Managing Fulbe Identity

Exchange Relations and Ethnic Discourses
in a Village in Central Mali

Alfhild Birkeland

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For Fabrice, Emile and Nicolas
Abstract

This study is about the Fulbe in Madougou and how they manage their identity in their meetings with relevant others in a context of social and cultural complexity. The rural village of Madougou is socially diverse, and the Fulbe pastoralists living here are in daily contact with other groups and categories, mainly the agriculturalist Dogon but also the different “castes” or occupational categories, nyeeeybe, and the former slaves, the Riimaybe and the Maccubé. While my main focus is on the Fulbe, I need to explore their relations with the other groups and categories to understand, if and eventually how, these relations influence the managing of Fulbe identity, and how the borders between the different groups and categories are constructed and maintained. There exists an extensive network of exchange relations of goods and services between the different groups and categories in Madougou. This is based on a social hierarchy of nobles, “castes” and former slaves, the social division of labour, the different lifestyles (real or imagined), and the modes of production between these categories. This social hierarchy is a historically rooted construction open for negotiation, and there exists a discrepancy between the levels of ethnic discourses and social practice. Despite historical hostility and social and cultural differences between the Fulbe and the Dogon, social practice and exchange relations in and outside the market place function as integrating forces that reduce the level of potential conflicts in daily life, also mediated by the ambiguous status of the nyeeeybe categories. Personal relationships like friendship, joking relationships (dendiraagu) and host relations (njaatigi), are important factors in preventing conflicts in seasons when interests between cultivating and herding culminate, like in harvest time. Islam, the practice of praying and traditional medicine also function as an integrating, common framework for inter-ethnic and inter-nyeenyo relations.
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Preface

My intentions before fieldwork were rather naive. I wanted to explore the ethnic relationships between the Fulbe (sing. Pullo) and the Dogon in Madougou from both sides by staying some months in each village, first in the wuro Fulbe, and then move into the Dogon hibbere. This turned out not to be such a good idea, and I ended up focusing on one side of the ethnic relation, namely the Fulbe side, because I had chosen to stay first in their wuro, and they were my first priority. Even if my hostess Ada agreed that I could stay in the hibbere at the end of my stay, I understood that it hurt her. It was like saying that she had not been a good hostess, which would be shameful (semtude) for her, since hospitality is heavily valued in Fulbe culture. But we agreed that I was going to stay in the Dogon chief Agodou Goro’s compound where my friend, the “caste” person Ousmane Morba, lived just besides. Then Ada would not lose me to a “commoner” Dogon, and she agreed to this since her son, Hamma, was not there at the time “to take care of me”, as she said. She was afraid for my security in the wuro without Hamma as my guardian, and therefore she accepted me to leave the wuro and to stay in the hibbere. I promised her that we would see each other very often. Then I installed myself in a room that was emptied for me in the compound of the Dogon chief. The chief told me it was about time that I came to live with the Dogon, because everybody knew that the Fulbe do not eat well! Their houses are not good, and they can’t afford new cloths, he said to me. That first night in the hibbere I just could not sleep. I found the Dogon house of banco too claustrophobic, and I couldn’t breath. I missed my Fulbe house, suudu, too much, and I realized that I had done a mistake leaving it and Ada to go to live with the Dogon. After spending the night thinking about what to do, I got up very early the next morning and packed a few things in a plastic bucket and carried it on my head back to the wuro and Ada. She was so happy when she saw me, and we laughed and she told me
she thought it would have been impossible for me to stay with the “Habbe” (Dogon), because they are so dirty! So I reinstalled myself in my suudu, and later that day I went with my friend Ousmane to explain my behaviour to the Dogon chief. I told him that I had to go back to the wuro, and he said that I acted just like a Pullo woman, debbo. I could not have had a better compliment, and I told him to keep the money for the rent, which he did. And so did my stay in the Dogon village end. When I returned to the wuro, Yero, my neighbour, said that “hibbere wodda” – hibbere is not good. Teddy, the “grandmother”, wanted to hit me she said, joking, because I left my suudu and went to stay in the hibbere. One can not have two hosts (njaatigi didi) in the same village, the Fulbe told me. Suddenly all the Fulbe told me how bad the hibbere is, and that the Dogon really want to cut my throat like a goat. Later that night, Ada, Bargo and Oumarou told me that it is not good to sleep in the hibbere, and Oumarou told me that some Dogon have Aids. From this case I got a lot of “backstage information” about how the Fulbe and the Dogon really think about each other, and how they refer to differences in material culture and consumption habits when they are making stereotypic images of each others. This opened up new horizons for me in the field, and it led me to focus more on the ethnic discourses at the end of the fieldwork, of which this thesis is the result.
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Notes on Transcription

Transcriptions are based on Fagerberg-Diallo (1984), Riesman (1977), and de Bruijn and van Dijk (1995). If the words are not found in these dictionaries or word lists, they are written as I have recorded them, i.e. by the ear. All names on people (ethnic categories, “castes” and former slaves) are written in normal English, because they recur so frequently in the text. For simplistic reasons, I use d instead of ṭ, and b instead of ß, like in Wodaabe (Wodaaɓe). Translations from French to English in the text are my own.

Abbreviations:

Bam.: Bambara
Eng.: English
Fr.: French
Lat.: Latin
sing.: singular
pl.: plural
Map 1: Mali

http://www.mali-guides.com/dogon_map.html
Map 2: The region

http://www.mali-guides.com/dogon_map.html
**Introduction**

This study is about the Fulbe in the rural village of Madougou and how they manage their identity in their meetings with relevant others in a context of social and cultural complexity. Madougou is a socially diverse village, and the Fulbe pastoralists are in daily contact with other groups and categories living here, mainly the agriculturalist Dogon but also the different “castes” or occupational categories, *nyeeybe* (sing. *nyeenyo*), and the former slaves, the Riimaybe and the Maccubé. While my main focus is on the Fulbe, I need to explore their internal social organization and their relations with the other groups and categories to understand, if and eventually how, these relations influence the managing of Fulbe identity. How are the borders between the different groups and categories constructed and maintained?

There exists an extensive network of exchange relations of goods and services in and outside the market between the different groups and categories in Madougou; this is based on a social hierarchy of nobles, “castes” and former slaves, the division of labour and the different lifestyles (real or imagined) and modes of production between these categories. This social hierarchy is a historically rooted construction open for negotiation, and I will explore how the different categories of social actors construct the past in the present to re-construct their identities in this dynamic social landscape. Different lifestyles based on pastoralism and cultivation are potential conflicting, but personal relationships like friendship, joking relationships (*dendiraagu*) and host relations (*njaatigi*), are important factors in preventing conflicts in seasons when interests between cultivating and herding culminate, like in harvest time. Islam, the practice of praying and traditional medicine also function as common framework for inter-ethnic and inter-*nyeenyo* relations. The relative stability in the social structure in Madougou does not mean that it is static; on the contrary, there are ongoing processes of social and cultural changes.
Arguments

First, I want to ask why there is a discrepancy between the social relations, created and maintained through exchange relations of goods and services between the different social groups and categories, and the images of these relations constructed and maintained by the different actors on the discourse level. And second, why are there no intermarriages cross-cutting ethnic and nyeenyo borders in Madougou? To answer these questions, I need to explore the different local interpretations of the past, the exchange relations between the different groups and categories and the local ethnic discourses based on stereotyped images of “the others”. The different social categories in Madougou are endogamic; even if there are relations of social and economic exchange on different levels, the borders between the different categories are not blurred by intermarriage. Still, the Fulbe households are not self-contained, but need to attach themselves to others for survival. I therefore need to explore the Fulbe social organisation and division of labour and how the Fulbe pastoral lifestyle distinguishes them from the “others”. My main argument is that the aspect of symbolic power and meaning in an identity (like the ethnic identity) may be so important for a social category that it overshadows its more economic and utility aspect (Eriksen 1993: 47). Since ethnicity may be studied as a social and cultural construction (Amselle 1998; Fay 1995) and as a basis for an “imagined community” (Anderson 1991), I must investigate what lies in the Fulbe conception of sameness that makes them distinct from the Dogon and others.

1 I will use the term Fulbe (sing. Pullo) as it is their indigenous term, even if they refer to themselves in French as Peul. The Fulbe are known under many names: Fulani (Eng.), Peul (Fr.), Fula (Manding), Fellani (Hausa), among others.
Theoretical perspectives and concepts

To explore Fulbe identity, I need to clarify some theoretical perspectives and concepts about identity, ethnicity and “caste”. Eriksen defines the study of identity in the anthropological discourse like this: “… identity means being the same as oneself as well as being different”. (1993: 60, original emphasize) He continues: “When we talk of identity in social anthropology, we refer to social identity, not to the depths of the individual mind. We must therefore begin by looking at social relations and social organisation” (ibid.), and I will follow this approach by exploring the social relations both among the Fulbe and between the Fulbe and the relevant “others”. According to Amselle; identity is not a substance, but “an unstable condition translating the permanent struggle” between those who define and those who are defined (1998: 54-55). Amselle defines identity as “… a variation or as a difference”, and further that “… identity melts into ethnicity when conditions of social and political production are forgotten” (Amselle 1998: 56-57). I will show that this collective “forgetting” of the production of the Fulbe has happened in Madougou, and that the Fulbe identity may be characterised as an ethnic identity. According to Barth:

A categorical ascription is an ethnic ascription when it classifies a person in terms of his basic, most general identity, presumptively determined by his origin and background. To the extent that the actors use ethnic identities to categorize themselves and others for purposes of interaction, they form ethnic groups in this organizational sense. (Barth 1969a: 13-14)

Following Handelman’s (1977) typology of ethnic group versus category, I will refer to the Fulbe in general as an ethnic category rather than an ethnic group, because the ethnic aspect of the Fulbe identity is cognitive and cultural rather than a basis for social corporate groups:
Most significantly, ethnic category membership provides members with the elements of a corporate history in time and space: a history which offers some explanation for their common membership, why they are members, where they originated, and why the existence of the category is substantial and legitimate. (Handelman 1977: 190)

But the Fulbe in Madougou do also belong to different social groupings with internal organization according to different roles (Keesing 1975: 10), and I will follow Keesing’s distinction between cultural category and social group (ibid.); a “culture” refers to an ideational system, a system of knowledge people share, while social groups are entities that may be empirically observed. It is therefore necessary to distinguish the Fulbe as belonging to a cultural category or a social group according to the context.

Following Bierchenk (1992), there are two ways of studying ethnic identities: either through the approach of Barth (1969a) and Amselle (1998), where ethnic identities are socially constructed within social relations, or by Bierchenk’s approach which emphasizes that “social identities are always rooted in concrete historical experiences and social practice, and that they relate to a symbolism which creates an identity and which is subject to constant negotiation within the social groups concerned” (Bierschenk 1992: 509-510). I will follow both approaches Bierschenk points out: 1. by exploring the maintenance of the Fulbe ethnic border that defines the Fulbe in relations to the “others”, because according to Barth “… the main task for the anthropological study of ethnicity consists in accounting for the maintenance and consequences of ethnic boundaries” (Barth paraphrased in Eriksen 1993: 37); and, 2. by exploring the content of the “cultural stuff that it [the ethnic boundary] encloses” (Barth 1969a: 15), the “boundary” being defined as “criteria of membership” (ibid.: 38). By this I mean that I will explore both the content of the Fulbe category and the social groups based on the Fulbe identity, and the borders between the Fulbe and the “others”.

Which are the identity markers that distinguish the different social categories in Madougou?
There exists a social hierarchy of nobles, “castes” and former slaves\(^2\) in West Africa. First, “caste” in the West African context does not signify the same as in India (cf. Dumont 1967), and I follow Sommerfelt\(^3\) in her considerations about the weaker notions of purity and pollution in the West African context (1999: 5). Dupire states that in the relations with the “castes”, “… we are far removed from rigid classification of purity and impurity” (1985: 91), and as Vaughan (1970) has pointed out according to Dupire; “‘caste systems’ do not exist in West Africa; on the contrary, there are castes of artisans” (Dupire 1985: 85). I follow this approach and define “castes” as the “castes of artisans” or occupational categories, \textit{nyeeybe}.\(^4\) In this context I will ask how the borders between the different ethnic groups and categories and the categories of the \textit{nyeeybe} and the former slaves are maintained. Second, the social hierarchy is open for negotiation, and Fulbe rank is variable in time. From being nobles, Rimbe (sing. Dimo), on top of the colonialist social hierarchy in the past, many Fulbe today are poor and live under difficult circumstances (de Bruijn 1999; de Bruijn and van Dijk 1994; de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995). In contrast, the neighbouring Dogon are becoming richer and increase their socio-economic status, and I will explore the consequences this have for the managing of the Fulbe identity.

It is important to limit the focus of this study. It is not a monograph about the “pure” Fulbe pastoral lifestyle and culture (if they have ever existed), but about the dynamics in the social relations between the Fulbe, the Dogon\(^5\) and categories of \textit{nyeeybe} and former slaves in Madougou. The idea of a \textit{pastoralist} Fulbe culture covers the fact that the Fulbe in West Africa live in many different ways, and that the content in the category Fulbe may change with time and place (Breedveld and de Bruijn 1996; Burnham 1999). But even if there are

\(^2\) The terminology of slave is not unproblematic; it assumes a form of unity of a heterogenous category (Amselle 1998: 6, 36).
\(^3\) I fully agree with Sommerfelt in her reflection about describing social institutions and processes in West Africa; it can best be characterised as “walking on a terminological minefield” (1999: 5).
\(^4\) I will employ the local terminology when referring to the different “castes”, but when my informants refer to “caste” in French, I will employ this term.
\(^5\) Very few have studied the two categories Fulbe and Dogon in relation; one exception is de Bruijn, van Beek and van Dijk (1997).
local diversities in the category “Fulbe” it does not mean that the ethnic identity “Fulbe” is not maintained, or that pastoralism is not an important element in Fulbe identity, pastoralism being defined by the keeping of animals as “economically and culturally ‘dominant’” (Galaty and Johnson 1990: 2). What it means to be a Pullo may change in time and place, even if one does not cease to identify oneself as a Pullo. The Fulbe way of life in Madougou is linked with pastoralism both economically and culturally through the focus on animal husbandry: i.e. livestock as “symbol of cultural significance” (Galaty and Johnson 1990: 2). To essentialize Fulbe culture and the pastoralist way of life is not my aim, and “Fulbe behaviour” and Fulbeness or pulaaku as a special Fulbe mode of behaviour is exhaustedly described and discussed in the regional anthropological literature. What I will explore is how the Fulbe, the Dogon and others interact in everyday life, how they exchange and how they talk about each other. How do they create images of “self” and “others”?

Methods and difficulties in the field

The building of my house (suudu) after my arrival in Madougou started the process of thinking about cross-ethnic exchange relations. I could not avoid from noticing how dependent the Fulbe and my host family were on the Dogon for obtaining materials for the suudu and for doing heavy work like clearing the ground before building. This was only the beginning of my observations of a lot of exchange relations crossing ethnic and nyeeyno borders.

I stayed five and a half months in Madougou, from the end of September 2000 to the beginning of March 2001. My observations are made at the end of the rainy season (nduungu) and the following harvest period, during the cold dry season (dabbunde) and into

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6 See Galaty and Johnson (1990: 2) for a typology of pastoralist societies. According to Galaty and Johnson, pastoralism does not represent a mode of production, because “the relations of pastoral production ... vary widely ...” (1990: 30).

the beginning of the hot dry season (ceedu), but I did not stay during the rainy season when the cultivation cycle starts. I did not meet any special problems as a woman in the field, and because we had visited Madougou the year before, people knew gorkam, my “husband”.

There are many methodological difficulties involved in my fieldwork. First, there may be some difficulties in studying relations between two ethnic groups or categories living in separate villages and speaking separate languages. When I first chose to stay in the wuro, I became identified as a Pullo woman, a Pullo debbo, both by the Fulbe and the Dogon. But this does not represent a problem in itself, because I had access to the Dogon compounds on daily basis and spent a lot of time (as all Fulbe do) in the hibbere. It is rather a question of complexity; and the Dogon and other groups and categories are only explored in the relation to the Fulbe; they are not in themselves within the scope of this study.

The language context is another methodological difficulty. Because of the social diversity there are many languages and dialects spoken in Madougou besides Fulfulde and Dogon, and I speak none of them except French, the former colonialist language and the official language in Mali today. So it was imperative for me to work with a local interpreter and translater, Hammadoun (Hamma) Barry, the son of my hostess Adama (Ada). One of the reasons that I choose to stay in the household of Ada was because she is one of the few Fulbe in Madougou who speaks French. Even if I tried to learn Fulfulde in the field, I did not learn the language properly, and I was never satisfied with the language “situation”, but I managed to be able to greet in Fulfulde and to make myself understood in everyday activities. Hamma as an interpreter, a young male and official Malian tourist guide is of course not “objective” in his interpretations, and he also had to change between the roles as interpreter and the head

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8 I first met Hamma as a professional guide on a trip to Mali the year before, and he took me to his natal village, Madougou. I decided to return to Madougou and stay with his family for my fieldwork. Hamma is both an insider and an outsider in Madougou, and that is important. He knows the village where his mother lives, but he has also an outsider’s eye for the interpretation of local practice. It is an argument for me that “fracture” and conflict are important to understand “normality”; by not to be able to live up to cultural standards of ideal behaviour creates stress in the identity, and cultural values are displayed.

9 Greetings are very complex in Fulfulde, see Labatut (1989). Greetings were the only Dogon I learned in the field, except some simple words and notions.
of the family, which were conflicting roles at times. Because of this, I chose to stay without him as an interpreter for the last two months of the fieldwork when Hamma went back to Bamako; I wanted to “look for myself” without an intermediate.

The third methodological difficulty is to do fieldwork in a context of relative poverty. De Bruijn (1999) has done fieldwork among poor Fulbe in the Hayre, and she writes about how the data was not in the notebook; people don’t want to talk about being poor, she claims. I observed the opposite; that the Fulbe in Madougou talked a lot of how poor they are. But then again they may not be as poor as the Fulbe described by de Bruijn (ibid.). Berge questions the ethics and morals of doing fieldwork among poor Tuareg in Mali like this: “During my fieldwork my right to stay with them and study them in their misery, rather than to at least try to do something to help them, was questioned again and again” (2000: 38). I felt the same way in Madougou: that I should have done something to help the people I lived with. At the same time, “the question of money” was eating me up. As a source of income (I paid for food and services like house building in addition to “gift-givings”), my presence did change the consumption practice in the household. Ada said directly to me that as long as I stayed, she would not leave Madougou to go on transhumance, eggude. De Bruijn and van Dijk (1995) did make the same experience in the Hayre; because they were considered very rich they always had to give, and it became “extremely difficult to handle the problem of the gift” (1995: 406).

This thesis is written on basis of my own observations and data from the field, the use of ethnographic material, and some records on the struggle for land from the archive in the Palais de Justice in Koro, the administrative center. I could not write down notes during the day because it only became focus for a lot of curiosity and suspicion, but I did take notes briefly, especially when “hiding” in the hibbere or in some Dogon or nyeeny compound, and

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10 Hayre is a region in the Central Mali, it means stone in Fulfulde.
11 Eggeude is seasonal movements with the cattle to find pasture and water.
I wrote down the field notes in my suudu in the evenings, outside the gaze of the public. There are few “hard facts” in this thesis, and quantitative data collecting was problematic because much consumption and social life happens in “secrecy” when “hiding”; and I soon gave up “the problem of counting cows”, especially those I did not observe directly. Kinship relations and names are also surrounded with a lot of “secrecy”, and to discuss these matters I had to go to the hibbere with my Fulbe informants. In short; the “hiding” complex described in chapter 5 has a lot of consequences also for the collecting of data.

According to Ortner, the practice of doing fieldwork is based on a paradox, namely “to participate and observe at one and the same time” (1984: 134). Still, it is by the participation in and observation of social practice and events in daily that have given me insights in the social processes in Madougou. I have observed the social life in Madougou through living with the Fulbe in the wuro, and I have taking part in daily life household activities like selling milk in the hibbere, everyday discussions and conflicts, ritual and ceremonial life like cow parties and name-givings. My informants are mainly the members of the household where I stayed, their neighbours and close kin, their friends and their wider social network. I discussed events with my informants as they happened, like after a quarrel or a disagreement, and I also practiced informal interviews by questioning my informants. The family I lived with is in some way “untypical” because Ada is a widow and she has not remarried, but it is a typical and poor Fulbe family who possess few cows. With the money Hamma earns as a tourist guide, the family try to rebuild the herd, and they are for the moment able to continue a pastoral lifestyle.

I was not allowed to go on transhumance with my Fulbe informants who considered it too hard for me, and because I arrived after the cultivating season I did not participate in cultivation. But I did take part in the watering of the animals, milking activities and the harvest. I followed my informants (both men and women, young and old) in and out of the
hibbere innumerous times in their comings and goings, selling milk, drinking tea or going to the market with them on Mondays (Altineere), the regular market day. Through the social network of my Fulbe informants, I visited and got to know different Dogon and nyeenyo families living in the hibbere, whom I visited from time to time, and who became informants and friends on “the other side” of the ethnic and nyeenyo border. I did have good relations with all the “castes” whom I visited regularly except the blacksmiths\textsuperscript{12} and potters, the Waylube. This is because especially the women were suspiscious of me and wanted me to pay to be with them, so I have not recorded much from the daily life in their compound. I went to hibbere to make visits of my own, and since many Dogon speak French, I was able to discuss more freely with them without an interpreter. This gave me the view of the “others” on the inter-ethnic relation between the Fulbe and the Dogon. At the end of my stay, I focused more closely on the inter-ethnic and nyeenyo relations, as I came to understand how necessary exchange relations with the “others” are, both for Fulbe economy and for the managing of the Fulbe identity.

Even if I visited other villages, I mostly stayed in Madougou,\textsuperscript{13} and my data are mainly collected in Madougou and from visitors to Madougou. I did follow my informants to the cow party, “la fête des vaches”, in Bindama, and I visited Naye, Kindé and the escarpment a couple of times during fieldwork. There was always the problem of transport when moving around. Locals move around on foot; by donkey carts or on a horse;\textsuperscript{14} some own a bicycle or even a motorcycle. Hamma and I arrived in Madougou with a bush-taxi, and we moved around with Hamma’s moped, or we walked.

\textsuperscript{12} There are no silver or gold smiths in Madougou, but silver smiths visit the market and make “silver” jewelry appreciated by the Fulbe from the old French “silver” Franc.
\textsuperscript{13} I went on “field break” in Koro a couple of times where I stayed at CARE’s facilities (CARE International in Mali is a NGO based in Koro).
\textsuperscript{14} To own a horse, podjo, in Madougou is, in addition to providing transport, a sign on wealth and prestige (cf. B. Frank 1987: 90), and Belko, the Fulbe village chief (amiiru), travels by horse.
My perspective is “actor-oriented perspective”; by this I mean that I see individuals as “active agents and subjects in their own history” (Ortner 1984: 143), and I will explore events from the “actor’s point of view” (Barth 1966; Bourdieu 1977). I will follow Amselle (1998), who places the focus on the construction of identity rather than post-structuralist focus on deconstruction. It implies an active actor in an ongoing process of interpretation and relations with the world outside the person. All facts are socially constructed and culturally interpreted; and there are no “objective” facts without the need for interpretation. The choice of scope is therefore important, and some ethnographical and regional works have influenced this thesis. I compare with the works of Riesman (1977, 1990, 1992) who explores the Jelgobe Fulbe in Burkina Faso; they seem culturally much alike the Fulbe Barry in Madougou. De Bruijn and van Dijk (1994, 1995, 1997) have studied the Fulbe in the Hayre in Central Mali, and their works are also important sources of inspiration; their field being poorer than Madougou though.

Chapter overview

Chapter 1 presents the context for the fieldwork, namely the village of Madougou, the Fulbe *wuro* and the Dogon *hibbere*. In the chapter I introduce the social diversity in Madougou, and the relations to the Malian state. I further explore local notions of political power and recource management, and the local struggle over natural resources. In chapter 2 I elaborate on the historical relations between the Fulbe and the Dogon as part of the wider Fulbe-Mande complex in West Africa. The historical relations have implications for the construction of the different identites and the re-construction and negotiation of the social hierarchy of nobles, “castes” and former slaves. Despite the social plurality and cultural complexity in Madougou today, the myths of origin express sameness and common origin.

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15 Those belonging to the Mande category are the peoples with relations to the Mali Empire.
and clan patronyms are symbolic markers of identity open for negotiation and thereby problematic as ethnic and nyeebe “classifiers”. In chapter 3 I explore aspects of Fulbe social organization and the social division of labor. Through the study of kinship and gender relations, the aim is to examine how the Fulbe affiliate to each others. In the chapter I explore the processes of social production and reproduction in the household and the domestic field. The empirical material shows that there are dividing forces acting on the Fulbe family, and cultural constrains inherit in social relations create stress and conflicts between the different members of the family and the household, and makes it difficult to handle the role as a noble Pullo. Chapter 4 focuses further on Fulbe lifestyle and cultural values, and what the shared culture of the Fulbe is. What make the Fulbe a category in opposition to relevant others? Is there general agreement about what it takes to be a Pullo, and if so, how is the identity performed? Local concepts yaage (honor, respect), semtude (shame), and tawaangal (tradition) are central in this analysis. In the chapter I explore the social practice of Fulbe pastoralism and the value of cattle and milk, and how it distinguish the Fulbe in contrast to the Dogon cultivators and others who do not take part in the pastoralist ideology. I also explore gender relations and the role of women and younger generations as “agents for change” and how they influence and change local Fulbe values and the practice of going on transhumance. The chapter explores the processes of social and cultural changes and the reproduction of sameness and diversity. There is an ongoing prosess of sedentarisation among the Fulbe, and the material culture and the house are given new values by the Fulbe. Finally, I explore how the Fulbe cope with poverty and how it influence of the Fulbe management of their identity as nobles. In chapter 5 I explore some arenas for exchange relations and meetings which cross-cut ethnic, nyeenyoe and former slaves’ boundaries. According to Fulbe ideals for noble behaviour, to be seen eating and drinking in public is considered as semtude, and the Fulbe need to hide. This makes them dependent of the other
categories and the Dogon and *nyeeybe* compounds in the *hibbere* function as hiding places for the Fulbe. The market place, the *hibbere*, joking relationships, and religious and magical beliefs are all arenas for meetings across borders and function as integrating forces across ethnic and *nyeeybe* boundaries in Madougou. Chapter 6 focuses on the economic exchange relations between the Fulbe and the Dogon, the *nyeeybe* and the former slaves in Madougou, and the ethnic discourses and the manifestations of ethnic and other differences are analysed in a broader context. Different work ethos is central in the definition of self and others and the work ethos define the different lifestyles between the pastoralists and cultivators. Despite different lifestyles, I argue that friendship cross-cutting ethnic and *nyeeybe* borders works integrating, and helps solving conflicts on the local level. The thesis concludes with some considerations about the discrepancy between the cultural discourses and the social practices in Madougou. While there is hostility between the different groups and categories on the discourse level, the social relations criss-cross ethnic, *nyeenyo* and former slaves’ boundaries, and because different people exercise different tasks, they live in a sort of “asymmetrical” symbiosis through the exchange of goods and services, and their co-existence on the plain is not as hostile as it may be in the Dogon escarpment. Local diversity and the division of labour create inter-dependence and social relations across ethnic and *nyeeybe* boundaries, and the general level of conflict is low.
Chapter 1: Madougou

In the north, Mali’s straight border stretches into the Sahara desert, while the south, where the majority of the inhabitants live, features the Niger and Senegal rivers (Imperato 1989). The Malian writer Amadou Hampâté Bâ calls the Niger River “la grande artère centrale de tout le pays” (1992: 9). The rural village of Madougou is situated on the Seeno-Gondo Plain in the Gourma region, south of the Bandiagara Plateau and escarpment at 14.40° latitude, 3.08° longitude. The plain lies in the interior of the Niger Bend and is a Sahel savanna landscape which stretches south into Burkina Faso. It is situated north-east of the Mossi of the former Yatenga, west of the pastoral Fulbe Jelgobe in Burkina Faso and south-west of the Hausa land.

Demography, insecurity and migrations

The Fulbe on the Seeno-Gondo plain belong to the Barry-clan. From Madougou there are about 15 km to the escarpment, and on a day when the sky is clear, one may see the escarpment cliffs from the village. While the Fulbe have been on the plain for several hundred years, the escarpment is the traditional and “old” Dogon country according to the French geographer Gallais (1975: 97), who describes the migration pattern and landscape in the Gourma region. Gallais describes la falaise as “the old Dogon Country”; here the ancestor

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16 “The main artery of the country”.
17 Seeno (pl. ceeni) means sand or dune in Fulfulde.
18 The Bandiagara escarpment, la falaise in French, hayre in Fulfulde, means the great rocky escarpment at about 400 to 700 m. altitude which is characteristic for the landscape, and which is the heart in the “Dogon country” and an important tourist goal in Mali.
19 The plain Seeno-Gondo covers about 30,000 km². Gallais classifies the Seeno-Gondo plain in the Sahel zone as a sandy savanna steppe composed of a semi-tree zone with baobab and acacia trees, deep sand dunes and “tiger-bush”, with grasses and cram-cram, a thorny plant that sticks to the clothes when one is walking in the bush (1975: 38-39).
20 Sahel is the primarily savanna landscape south of the Sahara desert, it runs from the Atlantic Ocean to the Horn of Africa through Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Tchad, changing from semi-arid grasslands to thorn savanna (Pedersen 1994: 182; Wikipedia online).
21 Barry is spelled Bari in the older literature (cf. Delafosse 1972 [1912]; Tauxier 1937).
22 According to Grayzel, Fulbe means the “free cattle people” (1990: 36).
cults and “animism” are kept alive, and the Seeno-Gondo plain is described as “the new Dogon Country”; it is richer, but the Dogon here are influenced by Islam and are “acculturated” and have left their traditions, according to Gallais (ibid.: 96). Madougou on the plain belongs to the “new” Dogon country where the migrant Dogon have settled. Madougou is among the most inhabited communes in the cercle with a population of 33,906 in 1996, a population that is increasing (CARE: 1997: 15). According to the 1997 national census made by UNICEF, there are 3174 inhabitants in Madougou Dogon and 277 inhabitants in Madougou Fulbe, and that makes the Fulbe a minority in Madougou. The nyeeybe are even less numerous than the Fulbe and counts only a few families, and Tamari claims that “caste” peoples “never form more than a small minority of the population” (1995: 61). The regional ecological context is one of insecurity and ecological hazards (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995; van Dijk 1999; Gallais 1975, 1984). Child mortality is high, the life-expectancy low, and the population is extremely young; 85 % of the population is under fifteen years (CARE 1997: xiii). Sicknesses like diarrhea, malaria, meningitis and measles are common and malnutrition are widespread (CARE 1997: xvi). The diet is very monotonous, with millet porridge, nyiiri, and the sauce of leaves from the baobab tree (Lat. Adansonia digitata) as the main meal. Milk is not always accessible, and the amount varies according to seasons. Plagues and diseases attack crops and animals (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 8). There are long-term (inherent in the region) and short-term (daily life) insecurities (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 9), and it makes it sometimes difficult to survive under.

23 The Dogon call themselves Dogô or Dogon. The Dogon are famous worldwide for their mask dances, see Griaule (1938), Dieterlen (1989) and van Beek (1991b) among others.
24 Gallais estimates in 1975 that about 100,000 Dogon have migrated since the beginning of the year 1900 (ibid.: 1975: 96).
25 The commune Madougou as an administrative unit must not be confused with the village Madougou.
26 Cercle is an administrative unit introduced by the French (Amselle 1998: 11).
27 This situation is the most common in Fulbe studies. In contrast, the Jelgobe Fulbe studied by Riesman (1977) is the major population in the region, and they may therefore not depend on neighbouring populations for agricultural products, but have to cultivate themselves.
28 Other ethnic categories represented in Madougou are a Bambara family, a Sonrai family, a Mossi and a Hausa family.
Topography, micro climate and subsistence

The sahelian climate is warm and dry (semi-arid) with maximal temperatures between 31°C and 42°C. It has a short rainy season (*nduungu*) which lasts one to three months between June and September with less then 500 mm rain (Gallais 1975: 9). The rainy season is the season both for cultivation and for transhumance, and conflicts for the Fulbe. After the *nduungu* is the harvest season (*jammde*), the time when the rains stop and it cools off until December. *Dabbunde* is the cold dry season which starts in December, and after it comes *ceedu*, the hot dry season from mid-March to June when the rain falls again. The rainfall in Madougou was 378 mm on 29 days in the year 2000, and 620 mm on 49 days in 1999, and the lack of water is a problem. But there are local variations, so-called micro-climates, even if droughts are an important part of the climatic variations (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 7). There are different types of soils (clay and sand) and vegetation, and this result in variations in the productivity of the land according to time and place (Riesman 1977: 11). The two most constraining forces on productivity are water and labour power (CARE 1997: xxi), and there are different local strategies, like migration and keeping children out of school, to meet these constraints among the Fulbe.

The Fulbe and the Dogon have different subsistence patterns. The Dogon practice hoe cultivation during the rainy season, and they cultivate cereals like millet (pearl millet), fonio (the smallest millet), sorghum, beans and peanuts as the main crops. The Fulbe subsistence economy is primary based on cattle (*nay*) for milk but also some goats (*bei*) and sheep (*baali*), both for local consumption and as a way to earn money, and some rich Fulbe own camels (*ngeeloba*) and donkeys (*araawa*) for work and transport. The Fulbe need pastures of grass to feed the cattle and leaves to feed the goats and sheep, and they explore the rich

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29 Source is the Baylo Sory Bagayoko, Madougou.
30 The domestic cattle of the Fulbe belong to the zebu race adapted to the savanna conditions (cf. Boutrais 1999).
annual grasses in the wet season when they leave on transhumance. Accordingly, they do some cultivation of millet, peanuts and beans in the rainy season, but they do not cultivate enough for their needs and have to exchange milk for cereals with the Dogon, or buy grain in the market for money the women earn on the milk sale. The wealthy Dogon accumulate cattle which are mostly herded by the Fulbe on contract, and some rich Dogon cultivate by plough. As Riesman points out for the Jelgobe; “The mode of subsistence is different from that nomadic pastoral economy described of Dupire (1962a), Hopen (1958) and Stenning (1959)” (1977: 17), and the same counts for the Barry in Madougou. As agro-pastoralists practicing transhumance the Fulbe in Madougou may be seen as “in-between” the nomad Fulbe described by the authors above and the Dogon agriculturalists on a “nomad-sedentary” scale (Galaty and Johnson 1990: 2), but there are ongoing processes of sedentarisation making the Fulbe even less mobile and more settled, as I will show. While it is regarded as shameful for the Fulbe to work for money, the Dogon work for money and also cultivate cash crops. The Fulbe do not cultivate cash crops, but the Fulbe women sell milk and the men sell cows to obtain cash. While the Dogon may hunt and gather bush products for consumption or for sale, the Fulbe do not. While the Fulbe have different subsistence strategies, like seasonal labour migration and contract herding, and even if they are no longer “pure” pastoralists, they keep a pastoral identity, and “household-based herding economy” (Burnham 1999: 277) may be applied as a label describing their economy. By this I mean that there are no corporations bigger than the family in the household (with friends) that take care of the herding, and the household is the principal production and consumption unit, even if it is flexible in size. Early in the season when the pasture is good, one herd together. But later when the pastures are exhausted and there is a lack of water, one disperses and herds alone. Fulbe herds are private (family) property if they are not owned by the Dogon.
The cattle are kept in Kindé during the rainy season because of the good pasture there, or they are taken on transhumance. In Kindé there is a rainy season *wuro*, and the owners of the cows like the rich grandfathers go there from time to time to see the cows (*nay*); “I am going to see my cows”, they say. In the middle of October the harvest of millet (*gawri*) starts and after the harvest is finished in November and the *dabbunde* starts, the cows are taken from Kindé to Madougou. This is a difficult time for the cows with little to eat. They can not go into the cultivated fields (*gesse*) yet, because the harvest is not finished, so there is little milk produced, and people complain that there is not enough milk to consume, *kossam timmi*. Later in *dabbunde* the Fulbe disperse to settle on the fields of their Dogon hosts, *njaatigi*, to feed their cows and exchange milk for millet. In the beginning of December, the cows have come from Kindé to the *wuro*; in theory there are no more *gawri* to be harvested. In practice, it is not that simple, and this is the peak period for Fulbe-Dogon inter-ethnic conflicts, or conflicts between the Fulbe herders and the different categories of cultivators: the Dogon and the former slaves. After the cold dry season from about the beginning of March and until the rainy season starts in June, the Fulbe have to find ways to manage: going *eggi* or buying fodder like cotton seed to feed the cows. This period is the most difficult for the Fulbe, with little water and little to eat for the cows, and there is not much milk. During the year, the Fulbe buy salt which they give to the cattle instead of systematically going to the salt licks. Cattle are watered at the village wells (*bulli*) or ponds (*pette*) after the harvest. The cattle roads called *burti* (sing. *burtol*) are paths of pasturage to lead the cattle through the *gesse* surrounding the village without causing any damage to the crops. According to Van Dijk, it is a general problem that the Dogon or the

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31 Kindé in the commune of Diankabu is about 15 km from Madougou. Kindé is *suudu baaba* for the Fulbe in Madougou, see chapter 2 and 3.
32 *Njaatigi* is a Bambara word for host (de Bruijn, van Beek and van Dijk 1997: 255).
33 The “salt cure” reduces the need to go on long-distance transhumance (cf. Bourgeot 1981: 122). Those who leave on “real” long-distance transhumance to the salt licks in the north are celebrated with a “cow party” when they return, see chapter 4.
34 The wells in Madougou are very deep; there is about 40-50 meters down to the water table in the dry season.
former slaves, Riimaybe or Bellaabe, are cultivating the \textit{burti} or the \textit{harima}, the pasture surrounding the village and the wells (1999: 257). My notes from the archive in Koro show that the same thing is happening in Madougou. There is shortage of land for pasture because of the increasing cultivating population, and the geographical boundaries of Madougou are set in relation to the neighbouring villages.

**The different social spaces of the hibbere and the wuro**

On the map, Madougou looks like one village. In reality there is a spatial division between two separate “villages” with different quarters, namely the \textit{hibbere} Dogon and the \textit{wuro} Fulbe. The social reality in Madougou is pluralistic and complex, and the ethnic and \textit{nyeenyo} diversity is reflected in the spacial segregation and the different socio-material landscapes of the \textit{wuro} and \textit{hibbere}, which are easily recognized from the different material structure and architecture, and the 300-400 meters that separates them. There are important manifestations of difference in Fulbe and Dogon house building traditions and architecture, both in forms and materials; the Fulbe build hemispherical houses of straw materials (\textit{suudu hoddo}), while the Dogon build rectangular houses of \textit{banco}, a mixture of mud and straw, and houses are like two different worlds. While the \textit{wuro} is “transparent” with few fences, making it difficult to observe the borders between the different compounds, the Dogon compounds are much larger than the Fulbe compounds and they are enclosed by walls of banco. While there are few granaries in the \textit{wuro}, there are several, both male and female, granaries in each Dogon compound or \textit{ginna}. Both villages are dominated by one or more mosques (\textit{misiide}) in the Sahelian style architecture. For the Fulbe settlement, the presence of a \textit{misiide} is a sign of the sedentarisation process, that they have become settled in a fixed place (Prussin 1986: 203).

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35 The Bellaabe (sing. Bellaa) are the former slaves of the Tuareg in the north.
36 \textit{Hubeere} signifies, according to de Bruijn and van Dijk, a large official and administrative sedentary village (1995: 513).
38 \textit{Ginna} signifies the Dogon family (Paulme 1988 [1940]).
The *wuro* in Madougou is located on each side of the track in the direction of Koro (against south-east). It consists of two quarters or neighbourhoods, or *deelé* (sing. *deende*), founded by different great grandfathers, but they are all from the Barry clan from Kindé. Seen from the *hibbere*, one only speaks of one *wuro*; *wuro Fulbe gooto*, and there is one village chief (*amiru*) for the whole *wuro*. The *wuro* is surrounded by millet fields (*gesse*) and two wells (*bulli*) at 3-400 meters distance. Outside the fields is the bush\(^{39}\) (*ladde*). After the millet harvest, one can see the *hibbere* from the *wuro*. There are no “slave” quarters in the *wuro*; only one old Maccudo is living in a hut. The Laube griot and woodworker’s compound is situated on the Kindé side of the road in a segregated compound.

*Hibbere* signifies a village with a weekly market, *luumo*. *Hibbere* consists of three Dogon quarters; the quarters have “parent” villages in the escarpment from which they have migrated (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1999a; Gallais 1975), and different Dogon dialects\(^{40}\) are spoken. The inhabitants of the Da quarter come from the village Iby in the escarpment; it is the largest quarter and has a mosque. The clan patronym (surname) of the Dogon who live here is Kodjo. Arou is the name of the “oldest quarter” (which is disputed below); they came from Arou\(^{41}\) in the escarpment, and the clan patronym is De or Din. The Arou quarter in Madougou is the most “animist” of the three quarters and most hostile to Islam, and it has no mosque.\(^{42}\) Domno comes from Domno on the plain, and the clan patronym is Goro. The village chief in Domno is Agadou Goro,\(^{43}\) and he is the chief of all the Dogon in the *hibbere*.

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\(^{39}\) According to Riesman, the *wuro* is the inhabited bush, in opposition to *ladde*, the bush, and the *hoggo*, the men’s cattle camp (1977: 30).

\(^{40}\) In the quarter of Iby the Dogon dialect *toro so* is spoken. In the quarter of Domno and Arou the dialect spoken is *jamsay*.

\(^{41}\) The *hogon* is an important person in the Dogon mythology and social organisation. Each lineage has a *hogon*, but the most important *hogon* lives in Arou in the escarpment, he is the chief and represents the whole Dogon people (Griaule 1973: 21). Because of this, the De in the Arou quarter in Madougou consider themselves superior the other Dogon in Madougou as descendants of one of the four “original” Dogon clans.

\(^{42}\) In Arou the Dogon have kept the tradition of drinking millet beer, *dolo*, a tradition the Muslims in Da and Domno have abandoned. In Arou, they keep to the traditions of the escarpment, and they are not “acculturated” as Gallais (1975: 96) claims.

\(^{43}\) There are also other Dogon clans present in Madougou, like the Dombo from Youga and Sangara from Tiago, both in the escarpment.
The Domno quarter is dominated by a great concrete mosque. At the heart of the hibbere lies the market place, partly a structure built of wooden piles with roofs, and partly an open space. The cattle market is situated on a little hill on the edge of the village, and between the village and the cattle market lies the village pond (feto): surface water where the animals are watered. In the hibbere there are some shops selling manufactured goods open all week and some “restaurants” (resto) where one can buy meals and drinks. The compound of the “Commandant” who represents the Malian state in Madougou, and the mayor’s office and the elementary school are also situated in the hibbere, close to the market place. All the nyeenyo compounds except the Laube are situated in the hibbere. Inter-ethnic and inter-nyeenyo meetings take place both in the hibbere and in the wuro, at the market place on market days and by the wells. Fulbe and Dogon women also meet when threshing millet in huge mortars between the hibbere and the wuro at the place called cokkirde. Other important inter-ethnic meeting places are Dendem’s resto, Ousmane’s shop (Dendem and Ousmane are both rich and give credit to the Fulbe), and the nyeenyo and Dogon compounds in hibbere in general.

While there is no electricity in Madougou, some of the richest shopkeepers and the “Commandant” have electricity aggregates and televisions, and children may pay fifty CFA 44 to watch television in the evenings. There is a “birth clinic”, a health station and a pharmacy in the hibbere, but the standard is very low, and there are no doctors (CARE 1997: xvi).

There are no clocks telling the time in Madougou, but at prayer times 45 (juulde) five times a day, a griot walks around hitting a calabash (horde) to gather people to pray.

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44 Mali entered the CFA (Communaute Financiere Africaine or the African Financial Community) zone in 1985. The CFA was devaluated in 1994 and was linked to the French Franc with 1:100 during fieldwork.

45 The names of the prayers are: julde fadjeri (at five o’clock in the morning), sallefana (at 2 pm) lasara (at 4 pm), fottero (6 pm) and safoko (after sunset).
The social diversity in Madougou

There are distinct social identities in Madougou, and people classify each other according to three social categories: the free nobles, Rimbe; the occupational groups, nyeeybe, and the former slaves (Bâ and Dieterlen 1961; Delafosse 1972 [1912]; Tauxier 1937). The local social hierarchy is based on the oppositions between the free (the Rimbe and nyeenyo peoples) and the non-free (the former slaves), and between the free Rimbe and the free nyeenyo people or occupational groups; the nyeeybe stand in an intermediate position as free, but not Rimbe. While there is consensus about the social distinctions of the different categories, there are ambiguities in the ranking of these categories. In the colonial model of Mande social structure, the social hierarchy in West Africa was fixed, and based on static ideas about status and work segregation (Conrad and Frank 1995; Amselle 1998). The social hierarchy was considered as a stratifying social system based on birthgiven statuses. On top of this social hierarchy were the nobles, below them the nyamakalaw (Bam.) or nyeeybe; the occupational groups or “castes”, and at the bottom the slaves. This hierarchy still exists, but it is flexible and situational and not static (cf. Sommerfelt 1999). The definition of the ethnic borders varies according to situation, and the nyeeybe categories function as intermediate groups with roots in the ethnic categories that embrace them.

The nobles: Rimbe

The Fulbe identity is based on ideas of superiority as free and nobles, or Rimbe (sing. Dimo). The position as a Dimo is based on the opposition to the non-free, the former slaves, the Riimaybe (sing. Diimaajo) and the Maccubé (sing. Maccudo). The Fulbe and the Dogon

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46 Trimingham claims that nyamde means to eat in Fulfulde (1970: 62). According to my informant Hamma, nyamakalaw comes from the Fulfulde words nyama, to eat, and kala, to talk. In Bambara it is called njeeli.
47 Noble freemen are called horon in Bambara.
48 Rimbe is a Toucouleur term according to N’Diaye (1995: 14). Bâ and Dieterlen claim that Rimbe derives from rimde; to be born (1961: 10).
are exhaustive categories but share the idea of a social hierarchy. They dispute who the nobles, the Rimbe, are, and I will show in chapter 6 how the earlier dichotomy Fulbe-Riimaybe (cf. Riesman 1977, 1992) is replaced by the dichotomy Fulbe-Dogon in Madougou today. While the Dogon think about themselves as nobles, the Fulbe classify them as “Habbe”, blacks, and “slaves”. The discrepancy in status ascription is based on ideas of differences in modes of production, between the pastoralists and the agriculturalists, and the value each category attach to the different types of work; herding or cultivating, and the value of working or not. Before the colonial peace, the Fulbe Rimbe did not do manual work like cultivation, but depended on the slaves to cultivate for them (cf. Riesman 1977, 1992).

The “castes”; nyeeeybe

The occupational groups or nyeeeybe are classified according to their activities or occupations, which are gender specific. The different occupational groups represented in Madougou are the Laube (sing. Labbo): Fulbe griots and woodworkers; the Waylube (sing. Baylo): blacksmiths (the men) and potters (the women); the Walabube (sing. Gallabo): griots for the Dogon and leatherworkers; and the Hossobe (sing. Kossodjo): former leatherworkers now trading with beads, jewelry and plastic articles, the women are dying cloths with indigo. Both the Laube and the Walabube are griots or “gens de la parole” (Camara 1992). The Laube men make all domestic utensils of wood, like mortars (wowru),


50 Kaado (sing.), Habbe (pl.) is a Fulbe term for the Dogon used in a negative sense during colonial times (Gallais 1975: 104). Dupire states that the Haabe is the Fulbe term for all blacks not belonging to their own category (1981: 168); Habbe signifies “pagan” (Petit 1998: 123) and “fetishist” (Gallais 1962: 115, and in Madougou today it is used in this way to signify the Dogon and the “blacks” in a negative way in opposition to the Muslim, superior an “white” Fulbe.

