantehene for example), lay in the original Islamic inspiration of the jihad and its leader Shaikh 'Uthman dan Fodio: as scholars he and his brother 'Abdullah rejected worldly wealth and its display as ultimately worthless. Acquiring it, they said, is apt to turn a man who was a Muslim in the morning into a pagan by the evening; and such wealth, when acquired, cannot go with you in death. Furthermore, in Islam *all* Muslims are simply slaves of Allah, and in the key rituals of Islam the equality of all believers, rulers and ruled, is made explicit, in the mosque or on the *hajj*. Backing up these Islamic precepts was the egalitarian ethos Fulbe retained as pastoralists, an ethos in which age, not birth, gave status. Hence, any tendency to aristocratic manners was associated with the sultanism of the pre-reform, pre-jihad states of Muslim Hausaland and Borno or with the divine kingships of such pagan states as Oyo. Finally, an explicit consciousness that the world's end was imminent made such austerity a rational choice.

What we have tried to show here was the tension within the system over how best to limit both the monopoly of power and its overt expression by particular, privileged groups within each emirate. To illustrate this, we have chosen two “potential aristocracies”, defined as type 1 emirates with strong founding lineages and centralized residence (or “court”). We have not discussed emirates that were from the outset client-based or decentralized, since they were few in number and were, at least initially, *a priori* unfavourable contexts in which a putative “aristocracy” might have developed. In the course of the century, however, some of the originally decentralized emirates tended to centralize and developed the conditions that made possible an urban “court” culture in the manner of Kano. These late-19th century “courts” became the model for the system of Indirect Rule that characterized British colonialism. But their new role as model obscures the fact that many emirates did not (and had never) conformed to this pattern—yet the size and prestige of the so-called “Hausa-Fulani” emirates have made scholars assume that Kano or Sokoto were typical. Conflating this stereo-

type with the marked status distinction between *Fulbe* and *haabe*, such authors have been able to generalise about "Fulbe aristocrats", a notion that has today much more rhetorical force than any basis in the actual historical record.

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The following contains the basic texts used for this essay; it is offered as a working list of monographs and (mainly Nigerian) theses on the various component emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate and its neighbours. It includes neither BA dissertations (though some of these contain important field material) nor the majority of MA theses that relate in varying ways to the history of the Caliphate. The bibliography is in three parts: the first part is arranged alphabetically by emirate or area; the second lists works on important themes without focusing exclusively on the political history of a particular locality; the third lists general studies relating to the Caliphate.

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