51 According to Bâ and Dieterlen, ñeeeybe comes from ñeeñude: to be capable, clever, knowing how to draw (1961: 10).

52 According to de Bruijn, van Beek and van Dijk, the korsoojo is a Hummbeebe (Dogon) caste of traders (1997: 257).
pestles (ongal), wooden bowls (léé, sing. la’al) and milking vessels (gallmare), and the
women decorates them by burning on patterns. Dupire distinguishes between woodcarvers
who produce domestic objects only and those who produce works of art (1985: 85); only the
first category is present in Madougou. The Laube live in a separate compound in the wuro
and speak Fulfulde, but they do not work only for the Fulbe, but for all who need their
services. The blacksmiths, the Waylube (numu in Dogon) have a special status as powerful in
Dogon and Mande society because they transform iron, and they often practice circumcision
(Dieterlen 1973; McNaughton 1988). The Waylube men make tools and utensils like hoes
and knives of iron, and the women are potters and make water jars and cooking pots.
Between the Fulbe and the Waylube there is a joking relationship, as I will elaborate in
chapter 5. The leatherworkers and griots, the Walabube, make everything of skin and leather
like amulet containers, drums (tam-tam) and knife sheaths (hollgo labbe). The women make
boxes of straw (kokono), and are petty traders. The men function as griots for the Dogon,\textsuperscript{53}
and beat the drums at ceremonies. The former leatherworkers, the Hossoobe, now trade with
glass beads (from which they make ornaments and necklaces), jewelry and plastic articles:
“Before, it was the Hossoobe and the Riimaybe that made the fabrics (clothes). Today, all
make them”, a Kossodjo says. The Hossoobe buy the fabrics in the market place; the women
sew patterns on them and colour them with indigo, and resell them as pagne (clothes or
skirts) in the market. As we will see, all the nyeeybe may function as mediators in conflicts.

\textbf{The former slaves}

In Madougou, local people distinguish between two types of former slaves; the Maccubé
(sing. Maccudo), slaves that where captured or bought, and the Riimaybe (sing. Diimajjo),
slaves that were born into slavery. According to Dupire, the Maccubé were slaves of the first

\textsuperscript{53} According to Launay, the garanké are Mande bards and leatherworkes (1995: 155).
generation, captured in war and sold, while the Riimaybe could not be sold (1994: 273). In this way slavery was produced through warfare (Meillasoux 1971: 54). The Maccubé are ranked lower than the Riimaybe by the Fulbe because they were “captives or bought”. According to the Fulbe, the Riimaybe “work for the Fulbe; they cultivate”, and they make building bricks of banco and build houses. A point is that the slaves were either nobles or professionals before they were captured as slaves (Sommerfelt 1999: 7).

**Socio-economic relations**

The social complexity described above represents occupational specialities: between pastoralists and cultivators, and between the different categories of *nyeeybe* and the Riimaybe and Maccubé. There is a discrepancy between self-ascription and ascription by others, not in status but in rank between the different social categories, as I will explore further along the way. Some of the above relations are more important than others for the managing of the Fulbe identity: the relations with the Dogon, the Laube woodworkers and the former slaves, the Riimaybe and the Maccube. The socio-economic relations between the different categories are essential for the reproduction of differences (Humphrey and Hugh-Jones 1992: 3), and there are different arenas for inter-ethnic and inter-*nyeenyo* meetings and exchange relations like the *wuro* and the *hibbere*, the weekly market in Madougou, and joking relationships, which I will explore in this thesis. But first I will turn to Madougou as part of the wider world and the relations to the state.

**Relations to the Malian state**

Mali’s official name is “République du Mali”, named after the Empire of Mali in the 14th century. Despite the national slogan “Un peuple, un but, une foi”, 54 Mali, 55 with its about 12

54 “One people, one goal, one faith”.

25
The Republic of Mali is the second largest country among West African nations, with a surface of 1.24 million km² (Imperato 1989: 2). Mali borders on Algeria in the north, Niger on the east, Burkina Faso and the Ivory Coast on the south, Guinea on the south-west, and Senegal and Mauritania on the west.

Before the French colonization, knowledge about people from the region was mainly from explorers like Mungo Park (1996 [1816]) and René Caillié (1996 [1830]), who observed the social diversity, slavery and trade (Meillassoux 1971: 53). Later, the French administrators contributed to the descriptions of the peoples they ruled (cf. Delafosse 1972 [1912]; Tauxier 1937), and Amselle, among others, claims that the existence of the ethnic categories were not empirically observed and recorded, but created by the colonial administrators themselves (cf. Amselle 1998; Fay 1995).

Today’s Mali was invaded by the French between 1879 and 1900 (Fage 1969: 177), and Mali stayed as the French colony French Sudan until it reached independence in 1960, when Modibo Keita became the first president in a one-party regime (De Jorio 2003: 830). Keita was overthrown by Moussa Traoré and army officials in 1968, and Mali first became a democracy after a military coup in 1991 when Amadou Toumai Touré put an end to Traoré’s regime. Alpha Oumar Konaré won...
the first multiparty elections in 1992, and after elections in 2002 he stepped down for Amadou Toumai Touré, the present Malian president (ibid.).

**Administration and political power**

The administrative structure of Mali is a heritage of the French colonial administration. It is divided into administrative regions (*régions*) and 1 district (the capital Bamako), then circles (*cercles*) and finally *arrondissements*, replaced by the “commune” after the decentralisation process started in 1992 and the new law came in 1996 (cf. Hetland 2000). *Commune de Madougou* belongs to *Région de Mopti*, the fourth administrative region of Mali, and *Cercle de Koro*. The representative for the Malian state in Madougou, *Delégé du Gouvernement*, is called the Commandant after the old colonialist structure. The mayor in Madougou, Mamodou Goro, is a Dogon born in the village, and his secretary (*secrétaire générale mairie*), the civil servant Oliver Sangara, is also Dogon but not from the village. His office functions as the “city hall”. The Fulbe and the Dogon village chiefs have no formal political power, the chief is “in power” but does not “exercise power”; he is rather an adviser (Riesman 1977: 47). Still, the village chiefs are considered the most important men in the Fulbe and Dogon villages, and they have to be consulted before actions concerning the community are taken. The *dankire* is the Fulbe men’s house, it is a place of power and function as council for the *wuro* with the village chief (*amiiru*) and the oldest Fulbe men present; the *toguna* is the council for the Dogon. Here village matters are discussed, and conflicts settled. The general assembly or the village council of notable representatives

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62 It is a simple wooden construction; a roofed wooden shelter not as elaborated as the Dogon men’s house.
63 Each of the three Dogon quarters has its own *toguna*, a Dogon men’s house. The *toguna* is both a place of power and an example of typical Dogon architecture; it functions as a “live” and open air museum for tourists, and the decorated wooden piles are stolen to be sold at the black art market in Europe (cf. Huet 1988).
64 Each Dogon quarter has a chief, but the chief of the Domno (Goro) quarter is the most important because of the settlement story, the Goro “founded” Madougou.
65 Actually it consists of the village chiefs and some village counsellors, both Fulbe and Dogon.
composed from the three Dogon quarters and the Fulbe *wuro* gathers in cases that concern the whole community of Madougou, like the creation of the *burti*, the cattle roads. The relationship between the formal and informal or traditional power structure in the village - between the political power inherent in the Commandant’s office and the traditional power of the men’s houses (*dankiré, toguna*) with their respective village chiefs - is not always clear (cf. de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 348), but there is a continuum in power rather than a polarisation between the “formal solution” or “informal solutions” of conflicts between the Fulbe, the Dogon and others, mediated by the village chiefs. The village chief functions as an “intermediary person between the administration and the people” (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 145), like in cases that go to the court in Koro, the administrative center in the *cercle*.

In the first place, locals try to solve conflicts the “informal” way by bringing them to the village chief and the *dankiré* or *toguna*. If the conflict is not solved on this level, it is brought before the mayor or the Commandant. The Commandant represents jurisdiction and the Malian law and has the power to put people in prison. The Commandant, the mayor and the civil servant are the only state officials the Fulbe in Madougou have a relationship to, and that is mostly about taxes and penalties to be paid, which means economic constrains, or people going to prison. The administration’s main functions are to keep order, to solve conflicts and to collect taxes (Dreyer 2002: 129). According to the civil servant, they try to solve the problems peacefully in his office, but if they do not succeed, the case goes to the judge in Koro (i.e. the Palace of Justice). Hagberg (2001), who explores the co-existence between Fulbe agro-pastoralists and Karaboro cultivators in Burkina Faso, shows how the locals try to solve conflicts without involving the State, i.e. the Prefecture. He argues that people try to solve the “problems” as friends and neighbours, and this is in accordance with my observations from Madougou. Only cases not friendly solved “a l’amiable” at the village level go to Koro.
Taxes are paid to the civil servant or the village chiefs in January. There are taxes on persons from eighteen to forty years (but not women that have more than four children), on animals,66 guns, bicycles and motorbikes, and transportation vehicles, but not on houses and land. One has to pay for tickets to get permission to sell in the market on market days (except the Fulbe women selling milk), and there are licenses for cutting trees, carrying weapons, for fishing rights and hunting, and penalties for animals (cows, sheep, goats, camels67 and donkeys) found in the gesse. It is difficult to get people to pay, both according to the civil servant and Belko, the Fulbe village chief, who collect the taxes in the wuro.

The differences in schooling and illiteracy between the Fulbe and the Dogon are striking. While the Dogon children, both boys and girls, learn Dogon and French in elementary school, none of the Fulbe children of the wuro attend school, which is situated in the Iby quarter in the hibbere, and the risk is great that they will stay illiterate. The Fulbe boys go to the Koranic school at night, hold by a marabout68 (moddibbo) at the miiside in the wuro where they learn to read and recite the Koran in Arabic, a language they don’t understand. No Fulbe girls in the wuro go to school. Mamoudou Goro, the Dogon mayor, tells me that the school in Madougou dates from 1962. It was compulsory until 1992, but now schooling has become voluntary; one has stopped forcing the pupils to go to school. Ada Barry is one of the few adult Fulbe in the wuro who has gone to school in Diankabu and learned to speak French, and there is a general Fulbe resistance to schooling. It may be a strategy for keeping the labour force and a pastoral lifestyle, and as Eng (1999: 52) and Berge (2000: 166-168) show, because schooling among pastoral nomads often brings changes like sedentarisation and change of lifestyles; they stop being nomads and pastoralists. While the Fulbe in Madougou is semi-sedentary, they still prevent their children from going to school.

66 Tax to be paid on each cow is 250 CFA.
67 The camels in Madougou and the Sahel are really one-humped dromedaries (cf. Berge 2000: 45).
68 The marabouts (moddibaabe) travel around with the Koranic students (garibo), living from gifts and food given.
They need the children to work and as they say; what good does schooling bring? The Fulbe think they will still be poor if they send their children to school. But attitudes to schooling are changing with persons like Hamma, who value schooling, and he quarrels with his mother about it because he wants his sister to go to school and have an education and not stay “ignorant,” but the mother refuses. By refusing schooling, the Fulbe in Madougou do not have networks into the central administration, and only one Pullo from Madougou has gone to school and has become a civil servant in Bankass. In this way the state seems far away for them.\footnote{CARE, one of the NGO’s working in the area, is based in Koro. They visited Madougou hibbere one night with a theater piece about education and democracy, but there were no Fulbe present to watch.} All this indicates that the Fulbe in Madougou are being marginalized in relation to the state (cf. de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 497), or are not interested in politics (cf. Riesman 1977: 46). For the herding Fulbe, the state is seen as oppressive and far away (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995); they have “uneasy relations with the state” (Galaty and Johnson 1990: 4). According to Berge, the French had a “negative attitude” to pastoralism because they considered it “unproductive”, and declared all non-cultivable land “vacant” and as state property open to all (2000: 161-162).

**Struggling over natural resources**

Ecology and power relations play an important role in the definition of ethnic identity, and ethnicity and identity are often connected to the struggle over resources (cf. de Bruijn and van Dijk 1997; Hagberg 1998, 2001). The Fulbe, the Dogon and others share and struggle over rural space and resources in Madougou. Traditionally, the Fulbe and the Dogon explored different niches in a complementary interdependence, but this has changed, and today there is competition over resources (cf. Barth 1969a: 18-19). Access to resources is village and lineage based; it is as a residential member of a lineage one gets access to land and water (cf. Vedeld 2001: 119). But today people may also buy and sell land, which complicate the
matters, and leads to a sense of “privatization” of land. Because of lack of water, the population on the plain have to concentrate where water is found, like around the wells in Madougou. According to Gallais, the Dogon were attracted to the Fulbe pastoral wells, around which the Riimaybe cultivated the sandy fields, and this “cohabitation” in separate quarters for the Fulbe, the Riimaybe and the Dogon immigrants became the rule (1975: 119), and still exists today. This cohabitation was peaceful and beneficial for both the Fulbe and the Dogon, but it gave the Fulbe hegemony in the exchange relations with the Dogon because their cattle fertilized the fields (ibid.). This context gave rise to the njaatigi or host relation that related one Fulbe family to one Dogon family (ibid.). According to de Bruijn, van Beek and van Dijk, the power and exchange relations between the Fulbe and the Dogon in the Hayre have changed because of the droughts in the 1970’s and the 1980’s and the economic modernization, which affected the pastoralists and the cultivators in different ways. While the Fulbe lost their cattle in the droughts, the Dogon cultivating cash crops got new income possibilities together with tourism (1997: 253 ff.), and they invested in cattle they let the Fulbe herd. According to these scholars, the relation between the Fulbe and the Dogon changes from one of symbiosis and reciprocity to one of dependency and patronage for the Fulbe (ibid.: 256), and the traditional exchange relations between the Fulbe and the Dogon are disturbed as exemplified in changes in political hegemony and in the njaatigi relation (ibid.: 254). According to their interpretation, the Fulbe are becoming poor agro-pastoralists or herdsmen for the Dogon, and according to Bonte, the Fulbe are in “un cycle d’appauvrissement des éleveurs” (1999: 398). Burnham argues that it is the Fulbe who are taking the ecological risk today; before they could raid and take slaves who cultivated for them and faced the risk; an option which is no longer there after the colonial peace (1999: 273). Because of external changes, many Fulbe have fallen into poverty and loss of hegemony. But there are individual differences among the Fulbe, and in Madougou, some
Fulbe have been able to rebuild their herds and have become rather wealthy cattle owners (cf. Basset 1994), and the image of the poor and dependent Fulbe described above does not fit the whole Fulbe population in Madougou.

**Territorial disputes**

In principle, access to land and pasture is open for all, but today there are boundaries, and, as cases show, that there is “a sense of territoriality” (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 352). Land is not accessible and free for all, because there is an increasing pressure on grazing land from an increasing population. It is as a member of the lineage one gets access to territory (cf. Riesman 1977: 36), or one may even buy land today, but there are struggles over rights to land and water between the pastoralists and the cultivators. In the question of access to land and water, history, politics and power relations culminate and meet the ecology in what may be called “the distribution and control of pasture and water resources” (Galaty and Johnson 1990: 4). The struggle over resources is a result of different access to resources and different land use and needs between herders and cultivators. While the cultivating Dogon consider themselves as “masters of the land” (Bonte 1999: 392), for the Fulbe, the plain, *leydi* Seeno, is where they herd the cows, and their territorial frontiers are difficult to fix because flexibility and mobility are necessary for the pastoralists to survive in times of ecological calamity (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 334; Riesman 1984, 1990). Access to water is crucial, and management of water points is the reason for many conflicts between pastoralists and cultivators (cf. de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 335). While land in theory is open to all, wells are not; they belong to those who dug them, and the owners may refuse strangers water from their wells.

In the *Palais de Justice* in Koro I studied the official records of the conflicts between Fulbe and Dogon that had come to court, *La Justice*. Based on these records I identified two
types of problems between pastoralists and cultivators that end up in court. The first type is when the pasture in general and especially the cattle roads (burti), and the pasture which surrounds the wells and the village, the harima, are cultivated, and the Fulbe demand return of cultivated land for pasture. The second type is when cultivated land is required back by the Fulbe as “theirs” from Dogon or others who are cultivating it at present. The State legal official, Greffier en chef, Makan Fofana, tells me that the problem is that three generations or 30-60 years ago, the Fulbe gave the Dogon the land and the right to cultivate it, but there exist no papers on these transactions. Then there is conflict when the Fulbe claim back the land for cultivating or pasture. One case from Koro showed that the Fulbe tried to claim “back” land that was cultivated during three generations by the Tamboura, the former slaves; the only reason was, as the Fulbe said themselves, “the Tamboura are the slaves of the Fulbe”. The Fulbe lost the case. Another case from Karakindé two years ago was about a Dogon cultivating the land of the Fulbe, and the Fulbe wanted to chase the Dogon off the land. This case was taken to la Justice in Koro. But in general, the cases brought to court show that the Dogon and other cultivators cultivate land defined as pasture for the cattle, like the harima or rainy season pasture. One case is brought to court by Belko, the Fulbe village chief on behalf of both the Fulbe and the Dogon in Madougou against a Bellaa man who cultivates the land given to his grandfather by a Dogon from Arou in the middle of today’s harima in Madougou. The aim of the creation of the harima about twenty years ago was to avoid conflicts between pastoralists and cultivators, and the Bellaa is challenging this relatively peaceful co-existence by his behaviour. Even though Belko won this case in 1997, the Bellaa has not stopped cultivating this disputed field in the middle of the harima, and this provokes conflicts every year at harvest time when the Fulbe try to stop the Bellaa from

70 Three generations means the generation of the “grandfathers”. Collective memories do normally not go back more than three to five generations.

71 In fact, the construction of the harima converted individually owned land to common property land (cf. Vedeld 2001: 119).
harvesting. In this case the chief of the arrondissement of Madougou is on the pastoralists’ side against the Bellaa, and he has brought complaints to the judge in Koro, but the case was not concluded during my stay. Even if the Commandant and the administration try to solve conflicts in terms of friendship, it sometimes comes to violence on the individual level, but not on the level of the Fulbe and the Dogon as ethnic groups fighting each other.

Conflicts and conflict solving

Because of the increased pressure on natural resources, the sense of private ownership is growing among the Fulbe, and every individual tree, plot of land, or cow dung on a field is owned by someone. But who the owner is, may be disputed. One may not cut branches off a tree to use it as fodder or collect cow dung for fire without permission from the “owner”, and the Fulbe constantly struggle to chase the Dogon away from the fields and the trees they claim they own:

A Dogon is cutting branches of a tree on Bilali’s gesse to feed the sheep. ‘The Dogon begs for war’, Ada says. Bilai’s son Yero runs to chase the Dogon’s sheep off the field, but he is not successful and the sheep eat the branches. Another day Ada comes running to the wuro, saying a ‘Habbe’ has cut a tree very close to the wuro. She tried to stop him from taking the wood, but he left with it. Grandmother Salmata chases some Dogon children who are collecting cow dung (doode nagge) on her gesse, something which happens almost every day.

The peak of the harvest time in November-December is when the level of conflict between Fulbe and the Dogon is highest, and there are lots of disputes over crop damages:

In the end of October, Hamma tells me that some Dogon have found Fulbe cows on their gesse. The Pullo who owns the cows tries to integrate them in the herd, but then more Dogon men arrive, keeping the cows back. They are kept as evidence and security until the Pullo has paid for the damaged crop. Around the first of November the Fulbe from Kindé are coming to Madougou on the seasonal movement called eggude, and everyone is waiting for the cows to come. The fifth of November the cows are starting to go into the gesse around Madougou. Hamma says that now the Dogon are afraid; now the Dogon have to finish the harvest very fast!
Belko, the village chief, says that it is when the cows come to Madougou before the harvest is finished that the problems between the “Habbe” and the Fulbe start, and he has to work as a mediator to negotiate between the parts. In this way, conflicts or potential conflicts are most oftenly solved in friendship on the local level outside the official legal system, like when a Dogon woman comes to Belko to ask for three days delay to harvest the gawri before the cows go into the gesse. The same is observed in Serma in the Hayre by de Bruijn and van Dijk (1995). They claim that in cases where cattle have damaged crops, people try to negotiate with intermediaries inside the village instead of letting the conflict end up in the legal system. This hinders “a political dimension or a disruptive effect on the community of Serma” (ibid.: 349), and anyone who claims compensation “has to face negative sanctions by the rest of the community” (ibid.). Hagberg (2001) observes the same in Burkina Faso; that people try the informal solutions before going to court. In Madougou, my impression is that the conflicts that are solved by negotiation through the chief Belko are cheaper than those solved by the interference of the civil servant in Madougou, because then the cows may end up in “cow prison”, and one has to pay day’s fees. One case is when the civil servant comes to us one day while I am eating with some Fulbe men in the resto, saying he has got four cows (nay) and two calves (binay) in the cow prison; it is a Bellaa man who has found them in his gesse and brought them to cow prison; the civil servant is looking for the Pullo owner so he can pay at once. These are some typical examples of friendly conflict solving:

One day Hamma wakes me up at six so I can witness a Dogon coming to the dankiré with nay he has found in his gesse. Hamma says the Dogon is ‘a good person’ because it is cheaper to find a solution here than at civil servant’s office in the hibbere. But Saliou, the Pullo who owns the cows, must pay for the damage. He leaves for hibbere at once to pay the fee; it is cheaper to pay at once so the cows do not end up in prison. Another example is one day when we sit in the dankiré and hear a lot of noise coming from the gesse. A Dogon has

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72 Price for each cow, camel or donkey a day is 500 CFA; 250 CFA for sheep and goats.
chased some Fulbe nay off his field, and they have started to run. It is difficult to stop running cows, but in the end the Fulbe manage. The chief Belko and all the old Fulbe men are present when the Dogon arrives to the dankiré. At first there is a loud discussion because the Dogon wants to bring the case before the mayor. But after some discussion with Hamma he changes his mind. Belko and the old Fulbe men want to go to the gesse to see the damage done, but once in the field, the Dogon gives in, and makes apologies and it all ends in laughter. There is no damage done, and all are relieved. Back in the wuro one of the old men says that one should never run off like that without one’s herding stick (sawru) because one never knows what is going to happen. Hamma says he has never seen Breihma, his brother, without his sawru; it is like a part of him: ‘One never knows when someone will hit (fieté) you’, he says.

There have been cases of violence between the Fulbe and the Dogon during harvest time, but they are not frequent. The Dogon teacher in Madougou tells me about a case. He does not speak with Belko after an incident in 1995 when Belko’s cows went into his gesse, and Belko hit a Dogon boy who tried to stop the cows. Belko had to pay for the damage, but since then they have not spoken together. Conflicts are usually solved on an individual basis or on the village level as quickly as possible; directly on the field where the damage is done, or at the dankiré. The damage done by the animals is always the responsibility of the owner of the animals and not the cultivator or the herder (cf. Basset 1994; Riesman 1977: 15), and there are negotiations about the price to pay for the damage. One typical case is the civil servant who is trying to solve a dispute between a Pullo and a Dogon from Karakindé. The Dogon whose gesse is destroyed wants 1000 CFA for each cow from the Pullo, but after some negotiations he goes down to 500 CFA for each of the twenty-two cows. Everybody is happy and they all laugh; the ambiance is good, the Dogon village chief Goro is also present. The day before there was another Dogon case they didn’t solve. The Dogon claimed 2500 CFA for each of the eleven cows he had found in his gesse, but the Fulbe owner of the cows did not accept it, so the civil servant had to ask them leave and come back later. In the meantime, he puts the cows in the cow prison.

73 As Basset shows from the Ivory Coast, unpaid crop damage is reason to conflicts between herders and cultivators (1994: 164-165). The conditions for herding are harder in the Ivory Coast than in Mali (ibid.: 158).
While competition over resources creates conflicts, the impression is that people try to avoid them, and friendship across ethnic borders is important as a conflict solving mechanism. Different access to and needs for land and water varies with the seasons, and because of it there is a tentative antagonism between the pastoralists and cultivators in Madougou. So why are there not more open or violent conflicts? Is it because the Fulbe have lost their power to negotiate? Bonte (1999) has studied the access to pasture and water on the Seeno-Gondo plain. After the Dogon expansion from the Hayre to the plain they risked becoming the slaves of the Fulbe, as Riimaybe. Today, the relations between the Fulbe and the Dogon are inverted, according to Bonte (1999: 385). The history of the Dogon expansion on the plain is complex, and there is an “l’occultation historique” of the movements on the plain (ibid.: 390). While the co-existence between the Fulbe and the Dogon was based on the classic complementary scheme of specialised production activities between pastoralists and agriculturalists and exchange of grain for milk, the colonialization and the independence of Mali disturbed this complementary relation, because it made pasture the private property of the state and thereby opened up for a greater Dogon expansion on the plain. This has led to what Bonte calls “un cycle d’appauvrissement des eleveurs” (ibid.: 398). The Fulbe have lost autonomy, and their strategies for survival are either to migrate to the south, or to become settled herdsmen for the Dogon, even if the situation varies according to place (ibid.). According to this interpretation, from being on top of the social hierarchy in the past the Fulbe have lost political power and have become powerless in their relations with the Dogon. To find out if this has happened in Madougou, I will explore the historical relations between the different social categories, and how they use myths of origin and settlement stories to construct collective identities and legitimate their position in the social hierarchy.

74 It involves also the Tellem and the Mossi, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore these relations; see Petit (1998) for a study of migration movements on the plain.
75 “An historical occultation”.
76 “A cycle of impoverishment of the herdsmen”.

37
Chapter 2: The Contextualizing of Historical Relationships

The past may be considered as a “collective reference” for the different social categories in Madougou, but it has different significance for the different interpreters (Vedeld 2001: 138). Ohnuki-Tierney defines history as “an interpretation or construction that attempts to represent the past on the basis of information from the past” (1990: 6), and in this chapter I will establish the historical context of the relationships between the Fulbe and the Dogon, the nyeeybe and the former slaves, and how they interpret the past in the present (cf. de Bruijn and van Dijk 1997: 25). How do the Fulbe, the Dogon, the nyeeybe and former slaves use the construction of historical events in the everyday construction of the self and other? (cf. Ohnuki-Tierney 1990: 5) Under what circumstances have the Fulbe and the Dogon relationships developed, and how do the “… present day constructions of the past” (Eriksen 1993: 73, original emphasize) affect their relationship today? The social hierarchy of nobles, nyeeybe and former slaves produced in the past continues to exist, and unites the different social categories through time and place. As Dupire notes; “Hierarchical ranking in Fula and in Tuculor, Wolof and Malinké societies is very similar” (1985: 92). But what distinguishes and what unites the Fulbe and the Dogon through history, and how did they come into existence as different categories? While language and history are symbolic markers of identity and difference, symbols may send conflicting messages about sameness and difference (Launay 1995: 153, 166), and this is true also for myths of origin and settlement stories.
The Fulbe and the Mande

The Fulbe\textsuperscript{77} and the Mande\textsuperscript{78} have historically been studied as belonging to different “cultural and ethnic complexes”, namely the Fulbe\textsuperscript{79} and the Mande\textsuperscript{80} world (de Bruijn and van Dijk \textsuperscript{1997: 13}). While the Fulbe have been studied as an ethnic category without known original land or place of origin, the Mande have their origin in Mande\textsuperscript{81} land under the Mali Empire with its peak in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century. The Mande was the center of the Keita Empire founded by Sundiata Keita\textsuperscript{82} in the 13\textsuperscript{th} century (Dieterlen 1957: 124). While Fulbe is the name of an ethnic category spread all over West Africa, Mande refers to a land of origin of many different ethnic categories, and that makes the Fulbe and the Mande of different orders, according to de Bruijn and van Dijk (1997: 14). While Mande origin is important for the maintenance of Dogon identity and continuity with the past, the Fulbe point of reference in history is the ruling period of Sékou Ahmadou Barry and the Maasina Empire in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century (cf. Bâ and Daget 1962). According to Dieterlen, the Dogon descend from one of the original Keita clans (1957: 125), and Bouju also shows that the Dogon claim origin in Mande land: “Nous sommes sortis du Mande”,\textsuperscript{83} the Dogon say (1995: 338). Because the Fulbe moved with their cattle, they do not seem to have a land of origin, and they have been studied as an intermediate race between the “black” and the “white” race\textsuperscript{84} (Amselle 1985, 1997).

\textsuperscript{77} The Fulbe ethnonym is ambiguous; it is a Mandingo category (Amselle 1998: 45).
\textsuperscript{78} Mande is called mandingue in French. There is a confusing variation in the use of the terminology for the Mande peoples and languages in the regional literature; see Amselle (1998: 56) and Vydrine (2004) for a summary.
\textsuperscript{79} Fulbe researchers are grouped in the GREFUL (Group d’études comparatives des sociétés peuls).
\textsuperscript{80} Mande researchers are gathered as the MANSA (Association des études mandé/Mande Studies Association).
\textsuperscript{81} According to de Bruijn and van Dijk (1997: 13), this land (“pays mandingue”) is not clearly defined. In a limited definition, it may simply mean the territory of the ancient Mande Empire. De Bruijn and van Dijk choose a wider definition of Mande land as the region where populations which claim Mande origin are in cultural and political dominance, something which opens for indigenous debates (1997: 13). See also Amselle for a regional definition of Mande land (1998: 56).
\textsuperscript{82} About the history of Sundiata, see N. T. Niane: “Sundiata. An Epic of Old Mali” (1979).
\textsuperscript{83} “We have left the Mande”.
\textsuperscript{84} There have been many speculations about the origin of the Fulbe “race”: if they originated from Egypt, India or if they were Jewish (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1997: 14; Tauxier 1937).
Today, scholars count Fouta Toro in Senegal as the Fulbe place of origin (Bâ 1992: 20; Gallais 1962: 118). Fay describes one known myth of the Fulbe origin as their descendancy from the marriage alliance between an “Arab” coming from Mecca to Islamize the Fulbe in Fouta Toro and a Malinké woman (1997: 173). According to the myth, their four children are the founders of the four Fulbe clans (named Diallo, Diakié, Sidibé and Sangaré). It was on their way back to Mecca that the Fulbe migrated to the Mande land, about the 13th century, and penetrated further to the Maasina in the Central Mali at the end of the 14th century (ibid.: 173 ff.). Dieterlen (1957) explores the Mande creation myth and genealogies. According to the myth there are 44 or 48 peoples who descend from the Mande, among them the four Fulbe lineages Diallo, Diakité, Sangaré and Sidibé, who are said to be among sixteen lineages of “noble captives […] voluntarily allied to Keita […] who have taken the war équipement” and who are considered to be voluntarily allied to Keita; with whom the Keita sometimes intermarry and with whom the Fulbe assert their original connexion (ibid.: 125). These 44 to 48 lineages with Mande origin are scattered all over West Africa, but they change their clan names (patronymys) and use the name of one of the traditional Mande lineages when they come to the Upper Niger area (ibid.). Even if the Mande creation myth has no ethnic or historical reality, it expresses the widespread tradition of unity among peoples (ibid.: 137), and it “provides the justification for certain fixed relations among them” (Dieterlen 1957: 136).

According to Bâ and Dieterlen, the noble Fulbe consists of four clans - the Dyal, the Ba, the So and the Bari (1961: 10) - and this “quartenaire” system is a heritage from the Mande and the domination of the Mali Empire after the conquest by the Sundiata (ibid.). For integration reasons, each of the four Fulbe clans adopted a Mande name, respectively Dyallo, Dyakité, Sidibé and Sangaré, where Bari took Sangaré, and there where marriages between the Bambara men and the Fulbe women. Later, the names were modified according to region, migration, history and political events: Dyal (Dial) became Dyallo (Diallo), Ba became
Diakité, So became Sidibé and Bari became Sangaré, each of the four couples all being “the same”; they are variants according to region (Dieterlen 1955: 41). Each clan also has its particular attribute, and the marabouts (moddibaabe) are recruited from the Bari clan (Bâ and Dieterlen 1961: 11; Dieterlen 1965: 315). According to Delafosse, the Bari\textsuperscript{85} and the Sangaré fought together against the enemy Dialloubé (Diallo) from the Maasina\textsuperscript{86} (1972b [1912]: 231).

The Bari Dynasty and the increasing role of Islam

Sékou Ahmadou of the Bari clan conquered the Maasina from the Diallo clan in 1810, and the 19\textsuperscript{th} century Maasina\textsuperscript{87} Empire and the Diina theocratic state established by Sékou Ahmadou Bari (1818-1862) is the culmination of the Fulbe domination and hegemony in the region\textsuperscript{88} (Bâ and Daget 1962; Delafosse 1972b [1912]; Sanankoua 1990.) One of the aims of the theocratic state of the marabout Sékou Ahmadou was to fight for a more rigid religious practice of Islam. Islam, as belonging to the minority elite until the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, had been tolerant to “ancestor worshipping practices” in the region, and the holy war, jihad, carried out by Sékou Ahmadou inverted the power relations, lifestyles and the religious thinking of the different categories of people in the region: fishermen, cultivators, herders and traders; nomads and sedentary; animist and Muslim; Fulbe, Bozo, Somono, Bambara\textsuperscript{89} and Dogon (Mayor 1997: 34). The razzias carried out against the opponent population led to imprisonment and slavery, and the slaves were used as cultivators for the ruling Fulbe (ibid.: 34 ff.). The Bari reigned in the capital Hamdallay,\textsuperscript{90} which is situated in the inner Delta south

\textsuperscript{85} Delafosse claims that the Bari and the Sangaré correspond to the Toucouleur clan Si and the Mande clan Sissé (1972b [1912]: 231).
\textsuperscript{86} Delafosse claims that the Bari and the Sangaré correspond to the Toucouleur clan Si and the Mande clan Sissé (1972b [1912]: 231).
\textsuperscript{87} The Diallo migrated from Fouta Toro to Maasina A.D. 1400 (Trimingham 1970: 150).
\textsuperscript{88} Maasina from mané siya: to show up and leave (“se montrer et partir”) (Fay 1997: 175).
\textsuperscript{89} Other Fulbe Muslim states were Sokoto of Ousmane Dan Fodio, Adaama, Bornu and Kaarta (cf. Fage 1969).
\textsuperscript{90} The Bambara and their capital Ségou was a strong rebelling opponent to Islam and the Diina, and a permanent source of hostility to the Muslim Fulbe (Mayor 1997: 34 ff.).
of Mopti, between 1820-21\textsuperscript{91} and 1862, and this was the essentional period of Islamization\textsuperscript{92} of the Dogon in the region (Mayor 1997: 37 ff.). The Toucolour\textsuperscript{93} El Hadj Oumar from Fouta Toro invaded Hamdallay in 1862 and put an end to Diina. He died in 1864 in the grottos of Degimberé in the Bandiagara escarpment. His nephew Tidjani\textsuperscript{94} followed him but did never succeed in establishing political or military control, and by 1893 the French arrived and peace between the Fulbe groups was re-established (Vedeld 2001: 126).

The social and political hierarchy under the Diina placed the Rimbe political elite on the top; under them served the dependent herders, and the slaves were placed at the bottom. Thereby the state could rely on services of a large body of peoples as slaves (Trimingham 1970: 79). This social hierarchy unites the Fulbe and the Mande world and makes them “inseparable” according to de Bruijn and van Dijk (1997: 15). The politics of the the Islamic Fulbe of the inner Delta of the Niger led to sedentarisation of the Fulbe herdsmen (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1997: 14), and the pastoralist Fulbe who had been living in the region for centuries were integrated into this political hierarchy (de Bruijn 1997: 627). They provided the economic base, and the project was to regulate the relations between the sedentary cultivators and nomad fishermen of Mande origin and the Fulbe herdsmen, and thereby secure the economy of the state (Trimingham 1970: 18). It was a symbiotic relationship based on the division of labour between cultivating and herding, and of slavery. Power meant control over people (slaves), Islam and cattle, and to have power over people, the Fulbe raided the Dogon and used them as slaves to cultivate for them. With the abolition of slavery in 1908 (Vedeld 2001: 126), these differences in occupation and lifestyle between free and non-free gradually vanished, but the social hierarchy was maintained by endogamy rules by the nobles, and the

\textsuperscript{91} According to Delafosse, the Bari Dynasty reigned 1810-1862 (1972b [1912]: 231 ff.).

\textsuperscript{92} Trimingham (1970) claims that the nomadic Fulbe were pagans and that they have lesser influence on the spread of Islam in the region than normally believed.

\textsuperscript{93} About the distinction Fulbe-Toucolour, see Bâ (1992: 23-25). The Toucolour from Fouta Toro call themselves halpoular; “those who speak poular”; Pulaar is a version of Fulfulde (ibid.: 24).

\textsuperscript{94} About the Muslim Tidjani brotherhood, see Bâ (1992: 25).
nobles still consider cultivation degrading “slave” work today (de Bruijn 1997: 627). The noble Fulbe work is herding cattle (ibid.). The Barry clan in Madougou claim descent from the great Sékou (Sheikou) Ahmadou Barry and the religious elite in Maasina, and the mythical relationship to Sékou Ahmadou Barry is very important for their identity today as noble Fulbe and Muslims. The oral tradition and songs sung by the griots trace the roots to Sékou Ahmadou and the glorious days of the Fulbe, and confirm the Fulbe noble identity as supreme and powerful in a rather stressful and poor everyday life.

**Hostility, colonial peace and waves of migration on the Seeno-Gondo plain**

Before colonialism the Fulbe carried out *jihad* and raiding on the plain because of the contradiction between the Dogon indigenous religious traditions and the Fulbe Muslims, and for centuries the Dogon served as a slave reservoir for the Fulbe. Petit (1998) has studied the Dogon migrations on the Seeno-Gondo plain. In the 15th and 16th century, the Dogon descended to the plain in the Madougou region, called “ourokorohi” or “the old villages of Kor” after the old Kor95 clan inhabiting the region (Gallais 1975: 118). They were captured by the Fulbe Bari and became their slaves, and, between the 18th and the 19th century, the Dogon left because of the Fulbe and the “chronic state of war”: the Fulbe destroying the millet fields of the Dogon (Petit 1998: 121). The Bari were divided between the Gondo-dô (to the east) and the Gondo-ley (between Madougou and Diankabou), and while the first were allied with the Mossi from Yatenga,96 the second were allied with the Fulbe from Maasina (Gallais 1975: 118). The *ardo* (the military chief) of the Gondo-dô won over the Gondo-ley and regrouped all the Bari at Diankabou and its surroundings and in this way the sandy plain

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95 The Kodio from Iby belongs to the Kor clan (Gallais 1975: 119).
96 The Mossi from Yatenga tried to colonise the Seeno-Gondo plain in the 19th century to let their trade caravans through Douenza toward Timbuktu, but the Bari clan from the Inner Niger Delta prevented this according to Gallais (1975: 98).
was depopulated\textsuperscript{97} (ibid.). The French arrival in 1893 in the Niger Bend meant “peace” and the end of slavery, which also led to social changes for the Fulbe because they no longer possessed slaves to cultivate their fields. The Dogon were free to settle on the Seeno-Gondo plain again, and they settled in Madougou about 1940 according to Gallais (1975: 118). But the descent of the Dogon to the plain was not without difficulties or dangers; some of them were taken by the Fulbe in razzias, and became their Maccubé or Riimaybe, slaves (Petit 1998: 120). The Dogon migration lead to pressure on the land, and there was less land left for Fulbe pastoralists herding their cattle on the plain. For the Fulbe, the Seeno-Gondo plain belongs to the Diina, the Islamic Fulbe state of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, and the Dogon expansion on the plain led to conflicts over resources along ethnic lines between the cultivators and the pastoralists (Gallais 1975: 125).

**Myths of origin and local settlement narratives**

The indigenous interpretations of ethnogenesis and group history in Madougou varies between the Fulbe, the Dogon and the different nyeeybe\textsuperscript{98} (cf. de Bruijn and van Dijk 1977: 252), and the different myths of origin are used to justify ideas of social stratification and ideas of sameness and difference. It seemed that every time I asked about who founded Madougou or who were the first to settle in Madougou I got different answers depending on whom I was asking.\textsuperscript{99} Still, when it comes to the cultural continuity with the past, not just anything goes (Eriksen 1993: 93), and there has to be consensus within the different social categories about some of the elements in the stories told. In Madougou today there is an ongoing struggle for hegemony and access to natural resources, and the Fulbe and the Dogon dispute the settlement story of Madougou, and both categories claim they were the first to

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\textsuperscript{97} Se the story about Allary Boucary told by the Labbo below under Barry settlement stories.

\textsuperscript{98} I did not record stories of origin from the former slaves, the Riimaybe or the Maccubé.

\textsuperscript{99} Harris has the same experience from Bolivia, and she discovered that when she was writing down the different stories, she tried to make them into a single story (1995).
settle. The different oral traditions and local narratives dispute the foundation of Madougou, and show how history is constructed and interpreted differently among the Fulbe, the Dogon and the nyeebe categories. There are aspects of power in these interpretations, and it is important to claim the status as founders of the village because it gives the right to control land and water (cf. Vedeld 2001). The right to land and water in Madougou is rooted in the principle of “coutumier”, custom. Those who explored the land by custom, i.e. settled first or found water and built a well on the land, have the right to it, after the principle of the “authority of firstcomers over latecomers” (Kopytoff 1987: 52). But in the context on the Seeno plain it is not evident who the first to settle on a place was because of the complex pattern of movements and migrations, as the settlement stories below illustrate. This opens up for different interpretations of “coutumier” of land rights as expressed in the conflicts over natural recourses.

Barry myths of origin and settlement stories

The Fulbe in general were very reluctant to tell me about their history, and they expressed their myths of origin very briefly. Belko Barry, the chief (amiiru) of the Fulbe in Madougou, says that the Barry clan came from Gimbala in the Sahel. According to Belko, the plain, leydi Seeno-Gondo, is for the Fulbe, and they have been here from before the “war”, the colonisation. He says that the “Habbe” (Dogon) came later than the Fulbe on the plain and the earliest wuro Fulbe in Madougou lay where the Dogon pharmacist’s compound in the Arou quarter now lies, but it burned down. It was Belko’s grandfather who constructed the misiide in the wuro. According to Belko, the Fulbe origin is Arab-Malinké. The father of the Fulbe (baaba Fulbe) is Arab; the mother (innam Fulbe) is Malinké (i.e. of Mande

100 The chief Belko Barry, sixty-one years old, is illiterate and only speaks a little Dogon; he needs an interpreter in meetings with the Dogon.
101 De Bruijn and van Dijk defines Gimballa as the area that stretches from the lake system in the north of cercle de Douentza to the northern side of the Bandiagara plateau (1995: 45).
102 This means that the Fulbe have been settled for at least three generations in Madougou.
origin). Because the father is Arab, the Fulbe are “white”, like the *toubabou*, Belko says. This Arab-Malinké relation gave the origin of the four Fulbe “families” or clans according to Belko; the Diallo (live toward Boni and Douentza), the Diakité (live toward Sikasso and Segou), the Sankaré or Barry (live toward Bankass) and the Sidibé (live toward Mopti). Diall-Diallo are “the true Fulbe; they are the first of all the Fulbe”, Belko says. But there are other versions of the Barry origin, like this one also told by Belko:

One Pullo from Gimbala came to Douma to herd. A hunter finds a woman besides the water. The hunter does *gris-gris* (magic) to get the woman with him from the water. The hunter gives her to the Pullo from Gimbala. The father from Gimbala, the mother came out of the water, that is the Fulbe on the Gondo, the Barry.

N’Diaye has recorded another version of the Fulbe origin: a Diawambé called Yaouba (a Fulbe “caste” person) married a Tuareg woman and had four children who became the Fulbe ancestors with the following patronyms: Diallo, Diakité or Bah, Saïbé (Sidibé) or Sow and finally Sangaré or Barry (1995: 49). In my view, all these versions of the Barry myth of origin tell us that the origin of the Barry is a historical construction, and there is not one “true” racial origin of the Fulbe. This illustrates the point of Amselle (1985: 37) that an ethnic group or a clan, in this case the Fulbe Barry, is historically constructed out of a heterogenous category, and this makes it possible to interpret the origin of the Barry in different ways, like in the meeting with the “others”. In this way the myths of origin function as “multivocal symbols” (Turner 1967), open for negotiation and collective “forgetting”, and qualify to the construction of an ethnic identity according to Amselle; a process where “the conditions of the social and political production are forgotten”. (1998: 57) The ethnonym (Fulbe) or the patronym (Barry) function as symbols or banners which define the category (Amselle 1985:

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103 *Toubabou* is the local term for all white people.
104 This version corresponds with the version of the Fulbe myth as explained by Fay (1997) above. According to Koumen, the Fulbe initiation text, the Diallo leave first in the transhumance movement, second the Diakité, then Sidibé and Sangaré last, and therefore the Diallo are the “first” of all the Fulbe (Dieterlen 1965: 316).
105 The Tuareg are considered “white” by the Fulbe.
37), and in this way the symbol creates the category. Amselle argues that the function of a myth of origin is “to unite groups of people with the same name around a common ancestor…” (1998: 97). The mythical ancestor of the Barry in Madougou is Sékou Ahmadou.

The Barry clan migrated from Maasina and settled on the plain, and all the Fulbe were together in Kindé (suudu baaba) before. Because of the war between the Fulbe and the Mossi from Yatenga, the Fulbe dispersed and came to Madougou. The wuro Fulbe in Madougou is split in two neighbourhoods or quarters, deelé (sing. deende), Kindé and Banikani, which correspond to sub-branches of the Barry lineage; one sub-branch came directly from Kindé, and another sub-branch from Kindé to Banikani and finally to Madougou. The Kindé sub-branch is in possession of the village chief (Belko) because it is the oldest lineage; it is “big brother” (mawniraado) to Banikani, and Belko is therefore the chief of all the Barry in Madougou, after the principle of the big brothers authority over the little brother. The settlement order goes like this, according to Belko: First, Boubou left Kindé and came here. It is hundred (temdere) years ago, and there were no “Habbe” here then. Boubou is the ancestor and founding father of the Fulbe in wuro Kindé in Madougou; second is Demba, third Hammadoun, and fourth Belko, the present village chief (himself). Gadda is the founding father of the wuro Banikani, second Moussa, third Moudi, and fourth Ousmane Hamadja. Belko is not specific about the relations between Kindé and Banikani; he only says that it is the same family:

Banikani and Kindé have different ‘grandfathers’, but the same ‘grandmother’. Banikani is the ‘little brother’ of Kindé; therefore it is Kindé that has the village chief (himself). But Banikani came here before Kindé; the little brother was here first. And the Fulbe came here before the Dogon. Before, it was no water in Madougou. It was the Fulbe who found water here. But the Fulbe travelled on, and then the Dogon from Domno and later from Arou came and settled. The Dogon from Iby had not come yet. So when the Fulbe came back, the Dogon were here.
According to Belko, the Dogon settled in Madougou while the Fulbe where moving with the cows. But it was the Fulbe who found water first, he says. According to this story, Kindé and Banikani are branches the same family (lineage); they are classificatory “brothers” (i.e. patrilateral parallel cousins) whose fathers may have been brothers according to the practice of levirate. The “little brother” left the “big brother” and installed himself in Madougou; the “big brother” came later. It means that Banikani and Kindé in theory consist of kinship groups traced through the patrilineage to two known ancestors, Boubou and Gadda, and the deelé thereby consist of sub-branches of the patriclan. The Fulbe settlement story is told like this by the Labbo griot, Hamidou Gadjaga, from Naye: 

The Fulbe in Madougou and Naye come from Kindé; it is their suudu baaba. Before the white people came, there was a Pullo from Bana, Allary Boucary, who killed many Fulbe in Kindé. They who survived became afraid and fled to Naye, Banikani and Bindama. Boucary saw that the people left Kindé all the way to Bindama. He cut the throat of 300 small children (sukabe) at Bindama, who were in the bush for circumcision. Boucary saw a young one running. He followed him all the way to Bindama and killed him at the foot of Bindama. The others in Bindama flew towards Vindo (Douentza), others to Tankoulla, Tangalé and Tangsamba, all on Gondo. They got many children; they came to settle in Diankabu, Gondougorou, Sourindé and Sengomara. Here ends the Gondo; Bombo is not Gondo, Madougou is Gondo. That is what the Pullo of the Gondo knows, came from Djimbala and Dari. Hommbeebe, the people of Domno, the fields are for them. The Hommbeebe left (eggi), the Fulbe came and installed themselves. The Fulbe from Kindé left for Banikani, later for Madougou. First the Fulbe installed them where the Walabube quarter is today, later at Sory’s place (the rich pharmacist in Bamako), and finally where the wuro are today. Leggadourou was the name of the first Madougou to De and Kodjo. Later the De and Kodjo moved closer to the Fulbe. The Fulbe didn’t like it, so they moved again. The people from Domno were already here. They were the first.

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106 Naye, a village about 8 km from Madougou, is where the former slaves, the Riimaybe, live. There are three quarters in Naye; the hibbere Dogon, the wuro Fulbe and the wuro Riimaybe. There is also a Laube compound in the wuro Fulbe in Naye.

107 Gimbala.

108 The Houmbébé is the Fulbe name for the Dogon on the Gondo plain according to Gallais (1975: 98). The Hommbeebe (sing. Kummbeejo) are Dogon on the plain who converted to Islam and were not taken as slaves (de Bruijn, van Beek and van Dijk 1997: 245).

109 This version is supported by the moddibbo Sisé Gindo in Kindé, who tells me that all the Fulbe in Madougou, Naye, Bindama, Sengomara and Sorindé originate from Kindé: “The Fulbe were here first, but the Dogon were here before that”, he says. What looks like a paradox at first glance is in reality the result of the complex pattern of migration and movement on the plain.
While the Fulbe claim they were the first on the plain and the first to find water in Madougou, the Labbo version of the story claim that the Dogon (Domno) were the first and therefore “the fields are for the Domno”, they are the “masters of the land” (Bonte 1999: 392). While there is disagreement about who were the first to settle in Madougou, the Fulbe or the Dogon, there is agreement about the Domno being the first Dogon clan to settle; the De and the Kodjo came later. But to understand why the Fulbe settled on the plain in the beginning, we have to explore the Dogon versions of the settlement history. How do the Dogon interpret the settlement history of Madougou?

**Dogon settlement narratives**

In a wedding in the Arou quarter, some Dogon from the De clan tell me that it was the Domno who first came to Madougou. But they did not stay; they went on, longer than Koro. Afterwards the De from Arou came and settled in Madougou. But the Domno came back, and because it was the Domno who were here first, the village chief belongs to them; it was they who had the land first. This follows the principle of the “rights of first comer” (Vedeld 2001: 130). Still, there are internal Dogon disputes following the historical antagonism between the different clans’ descent from the escarpment, and I feel a certain antagonism between the De and the Domno. One day in the Iby quarter in *hibbere*, Idrissa, a Kodjo Dogon, tells me that the Fulbe came to Madougou first and they made a well: “The Dogon from Arou came later, made another well, but they did not dare to stay because of the Fulbe, so they went back; they fled. The Dogon came for cultivation, and the Fulbe never quarrelled with them”, he says. As these statements indicate, there are different Dogon opinions about who came to Madougou first, the Fulbe or the Dogon, and both categories are in a way “strangers”; immigrants who came from somewhere else, the Fulbe from Maasina and the Dogon from the escarpment.

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110 Dogon myths of origin are complex and not the scope of this thesis; see Griaule (1966), Griaule and Dieterlen (1954) and Dieterlen (1957).
There are Dogon quarrels at the level of clans rather than between the Dogon and the Fulbe, and there is friendship across ethnic borders between Fulbe and Dogon clans as in the story told below by the mayor in Madougou. The movements and migrations on the plain are complex, and the mayor Mamoudou Goro from Domno gives me this elaborated version of the settlement history of Madougou:

The people of Domno were the first. Their parents came from Dinangourou.\textsuperscript{111} The first was coutumière (customary right), since ancient times. The owners of the land by customary right are: Domno: Goro and Aya; Fomboro: Ongoiba. Before the 16th century we were here. The Fulbe came from the other side of the mountain, from Maasina. They brought the Sonrai Sony Alibere\textsuperscript{112} here in 1492. He was almost a Nazi against the Fulbe. He would exterminate the Fulbe race.\textsuperscript{113} The Fulbe fled. Agona Aya brought the Fulbe here, to hide them. The Fulbe on the Gondo were here before the Fulbe Agona brought. Agona was their host (njaatigi).\textsuperscript{114} Agona came to Gondo. The ancient Madougou from the 15th century lay where the school is today. Why did the Dogon parents leave? Askia Muhammed Touré replaced Sony Alibere. There was a war with the Mossi from Yatenga. The Yatenga did pass the Dogon to come to the Sonrai; the Dogon left east to leave space and have peace. The Fulbe stayed here with their slaves.

The war between the Mossi and the Sonrai made the Dogon to leave to the east, to escape.

The Fulbe from Maasina fled from the Sonrai, and were hidden by Agona on the plain because he was their host, njaatigi. According to Amselle, this “Fulani extermination” by the Sonrai (1998: 48) described above led the Fulbe Sangaré from Maasina to leave, and some came to the plain to hide, as the story above tells us. The mayor continues:

\textsuperscript{111} According to Gallais, Dinangourou was the first Dogon “colonial” settlement on the plain far from the escarpment (1975: 97).

\textsuperscript{112} Sonny Ali, the Sonrai souvereign (1465-1492) struggled against the Fulbe from Maasina (cf. Amselle 1998: 47). Amselle claims that the hostility between the Sonrai and the Fulani has less to do with ethnicity than with religion, the Fulani being Muslim (1998: 47), and Sonni Ali’s “… hostility toward the clerical class extended to the whole group” (Amselle 1998: 48).

\textsuperscript{113} From the Tarik-El-Fettach: “There were no enemies he [Sonni Ali] hated as violently as he hated the Fulani and [he] could not stand to look at a Fulani without killing him, no matter who he was, educated or ignorant, man or woman. He accepted no educated Fulani in either the Political administration or the magistracy. He decimated the Sangaré tribe, allowing the survival of only as many as could stand under a single tree”. Tarik-El-Fettach cited in Amselle (1998: 47; my emphasize). The Tarik-El-Fettach and the Tarik-Es-Sudan are Arabic historical medieval sources about the empires of the Ghana, Mali and Sonrai written in Timbuktu and discovered in the early colonial period (Amselle 1998: 171).

\textsuperscript{114} See chapter 6 about the host (njaatigi) relation.
The first Fulbe village on the Gondo is Kobadji\textsuperscript{115} (in the commune of Diankabu) where Agona installed them. The Fulbe did make razzias against the Dogon in the escarpment. The Dogon ‘parents’ left to the east to escape the Sonrai and the Mossi. The Goro stayed behind at Diankabu. The Fulbe installed themselves there, until the arrival of the French. The mountainers were afraid to descend to the plain; they cultivated no more than 2 km from the escarpment. With the colonial peace after 1900 the mountainers descended. In Madougou; the people from Arou; the De, they came here. After that there were people from Iby. A young man asked if the others would follow him, but because he knew one Pullo, the others were afraid and refused. His name is Polaire Kodjo, the first who asked to come here. He is a friend of the Fulbe; he will ‘sell his children to the Fulbe’.\textsuperscript{116} He leaves the signs in direction to Madougou. The others followed the traces. They came to Leggadourou.\textsuperscript{117} When the people of Iby came, the Arou/De said that the land was for them; there are no other fields here. They (Iby) went to the Goro at Diankabu, to the old (Maloum Amasogo Goro), and asked who the land was for? The Goro are the owners of the land, he said. The land is for the people of Madou (Madougou). The Goro went all the way to Dinangourou. They have to go to Dinangourou, ask the Madounoung, the quarter with the name of the village (Madougou\textsuperscript{118}) they did leave. Ask the old if they (Iby) can stay with us (Goro). They did go to Dinangourou, talked with the old: ‘The people of Arou said that they had bought the land’; that did make the Goro angry: ‘If it is animals or cowries they have paid, we will pay them and then chase them’. A delegation left Dinangourou for Madou; they confronted the De with the lies that they had bought the land. But Arou said that the Goro are the big brothers; and then Goro won’t chase the De. The people from Dinangourou let someone stay behind to be village chief so that the people of the escarpment should not start to quarrel. The old who stayed is Mogom Adojnou Goro. The village of Madougou was founded about 1901 by Mogom A. Goro, who came from Dinangourou. He is the founder of Madougou. They made their pailettes, huts, here. They said to Kodjo to quit Leggadourou to come here, here is Madougou. When they came, they would make a well; the Kodjo, the Goro and the De made a well together. It is the only village where one has made a well together. The Mogom was the first village chief in Madougou. The second was Boy Goro, the third was Aleve Ireko Goro, the fourth was Amagonou Adoigeno, the fifth is Agadou Aleve Goro, the actual chief. The third chief is the father of the fifth. The Fulbe in Madougou are the Fulbe of the Arou/De. The Goro do not agree to install the Fulbe. That is why the Fulbe did install themselves close to Arou. Because of a fire, they withdrew. The land was given to the Fulbe by the village chief Agona, the grandfather that installed the Fulbe here. Today, the relations between the Fulbe and the Dogon from Arou are not good at all.\textsuperscript{119}

As this story shows, the patterns of migrations and relations on the plain are complex. Bonte has studied the Dogon and Fulbe relations on the Seeno-Gondo plain, and his version of the Dogon and Fulbe settlement in Madougou corresponds with the version told by the mayor above (1999: 388). While Bonte shows that the relations between the Fulbe on the Gondo and

\textsuperscript{115} Kabodié according to Bonte (1999: 387).
\textsuperscript{116} To “sell his children to the Fulbe” implies the history of slavery in the ethnic discourse.
\textsuperscript{117} Leggadourou is the name of the first Madougou of the De and the Kodjo according to the Labbo story above.
\textsuperscript{118} Trimingham claims that the Mande Mâ-dugu means the ‘land of the master’ (1970: 68).
\textsuperscript{119} This refers to the conflict between the Fulbe and a Bellaa cultivating the harima described in chapter 1.
the Fulbe from the Maasina (Diina) are not clear, he demonstrates the linkage between the Barry sub-lineage installed in Diankabu and the dispersion to Sengomara, Sourindé and Madougou; all the Barry from this sub-lineage descend from the same ancestor. There were Fulbe on the plain before the Fulbe from Maasina came, and there were conflicts between the different Fulbe clans. According to Amselle, the settled Dogon population “took in” the Fulbe expelled from their region of origin, in this case Maasina (1998: 48). The Goro justify their right to land by claiming they were the first to settle, and the land belongs to the lineage. Land is inherited in the father’s line from father to son, and newcomers have to respect the rights of the first settlers (Bonte 1999: 393) and one has to “ask to come here” as the Kodjo did in the story above. The different Dogon clans agree that the Goro are “the owners or masters of the land”, and they agree that the land is for them and not for the Fulbe because the Dogon were the first to settle and to make a well together. According to the Dogon, the Fulbe got the land from Agona Aya, the Dogon njaatigi, but the other Domno clan, Goro, disagreed. The Dogon version contradicts the Fulbe version of the settlement history about who came first, and the Goro claim Mogom A. Goro as the founder of Madougou. As a Kossodjo friend says: “the Goro from Domno were the first to settle on the plain; it was them that founded Madougou. It is for them”. As we have seen, there are complex historical processes of war, peace and migration behind the Fulbe and Dogon co-existence in Madougou today, and settlement stories are not objective, but biased, and the past is reconstructed in the present to legitimate hegemony in the present. I will now explore the nyeeybe myths of origin and how they make “constructions of the past”.

52
Laube myths of origin

Paradoxically, both the Laube and the Fulbe narratives in Madougou show common Fulbe and Laube origin (cf. Dupire 1981: 170), as in the story told by the Labbo griot Hama from Sengomara:

The names of the Laube are Gadjaga, Kebe and Jomo, all the way to Senegal. Labbo is a Fulbe griot. The race of the Laube has left from the Fulbe. Same mother, same father as the Fulbe. The Fulbe have Arab mother and Malinké father. N’Dolo120 are the Fulbe from Gimbala, towards Mopti. The Laube are the children of the N’Dolo; Kaabakoi N’Dolo, the grandfather of the Laube, the Laube race have begun.

One day I visit the Hossobe compound, a Gadjaga Labbo from Naye arrives, asking for food, saying he hasn’t been eating. He comes here often, because he is a friend of the Hossobe. Because he is Labbo, he can ask (njagaade) for food, he says, and tells me this story about the Laube:

The Laube have left from the Fulbe. Same mother, same father as the Fulbe. Labbo is the little brother (miñiraado) of the Fulbe. They are together, all. The Fulbe are the big brothers (mawniraabe), they leave for herding the cattle (droî nay) on the fields. The little brother goes to the bush to cut trees (leggâl) for making leé (sing. la’al, wooden bowls). The little brother gives a la’al to the big brother, who drinks milk (biri kossam) from it. The big brother drinks a little and then gives to drink to the little brother. After that the little brother has demanded the big brother; you have to give me that and that: hokkam. The big brother agrees with giving.

According to this origin story, the Laube are the little brothers of the Fulbe from the same parents, and the relationship between the Laube and the Fulbe is interpreted in terms of kinship and differences in age by the Labbo; Pullo is the big brother (mawniraado) and Labbo the little brother (miñiraado); the Pullo being the oldest brother, this is an authority relation. Because the little brother makes objects of wood needed by the big brother, he may ask for milk and the big brother agrees to give it to him. In this way, the myth justifies the

120 According to Bonte is N’Dullo one of the Barry ancestors coming from the Diina in the 19th Century (1999: 387).
division of labour between the LaUBE who ask and the FulBE who give. This story is told by a
gadjaga labbo born in madougou:

fulBE and laUBE have the same father and same mother. the labbo is the little brother. the
pullo, the big brother (mawniraado), went to the fields to herd the cows. the little brother
stayed behind; he made the la’al. when the big brother came back, he said that was going to
be his work - he became labbo. he made the hoddu (instrument) to go and ask (njagaade)
from people. the laUBE are not slaves. the others can not say that you are there because of
me. the laUBE are the singers who give courage to people. at weddings, he tells the history
to people. that is his work.

the laUBE include themself in the fulBE category, and in this interpretation there is a racial
continuum between the fulBE and the laUBE, they are only separated by different work.
because the laUBE are important as griots and story tellers for the fulBE; they play the
instrument called hoddu at weddings, and they may “ask” (“quemander”). still, the laUBE
patronymys are different from the fulBE: gadjaga, kebbe, adjoum, amalaou, djoum, they are
not fulBE patronyms. the laUBE live in a separate quarter in the wuro fulBE, and they are
endogamous; “labbo is marrying labbo”, they say.

walabube myth of origin

the walabube in madougou practice as leatherworkers¹²¹ and as griots for the dogon.
earlier, leather goods were symbols of prestige, and launay claims that this part of the
profession therefore was given priority over the griot part (1995: 161). in madougou, the
griot part of the walabube identity is strong, and the gallabo oumsane daramé tells me this
story of the origin of the walabube:

gallabo left the manding land, like the dogon. everybody was in the escarpment, unable to
go down to the plain. one found a way to go down, but he could not climb up again. he
asked the people who were upside if they could hand him a tam-tam (drum), which they did.
a dancer heard the tam-tam and wanted to climb down. he found a way, and that is the way

¹²¹ Leatherworking derives from the Mande heartlands and is a typical Mande “caste”, according to launay
they used to climb down. They played and danced so good that the Dogon said they should not cultivate; the Dogon should give them grain to eat. That is how the Walabube came into existence; they should work with skins and tam-tam. But it is not like that any longer, today people don’t give them. Today it is everybody for themselves. First they came to Domno. Then they came to Arou, Iby, and then back to Arou. From Arou they came to Madougou. The first Gallabo in Madougou was Dogonpanga, the son of the first who climbed down. Dogonpanga means the Dogon force; it is because of the Dogon that I live; it is them that give me food. He came together with the De, the people of Arou. They, the Walabube, beat the tam-tam so people give them money and food. When they had enough, they came to Madougou. All Walabube have the name Daramé. But since they live with the De, they have taken that name.

The Walabube claim Mande origin together with the Dogon. According to the myth, the Dogon feed the Walabube who work with skin and “beat the tam-tam”; it is their work which separates them, and the Dogon have to give them food. The Walabube\textsuperscript{122} with the patronym Daramé has “taken” the patronym De from the Dogon among whom they live and work. Before they only married other Walabube and Waylube, and they do not marry Dogon, Fulbe or Kossodjo, but “the white”; “The Dogon don’t give their children to Walabube”, they tell me. According to this Gallabo statement, the reciprocity is on decline; people do not give any longer, something I will return to in chapter 6.

**Hossobe\textsuperscript{123} origin narrative**

I often visit the Kossodjo Ousmane Morba’s compound, and we listen a lot to music on his cassette player while he works, making bead ornaments. One day we listen to Kadia Goro, a female “Dogon” singer. It makes Ousmane in so good mood that he tells me a lot about the Hossobe and their origin. Ousmane says that Kadia Goro is “really” Morba, but she is from Goro, and has taken that name. Ousmane’s mother is also from Dinangourou (Goro’s village). Ousmane tells this:

\textsuperscript{122} N'Diaye claims Toucouleur origin for the “aouloubé” (“gaoulo”) griots (1995: 87).

\textsuperscript{123} The Hossobe name themselves Gangarabouro, and they have a separate language called bonotego.
The Hossobe came from the Dogon in ‘Manding’ (Mande). The Dogon cultivate; the Hossobe work with leather and skin. It is like that the Dogon change with the jammo.\textsuperscript{124} The Hossobe walked around, that is how they came here. The true family name is Morba. Morba is Morba; there is no mixing; there are no Dogon Morba or Bambara Morba. The true Dogon is Goro. The Goro are different; they are mixed. But the Hossobe may take the names of the Dogon where they live: like Goro, Oungiba, Yanogo (towards the escarpment), Tabalaba and Dombo (in the escarpment), Degoga, Napo, Temé (in Sangha). Goro and Dombo are Dogon names, but also Hossobe names. The Hossobe took those Dogon names. Morba is only for the Hossobe. The Hossobe marry only the Hossobe. The Hossobe did have a lot of cows and sheep because they had a lot of money. They gave the cows and the sheep to the Fulbe to herd. That is how they became friends. The Dogon and the Hossobe have the same father and the same mother. It is the work that separates us. There are other Hossobe that work with the skins, but we have left it, because ‘everybody’ can do that. That’s how we started with jewelry, Barke (the father) started it in the Gold Coast.

Ousmane claims Dogon origins, same mother and father, for the Hossobe\textsuperscript{125} in Mande (“Manding”), and it is their occupation or work that separates and unites them in a reciprocal exchange of services with the Dogon and the Fulbe. As this statement shows, the Hossobe have changed occupation from being leatherworkes to trading with beads and jewelry according to “loss” of occupational monopoly (cf. Launay 1995: 163). Still, they remain Hossobe, and the change of occupation do not lead to a change of status. As this statement shows, the relation between “caste” and occupation is not simple (ibid.). There is friendship with the Fulbe, who herded their cattle “before”. The Hossobe family in Madougou carries the patronym Morba, but other places they may take Dogon patronyms. They do not marry other people than the Hossobe, and Ousmane’s brother claims they are a separate “ethnie” (race); “a separate people, like the Fulbe”, and “the Hossobe feel closer to the Fulbe than to the Dogon”, they say. “We are not Dogon, I don't want to be Dogon”, the Kossodjo tells me. Even if the Hossobe claim Dogon origin, they feel more “noble” and closer to the Fulbe than the Dogon or other categories of nyeeybe, because they don’t ask like them:

\textsuperscript{124} Jammo means Kossodjo in Dogon.

\textsuperscript{125} N’Diaye claims that the Hossobe found among the Dogon are much feared (“redoutés”) by the Dogon (1995:81).
Laube and Walabube are the same, because they are the ones that ask if they are hungry. *Tiggare* (Dogon) means to praise. The work of the Walabube and the Laube is to praise. *Toggo* (Dogon) means to ask for something, to sing your name, like the Walabube and the Laube. Gallabo is for Dogon as Labbo for Fulbe.

The Hossobe classify the Laube and the Walabube together as those who praise and “ask if they are hungry”, and in this way they place themselves above them together with the Fulbe, who they classify above the Dogon, who are “mixed”.

* As we have seen in this section, the Fulbe claim Arab-Malinké origin (i.e. “mixture” with the Mande), the Laube claim Fulbe origin, the Hossobe claim Dogon origin, and both the Walabube and the Hossobe claim origin in Mande, together with the Dogon, and they are all part of a wider system of what Amselle calls a “Fulani-Bambara-Malinke transformations” (1998: 56). There is a complex pattern of relationships between identity, occupation, and rank expressed in this narratives. As Launay shows, “caste” and “ethnicity” are different labels for “very similar prosesses, involving the social differentiation of various groups and the symbolic marking of identity and difference” (1995: 163), and further: “The problem is that it is difficult to pin down the nature of their position in the hierarchy” (ibid.). As these narratives show, the “castes” are in a way different than the ethnic categories even if they express the same origin, and this difference is expressed symbolically, as in spatial terms, in rules of endogamy and different occupation. While the “ethnic” narratives of the Fulbe and the Dogon dispute political hegemony and the right to land and water, the *nyeeybe* myths claim exclusive rights to occupations and legitimate the social division of labor between the Rimbe and the *nyeeybe*. Let me now explore the origin and rank of the former slaves.

**Origin of the Dogon slaves, gonom**

Mamoudou Goro, the Dogon mayor, explains the slave origin to me like this:
Gonom were the Dogon slaves in Dinangourou called. One does not marry the gonom, but they are free. The slaves of the Fulbe took the name Guindo; 80% of the Guindo on the Gondo are the slaves of the Fulbe. They are the Riimaybe for the Fulbe, and the Dogon know the Riimaybe as slaves, but today one does not say it. It is the Guindo on the Gondo who are the slaves, not elsewhere. The Guindo patronym are for all the Dogon. The true Guindo are from Bankass; they were never slaves. Tamboura in Naye are the descendants from the Dogon. They are prisoners of the Laube.

The “slaves” origin is Dogon, and the former slaves are known by Dogon patronyms. Guindo is a Dogon patronym of the former Fulbe slaves, and Tamboura the name of the former Laube slaves. The Kossodjo Ousmane tells me this story about the origin of the gonom, the Dogon slaves, and the relations between the gonom and the Walabube, Hossobe and Dogon:

The Walabube in Dinangourou had a lot of stuff; they could not carry it all. They started to play the tam-tam. The Domno (Goro) came; they had brought millet, clothes and money. The Walabube said that they don’t need millet, clothes or money; they need someone to carry their luggage. The Domno left someone to carry. That is how they came here; the Dogon don’t marry them. The Dogon see them as slaves. There are 4-5 houses like that in the Iby quarter. Even we, the Hossobe, don’t need their sons. If a Gallabo dies, the people from Arou don’t touch him. It is them (the slaves) that come and take him to the grave. Their women will pound the millet (sokka gawri). We name them gonom, slave. If a gonom dies, they need to call the Walabube to come and see, before they prepare the cotton yiripirou, the blank funeral cloth. If not, the Walabube will start a quarrel and ask if they have forgotten that it is because of them that they came here, as luggage carriers. Before, they would ask the Walabube to take the corpse away. Today they hide to call the Walabube, because they don’t want people to know. They think that people don’t know, but they do.

The Kossodjo places himself above the “slaves”; “he don’t need their sons”. He continues, saying that there are Dogon that don’t know the history of Iby, or young people who don’t care and marry them after all:

They (gonom) may marry at Iby, but not at Domno. They marry the Kodjo, because they don’t know the history. They may not marry in Arou. The Dogon don’t know anything, they think we are slaves; the Walabube, the Hossobe, the Waylube. They don’t know history. One day, a Dogon said to the Gallabo Ousmane Daramé that he is nothing, that he is not Dogon, that he is Gallabo, like a slave. Ousmane Daramé answered him to go home and ask his mother and father, and since that, the Dogon has said nothing.
According to this Kossodjo statement, the Dogon exclude the “castes” from the Dogon category and place themselves above them, thinking the Hossobe, the Walabube and the Waylube are “slaves”, something they do dispute. The statement also ranks Domno (Goro) and Arou (De) above the Kodjo from Iby, who marries the “slaves”. The Kossodjo Barke Morba\textsuperscript{126} tells me this about slaves:

The Fulbe left to take Samoko\textsuperscript{127} and Bobo\textsuperscript{128} as slaves to sell. Even here, they took the Dogon to sell. Before, the Fulbe took the Dogon who descended to the plain, to sell. They took all. Before, one could say slave; today one may not say slave, because they do not agree. The Hossobe had a lot of slaves. Bondokoli and Debere were slave villages for Morba. But they no longer work for the Hossobe, even if all know their history as slaves. One does not talk about it. The grandparent did pay for the slaves. The slaves from Gondo were not bought; they were given to do the work. The Laube did pay for the Riimaybe; they were the Laube slaves. The Maccubé were also bought.

The Fulbe were not alone about taking slaves on the plain; the Mossi, Samono, Tuareg and Toucoulor also did take slaves there, but because of the antagonisms between Fulbe and the Dogon in the escarpment, the Fulbe have remained as the prototype image of a the slave-takers (de Bruijn, van Beek and van Dijk 1997: 252). The Fulbe chief Belko Barry tells me this about the difference of the Laube and the Riimaybe origin:

The Laube are strangers, come from the Fulbe, come from the Dogon. They don’t have a village for themselves, live besides the Fulbe. The Riimaybe came from the Dogon. They were sold in the market. Dogon and the Riimaybe are the same. The Laube were never slaves.

Belko makes a difference between the Fulbe, on one side, and the Dogon and the slaves on the other, with the Laube in a sort of intermediate position because “they were never slaves”, but “strangers”. The Laube live closer to the Fulbe and are associated with them, but they have an ambiguous position in the hierarchy. This statement also contradicts the Dogon idea

\textsuperscript{126} The Kossodjo Barke Morba and the father of Hamma, Ousmane Barry, were good friends; Barke speaks Fulfulde and knows the Fulbe very well.
\textsuperscript{127} Ethnic category.
\textsuperscript{128} Ethnic category.
of themselves as nobles and ranked above the slaves, and is typical for Fulbe ideas of the Dogon; they consider them as “slaves”.

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Myths of origin legitimate the social division of labour, and the access to land and water according to the rights of the first settlers. While there is agreement about the division of labour between those who “give” and those who “ask”, there is internal disagreement between the different groups and categories about the rank in the social hierarchy; but the former slaves are ranked lowest by the “others”. The social reality in Madougou is complex, and patronyms are used as markers of identity in this pluralist society, but they are unproblematic classifiers.

**Patronyms as classifiers**

All clans or nyeebe have patronyms, i.e. surnames, and patronyms and ethnonyms define social categories with different access to power and resources; Fulbe, Dogon, nyeebe and former slaves are all classified by patronyms or ethnonyms in Madougou. The myths and stories of origin testify how the patronyms may change according to proximity to the different ethnic groups and clans among whom the nyeebe live, and patronyms alone are therefore problematic classifiers, they have to be contextualised according to ethnic or nyeebe status (cf. Sommerfelt 1999: 126-127). As Launay shows, patronyms are far from “inflexible”, and they can and do change according to region (1995: 156). In Madougou, the nyeebe “take” the patronymic name after the Dogon clan with whom they live: Daramé becomes De, Morba becomes Goro etc. But the Laube remain Gadjaga; they are not allowed to take the patronym of the Fulbe Barry, even if they are considered to have common origin with the Fulbe, both by the Fulbe and by themselves. In this way the Fulbe protect the nobility and “purity” of their lineage. The patronyms refer both to nyeenyo or ethnic origin in
the mythical past and to territoriality and region because there are changes between patronym equivalents according to region (Dieterlen 1957; N'Diaye 1995). Because of this “ethnic mutation” (Gallais 1962: 120), a Dogon going to Mande is called Keita in accordance with this system of name changing (Dieterlen 1957: 125), or may be known by “Fulbe” patronyms like Diallo, Sy and Sangaré (Gallais 1962: 123). In Madougou, social categories like the Maccubé and the Laube are marked by patronyms and are identified by them; Tamboura still identifies former slaves, and Gadjaga identifies griots and woodworkers in Madougou. Patronyms are also clan-identity markers, like the Barry and the Goro, and represent ethnic and nyeenyo stereotypes (cf. Dreyer 2002: 82). The patronyms function as symbols that create identity and belonging to a category. “To be the same as”, gooto, is a very common statement in the field: “Barry and Sangaré is gooto”, and Fay makes the same point from Maasina (1995: 455). This is interpreted by Bâ and Dieterlen as integration between the Mande clans (Dyallo, Dyakité, Sidibé and Sangaré) and the Fulbe clans (Dyal, Ba, So and Bari) by marriage alliances (1961: 10), and by regional modifications due to migrations, the Bari have become Sangaré and in this way is “the same”. I did never get a local explanation on this in the field; people just answered that Barry and Sangaré are “the same”, and people said that between the Sankaré and the Barry (and the Sidibé) there is a joking relationship, which means they must not fight or hurt each other, but one may insult each other without damage done, and one may also intermarry (cf. N’Diaye 1995: 18). The practice of patronymic changes and the origin stories show how the different social categories are inseperable and connected to the early migrations from the Mande (cf. Conrad and Frank 1995). Historically, the nyeeeye could not seek political power, nor be reduced to slave status (Camara 1992: 70-71). While the ethnic categories Fulbe and Dogon are exhaustive, the

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129 According to N’Diaye, the clan or nyeenyo patronym refer in most cases to an animal which the clan or nyeenyo must not kill, eat or touch, but they are not totems (1995: 16). Dreyer (2002: 79 ff.) makes the same point.
nyeeybe categories cross-cut the ethnic categories in a wider sense by “taking” their patronyms, but some nyeeybe and some ethnic categories in Madougou are mutually exhaustive; it is impossible to be a “Pullo Baylo” or a “Dogon Labbo” (cf. Riesman 1977: 116). The Laube are only represented among the Fulbe, and the Waylube, Walabube and Hossobe are only present among the Dogon in hibbere. The Fulbe-Laube and the Dogon-Waylube-Walabube-Hossobe are symbolic similar but not identical (Launay 1995: 165) and their myths of origin and patronyms cross-cut each other’s borders. In a narrow sense, one is either Labbo or Pullo and either Gallabo, Kossodjo, Baylo or Dogon. But in a wider sense the nyeeybe are included in the ethnic category from which they have “originated” by patronym changes and symbolic closeness, and local narratives show common origin for some nyeeybe and some ethnic categories. Because of this ambiguity in status, the rank of the different nyeeybe may be negotiated according to situation, and it is not static.

How to define the Fulbe category?

In this context of social dynamism, how to define the Fulbe category? There have been many default attempts to define the Fulbe “race” as a non-black separate category with special physical characteristics as a straight nose and long hair (cf. Dupire 1981; Burnham 1999). Even if this separate “race” once existed, it does not exist any longer, because the Fulbe have mixed with the local black populations during centuries of migration. Because the Fulbe are composed of different clans spread all over West Africa today, there is the question of unity or difference in the Fulbe category. According to Amselle (1998), the category Fulbe is a colonial construction created by those studying them. If, following Amselle, the Fulbe may be seen as a part of a wider system of “Fulani-Bambara-Malinke transformations” as he does (1998: 56), then how to define the Fulbe category under study? Dupire (1981) explores what

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130 According to Tamari (1995), the occupational groups have their origin in the Mande.
makes the Fulbe a category; what ties them together as an ethnic category, and her answer is their relations to the neighbouring (the negroid/black) categories. There exist only a small “core” of common cultural practice that links the Fulbe in time and place, like the cattle rope (boggol), according to her (ibid. 179), and that makes it difficult to define the Fulbe identity in cultural terms. De Bruijn and van Dijk ask the question if the Fulbe can be seen as one group or if they represent an amalgam of different groups with different history, social evolution and economic activity, and this complexity has to be part of the definition of the Fulbe category according to them (1999: 446). Is it possible then to define the Fulbe in other ways than in relation to the others? The Fulfulde language\(^{131}\) may be a marker of the Fulbe ethnic identity, but there are Fulbe who do not speak Fulfulde, and other non-Fulbe ethnic categories who do speak Fulfulde, and in this way language alone is not an ethnic marker. The pastoral lifestyle is another possible marker, but then again not all Fulbe are pastoralists; some are agro-pastoralists or even pure cultivators (Burnham 1999; Fay 1995: 430). What remain to explore is how the Fulbe identity is constructed through history, and how the borders against “the others” define the Fulbe category (cf. Barth 1969a). While I agree that it is the “politics of ethnic difference” (Burnham 1999: 282) that creates and maintains the Fulbe identity, even if it may be diverse, I claim that for the Fulbe in Madougou, pastoralism as a lifestyle and social practice is an ethnic marker which distinguishes the Fulbe from the “others”, the non-pastoralist Dogon, nyeeybe and former slaves, and the local version of the Fulbe “pastoral” lifestyle therefore need to be explored. But first I will turn to aspects of Fulbe social organisation.

\(^{131}\) The Fulfulde speakers are distributed over a vast area from Senegal to Soudan, over a 5 000 km distance. Fulfulde was long assumed to be a Semitic language (Delafosse 1972a [1912]: 113) and Delafosse suggested the Fulbe origin to be in the Middle East. While the Fulbe legends and oral traditions claim a more or less “oriental” origin as far as India or Palestine (cf. Botte and Schmitz 1994), newer African historical research show Fulbe origin to be pure African with roots in the Fouta Toro in today’s Sengal, according to Bâ (1992: 20), and Greenbergs classification of Fulfulde as a West Atlantic language implies that the Fulbe have moved in the opposite direction than earlier believed - namely from the littoral zone on the Atlantic west coast towards the east, and not the opposite, as in the Semitic hypothesis.
Chapter 3: Aspects of Fulbe Social Organization

Important principles for Fulbe social organization are kinship, gender, generation and residence. De Bruijn and van Dijk describe the social organization of the Fulbe as “division of society into endogamic social categories and their sub-division into patri-lineages” (1995: 137). The patrilineage is an important identity-marker for the Fulbe, and through it each individual belongs to a group. Smaller kin groups and groups formed on basis of gender and generation are important in the organization of residence and the social reproduction. The household is the basic production and consumption unit, and the division of labour inside the household is organised according to age, sex and marital status.

Spatial and social organization of the wuro

Among the Fulbe, patrilocal residence is an important principal for social organization. The wuro is the Fulbe “living unit”, according to Riesman, who defines the wuro like this: “Any sociogeographic unit that has a man who is recognized as its head, and whose members are joined by significant ties of kinship or neighbourhood, is called a wuro” (1977: 30).

According to Riesman, the wuro is a social community, and the constellation of the wuro varies with the transhumance pattern during the year; it is a flexible unit that vary in size with time, and may even cease to exist if its members separate (ibid.). In Madougou, the wuro is used to signify different levels of organization. A husband (gori) and wife (genndiraawo) may form a minimal wuro on a field when dispersing (eggi) in the cold dry season, but the whole social unit we call a village, is also called a wuro. The social unit Riesman defines as a wuro above is called galle, the family compound, in Madougou.
Relations between the *deende* Banikani and the *deende* Kindé

The *wuro* in Madougou is split in two *deelé*, neighbourhoods, and each *deende* is split in different *galleji* (sing. *galle*), or family compounds. Both the *deelé* and the *galleji* represent social and spatial categories. The Barry clan (*lenyol*), the maximal lineage (cf. Holy 1996: 76), is organized in patrilineages, and the *deende* is the organisation of the social space of the minimal lineage (cf. Dupire 1994: 267); “…groups of agnatically related men who were all descendants in a patrilineal line from a common ancestor, from four to six generations in ascent from the present day” (Holy 1996: 78). The *galle* signifies “our family”; it is a patrilinearly related segment of the minimal lineage through descendance from the same grandfather. But the whole *wuro* is one: *wuro* Fulbe *gooto*; i.e. it is the same family with roots in Kindé as their *suudu baaba*, their father’s house. In this way, the lineage is symbolized by a house. The chief of the *galle* is called *maude galle* - “leader of the family” - or *hoore suudu* – “the chief (literally the ‘head’) of the *suudu*”. The *galle* is a residential and social unit, the extended family compound; and *galle amin* signify my family in the *wuro*.

The *galle* consists of the *hoore suudu*, which is normally the oldest man of the lineage segment, his younger brothers with their families (if they have not split up and left the *wuro*), his sons with their wives and children, unmarried daughters and widows of the brothers with their children. The *deende* Kindé is one *galle* with one *hoore suudu* (Belko, the village chief). The *deende* Banikani is split in 3 *galle*: Bargo, Aliou Boucary and Bilali; each of the three is *hoore suudu*. The *galle* is further split in households or hearthholds,\(^\text{132}\) *cuudi* (sing. *suudu*\(^\text{133}\)), smaller production and consumption units. The *suudu* is a social and residential cooking unit and this is the level of sharing milk which is an important marker of Fulbe identity, and the sharing of milk defines the production and consumption unit. There is an ongoing process of

\(^{132}\) Among the Jallube clan, the hearthholds are called *fayannde* (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 151).
\(^{133}\) The root *suud-* means to hide or hide oneself (Riesman 1977: 32).
subdivision or fission in the lineage, like a tree with its branches (Holy 1996: 76). Each new generation of sons with their wives and children may create a new *suudu* or cooking unit, and finally a new *galle* in case of conflict (cf. Grayzel 1990: 43). The household, *suudu*, is an unstable unit, and may cease to exist in case of divorce. Between the *galleji* and between Banikani and Kindé there are marriages; patrilateral parallel cousin marriages are preferred. As de Bruijn and van Dijk observes: “These categories of preferred marriage partners are defined not only through the brothers and sisters of the parents of the marrying couple, but also through grand-parents and even great-grand parents” (1995: 149). There are conflicts and rivalry between the *deelé* and Hamma says he will rather die than to see me stay with Belko in *wuro* Kindé, which is the richest *deende*. That will destroy his name he says. According to Dupire, there is competition between lineage segments about superior position (1981: 168), and Hamma’s statement confirms this competition between the different *deelé*.

The neighbours in the *wuro* are related through the patrilineage by the principle of patrilocality, but because of the principle of endogamy, they may also be related through the matrilineage (de Bruijn 1997: 631). Brothers are living together, and the neighbours are often close patri-kin. *Suudu baaba* (“father’s house”) indicates the patrilineage, but it is more an idea helping people to conceptualize the social structure than a corporate institution (cf. Riesman 1977: 35), and there are no help relations with close patri-kin. While the neighbours Ada and Bilali belong to the same *galle*, they belong to different hearthholds, or *cuudi*. Bilali (the brother of the father of Ada’s deceased husband Osmane) is the *hoore suudu*; literally “the head of the *suudu*”, and the chief of the *galle* and in control of the family’s cattle. Ada’s compound is placed between Bilali’s and Bargo’s who belong to different *galle*. Bargo’s family and Hamma’s family have never quarreled; that is why they have good relations and help each other with herding and watering. This friendship relation contrasts with the rather bad relation Hamma has to his paternal kinn and Ada to her in-laws (*esiraabe*):
Ada Barry is the widow after Hamma’s father, Ousmane Barry. She has not remarried after Ousmane died. She stays in her suudu in the galle, next to Bilali, Ousmane’s father’s brother and classificatory patrilateral grandfather, baabababam. Ada says that when she has not been married to one of Ousmane’s brothers, she will not find another husband in the galle. The tradition is ‘small marriage’: when one of the father’s older brothers marries his wife if he dies (the practice of levirate). Ada says that one of the brothers of her dead husband Ousmane could have married her; besides him she can not find another husband in this galle: ‘If it is spoiled one time, it is finished. You don’t find a second time’, she says. Because Hamma’s father died when he was a small boy, it was the classificatory brothers of his father, wappaye (‘small fathers’) Oumaro and Hamidou, who took care of the cattle he was entitled to inherit. But the wappaye have kept the cows according to Hamma. The 7-8 cows his brother Breihma is herding are bought for money Hamma has earned as a tourist guide. So Hamma has no good relations with his wappaye, and Ada quarrels with them almost every day, saying that when Ousmane died, there was nothing left for her and her children, not a single cow. Bilali has four herds, but gives her nothing; she has to manage herself. That’s why she buys goats to fatten; they are her bank savings, so she will not eat her money. She has no milk to sell; she has to buy milk.

By this quarrel, Ada is attacking Hamma’s patrilineage (cf. Riesman 1977: 63). The patrilineage was important in warfare and conflict resolution in the past, but those functions have disappeared today and are taken care of by modern bureaucracy and Islamic institutions (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 367). While the dominant discourse is patrilineal and the patrilineage controls the cattle, it has no wider political function, and the matrilineal ties are often used. According to de Bruijn, matrilateral ties may be important in times of conflicts and disputes (1997: 630), and Fulbe women in Madougou go home to their suudu baaba to visit their mother in times of crises. As Goody says, “though descent groups are unilineal, kinship is everywhere bilateral”, and further: “a system of agnatic clans or lineages does not exclude the active presence of bilateral kinship” (Goody 1983: 16, 22 in Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 15).
Aspects of kinship and gender relations

Although the Barry clan is organized in patrilineages, maternal filiation is important, and what Keesing calls “complementary filiation” or “non-unilineal descent” is practiced (1975: 47, 48). The social structure is flexible, with no strict boundaries, and is open for shifts to the mother’s patrilineage (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 141). Kinship groups are based on the sharing of milk (from the cow or the mother); it ties the children together and makes them equal (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 141). While the suudu baaba, father’s house, represents the power and authority of the patrilineage, suudu innam represents the sharing of milk.

The interpretation of the kinship terminology

The Fulbe are linked by agnatic kinship, and social and economic activities center around agnatic kin, but because of the principle of endogamy, everybody is related and descent may be traced in different ways, according to the situation. Kinship groups and residential units are more important in daily life than lineage membership (cf. de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 145). Membership in suudu baaba and suudu innam is always defined from the individual concerned (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 146; Riesman 1977: 32-33). The Barry practice lineage endogamy, polygyny, and levirate. Kin relations are classificatory; it means that lineal and collateral relatives like father and father’s brothers are classed together (Keesing 1975: 102), and it is the context that defines the kinship terms. In the generation of ego’s parents one distinguishes between the parents: the mother (innam) and the father (baaba); further one distinguishes between mother’s brother (kaawa), mother’s sister (innam, or “small mother”), the father’s brother (sing. bappanjam, pl. wappaybe, “small father”), and

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134 According to Diakité, the patrilineal filiation is due to the influence of Islam; the traditional system of succession was matrilineal or collateral (2003: 141). The trans-Saharan trade and the contact with the Muslim ‘Arabo-Berbès’ led to the introduction of Islam in the region since the 8th century (ibid.: 140).

135 According to de Bruijn and van Dijk (1995: 167) this classificatory kinship system where parents and their sisters and brothers are given the same term, and the classification of cousins in parallel- and cross- is fall under what Keesing calls “Iroquois” (cf. Keesing 1975: 110-112).
father’s sister (goggam). While the classificatory kinship terminology is rather ambiguous and always has a narrow or a broader sense (cf. Riesman 1977: 34), the terminology concerning age and generation is precise and without this ambiguity, something Riesman suggests means the importance of these organizational principles (ibid.: 35). People of the same generation as ego (siblings and cousins) are very important, they are called sakiraabe. True siblings (by the same father and mother) are divided into older and younger: miñiraado (little brother or sister), and mawniraado (big brother or sister), and then debbo (pl. rewbe, female) or gorko (pl. worbe, male) is added to indicate the sex. Age-mates are very important; they spend a lot of time together and herd together. Children (and sibling’s children) are called bibbe. Cousins are divided in two groups: cross-cousins, dendiraabe (children of kaawa and goggam); and parallel cousins, baabiraabe (children of bappanjam) and miraabe (children of innam, mother’s sister). The cross-cousin relationship is a joking relationship (dendiraagu). There is also a joking relationship between those who descend from the same grandparents (between the alternate first and third generation). One may insult those of the same generation with whom one has “cousinage”, not with the generations above or below (one’s father’s or children’s generation). Kaawa, mother’s brother, is the “true” uncle, and one may eat with him. There are differences in behaviour between ego and kaawa, and between ego and the agnatic kin, bappanjam. While there is joking in the first relation, there is avoidance and respect (yaage) in the last. The Fulbe, in theory, do not distinguish between children of same mother and the same father and the children of father’s brothers; baabiraabe. Still, they always pointed out to me when children really have the same mother and father (innam gooto, baaba gooto) because this is the strongest bond between siblings, and they are “frère de lait”, literally meaning “brothers of the milk”. This refers to brothers (and sisters) that have been nursed from the same mother, the same breast (endam), and the suudu is the unit of siblings sharing their mother’s breast milk or milk from the cows she has
access to. The sharing of milk creates a bond between siblings, and there is a relation of solidarity between them for life. “Frères de lait” also signifies an incestuous taboo. Ada says that one may not give another child one’s breast milk, because then they can not marry one’s children: “It is very serious if two children that have sucked the same breast marry”, she says. That is why one gives cow milk if a mother dies and leaves a child. While blood relations are emphasized in the father’s line, the milk relation through the mother’s line is important.

There is avoidance and yaage (notion of honor and respect) between spouses and in the relation between parents and their first child of each sex (cf. Riesman 1977: 113). In-laws or affinals are called esiraabe, and the relations to one’s esiraabe is guided by avoidance and yaage. The principles of primogeniture, generation and seniority are fundamental for the Fulbe. The first-born son has authority over the second-born, and generation has priority over age. One has to show respect for older people and people at same or younger age, but of older generation. Today, there is a general conflict in interest between the suukabe (young men) and the mawbe (old men) about work and time-spending; the older people think the younger are “vagabond” who do not work hard enough, but only want to amuse themselves like when going to the market or drinking tea in the shadow of a tree.

**Fulbe marriage rules and divorces**

The significance of marriage for a girl is to be able to set up her own household and have access to milk either from her own cows or from the cows of her husband and later her children. For the boys, marriage has lesser significance because they herd their fathers’s cattle, or the herd is split by inheritance and they herd for themselves. Marriage, in theory, represents a break from the suudu for the girls who move out of the household to set up their own suudu, while the boys stay in their father’s compound and gradually take over the household of the father (Stenning 1962). However, because of the principle of close kin
marring each other, girls in practice do not move very far, and some move just a few households away from the suudu baaba in the wuro. In this way they may maintain regular contact with their mother’s suudu, which is important in times of crisis. Preferred marriage (njappolé) rules among the Fulbe in Madougou are patrilateral parallel cousins or patrilateral cross-cousins: for ego to marry father’s brother’s son, or father’s sister’s son. Preferential marriage is a way to distinguish from non-Fulbe neighbours, like the Dogon,\(^{136}\) who prefer marrying the daughter of the mother’s brother (Griaule 1973: 15).

Mayrama is Breihma’s father’s sister’s daughter (FaZiDa), Breihma’s goggam’s daughter. It is a patrilateral cross-cousin marriage, and therefore a joking relationship; Mayrama is dendirao to Breihma and Hamma, and their sister Verlore is going to marry goggam’s son (FaZiSo), the brother of Mayrama; ‘that is how we prefer it’, Ada says. But if Verlore is not satisfied with her husband, she may run off after the wedding. If Hamma and Breihma have daughters, the daughters are supposed to marry the son of the other (patrilateral parallel-cousin). But Hamma says he will not go against the will of a daughter if she does not want to marry Breihma’s son, for example because of education.

De Bruijn and van Dijk claim that the Fulbe “prefer marriages with close kin, maternal and paternal parallel cousins and cross-cousins” (1995: 149). I did not record frequencies of marriages, but my impression from the field is that the Fulbe in Madougou prefer paternal parallel- and cross-cousins marriages. But there are ongoing processes of changes according to marriage rules, and when discussing njappolé with the Fulbe men in the hibbere, they say that now it is the money that decides. Before, a Pullo and a Dogon could not be married, but today it is possible if they have money. The chief Belko claims that one may marry who ever one wants, but Hamma corrects him and says that it is according to the will of the parents. Still, no marriages between a Pullo and a Dogon have taken place in Madougou. The idea of endogamy links nobility to descent, and there is the idea that people do not “mix”, and each social category is seen as an endogamic group (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 138). According

\(^{136}\) See Dieterlen (1956) and Paulme (1988 [1940]) about the Dogon social organisation.
to de Bruijn and van Dijk; “…marriages between nobles […] reconfirm their historical ‘unity’” (ibid.).

If a woman is not satisfied with her husband, she may leave him and go back to her suudu baaba, and marriages among the Fulbe are fragile (cf. Grayzel 1990: 44). Dupire observes that: “It is only after marriage that a young woman may attempt to free herself from a union which has not been one of her own choosing”. (1963: 59) The first wedding is often a preferential wedding decided by the parents and Ada’s statement above confirms that it is first after the wedding the bride may run off if she is discontent. “Where the woman is married is where she is having problems”, Hamma says. Poverty affects the marriage and the marital relation in form of absence of gifts and lesser milk to sell for the woman. A wife with a poor husband who receives no milk or gifts will leave the husband and return home to her suudu baaba, and in this way, kinship networks are important for women’s material security. There are different reasons for divorce, like absence of gifts, not enough milk to sell or the relations between the woman and her husband and in-laws (esiraabe). Children stay in their father’s suudu after divorce, while young children go with their mother in the case of divorce.

There are some polygynous households in Madougou, and the Fulbe say that there are more women than men and that is why the men may take more wives. This is confirmed by de Bruijn and van Dijk from the Hayre; because many men have migrated and left the region during the crises leaving the women behind, there is a surplus of women (1995: 372). According to them, poverty and the shortage of men forces women to accept living in polygynous unions. In the past, this would have led the women to ask for divorce. Another reason for the women to enter a polygynous unit is “love”; but wealth is not necessary (ibid.: 373).
Property and the position of women

It is through marriage that the Fulbe women get access to milk, and ownership of cattle and milk between husband and wife is divided at marriage. The first wife is given a cow by her husband when she marries.\footnote{This present is called \textit{fatteeji} by Riesman (1977: 81).} This cow she may take with her if the husband later asks for divorce. But if it is the wife who leaves, she has to leave the cow with her husband; she can not take it with her. But everything that belongs to her, like jewelry, clothes, cooking utensils and the bed she can take with her, and she has “undisputed rights to her personal belongings” (Dupire 1963: 77). Ada says that it is the mother that gives the girl the jewelry. The future husband gives 25,000 CFA\footnote{This is less than the price of a cow in the market.} and 10 \textit{pagne} (skirts or units of cloths used to wrap around the hips) to the bride at marriage, and a sac of millet to distribute in the whole \textit{wuro}. Kola nuts and a calf (\textit{binagge}) are given by the groom’s father. All the milk from the calves (\textit{binay}) is for the bride. According to this and other statements, the wife gets one cow from the husband’s herd and one calf from the father’s herd to milk\footnote{I did not explore the women’s amount of cows in detail, but from the milk sale I could extrapolate who had access to many or few cows.} after marriage. If a woman does not marry, she has no access to milk, and thereby no means for earning money. The gender categories are constituted by marriage; \textit{debbo}\footnote{Because the term \textit{debbo} (pl. \textit{rewbe}) can be derived from the verb \textit{rewde}; to follow (Dupire 1963: 50), it has been interpreted as women’s submission to men. But later linguistic analyses claim that it may be translated as “the one that is followed” (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 150).} means woman and wife, \textit{gorko} man and husband (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 150). I will argue for a complementarity between the sexes rather than a hierarchial relation, and the cosmology of the \textit{suudu} symbolises this complementarity. Talle (1988) shows how the role of women in pastoral societies is neglected in the ethnography and how the ethnography has been male biased. The analytical differences of the private and the domestic as female and the public and the social as male that “\textit{a priori} renders pastoral women in a subordinate position to men” (ibid.: 9) do not fit the Fulbe in Madougou. The sexual division of labour and the gender relations as manifested
in social practice and in the cosmology of the house are symbiotic and equal, and not hierarchical, and women know their rights (cf. Dupire 1963: 89). I will argue that the construction of female and male roles as Pullo debbo and Pullo gorko are oppositional but symmetrical roles, and that the gender relations are not hierarchical, as among the Maasai (cf. Talle ibid.). There is a system of rank and status that men and women may manipulate to their advantage, and I will argue that individual Fulbe woman (rewbe) may have a great deal of freedom and autonomy, dependent of her personal richness and social status, and Fulbe women are far from a “muted category” (Ardener 1989 in Eriksen 1993: 155).

My friend Fata who lives near by is married and has four children. She is an autonomous and free woman because she earns money from selling milk and the sexual relation she has with a Dogon man. She is self-contained with money and may buy what she wants of consumer goods like clothes, jewelry, tea and food in the market. Even if there is jealousy, Fata is looked upon with admiration by the other Fulbe women because she is so rich in personal property and consumer goods. Fatma, who has a child with Hamma but is not married to him, is on the other side of the social scale. Because she is not married, she has no milk to sell, and that puts her in an insecure social position, dependent on the gifts of Hamma for personal consumption when there is little or no milk to sell for her ‘mother-in-law’, Ada. Because Hamma is absent most of the year travelling as a guide, Fatma has no-one to support her, and she is thereby forced to return to her suudu baaba in Naye, but she must leave her son Ousmane behind. She does not have the freedom and autonomy of a married woman who owns her house and is established as the head of a hearthhold or consumer unit, suudu, with cows and milk to sell.

On the basis of typical cases like this, I will argue that the status of the women is not systematically subordinated to that of the men, but is open for individual negotiations and women have a possibility to increase their status and rank on the Fulbe social scale through marriage and children and access to milk. Rich women are more autonomous and independent than poor women who are more dependent on their husbands for support and material security.
Socialisation and attitudes to children

To have children is an important aspect of Fulbe life. Children have a “use value” as labour force in housework and herding, and labour is an important resource (CARE 1997: xxi). Ada comments that she is rich, because she has two sons and two male grandchildren, tandiraabe worbe. Children belong to their mother’s suudu, and socialisation and children’s education takes place in the household when they are small and among the age-mates from the age of about three years (Riesman 1977: 205). Fulbe children’s activities center round the household and in the household they learn proper Fulbe conduct and rules for acting according to shame (semtude) and respect (yaage), and thereby to behave distinguished from the Dogon. One typical case is when Ada insults Ousmane, saying he is a Dogon and no Pullo, because he doesn’t like fresh milk (kossam) he only wants sour milk (kaadam). She often calls her daughter Verlore a thief and scolds her like when she throws sand in her eyes and drags her by the hair when she discovers that the daughter has been stealing food from the cooking pot (barma). Like this, children are insulted and scolded in the household to learn how to behave as a Pullo. There is a widespread system of fosterage of children in the families; the first-born son belongs to the father’s relatives; the first-born daughter belongs to the mother’s relatives (Riesman 1977: 113). Hamma lived with his grandfather Amadoun, Koumbel and Ousmane’s father when he was a child. As goggo, sister of his father, Koumbel has authority over Hamma, because he is the first child. Koumbel calls Hamma for her child (bingel), saying she is his “father”, and that she is not happy if she does not see Hamma for a while. Mothers are supposed to insult their children, especially the oldest, and fathers are supposed to avoid their first-born child. The avoidance rules between the father and his first child are explained by Stenning (1962) as a sort of competition relation, because with time it is the oldest son that is going to inherit the herd and become the head of the family, hoore suudu, while the father’s
power declines. According to Riesman, the father-son relation is based on fear and authority (1977: 195), and this interpretation also suits the father-first son relations in Madougou:

One day we all sit under a tree listening to Fulbe music, because Hamadoun, classificatory ‘grandfather’ to the child Ousmane, visits us. He plays with Ousmane, takes him in the sex organ (hallere) and pretends to cut it off with his knife (labbi). Ousmane gets scared, but Hamadoun repeats it several times. Then he takes the herding stick (sawru), and pretends he is going to hit Ousmane. Ousmane starts to cry, and seeks protection with Breihma, his bappanjam, while Hamma, his father, only looks on from distance. People laugh, and Ousmane gets peanuts.

Hamma does not play with his first and only son Ousmane, and Ousmane is afraid of him. That is why he obeys his father, Hamma says. But Hamma’s little brother Breihma may play with Ousmane, and Hamma may play with Breihma’s son. While the father-child relation is characterised by avoidance and yaage, the mother-child relation is very strong because it is the children, especially the sons, who are going to take care of their mother in the future when they inherit the herd. Women’s role as mothers and wives are different, the first representing the lineage, the second the household. The household established through marriage is the essential production and consumption unit, and there is a strict social division of labour according to gender, age and marital status in the household.

**The social division of labour and time spending**

The division of labour in the household separates the sexes, and the husband and wife is separated during the day while performing different tasks. During the day, men’s and women’s worlds are mostly, if not totally, separated, and the gender roles differ; while men herd, women nurse. According to Riesman, it is shameful for Fulbe men to be seen in the wuro during the day, because it is women’s space (1977: 53), but contrary to this I found that Fulbe men in Madougou spent a lot of time in the wuro, sitting under a tree listening to music, drinking tea or eating. Tasks also differ between boys and girls, and while both boys
and girls up to marriageable age are herding, girls beyond this age help their mothers with the housework. The work ideology is each family or household on its own, and there are few tasks carried out in common in the wuro; work relations outside the household and the parent-children relations are based on contracts through the “labour market”\(^{141}\) and not kinship relations, like when the Fulbe are herding cattle for the Dogon or the Dogon build houses for the Fulbe. The obligation to help one’s father, mother and sister is based on co-residence (cf. de Bruijn, van Beek and van Dijk 1997), and there are no help relations with the close patri-kin and neighbours, only from the mother’s kin. One exception is the rebuilding and reparation of the well (kingi bunndu) when the Fulbe men in the wuro gather to clean and rebuild the well once a year (cf. Riesman 1977: 179). The lack of help relations outside the family mean that there is little labour exchange between the Fulbe, and the poor Fulbe need to affiliate themselves to others and the exterior world, like the Dogon, to survive. There is a lot of labour and economic exchange between the Fulbe and the Dogon; the Fulbe selling milk to and herding for the Dogon, and the Dogon selling millet and prepared food and working for money for the Fulbe. The Fulbe lifestyle centers round cattle and milk, and in their mode of production the household is the central production and consumption unit.

**The rhythm of the house work**

The Fulbe women are responsible for the preparation of food. While the Fulbe prefer to consume fresh milk (kossam), millet is their stable food, and the process of making a meal is extremely time-consuming. First, one has to pound millet to make the millet flour for the porridge (nyiiri), then to fetch wood or cow dung to make the fire, and finally to fetch water from the well. Then the cooking (deffam nyiiri) can start. There are normally two dishes to be made, the nyiiri, with saus (oro) made of the baobab leaves, or a sort of millet soup or drink

\(^{141}\) The “labour market” is not organised in a capitalist manner (cf. Bourgeot 1981: 122).
(cobbal). The meals are served very irregularly as a function of how long time these different operations take and how many interruptions there have been during the preparation. Normally one cooks one hot meal a day, the evening meal, and eats the leftovers (barke barma) for breakfast the next day, but some also cook lunch (bottari). If there are no barke barma one may buy “bouille” or “gallettes du mil” from the Dogon women who come to the wuro every morning to sell breakfast to the Fulbe. Other tasks the Fulbe women carry out are to take care of the small children (who they carry on their backs while working), to sell milk if they have some and to go to the market to purchase “the ingredients for the sauce”, to wash the kitchen utensils and clothes, to sweep the ground inside and outside the suudu with a brush/broom, to wash and repair calabashes (koore), to make straw covers (beddi) for calabashes and to make and repair mats (sekke), and to braid hair\textsuperscript{142} and wash and polish their metal bracelets with sand. Old women look after children; make sekke and ropes of fibres (boggi). The Fulbe women do not cultivate but they take part in the harvest of millet, and they gather straw and grass materials in the bush for the construction of the cuudi which they build. A source of income is to buy sheep (baali) to fatten and resell them at the Muslim feast Tabaski to earn money. This is called jarni, and it is a way both to save and to earn money.

**The rhythm of herding and watering**

Fulbe men are responsible for herding cows and herd management, and herding is a source of identity for Fulbe men, and institutionalizes their relationships with the Dogon through the herding contract. Herding is organized on the level of the household or the galle, and cattle are herded by the sons of the cattle owners, or one makes individual agreements with friends and members of the family. The cows which have spent the night in the bush (ladde) come to the corral (hoggo) in the morning to be milked by the Fulbe women (men may milk in the

\textsuperscript{142} To braid hair, tattooing lips and gums (sokkude) or repair calabashes may be a source of income for Fulbe women elsewhere (cf. de Bruijn, van Beek and van Dijk 1997: 258, 296), but not for the Fulbe women in Madougou.
absence of women). After milking, the cows are taken back to ladde again and the calves back to the wuro. The men draw water for the animals from the well\textsuperscript{143} (bunndu), or the pond (feto) in the hibbere; they give them fodder, like cotton seed and salt in periods, and take them on transhumance when necessary in the rainy season. When the men are not herding, they spend a lot of time drinking tea (atté) and listening to music in the Dogon quarters, and therefore the Dogon have the impression of the Fulbe worbe as lazy and not working, only relaxing. Other tasks carried out by Fulbe men are cultivating, the making of enclosures to store the gawri after the harvest (kalli gawri), putting protections around the cuudi (gé chillude) so they are not eaten by animals, shaving the boys’ hair, sharpening the knives (labbe), and making ropes used in herding (boggi). The Fulbe worbe like to herd much better than to cultivate, which they despise, they say. Still, there is a generation conflict considering the quality of herding. The young herders do not want to work as hard as the elders had to do in the past; they prefer going to the market and relax drinking tea and listening to music instead, and “they do not want to suffer”, as Basset remarks (1994: 166).

**Milking**

Milking and the milk sale is a source of identity for Fulbe women. Milking makes a difference with the Dogon women, and through the selling of milk the Fulbe women keep relations with the Dogon and give them a reason for going to the hibbere. The milking and the milk sale (sippi kossam) are important for the role and status and the identity as pastoral Fulbe women. The milk has social significance; it implies social relations and gives the women status.

At about nine in the morning, the men and children who are going to take the cows to pasture and the women who are going to milk, go to the hoggo. It is situated about 4–500 meters

\textsuperscript{143} The few rich Fulbe in the wuro who own a camel use it to draw water, which makes the work a lot easier.
outside the *wuro*, to the west. The cows have not yet come from *ladde*, so we all wait in the shadow of a tree. The place where the calves (*binay, sing. *binagge*), are bound is called *dangol*, and they are tied to the rope *boggol*[^144] with small ropes called *dade*. The *boggol* is tied between two piles of wood. The cows arrive in small herds for each family. When the *nay* are in the *hoggo*, one after one *binagge* is let loose of the *boggol* and may suck its mother for a moment before it is tied to the right front leg of the *nagge* with the *dade*. Then the woman (who has the right to the milk from this cow) milks in a *horde*[^145] she holds between her knees. After the milking, the *binagge* is let loose once more to suck the rest of the milk of its mother. The fresh milk (*kossam*) is carried in the *horde* on the head back to the *wuro* where it is either consumed, sold in the *hibbere* later that day (*kossam, biradam*) or kept for selling later (after two days) as sour milk (*kaadam*). Butter (*nebbam*) is not made because there is not enough milk to save. After milking the cows are given water from the well and return to the pasture, and the same rhythm is repeated before sunset in the evening.

In this way, women are said to compete with the calves for the milk. Milking and selling milk give the Fulbe women an important role in the everyday economy, and it is the women who buy what is needed for everyday consumption with the money they earn from the milk sale.

### Cultivating and harvesting

While herding is appreciated, cultivating is despised among the Fulbe; it is considered “slave’s work”, and the cultivated Fulbe fields (*gesse*) I saw are smaller than the Dogon fields. The Fulbe women do not cultivate but they do take part in the harvest. It is the little brother (*miñiraado*) in the family, Breihma, who cultivates the family *gesse* even if he prefers to herd the cows, and he owns his own hoe, *jalo*. He cultivates millet (*gawri*), beans (*njebbe*) and peanuts (*ngríidje*), on the field. He and Hamma complain that the Dogon who cultivates next to them steal their land by pushing the borders little by little. The Dogon has bought the land from a Pullo, they say. Hamma complains that he needs to buy back the land that his grandfather sold to a Dogon for 25,000 CFA because he needs more *gawri*. While Riesman claims that it is evident that the Fulbe men spend less and less time herding, and more time

[^144]: The use of the cattle rope (*boggol*) is one of few practices that link the Fulbe in time and space according to Dupire (1981: 179).

[^145]: Dupire writes: “The object the most endowed with supernatural forces and symbolism is the milking vessel. The woodcarver may bless it or curse it; the reproduction of the herd partially depends on it” (1985: 96). I did not find such connections in Madougou.
cultivating their fields of millet (1977: 12), I do not know if this is right in Madougou. The Fulbe in Madougou are not self-contained with grain and harvesting did not take many days, and herding is still their main activity and source of identity as Pullo gorko.

Music and “leisure” time

One beloved activity for Fulbe men when they are not herding, is to listen to traditional Fulbe music song by the griots. It is a social happening that gathers many young men, like 15-20 persons around a radio with cassette player or a ghetto blaster. Then they sit on sekke in the shadow under a tree in the wuro or in a compound in the hibbere, drinking tea and smoking cigarettes while listening to the griots singing and playing the hoddu (stringed music instrument like a guitar) and calabashes. The songs are about how much the Fulbe love their suudu baaba and their cows, the colour of the cows, about milking and selling milk, and the story of Maasina and Sékou Ahmadou Barry. As Riesman claims; “it is the bard’s primary duty to help the Fulani maintain his identity”, and he does so in two ways: by reciting genealogies and by speaking of heroes in the past (1977: 199):

One night we are listening to music at Moussa Mangel’s (brother of Belko) place in wuro Kindé. Hamma says that listening to the ‘parole’, words, hurts so much because the griot is singing about doing things for others, something one is not able to do when one is poor. The young men listen carefully and agree with the words song by nodding and singing along. The ambiance is good, and there is much joking with nicknames (waccore macco), and the cross-cousins (dendiraabe) present. The body language of the young men at these happenings is very gay. They lie upon each other, fight for fun and hold each others hands. They smoke cigarettes and make themselves beautiful, brushing their hair while looking in the mirror.

Gatherings like this are important elements in the confirmation and maintenance of the Fulbe noble identity, in contrast to the realities of the relative poor agro-pastoral lifestyle they live. The songs are about the glorious days of the Fulbe when they were in power and had many

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146 I was not present during the cultivation season.
cows, and these songs about heroes in the past are an important element in the construction of the image of the Fulbe as nobles. It is a sort of “Fulbe production” (Riesman 1984: 183), and important for keeping up the moral in an everyday life that is rather stressful.

**The household and social reproduction**

The household is central in Fulbe social life, and because of the centrality of the women in the household, it challenges the patrilineality in Fulbe society (de Bruijn 1997: 626). Social reproduction of norms for interaction according to gender and generation are transferred between individuals in the household. The household unit is the center in the domestic economy, and it is on the level of the household the distribution of milk and food finds place. According to Ortner, the actors need little reflection to act in the domestic \(^{147}\) domain, and it is in this part of the social system that the “conservatism of a system tends to be located” (1984: 150). Even if it is difficult to define the Fulbe domestic domain, it has to do with the social reproduction in the household where the degree of cultural complexity is the lowest. Still, the household is dependent on relations across ethnic and nyeeybe borders to exist, and the Fulbe domestic domain therefore transcends these borders.

It is on the level of the household, the suudu, that the conflicts in Fulbe society appear most clearly (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 165), and the household is an arena for conflict and competition as well as sharing (Moore 1994: 86-87). There are many types of quarrels inside the household. There are quarrels about social insecurity, social status, work and money, and about the household member’s public actions; if members act according to norms for proper Fulbe behaviour or if they “spoil” the family’s name (semtude). As a widow, my hostess Ada is among the potential “structural” poor in Madougou, and her economic and social position is difficult. She complains that she is not receiving any “help”, and quarrels

\(^{147}\) The ‘domestic’ domain is not the same as the household.
with members of her household (her children and her daughters-in-law) and her neighbours (her in-laws, esiraabe, i.e. her children’s partikin) almost every day. Different roles are often in conflict in the household, and the different actors have different access to resources according to different social status, gender and generation, and this create tensions and oppositions between the different members of the household.

The instability of the household

The poverty and insecurity in daily life creates stress and conflicts in the social relations, and the different tasks and priorities according to gender, generation and marital status display conflicts between the members of the household. There is a lot of quarrelling about money and priorities according to work and time spending. The composition of the household varies with time for different reasons. Members leave on migration, they divorce and move according to the seasonal cycle or life cycle events (de Bruijn 1997: 629). Other reasons for household division may be quarrels over inheritance, authority conflicts or personal differences (Toulmin 1992: 268-269). Stenning (1962) describes what he calls the “household viability” among the pastoral Fulani in Bornu in Nigeria. He claims that the household is viable when there is equilibrium between the size of the household (enough members to carry out the productional tasks necessary to survive) and the outcome of the subsistantial production of the household (that the household produces enough food to support the members of the household). When there are too many people to feed, the household splits up to find a new equilibrium, and in this way Fulani social life may be seen as a series of centripetal and centrifugal processes to find equilibrium (ibid.). Is the concept of “viability of the household” still relevant for the agro-pastoralist Fulbe in Madougou? I will argue that “household instability” is a better concept than viability to understand the social processes in the household, the suudu. Henrietta Moore stresses the permeability of the
household: that it is better analyzed not as a bounded unit, and that the household may be studied as an arena for competition and conflict between interests instead of an arena for sharing (1994: 86-87), and I will follow her approach. On my arrival in Madougou, I found that neither the “wife” and son of Hamma, nor the wife and son of Breihma were present in the wuro Fulbe. That was not coincidental, and their presence or non-presence in the wuro set the agenda for many of the family troubles and worries:

When I first arrived in Madougou, only Ada, her unmarried daughter Verlore and her son Breihma were present. Fatma had taken Ousmane back to her suudu baaba, Naye, and Ada complains that Hamma has not married Fatma. She wants him to marry Fatma and bring her back to Madougou. But Hamma refuses, saying he can not live with her. He is going back to Bamako, and he can not take Fatma with him. She is ‘deaf’ and has no education, he says. Some days after this conversation, Ada comes with the wife of the Labbo griot in the wuro. They order Hamma to go to Naye and to bring Fatma and Ousmane with him back. Hamma says he can not refuse the will of a griot, and the next morning he goes to Naye to bring back Fatma. He returns at noon, saying that it is arranged that Fatma will come later that day, because he has given her father 2500 CFA. But by night she has not come yet. On Sunday, Fatma has still not come, but Ada puts back a plastic bucket and plastic cup in Fatma’s suudu, saying Fatma will not be satisfied if she notices that Ada has borrowed from her in her absence. Hamma remarks that it is Ada that has asked Fatma to leave the wuro, and therefore she can not touch Fatma’s things. When one has asked someone to leave, one cannot touch their things afterwards. That is not good and may destroy one’s name (bonnude indema) he says. The Labbo griot, Idy, leaves for Naye to get Fatma and Ousmane back, and after dark he returns with them. Hamma’s son Ousmane recognizes Ada, and Ada calls him ‘my husband’ (gorkam) and is very happy. Hamma and Fatma are not talking to each other, but everybody is happy, and we eat peanuts (ngiridje) and drink tea, women in one group (also the Labbo woman eats with us), and men at the other side of the fire. Later, when Fatma leaves again for her suudu baaba she has to leave Ousmane behind, because he ‘belongs to his father’. Ousmane cries when she leaves, and she looks very sad.

The Laube play the role as intermediates in “marital” conflicts as the one above, and the Labbo succeeds where the “husband” Hamma fails. As Riesman shows, the husband-wife relation develops slowly (1977: 112), and it is too early to say what will happen to Fatma’s and Hamma’s relation or if they will marry. But as not married, Fatma’s position in the household is insecure and marginal, and she has few rights. She is in a liminal and not defined position “between kin and affines” (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 367), and the suudu
baaba functions as a place for refuge for women like Fatma in the case of conflict. According to Riesman, among the Jelgobe the woman own the suudu she lives in, but it only begins to exist as a structural unit after the birth of a son (1977: 86). In the case of Hamma and Fatma who are not married but has a son, Hamma disputes Fatmas right to the suudu, claiming it is his, because they are not married. When Fatma is sick (she may be pregnant) and does want to get up and work, Ada complains that Fatma, her “daughter-in-law” is “killing” her. But as long as Fatma has a child here, the suudu is for her, and Ada may not refuse her food. Neither Ada nor Hamma may chase her; she has to leave voluntarily they say. Finally, when Fatma decides to go back to her suudu baaba, Ada is not satisfied, saying “we have the same parents”, and claiming it is Hamma that has chased her. She may not say anything if Fatma takes Ousmane with her, even if Ousmane is “for her”, that is their tradition (tawaangal). Ada just wants Fatma to get up and work, not to leave.

Many quarrels between members of the household concerns how they act in according to Fulbe norms for behaviour for honour and shame (semtude), and shameful acting, like herding for others, may destroy the name of the family:

When Breihma does not return after a cow party in a neighbouring village, and since his wife Mayrama has already left the wuro the day before, Ada thinks it is Koumbel, innam Mayrama, who is responsible for the disappearances. Hamma says that Breihma for long time has talked about earning money for himself and he thinks that Breihma will end up as ‘a Maccudo, looking after other people’s cows’. Hamma says that there is nothing he can do if his little brother will ‘destroy the family’. But then the relationship will be over for him. Ada takes the opportunity to tell Hamma that now is the time for him to begin to work, or they can not stay in the wuro. But Hamma answers that he will find someone who can herd the cows instead of Breihma, and nobody is going to force him to stay; he has his own life elsewhere.

Poverty means shame (semtude) for the Fulbe and is a constant threat to them. It forces the poor to leave the wuro and find work elsewhere because of lack of help relations. The disappearance of Breihma may be interpreted in the light of the rule that the younger brothers
miñiraado worbe) must leave the older to get independence (cf. Riesman 1977: 89, 94), and as Riesman claims; the Jelgobe “see their living as existing under the shadow of an ever possible coming apart” (1977: 37). Life is a process of leaving others or to be left by others (ibid.), but poverty makes it difficult to become self-sufficient; there are no herds to inherit so the miñiraado can herd for oneself. And there are no other ways to earn money in Madougou because the Fulbe show contempt for a Pullo herding on contract for others or who works for others to earn money (cf. Riesman 1977: 223); it is semtude and will destroy the good name of the family. Ada’s household is on the limit of poverty, but as long as they manage without herding for the Dogon, they keep their noble status, and they have not become “slaves”, Maccubé; and slavery is a part of the ongoing inter-ethnic discourse to distinguish oneself from the “others”.

One reason for the women to split the household and leave is when there is not enough milk and food to share, the household being unit for redistribution and consumption:

Ada’s extended household or hearthhold consists of three cuudi when everyone with the right to belong to it is present. One suudu is Ada and her unmarried daughter, Verlore, the other is her firstborn son Hamma, his ‘wife’ Fatma (they are not married yet) and their son Ousmane, and the third is Ada’s second born son Breihma, his wife Mayrama and their son Amadoun. Still, the three cuudi constitute one cooking and consumption unit because the two sons, Hamma and Breihma, have not yet established their own households or cooking units and they still belong to Ada’s cooking unit. The women in the family help each other and change to prepare cooking food, but it is Ada who distributes the gawri to her daughters-in-law when one of them is cooking the meal. Contrary, the patrilateral grandmother and neighbour Teddy gets two plates of nyiiri each day, one from each of her daughter’s-in-law, while Ada gets no plates of nyiiri because when her daughter’s-in-law are cooking it is Ada who distributes the gawri. What Breihma cultivates on the family field belongs to Ada, and it is still not enough to support the extended household. Breihma stands in a difficult position as Hamma’s little brother (miñiraado) with no authority, and the millet Hamma buys for the money he has earned as a guide he gives directly to Ada and not to his little brother nor to Fatma, his “wife”.

The redistribution of food takes place inside the extended household, and it is difficult for the sons and daughters-in-law to establish their own cooking units when they have not enough
milk or gawri to share. Poverty makes the establishment of independent production and consumption units difficult, and this leads to the problem of authority in the household.

**Decision-making and authority relations in the household**

Hamma and Ada are disputing who the head of the household, hoore suudu, is. Normally, it is the father who has authority over his children, but Hamma thinks he is the hoore, because his father is dead, and he is the oldest son (the principle of primogeniture). But, since Hamma travels as a guide and is away most of the year, Ada thinks she is the hoore, because it is her that stays in the suudu and makes decisions when Hamma is away. The result of this undefined authority relation is a lot of quarrelling about decision making in the household, Hamma saying it is he who decides; it is the man that is the head (hoore) of the suudu: gorko wonni hoore suudu. “A woman can not be chief, and Ada talks too much”, he says and continues: “the Fulbe women are too complicated”. Ada says that Hamma may not decide over her and what to do, and he on his side claims that he is the chief of the family (hoore suudu):

Ada complains that Hamma is not working. She says that, contrary to her husband, she can not force her son to do anything. Because she has no milk to sell, she has no money. She is angry with Hamma because he doesn’t give her any money. The wife of the village chief, Kadja, tries to negotiate between them without success and one day Ada takes Verlore and walks to Sengomara and her suudu baaba, saying she is going to visit her mother (her father is dead). Hamma and I are on our way to Kindé on the moped and pass them on the way. Hamma stops in Sengomara to talk to Ada’s brothers (kawiraabe) and Ada’s mother (innam). The kawiraabe say that it is Ada’s destiny (tagadi\(^\text{148}\)), and that nobody may change it. But they agree that she makes the situation worse by taking Verlore with her, because then there is nobody to herd the goats in Madougou.

The quarrel between Hamma and Ada is about authority and work. One of the privileges of being old and having children is to be able to “sit” and not have to work (goalla). Ada

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\(^{148}\) The destiny may be interpreted as God’s will; tagaado meaning God’s creation, human beings. Riesman calls it tageefo; “everything that God made” (1990: 331). One’s destiny is part of one’s personality, as Ada’s case shows.
complains that she never gets any rest, that she always has to work, and this goes against her status as a noble, Dimo. She works like a “Maccudo” for her children, she says. Nobody takes care of her and she has to do all the work herself. According to Riesman, “to be able-bodied and not work means that there is someone who works for one, and that between oneself and that person there exist a relation of authority based on inequality of status” (Riesman 1977: 73). So what Ada is really complaining about is that she has no authority to force someone to work for her, and that goes against her ideas of being a respectable and noble Pullo debbo of a certain age. The quarrelling between Ada and Hamma is also a generation conflict between different value-systems. Ada wants Hamma to stay in the wuro and to work, to herd the cows; she does not see that he is working. He on the other side just wants to leave Madougou and work as a guide elsewhere. The problem is that he is not accumulating enough money for cows, so Ada does not see the meaning of his work. In this way, the conflict between mother and son is both a gender and generation conflict. It is a result of the dependency situation and the economic insecurity that Ada as a widow and dependent on her sons finds herself in; she does not know when she will be paid and how much money she is going to get from Hamma, and there is not enough milk to sell for her to be independent and self-sufficient like she would have been if her husband had been alive, and she would have access to the family’s cattle. It is also a value conflict between herding and working for money by guiding. Still, Hamma respects his mother even if he quarrels with her because she is his mother. Hampâté Bâ writes about respect for the mother in Fulbe society; “il y aura donc des choses qu’un Peul bien né refusera de faire. ... Un Peul peut désobéir à son père, jamais à sa mère. La règle est absolue”. (1992: 10) According to Bâ, it is one of the double fidelities of being a Pullo; namely the code of honor (pulaaku) and the mother’s will:
When Ada is away in Naye, Hamma complains about the cooking of Fatma and Mayrama; that their millet porridge (*nyiiri*) is not as good as his mother’s. Except that Ada talks too much (*hala annahewi*) she is good, and she makes the best food, he says. He is lost without her, and wants her to come home soon. He says that men may pound millet for their mothers, but not for their wives. One loves one’s mother very much, because she has given you birth. So one may never insult or answer back to one’s mother. But a wife you can beat if you are not happy with her. The mother you have to protect and obey.

As Riesman shows, authority is based on inequality in status (1977: 73, 75 and 125), and a mother is supposed to insult her children because of this inequality (ibid.: 78). There are serious examples of the lack of authority and *yaage* (respect and avoidance) and how the Fulbe may spoil each other’s names, as this case illustrates:

Oumaro and Hama insult Bilali.\(^{149}\) Bilali is Hama’s real *baaba* and Oumaro’s classificatory *baaba*, and it is a relation defined by *yaage* behaviour. They come in the evening and insult him badly, saying things like ‘fuck your mother and father’. Hamma says that the men in the family ‘are like women’ since they let this happen. If he had been there, it would not have happened, he says. It is very serious, since Bilali is the head of the family, *hoore galle*, and then the whole family’s name is destroyed. The next day Bilali reports this to Belko, the village chief, and Belko brings it to the Commandant who sends Oumaro to prison. He is supposed to pay 65,000 CFA as a compensation for spoiling the name of Bilali.

This case shows lack of respect and authority against an older generation and illustrates how Bilali’s authority as *hoore galle* is declining in accordance with the household cycle; i.e. the sons replace the father when he is old, and the sons have established themselves in households and claim their independence (cf. Riesman 1977). Riesman defines authority as being about the rights to command and to be obeyed, and it is about the rights to goods and services (1977: 74, 89). Acting in a disrespectful way is a practice diverging from the ideal Fulbe behaviour (ibid.: 128) and shows divergent cultural values. In theory, quarrelling is against the Fulbe ideal of self-control and *semtude*, but in practice there is shameful social performance leading to *semtude* for close kin, and the household as an arena for authority and power relations makes it an arena for conflicts.

\(^{149}\) Unfortunately, the reason for the insult is not clear to me, only that it had something to do with the ownership of a tree in the *wuro*.  

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Gendered values and interpretations

The different interpretations given of Breihma’s and Mayrama’s disappearances from the household illustrate how gendered an interpretation of an event may be, and how variable the size and composition of the household is. Public gatherings and celebrations like cow parties create stress and tensions in the family relations because it is an opportunity to seek a second wife:

When Breihma has left for the cow party in Bindama, Hamma says that Breihma does not take responsibility for the family by going to amuse himself instead of herding. The wife of Breihma, Mayrama, is jealous and afraid that Breihma is seeking a second wife. The next day she packs her things and leave for Sorindé and her innam at suudu baaba. Mayrama’s brother was in Madougou earlier that day, and Hamma thinks it is him that has told Mayrama to leave. Hamma says she is free to do what she wants, but he doesn’t like it. He says that Mayrama is a ‘materialist’ because she comes to Breihma every time she needs something, but she never stays more than one month at the time. He likes women that love their husbands and stay, no matter what happens. Hamma says it is better to find a new wife for Breihma, one who loves him even if he is poor. His interpretation of Mayrama’s disappearance is that Mayrama wants to show that his family is poor, even if they are better off than Mayrama’s family, because one argument for Mayrama’s departure was that there was not enough milk for her to sell. Since there have been no births or deaths in Sorindé lately, there are no reasons for Mayrama to stay there. It can only mean that Mayrama doesn’t care about Breihma, and that damages his family. If it is goggam Koumbel (innam Mayrama) that has decided this, he wants Breihma to find a new wife, because when one is married, it is the husband who decides over the wife and not the mother. Hamma claims in a sort of desperation that ‘it is not normal. When one has married, it is no longer one’s mother, but one’s husband who decides’.

Later when Mayrama returns to the wuro Banikani, she says that it was her own idea to leave. She left because Breihma was going to the cow party, and she thought he would find a second wife. But her mother was angry with her for returning to Sorindé, so she stayed with an aunt. Everybody is angry with her, even if she is back with her husband in Madougou. As Riesman claims: “Every woman, if she does not yet have a co-wife, lives under the constant threat of the arrival of one, and it is a threat against which she can offer no legal resistance” (1977: 92). Fulbe men and women have different priorities, and their values differ. While
Fulbe men claim authority over their wives, Fulbe women have autonomy and leave for *suudu baaba* if they are not happy with their husbands because men’s and women’s priorities differ:

Hamma and Breihma are discussing when to buy *gawri* in the market. Breihma wants to wait, because if they buy it now, the women will eat it instead of harvesting ‘small millet’ (*catorde*, the last millet to be harvested), and then they have to buy millet again soon. So they decide to wait, even if the prices are low now. Breihma says he has to move (*eggi*) when the harvest is finished. If not, the women will eat too much. If he leaves, his wife Mayrama must sell milk to buy *gawri*, something she does not do when they stay in the *wuro* in Madougou. Hamma says ‘one has to fight’ in the sense one has to fight against the will of the women. He says that the women in Madougou are spoiled because they live in a village with a market place, and they do not save their money, but spend it on food.

To spend much money on food is *semtude*, and in this case, to *eggi* is used as a threat against the women, a way of saving the *gawri* in the *wuro*, and the blame for consuming too much is put on the women, that they are being spoilt by living close to the market. But a different interpretation of who are spoiled is given by Ada in this case:

Ada complains one night that her son Breihma spends too much time in the *hibbere* instead of taking care of his work; to herd the cows. It is after six in the evening and Breihma has not returned home from the *hibbere* to tie the goats and go to sleep with the cows for the night in the *hoggo*. Ada says he is not a real Pullo, staying in *hibbere* so late. She and Hamma agree about Breihma being spoiled, since he doesn’t do his work properly. Ada says he should move the cows to better pastures, so they will have more *bingel*, calves. It is not good that Breihma and his wife stay so long in the *wuro*. Breihma and *bappanjam* Hama are eating too much and are getting thick, they are not like other Fulbe, Ada complains: ‘Just look at his body! He is an eater! It is not good, to eat the money’, she says.

To “eat the money” means to spoil, which is *semtude*. The norms for “correct” Pullo behaviour and the image of the ideal Pullo body as a slim Pullo with the *sawru* over his shoulders while herding *nay*; *pullo gorko droi nay*, is the opposite of the image given by Ada above of a fat Pullo eating too much and who doesn’t care about herding. To be identified as a Pullo one has to incorporate the body practice of herding. The work one carries out and the

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150 This show how their behaviour lacks adaption to the market and price fluctuations, as noted by Dupire (1962).
incorporation of the knowledge of work are important categories for classification of “us” and “the other”, and I will return to this in chapter 6. As these cases show, there is a discrepancy in interpretations between the sexes about the value of the different tasks they perform. The Fulbe rewbe complains that the Fulbe worbe don’t work but only like to drink tea, smoke and listen to music in the hibbere. And the Fulbe worbe complains that the Fulbe rewbe are spoiled and only sell milk to earn money to spend on themselves in the market. This typical discussion shows how gendered ideas about work and values are:

One day, there is a discussion between Hamma, Breihma, Bargo and grandmother Amtal about who is working the most, men or women. Amtal says it is the women, because they harvest the gawri, pound gawri, cook nyiiri, fetch water and sell milk. The men do not agree, they say the women profit on their nay and hide the money in their suudu. They say it is they who cultivate, herd, give water to the animals, and then the women come and steal the milk to sell it. Bargo says that one should not listen to the women; they don’t show the right way: fati djaba waadja debbo hollatama laawol lobbol, and Hamma comments that if a woman likes her husband, she buys him tea and sugar.

I think this discussion sums up the conflicting interests between the sexes. The household with its access to resources of cattle and milk is an arena for competing interests between men and women, and household members who are not satisfied with their resources may leave the household, and this makes the household instable, as I have argued. Men and women have different interests in cattle and milk, something I will explore further in the next chapter. Values are gendered, and there is an internal Fulbe discourse about work and values of consumption. There is a high level of conflict and competition inside the household and between households of the patriline for access to labour and resources, and sedentarisation sharpens the distinctions in wealth and life-style between the households (Baxter 1975: 224). Households are not self-sufficient on the reproductive level, but dependent on relations with the “others” to exist, like the Dogon for exchange of milk for millet for subsistence and the Laube as mediators in marital conflicts. While the household is an arena for conflicts between
its different members, like spouses, kin and affines, it is also an arena for sharing and affiliation. But there are relations of sharing and affiliation that go beyond the household, and cross the ethnic and nyeeybe borders, and the Fulbe domestic domain in this way is part of a complex network of exchange relations by which the Fulbe affiliate themselves to others and negotiate and reproduce their identity. While there is a low degree of cultural complexity inside the household, the households are connected to others through a “complex web of cross-cutting ties” (ibid.), but the nature of these ties vary according to the socio-economic status of the household, as I will explore further in chapter 6.
Chapter 4: Fulbe Orientations and Meanings of Life

The Fulbe community is internally differentiated according to gender and generation, and there are inequalities between the different families and members of the families according to wealth and status. There is much conflict inherent in Fulbe relations with other Fulbe, and jealousy is part of everyday life. As de Bruijn and van Dijk notes: “… in every society, too much inequality has its costs, it leads to jealousy and conflict, haasidaare as it is called in Fulbe society” (1995: 402). However, there is agreement among the Fulbe on some key values of what it means to be a Pullo in contrast to the Dogon and others, and in this chapter I will explore different Fulbe meanings of life and how the Fulbe manage their individual identities in a context of both cohesion and conflict.

Sedentarisation and mobility

The Fulbe are dependent on a mobile lifestyle in times of crisis like droughts, when they wander off to pastures with their cattle (Riesman 1977, 1984; de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995). As a result of this mobility pattern, there has been a high degree of flexibility in the household composition, and it goes through periods of expansion and dispersion, and Fulbe lifestyle is “adapted” to pastoralism (Burnham 1999: 271). Still, I will argue with Burnham against Stenning’s (1962) structural-functionalist tendency to “analyse certain pastoral Fulbe cultural practices as regulatory mechanisms promoting equilibrium, for example, between household composition and herd size” (Burnham 1999: 271). Today, external forces work on the household economy and influence the “viability” and the stability of the household. There are always individuals and families who fail in the pastoral lifestyle and therefore are forced to practice other economic modes (ibid.), but the pastoral lifestyle persists even if the pastoral category loses individuals. This is in accordance with Barth who has showed that the border
between two categories may be maintained even if there is a flow of individuals over it (1969a: 9, 1969b). There are both ecological and social reasons for dispersion, and ecology does not alone determine people’s way of life (Riesman 1977: 37-38). While flexibility and change in mobility patterns are important in times of crises like in case of drought or lack of pasture when the Fulbe need to move with their herds (cf. de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995), there is an ongoing process of settlement among the Barry in Madougou, which may led the still semi-settled Fulbe to become sedentary with time.

**Fulbe as agro-pastoralists**

The French geographer Jean Gallais has studied what he calls “the Sahelian condition” (1975: 165). This condition means that “… the distinction between cultivators and pastoralists is only gradual and every group in the Sahel has to find its own mixture of mobility/sedentarity and pastoralism versus cultivation” (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 18), and that the organisation of space is based on the flexibility of the settlements (Gallais 1975: 4). De Bruijn and van Dijk claim that there are two strategies for survival under these conditions: either the flexibility of migration as pastoralists, or sedentarisation and cultivation with crossing the ethnic border as a result (1995: 402-403). They claim that in the Hayre some Fulbe families (Jallube and Barri) have Dogonized (ibid.), and de Bruijn argues that pastoralist Fulbe in the Hayre do become agro-pastoralists out of necessities for survival, but that cultivation has low status (1999: 292). The Fulbe in Madougou have in practice become semi-settled agro-pastoralists, and I will question how this does affect the Fulbe identity and self-esteem. My hypothesis is that to own cattle is not necessary to remain pastoralist; it is to keep pastoralist values through practice and knowledge that is important, and, as we will see

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151 According to Burnham (1999: 276) there is no point in distinguishing between “pastoralism” and the practice of “animal husbandry” as different modes of livelihood, because it would analytically freeze the societies studied, and the difference may be only gradually for some societies. However, I will claim that while the Fulbe in Madougou are pastoralists, the Dogon are not, they practice animal husbandry for economical reasons, and the difference is “socially reproduced as cultural knowledge” between the categories (ibid.).
below, the herding contract is part of a strategy to keep a pastoral lifestyle and values even if one is poor. One may be poor and not own livestock, and still identify oneself as pastoralist while trying to rebuild one’s herd through different strategies (cf. Basset 1994). Burnham (1999) explores Fulbe ethnic identity and the on-going processes of ethnic identity construction in West-Africa. I will argue with Burnham that “… the persistence of an ethnic category is better analysed as a function of the conditions governing the social reproduction of such categorisations and not as a function of the lifestyles of particular individuals or families” (1999: 279). He argues against an essentialist approach to the Fulbe cultural category, and he shows how the category of Fulbe pastoralists always has contained individuals and families that have not succeeded in the pastoral way of life, and therefore the necessity of practising other economic modes, like agro-pastoralism and labour migration, has always existed (ibid.: 271). Through his study of social change in Fulbe societies, he finds that the Fulbe ethnic category is persistent (ibid.: 279), and concludes that:

… many communities who define themselves ethnically as Fulbe own little or no livestock and the persistence of the Fulbe category can most clearly be seen, in such milieus, as deriving from the politics of ethnic difference within the context of modern West African states. (Burnham 1999: 282)

This is in accordance with my data from Madougou. Ethnic identity in Madougou is constructed in a dichotomist negotiation process between the Fulbe and the relevant others, like the Dogon and the different nyeeeybe in a modern, global context, and Stenning’s “viability perspective” is somehow out of date. The different groups and categories make stereotypical images of each others as pastoralists and agro-culturalists based on ideas about (former) division of labour and lifestyles that do not necessarily correspond to today’s mode of production or economic reality. The Fulbe and Dogon ethnic identities are constructed in interaction and relations with the significant or relevant other, and can not be extrapolated from their economic activities or lifestyles. As Riesman observes, the Jelgobe Fulbe “… have
a mixed economy of cattle-raising and agriculture. They think of themselves as herdsmen, but, as distinguished from true nomads, they cultivate millet fields ...” (1977: 12). Even if both the Fulbe and the Dogon in Madougou in fact are “agro-pastoral” because both categories herd cows and cultivate, there is a difference in the social reproduction of knowledge of pastoralism and cultivating, and a difference between the reproduction of a “pastoral mentality” and animal husbandry as an economic activity (Burnham 1999: 276), as I will show below.

**Transhumance or seasonal migrations as a cultural difference**

The chief Belko is specific about the difference between Fulbe and Dogon: *pullo goalla nagge* (the Fulbe work with cows), and when there is nothing more to eat, one has to *eggi*, to move, to exchange milk for millet. That is why the Fulbe may not marry the Dogon, cultivate or go into commercial activities, Belko claims. The process of transhumance (*eggude*) starts in the cold season (*dabbude*) in the middle of December when many Fulbe leave Madougou to settle on their Dogon *njaatigi* fields. *Eggude* is an individual or family affair, and there are hardly any fixed patterns of transhumance (cf. de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 162-163). Why some are going on transhumance and others are not is an individual choice, according to Grayzel (1990: 54), and the transhumance moving pattern is like an “outdoor ballet” (ibid.: 48). Before, the Fulbe on *eggude* did not return before the rain started in June, but today they do, and in the end of February the Fulbe return from *eggude* because there is no more “tiges du mil”, fodder for the cows to eat on the fields. Today, the Dogon harvest everything because they have their own cows to feed, and there is not enough left for

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152 *Egguide* means to travel or to move: *mi eggii*. *Mi hootii* means I have come back.
153 The wind (Harmattan) and sand storms start in *dabbunde*. People are sick: “the wind brings death”, they say.
154 There are also examples of Fulbe *njaatigi* relations with other Fulbe, like when one Fulbe family on *eggude* is staying in Breihma’s *gesse*, and one day they send a *la’al* with *kossam* to Ada.
the cows to eat on the *gesse* during *eggude*. From now on the Fulbe have to manage as best they can until the rainy season, and they have to buy cotton seed as fodder in the market.

There is a discussion in the middle of December about when Breihma should go *eggi*. Ada wants him and Mayrama to leave as soon as possible, but Breihma is in no hurry. The life in the bush does not seem to tempt him. Ada asks me about what they should do when the *gawri* has finished, and I answer that then Breihma must go on *eggude*. But I have the impression that it is not the answer she wants from me.

The Fulbe women leave with their traditional white calabashes (*faggo*) on their heads when they *eggi*, and some have even to rent donkey carts from the Dogon because they have a lot of things to carry with them. Those who do not go far may still be able to visit the market in Madougou to sell milk, even when they have *eggi*. When the Fulbe go on *eggude*, they build a house called *gjoobaro* on someone’s land, like a *njaatigi* field. This house is oriented like the *suudu*, but is much simpler and less comfortable. For the Fulbe, the myth of mobility and the “threat of leaving” are always there, but I found the departures on *eggude* almost like ritual actions, the women making a lot of goodbyes and regrets when leaving, even if it was really for a short time and not very far either. It seemed to me they were keeping on to a tradition they are not interested in any longer, and the women take every chance they have to visit Madougou on market days to sell milk, even during *eggude*.

**Eggude and the idea of comfort**

People do not always want to go *eggude*, because life in the village is more comfortable than life in the bush, and also because people are afraid of thefts when they are away from their *cuudi*. The material objects get in the way for transhumance, and there is a constant fear of theft which leads the Fulbe to put locks on the doors to their *suudu* of banco. Heavy loads also result in the need for transportation means which cost money (Dupire 1985: 87). While the Fulbe women prefer to stay at home because it is more comfortable, near the wells and
the market place where they can sell *kossam*, the Fulbe men complain that the Fulbe women in Madougou are being spoilt because of the market. Riesman describes the transhumance experience as expressing “the real Fulani life” (1977: 158), but I think this is less true today. Young herders like Breihma prefer to stay in the village both because it is more comfortable and because it is more amusing to go to the market in Madougou than to live in the bush, and this reinforces the sedentarisation process in Madougou and reduces the flexibility and the mobility of the Fulbe. The sedentarisation of the Fulbe is nothing new; it has been going on for a long time (cf. Prussin 1986), and the mosque was built three generations ago by Belko’s grandfather. But today it is especially difficult for the women to go on transhumance and leave behind their possessions, like beds, mats and water jars. One typical case is when the chief’s wife Kadja shall *eggi*. She is not able to carry all her things in the *faggo*, so she has to rent a Dogon donkey cart. She is very afraid that all the things she has to leave behind, like her bed, mats and water jars, will be stolen. Has it always been like this? Dupire asks the same: “Did neolithic herders carrying heavy objects migrate less than the nomadic Fulani of the East, or did they have more pack animals?” (1985: 87), and she assumes the last option. Is it a change in Fulbe lifestyle and values we are observing, and is the idea of personal comfort replacing the earlier comfort of the animals (cf. Dupire 1981: 171)? May Fulbe women in Madougou be seen as “agents of change” (Barth 1969a: 33) by not wanting to go *eggude*, and is it a gendered conflict – do the men have to “force” the women to go *eggude*? To answer these questions, let me look closer at the role personal consumption practices in Fulbe lives.

**Pastoralism, consumption and social identities**

Changes in consumption practices and values motivated by the women to get a more comfortable and better material life may influence the Fulbe tradition of going on transhumance. Is there a movement from a “pastoralist” consuming ethos (Riesman 1990:...
327) to a “consumerist” ethos (cf. Gell 1986) and a sedentary lifestyle among the Fulbe in Madougou? There are different priorities in the household and patterns of consumption are gendered. While the men is responsible for cultivating enough and bringing enough food to the families among the Dogon and the nyeeybe and the former slaves, it is the women who are responsible for bringing food to the household among the Fulbe. When husbands give something like jewelry or clothes to their wives, it is in the form of gifts, and not obligations (Grayzel 1990: 46). The women sell milk to obtain what they need for daily life consumption, and this practice is despised by their neighbours, who find the Fulbe men lazy. But the Fulbe women are not only interested in food, they are also interested in new consumption objects like clothes, shoes (padde) and jewelry, plastic articles (mana), industrially produced soap and washing powder offered in the market. In this way the role of women as consumers in the global market influences the Fulbe pastoral lifestyle. But the need for money to spend on consumer goods creates tensions in social relations and between the sexes in the household, and particularly in the marital relation between the husband and wife, because there is a conflict of interest in what the women spend their money on. There are different responsibilities between the husband and the wife, men and women, for bringing the different consumption objects like food and clothes into the household. While it is the women who sell milk and buy what is needed for everyday consumption, like ingredients for the sauce, sugar, soap, etc., they decide what to purchase in the market and are also important as consumers of “luxury goods”. Luxuries in contrast to daily life consumption are just a matter of acceleration in time, the same products are consumed at Muslim feasts, like Tabaski, but everything like hairstyles and clothes has to be new. There are also internal differences between rich and poor Fulbe women, and I think it is useful to distinguish between them, like the cases of Fatma and Fata from chapter 3. Their examples show how the difference in status and wealth determines their possibilities for consumption. While Fatma has no milk to sell,
she is dependent on gifts, the rich Fata tells me that she is the one who buys clothes for the family, and clothes and jewelry are dawla for her, they have value. “The husband brings nothing else than hallere to the house”, she says, and this statement shows her economic independence. Fulbe women change the tradition of going on transhumance because they want to be consumers and live comfortable lives in the wuro instead of the uncomfortability of the bush, and in this way they are “agents of change”. Rich Fulbe women “invest” in heavy objects like water jars (loode), calabashes (koore), wooden bowls, enamel trays and plastic containers, and some have started to buy mattresses and mosquito nets for the beds. But Fulbe women still need milk to earn cash to spend on consumption; therefore I need to explore how the Fulbe value the cow.

The value of cattle and milk

According to Koumen,\(^{155}\) the Fulbe initiation text, cattle are kinsmen for the Fulbe, and this relation is expressed symbolically in the relations between the four Fulbe family clan names,\(^{156}\) the four colours of the cows, the four cardinal directions,\(^{157}\) and the four elements (Dieterlen 1965: 316). For the Fulbe in Madougou, cattle (nay) and milk (kossam) have value (dawla). Dawla is all that which gives value: money, a good “name”, and cattle, according to the Fulbe. The Fulbe say value for a Pullo gorko are cows, and value for a Pullo debbo is milk: dawla Pullo wonagge, kossam dawla Pullo debbo. According to Belko, dawla for the Fulbe are nay; and the one with the most nay has the best name. Value and a good name are linked to dawla in this statement. Belko himself has the biggest gesse and many nay, which he needs to see from time to time. Not everybody may have dawla; only God gives dawla.

\(^{155}\) Translated by Bâ and Dieterlen (1961). Pastoral initiation rituals as expressed in Koumen are important for the nomad Fulbe (Bâ 1992: 25).

\(^{156}\) Dyal: yellow cowskin, east, fire; Ba: red cowskin, west, air; So: black cowskin, south, water; and Bari: white cowskin, north, earth (Dieterlen 1965: 316).

\(^{157}\) The four cardinal directions are also expressed on the “Fulbe” herding hat (tengaré) also used by the Dogon. See Barbara E. Frank (1987) for an analysis of ethnic style and identity.
and it is linked to one’s tagadje\textsuperscript{158} (destiny). The Fulbe believe that one’s personal character is given by God, and other people can not change one’s character (cf. Riesman 1977: 115). To be rich is to be morally good because God has given one value and a good name. This belief leads to a kind of fatalism in the conception of work; because one may not influence the will of God when it comes to reproduction of cattle, it is not one’s manual work input which decides the output (the number of cows), but God’s will.\textsuperscript{159} Only God gives dawla in the form of cattle and wealth, and it is not one’s work in the form of managing the herd, which in reality is hard work, that increases the amount of cattle. The same belief counts for biological reproduction; it is the will of God that gives you many children which is highly valued. This belief in faith distinguishes the Fulbe from the Dogon, and both the Fulbe and the Dogon consider hard work necessary for the output of the cultivation process. While the Dogon work hard cultivating cash crops and invest money in cattle\textsuperscript{160} as “capital”, cattle for the Fulbe have a symbolic value beyond the economic value, and this distinguishes the Fulbe and the Dogon at the level of the social reproduction of the cultural knowledge of herding (Burnham 1999: 276). Cattle are linked to the Fulbe identity through the pastoral lifestyle, and cattle are not bought and sold easily like a commodity; selling cattle is socially sanctioned and people try to avoid it even if they need to do it from time to time to pay taxes and obtain cash. Cattle represent value and transferable wealth\textsuperscript{161} for the Fulbe (Grayzel 1990: 36; Riesman 1990: 326-327), and it is unpopular and shameful to sell or “eat” cows: i.e. to sell a cow and spend the money on consumption; it is like “eating the money”. Because the act of eating is semtude for the Fulbe, “eating” (nyama) ones cows is regarded as shameful behaviour. When there are rumours that Hama, bappanjam and Bilali’s son, sells

\textsuperscript{158} In Fulfulde, tagude means to create (on the part of God) and tagaado is God’s creation, human beings (Fagerberg-Diallo 1984).

\textsuperscript{159} “… everybody likes a rich person, because they think perhaps God likes him”, as Riesman writes (1992: 53).

\textsuperscript{160} The word cattle comes from the medieval term capitale (Lat.), meaning personal property (Merriam Webster online). For cattle as “capital”; see Hart and Sperling (1987).

\textsuperscript{161} According to Beneviste, the word wealth is driven from livestock (E. Beneviste (1969): Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes, Paris: Les Editions de Minuit (2 volumes) in Riesman 1990: 327).
nay to have money to spend, Hamma is worried because then there will be no more nay, and he says that “those who have no cows are no Pullo”. As a possible inheritor of the cattle of Bilali, his paternal grandfather, it is also his concern if the family’s cattle are “eaten”, because it brings shame on his family. Even if there are different reasons for selling a cow, the result is the same; there are fewer cattle left in the stock:

Bongolde, Bargo and Amadou bring nay to sell in the market. ‘There are many problems’, Hamma says, ‘one needs money to buy new clothes to the women, to pay the fee if the nay go in the gesse’.

De Bruijn and van Dijk claim that when the Fulbe sell productive cattle, they are poor (1995: 475). Are the Fulbe in Madougou poor, or are we witnessing a change of values to a “consumerist ethos” where it is no longer shame to “eat” one’s cows and to spend the money on consumer goods? There is still reluctance to sell cattle to “eat” the money, and there is a lot of pressure for buying cows at market days. The exchange of cattle is through the market, and while the rich Fulbe and Dogon buy and accumulate cows, the poor Fulbe sell to cover their expenses. The cattle market is sanctioned by all the Fulbe men present, observing who are selling or buying cattle. There are many discussions in the households about “eating the money”: a nyami kaalsiamalla, and the value of money for the Fulbe is different than the value of cattle. As Hamma says it:

Tomorrow, the money is finished. The talk (‘la parole’) is never finished. If he does not have money, Ada may insult him and say he doesn’t do anything for her. If he has a lot of money, she may insult him and say he is just trying to show that he is rich and she is poor. Both ways it turns out wrong. Money is nothing. What is important is to do the good things, and then Allah will pay you back.

Money, for the Fulbe, is considered perishable, even if one may buy cows for money. The meaning of money and cattle are different (cf. Bloch and Parry 1989: 22), even if the one
may be transferred into the other. Cows for the Fulbe function as savings when there is no bank: “the cows are the leftovers” (nyiiri wokedde nyiiri), Hamma says, and continues: “the wealth is the leftovers” (nyiiri wokedde nyiiri); jawdi\footnote{According to Riesman, jawdi means wealth in goods, cattle and slaves (1977: 83, 1990: 328). About slaves as “wealth in people”, see Guyer (1995: 83-84) and Pedersen (1994: 194).} means richness, wealth, all the animals. Hamma says that first one has to eat, and then one may buy cows for what is left; that is why the cows are the leftovers for what one has eaten. First they drink of the milk, and then they sell the rest. Some families sell all the milk, and that is no good, Hamma says.

While there is a general agreement about what is dawla (value) for the Fulbe, jawdi (wealth) is unevenly distributed in the wuro. Wealth is the ultimate basis of power (cf. Dupire 1981: 173), and may exert power in the form of symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1977: 195); the richest, like Belko and Bilali, are the Fulbe with the most power and the best name. As Comaroff and Comaroff remark, the “beasts” remain a symbol of economic and cultural self-sufficiency and freedom from the labour market (1990: 209), and in the case of the Fulbe this means freedom from cultivating more, which is considered “slave” work. While cattle symbolize Fulbe values above the economic level, small stock like goats and sheep are kept as investments, savings and a source of cash income for the women. Scholars emphasize the relations between the Fulbe identity and cattle, and according to Grayzel, the Fulbe identification with cattle and “the cattle way of life” is part of the shared Fulbe identity (1990: 36), and Riesman claims the Fulani depend on cows to be Fulani (1977: 93). In Koumen, the Fulbe initiation text, the cattle are emphasized as the “strength” of the Fulbe (Bâ and Dieterlen 1961: 65), and the local interpretation as Hamma gives above says that those who have no cattle are no Pullo. However, I claim that this is only partially true. One may own no cattle at all but herd other people’s cattle and remain a Pullo, poor and despised, but still Pullo. And as a Pullo, one is ranked above the “others” by other Fulbe even if one is considered poor. Cattle and the
practice of herding are important as marker of Fulbe identity in Madougou, and the relationship to cows is celebrated among the Fulbe, like in “cow parties”.

A cow party

The cow party, ‘la fête des vaches’, in Bindama is really a competition. When the herders are back after months on transhumance in the bush with the cows in the rainy season, they want to show their best animals on their return. There they meet their wives who greet them by putting a scarf on their shoulders. But there may also be fights; if there have been problems while the husband has been away, then the wife will be beaten. The men run after the cows through the wuro, gather them and beat them with the sawru, while yelling and whistling to show off their abilities as herders. The women stay on the side, admiring the herders and the cows. There are lots of noise and dust in the air; all the Fulbe stay in small crowds dressed up in their best clothes and jewelry. The young men have turbans, sawru and radios; the girls have silver money in their hair; they start to sing and dance, clapping their hands with their silver bracelets (jawi), and the movements are easy and careful. Young children learn how to act as a Pullo; the miñiraabe rewbe and miñiraabe worbe copy the gestures and acts of the older brothers and sisters, mawniraabe rewbe and mawniraabe worbe. This time the Pullo gorko who arranged the cow feast in Bindama has lost, and he has now become ‘a woman’. The next day, we hear about a fight between the girls from Bindama and that a boy cut another boy’s finger off with his knife (labbi).

The cow party is a “cultural performance” (Ortner 1973: 1341) and a socialisation ritual where the Fulbe children learn Pullo behaviour through participation. The cow party transfers knowledge of herding through practice, and it creates a cultural difference and a social distance between the Fulbe and the Dogon and others. In the cow party, the Fulbe celebrate the importance of cattle, and one may interpret the cow party as a reproduction of the Fulbe pastoral identity. Keeping cattle has symbolic value for the Fulbe, and cattle carry meaning above the economic and utility level as a symbol on the pastoral and noble Fulbe life. It is a marker of identity; while the Fulbe are pastoralists, the Dogon are not, even if they own cows, and the Dogon do not participate in the ritual, even if they are spectators. (I will elaborate on the differences between the Fulbe and the Dogon in relation to lifestyle and work in chapter 6.) After the cow party, the party itself, the cows and the beautiful Fulbe women present are discussed over and over again by the men while drinking tea in the wuro.
and nurse the desire for *dawla, jawdi* and for beautiful women, *rewbe lobbo*. In addition to cows, milk is a key symbol of Fulbe identity and an important marker of Fulbe women’s identity, i.e. cattle and milk provides cultural “orientations” for the “ordering of actions” (Ortner 1973: 1344). By selling milk (*sippi kossam*) Fulbe women maximise the difference with the Dogon women who do not sell milk, but “gallettes du mil”. It is an exchange of milk and grain based on different lifestyles and different identities. The colour of the milk is a sign of beauty for the Fulbe, and everything valued should be “white”: the colour of the skin, the colour of the calabashes, the plastic shoes they buy in the market: all are “white”. Selling milk gives the Fulbe women access to consumer goods which have value for them, like clothes and accessories, and the lack of milk undermines a woman’s social position. As Talle claims; “Women tend to relate their material poverty to the alienation of their livestock property and the lack of access to cash resources” (1988: 262), and further: “Women even leave their husbands if the situation becomes intolerable” (ibid.: 263), which is true also in Madougou. For the Fulbe women, material objects like the house, the size of the bed and the number and quality of the mats (*sekke*) have value and give the owner “a good name”. To have many *sekke* shows the woman’s richness and wealth. For women *dawla* is cattle and milk, but also the house and the bed (*balndi*) which symbolises their social position as married women. In reality, the Fulbe in Madougou are not as mobile any longer, and the house, *suudu*, plays an important role in the management of the Fulbe identity and as an ethnic marker. I will now explore the meaning of the house both as a symbol and in social practice.

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163 The value of the white colour may be linked to the association of the Barry with the white colour of the cowskin; see Dieterlen (1965: 316).
The meaning of the house

Berge has studied the nomadic Tuareg in Northern Mali. She claims that “…easing a nomadic life is the fact that nomads do not put esteem in owning many and heavy possessions” (Berge 2000: 218). In Madougou, the Fulbe women value many possessions, and they own many heavy objects, like loode, sekke, balndi, etc., which they display in their cuudi. Many possessions increase the probability of settling, and exemplify women as agents of change in the process of becoming fully sedentary. The sedentarisation process leads to material changes, and more and more Fulbe in Madougou build cuudi toggoro - houses of banco - like the Dogon. While the plan of the suudu toggoro may be circular or rectangle, the interior in a suudu toggoro is organised in the same way as the suudu hoddo. In the suudu, different aspects of Fulbe identity and social practices are expressed. It concerns the exchange relations in the building process, the house as a symbol of marriage and women’s social status and property rights, the house as a symbol of gender relations by male and female orientations in the house, and the house as a place for reproduction and consumption practices. The suudu is also as a place for Fulbe women to pray. A suudu is a place to hide, and the suudu carries meaning in the sense of an amulet cover which protects its sacred contents and links the house to Islam; sedentarisation makes it easier to pray according to Prussin (1986: 225). The house also express cultural values like beauty, and following Ortner (1973); the suudu may be seen as a new key symbol of Fulbe culture, and a source of personal prestige for women (Dupire 1963: 85). While Riesman claims that cattle and slaves, but not houses, are jawdi for the Fulbe (1990: 328), I will argue that in Madougou houses are becoming jawdi, and this represents a change of cultural values for the Fulbe.
The suudu as gendered space

According to Carsten and Hugh-Jones, the house is “a prime agent of socialization” (1995: 2), and the Fulbe suudu and the use of it are important factors in the construction of the self and of gender relations. The suudu has both a symbolic and practical dimension (cf. Bourdieu 1977, 1979). The suudu and the body are strongly linked, and the use of the house constitutes the differences between the sexes; there are male and female orientations in the house. For the Fulbe, the earth is flat with four directions, and this is reflected in the process of the building of their cuudi. When building a suudu, the first thing to do is to draw a circle on the ground with the help of a rope tied to a pole in the centre of where the suudu is going to stand. Then the four directions are marked: saahel – north; baleeri - south (literally “the land that is black”); fulnange – east, or lettogal, the female side; and hiirnange – west, or gorgal, the male side. The entrance is oriented to the south - south-west. The interior of the suudu is divided by an axis running north-south in a male western part and a female eastern part, and in this way the suudu is a gendered space. Gorgal is the men’s western side of the house, and lettogal is the female’s eastern side.164 The bed (balndi), a structure of wooden piles with a variable amount of sekke on, occupies in practice most of the interior space. It is surrounded with sekke as “walls”, and a wooden structure compose the “roof” which is used as a shelter (danki) for storage. Like this, the bed is like a little “box” inside the suudu. The male side of the bed is called hoore balndi, “the head of the bed”. Male objects like labbe and old spears (wango); “from the time the Fulbe were warriors and used horses”, are placed against the wall at the gorgal side of the suudu. Danki kossam, the shelter to store the milk (kossam) is always placed at the west side, and the side with the water jars (loode), and danki yiite to store the food is always placed to the east, the side of the fire (yiite). Water and milk are always placed at hirnange, and food and fire against fulnange. Women sleep on the fulnange

164 The nomadic Fulbe are known for arranging their camps in spaces segregated by sex; west is synonymous with “front”, east with “back” (cf. Stenning 1959: 104-106).
side of the bed, men on the hiirnange side, both with their heads toward the baleeri, south, where the entrance is, and the feet against saahel, north.

One day Hamma and I are eating inside my suudu when grandmother Amtal pays us a visit. She says to Hamma: ‘debbo djootoo hoore baldemaa’; literally meaning ‘the woman is sitting on your place, the head’. She is pointing out that I am sitting on Hamma’s ‘head’, on his place in the suudu, which in fact I am. Then she asks me if I am a man and Hamma a woman, since I am sitting on the gorgal (male) side of the suudu. She is not angry, only joking with us. One day Fata comes to my suudu and finds me asleep with my feet toward baleeri (south). She wakes me up laughing, and says to me that I have to sleep in the other direction, with my head against baleeri and my feet against saahel. When I ask why, she only says it is their tradition (tawaangal).

In polygynous households the entrance of the house of the second (and the fourth) wife is oriented in the opposite direction with the door toward the saahel. Then the interior is “mirrored” or “reversed” so the male and female sides are the same. But the head when sleeping is oriented against saahel and the feet against baleeri. All cuudi are arranged in the same way, also houses built on eggude, called gjoobaro. They are much simpler than the cuudi in the wuro, but identically arranged according to directions and interior. Cultural meaning and tradition is incorporated and learned through the practice of the house (Bourdieu 1977). According to Bourdieu, it is through the embodiment of the space of the house the earliest learning processes starts (1977: 90), and through the bodily learning process, the Fulbe internalise the organic relationship with the house, like when giving birth in the suudu:

Fatmata (the wife of Ada’s brother Moussa) gives birth to a baby boy in Ada’s suudu; she has walked from Sengomara to visit the market in Madougou. She gives birth (beyni) sitting on the floor at the east part of the suudu: lettogal rimmete (rimude: to give birth). The placenta (gongo) is buried outside the suudu, at the eastern side of the entrance. The neighbour Aïtel, Bilali’s wife, washes the baby. The next day Fatmata washes herself in the gesse, behind my suudu. She can not wash herself in the washing enclosure (kalli) because she is still bleeding. After the birth there is a seclusion period for seven days (dammbordu), where she and the baby do not get out. It is first after the name-giving ceremony (lamru) that the mother and the child may come out of the suudu.
The house plays a role in keeping memories alive, and they may say to follow the life story of the bodies inhabiting them (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 3). The cuudi grow and die with the persons living in them, and Ada says that as long as she stays and keeps the house in the wuro it is like Ousmane, her deceased husband is only on “travel”. But if she leaves the suudu and goes to live with her mother, he will be like dead, because then nobody will keep the house. The suudu is also an important symbol of women’s individual status and wealth, and the size of the house increases with age and status. Since last year Ada has built a bigger suudu, a “kitchen hut” and a dankir financed by selling a cow. To sell a cow to build a better house signalises that jawdi for women are houses, and they are reluctant to leave their cuudi and go eggude. When we discuss the size of my suudu, Ada says that it took her twenty years to have a suudu of her size. One has to start with a small suudu, and then build a bigger one next time, she says.

**The building materials as cultural markers or creating new meaning?**

Dupire notes that the Fulbe are the only Saharian or Sahelien pastoral population with this type of rustic “habitat” made of materials of the vegetation, like straw and wood (1981: 179). While the neighbouring Tuareg live in tents made of skin, the Wodaabe nomads don’t build houses, only very rustic and uncomfortable shelters (Dupire 1962a), and according to Riesman, the Fulbe material world is fragile (1977: 161). The techniques and materials used to build a Fulbe or a Dogon house are very different, and the houses give different living qualities. While the Fulbe suudu is hemispherical, made entirely of straw materials and is naturally aired, the Dogon house is rectangular and built of mud bricks, and it is not naturally aired like the Fulbe suudu hoddo. The Dogon houses are not oriented in any particular
directions,\textsuperscript{165} and the interior spaces are not gendered. While the Fulbe houses (\textit{cuudi hoddo}) traditionally are built of a structure of wood (\textit{leggal}) and branches (\textit{losi}) covered with straw materials (\textit{hoddo}), the \textit{cuudi} in Madougou and elsewhere where the Fulbe have settled are now also constructed of banco, mud bricks made by the Dogon or the Maccubé. To have such a \textit{suudu toggoro} is a sign of wealth (\textit{jawdi}), and it costs more money to build it because it is the Dogon or the Riimaybe men who is paid by the Fulbe to build them. Belko tells me that the \textit{suudu} of banco is not the Fulbe \textit{tawaangal}; they have learnt it from the “Habbe”. The true \textit{suudu} is built with \textit{hoddo} (straw), \textit{losi} (branches) and \textit{badji balli} (fibre materials). Do the meaning and the use of the house change with new materials and forms? Thomas (1991) argues that while materials may change, the meaning of an object may remain because objects do not have meaning in themselves; meaning is put into objects by actors interpreting them. Berge claims that among the Tuareg, the replacement of traditional materials with new ones does not necessarily mean changes in the meaning of the object, as long as the old function persists (2000: 219). The objects do not have meaning in themselves, but are interchangeable, according to Thomas (1991: 208). I fully agree with Berge and Thomas; it is how people use and interpret the objects that give them meaning. Changes in Fulbe house types and materials have a communicative aspect and may signal a different life-style, standard and cultural values. While the \textit{suudu Hoddo} only have a straw mat as a “door”, one may put locks on the \textit{suudu toggoro}, so thieves can not enter. Fulbe women also decorate the inside of the \textit{cuudi toggoro} with paintings in blue, black and white; the paintings representing objects of value like \textit{beddi} and \textit{koore}, and some have put electric switches on the walls as decoration. In this way, the house may be given new meaning as an arena for expression of female values. The change in house structure also has “organizational consequences for the sexual division of labour”, as when the house-building gradually is taken over by men (Talle

\textsuperscript{165} In Madougou, I did not find the house plan as described by Griaule and Dieterlen as a man lying on the side, procreating (1954: 97-98).
1988: 254). In the case of the Fulbe, it means that the house-building is given up by the women and taken over by paid Dogon or Riimaybe men, and housebuilding thereby create a new arena for exchange relations but also dependency of money for the Fulbe. How this influence the gender relations, I can not answer, I just want to say that the Fulbe women do not like to gather straw material (hoddo) in the ladde, it is heavy work and a task they avoid by building houses of banco. Houses of banco and metal are more imperishable and are not eaten by termites or cattle, and therefore they do not need to be repaired as often. But suudu toggoro cost money, and I think they visualises differences in wealth in a new way. The suudu toggoro becomes a status symbol and a source of female symbolic power like cattle and milk. The architectural changes taking place in the wuro signalise new meanings and value orientations. While the social space inside the house remains the same in the suudu toggoro, the Fulbe put new meanings into them; they represent jawdì and an orientation to a sedentary lifestyle. Houses and possessions get in the way for movements and this implies change, as Berge notes (2000: 219). In this way, the house and the use of it may be seen as a process and a dynamic entity with no fixed meaning; it is given meaning through practice (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995).

**Coping with poverty and identity**

To show hospitality and generosity are among traditional Fulbe values (Bâ 1992), but how does it influence on the social relationships when there is little to give; when people are poor or don’t like to give or to share? As Dreyer (2002) and Sommerfelt (1999) point out; giving and receiving produce and reproduce social relationships. But when there is little, there is little to give. People either deny having things, or they hide it, and there is a low degree of reciprocity outside the household and the close family. Riesman says it like this: “If a person

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166 Houses of banco need to be repaired after the rainy season, though.
does not want to give, he rarely refuses to do so but instead either tries to hide the fact that he has what the other wants or is careful not to own any to begin with” (1977: 183). Refusing to give may bring you bad luck or spoil your name (*bonnude indema*), and to destroy one’s name is a very serious thing to do. There are social sanctions in the form of accusations of sorcery and witchcraft if people who have don’t give.

What is poverty, and how poor are the Fulbe in Madougou? Poverty is difficult to measure; it has to do with self-definition and others’ definition of poverty, and about comparison with others (Wikan 1995). But for the Fulbe, the idea of poverty goes against the ideal of nobility, it is *semtude* to be poor; and the experience of poverty gives the Fulbe “no choice but to change these ideas, which implies giving up their identity, to die, or to migrate. This may lead to a fundamental confrontation with their identity.” (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 400) I will show how the ideas of poverty are expressed by the Fulbe in Madougou, and how it influences their ideas of superiority and nobility and the Fulbe pastoral identity. The noble status prevents the Fulbe from adopting strategies of work that could have been important in times of scarcity, like gathering food in the bush or working for others to earn money to buy food, and the Fulbe in Madougou say they will rather starve or die than to make this an option. Poverty makes gift-givings, social life and reciprocity difficult. The survival strategies are individualised, and depend of the symbolic and social capital of the individual. When I ask the Fulbe men how they can earn money, they give two options: either to sell a cow, or to migrate to work in places like Abidjan (in the Ivory Coast). Below I will explore in what ways poverty affect Fulbe social relations, and what the consequences for the Fulbe identity as nobles, Rimbe, are. How do the Fulbe master their cultural ideals of noble behaviour in a context which is stressful and difficult? While being rich on *jawdi* has a moral value; being poor is *semtude*. 
Poverty, nobility and reciprocity

The lack of cattle and milk makes it difficult to keep up social relations and hospitality in accordance with the Fulbe noble ideal of hospitality and generosity. Poverty makes it difficult for the Fulbe to play the role as nobles, and to be poor is contradictory to be noble and generous; to be noble and to be poor are contradictory roles. Generosity in the meaning sharing of goods (cf. Berge 2000: 293) is threatened by poverty, and social life is restricted. One exception is the Fulbe men who gather in hibbere to drink “Arabic tea”\(^{167}\) together. As I have showed above, there are few help relations and little redistribution or reciprocity among close Fulbe kin outside the household, but there is help to get through networks of friendship and njaatigi relations across the ethnic border with the Dogon, and the exchange of food follow these lines. As a widow, Ada is in the category of structural poor, and even if she has two sons to rely on, she claims that she is poor. She complains that she is tired because she has to work so much, it is “la fatigue”, and according to Verger (1997) it is a strategy of the poor to claim that they are tired. “Today it is the Fulbe who are the slaves”, Ada says. “We are the poor. Before, it was the Dogon who were poor, because we took them as slaves (Riimaybe). Today the Dogon are rich and the Fulbe are poor”, she complains. According to this statement, the Fulbe have become “slaves” which is a contradiction to nobility. It is semtude for the Fulbe to be poor if one is not sick and unable to work, and Ada always complains that her stomach hurts (reedu am ananaawi), or her head hurts (hoore am ananaawi), and that she has intestinal worms. According to de Bruijn (1999: 295), to be poor and sick negates the idea of nobility; one can no longer behave according to one’s ideal of yaage (respect). Acting in a shameful way without self-control in public is sanctioned, and the lack of semtude is very serious because it means breaking the rules of society and has to be sanctioned if social order is going to persist (ibid.: 138):

\(^{167}\) The “Arabic tea” consumed by the Fulbe is the same type of green imported Chinese tea as Berge reports the Tuareg drink, and prepared in the same way (see Berge 2000: 295). In Madougou, it is mainly the Fulbe men who consume tea, not the women; they chew kola nuts, gooro.
Ada plays the role of a noble Pullo debbo with difficulties. She talks too much (hala annahewi) quarrels without hiding and behaves like a ‘crazy’ in public. It is great shame (semtude) and Hamma says afterwards that he is ‘dead’ and that it is ‘over between them’, it is even worse than semtude. Her performance is sanctioned by the interruption of others (in one case the moddibbo) and is condemned by other Fulbe in the form of ‘back-stage’ gossiping, and she loses esteem in the wuro. But, because her personal character can not be changed, it is created by God and is her ‘destiny’, she is loved after all. One is not only judged by one’s actions, but also by one’s status as mother, which is unchangeable despite ‘non-Pullo’ conduct; one can not stop being one’s mother. As Hamma says, Ada will always be his mother, and he loves her despite her shameful performances where she is making semtude, great shame on the family.

To talk too much (hala annahewi) in public is contradictory to noble behaviour; it is associated with griot behaviour, and therefore semtude. While the Fulbe have shame, the griots do not have shame, and in this way they are a negative reference group for appropriate public Fulbe behaviour (cf. Camara 1992: 183), something I will return to in chapter 6. Poverty also influences on people’s ability to give and to maintain social relations; when gift-givings become problematic, social relations decline. Mauss emphasizes reciprocity and the obligation of the gift (1954: 10) and according to Humphrey and Hugh-Jones, gift exchange do underwrite “social relations and is concerned with social reproduction …” (1992: 7). For the Fulbe, it is difficult to be poor and not be able to give gifts, because gifts are an important part of Fulbe tawaangal (cf. Bâ 1992). Not being able to give may spoil one’s name, and is destructive for their relations with the “others” like the nyeeybe who may “ask” for gifts and have the power to destroy one’s name if they do not receive. As de Bruijn and van Dijk point out for the Jallube in the Hayre: “the maintenance of the principle of reciprocity has become extremely difficult as a consequence of impoverishment” (1995: 378). The same is true for the Barry in Madougou, and as Ada says: “We the Fulbe love presents, we don’t give”. This may be interpreted as a lack of reciprocity. Today, gifts often provoke jealousy, and it is a declining importance of the gift and thereby a discontinuity in social relations caused by poverty. Gifts are valued, but lesser quantities are given, and the most common gifts are
small quantities of money, *gooro*, soap and *ngiiridje*. Poverty leads to changes in the amount of gifts at different occasions, like name-giving ceremonies and weddings where the amounts given are small. To give a hen or to sacrifice a goat on these occasions is important, but only small quantities are distributed afterwards, and the ceremonies are far from prosperous.

**Discrepancy in wealth**

Wealth is unevenly distributed among the Fulbe, but it is not easy to notice who are rich. The rich Fulbe who owns 2-300 cows hide their wealth by carrying poor clothes and they do not spend much money on consumption; they live like poor people and there is no conspicuous consumption in the *wuro* (cf. Riesman 1990). The rich avoid using their money to create dependency relations around them (Riesman 1977: 224). Even if it is impossible to count people’s cows because they are distributed and kept in different places, everybody in the *wuro* knows who are rich and who are poor, and there is an internal ranking based on wealth and poverty, those herding for the Dogon being ranked below those herding for themselves. The rich Fulbe possessing many cows do not need to herd for the Dogon; they are self-contained with milk to sell or exchange for millet. For the poor, to herd for the Dogon is a strategy to get milk to sell or exchange for millet, and to keep a pastoral lifestyle. Fulbe herding for others is a subject too painful to be discussed, because it hurts for those who are poor, the Fulbe say. According to de Bruijn and van Dijk, the rich have only two choices: they may distribute their wealth, and become poor themselves, or stay rich and be the victims of gossip and envy, and in the worst case, sorcery (1995: 407). Bilali has chosen the last solution, and Ada and others gossip a lot about how rich and stingy he is. The Fulbe will rather be poor than work for others, but sometimes it is necessary to work for others to survive. A loss of social esteem follows: to herd for the Dogon is despised. To work for others means loss of independence and control, and goes against the noble ideal of a free man
(cf. Grayzel 1990: 45). To be poor also means that it is more difficult to keep up social relations, like visits to “pay respect” after someone has died, or attend name-giving ceremonies (lamru). Travels and visits cost in form of expenses and gifts and take time one does not have, because there is so much work to be done. Ada complains that she has not had the time to go and visit her mother in Sengomara because she has so many “problems”. She keeps on sending small money gifts with someone going there with excuses as to why she has not come to visit after somebody recently died. To be relatively poor means one does not earn enough money for savings; and what one earns on the milk sale or by feeding a sheep and resell it is being “eaten up” in everyday consumption. It is an economy from “hand-to-mouth”; “se debrouiller”. Toulmin (1992) asks the question why some households are getting rich and others poor among the farmers and cattle owners in Kala in Mali, and she finds a strong link between the household’s demographic and economic performance. This leads to a polarization of the domestic groups in terms of their access to labour and the ability to accumulate wealth, she argues (ibid. 276). Because of this discrepancy between wealthy and poor households, the content in the “pastoralist” category is not homogenous but has to be differentiated according to wealth. It covers different capacities in work strategies (cf. Basset 1994: 170), something I will return to in chapter 6.

**Semtude, self-control and the practice of eating**

There is a contradiction or an inherit paradox in Fulbe life. While their life is lived in public, it is important to consume in private, out of the gaze of the public. As VerEecke (1999: 101) writes: “…pulaaku, associated with the strong sense of morality of the Fulbe, discourages certain behaviors in public, such as eating, drinking, and urinating. These actions should take place in private, namely the household, or at least far away from the gaze of the public”. She continues: “Individuals may be ridiculed if they eat in a restaurant, in the market, or in
another’s household as is believed that these acts are not only shameful; they also suggest the poverty of one’s household” (ibid.). Poverty is linked to lack of nobility, like the former slaves lack nobility. The Fulbe poetry “Silâmaka and Poullôri” presents the stereotypic Fulbe-slave roles (Seydou 1972: 80-81), and in the poem, the Pullo Silâmaka eats less than the Maccudo Poullôri. While the noble Pullo is able to control his hunger and thirst, the latter is not. Eating habits, or the capacity to refuse to eat, are connected to the noble status of the Fulbe. According to this ideal, it is important to be able to refuse to consume also in case of worse times to come. The local consumption practice is to hide to eat and drink. The Fulbe are eating in the suudu and not in public in front of others, and the Fulfulde word for house, suudu, means to hide. The Fulbe hide to eat because it is semtude to be seen eating. The Fulbe may eat together only with some social categories: their maternal uncle (kaawa), close patrikin (bappanjam), members of the household or age-mates, but not with other Fulbe or with strangers, and one will not accept food from others; food offered by others may even be dangerous to eat. The Fulbe think of themselves as able to refuse drinking and eating because they are noble and proud, in contrast to the Dogon and the Maccubé. Drinking and eating are values associated with the Dogon and the former slaves and despised by the Fulbe. To eat in front of strangers is semtude as this case shows:

One day in the resto Benkady, a stranger Pullo enters to eat. While eating, grandmother Amtal comes in. At first she does not notice the Pullo; he hides behind a fan (biforgal). But when she sees him, she says asemi, and the Pullo runs out of the resto without finishing the meal.

Because the Fulbe don’t eat in front of others, to serve food is the safest way to get a Pullo to hide. When the food is prepared and it is time for eating, everyone disappears. Food is served in huge plastic or metal trays and eating is sex segregated; men share one tray, women another. According to Stenning, eating is connected with intercourse; or of the man “eating her”: “It is considered improper for a man and a woman to be seen eating together for this is
like seeing them in coitus” (1959: 149). To be seen in public with food is also *semtude* and may spoil one’s name; *bonnude indema*. One typical case is one day I am returning from *hibbere* with Bargo and Idrissa, and Bargo is carrying a sack with peanuts which he has got from a Dogon *njaatigi* family. Bargo carries it out of *hibbere*, but midway to the *wuro* he asks me to take over and carry it. He must not be seen with a sack full of peanuts in the *wuro*; it will be *semtude* and may spoil his name. But there are ongoing changes in eating habits among the Fulbe:

One day while some Fulbe men (Hama, Adraman, Breihma, and Hamma) are eating *giridje* outside the *suudu*, three Fulbe women from the *wuro* walk by. The Fulbe men are ashamed (*asemti*) and they do not like to be seen. Breihma remarks that it is now that men may eat outside, before it was not possible.

As VerEecke (1999) argues above; to eat in front of others may indicate poverty and not to be able to control oneself. I will rather take it as a sign on changes in consumer values and eating habits in Madougou, like Breihma’s statement above suggests. But still one has to “close the door” to the *suudu* while eating meat (*tewu*), to avoid the gaze of the others.

**Hiding and hiding things**

One way to escape the “constant pressure to share” (Berge 2000: 293) is to hide what one has and thereby escape the obligation to give (Mauss 1954: 10). The Fulbe have many secrets and they hide a lot, and because of this they are dependent on the Dogon and the *nyeeybe*. The Fulbe hide in the *suudu* when they are eating, and they hide things in *loode* in the *suudu* and money in the ground. They also hide themselves to eat and hide things in the *hibbere*, and the women hide the food they buy in the market in calabashes. They say they are hiding from thieves, but I think they hide from the eyes of other Fulbe, for two reasons. One reason is not to provoke jealousy and the evil eye of other Fulbe; and it is *semtude* to display what one has. The other reason is to hide their food, like tea and sugar, and money so that if people ask to
have some (*hokkam*) they may refuse, simply saying that they don’t have anything, so they don’t have anything to give (cf. Riesman 1977: 183). Not to have is a strategy to keep to the ideals of nobility in a context of poverty; because when one has nothing, one has nothing to give. Because there is no general reciprocity beyond the household - to hide food from one’s relatives is not in contradiction to the morality of sharing and giving (Sahlins 1988: 204).

While the Fulbe need to hide from other Fulbe, they do not need to hide from the Dogon, the *nyeeybe* or the former slaves, because they have no *semtude*. De Bruijn and van Dijk claim that because *yaage* (respect) do not exist in the relation between the Jallo and the Riimaybe women, they “do not need to hide their wealth or poverty from them” (1995: 413). It is the same with the Barry and Hamidou Bangara,\(^\text{168}\) the only *jiirom* (a Dogon butcher “caste”) in Madougou:

Hamma gives his mother Ada money so she may buy rice and millet at the market, but she does not bring it with her home to the *wuro*, but keeps it together with her precious things at a storage room at Hamidou Bangara’s place in the Dogon village, near the marketplace. Ada also keeps her money with Hamidou, and his compound functions as her ‘granary’ and hiding place. Hamma says it is because if they bring foodstuff with them home to the *wuro*, the animals will eat it up or it can be stolen by thieves. They use the Bangara’s place as their storage room, for which they give him small gifts, like *gooro* or a little money. Ada always goes to the Bangara’s place when she goes to the *hibbere*. Bangara is also a great marabout and he gives her medicine and reads Koran verses to heal her.

The Fulbe don’t need to hide for him because he is a *nyeenyo* person, and therefore he has no *semtude*. It is a place for storage, for hiding to eat, for healing and discussion of family business, and Hamidou also function as a family adviser in conflicts.

\(^\text{168}\) Some Fulbe say that the Malinké mother of the Fulbe comes from Bangara, Malinké, and that Bangara and Fulbe are like the Dogon and the Bozo; they may not kill each other, and are the “true cousins” which is a joking relationship, but I did not observe joking in this relationship.
Fulbe self-image; *pulaaku* and *tawaangal*

As we have seen, ethnic identity constrains the role individuals are allowed to play without being negative sanctioned (Barth 1969a: 17). The Fulbe define themselves in relation to the others who are different from them in a stereotypical sense and therefore act differently (cf. Riesman 1977: 116-117). *Pulaaku* is a very much used term in Fulbe studies to express Fulbe behaviour. According to Riesman; *pulaade* for the Fulbe in Jelgoji means “to behave like a Fulani” and “to act Fulani” (1977: 122). Riesman claims that the Fulbe are playing defined *roles* when behaving according to this ideal, but that it is not always appropriate to play the role of ideal Fulbe behaviour, for example when one is going to eat in the family setting. According to Riesman this mean that there exist two types of Fulbe behaviour; one is spontaneous and based on feelings, and one is “characteristically Fulani” according to traditions (*tawaangal*), but both are part of being a “Fulani” (ibid.: 123). I agree with Riesman in this analysis. The separation of the private and the public space is defined according to the rules of the two forms of conduct: either without shame (*semtude*) in the family and in secrecy in the *hibbere*, or according to *pulaaku* in public. *Semtude* is defined as “lack of *pulaaku*” (Riesman 1977: 129). In Madougou, *pulaaku* signifies all the Fulbe in the world, i.e. the Fulbe community, but that implies shared Fulbe norms of behaviour.

*Pulaaku* includes all who are born as a Pullo and act like a Pullo. Still, *pulaaku* is not a concept my informants use very often; *tawaangal* is the concept they refer to when

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169 For a summary and critique of how the concept *pulaaku* has been used in anthropological literature; see Breedveld and de Bruijn (1996). See also Eng (1999: 64) for a summary about the different spellings of *pulaaku*.

170 For a linguistic analyse of the verb *semtude*; see Riesman (1977: 129-134).

171 Breedveld and de Bruijn explores the use of *pulaaku* in the regional anthropological literature, and their conclusion is that for the Fulbe in Central Mali, *pulaaku* does not signify a moral community, but simply “Fulbe community or society” (1996: 791). Eng, who has done fieldwork among Fulbe in the Mopti region, disputes Breedveld’s and de Bruijn’s conclusions of the meaning of *pulaaku* and their questioning of the diversity of the Fulbe identity (1999: 10), and she argues that the Fulbe is one people (1999: 1). The point to Breedveld and de Bruijn is that because the Fulbe category is diverse, one has to study the significance of *pulaaku* locally and empirically, and one may not take the content of *pulaaku* for granted or extrapolate the significance from the regional literature, and I agree with them.
discussing Fulbe tradition and behaviour. The chief, Belko, explains the relations between
pulaaku and tawaangal like this:

_Pulaaku_ means all the Fulbe, from Dakar to Saudi Arabia. It is our culture, _pulaaku_. It is
_yaage_ or _semtude_ to be seen eating or eating in front of strangers in the market, or to be seen
going to the toilet in the bush. The Fulbe are not like the Dogon; the Fulbe are proud. The
Fulbe have to keep one’s mouth; _nango honkoma_. The Habbe are dirty and work too much;
they have no _semtude_. Pullo is more pure than _baleejo_. _Baleejo_ are all blacks, also Maccudo
and Labbo. Pullo is better than them, more intelligent and clean. Pullo herd cows (_droi nay)_
better than the Dogon and the Habbe, and Habbe cultivate better than Pullo. A Pullo may act
like a Pullo or not. If Pullo does not follow _pulaaku_, he is no Pullo, even if he is born a Pullo.
_Tawaangal_ means that which is found.

It is how one acts that decides if one born a Pullo stays a Pullo or not, according to Belko.
Ada’s actual behaviour contradicts Belko’s statement because she talks too much: _nango
honkoma_. Still, personal qualities are important in the negotiation of identity, and Ada
remains defined by others as a Pullo even if she breaks with the Pullo rules for conduct
according to _pulaaku_ from time to time because she accepts the sanctions and thereby share
Fulbe values. According to Belko, _pulaaku_, or Fulbe culture, defines the rules for conduct
(yaage and semtude). It is their _tawaangal_, their custom or tradition which they have found
in contradiction to the Dogon, who do not have _semtude_. Talking too loudly or talking too
much are negative values; _haala anaheewi, wooda_ (“talking too much, it is bad”) and acting
without self-control means a lack of _pulaaku_. Belko’s statement above shows how _tawaangal_
and _pulaaku_ are important markers of identity and difference between the Fulbe and the
“others”: the Dogon, the Laube and the Maccubé are all “blacks” and not pure. To have
_semtude_ and _yaage_ are part of the Fulbe _tawaangal_, and that is what makes them different
from “the others”, the “blacks” who do not have _yaage_ or _semtude_. Fulbe individuals, like
Ada, may break the rules, but as a category the Fulbe are classified above the “others”. As
this show, it is the opposition to the “others” that defines the Fulbe category; the Fulbe are

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172 Riesman defines _tawaangal_ as “an objective reality which one ‘finds’ around one” (1977: 9). That means the
Fulbe “finds” their culture around them, it is there to be discovered, like “properties of the human world” (ibid.).
pure and noble in opposition to the “others”. This reflection is given by Breihma one day as we discuss the matter of who the Fulbe are:

One can not become a Pullo. Even if one marries a Pullo, one can not become one. But the children become Pullo if the father is a Pullo. If one says to a Habbe that he looks like a Pullo, he will be happy. But on the contrary, if one says to a Pullo that he looks like a Habbe, he will get angry, because to be a Pullo is the best. With the Laube and the Maccubé, it is the same as with the Habbe. They stay what they are. In Madougou, no Pullo has married Habbe.

To be a Pullo means to be born as one. The rule of endogamy prevents other social categories from becoming Pullo; they are excluded from the noble status as Fulbe. But as soon as the Fulbe are talking about what it means to be a Pullo, the oppositional Dogon and others are mentioned as a contrast. In this way the Fulbe are dependent on the “others” to define themselves as a category, and in this way the ethnic identity is an important aspect of the Fulbe identity.

As I have showed in this chapter, there are different individual behaviour and practice within the Fulbe category, and there is social diversity according to wealth, gender and social status. But, even if the Fulbe are internally differentiated, they define themselves as a category in opposition to and above the cultivating Dogon and “the others”; “blacks” and “slaves”. The pastoral lifestyle of cattle and milk are defined as key Fulbe values, but also the house and new consumer objects. There is an ongoing sedentarisation process and the Fulbe, who express new values in opposition to traditional pastoral values of self-control and absence of consumption, prefer staying in the wuro to consume instead of leaving on transhumance, and in this way they act as agents for change. One important reason why the Fulbe want to stay in Madougou is closeness to the market, which I will explore in the next chapter.
Chapter 5: Arenas for Integration across Ethnic and Nyeeybe Borders

In this chapter I will explore some arenas for inter-ethnic and inter-nyeenyo meetings. The marketplace, the hibbere, joking relationships, and religious beliefs and traditional medicine are all arenas for integration across ethnic and nyeeeybe boundaries. The marketplace, as an arena for economic exchange, is also an important social arena.

The marketplace as a social arena and meeting place

The marketplace in Madougou is an important arena for inter-ethnic and inter-nyeenyo meetings, and for the articulation of the different identities. The exchange relations in the marketplace reflect the ethnic and nyeeeybe pluralism in Madougou, and the extensive system of division of labour. The marketplace is an arena for exchange relations between the different groups and categories, and in this way the market functions as an arena for integration, and both Fulfulde and Dogon are spoken in the market (cf. Paulme 1988 [1940]: 27). Gallais calls the market one of the “modern coherence factors” because it is an important arena for exchange relations (1975: 201), and that may be one of the reasons why there is not so much open conflict in the region; people are interdependent in the economic system based on exchange in the market. The marketplace is a place where people meet and buy and sell (Skinner 1962: 255), and the only barrier to the commercial activity is the relative poverty of the rural people (ibid.: 259). While the economy in Madougou is monetised, the market is more than the commercial activities; social life on market days seems often more important than the economic activities. Market day is the day for justice, conflicts and conflict resolving, and the Commandant is available. Colonialism created a market for
commercialization of cattle, and since Independence there have been trends continuing with the “increased presence and demand for consumer goods” (Grayzel 1990: 63).

The regional context of the market in Madougou

The market in Madougou is part of a regional trade system which may be linked to the earlier trans-Saharan trade (Fage 1969), and it was the Saharan trade which brought Islam with it (Meilassoux 1971: 55). The pattern of the trade was gold, slaves and kola nuts from the south against livestock, salt and clothes from the north (Toulmin 1992: 29), and the export of cattle from the region is economically important (Pedersen 1994: 183). According to the mayor Mamoudou Goro, the marketplace in Madougou dates from 1933, and it was the Hossobe, the Mossi and the Hausa who started trading. First it was every 5th day, but from 1977 it became weekly, every 7th day, and Gallais explains this change by the influence of Islam on the market cycle on the Gondo (1975: 205). The Kossodjo Barke Morba, who sells plastic beads, needles, thread and magic stuff in the market, tells me this about the development of the market in Madougou:

It is the Dogon who constructed the market place in Madougou. There was always quarrelling between the Fulbe and the Dogon in the beginning because they were all drunk, but the Fulbe from Banikani (Ousmane Barry, Hamma’s father) were the strongest and not afraid of anything. Before they took the slaves with them to the marketplace, even here in Madougou, like sheep. The donkeys, the sheep, the goats, the millet, the ingredients for the sauce (oro); all the villagers brought with them foodstuff to the marketplace, to sell it. There were no clothes. It is us, the Hossobe, who brought the white clothes from the Gold Coast. There were no modes of transportation to travel with, no cars, no motorbikes, no bicycles. When the cars came, they used wood as fuel, there were no petrol. Before, you did not find so much at the market; today you find everything! Before, if you did not need anything in the market, you stayed at home; you did not go to the market. Today, there are lots of bandits who come to see and to steal. There are more people today; there were not so many before. Today, many don’t work, they steal. Madougou was small before, not more than 100 persons. The Fulbe were already here. The houses were not of banco, but of hoddo, straw materials, like the Fulbe houses. The last 30 years the houses have changed to banco. People are richer, and the houses larger and better. It is better now.

173 Paulme describes the Dogon market and the Dogon family values (1988 [1940]: 297); the Dogon in the escarpment may cultivate cash crops for themselves every 5th day.
There is a trading “axis” following the escarpment between Koro and Douentza on which Madougou lies. The market day creates an urban-rural link, and there is an urban-rural continuity through trade and people who travel back and forth and bring in goods from Bamako and across the border from Burkina Faso. But transportation is expensive and distances are long; it is about 135 km to Mopti on the road axis Bamako-Gao, and the distance to the capital Bamako is about 500 km, and roads are absent or very bad all the way to Mopti, and the state of the vehicles, the “bush-taxis”, even worse. If one is lucky to take a non-stop bus from Koro to Bamako and have no break-downs, it is about a twenty hours ride to the capital in the dry season.

The division of labour and segregation in the market

The division of labour and the ethnic and nyeenyō diversity is expressed in the different activities in the market. The Fulbe, the Dogon, the different nyeeybe, woman and men, older people and youngsters, locals and strangers (hobbe), all participate in the market in different ways. There are many different types of stalls and open air booths in the market place, and it is organized in different sections for different types of merchandises, products and activities. Among the shops there are butchers selling meat (tewu), two or three “hotels” and restaurants, there is a Dogon “antique” shop selling masks174 and wooden objects to the few tourists who visit the market. The different nyeeybe offer services in the market, like travelling silver smiths, leatherworkes, woodworkers and griots.

First, there is the segregation between two main types of merchants operating in the market; the locals and the professional merchants, the djulabe.175 The local producers are living in and around Madougou and offer their services and local products like millet, livestock and locally produced goods, and maybe some goods obtained in other local

174 Dogon masks and wooden objects are very famous art objects for Western collectors.
175 Dioula is the Bambara title of the Muslim professional travelling merchants (Toulmin 1992: 29).
markets. For example, some Dogon women from Madougou go to Bamba with a donkey cart for the Friday market where they buy vegetables like lettuce, tomatoes and sweet potatoes which they resell at the market in Madougou the following Monday. This means two days on the road to obtain goods to sell. The professionals are itinerant long-distance traders and *djulabe* who follow the regional market cycle, travelling from market to market during the week. They may attend several weekly markets: Bankass (Tuesday), Bay (Wednesday), Douna or Bamba (Friday), Koro (Saturday), etc. They sell mainly imported goods, like metal trays, bleaching powder, soap (*sabonde*), tea (*atté*), coffee, and sugar, but also cows and grain, and they need to go to Mopti or Bamako from time to time to obtain more goods. Some rich merchants have storage places in Madougou and use it as a redistribution place to go to other local markets.

Second, activities are ethnic, *nyeenyo* and gender specific. There is the food market (*sakara*) where the Dogon women sell fruit, vegetables, and cooked food, like “gallettes du mil” or “gallettes du riz”; delicious small pancakes made of millet or rice. While the Dogon sell prepared food, the Fulbe sell “raw materials” like milk and cattle. The “milk” tree (*komboi*) under which the Fulbe women sell their milk lies in the middle of *sakara*, and the Fulbe men refuse to go here. The cattle market (*luumo nay*), where the Fulbe and Dogon men sell cows both for redistribution and export, is primarily a male arena, while the market for goats (*luumo bei*) and for sheep (*luumo baali*) is both a male and female arena; Fulbe women come here to buy sheep and goats to feed and resell for the Muslim feast Tabaski. Both Fulbe and Dogon men bring their *nay* to the cattle market, where *djulabe* traders (Dogon or others) buy and resell them. The Dogon women also sell peanuts and millet to the *djulabe*

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176 Other imported goods are canned food, Maggi bouillon, cigarettes, biscuits, milk powder, medicaments, menthol, plastic articles, shoes, flashlights, batteries, kerosene lamps, matches, watches, sunglasses, mirrors, combs, etc.

177 Tabaski, the Prophet’s birthday, is called Eid al-Adha in the Arab world (Berge 2000: 219).

178 According to Bourgeot, the Dioulla traders make up a “livestock bourgeoisie” who explore the poor herders in the absence of a capitalist labour market were they would be properly paid (1981: 122, 126).
who transport them to Douentza to resell them at a higher price there, and they bring back
fodder (cotton seed), dried fish and straw mats (daage) to Madougou. Dogon men from
Sangha in the escarpment come to Madougou to sell onions, dried pigments, fruits (mango
and papaya) and sweet potatoes which they sell to Dogon women in the morning who resell
them during the day. Some Dogon women go all the way to Mopti or Douentza to buy dried
fish from the Bozo fishermen, and some Bozo even come to Madougou to sell dried fish. The
Dogon women also make soap and peanut oil which they sell. The Dogon men sell tobacco
(sira) and snuff in the market; they travel to Sangha to buy it. Kola nuts (gooro) are imported
with djulabe from Abidjan in the Ivory Coast. In addition to the butchers in Madougou, there
is also a market for imported porc meat on market days; the pigs are slaughtered in
Gangarabourou and prepared in Madougou by slaughters from outside the village. In addition
to the food market, where the women do their “daily” (that is, weekly) shopping
(sommoyaade), there are open air stalls and booths where the different merchants sell their
products like used shoes, used clothes, used plastic articles, baskets, ropes (boggi), mats
(daage), salt (lamdam) from Timbuktu, skin water containers (jaba); all sold by men, on the
ground on plastic mats or on the donkey carts. Some Mossi men sell used clothes and white
sugar and medicaments trafficked from Burkina Faso, and some young Ashanti men from
Ghana sell new and used clothes, which they buy in Bamako once a month. The green and
purple industrially made colours needed by the Fulbe women for colouring the straw covers
(beddi) are sold by the Hausa. The Hossobe sell glass beads, jewelry and plastic articles in
the market. There is also a market for illicit trade; some, like a Hausa boy, smuggle crocodile
skins, medicaments, soft-drinks, bottled beer and alcohols like vodka and pastis across the
border from Burkina Faso on motorbikes or bicycles. The Bellaabe bring salt plates from
Timbuktu on camels to the Dogon fields outside Madougou; the Dogon buy it and then resell

179 The Dogon in the escarpment cultivate cash crops like onions, vegetables, fruit and tobacco, among others.
it at the market place, or for export. Some djulabe trade cotton bought in Sikasso, which the Dogon women spin thread from, and the Dogon men weave clothes from. The Hossobe men buy the Dogon clothes, the Hossobe women colours them with indigo, and then they resell them in the market. The Waylube women sell water and cooking jars (loode) and the Walabube women sell spices and sauce ingredients and straw boxes (kokono), which is their speciality.

Locals arrive at the market on foot, by bicycles, motorbikes or donkey carts, but there is also a transportation market on market days. Trucks leave Koro on Saturday to go to Douentza on Sunday, and back to Madougou on Monday. They bring salt, dates (tamoru), rice, and fodder for the animals. The imported goods arrive with the merchants in trucks and bush-taxis, and they have to leave in the afternoon when the taxis are full. The local sellers like the Dogon may stay longer, until darkness, and there is a difference between locals and hobbe (strangers) in the market.

Social interaction and behaviour in the market

The market day is like a vacation day and a feast, and a regular break in the everyday working activities. The preparations for the market day begin Sunday afternoon with slaughtering, food and drink preparation in the hibbere. The arrival of the bush-taxies, trucks and donkey carts the next morning means the market day starts; the market opens at about 10.00 am and lasts until sunset at about 18.00 pm. Many have walked for hours in the morning to reach the market, and it is a day for visiting and meeting family and friends (yibbe). According to Gallais, market day is the culmination of the week (1975: 207), and it is a “kaleidoscope of activities” (Skinner 1962: 270). People circulate a lot; greet\textsuperscript{180} each other

\textsuperscript{180} According to Riesman, greeting people is “the most fundamental act for the day-to-day maintenance of the social fabric” (1977: 169) and all greetings have meaning: “For the Jelgobe, society has no existence other than in relations between people, and these relations cease to exist if people stop communicating” (ibid.: 175), and I agree with his analysis of greetings.
several times during the day, much time goes by looking for someone or just circulating to see or be seen, and the social aspect of the market is as important as the commercial aspect. The market is a communication center, and the exchange of news and messages is important. Fulbe and Dogon communicate in Fulfulde in the market; som Fulbe women know some Dogon, but not the Fulbe men. Going to the market (a yahaa luumo) is an institution; it really means: “I am going to the hibbere” (Bierschenk 1999: 202). The marketplace is a social arena where people, both locals and hobbe, from many places can meet once a week, and ethnic style is important for the classification of people. The articulation of different styles in clothes, jewelry, accessories and hair styles according to ethnic or nyeenyo belonging are very important as identity markers, and how people dress and behave are aspects of the managing of the identity in the meeting with others in the market. People dress up on market day and put on their best clothes, and the Fulbe women make themselves especially beautiful before they go to hibbere to sell milk on market days. The Fulbe men walk around in small groups, holding each others hands, smoking and looking handsome, like some sort of local flâneurs wearing sunglasses, watches and carrying radios. The young walk around in groups according to sex and age the whole day if they have escaped from herding and housework duties, the boys flirting with the girls. There is an intense atmosphere in the market, with a lot of expectations in the air; it is more like a social happening than a commercial one, and griots often arrive to the wuro on market days.

Among the Fulbe, there is social segregation in the market according to marital status, sex and age, and it is impossible to notice married couples in the market place; they don’t even greet each other, but walk around ignoring or trying to avoid each other. The market is an arena for joking behaviour, a typical case is when Ada meets her cross-cousin

181 See Calvet (1992) for an analayses of market languages in Mali.
182 Unfortunately, I do not have the space here to elaborate on ethnic style; see B. Frank (1987).
183 See Dupire for a classification of different hair styles which indicate Wodaabe women’s status (1963: 91).
(dendiraado) and Ada “steals” her purse and takes 1000 CFA from it. The dendiraado answers that it does nothing, and they laugh; it is typical joking behaviour.

There are also conflicts and expectations for gifts on market days, and small amounts of money to buy consumer goods circulate in the family. Griots are asking for money in the market (hokkam kaalsi); it is the day for business, hopes and disappointments, and it is also a day for loans and paying credit. There is a lot of quarrelling about money on market days:

When Hamma meets Ada in the market place, she asks him for money. He says he doesn’t have money, and then they start arguing. We go to Hamidou Bangara’s place, where Hamma asks me about money. In the end we agree that Ada may have 5000 CFA. But she is not satisfied, because she needs both cloth for a dress, and new plastic shoes (padde). More discussion, and in the end Hamma gives her 3000 CFA more.

Are the Fulbe marginal in the market? No, because they sell milk and cows and purchase goods in the market. The social interaction in the market place and the exchange relations work as integrating forces between the different groups and categories, and they transcend ethnic and nyeenyo borders and cultural differences. There is a kind of symbiotic relationship expressed by the market relations, both social and economic, and the Fulbe actively seek the market both for economic and social reasons (cf. Dupire 1962b: 354). People joke with each other in the market, and the Fulbe affiliate to others through joking relationships, as I will explore below. But first I will explore why the Fulbe go to the hibbere.

**Hibbere as a hiding place**

Because the Fulbe are not self-contained in everyday life they need the relations with the Dogon and other social categories for the exchange of goods and services, but also to hide from other Fulbe. There are many excuses to go to the hibbere on other days than market

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184 Bangara is a nyeenyo who belongs to a Dogon butcher “caste”. According to Dupire are Bangaré “composé de serviteurs et d’esclaves volontaires”, they are Fulbe “captives” (1994: 266).
days, and both Fulbe men and women move many times between the wuro and the hibbere during the day. Hibbere function as a hiding place for the Fulbe who may not eat (ñaamude) or drink (yarude) in public because of shame (semtude), and it is like a labyrinth where it is easy to hide, and it is a place both for relaxing and for consumption in secrecy for the Fulbe. While Fulbe men go to hibbere to consume in secrecy out of the gaze of public and to discuss sensitive objects, the Fulbe women go to hibbere to sell milk, and some women have sexual relations with the Dogon. The economy of the “small quantities” is extremely time-consuming – the women have to visit many Dogon compounds to gather the different sauce ingredients –but the social and cultural aspects by going to the hibbere is as important as the economic; upkeeping social relations cross ethnic and nyeeybe boundaries:

One day after the harvest in the beginning of November, Ada takes a bucket full of peanuts to hide them at nyeeyno Hamidou Bangara’s place in the hibbere. She says that if she does not hide it, everyone will come and take a little from her until there is nothing left. One has to think of oneself, she says. Her first stop in the hibbere is at a Dogon’s place in Arou where she buys three small plastic sacks with spices for 75 CFA. Then she goes to Hamidou Bangara and leaves the peanuts with him; he gives her a kola nut (gooro). After that she is off to the shop where she buys peanut oil for 100 CFA. At the store she meets the mayor and jokes with him, saying she is his wife. Then she goes back to the wuro; the whole trip has taken more than an hour.

Milk is sold in small quantities, in ladles (galmaaje). Before, one sold the whole calabash with milk, but today people are poor, the Fulbe women complain. Because the income from the sale of milk is small every day, the purchasing of the food is done in small quantities, and it is very time-consuming to go to the hibbere to sell milk, buy food and ingredients to the sauce or to fetch millet or rice which is kept hidden with some Dogon or nyeeny in the hibbere. While the Fulbe women go to hibbere to sell milk (sippi kossam) to earn money for everyday consumption, their men follow them and watch them and what they do very closely, because “money may change your head”, as the Fulbe say. It is known that some Fulbe women have sexual relations with Dogon men:
There are rumours in the \textit{wuro} that Djeeba is ‘selling’ more than milk. Djeeba is rich in personal consumer goods, and the other women in the \textit{wuro} are jealous of her. I often go with her to sell milk in the \textit{hibbere}, and before going she washes herself, smears herself with body lotion (\textit{nebbam}) or oil which makes her smell very good and takes her time choosing her clothes. Then she takes a little milk in her \textit{la’al}, and off we go to the Arou quarter where she places me on a bench outside the same house every time. Then she disappears with a Dogon man into the house, and I wait 10-15 minutes before she comes out, the same Dogon man comes out of the house after her. She has sold her milk, and is in a very good mood. Then we go to Bangara’s place where she buys \textit{gooro}. She takes out a note of 1000 CFA, and I wonder how she has got it, there was only milk for 2-300 CFA in the \textit{la’al}. Later, when I ask Hamma about this incident, he says that everybody knows that Djeeba ‘sells more than milk’.

This case tells a lot about Fulbe women’s position and individuality, and how they may have a stable sexual relation outside the marriage through the milk sale. It may be a gift-relation\textsuperscript{185} or a relation as lovers across ethnic borders. According to Grayzel, sexual relations are an important source of income for Fulbe women (1990: 46). But the relation is differently interpreted by a Dogon, the teacher in Madougou:

Marriage with a \textit{Pullo}te is impossible – because she will never work like a Dogon woman. But the ‘ethnies’ are mixed, because there are sexual relations and their children are mixed. It is in their character – the Fulbe women accept, they do not refuse the Dogon, it is their tradition. It is a ‘forced relation’, the Fulbe women come to your compound, they sit. If you buy milk, they come again. One day you give some millet. The next day you wait for her in the house. If she accepts, she enters the house. Then she has a client for her milk. The Fulbe men has given up following their women; they understand how important it is for the women to sell the milk. But the Fulbe men visit the Dogon compounds’ to eat in secrecy. There they may drink tea, eat meat and rice, and give presents to the Dogon women. In that way it may also develop to a (sexual) relation. A Dogon civil servant may marry a \textit{Pullo}te, because he may afford it. But a cultivator may never marry a \textit{Pullo}te, he can not afford it.

According to the teacher, the Fulbe exploits the Dogon and Fulbe women “force them” on the Dogon men to enter into a milk-selling and sexual relation. Marriage between a Dogon and a Pullo woman is impossible because the Fulbe women do not work. The inter-ethnic sexual

\textsuperscript{185} Grayzel (1990) has studied the Fulbe in the Doukoloma area in Mali. He found that the single most consistent source of jewelry (functions both as adornment and savings) for Fulbe women was “gifts in connection with extramarital relations” (ibid.: 46).
relations are interpreted differently by the Fulbe women and Dogon men; while it is a source of income and autonomy for the Fulbe women; the Dogon uses sexual stereotypes (“it is in their tradition”) and economic dependency to explain the relation. Sensitive subjects like sex, cows and property are always discussed in secrecy in the hibbere:

In the hibbere with Hamma, Bargo and Idrissa we may talk about subjects that they can not talk about in the wuro, like women, sex and cows. Hamma says that everyone knows about who has no cows and who are herding for the Dogon. But they can not talk about it, because it will hurt those who are poor; it is semtude for them. When I ask how the Fulbe get cows, they whisper to me that it is dangerous to talk load about it. Either one inherits, or one wait to the cow has a calf, or one may buy a cow. But it is a very sensitive question.

Hibbere is an important arena for different inter-ethnic and inter-nyeeybe meetings, but also for hidden consumption and secret sexual relations. In this way, hibbere is like a free space for the Fulbe, a place where they can relax from the rules of the wuro. Riesman describes the Maccubé villages as free spaces where the Fulbe may relax from the strong moral code for Fulbe behaviour (pulaaku); they are like cafés for the Fulbe (1977: 120-121; cf. Gallais 1984: 134), and hibbere plays this role for the Fulbe in Madougou; it is a place they can relax and drink tea, and it has replaced the bush (ladde) as a place where the Fulbe may relax from the strict rules of the wuro (cf. Riesman 1977: 245-257). The Fulbe do not go to the hibbere only because they need to; they go there because they like it; it is a place for amusement and relaxing, and for inter-ethnic and inter-nyeenyo social meetings and exchange of news. Do people behave in distinct ways in the hibbere and in the wuro? Yes, they do, but in secret:

We meet bappanjam Oumaro in the hibbere at the marketplace, drunk. He takes us to the ‘back-stage’ Madougou: a Dogon compound in Arou where many Fulbe and Dogon men and the Dogon women living there (no Fulbe women) are gathered, they are drinking the traditional Dogon millet beer\(^\text{186}\) (dolo) and playing for money with cowries. The bappanjam

\(^{186}\) The Dogon millet beer is called chappato in Fulfulde. Dreyer reports from Blendio, a village she studied in the Sikasso region in Mali that people had suppressed the drinking of millet beer on market days because of the impact of the Islam prohibition of drinking alcohol (2002: 141). In Madougou, dolo are consumed in “secrecy” in Arou on market days. Other liquids like vodka and pastis and bottled beer, are sold and consumed in a back-
invites us to eat meat (tewu) with him. The Fulbe and the Dogon men joke and sing together: ‘On your father’s penis, if I don’t win over you in fight, your whole family is going to die’. The Dogon calls the Pullo for Maccudo, and all laugh.

Hibbere is a public place which makes it different from the bush (ladde). Fulbe men go to hibbere to relax, eat meat and drink tea in secrecy. As the case above illustrates, the Fulbe and the Dogon may even insult each other without defence; like in a joking relationship. Is the Fulbe-Dogon relationship a joking relationship in the making?

**Joking relationships**

The Fulbe in Madougou affiliate to each other and to other groups and categories through joking relationships\(^{187}\) or “cousinage”, and joking is related to notions of honor (yaage) and shame (semtude), and to different types of behaviour. Radcliffe-Brown defines the joking relationship like this: “… a relation between two persons in which one is by custom permitted, and in some instances required, to tease or make fun of the other, who in turn is required to take no offence” (1979: 90). Among the Fulbe, there are different types of joking relationships which represent different degrees of cultural complexity: from low degree of cultural complexity in the relations between special categories of kin, age-mates or grandparents, to high degree of complexity between some Fulbe clans;\(^{188}\) the Barry clan makes “cousinage” with Sidibé and Sankaré, between ethnic categories like the Dogon and the Bozo,\(^{189}\) or between the Fulbe and some nyeeybe clans like the blacksmiths,\(^{190}\) the Waylube (cf. Launay 1995: 161; N’Diaye 1995: 58). In Madougou, the first category of room of the Dogon resto whose owner, Dendem, is a Christian protestant and therefore not restricted by religion against selling alcohol.

\(^{187}\) Mauss (1928) refers to joking relationships as “parenté à plaisanteries”, which is the term used in the French ethnographic tradition.

\(^{188}\) Joking relationships are called sanankan ya in Malinké; the clans linked are called senekoun (Paulme 1939: 433).

\(^{189}\) The Dogon-Bozo relationship is a famous inter-ethnic joking relationship, see Dieterlen (1957); Griaule and Dieterlen (1954); and Paulme (1939) for further analysis.

\(^{190}\) Dieterlen claims that the Fulbe and the blacksmiths share kinship through a joking relationship (1973: 51).
joking with low degree of complexity between different categories of kin is called *dendiraagu*, and joking with *dendiraabe* partners happens in every-day life. The second type of joking relationship, i.e. between different clans or ethnic groups (*senekoun*) did not happen so often in daily life because the Fulbe in Madougou only jokes (*yeewtude*) with the blacksmiths; there were no other Fulbe clans present, and interaction with the blacksmiths is very limited in everyday life. But there are joking between different categories of *nyeeybe*, and when I visit the Walabube with the Kossodjo Ousmane, he says that “between the Hossobe and the Walabube, it’s like between the Dogon and the Bozo, its cousinage”. Then he takes the tea from a Gallabo man, who laughs, they are joking. The origin of the joking relationships between clans and ethnic groups are commonly explained by myths (cf. Dreyer 2002: 110) and Paulme explores the “parenté à plaisanteries” between the Fulbe and the blacksmiths and the prohibition that follows the relation (1939, 1988 [1940]: 24). There are two versions of the myth of origin of this joking relationship according to her.\(^{191}\) One version is a story about a blacksmith who looked like a hairy monkey and a Pullo who was not circumcised, who were friends. The smith-monkey circumcised the Pullo, who raised the blacksmith and cut off his tail. The blood from the two of them mixed, and they made a pact never to spill each other’s blood. Another version of the myth is that the ancestor of the blacksmiths and ancestor of the Fulbe came together from Mecca. The ancestor of the blacksmith had a wife and daughters, but the ancestor of the Pullo did not have a wife. The blacksmith offered one of his daughters in marriage to the Pullo, promising that it would be the last and only marriage between the two clans. This marriage makes it impossible for the descendants from the two clans to marry or to have sexual relations. Inter-clan joking relations are often followed by prohibition of marriage and the promise of not spill each others blood, like in the Fulbe-blacksmith and the Dogon-Bozo joking relationship (cf. Paulme bases the versions on P. E. N. Doumbia, “Etude du Clan des Forgerons**, in: **Bulletin du Comité d’Études Historiques et Scientifiques de l’A.O.F.,** Paris, t. XIX, 1936, p. 334-380.

\(^{191}\)
Inter-ethnic and inter-clan joking relations are often about the exchange of services, as in the myth above, and according to Paulme, the joking relationship is an economic exchange relation of obligational gifts and services (1939: 433).

According to Radcliffe-Brown, joking relationship is a relation of “permitted disrespect” (1940: 196, 1979: 91), and Riesman claims that “dendiraagu” is “… a reversal of pulaaku”; pulaaku is defined as “the qualities appropriate to the Fulani” (1977: 127). Dupire makes the same point; that in the relations between ego and the maternal uncles ego does not behave in accordance with puulade; literally “to behave like a Pullo” (1981: 169). In this way, joking relationship behaviour may be interpreted as a burlesque opposite of the behaviour according to yaage in everyday life performance, and notions of being one’s slave; Maccudo, is often used in joking; the slaves is a category excluded from pulaaku. People classified as cross-cousins i.e. children of kaawa; mother’s brothers, and children of goggo; father’s sisters, and those whose mother’s come from Madougou (i.e. the matriline; kawiraabe) are classified as dendiraabe, something typical for societies emphasizing the patrilineage, according to Radcliffe-Brown (1979: 97). Kaawa is mother’s brother, the “true uncle”, and one does not feel shame against one’s kaawa because he was nursed by the same breast (endam) as one’s mother (Riesman 1977: 39). The status as dendiraado means that one may insult each other without it hurting, or the other part making offence. Typical dendiraado joking is to take or steal food or tea; the dendiraado may visit their mother’s village and take whatever they want in theory, like a cow. In practice, only small quantities of food or things like cigarettes, peanuts and tea are taken, and no one can object. A typical joking statement to a dendiraado is that he will be “chased back home, because he eats too much”. To call each other for “Maccudo” is typical dendiraagu behaviour. When we visit Hawa, Ada’s dendiraado (Ada’s cross-cousin, her goggam’s daughter) who has eggi outside Madougou, they are joking. Hawa brings us milk, calling Ada her Maccudo, and Ada
answers back that it is Hawa that is her Maccudo. Because patrilateral cross-cousin marriages are frequent, spouses are often *dendiraabe*, and this principle works against a gendered hierarchy in the marital relation. There is joking between ego and the siblings of the spouses, and Mayrama insults Hamma who is the older brother of her spouse because they are age-mates:

Mayrama and Breihma are patrilateral cross-cousins (*dendiraabe*) and married. According to Hamma, that is not problematic because it is Breihma who is the ‘boss’. Mayrama says ‘*woalla hoore*’ to Hamma; that he is stupid, has no head, and *bonanoayowal*, he is a ‘villain’ (ugly person). She may insult him because she is his *dendiraado* and they are age-mates, even if she is married to his younger brother Breihma. Ada says that they are ‘true cousins’ because Mayrama’s mother Koumbel comes from Madougou.

There is also a joking relationship between age-mates and between grandparents and grandchildren - between the first and the third (alternate) generations - and the content of the jokes varies according to category. Between age-mates the insults have character of obscenities and sexual joking; *merall kallall* (the masculine sex), *merall koalall* (the feminine sex) and *hottere innama* (your mother’s sex) are expressions often heard in these jokes. Riesman claims that only persons of the same age may mutually insult each other, and older brothers may insult the younger, but these insults may not be returned according to the principle of seniority (1977: 77). Between grandparents and grandchildren the jokes are often about marriage; that ego is going to marry the grandfather or grandmother is going to be ego’s co-wife. Typical grandfather/grandson joking is when Bilali (Hamma’s paternal grandfather) calls Hamma by nicknames (*waccore macco*) like *saggara* after a huge Dogon who “eats dog meat”, because Hamma is so huge. These are typical forms of grandparent joking (cf. Radcliffe-Brown 1979: 97):

The old grandmother jokes with Hamma, saying he is her husband, and that I will have the grandfather as husband. Another grandmother says that I shall hit (*fiété*) Fatma now that she
is back, because she is going to ‘steal’ my husband Hamma. Saliou, a friend of Hamma’s
grandfather and thereby ‘grandfather’, insults Hamma by saying woalla hoore; literally ‘no
head’, and wants to take me as his wife, because Hamma has no head.

According to Radcliffe-Brown, there are two ways to show respect: either by joking, or by
avoidance (1979). The dendiraagu behaviour is opposed to the yaage behaviour in the
relationship between ego and one generation above ego (one’s parents and partents-in-law) or
between ego and one generation below ego (one’s children). In these relations there are no
joking, but avoidance and yaagaade (to show honor and respect), and one may not eat or
drink in front of people to which one has to act in according to yaage. Avoidance in these
relations must not be interpreted as hostility, but as mutual respect, according to Radcliffe-
Brown (1979: 92):

When Hamma visits Naye, he can not enter the wuro Fulbe. Even if he likes to, he may not
visit the wuro because it will show lack of respect: mi yagote, he says, and it will be semtude
for him. The mother and the father of Fatma (his ‘parents-in-law’) live there, and he has to
avoid them.

According to Riesman, it is among one’s in-laws that the risk is greatest of committing an
error (1977: 131). Are cross-cousin joking relations hierarchical, i.e. is the one who “takes”
subordinated to the one who “gives”? According to Dupire there is continuity in relations
between cross-cousins and “castes” according to who gives and who takes (1985: 89). While
I am not going to speculate about the origin of joking relationships nor to enter the theoretical
controversy following it (for discussion, see Dreyer 2002: 117-121; Radcliffe-Brown 1979), I
will confirm that the Fulbe in Madougou attach themself to others by different forms of joking
relationships, and that these relations do not form “a fixed hierarchy” (Sommerfelt 1999:
123), and joking is used in the negotiation of status between the different categories of actors.
Joking mediating ethnic and nyeeyno borders

There are joking relationships between some categories of nyeeybe: the Walabube, the Hossobe, the Waylube and the Laube, depending on who one ask, but not between the nyeeybe and the former slaves, the Macubé or the Riimaybe. One example of cross-nyeenyo joking between the Laube and the Hossobe is this: The Labbo woman Fatma Gadjaga’s mother is from Karakindé, as is the mother of the Kossodjo Ousmane Morba’s oldest brother. Therefore Fatma may joke with Ousmane, asking if his oldest brother is not “dead”. In theory, there are no joking relationships between the Fulbe and the Riimaybe or between the Fulbe and the Dogon. But, in practice, people also joke across ethnic and nyeeybe borders, and I think there is a dynamic in the acceptance of who people regard as “close cousins” (Launay 1995: 159) according to the dynamic in the social hierarchy:

One day, Hamma jokes with three Riimaybe women visiting the old Maccudo in the wuro, who is sick. The women are bartering ngiiridje for kossam in the wuro. Hamma says to me that ‘Riimaybe is the same as Macubé’. The youngest of the Riimaybe says ‘merall nayall’ (nayeedo means an old person) to Hamma, which is an insult, meaning that Hamma has become old. Hamma returns the insult; that it is her that has become old, because she has a baby on her back. The same joke is repeated by a Maccudo when he is insulting Hamma; saying he has become old. This insult one can only say if one is of the same generation or age.

As Sommerfelt has observed with respect to “castes” in Gambia: “… I emphasize the difference between dynamic organization, on the one hand, and formal structure on the other. I claim that ‘continuity’ in relations between ‘castes’ and cross-cousins reflect the fact that people constantly negotiate power and identity”. (1999: 121) I think this is a fruitful way to explain the joking also in the relationships between the ethnic categories and categories of nyeeybe that are not formalised as joking relationships in the social structure. An example is how the Fulbe “extrapolates” the dendiraagu relationship to include the Laube category, like

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when joking with a Labbo woman from Sengomara who is visiting wuro Madougou. Because Hamma’s mother Ada is from Sengomara, Hamma says that the Labbo woman’s child is his dendiraado. Hamma treats the child very rough, hits him, and gives him sand to eat until he starts crying. It is typical dendiraagu behaviour, and it exemplifies how social interaction between an individual Pullo and Labbo in some situations is interpreted in terms of kinship and dendiraagu; even if in theory there is no dendiraagu relation between the Fulbe and the Laube. The same happens in social interaction with the Dogon. Between the Fulbe and the Dogon there is no formalised joking relationship, which may seem strange, following Radcliffe-Brown’s structuralist interpretation of joking as preventing conflict and removing any “serious hostility” in relationships (1979: 92). The Fulbe-Dogon relationship is a relation that involves “possible or actual hostility” (ibid.), and in practice the Fulbe and the Dogon tease each other and joke every day, like when Breihma is joking with the Dogon women who come to the wuro to sell “gallettes du mil”. However, between the Fulbe and the Dogon there are other and stronger relations, like njaatigi, the host-relation and the herding contract, which institutionalise the Fulbe-Dogon relations and the exchange of gifts and services, as I will explore further in chapter 6, and following Radcliffe-Brown, a joking relationship is “in some ways the exact opposite of a contractual relation” where the parties are “conjoined by a definite common interest in reference to which each of them accepts specific obligations” (1979: 103). This may explain why the relationship between the Fulbe and the Dogon has not developed into a joking relationship: because their relations are contractual and interdependent in a kind of economic symbiosis based on the exchange of goods and services, and it is therefore a potential friendship relation rather than a joking

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193 According to Drissa Diakité (professor d’Histoire à l’Université de Bamako, Mali), joking is a way to transcend borders or avoid conflict between different categories of people. He gives a functionalist interpretation of the reason for joking relationships; because the Fulbe practice transhumance, they are in contact with many different peoples, and joking relations ease the communication with different categories of people (personal communication).
relation (cf. ibid.: 112). To be a joking relationship, there has to be an exchange of insults without offence, which are non-existing in the Fulbe-Dogon relations (ibid.: 113).

Life cycle ceremonies

Fulbe ritual and ceremonial life is very poor with few public celebrations. But those life-cycle events that are marked, like weddings and name-giving ceremonies, involve the “others”; the Dogon and the Laube. The Dogon play the role as “égorgeurs”, butchers, and circumcisers for the Fulbe who do not perform this type of work, and their specialist roles link the Dogon to the Fulbe ceremonies (cf. Dupire 1994: 274). Unfortunately, I did not have the possibility to explore circumcision or initiation in the field, even if they may be important life-cycle events and markers of identity (cf. Dieterlen 1965), but I was told that it is the Dogon women who exercise circumcision on Fulbe girls in the hibbere. Neither did I attend many wedding ceremonies in Madougou; there was only one Fulbe wedding in the wuro during my stay. But I did attend some name-giving ceremonies (lamruuji); Fulbe, Laube and Dogon. The Fulbe do not consider the child as a person before it has been named at a ceremony (Stenning 1959: 118), and this is a typical lamru ceremony:

There is a lamru at bappanjam Yero’s and Hawa’s suudu. The first week (dammbordu) after the birth the mother and the child stay inside the suudu; it is only after the name-giving ceremony that they may come out in public. Everyone is waiting for the lamru to start; Bilali has not yet come. When he arrives, all the men gather on one side, sitting on sekke. The women arrive and sit down on another seko outside the suudu. The child’s hair has been cut off; it is put together with a silver ring between to beddi, and passed around first on the men’s side, later at the women’s side. People put coins on it, and in the end it is put in the middle, while good blessings are given by the Labbo. When the name of the baby is announced, the Dogon present cut the throat of a sheep at the same time. The Dogon gets the neck and the backpart of the animal, the Labbo gets the legs, and the rest of the meat is for the family to distribute. The men receive gooro. The beddo is sent into the suudu, where the baby’s hair is hidden. Then gooro and money are distributed: 200 CFA to each of the oldest women and the Labbo woman, gooro to the others. The sheep is skinned by the Dogon; the meat is going to be distributed afterwards, and the older women quarrel about who are going to receive money. The whole ceremony takes no more than fifteen minutes.
As this ceremony shows, the Labbo and the Dogon play important roles in the name-giving ceremony which is an arena for meetings across ethnic and *nyeenyo* boundaries. The work they perform is defined according to their ethnic and *nyeenyo* status; while the Dogon perform manual work despised by the Fulbe, like slaughtering, the Labbo perform the symbolic work of blessing and praising; and for these services they receive meat and money as compensation. While the Labbo griot plays the role as “marabout” by blessing the child in this Fulbe *lamru*, the marabout (*moddibbo*) was present in a Laube *lamru* where he and the Labbo father blessed the child together. Besides these tasks described above, there is no working together at *lamruugi*, because no food is cooked or distributed, and it is a very modest ceremony compared to the name-giving ceremonies discussed by Sommerfelt (1999: 61-66). Name-giving ceremonies follows kinship and individual networks of friendship across ethnic and *nyeeeybe* borders, and there are no extensive gift networks, only gift relations between close kin, neighbours and friends (cf. de Bruijn 1999: 298). When I discuss the *lamru* with Ada later, I ask her why they do not last longer; the Dogon *lamru* (*ibokono* in Dogon) I have been to last the whole day; people stay to eat, talk and amuse themselves. Ada answers that if you serve food to the Fulbe at *lamru*, people will say you are greedy (“gourmand”), and then they will talk bad of you. Even if the Fulbe don’t eat together at the *lamru*, it is still a redistributive ritual because the meat is distributed afterwards, and later the same day, Ada comes to me to complain about the meat she has received from the *lamru*. She does not think it is enough; saying: “We are better than them. After all we have given (500 CFA); this is what we receive? They don’t know anything. My husband was the oldest”, she complains. Name-giving ceremonies are often followed by disputes about the distribution of gifts, as Riesman also remarks (1977: 60), and following Sahlins’ interpretation of how food sharing may be seen as the “barometer on social relations according to reciprocity” (1988: 215), the *lamru* represents a negative exchange relation for Ada; she gives more than she
receives, and she is dissatisfied. As the wife of the oldest brother, she claims she should receive more meat. This supports the principle of the reciprocity in sharing as Sahlins has noted (ibid.), and Mauss’ obligation to give and receive (1954: 39-40). What Ada gave as a “gift” in the lamru, is voluntary in theory, but in fact is “given and repaid under obligation” (Mauss 1954: 1).

I will very briefly note that wedding ceremonies (njappolé) also gather people cross ethnic and nyeeybe borders. While there were no former slaves present at the lamruuiji, the Riimaybe women pound millet at marriages (ongol njappolé); it is the bride’s mother who is paying them for it. In the Fulbe wedding ceremony at night, Dogon men were among the guests, and in the Dogon wedding in Arou, there were Fulbe among the guests; “because we are friends”, as both the Fulbe and the Dogon explained. But there are more Dogon taking part in Fulbe ceremonies than inverse, and this may be due to the relative poverty of the Fulbe; the Dogon becoming their economic “patrons”. In the next chapter I will explore how the asymmetry in economic and power relations affect their social relationships and the images of each other, but first I will turn to the role of Islam for the ethnic and nyeeybe relations.

**Islam as a common religious framework**

Islam was gradually introduced in the region by Arabic and Berberian traders during the 19th century (Vedeld 2001: 121). The Fulbe identity as nobles presupposes their identity as Muslims, with roots back to the “Barre” clergy clan of Sékou Ahmadou (ibid.) and the Diina Emire and the Fulbe hegemony in the 18th century. Islam was a “privilege of the elites in the past” (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 420), and the poor Fulbe struggle to be good Muslims. Because many Dogon in Madougou have converted to Islam, the Fulbe may no longer claim religious superiority according to religion over the “pagan”, “fetishist” or “animist” Dogon,
and this represents a paradox for the Fulbe; the religion they conceive as “theirs” link them to the “others” (cf. Riesman 1977: 96). In fact, some poor Dogon have converted to a fundamentalist version of Islam, the Wahabism (cf. de Bruijn, van Beek and van Dijk 1997: 260) recognized by different prayer practice and the practice of gender seclusion. Fulbe *tawaangal* and pre-Islamic practices 194 are often contradictionary to Muslim values, as in help relations and in the relations to the poor where the Fulbe traditions are weak. Traditionally, there is a lack of institutions of social security among the Fulbe, and according to de Bruijn and Van Dijk, the Fulbe ideals of pastoralism lose influence to Islam and the practice of praying (*juulde*) takes over from custom (*al’aada* or *tawaangal*) (1995: 427).

According to Dupire, the Fulbe confiscated Islam as “theirs”, and it has become an inherent part of being Fulbe (1981: 173; Azarya 1993: 41, 52), and to be a good Muslim is a way to escape the shame of poverty. Daily life is influenced by *juula*, prayer five times a day, 195 and the Fulbe struggle to be good Muslims by praying and following the fast during Ramadan. For the poor Fulbe, being a pious Muslim is a strategy that legitimates ones poverty, and the study of the Koran or to become a marabout may be used as an excuse not to work and to keep one’s noble status even if poor (de Bruijn, van Beek and van Dijk 1997: 259). To be a Muslim is part of the Fulbe cultural-religious identity with roots in the Diina, and as Muslims the Fulbe still claim cultural superiority over the “Habbe” who are Islamic “newcomers” (cf. Azarya 1993: 54). Belko tells me that about forty years ago, the Dogon buried their dead in the escarpment, but today the Dogon and the Fulbe are buried on the same place but “each on different sides”. Not all the Dogon are Muslims, some “eats all”, he says. This became clear after the incident where a Pullo was killed in a Dogon village in the escarpment. It created a bad atmosphere in the *wuro* and started a lot of talk about *sukunjaabe*, witches, and the Fulbe were very afraid. The Dogon interpretation of the accident was that the Pullo was killed by

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194 *Koumen* represents an example on pre-Islamic Fulbe tradition; see Bâ and Dieterlen (1961).
195 Every day I was always asked if I should not pray: *a juula*?
the Dogon hunters and “animists” as a sacrifice so the rain would fall and the millet grow. They cut off his hallere (male sex organ), one testicle and the heart. “The whole village wanted it”, the Dogon said. Another interpretation was that a Pullo was allied with some Dogon to kill another Pullo who had run off with his wife: that it was a jealousy murder. Both the Fulbe and the Dogon in Madougou agree that the Dogon in the escarpment are dangerous; that they have “fetishes” which talk.196

Religious syncretism

Islam as a common framework unites the Muslim Fulbe and Dogon in Madougou in opposition to the “animist” Dogon in the escarpment, and there is a religious syncretism based on Islam and maraboutism, the belief in sukunjaabe (witches), and the use of traditional medicine and magic charms (talki, sing. talkuru) which the Fulbe and the Dogon share. Islam and the belief in traditional medicine and magic - the practice of talki198 (charms) - work as cross-ethnic and cross-nyeenyo integrating forces that unite the Fulbe and the Dogon and the different nyeeeybe and former slaves199 in a common religious framework. They follow the fast during Ramadan and the same religious festivities, like Tabaski, even if they don’t pray together. There is social segregation in praying, and they do not visit each other’s mosques; the Fulbe pray in Dogon compounds rather than in the mosque when they are in hibbere. All categories practice maraboutism, and small gift exchanges in the form of kola nuts (gooro), and money criss-cross ethnic and nyeeeybe borders through the marabouts. The Fulbe, the Dogon and the nyeeeybe exchange magical knowledge and expertise like talki, and use each other’s medical competence, like when a Pullo is called upon to help a pregnant

196 It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore Dogon cosmogeny, see Griaule (1966).
197 According to Triningham, the mixture of Islam and “animism” lead to a synthesis (1959: 44), and there are “animist” Dogon “autels”, shrines, in Muslim Madougou, kept in secret.
198 There are different names for the talkuru according to where they are carried on the body: balkol: around the waist; talkorakakaro: long gris-gris carried over the shoulder; talkordaane: short gris-gris around the neck.
199 Before liberation, the slaves were not allowed to practice Islam, so converting from them means upward social mobility (de Bruijn, van Beek and van Dijk 1997: 262).
Dogon woman whose unborn child will not come out. The Pullo *debbo* puts a *talkuru* on the women and says magic spells to help her to have an easy birth. The Fulbe are also known as herbalists and are called upon by the Dogon to help (Burnham 1999: 272). Islam is a common framework for explaining misfortune and crisis: God, Allah, and religion justifies social differences between rich and poor and make it easier for the Fulbe to accept their status as poor. It is one’s destiny, *tagadje*, that decides, and only God can change that. This leads to fatalism in daily life, because no one may change one’s *tagadje*, as we have seen above. Islam has impact on daily life through greetings and prayers, and is an important aspect of the Fulbe noble identity.

**The role of the *moddibbo* in Fulbe life**

The *moddibaabe* (sing. *moddibbo*), the marabouts, play an important role in Fulbe life. The *moddibaabe* have many functions: curing illness by the knowledge of medical herbs, as healers, instructors in prayer, teaching children the Koran in evening school, and as religious leaders and sources of inspiration. The *moddibaabe* are considered wise men and do not take part in cultivation or herding activities, but are supported economically as religious elite. They live in segregated quarters and practice gender seclusion; the women are secluded in a part of the compound the men must not visit. If the *moddibbo* is rich, he has more wives and the wives of a *moddibbo* do not work. The practice of gender seclusion separates them from the pastoral Fulbe. The *moddibaabe* go on pilgrimage to Mecca if they can afford it, to obtain the title El Hadj. The important *moddibaabe* are rich and looked up to, and to obtain religious knowledge and become a *moddibbo* may also be a source of income for some poor Fulbe.

Belko, Ada’s brother from Sevaré near Mopti, is travelling around as a *moddibbo*. He makes *talki* (charms): “Your body becomes strong, all the Fulbe carries it”, he says. But it is not the *moddibaabe* who gives the good luck; it is God; Allah. The *moddibaabe* only asks God for
good luck. According to N’Diaye (1995: 20) and Riesman (1984: 179-180) the importance of the marabouts is increasing with the influence of Islam in Fulbe society. The *moddibaabe* dispose Islam as a symbol of power and nobility by *juulde*, to pray (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 138). But even if the Fulbe, the Dogon and the other social categories in Madougou share Islam and maraboutism as a religious framework, the Fulbe still consider themselves superior to the Dogon and others. Islam makes socio-economic relations and friendships across ethnic and *nyeeybe* borders easier, and in the next chapter I will explore the nature of the exchange relations between the different social categories more closely.
Chapter 6: Ethnic and Nyeenyo Exchange Relations

The social division of labour in Madougou is complex, and unites the different social categories in a network of exchange relations. The work (golle) defines people (cf. Fay 1995: 436), and the social division of labour between the different categories is legitimated in the myths of origin as explored in chapter 2. Fulbe lifestyle and values make them dependent on their neighbours for subsistence and exchange in form of goods and services, and this is a traditional schema for pastoral-cultivator relations. Economic exchange relations are based on differences in modes of production, and the specialization in the Fulbe pastoral economy makes them dependent on the neighbouring cultivators and the market, and the different artisans or occupational nyeeybe for exchange of material goods and services (cf. Dupire 1962a: 127). The exchange system in Madougou is based on real and ideal differences in the production system and work segregation. Exchange relations are based on reciprocal obligations about giving and receiving, according to Mauss (1954). But exchange relations are not necessarily equalized, and may take the form of asymmetrical power relations, dependency and even patronage. In this chapter I will explore the social division of labour and the exchange relations between the different groups and categories in Madougou in a wider social context outside the market place. There exists an elaborated network of exchange relations crossing borders between ethnic categories, nyeeybe and former slaves. I will show how each category claim unique and specialised knowledge about their occupations and tasks to protect their respective status and occupation, and show how ethnic and nyeenyo endogamy is made legitimate in local theories about differences in work ideology or work ethos.
**Fulbe and Dogon division of labour**

The division of labour unites the different social groups and categories in a common economic exchange system. The exchange relations between the Rimbe, the *nyeeybe* and the former slaves are built on ideas about giving and receiving (cf. Sommerfelt 1999), but there are different opinions about who are giving and who are receiving, and these different ideas constitute different versions of the social hierarchy based on the local stereotypical categories “to work”, “to ask” and “to give”. “The Laube ask for gifts; the Dogon work hard”, the Fulbe say with contempt. The Fulbe-Dogon relations are mainly based on different modes of production and the “ideal” lifestyles as respective pastoralist herders and agriculturalists. Their common notion of a stratified society is based on the work segregation according to these categories and the different *nyeeybe* occupations, but the Fulbe and the Dogon interpret this hierarchy in different ways. While Fulbe idea of nobility prevents them from doing certain work, the result is their dependency on the Dogon for subsistence and the Rimaybe and the *nyeeybe* for different work and services. There are two exchange relations between the Fulbe and the Dogon that are especially important: the *njaatigi* relation and herding on contract. What type of reciprocity does the *njaatigi* relation and contract herding between the Fulbe and the Dogon imply?

**The *njaatigi* relation**

The *njaatigi* relation is a host relation; the *njatigam* are the hosts on whose field one can install oneself and “rest” according to the Fulbe. It is an exchange relation based on the division of labour between pastoralists and cultivators where milk and manure are exchanged for millet (*gawri*). It is a good relation for the Fulbe because it gives them what they need, and they are taken good care of, they say. A Dogon *njaatigi* tells me that the Dogon pay one
basket (*hande*) with *gawri* for ten days of manure of a field. For that the Dogon need the Fulbe, he says.

Three Dogon men on horses come to the *wuro*; they have come to greet Ada. The three Dogon men belong to the category *njatigam* for her, and Hamma says that it is on their fields his family make their *suudu* those years they move after the harvest. They stayed on their fields when he was a small boy, but he doesn’t remember. ‘It is not every year we move’, he says.

When Hamma meets one of his mother’s *njatigam* at the market one day, the *njatigam* calls Hamma “his son”. Like this, the mutual exchange relation is interpreted in terms of kinship and authority. The *njaatigi* relation link the Fulbe to the Dogon in different ways, and the content in the relation is not fixed and may vary. The Fulbe are dependent on extensive networks of *njaatigi* relations to be able to travel, because they may not eat in a stranger’s house as I have showed above (cf. de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995: 161), and because of this they need to stay either with the Laube, the Maccubé or with the Dogon when they travel:

One day we meet Sidy, a cousin of Ada, in a Dogon *njaatigi* compound in the *hibbere*. He is on his way back to Bombo, and stops to eat with the Dogon rather than to go to the *wuro*. It is shameful for a Pullo to eat in another Fulbe family if he has no kinship relations on the father’s side there, Hamma explains to me. Then someone may hurt him.

According to Ada, the *njaatigi* relation is about access to land. She says that the Fulbe were in Madougou first, and that the Dogon Amidou’s family got land from Hamma’s grandfather; that is why they are *njaatigi*. When we visit Amidou one day, he gives us a plastic bag full of delicious peanuts, *ngiiridje*, which we take with us to the *wuro* to eat. In this way, the *njaatigi* relation based on the transfer of land from Hamma’s family to Amidou’s family in the grandfathers’ generation created a social bond between the two families which is confirmed by gifts in the form of food from the *njaatigi* to the Fulbe. *Njaatigi* also signifies a help relation. Hamma’s family have another *njaatigi* relation with a Dogon in the *hibbere*; they
store the *gawri* in the Dogon’s granary, something they have done for generations, and when we visit the *njaatigi* compound we are given a bowl full of *ngiiridje* to eat. The *njaatigi* relation is also called upon when help is needed, like writing a letter for an illiterate Pullo on market day. A Dogon explanation of the *njaatigi* relation is given by Pierre:

Pierre says that *njaatigi* means that some Fulbe install themselves on your field which their cows then fertilize. Then the Fulbe will ask you for grain or money in return. It is a way for the Fulbe to save their millet, he says, for example the Fulbe from Bindama leave their millet there and come back first when the rain falls. Then they eat their millet. But Pierre’s father Denem has eleven cows on their fields around Madougou, so they don’t need the Fulbe cows as fertilizer any longer.

As this shows, the Fulbe and the Dogon explain the *njaatigi* relation in different ways, and the content of the *njaatigi* relation may embrace different types of relations. While the Fulbe interpret the *njaatigi* relation as a mutual help relation, the Dogon interpret the *njaatigi* relation as an asymmetrical relation where the Fulbe ask for millet and the Dogon give. De Bruijn and van Dijk claim that the Fulbe need the Dogon more than the Dogon need the Fulbe, and the *njaatigi* relation is no longer a symbiotic relationship; it has become a dependency relation for the Fulbe, who are becoming poor clients of the Dogon (1995: 426). I think this is a simplistic image that has to be nuanced. First, some Fulbe interpret the *njaatigi* relation as one by which access to land was given to the Dogon because the Fulbe were in Madougou first, and this makes the Dogon receivers and dependent in relation to the Fulbe, and second, the relationship is confirmed by gifts and interpreted in terms of friendship and kinship by the Dogon. Still, the Dogon need the Fulbe less to manure their fields because they possess their own cows, and in this way the *njaatigi* relation is threatened as an economic institution in the exchange of milk and manure for millet. The content of the *njaatigi* relation has changed because the Fulbe have become poor after droughts in the 1980’s when they lost cattle and the Dogon have become rich because of income from
tourism and cash cropping, and the earlier complementary relation and utilisation of natural resources is disturbed (cf. de Bruijn, van Beek and van Dijk 1997), if not totally destroyed. But the njaatigi relation still exists as a help relation, and it is interpreted as a social relation of friendship cross ethnic boundaries.

**Herding on contract**

An important Fulbe-Dogon exchange relation is the herding contract. While herding on contract generally is despised by the Fulbe, it is a strategy for relatively poor Fulbe in Madougou to remain “pastoralists” and stay in the wuro. Hamma’s family does not herd for the Dogon, and they find it a despised activity. Herding on contract mean a loss of autonomy for the individual Pullo and contradicts the idea of nobility and freedom. Is the herding on contract a “poverty trap” or a way to increase one’s herd (Burnham 1999: 277)? And what is the limit in number of cows for the Fulbe before they start to herd for the Dogon? While I do not know the number of cows needed to avoid herding for the Dogon, I know that Ada’s family with few cows refuse to herd for the Dogon, and they manage because Hamma work as a guide for money elsewhere. Is the herding contract threatened from the inside by the Fulbe contempt for herding for others or from the outside by the Dogon herding their cattle themselves; and is the herding contract coming to and end, as van Driel (1999) claims? I don’t think so, because it is a possible way to rebuild one’s herd and continue with a pastoral life in Madougou.

A Dogon from Arou visits the wuro one evening. He says that a Pullo has herded for him since 1997. He does not pay for it but helps with ‘problems during the harvest’, like shoes, plastic objects, etc. And he helps with marriage. If he sells a cow, he gives a gift to the Pullo. He may call the Pullo for ‘my Pullo’, but he is not the njaatigi of the Pullo, that is the Dogon on whose field the Pullo stays when leaving on transhumance and who gives millet to the

200 See Lane (1988) about the influence of tourism on the Dogon.
Pullo. But the one who owns the cows is responsible when the cows go into someone’s field; then he has to pay.

As the statement above shows, the Dogon do not pay, but helps with “problems”, and it may be classified as a reciprocal exchange relation with commitments and obligations (cf. Basset 1994). Herding contracts based on entrusting rather than money which the Fulbe find degrading, make the herders to devote more care to their work according to Basset (1994: 148), and this gives more milk in return to the herder which increases their income through milk sale and in this way may help them rebuild the herd (ibid.: 163). When I discuss the Dogon-Fulbe exchange relations with the Dogon, they tell me that the Dogon need the Fulbe to herd cattle and give or sell them milk when harvest time comes. Even if the Dogon have many cows, they don’t have the time to herd during harvest. Issa Kodjo is home from Bamako to herd his family’s cattle, but then he has to harvest and make bricks of banco for construction, and the cows are herded by a Pullo. Even if I do not agree that contract herding is a patron-client relationship where the Fulbe stand in the client position, I do agree that it is a power relationship where the Dogon hold power and is “stronger” than the Fulbe in the relation, but the Fulbe and the Dogon maximize different values for a period when the Fulbe herd for the Dogon to rebuild their herds. While the noble Fulbe “had” people as slaves before; “my Pullo” in the statement above express a dependency relation where the Dogon is in power over the Pullo; the power relations have changed according to the Dogon. But the many other exchange relations between the Fulbe and the Dogon mediate the impression of the Fulbe as powerless clients for the Dogon and the Dogon need the Fulbe to herd the cattle when they are harvesting or constructing houses, so there is interdependence in the relation. The Dogon men also build houses of banco for the Fulbe; they do manual work and offer transportation means when the Fulbe *eggi*; they slaughter animals for the Fulbe at name-giving ceremonies, and the Dogon women are selling “bouille de riz” and “gallettes du mil”
every morning in the *wuro*, because they know that the Fulbe women don’t always have the
time to make breakfast. The Dogon women selling breakfast are appreciated among the
Fulbe, who have to eat yesterday’s leftovers (*barke harma*) or nothing at all if there is no
milk yet in the morning, and the relation has a certain sense of service and friendship. The
Fulbe pay the Dogon to do manual work, like when three Dogon men come from the *hibbere*
to put Bilali’s *gawri* in his banco granary. When I ask them why they are doing it, they say
that the Fulbe don’t know how to do such work. Other Dogon come with donkey carts to
bring the Fulbe *gawri* to rented granaries in the *hibbere*, and when Ada’s *danki* falls down,
she does nothing to repair it; she only says she will call a Dogon to repair it. Dogon men
come to the *wuro* after darkness to sell pieces of wood illegally (it is forbidden to cut trees)
for construction, and they ask the Fulbe if they have animals to be slaughtered or other types
of work for money. They also gather fibres from the baobab tree which they sell to the Fulbe
who make *boggol* or *seko* of them. As all these exchange relations show, there is economic
interdependency, and it is not only the Fulbe who are dependent on the Dogon for work, but
also the opposite, depending on personal status and wealth. While de Bruijn and van Dijk
claim that the relation between the Fulbe and the Dogon in the Hayre is becoming a patron-
client relationship in the disfavour of the Fulbe (1995: 327); the Fulbe becoming a “pastoral
proletariat” (de Bruijn, van Beek and van Dijk 1997: 256), I do not agree to this, but claim
that the poor Fulbe herding on contract for the Dogon chose this strategy because it makes
them able to continue with a pastoral, but poor lifestyle. The Fulbe and the Dogon are
different and maximise different values (cf. Barth 1966, 1969b), and the Fulbe do not affirm
Dogon values like cultivating for cash. The Fulbe-Dogon relations in Madougou have more
the character of symbiosis or asymmetric exchange relations than a patron-client relationship
of unequal exchange; the patron is defined as “the person who has the values of his own
choosing affirmed by the other” (Paine 1971: 8), and the Fulbe and Dogon are “different,
rather than unequal, in what they possess” (ibid.: 12). The Dogon interpret the relations with
the Fulbe in terms of giving and receiving (but still different from a *nyeenyo* relation); the
Fulbe ask the Dogon for grain, and the Dogon give it to the Fulbe; the Fulbe on their side
interpret the relation as a symmetric exchange relation; as compensation for herding they get
access to milk and a pastoral lifestyle. Toulmin explains the lack of patron-client
relationships among the Bambara in Kala, Mali, like this: “Another factor limiting the
emergence of patron-client relations between the Bambara is the presence of other more
exploitable forms of labour, particularly that provided by Fulani herders” (1992: 283). She
claims that the Bambara is in power over the herding Fulani and they therefore decide the
conditions of the herding contract (ibid. 280), and according to Bourgeot, “prestations in
kind” is typical for the herding contract which explore the unpaid herders (1981: 121). Have
the Fulbe in Madougou taken the role as the “exploitable forms of labour” for the Dogon?
There are individual differences among the Fulbe, and it is important to distinguish the rich
Fulbe, owning many cows, from the poor Fulbe herding Dogon cattle on contract; the poor
Fulbe being the most dependent on the Dogon. According to the civil servant in Madougou,
most Fulbe in the *wuro* herd cattle for the Dogon: “The Fulbe are nourishing themselves on
the backs of the Dogon”, he says. Even if the Fulbe are dependent on the Dogon
economically and herd their cattle, it makes it possible for them to keep their noble and
pastoral identity by avoiding cultivating more. The local system of exchange relations and the
division of labour between the different groups and categories works economically in favour
of some groups, namely the Dogon and the cultivators who earn money on cash crops. Even
if the herding contract creates stress in the Fulbe identity because it is in conflict with their
ideals of freedom, superiority and not working for others, it makes them able to continue a
pastoralist lifestyle. The image of the poor Fulbe forced into client relations or “exploitable
forms of labour” is mediated by the reciprocity in the exchange relation; the Dogon need the
Fulbe to herd, and the Fulbe escape from cultivating more. In this way the different values of the Fulbe and the Dogon make it possible for both parts to “profit” from the relation; and they “… hold different views which lead to differing evaluations of the prestation, so that both can profit” (Barth 1966: 13). There is an internal ranking system in the Fulbe group where the Fulbe herding on contract have low status and is despised by those not herding for the Dogon. It is still better to keep on to the Fulbe identity, because, according to the Fulbe, the Fulbe as a category is ranked over the Dogon and the “others” in the Fulbe social hierarchy.

**Fulbe and Dogon relations with the nyeebye**

As we have seen above, the Fulbe-Dogon relations are based on reciprocal exchange relations; they work for each other and exchange services in property of their positions as pastoralists or cultivators. The relations with the *nyeebye* are different because they are in the position as those who may “ask” (“quemander”). The Fulbe and the Dogon have different relations with the *nyeebye*, and some relations are more important than others for the different categories. While the Fulbe and the Laube live in close daily contact in the *wuro*, the Dogon and the Walabube, Waylube and Hossofibe are spatially gathered in the *hibbere*. The Laube and the Walabube function as griots and mediators for the Fulbe and the Dogon, and the blacksmiths, the Waylube, have an important position in both Dogon cosmology and society and stand in a joking relationship with the Fulbe as we have seen, even if they do not interact often in daily life. There is an internal *nyeenyo* ranking between the Laube and the Walabube griots who ask, and the Waylube and Hossofibe who may ask, but don’t do it (cf. Gardi 2003).

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201 The complexity in Dogon cosmology is a study of itself and not a scope in this thesis, see Dieterlen (1956) and Griaule and Dieterlen (1954) for elaboration.
The symbolic power of the Laube griots

While the Walabube and the Laube griots may “ask”, they also have the symbolic power to spoil one’s name. One Monday evening when we come home to the wuro after the market, griots have arrived at Hamma’s suudu. He is not happy, because they will ask for things; and he says: “They do not work, only ask for things. And one can not refuse, because then they will spoil your name. They are dangerous”. The griots are not from Madougou, so it is Idy, the Labbo from Madougou who tells them the genealogical names, and then they split the money afterwards. People are afraid of the griots because they have the power to destroy one’s name, and because of it people hide when griots arrive. As the Labbo griot Hama from Sengomara (he calls himself “African gitariste”) tells me:

The griots did ‘spoil the name’ of Bilali, the rich grandfather, since there were nobody in his suudu to receive them on arrival. Bilali gave him only 5000 CFA, and that is not much; he is not satisfied. Hama, Bilali’s son, gave nothing. He says that ‘here we are at home, we have the same parents. It is serious’.

The rich were not at home, and they did not give much to the griots, and the griots spoiled their name. If there is a lack of reciprocity and the griots do not receive anything in the place he “comes from”; where is he going to receive? This is a serious problem, and as Dupire writes:

In highly stratified Senegambian societies such as these, concepts of honor and prestige require that a freeman show generosity to artisans and especially to ‘praise-giving’ griots who are capable of both slander and lies. (Dupire 1985: 89)

According to Camara, griots are a negative reference group for the nobles, but they are integrated in society through the joking relationship (1992: 190-191). Against this, Dupire claims that griots are always socially inferior as takers and beggars and, therefore, are despised by the non-professional nobles: “Like a slave, a caste artisan is of course presented
as an anti-model. He is a beggar and a thief; he has no sense of honor or shame, he is arrogant etc.” (Dupire 1985: 90). She claims further that it is the “… inferior party’s right to receive compensation which are essentially economic in nature” (1985: 89), and that the Laube are overpaid; they are paid in cash and also receive an additional gift for the work they do (ibid.: 89). According to Dupire the Laube are socially inferior, but have the power to bless or to curse, and therefore possess a socially ambiguous status, like the blacksmiths (ibid.).

Griots play an important role in the maintenance of Fulbe identity. As musicians and history tellers, the griots sing about the past and nurse the Fulbe desire for superiority:

Baba Gadjaga from Naye is a musician; he plays the hoddu. He plays ndohinda; ‘dangerous music’. It is dangerous because it was played before going to war. Alpha Bahlo from Maasina, the son of Sheiku Ahmadou (bappanjam) said one should go to war. Baba says that this music is ‘like drugs for the Fulbe; it’s dangerous. This music makes you remember that you are a man; that makes you happy, like drugs’. He says that the Fulbe on the Gondo will rather die than ask others for work. ‘They are the strongest’, he says.

Hamma claims that the Fulbe are dependent on the griots, and he always gives a gift, like 500 CFA, when he meets a griot who belongs to his family. The griots also function as messengers, like when a Labbo comes to Hamma one day at the market and tells him that there are many Fulbe men who have asked about marrying his sister Verlore, who has reached marriable age. The Laube are also mediators in conflicts and problem solvers, as in the case when Idy brought Fatma back to the wuro from her suudu baaba. Bongary Gadjaga, “Hamma’s mother” by classificatory and extended kinship rules across ethnic and nyeenyo borders, functions as an adviser for Hamma in family business.

Even if there is spatial segregation, there is no avoidance between the Laube and the Fulbe, and the Labbo woman Mama walks around in the wuro as she likes. I visit Mama and Amadou Gadjaga in the Laube compound in Madougou. They speak Fulfulde, but also the
Laube language called *laulawre*. Amadou says that Laube and Walabube “are the same”, because their work is to “ask” (*njagaade*). The Laube, Waylube, Walabube (but not the Hossobe) “may ask”; “I am here because of God. It is our work. You have to give me something. It is our *tawaangal*. According to Amadou, it is a relationship based on giving and receiving, and the Laube have to be given because it is their work to ask. Public praising gives the Laube the power to make people want to give cash and goods, and because the Laube have no shame, they may criticize the nobles in public (Hoffman 1995: 37).

According to Camara, while social relations are based on reciprocity, the exchange relation between the griots and the nobles is that the griots always take and never give (1992: 186-187), and Dupire claims that the Laube are always the social inferior partner as beggars and “takers” (1985: 93). The Fulbe always speak badly about the Laube when they are not present; “they ask and talk too much”, the Fulbe say, and to show their superiority, the Fulbe say they will never ask for anything in front of a Labbo, it will be *semtude*. According to the Fulbe, they may say *labbo warga*, meaning “*labbo*, come here”, and this contradicts what the Laube says: namely that the Laube may not be commanded because they are not slaves.

According to de Bruijn it is an aspect of being Rimbe “to have people” (*yimbe am*), it means power (1999: 295), and while the Fulbe interpret the relation to the Laube as an authority relation where the Rimbe is in power to command, the Laube interpret it as an equal and interdependent relation based on common origin, kinship and work segregation. According to a myth told by Dupire (1985: 89), there were three brothers; the eldest the woodcarvers’ forefather, the second the herders’ forefather and the youngest the musicians’ forefather. By chance or force, the Pullo became the master of the cows sent in a mysterious way by a spirit. This good luck represents a debt by the Pullo’s descendants’ vis-à-vis the less fortunate brothers. The members of these two “castes”, one linked to the pastoral life (the

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202 Dupire also claims the existence of a Laube language, but mentions no name (1985: 86).
203 Camara himself is a Malinké noble as Hoffman remarks (1995: 44).
woodworker), the other to power (the griot), have a right to the products of the Fulani livestock; the herder feels an obligation to give milk to a woodcarver, and a musician may claim a bull in recognition for his services.

This myth illuminates the ambiguity of their social status. According to the Laube, while the Dogon work hard and the Fulbe are poor because they do not want to ask or to work, the Laube “ask” (hokkam) or “beg” (njagaade) for things; they give something, like a wooden bowl (la’al) and get something back. But there is discrepancy in the interpretations of the compensation between the Laube and the Rimbe; while the Rimbe see what they give as gifts, the Laube see it as payment for services, and they are expected to be paid (cf. Launay 1995: 158).

The Laube had slaves known by the patronym Tamboura before, and in Naye the Laube and the former slaves live segregated in different quarters. On the question about the differences between the Laube and the nyeeybe on the one side, and the former slaves Riimaybe and the Maccubé on the other, the Labbo Baba Gadjaga from Naye answers that “we are born together”. Therefore he will not use the term Maccudo; that means a person that is bought. Because the Laube and the Riimaybe are born together in Naye, they are brothers, and he uses Riimaybe instead; “for the respect because we are born together”; even if he knows that the person is a Maccudo, maybe because he was bought by his grandfather: “Slavery still exists, they (the Riimaybe) cannot refuse. Before it was the war, and one could use force. Since the grandfather it is like that”, he says. The Riimaybe or Maccubé may learn to do Laube woodwork, but they do not become a member of the professional occupational group, nyeeyno, because occupational skills are handed down from father to son, i.e. the occupation is hereditary, and this is a way to protect the Laube occupational monopoly (cf. Launay 1995: 163). Even if the occupation is based on knowledge of some technical skills, the learning of the occupation is not enough to become a Labbo; one has to be born as a
Labbo. As Launay has showed, the occupation in itself is not enough to classify the different “castes” because they may be learned by others, like the former slaves, Tamboura, practicing woodworking. How then to define the Laube category? The Laube stay in an intermediate and ambiguous position between the free, noble (Rimbe) and the former slaves. They claim Fulbe origin, speak Fulfulde and their own language, have their own patronyms, live in segregated quarters and practice the occupations as woodworkers and griots.\textsuperscript{204} According to Dupire, the Laube today are “considered as a separate race” and this gives rise to “a confusion that still persists between social category and ethnic group” (1985: 86). While Dupire identifies the criteria for the Laube as a “caste”\textsuperscript{205} according to this: “… hereditary profession, residential isolation, endogamy and avoidance behaviour based on a particular notion of how the lawBe are different, considered in a racial sense” (Dupire 1985: 92). But according to Dupire, sometimes the legends give the Laube woodworkers and griots a common origin with the Fulbe (cf. Dupire 1981: 170), and as we have seen above, the Laube in Madougou claim Fulbe origin: “They say they are Laube, but some griots have come from the Fulbe”, people say. Still, because of spatial segregation, rules of endogamy and hereditary occupation, they are to be considered by others and by themselves as an occupational group, nyeeybe, and not an ethnic group.

**Fulbe – Waylube relations**

The male blacksmiths work with iron, and while they make hoes and knives for the Fulbe, the women make pottery, like the water jars, loode, which they sell in the market (cf. LaViolette 1995). The patronym of the Waylube in Madougou is Goro; they have taken the Dogon patronym of the Domno quarter where they live. There is a joking relationship between the Fulbe and the blacksmiths, but I did not observe much social interaction between the Fulbe

\textsuperscript{204} According to Launay, music is not a “casted” occupation (1995: 161).

\textsuperscript{205} Dupire bases the “caste” criteria on Berreman (1967).
and the Waylube in Madougou. We often visited the blacksmith Korka Sangaraba, mostly at his forge close to the market place, but also in the family compound in the Domno quarter near by. When I visit Korka with Hamma, Hamma behaves very gaily; he jokes with Korka and even tries to take over his work at the forge while the blacksmith only laughs. Korka gives advice in marriages and mediates in conflicts, and for this he receives “gifts”, he says. According to Korka, there is a difference between the Laube and the Walabube, on the one side, and the Waylube and the Hossobe, on the other side, and he claims that the “Waylube are stronger than the Walabube”. According to him, the Laube and the Walabube “walk around to beg and ask. Baylo and Kossodjo don’t do that”, he says and continues:

The Waylube ‘may ask’, but they don’t like it; they are not like the Laube. But he can ask Hamma for everything, because there is cousinage (joking) between them, the Waylube and the Fulbe. But he will not ask, only accept if Hamma wants to offer him a gift. A Labbo or a Gallabo will do sentude if you don’t give to them; they will destroy your name; they will scream.

As this statement shows, there is an internal disagreement between the different nyeeybe about the social position and rank of the “others” in the social hierarchy, and this case is typical for the Baylo’s view of the social hierarchy. The Baylo claim superiority together with the Hossobe over the Walabube and the Laube, because “they walk around and ask”, and they have the power to destroy one’s name if they don’t receive enough, they have no shame. Sory Ibrahim Bagayoko, a Baylo who does not practice the occupation, explains the Waylube endogamy and why they do not marry the Fulbe like this:

One may recognize a Baylo by the patronym, like Kolibaly. But other Kolibaly are not Baylo. Baylo is a profession, a caste. It is forbidden to marry a griotte or a Pullo debbo. Baylo are not slaves, but a Dimo (noble) may ask services for free, even today. One may not become a Baylo; one has to be born Baylo from a Baylo father. Still they are not like an ‘ethnie’, (‘race’) they are a professional caste, and one can not learn to be a Baylo. A Baylo does not ask like the griots; they work for exchange against millet and money.
According to this statement, one has to be born a Baylo and can not become one. The Waylube are professionals, a “caste” that is dependent on the “nobles” for gifts. They do not “ask” like the griots but work and exchange, and the Waylube rank themselves over those who “ask”, like the griots. To “ask” is ranked below those who receive “gifts” as payment for services, and I will return to the question of asking below.

Fulbe - Hossobe relations

The Hossobe is an important category for the Fulbe women because of their taste for beauty and new objects the Hossobe trade, like beads, jewelry and plastic articles (mana), and the Fulbe women are always gathered around the Hossobe in the market. There is an ongoing discussion about jewelry and ethnic identity in Madougou, and cloths and jewelry are used as ethnic markers, and there are “Dogon” styles and “Fulbe” styles in clothes, jewelry and accessories (cf. B. Frank 1987). The Hossobe, like the Waylube, say they don’t ask; they don’t demand, according to themselves, and it makes them different from the Laube and the Walabube. The Hossobe are endogamic; they do not marry other than the Hossobe. When discussing with the Kossodjo Ousmane and a Hausa friend, Ousmane says that “Labbo and Fulbe are the same. Labbo is close to the Fulbe, Labbo is beside the Fulbe”. Ousmane says that the Fulbe don’t want to work, but it is God that has decided that. When “Sheikou” Ahmadou died (see chapter 2), it was the Dogon that prepared his body, not the Fulbe. Ousmane talks about the relations between the Hossobe and the Fulbe. He says that “the Hossobe stay close to the Fulbe and work for them. The Fulbe like beads and jewelry more than the Dogon, and the Fulbe like daneedo, white and the black and white mixed”, he claims, and continues about the image of the Fulbe. He says that “the Fulbe don’t like to work or cultivate. It is the women who sell milk that earn the money to buy grain; the men don’t earn anything if they don’t sell a cow, and they only hang around drinking tea. The
Hossobe are not like that; the Hossobe men are responsible for the food”. The Kossodjo confirms an image of the Fulbe as lazy and not willing to work. Ousmane tells me this to show that his work is that of a Kossodjo, and that he doesn’t eat with the Dogon:

The Hossobe don’t eat with the Dogon, and they did not marry the Dogon, before. Now one may; today one marries the Dogon, the Walabube and the Waylube. In Koro a Kossodjo is married to a Dogon. To become a Kossodjo, your father has to be a Kossodjo. You may learn the occupation, but you do not become a Kossodjo. And a Kossodjo who leaves the occupation is always a Kossodjo. The origin of the Hossobe is Oungiba, towards Douentza. Barke (his father) comes from there. The true Hossobe worked with jewelry, fabrics (cloths) and skins in the beginning. The skins were not for the Walabube in the beginning, but for the Hossobe. But the Hossobe left the work with skins, and the Walabube started working with skins. The Walabube and the Laube are the same, their work is the same. If there are marriages, the Walabube have to do the tam-tam, the Laube the guitar, and they ask for money. The Walabube are for the Dogon like the Laube are for the Fulbe. The Walabube are the griots for the Dogon.

According to this interpretation given by Ousmane, one cannot become a Morba, or stop being a Morba, even if one learns the occupation or leaves the occupation for a new one, as they have done. If your father is a Kossodjo, you are born a Kossodjo, and you can not change that even if one leaves or changes the occupation. It is a relation defined both through blood and hereditary occupation, and he distinguishes himself from the Walabube and the Laube who “ask”, and from the Dogon who they do not “eat” with nor marry. By distancing themselves from the Dogon and approaching them to the Fulbe, the Hossobe, who are faithful Muslims, try to negotiate their position in a movement of upward social mobility.

**Fulbe - Walabube relations**

The Walabube are leatherworkers and griots, and they sing and play the drums at Dogon ceremonies like weddings and name-givings. The Fulbe need the leatherwork of the Walabube like talki, and because the Walabube family in Madougou is rich, the Fulbe also seek credit with them:
Visit at Ousmane and Fatmata Daramé (De). They are rich. Ousmane says that the Walabube are not Dogon. They marry only the Walabube. They have been griots since the ‘beginning’; he has learned from his father, who learned from his father and so on. The women spin cotton and make straw boxes (kokodje) while the men play the tam-tam (bin) and clean and prepare leather and skins. The Fulbe are poor; the Fulbe don’t work, and they come to him to get credit and it tires him, he says. Sometimes he has to hide himself, because the Fulbe come to him to have credit in pagnes (clothes). The problem is that they never pay back. Fatmata says that it is not easy to have money in Madougou, because ‘people will make you fall’. Fatmata also has a small commerce where she sells spices, salt and rice in the market. The Walabube do not ask like the Laube; the Walabube play the bin and sing. It makes people so happy that they want to give, like millet, fine clothes, etc. They don’t need to ask, like the Laube. That is no good, they tell me. ‘If you don’t have money, you take the horse and leave with the bin to find money’.

According to this statement, there is an internal hierarchy among those who are classified by others as “asking”, and the Walabube interpret the compensations they get as gifts, not as asking, and this make them superior the Laube, who “ask”. This statement is typical for rich nyeebye persons who wish to climb up the social ladder; but while personal wealth may influence the self-image and make one climb the social ladder, it does not influence the “other’s” image of one, and people joke with the griot Ousmane De, saying he is “hala annahewi”; he talks too much. This is a usual negative statement about griot behaviour as contrary to noble behaviour (cf. Hoffman 1995: 37). Because Ousmane is rich, he does not have to work so much, and to make him come to a wedding one has to pay very much, he says. But when the Dogon village chief asks him to come, he can not refuse; he may be rich but that does not change his social status, he is still a griot for the Dogon.

**Relations with the former slaves: Maccubé and Riimaybe**

There are two categories of former slaves in Madougou: those captured and sold (the Maccubé), and those born into slavery (the Riimaybe). Belko, the village chief, tells me this:
The Maccubé construct houses for the Fulbe. Bindama and Naye are Maccubé villages. Maccubé are the slaves that were bought. The French put an end to that. Some Maccubé have become rich, and will not accept their status as slaves. But if one is born as a Habbe, Pullo, Maccudo or Labbo, one can not change that.

Belko and the Rimbe dispute the end of slavery by the French, and even if the Maccubé have become rich, they remain Maccubé for the Fulbe:

Hamma, Bargo and Idrissa are talking in the *resto* about things they can not discuss in the *wuro*. They tell me very secretly that the Maccubé are like ‘sheep’, and that ‘is why they don’t understand us’. One has to be careful when talking to a Maccudo, they tell me. Another time, Hamma tells me that the Maccubé are like ‘donkeys’; they have strong bodies and can work hard, something the Fulbe cannot do. The occasion is that some Maccubé from Naye are in Madougou, making wooden mortars.

These typical statements show how the Fulbe feel contempt for those who do the hard manual work. The Fulbe say that the Riimaybe and Maccubé are the same thing; they work for others. They are like those one has bought, like *nay*. Animals are often used as metaphors when describing the former slaves. The Fulbe say that the “slaves” are not Dimo, free, they are Riimaybe, and the “Habbe” were like Riimaybe, before. While they claim that the Dogon marry (*anyappa*) the Riimaybe; the Fulbe do not.

One day while visiting the Commandant in Madougou, Youssouf Tamboura from Naye walks by. The Commandant shouts “Maccudo” at the boy, and everybody present laugh, while the boy smiles and waves back to us from distance. The Commandant says to Hamma that he may take Youssouf and sell him if he likes: “Just until our days the slavery exists with us”, he tells me. Later, when Hamma and I visit Naye, we meet Youssouf. Hamma calls Youssouf his “first-born”: “I am your father”, he says to Youssouf, who answers with an insult. He may do that because they have the same age; they are joking. Then follows a lot of sex-talk, and Hamma says Youssouf is a great lover (*annahidi hoovde*).

Though the Fulbe consider the Tamboura former slaves as a category of “slaves”, on the
individual level they may joke with them, but as Riesman writes; “… the memory of the old relationship is still very much alive in both groups” (1992: 15), as this case shows:

Hamma and Sory, a Baylo, are discussing. Hamma says he once met a Tamboura ‘slave’ in Bamako who had written ‘Barry’ on his identity card:206 ‘The Fulbe will never accept that’, he tells me. Sory finds it logical, because the Tamboura had the Barry as their slave masters, and after the liberation they are free to take their former master’s name. But Hamma does not agree, saying one may only take the name Barry if the masters agree: ‘How may a slave become ‘pure’? A ‘pure’ may not marry a slave’, Hamma says. According to Sory, slavery does not exist, juridically speaking, but traditionally, it exists. Hamma gets angry, claims that slavery does still exist, to our days.

According to both the Fulbe and the Laube above, slavery “still exists”. Hamma’s statements express the Fulbe idea of the noble being “pure” in opposition to the “slaves”, and the impossibility of mixing the two categories through marriage, and thereby the importance of keeping the clan patronyms as identity markers. This confirms Belko’s statement above; and the local Fulbe ideology is that one remains what one is born.

Hamma says that that the Riimaybe have worked for the Fulbe since “grandfather”, and they can not refuse. They cultivate and do manual work, like making bricks of banco and building houses. Isa Pathé (Pathé is a Riimaybe patronym) is a Diimaajo living in Naye, and one day he come to visit Madougou. He carries a gun on his back, ‘for security reasons’.

Hamma and I drink tea with and Ada and Isa in my suudu. I ask him why Fulbe and Riimaybe in Naye don’t live in the same quarters, and he tells me that is because the Maccubé are slaves (he uses the word Maccubé for slaves). I ask Isa carefully about the difference between Riimaybe and Maccubé, but he says it is the same. When I ask him what it means to be a slave today, he says that a Pullo may come and ask him to work for him. But only some Fulbe in Naye may ask; those for whom his family has worked in generations. When I ask if slavery is not finished, he laughs, saying that it still exists. Hamma and Ada agree, ‘Maccubé and Riimaybe, that’s the same’, they say; ‘both are slaves (‘captives’). They are the same’. In their behaviour toward Isa it is impossible for me to notice if he is Pullo or Diimaajo, and people greet him in the same respectful manner as a Pullo. But Isa says himself that he is a slave, a Diimaajo, in the presence of the Fulbe Rimbe.

206 Gardi (2003) asks the relevant question if the introduction of identity cards will fix the patronyms in the future.
Respectful behaviour in the meetings between the Rimbe and a Diimaajo is typical, and according to Riesman, the Fulbe disguise their feelings and avoid using the slave terms (1977: 117). Even if the slave status is discussed and they all “agree” about the still existent status of the slaves, the Fulbe show the Diimaajo respect in social interaction. “Slaves” as a social category does exist, and I do not know what the former slaves “really think” about their status when there are no Rimbe present, but my impression from the meetings with former slaves is that they do not question their status as slaves; “slavery does still exist” even if it is forbidden by law, but that the rank as socially inferior may be questioned. A Diimaajo says to Hamma that because Hamma is a Pullo, he is superior, and that is why he (the Diimaajo) can ask for some tea, since he is the slave: “We are the Riimaybe; you are the Dimo, which is why I can ask for tea”. Riesman writes: “… in Fulani thought, the riimaaybe are like the negative image of their masters in many respects” (1977: 83). This is still true in Madougou, and “slaves” is presented as a categorical opposite to the noble Fulbe identity. But individual “slaves” are showed respect by the Fulbe. While de Bruijn and van Dijk claim that “the Riimaybe are reckoned as members of the Fulbe community, of pulaku” (1995: 142), this is not true in Madougou. My observations from Madougou do not show that the Riimaybe are not included in the Fulbe community of the pulaku category; rather they are “blacks who have no semtude” according to the Fulbe. Even if the individual Diimaajo or Maccudo is showed respect in social interaction, they are not classified together with the Fulbe, but as a categorical opposition of the Fulbe. The hierarchy is based on differences in theory and practice; the noble Fulbe who claim they don’t ask in opposition to they who do. In practice, the Fulbe ask as lot. What is the difference then of njaagade (“asking”) for gifts (dokkal) and hokkude (“giving”)?
**Begging and gift-giving**

The social hierarchy of free non-professional Rimbe, free professional nyeeeybe and former slaves, Riimaybe and Maccubé is expressed by asking (njaagunde) for gifts (dokke, sing. dokkal) or not asking. While some categories of nyeeeybe (depending on who one is talking to) and the former slaves may ask for gifts; to “ask” (njagaade) for dokke is shame (semtude) for the noble Fulbe, and it is a way to distinguish themselves from the “others” not nobles. The different nyeeeybe groups negotiate their identity as nyeeeybe and their rank in the social hierarchy by refusing to “ask” even if they are “allowed” to “ask” by their tradition, as the Hossobe and the Waylube. Contrary, the Fulbe may ask for something in the imperative form: hokkam!, and then they may not be refused, because the person’s nobility gives him or her right to the gift, according to de Bruijn (1999: 299). I witnessed a lot of asking from the Fulbe in the form of hokkam; very often the Fulbe women came to me and asked me for things in the form of a command: hokkam!, but contrary the Laube, they did not give anything, like the wooden bowl the Laube women often give as a gift when asking. I agree with Riesman who claims that the frequencies of request has little to do with personal poverty or wealth, but with the person’s character (1977: 182):

Salmata is the sister of Bilali, one of the richest men in the wuro. She is washing my calabashes (lawdje koore). ‘Hokkam kaalsi’ – give me money; she says when I come to collect them. We are joking about it, but I have the impression that she is serious. In the end I give her 250 CFA, and she is satisfied.

While hokkam kaalsi is a direct and imperative form of demanding, it is not like asking for dokke in the form of “begging” according to the Fulbe, and the Fulbe say they will be ashamed to ask for something in front of a Labbo; it is beyond their dignity and will be

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One difference is that while the Fulbe ask each other a lot; for tea, sugar and money, they do not ask the nyeeybe, which would be semtude because they are below them in the hierarchy. Even if the Fulbe women say hokkam, they also have a more discrete and indirect way of telling what they want, like: midda hiddi cobbal sukkero; “I like cobbal with sugar”, in the meaning “please give it to me”. “Begging” (“quemander”) for dokke (gifts) is only for the griots and the (former) slaves, the Fulbe say, and it contradicts the Fulbe ideal of nobility and self-control. While the Laube interpret the money given for a wooden bowl (la’al) as payment for a service given, the Fulbe interpret it as a dokkal. This points to the discrepancy in the power relation between the nyeeybe and the Rimbe, as we have seen; the nyeeybe regard what they receive not as gifts, but as payment for their skills and services while the Rimbe regard it as gifts. While the one who gives is in power, the one who asks is subordinated, but the relation is considered different seen from the Rimbe and the nyeeybe side. There where not much willingness among the Fulbe to give and to share with those who “asked”, and I did not find the difference in behaviour between the Fulbe women and the Laube women as great as Riesman describes for the Jelgobe (1977, 1992). I never figured out the real difference between hokkam (to give) or njaagunde (to ask), because they all, Rimbe and nyeeybe, asked for something in the form of hokkam, but the Fulbe women told me not to give the Laube too much, in a sort of internal competition.

**Work ideology and power relations**

The work ethos or work ideology differs from group to group in Madougou, and, as we have seen above, the Fulbe and the Dogon define each other in terms of their different capacity and willingness to work (cf. Weber 1995). The Fulbe ideas of nobility and superiority by tradition are expressed in Hamma’s statement: “the Fulbe tawaangal is that they want it all, but don’t want to work for it, like the Habbe”:
The Fulbe want many cows and a big name, but they don’t want to cultivate. They want all that is new and looks nice, like new clothes and jewelry, but the Fulbe are no good at cultivating, like the Habbe. The Habbe cultivate and save the harvest, and then they may sell grain when the others have little left. Like that they gain money to buy cows. The Fulbe don’t do it like that; the Fulbe would rather starve than to sell a cow to buy grain. And there is not much money to gain in selling milk; everything is spent on the ‘ingredients to the sauce’ and everyday consumption.

This statement expresses how the different work ethos defines the Fulbe and the Dogon differences. By work ethos I mean the local definitions of work attitudes according to the different tasks performed, like when the Fulbe men cultivate but say they despise it and prefer to herd. While the Dogon have a “capitalist” work ethos; to work hard and save, the Fulbe seem to have a “consumerist” attitude to work, what Riesman has defined as a “leisure society” (1977: 72); they want it “all” without working for it; they want to spend on new stuff. While the Dogon work hard and save so they are able to invest in cattle, the Fulbe do not want to cultivate to earn money. Cultivation is considered degraded and below their dignity. Different types of work are based on different types of knowledge and technical skills which correspond to the economic division of labour between the different ethnic and nyeeybe categories (cf. Weber 1964). Both Fulbe and the Dogon see work as essential for survival, but people in each category wish for more than survival from life (Riesman 1990), and each different work ethos expresses different value orientations in life. These values are ranked by the different social categories of actors, and there are aspects of power in this ranking; the Fulbe pastoralists claiming superior status over the hardworking Dogon “slaves” and the nyeeybe who “ask”. How then to distinguish caste identity from ethnic identity in this context? According to N’Diaye, the “castes” have a professional origin, and each “caste” has a function in the society according to economic and social needs (1995: 40). Tamari (1995) claims that the “castes” are characterized by two criteria, namely heredity and endogamy (cf. Dupire 1985). The ethnic categories Fulbe and Dogon are also defined according to rules of
endogamy and their economic roles in society as herders and cultivators, but they are not defined as “professionals”, like the nyeebye.

The distribution of knowledge and cultural complexity

According to Riesman, while the Fulbe Rimbe are subdivided into clans and lineages for transmitting tangible possessions like cattle or land or political power, the nyeenyo individuals do not belong to lineages because there is nothing tangible to transmit; “what counts is the quality of his work and not his belonging to a particular family” (1977: 21). While this is no longer true because the nyeebye and the former slaves also possess tangible objects and may be even richer than the Fulbe, knowledge may still be seen as an asset or a property in the meaning that “… no one can take away the knowledge and skill that are part of his being” (Riesman 1977: 21). The different groups and categories define themselves and their occupation and knowledge in an exclusive way to exclude the “others” (de Bruijn and van Dijk 1997: 24). For example, when I ask the Fulbe women why they don’t make the togodjo, a drink they buy from the Dogon women, themselves to save money, they just laugh and answer that they don’t know how to do it. When I ask Hamma why the Fulbe women don’t make tori (an ingredient to the sauce) he answers that if all people were capable of making everything, there would be no buyers, no “together”, no relations. That is why the Dogon don’t sell milk, and that is why the Fulbe and the Dogon need each other, he says; if it were not like this, it would not “work”. In this way, different knowledge is basis for the exchange relations which create social relations. When knowledge is unevenly distributed between the different groups and categories, there are “different fields of knowledge” and this defines cultural complexity (cf. Hannerz 1992; Sommerfelt 1999: 35). Madougou may in this way be classified as a culturally complex village; there are different fields of knowledge distributed in the population. The cultural complexity and division of labour make people
interdependent in a network of exchange relations, but there are differences in power attached to the different knowledge possessed.

**Incorporated knowledge**

Even if the Barry in Madougou do cultivate and in reality have become agro-pastoralists, their work ideology is based on a pastoralist ideology of herding, and this is also the knowledge they are ascribed by others. Likewise, the Dogon in Madougou own cattle and herd them; they have in fact become agro-pastoralists on an economic level, but they do not take part in the “pastoral” identity, and they identify themselves as cultivators and hard workers in opposition to the Fulbe herders, who are “lazy, just walking behind the cows”. In this analysis Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* may be useful, defined as systems of durable, transposable dispositions (1977: 72). The performance of the different types of work is bodily incorporated through social practice, and is made part of the actors’ different habitus. Incorporated practices are not easy to change, and cultivating and herding as incorporated practices change only gradually. Knowledge becomes part of a person’s social identity through socialisation and incorporation, and the embodiment is a never finished process. Actors are structured by the body, because the language of the body is learned like speech is learned, and language is structure. Habitus is in this way the mediating field, the knowledge incorporated (Bourdieu 1977). To be a Pullo *gorko* means to act like a Pullo *gorko* and this again is linked to the practice of herding and the knowledge of treating cattle, like it is celebrated in the cow party described in chapter 4. The stereotypical image of a Pullo herding (*droi nay*) is when he stands on one foot, the other foot in 45 degrees’ angle against his knee, relaxing with his arms over the herding stick (*sawru*) which he holds over his shoulders. Like this image shows, herding and cultivation is very different bodily activities, and the Fulbe refuse to do “Habbe” work because they think it is degrading, bending like a “slave” while
cultivating. As Riesman observes, the Fulbe and the neighbouring Mossi cultivators use different types of hoe; the Fulbe hoe is longer, meaning they have to bend “only” about 45 degrees, while the Mossi hoe is so short that it allows more forceful digging, but they have to bend more\(^{208}\) (1977: 13). Unfortunately, I ignore the different angles of the hoes used in Madougou, but when the Dogon say the Fulbe don’t like to cultivate, they imitate with their bodies how one has to bend to dig in the earth. In this way, the different bodily practices of cultivating and herding express different identities. Habitus is of course not unchangeable, and if the Fulbe stop herding in the future they may be forced to cultivate and even change identity to Dogon, like de Bruijn and van Dijk (1995) have showed happens to poor Fulbe in the Hayre. They claim that it is too shameful to remain a Pullo without cattle, and poor Fulbe women have married Dogon men and become Dogonized. This supports my hypothesis that Fulbe in Madougou construct their identity partly on the practice of herding cattle as an opposition to the lifestyle of the Dogon cultivators and others among whom they live, and partly on the cultural idea of pastoralism as a system of knowledge. The performance in the ethnic status and the adequate “acting out of the roles required to realize the identity” does require specific assets (Barth 1969a: 28). While there are individual differences between poor and rich Fulbe in Madougou, they all have knowledge about herding and take part in the cow parties and the practice of herding. Pastoralism is still a source of identity for the poor Fulbe who, even if they do not own many cows, practice pastoralism as a way of life through the herding contract.

**Nyeeybe and Rimbe sources of power**

The *nyeeybe* system is built on occupational segregation, and the different categories of *nyeeybe* reproduce their identity through their profession and endogamy. “Everyone has their

\(^{208}\) The Jelgobe Fulbe cultivate the more sandy soils called *ceeni* (sing. *seeno*), which are easier to work than the clay soils cultivated by the Mossi (Riesman 1977:13).
work”, as the Kossodjo Ousmane Morba says. The different occupations are linked to different symbolic power, but symbolic power is not the same as rank. While symbolic differences serve as markers of identities and thereby as “exclusionary devices”; the “symbolism of difference is a double-edged sword”, as Launay claims (1995: 165). The “difference” accounts for the contrary attitudes their neighbours hold about them, ranging from “contempt to awe to distrust” (ibid.). While the Laube griots and woodworkers hold the sacred power over the wooden objects (cf. Dupire 1985: 93) and the Laube and the Walabube griots hold the power to “spoil one’s name”, the “Dogon” blacksmiths play an important religious role in Dogon cosmology and myths of origin (Dieterlen 1973). However, they are all ranked below the ethnic categories by the Fulbe and the Dogon; even if they are “dangerous” and their positions are ambiguous. Knowledge is powerful and reluctantly shared outside the family, and skills are handed down from “father to son” (cf. Riesman 1992: 154). The Dogon are the “masters of the land” (cf. settlement story in chapter 2), and their relation with the land is their source to power; while they control the land the Fulbe control the cattle. Cattle are a source of expertise knowledge for the Fulbe and they claim and are ascribed by others unique and specialist knowledge as herders. The ethnic categories are in some ways defined according to different knowledge and work ethos as herders and cultivators, but as a difference from the nyeebye occupational knowledge, the specialist knowledge as herders or cultivators is not inherited or transferred as an occupation in the patriline; it is incorporated through the practice and knowledge of herding and cultivation. Even if a nyeebye person change occupation or stop performing the occupation, he remains a nyeebye with the specialist knowledge and symbolic power by which the nyeenyo is identified. But if a Pullo stop herding or a Dogon stop cultivating, the knowledge will disappear with time because it is not inherent in the ethnic identity; it does not define the ethnic identity if it is not practiced as the nyeebye occupation is inherent in and defines the different nyeebye identities. In this
way herding has to be practiced to define the Fulbe-Dogon ethnic border in Madougou, and that is why the herding contract is so important to poor Fulbe; it helps them keep on to their pastoral lifestyle and avoid “Dogonizing” and cultivating more, paradoxically by herding for the Dogon. Because the connection between the Fulbe identity and the practice of herding is so strong in Madougou, there is the danger that the Fulbe become an exploited labour force herding for the rich Dogon who are the “capitalists”, and in this way marginalize themselves economically in the future (cf. Bourgeot 1981).

**Ethnic discourses**

Let me now turn to local conceptions of sameness and difference and how the different categories rank themselves and the “others” in the social hierarchy. The culturally specific ideas of work expressed in the local discourses of differences between the self and the “others” show how the different categories of actors operate with different social hierarchies. The discourses considering differences in work ethos lead to ethnic stereotyping and the dichotomy Fulbe-Dogon; but also the Fulbe and Dogon relations with the nyeeybe are based on constructed stereotypes, and the making of “images of the others” legitimates the different positions in the social hierarchy of ranked categories. While colonialism, the abolishment of slavery, monetisation of the economy, and the increasing population have led to a convergence of the Fulbe and Dogon production systems, they have become agro-pastoralists in practice, they continue to create “images of the others” based on different lifestyles and work ethos.

**Constructing differences: the local Fulbe hierarchy**

The “others” for the Fulbe are classified in accordance with the negative stereotypical characteristics they are given. The Fulbe classify the Laube as closer to them (gooto; “we are
the same”) than, for example, the “Habbe” (Dogon), Maccubé or Riimaybe, and while they may eat with those categories, and not with other Fulbe (outside the close family) when travelling because of *sentitude*, all these categories of “others” are ranked below the Fulbe in their social hierarchy. The local Fulbe hierarchy is based on colour of the skin: *daneejo* (white), *bodeejo* (red), and *baleejo* (black); *daanejo* is the colour preferred and highest ranked. Fagerberg-Diallo claims that the Fulbe generally describe themselves as being red, compared with their black neighbours (1984: 113). This is in accordance with my data from Madougou; the Fulbe describe themselves as *woddebe* (sing. *bodeejo*), but in the meaning of “white”, like the *toubabou*: “The Fulbe think they are like the *toubabou*, white like them”, Hamma says. The Fulbe express their ideas of nobility in terms of racial “purity” and by not mixing with others through rules of endogamy, and this is one version of the local Fulbe social hierarchy: (1) The Fulbe - “We are the purest”; (2) the “Habbe” (Dogon) - “They don’t ask for gifts, they work”; (3) The Laube - “They speak Fulfulde, but ask for gifts”; (4) Maccubé - “They are bought”. The Fulbe claim that if one tells a Pullo that he looks like a Dogon, he will get angry (*ananjanga*), but if a Pullo says to a Dogon that he looks like a Pullo, the Dogon will not get angry, but flattered. While the Fulbe think the Laube put themselves over the “Habbe” because they speak Fulfulde and think of themselves as Fulbe, the are not considered “Fulbe” by the Fulbe:

‘Dogon and Riimaybe are the same’, grandmother Ayel says. ‘Laube are better than the Riimaybe and Habbe, but not as good as the Fulbe. Because they ask for money: *hokkam*. A Pullo is capable of dying without asking for nothing’, she says. That is what separates the Fulbe and the Laube; the Fulbe are not asking: *Sala njamaa, ware njamaa sanjamata yoppo*: ‘come and eat; if you don’t want to come, don’t come. A Pullo will not come’, she says.

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209 Dupire mentions a fourth category of Fulbe categories of skin colours; the *bamaleejo*, or red-black (1981: 175). She claims elsewhere that the nomad Wodaabe in Niger distinguish only three categories of skin-colours; namely the *balejo* (black), *bamaleejo* (black with red ‘reflets’) and *bodejo* (red); there is no category of white skin (1996: 7).

210 Still, they classified the colour of my skin as *daneejo* and superior.
Another version of the Fulbe social hierarchy according to this statement is: (1) the Rimbe, the ideal and noble Fulbe who are not asking and not eating alone on the top; (2) the Laube who “ask”; (3) the Dogon, the Riimaybe and the Maccubé at the bottom of the hierarchy. In this version, the Dogon are classified together with the “slaves” at the bottom of the hierarchy. While the classification of the Dogon varies, the “slaves” are always placed at the bottom of the Fulbe social hierarchy because they are “blacks”:

Hamma, Idrissa, Breihma and I are listening to music one day. We are talking about the Riimaybe. While I say that I can not see the difference between a Pullo and a Diimaajo, Hamma says that he can; ‘it’s not the same blood’, he says, and the others present agree. Even if a Pullo is dark skinned, like Breihma, he is ‘whiter’ than a Diimaajo. And even if a Diimaajo is white, it does not make him a Pullo. Hamma says they can see if a person is a Diimaajo, and touches his face as if he was a Diimaajo. When I ask if they would behave differently toward a Diimaajo, Hamma says that they will do the same things, but if it is a ‘good Diimaajo’, he will take over the work you are doing, like preparing tea. He will also sit and listen to Pullo music, because he wishes to be a Pullo. But he knows that he can not be one, Hamma concludes.

The Riimaybe are still the “negative image” of the Fulbe in racial terms (cf. Riesman 1977). But it is the Dogon the Fulbe in Madougou interact and compare most with in everyday life, and the Dogon are replacing the former slaves as the most relevant “other” for the Fulbe, because the Fulbe need to distinguish themselves from the Dogon who economically are more alike the Fulbe as agro-pastoralists than the former slaves are. Typical Fulbe statements about the Dogon are: “The Fulbe are not like the Dogon; the Fulbe are proud”; “the Dogon have Aids, and they get it from coupling with dogs”; and “All Dogon are thieves”:

One night Hamma has gone to find his brother in another village; he has not come home at night. Ada does not like me to stay alone in the suudu without Hamma in the other suudu close by, because ‘all Dogon are thieves’, and she is worried about my luggage. So she arranges that ‘small father’ (bappanjam) Hama sleep outside my suudu that night, and the next morning Hamma returns.
When I tell Hama, *bappanjam*, that I am going to stay in the *hibbere*,\(^{211}\) he responds that the Habbe is going to cut my throat, making a demonstrative “cutting throat” gesture with his finger. This gesture is very common when a grandparent is joking with the grandchild and wants to scare it (cf. Radcliffe-Brown 1940), but it also indicates the image of the antagonist relationship between the Fulbe and the Dogon. There is also much talking of the Fulbe beating the Dogon with their *sawru; sawru hoona habbe*, Breihma says, meaning that one is going to beat the “Habbe” with the *sawru*. Is this real antagonism or is it an expression of impuissance? I think the last. Before, when the Fulbe were in power, they could raid the Dogon and others and use them as slaves. Today, the power relations have changed, the Dogon are the economically strongest and the Fulbe are dependent on the Dogon. Even if the Dogon sometimes are classified as the Fulbe’s opposition in a negative sense together with the “slaves”, the slaves are always ranked at the bottom of the hierarchy while the position of the Dogon varies according to the situation; they are not consequently ranked lowest by the Fulbe. The Dogon are more like the Fulbe in some regards because they don’t “ask”.

**Dogon images of the Fulbe**

“The Fulbe are the louses of the Dogon” and “where there are Dogon, there are Fulbe” are typical Dogon statements in Madougou. One day I visit a Dogon tailor and the teacher in Madougou, both Kodjo. They start talking about how bad it is that I stay with the Fulbe, and they don’t understand how I can manage it; it is bad: *wodda*. The teacher gives me this testimony about the Fulbe and their relations with the Dogon:

The Fulbe are lazy; they are the ‘partisants des moins des efforts’\(^{212}\) and one will never see a Pullo sweat, dig a well or make bricks of banco. When the Fulbe women pound millet, they only pound a little, and they never fetch more than 2-3 *loode* with water. While the Dogon

\(^{211}\) See the story in the preface.

\(^{212}\) “Supporters of less stress, less work”.
cultivate for months, the Fulbe cultivate only 2-3 weeks, and there are not more than 2-3 granaries in the whole wuro. One does not sweat when one herds cows. It is a relation of exploitation, in the favour of the Fulbe exploiting the Dogon. There are never true friendships, and even if one are ‘friends’, the friend will betray you. Even your best friend will betray you. The Fulbe think they are better than the Dogon, but the Dogon are richer than the Fulbe. Before, a Pullo may cut your head off by the well if your rope had been twisted together with the Pullo’s rope. One could not say anything. Today it is impossible, the Pullo would not dare. But the Pullo will cut you with his knife if he finds you with his wife, that happened with Hama (Bilali) last year. He threw a knife after a Dogon who tried to enter the hut of his wife at night. The case ended in Koro and la justice. Ada begs for milk, she does not pay. But it is not like the caste people, there is a difference, she does not stay like them. The slaves, the Riimaybe, comes from the Dogon and the Mossi. They still work for ‘patrons’, they do not cultivate a lot and do not possess cows, they ask for work. Do you ever see a Dogon come to the wuro? Every time the Fulbe need something, they come to hibbere.

According to the teacher, there is never “true” friendship across the Dogon-Fulbe border. But he makes the distinction between the Fulbe and the “castes” who stay and the “slaves” who ask, and ranks the Fulbe above the “castes” because the Fulbe do not ask for work.

According to the Dogon Breihma, Sékou Ahmadou of the Maasina Empire was very strong. When he died, the Fulbe left him, they stopped praying. It was the Dogon who took him to his grave and buried him. That is why the Dogon got more power than the Fulbe.

Breihma continues:

Before, the Fulbe were stronger than the Dogon. One Pullo could hit many Dogon with his stick and knife. Today, it is not like that any longer. I may chase all the Fulbe in Madougou alone. I am not afraid of them. After Sékou Ahmadou, we the Dogon are the strongest. Before, the Fulbe had many cows. Today, the Dogon have many cows which are herded by the Fulbe. The Fulbe keep the milk to sell it. The Fulbe do not have many cows. The Fulbe do not cultivate a lot; the Dogon cultivate a lot. Before, it was the gonom (slaves) that cultivated for the Fulbe, but today they do not agree to cultivate for the Fulbe. The Dogon sell millet. The Fulbe sell their cows to buy millet from the Dogon. The Dogon win the cows. Today, the Fulbe do not cultivate much; they don’t earn much. They leave; they go to the bush to find millet. They sell milk to find food.

This statement shows how the Dogon tries to climb in the social hierarchy by adopting the Muslim Fulbe Sékou Ahmadou as “theirs” and also by taking over the cows; while the Fulbe have lost rank in the Dogon social hierarchy, from being powerful before the French arrival.
to being poor today. The mayor tells me that the Fulbe on the Gondo are the poorest Fulbe in Mali, and about 50% of the animals are owned by the Dogon; the Fulbe can hardly manage. Especially the Fulbe in Madougou are very poor, he says. These testimonies show changes in rank in the local hierarchy; the Fulbe have lost strength and power to the Dogon due to the lack of slaves and cattle, and they have become poor, according to the Dogon. While there have been a downward social mobility of the Fulbe, the Dogon are becoming richer, and there is a new “class” of rich Dogon growing:

One day I discuss with some young Dogon men in the hibbere about the differences between the Fulbe and the Dogon. They say that ‘we (Fulbe and Dogon) are the same, because we both keep cattle and cultivate. But one difference is that the Fulbe don’t save their grain, and if they are short of food, they only pack up and leave’. The Dogon don’t do that, they save the grain from years when there is more than enough, to years when there is not enough, and so they can sell grain in years when others do not have enough. Like that they can earn money and become rich, they say. Besides, the Dogon send their children to school, something the Fulbe do not do. And another difference they point out to me is that among the Fulbe, it is the women who sell milk who are responsible to buy the gawri. Among the Dogon, having enough grain is men’s responsibility. The Fulbe women do not cultivate. They are lazy; they just ask. Among the Dogon, the women213 also cultivate; that is why we have the granaries. The Fulbe look at the Dogon as animals, like cultivators. They are proud; they think they are better than others.

As these statements show, the Dogon think they have a different mentality than the Fulbe about spending and saving, and classify each other according to different saving and consumption patterns and differences in wealth; the Dogon expressing a kind of “capitalist spirit” by saving and earning money and not spoiling it like the Fulbe (cf. Weber 1995).

According to the Dogon there has been a downward social mobility of the Fulbe, and the Dogon claim that the Fulbe “ask”, and in this way classify them together with the nyeenyo as those who ask. When I ask the Dogon if they are not insulted by the way they say the Fulbe think about them as “animals”, they respond that they don’t, because “it is us that feed them”.

According to the Dogon men, it is the Dogon who cultivate and the Fulbe who ask for food,

213 The Dogon (and Walabube) women may cultivate their individual fields every Monday. What they earn from it belongs to them to save or spend.
and this make the Dogon strongest in their eyes. One example they give is when a Pullo is installed on a Dogon gesse and is given one handere gawri each week: “It is my Pullo”, the Dogon say, which is an expression of a power relation, as we have seen. The Dogon don’t marry the Fulbe because the Fulbe women don’t cultivate; they are “lazy” according to the Dogon, and it would have been a war if they married, they say. The Dogon tell me that there are rich Fulbe with 2-300 cows in the wuro, but they don’t eat well; “they don’t eat; it’s miserable” (cf. Riesman 1990), and the Dogon think it is the Fulbe who are the “animals”: “They don’t even bring their children to school; they sell a cow to take the children out of school. They are savages”, a Dogon says. Despite this, there are sexual relations between the Dogon and the Fulbe who are both “noble” and free non-occupational in difference to the occupational “castes”:

We, the nobles (Dogon and Fulbe) do not have sexual relations with the caste peoples. There are Dogon who are caste peoples; they are not nobles. The Laube are Fulbe, but like Walabube for the Fulbe. The Maccubé are the ancient slaves; they are of Dogon origin. The difference between the caste peoples and the ethnic peoples (‘les ethnies’) is that we encompass the caste peoples as ethnic peoples: like Dogon or Fulbe. Maccubé are always Dogon, and Laube are always Fulbe, but they are not pure. They are the caste peoples.

According to this Dogon hierarchy, the Dogon and the Fulbe as ethnic categories are ranked above the “caste” peoples and “slaves” who are not pure, and the Dogon think of themselves as pure and noble in contrast to the “castes” and “slaves”:

One day on our way to the Walabube quarter in Arou, the Kossodjo Ousmane Morba and I meet one of the Dogon tourist guides, drunk. He shouts to us, telling me that it does not matter if I visit the ‘griots’; I have to talk with the ‘nobles’ to know, and Ousmane is not a noble. Ousmane is troubled with the behaviour of the Dogon.

According to the Dogon interpretations of nobles, the Dogon and the Fulbe are noble categories ranked over nyeeybe and the former slaves; and the ethnic groups are “purer” than the nyeeybe (who sometimes are included in the ethnic categories by the Fulbe and the
Dogon). But the Dogon are ranked higher than the Fulbe in this Dogon hierarchy, because the Fulbe are poor and the Dogon are rich, and the Dogon interpret the relationship between the Fulbe and the Dogon in terms of poverty and dependency. The Dogon mayor explains the Dogon social hierarchy to me like this:

The social hierarchy is: First the nobles, then the castes (they also have slaves), and third the slaves. All the castes may ask from the nobles. The mountaineers (the Dogon in the escarpment) do not have slaves. The caste people are the mediators. The blacksmiths are sent to negotiate with a wife that has run away. She is obligated to come back with him. If she does not, it is finished for her here.

The ethnic discourses in Madougou are centered around lifestyle, work stereotypes and slavery, but they are not as hostile as in the escarpment. Even if Fulbe and Dogon lifestyles merge on the plain, they are both agro-pastoralists and Muslims, they keep distinct ethnic identities based on constructed “images of the other” based on work stereotypes and as nobles in opposition to the “castes” and “slaves”. The “castes” are despised because they “ask”, but the nobles are dependent of them as mediators in conflicts and have to obey their orders; if not it is “finished”. The upkeeping of the endogamy rules emphasize this point.

**Ethnic stereotypes and the legitimations of ethnic and nyeenyo endogamy**

Endogamy is related to the social divisions between the free and noble, the free occupational “castes” and non-free “slaves”. Even if this division is no longer formally valid, endogamy is maintained and legitimated in the social division of labour which still exists between the different social categories. The discrepancy in the two statements “the Fulbe are the louses of the Dogon” and “the Dogon are the slaves of the Fulbe” are negative stereotypes based on different ideas of work. It also in a way legitimates endogamy; why the Fulbe and the Dogon, the nyeeybe and the former slaves don’t intermarry in Madougou. A Kodjo says that the

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214 See de Bruijn, van Beek and van Dijk (1997) for a description of hostile Dogon rituals in the escarpment.
reason why the Fulbe and the Dogon don’t marry each other is because the Fulbe don’t work
like the Dogon. I heard this often in the field; that marriage between a Dogon and a Pullo was
impossible, because the Fulbe don’t like to work like the Dogon. As Hamidou *njaatigi* said it;
“the Fulbe don’t like to work, only to walk behind the cows”. Mamoudou Goro, the mayor,
explains marriage and relations with the Fulbe like this:

Among the Dogon, marriage between the children of two brothers is formally forbidden.
Marriage between the cousins, the children of a brother and a sister, is more common. We
don’t want to make marriages between too close parents. One did not marry within the same
quarter in Dinangourou. The mountain Dogon from the escarpment started to marry
between the ‘parents’. There has been a case in Madougou, but they are Muslim. But people
talked. The Dogon marabout may marry a *Pullotte*. The cultivators or the mountain Dogon
don’t like to marry a *Pullotte*, because they don’t want to work. And the Fulbe think they are
better than the Dogon; they don’t want to marry the Dogon; they think that they are superior,
*une fiérté nu*. It is the truth. They can not live without the Dogon. They are the animals of the
Dogon, and they stay on the Dogon fields.

When I ask the Fulbe why they don’t marry the Dogon, they answer like this: “one should not
mix ‘l’ethnie’ (the ‘races’); how can one then know one’s ‘origin’?” They say that flirting
with the Dogon is acceptable, and also sexual relations, but one can not marry each other.
The Fulbe are white, and the Habbe are black, they say. But a Pullo can marry a *toubabou*
(Westerner/white) or a Tuareg, because they are also white. As we have seen above, the
Fulbe hierarchy is based on colour of the skin, and they don’t want to mix with the “blacks”.

There are different Fulbe and Dogon local explanations of why they do not marry.
While the Dogon interpret the absence of marriage in terms of different work ethos and
negative work stereotypes like “the Fulbe women will not work”, the Fulbe interpret it in
racial terms - not to mix different people and different colours; because the Fulbe are white
and pure they will not marry the “blacks”. The civil servant says that if a Dogon asks for a
Pullo *debbo*, the Fulbe are silent. Hamma has a Dogon friend who is interested in a Pullo
*debbo*, but Hamma refuses to introduce him to her. Hamma says only that it is his *tawaangal*.

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215 See settlement story in chapter 2.
The ethnic categories in Madougou are endogamic. They may have sexual relations, but they do not intermarry. Among the nyeeybe, there are different versions told about whom they may marry, but they marry only among the nyeeybe, and not the Dimo (the Fulbe and the Dogon nobles), or the former slaves, the Riimaye or the Maccubé. The Labbo from Madougou says this about marriage and endogamy:

Laube and Waylube are the same (gooto), they may marry each other. Laube, Walabube, Waylube and Hossobe are the same, may marry. He (the Labbo) has seen that. But the Laube are closer to the Fulbe. The Laube do not marry the Dogon or the Fulbe.

There is also sexual stereotyping related to ethnicity (cf. Eriksen 1993: 155). There is an image both among the Dogon and the Fulbe of the Fulbe women as being beautiful (debbo lobbo); being beautiful is a value that is often talked about. This makes the Fulbe women unpopular among the Dogon women in the hibbere, and the Dogon women give me the names of the Fulbe women who are selling “more than milk”. But they think the Fulbe women are more beautiful than the Fulbe men, who are dirty. The image of Fulbe women as prostitutes is not new, and Dupire writes about the bad reputation of the Bororo women; they are seen by the neighbouring agriculturalists as a “bush bitches” (Dupire 1963: 48). Contrary, there is an image of Dogon women as “softer” than the Fulbe women: Hamma says he doesn’t like circumcised girls, which is why he prefers Dogon women who are “softer” than the Fulbe women. Fulbe women are too small and too thin, he says. Fulbe women will not show interest in sex, because they are too afraid to spoil their name.

The borders between ethnic groups and categories in Madougou are not blurred and patronyms are important, but not unproblematic classifiers. The Dogon and the Fulbe do not marry each other or the nyeeybe or former slaves, and there are different local explanations to the question why the Fulbe and the Dogon don’t intermarry: not to mix blood (racial ideas about origin and purity); different identity (patronyms, language and history) and different
traditions (tawaangal, marriage rules, consumption patterns and eating habits); and different work ethos and lifestyle as pastoralists and cultivators. All these identity markers are aspects of the ongoing process of dichotomizing identity between the Fulbe and the Dogon in Madougou. The Fulbe in Madougou are concerned about their “purity” and they classify themselves as “pure” in contrast to the Habbe, who are dirty. According to Dupire: “The ideal of social purity expressed in terms of purity of blood is found at all levels in all the stratified societies of Senegal and is also found among their ethnic minority satellites” (1985: 92). The “pure” Fulbe have pulaaku and semtude, but the Habbe do not, according to the Fulbe. The Habbe are black and work hard like the Maccubé and the Laube, and the Fulbe are better than the Habbe, more intelligent and clean. Fulbe can herd the cattle better than the Habbe, and the Habbe can cultivate better than the Fulbe. One Pullo may act like a Pullo or not. But if one does not act like a Pullo, following tawaangal, one is not a Pullo, even if born as one. This means that a Pullo needs to practice like a Pullo to stay a Pullo; it is not a birth-given fixed identity or inherited status once and for all, but a status which needs to be practiced and acted out in the world to be confirmed. This is consistent with Barth’s study of the maintenance of Pathan identity; it is one’s performance according to different value orientations and rules (norms) for proper behaviour which is judged and sanctioned by others (1969b). Acting according to semtude and yaage distinguish the Fulbe from the nyeeybe who have no shame. The nyeenyo status is a birth-given status of both blood relation and inherited occupation in the father’s line, and it is therefore difficult to change: one remains what one is born even if one changes occupation (like the Hossobe) or stops practicing the occupation, like the Baylo. These findings are in accordance with Sommerfelt (1999). The existence of the nyeeybe mediates the rigid Fulbe-Dogon dichotomy, and they are ranked according to situation. In some situations the Laube are included, in other situations they are excluded from the Fulbe ethnic category, and following Eriksen who defines ethnicity as “systematic communication
of cultural difference” (1993: 79); who “we” are varies in time and place, and therefore the notions of sameness and difference needs to be empirically explored. The nyeeybe stand in an ambiguous position between the nobles and free, and the former slaves; as free, but not nobles (Camara 1992: 196), and they blur the system of ranking of the different social categories.

**Assimilation or an ethnic dichotomization strategy?**

The rich Dogon in Madougou invest in cattle which the Fulbe herd on contract. Why are the Dogon not becoming pastoralists themselves, like in the Fur-Baggara case explored by Haaland (1969)? The Fur agriculturalists accumulate cows they let the Baggara nomads herd on contract. But if the Fur accumulate more than about ten cows, the value is so great that, instead of risking it with the Baggara, they prefer to change lifestyle and herd themselves, and in this way end up as relatively poor nomads, considered as Baggara and valued according to Baggara values and norms of behaviour. Why is this not happening with the Dogon in Madougou? Why do the ethnic borders remain, and why do not more Fulbe assimilate to the Dogon category, or vice versa? As I have tried to show in this thesis, the symbolic value of an identity like the ethnic identity may be more important for the actors than other aspects, like economic maximizing. At the moment, there is an ongoing process of ethnic dichotomization between the Fulbe and the Dogon in Madougou as a result of the dependency relationship in which the Dogon are the economic strongest, but there is no crossing of ethnic borders even if there are changes in lifestyles to a more or less sedentary agro-pastoralist lifestyle for both the Fulbe and the Dogon. Still, no “intermediary” Fulbe agro-pastoralist identity arises; and the Fulbe clearly define themselves as pastoralists, and the Dogon who own cattle do not convert to a pastoral lifestyle because they do not share the pastoral values which they find poor; for them, cattle is an economic investment. Both
categories place themselves on the top of the social hierarchy above the others, and this is possible because the social interaction is limited (they live in different villages), they keep different cultural values, and evaluations and judgements about social conduct differ (Barth 1966: 13). There is a general agreement that “… a person’s behaviour should be judged according to the standards of evaluation that apply to his ethnic group” (Haaland 1969: 61, original italics), and I will return to this incommensurability of values in the next section.

**Rank and social status**

If there are common social categories, can they be ranked in a common local hierarchy? According to scholars (Amselle 1998; Conrad and Frank 1995; Launay 1995; Sommerfelt 1999), the ranking and the categorisation of Rimbe, *nyeeybe* and slaves in a clearly defined hierarchy was a colonial construction that ignored the ambiguity of the “castes” and the role of individual agency and the fluidity and flexibility of the social landscape in West Africa. They replace this static perspective with a dynamic model of the social hierarchy to try to understand the relationships between the different social groups and categories. Launay even claims that “caste” may not be seen as a category, but as a process of identification as we have seen above (1995: 164). In Madougou, there are different opinions about the rank of the different categories in the social hierarchy according to status in the hierarchy. Wealth is unevenly distributed, and many Dogon, *nyeeybe* and former slaves are richer than many Fulbe. While the Fulbe have lost power on the socio-economic scale, the Dogon have increased theirs, and the ranking in the hierarchy depends on who one is asking, and there is “never a simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic membership and rank in a society” (Eriksen 1993: 50). Still, the Fulbe claim cultural hegemony and superiority as noble pastoralists and rulers in the past. Do we witness a change in Fulbe rank from rich to poor, from superiority to dependence, but not in social status as nobles? As De Bruijn and van Dijk
claim: “The strategic shift of an impoverished herdsman to cultivation also occurs in the Hayre, this does not imply a change in status: a Jallo noble cannot become a Jawaando and never a Diimaajo, because he is born noble: at least this is the way people present it nowadays” (1995: 403). This is true also for the Barry in Madougou. Even if de Bruijn and van Dijk claim that in the Dogon area south of the Hayre some Jallube and Barri have crossed the ethnic border and Dogonized (cf. de Bruijn and van Dijk 1994), this does not happen in Madougou where rules of endogamy between the different categories are kept. But the ranking of the categories are in flux, and categories are changing place in the social hierarchy today. There is strong ideological pressure on the pastoralist Fulbe, who today are poorer than the Dogon, and it is a social hierarchy in change. Today, the Dogon are the most relevant categorical opposite for the Fulbe, and not the Riimaybe, as Riesman (1992) claims, because, today, the Fulbe are more dependent of the Dogon than of the Riimaybe, who they were dependent on in the past, for subsistence. Ideas about nobility are important for the Fulbe, but also for the Dogon. There is negotiating of rank and status in Madougou: between the Fulbe versus the Laube, the Dogon and the Riimaybe and the Maccubé; and between the Fulbe and the Laube versus the Dogon and the Riimaybe and the Maccubé; and who “we” and “the others” are change with the situation (cf. Eriksen 1993: 31). Ethnicity may be fluid and ambiguous, and can be manipulated situationally by individual actors, like a former slave who writes “Barry” on the identity card, and thereby may be recognized as a noble freeman. As Ada says; “today it is the Fulbe who are the slaves. We are the poor. Before, it was the Dogon who were poor, because they were taken as slaves (Riimaybe). Today the Dogon are rich, and the Fulbe have become poor”. This statement shows downward social mobility and the transformation of society. The discrepancy in their interpretations of the social hierarchy makes the Dogon and the Fulbe both able to place themselves on top of it, the Fulbe as “nobles” and the Dogon as “rich”. While the Fulbe still see themselves as superior the Dogon
because the Dogon are “Habbe” and “blacks” who work so hard cultivating, an activity despised by the Fulbe, the Dogon identity is not threatened by the Fulbe, whom they see as powerless and poor. Because the Dogon are richer than the Fulbe who are dependent on them for survival, they put themselves on top on the social hierarchy. This is a symbiotic relationship rooted in the differences in values maximized where both categories need the other for the construction of their own identity.

Friendship across borders

With all these diversities and potentionals for conflicts, why are there not more open conflicts in Madougou? One answer is the role of personal friendship relations that criss-cross ethnic and nyeenyo borders. Dupire notes: “Friendship between freemen and caste individuals is the best way to cross this social barrier” (1985: 93). I think this may be extrapolated to be true also for the relationships between the different ethnic groups as well. An example is when the Fulbe jokes in a friendly way with the Dogon women coming to sell food in the wuro in the morning, or when a Pullo jokes in the cattle market with the Dogon who make holes in the bull’s (dandi) noses for using them as draft bulls, and that makes the Fulbe men laugh; it shows the construction of a friendly ethnic stereotype. As we have seen, there are no inter-ethnic or inter- nyeenyo marriages in Madougou, but friendship relations cross ethnic and nyeenyo borders. Personal friendships are important, and for the individual Fulbe there is more help to get from friends than from kin. One example is when Hamma and I go to Kindé to visit bappanjam Hama, Bilali’s son. In Kindé we are invited to eat two times with Gidado, Hamma’s friend and one time to eat with the moddibbo. But we are not invited to eat at the bappanjam Hama’s place. Hamma remarks: “What is the bappanjam doing for me?” He says

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216 Is this a joking relationship “in the making”? Drissa Diakité claims that a joking relationship may arise between ethnic categories in close contact, like between the Fulbe and the Dogon, to avoid conflict (personal communication).
that friends are better than family in that way. Good friends of one’s parents may become “parents”, like a Kodjo Dogon from the Iby quarter, who calls Hamma “his son” because Ousmane Barry, Hamma’s father, was a good friend of his. Hamma is also friend with a Labbo with whom he grew up, and when he meets him in the market, they walk around holding hands or with their arms around each other. Hamma says that he is cool, because “he never asks for something”. There are also Dogon who interpret the Fulbe-Dogon relations in terms of friendship. They say simply that the Dogon and the Fulbe are dependent on each other, and that they are friends. Friendship cross-cutting ethnic borders is also important in conflict solving or even in avoiding conflict; one typical case is the story Hamma tells me when he has taken goggam Koumbel home to Sorindé on his moped. There he heard about a quarrel between a Dogon and a Pullo; the Pullo’s cows had eaten in the Dogon’s gesse. If the Dogon had not been friends with the Pullo’s father, the Pullo would have “hit him in the head”. When I visit Irelly in the escarpment with Pierre, his grandfather Atoy Dyon tells me that there is friendship between the Dogon from Irelly and the Fulbe from Naye; “they have the same mother and father; we are like brothers”. If the Dogon from Irelly make war with other Fulbe, the Fulbe from Naye will help the Dogon against the other Fulbe; it is like an alliance relationship across ethnic borders and it helps avoiding conflict along ethnic lines.

Friendship also has another function; it is a relation to be used in the case of need for help. De Bruijn and van Dijk notes: “New help relations have developed among a number of Riimaybe and Jallube women, which are a continuation of relations of interdependency in the past” (1995: 412). Because there is work too shameful to perform for a Jallo woman, they must rely on others for help in times of scarcity. Inter-ethnic relations are solidarity and social security relations where the Fulbe lack help relations internally, and because of this, poor Fulbe interact more with the Dogon than rich Fulbe because they need more help.
Even if there is much “backstage” gossiping (cf. Goffman 1959) about the different groups and categories, and construction of “images of the others” that do not correspond to the social or cultural reality, the Fulbe and Dogon live side by side trying to avoid conflict in interdependency and relative dependency. Personal friendships transcending ethnic and nyeeybe borders are important to avoid conflicts between different value systems or work ethos, the pastoral and the agricultural.

Understanding social stability and change in Madougou

As we have seen above, there is continuity with the past through historical narratives and kinship relations. But there are changes in social practice in Madougou, and Fulbe identity is influenced by these changes. There are long-time changes and short-time changes on different levels. The two most important long-time changes are the colonial peace that led to the abolishment of slavery, and the Islamization of the Fulbe and the others in the region, that led the Fulbe to settle and build mosques. Short-time changes may be ecological and climatic variations or new consumption patterns. Grayzel claims that crises and change always have been part of Fulbe way of life: “Rather than being a tradition-bound people, it is their mobility and flexibility that allowed them to survive and prosper, often in response to seemingly negative situations” (1990: 64). Further, in his opinion, there is an “inextricable interdependence of economic and cultural strategies” (ibid.). The context in Madougou is one of poverty and ecological insecurity, and the inhabitants living there may be classified as more or less poor, but if the harvest is good, people do not starve. In this marginal context, people in Madougou are linked to the global economy both through national and international migration and through tourism and the importation of luxury goods in the market. This is nothing new. Madougou lies on the old trade routes connecting the Mediterranean countries to sub-Saharan Africa, and it is long time since locals were “newcomers to the world of
goods” (Gell 1986). As semi-settled nomads, the Fulbe have always travelled, at least part of the year, and have been in contact with other groups and categories with which they have bartered milk for grain in a symbiotic relationship. Still, I have argued that there are processes of change taking place among the Fulbe (and the Dogon) in Madougou. Even if the Fulbe live in close contact with other groups and categories that lead other lifestyles, that does not necessarily influence Fulbe values and culture, since they see themselves as superior and remain endogamic. I have tried to show that there are important internal conflicts over values among the Fulbe themselves. These value conflicts are based on gender and generation rather than ethnicity, and with time these conflicts may lead to new lifestyles based on local ideas of comfort and (conspicuous) consumption. Socio-cultural change does not only come from close contact with the Dogon and other sedentary populations. Change comes from contact with outside ideas and links the Fulbe with the urban modernity, brought in with cultural entrepreneurs from the younger generations which profit from tourism and the new goods offered at the weekly market in Madougou. New discourses rise that may lead to change in habitus (Bourdieu 1977). Of course, the fieldwork was carried out and data collected only in a moment in history, and social changes are parts of ongoing cultural and historical processes over time. One can not observe change in one moment without taking these processes into consideration.

Fulbe identity and the politics of difference

In Madougou, ethnic and nyeenyoko identities and borders are important for people, they are part of what Fay calls “an obsession with identity” (1995: 454). Even if all categories in some way are linked historically to the Mande (ibid.: 427), and Fulbe and Dogon lifestyles become more alike as agro-pastoralists, the categories maintain different ethnic and nyeeyoko identities and work ethos, and they do not intermarry. The differences are articulated in the origin
narratives and interpretation of history, in languages and tradition (*tawaangal*), in marriage rules and social organization, in material manifestations, and on the discourse level and in the images they make of “the other”. The exchange relations between the different groups and categories in and outside the market place do work as integrating forces by creating social networks that criss-cross ethnic and *nyeenyo* relations. Potential conflicts based on differences between the categories on a group level are counterbalanced by other social forces like friendship, joking relationships and *njaatigi* on the individual level. There is an ongoing battle for power and hegemony between the different groups and categories in Madougou, and even if they share some local and regional notions of status and hierarchy, they do have different cultural norms and values that work against the creation of one common social system and culture. Cultural and ideological differences between the ethnic groups and categories persist; there are poverty and changes in life-style to agro-pastoralism, and the earlier reciprocal nature of some exchange relations (milk for grain) is lost and replaced by dependency relationships. For example, herding on contract may mean maximizing different values, and not integration. However, the Fulbe maintain cultural hegemony as noble Muslims, and even if the Dogon and others say bad things about the Fulbe, they agree on the Fulbe being morally superior and in the possession of honor (*yaage*) and shame (*semtude*) (cf. Riesman 1984: 180). “Les Peuls n’ont plus le pouvoir politique, bien que culturellement ils soient toujours dominants”217 as de Bruijn and van Dijk says it (1997: 26). The Fulbe notion of nobility and *semtude* defines the Fulbe in contrast to the Dogon and others, who have no *semtude*, both according to the Fulbe and the “others”. Even if the content in what it means to have *semtude* may change with time, it is still an ethnic marker. According to Burnham, it is the “politics of difference” rather than lifestyle that articulates difference and defines the ethnic borders (1999: 282). Still, pastoralism is part of

217 “The Peul (Fulbe) do not have political power any more, but cultural they are still dominant”.

this “politics of difference” for the Fulbe in Madougou, but the content in the pastoral category varies between the rich Fulbe herding their own cattle and the poor Fulbe herding on contract for the Dogon; the poor Fulbe are despised by the rich and lose self-esteem and rank as a consequence. But the poor Fulbe are still considered Fulbe, and while there is no consciousness of class based on discrepancy in wealth; wealth is unevenly distributed cross ethnic and nyeeybe borders, ethnicity is an important marker of identity in Madougou.

Marginalisation?

The life conditions in the Koro cercle in which Madougou is situated have been documented by CARE (1997). In their study of what they call the “life security strategies” for the population in the cercle, their conclusions are that for an average household neither cultivation nor herding bring enough subsistence to support all the members of the household, and one has to rely on other strategies, like “artistic occupations”, petty trade or migration. The study shows that about 70% of the population practice at least two of these additional activities. As I have showed, there are cultural constrains on which activities the Fulbe will perform, and this excludes the Fulbe from alternative strategies except migration, and marginalizes them further both socially and economically in the future. Are the Fulbe in this way “prisonors of their culture” (Bierschenk 1992: 513)? My answer is both yes and no. There are ongoing processes of economic marginalization in Fulbe society and in their relations with others, the outside world and the state, for example when they refuse to cultivate more or resist education for their children. But this is part of a self-chosen strategy of the Fulbe in Madougou, who maximize herding and pastoralism as a cultural value. Herding, because of its flexibility, is an ecologically adapted survival strategy in the insecurity in the Sahel, but today it is constrained by the increasing population and the lack of pasture as a result of more land being cultivated, and by the sedentarisation processes among
the Fulbe. Still, the Fulbe accept poverty instead of taking the psychological stress of changing their ethnic identity or status as Fulbe Rimbe, and they do not cross the ethnic or cultural boundaries through marriage or change of lifestyle to become cultivators. I do agree with the observations made by de Bruijn and van Dijk, who note about the Jallo in the Hayre:

Thus despite the fact that a Jallo may be able to gain a living through activities that conflict with his or her status, he or she will not easily do this and leave behind the cultural values, rules and norms. Poverty is bad and degrading, but losing one’s identity may be worse and may lead to psychological problems for the person involved (1995: 402).

This is true also for the Fulbe in Madougou. It is very important for individuals like Hamma to maintain the Fulbe pastoral identity, even if he works as a guide elsewhere and even if he embraces the wider national identity as Malian citizen. The Fulbe may accept being ranked lower in an economic hierarchy to a marginal economic position instead of changing their identity or ranking themselves as less noble. In accordance with Eng (1999), who shows that the marginal position of the Fulbe women in Maasina is self-chosen as “guardians of tradition”, I will go as far as to claim that in the case of the Fulbe in Madougou, their identity as Fulbe Rimbe even restricts their actions in a way that marginalizes them economically. As Eriksen claims: “… it has been shown that a number of ethnic categories reproduce their identity even if it actually reduces their chances of attaining prosperity and political power” (1993: 74). This is true for the Fulbe in Madougou. By keeping their Fulbe identity and not assimilating to other identities they remain poor, but Fulbe Rimbe; in this sense, the symbolic value of the Fulbe identity in Madougou is stronger than the economic utility aspect. I also agree with Riesman (1990) in his reflections on lifestyle and ecological adaptation. Even if the pastoralist lifestyle is ecologically adapted in times of drought and ecological crises as a flexible lifestyle following the cattle for pasture and therefore exploring marginal resouces of grass, this adaptation may be an unintentional rather than intentional effect. People search for more than survival in life; they search for meaning (ibid.: 327), and, for the Fulbe, keeping
cattle gives them meaning in life no matter if it is an ecologically adapted lifestyle or not. The Fulbe noble identity is still strong and is not threatened. Dreaming of a better life does not mean dreaming of being someone else. The Fulbe in Madougou are not being Dogonized, even if they are changing their traditional pastoral lifestyle and becoming more and more influenced by the global economy through migration and the global market. What it is like to be a Pullo in the world may change, but the idea of being a Pullo is still strong. Today it is not unusual that a Pullo may ask directly for money or things in the market: *hokkam kaalsi!* Before, it was only the *nyeeybe* who asked; for a Pullo to ask would be *semtude*. This is less true today. The Fulbe pastoral identity is still very strong, and it is still important to be a Pullo; even if it means self-sacrifices and that economic opportunities, like possibilities of earning money, are lost. All the talk about how cows and milk are the most valuable possessions, *jawdi* and *dawla*, the cow parties and the contempt for cultivation show that the Fulbe are still attached to the values of the pastoral way of life, even if many Fulbe in reality are poor and do not own many cows, and have settled. The symbolic value of the pastoral life is a very important component in the Fulbe construction of their identity, even if their lifestyle in practice is agro-pastoral. As I claim above, one does not need to own cattle to be a Pullo as long as one practices herding and pastoral activities. In practice, it is in intercation and exchange with each other that the Fulbe, the Dogon and the “others” construct themselves as ethnically distinctive in a dichotomizing process (cf. Eriksen 1993: 74). The Fulbe depend on the “others” to stay noble and superior.
Conclusion: Local Pluralism as a National Strength

In this thesis I have explored the management of different identities in a heterogenous population. I have tried to show that while there is integration between the Fulbe-Dogon on the level of social interaction, there is antagonism on the ideological and discourse level. The Fulbe and the Dogon share some notions of social hierarchy but they have different opinions of the rank of the different groups and categories present. This may be explained by regional and local historical changes that have been going on since colonial times and the peace these created between the Fulbe, the Dogon, the different nyeeybe and the former slaves. The result is the co-existence of different local hierarchies or scales of values where different meaning is hold and maximised. This contradiction is reflected in the local ethnic discourses regarding the construction of the “image of the other” based on different work ethos. While the Fulbe hold fast to their noble and pastoral identity, they have in fact become poor agro-pastoralists and are marginalized economically. Meanwhile, the Dogon have increased their economic status, and the traditional and symbiotic relationship between pastoralists and cultivators based on the exchange of milk for grain has become an asymmetric relation of dependency for the Fulbe. Because the Fulbe and the Dogon define themselves differently in the social hierarchy and maximize different values, the situation with relative social stability remains in a context where more conflict may have been expected. While there are no processes of assimilation of ethnic identities in Madougou and the ethnic boundaries are not blurred, there are processes of negotiation of rank in the social hierarchy between the different social categories. Because of their ambiguous status, the nyeeybe and former slaves play the roles as intermediates in these processes of marking of the symbolic borders between the different categories by opposition. These processes of negotiation of rank and status show how the social hierarchy is not simple and static, but complex and situational.
Modernity processes, like monetization and the influence of the global market, create opportunities for new internal distinctions based on wealth, pattern of consumption, gender and generation in the ethnic and *nyeeybe* categories in Madougou, and give individuals the opportunities to negotiate their rank and manipulate their status, and there are new identities in the making based on nationality transcending ethnic borders among the younger generations in Madougou. The ethnic diversity and complexity on the local level is a Malian “microcosm” (Gallais 1975: 217). Is it a menace to the national unity of modern Mali? The Malian slogan “Un peuple, un but, une foi” is far from reality in Mali today, but the pluralism and complexity on the local level may be a national strength because there are no ethnic or religious dichotomist processes on the national level, like in surrounding states. Economic exchange, friendship and joking relationships cross-cut ethnic and *nyeeybe* borders, and work as integrating forces in this pluralist society. People may manage different levels of identity, and the creation of a Malian national identity above the level of ethnic and *nyeeybe* identity and in addition to it, is a peace-creating and integrating force in the Malian pluralist society today.
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Fulfulde Glossary

Transcriptions are based on Fagerberg-Diallo (1984), Riesman (1977), and de Bruijn and van Dijk (1995).

Allah: God
Altineere: Monday
amiiru: chief
anaheewi: much
ananaawi: it hurts
ananjanga: to get angry
anyappa: to marry
araawa: donkey
atte: tea

baaba: father
baabababam: grandfather
baabiraado (sing.), baabiraabe (pl.): children of father’s brothers, parallel cousins
baali: sheep
balndi (sing.), baalde (pl.): the bed
bakke barma: the rest of the nyiri, leftovers, like crackers
bancce: mixture of straw and mud for construction
barma: cooking pot
balli: straw material
baleeri: south
baleejo (sing.), baleebe (pl.): black person
bappanjam (sing.), wappaybe (pl.): father’s brother, “small father”
Baylo (sing.), Waylube (pl.): smith, potter
beddo (sing.), beddi (pl.): covers made of straw, to cover the milk in calabashes
bei: goat
Bellaa (sing), Bellaabe (pl.): former slaves of the Tuareg
beynude: to give birth (beyni)
Bodeejo (sing.), Wodebbe (pl.): person who is red
bibbe: children
bidje: cotton seed for fodder (Dogon: nami)
 biforgal: fan
binagge (sing.), binay (pl.): calf
bingel: child
biradam: fresh milk
birude: to milk (mi biri)
boggol (sing.), boggi (pl.): rope
bonnude: to spoil, to ruin
bottari: lunch
bunndu (sing.), bulli (pl.): well
burtol (sing.), burti (pl.): cattle road

catorde: the last millet to be harvested, “small millet”
ceedu: the hot, dry season
cobbal: drink made of millet
cokkirde: place to thresh millet
chappoto: millet beer (Dogon: dolo),
chillude: fodder to baali and bei

dabundede: the cold, dry season
daago (sing.), daage (pl.): mat made by the Dogon and bought in the market
dammbitade: to get out after dannbordu
dannbordu: seclusion period of seven days after marriage or giving birth
daneeedo: white
dankir: roof, shade
dankiré: Fulbe men’s house (Dogon: toguna)
dandi: ox, bull
dawla: value, money, cows, jewelry, suudu
debbo (sing.), rewbe (pl.): woman
dende (sing.), deelé (pl.): quarter or neighborhood
deffam: to cook
dendiraado (sing.), dendiraabe (pl.): cross-cousin
dendiraagu: joking relationship
diam: water
Diimaajo (sing.), Riimaybe (pl.): descendant from slave, former slave
Dimo (sing.), Rimbe (pl): free person
djaba: listen
djulabe: merchant
dokkal (sing.), dokke (pl.): gift
doode nagge: cow dung for burning
durde: to herd (droi)

eggude: to move, go on transhumance (mi eggi: I leave)
endam: breast milk
endu: breast

faggo: white calabash used when going eggi
fati: don’t
fiyde: to hit (mi fiyeté)
fulnange: east
Fulfulde: the language of the Fulbe

galmaare (sing.), galmaaje (pl.): scoop, ladle, deep shovel
galle (sing.), galleji (pl.): compound, extended family
Gallabo (sing.), Walabube (pl.): leatherworker
garibo: Koranic school students (gidda Allah garibo)
gawri: grain from millet
gé chillude: fence around the suudu so the animals don’t eat it
genndiraawo (sing.), genndiraabe (pl.): wife
gesse: the (agricultural) fields
gido (sing.), yibbe (pl.): friend
goggam (sing.), goggirabe (pl.): father’s sister
gollude: to work (goalla)
gongo: placenta
gonom: slave
gjoobar: suudu when eggi
goonga: the truth
gooro: kola nut
gorgal: the men’s side of the house
gori: husband
gorko (sing.), worbe (pl.): man
gooto: one, the same

haalude: to talk (haala)
hallere: male sex organ
hande: basket
hayre: stone
harima: pasture surrounding the village and the wells
hettude: to harvest (mi hettan gawri)
hibbere: Dogon village, sedentary village (hubeere), ngenndi
hiirnange: west
hoddo: straw material
hoddu: music instrument with strings, like a guitar
hogg: corral, where the cows sleep at night
hokkude: to give (imperative: hokkam: give!)
hollgo labbi: knife sheat
hollude: to show
hoona: to hit (fieté)
hoore: head
horde (sing.), koore (pl.): calabash
hoovude: to have sex, copulate (a hoovan: would you like to have sex?)
hottere: female sex organ
Kummbbejo (sing.), Hommbbeebe (pl.): Dogon on the plain

indema: my name
innam: mother

jalo: hoe
jammde: the harvest season
jarni: to feed sheep for reselling
jawi: silver bracelet
jawdi: wealth, richness
juulude: to pray (juula)

Kaado (sing.), Habbe (pl.): Dogon, all “blacks”
kaadam: sour milk
kaawa (sing.), kawiraabe (pl.): mother’s brother
kalli: enclosure
kaalsi: silver, money (from kaalsi: French silver Franc)
kodo (sing.), hobbe (pl.): stranger, guest
kokono: straw box
kossam: milk
Kossodjo (sing.), Hossobe (pl.): leatherworker, trader

la’al (sing.), leé (pl.): wooden bowl
laawol: road
Labbo (sing.), Laube (pl.): griots and woodworkers
labbi (sing.), labbe (pl.): knife
ladde: the bush
lamdam: salt
lamru (sing.), lamruuji (pl.): name-giving ceremony (Dogon: ibokono)
lawude: to wash (lawdje koore: wash calabashes)
leggal (sing.), ledde (pl.): wood
lenyol: clan
lettogal: women’s side of the house
leydi: earth, land
lobbo: beautiful
lobbol: good
losi: branch of three, to construct with
loonde (sing.), loode (pl.): water jar
luumo: weekly market

Maccudo (sing.), Maccubé: descendant of slave, former slave
mana: plastic articles
maude: leader, older person, adult
mawwiraado (sing.), mawwiraabe (pl.): big brother or sister
mawdo (sing.), mawbe (pl.): old
miñiraado (sing.), miñiraabe (pl.): little brother or sister
misiiide: Mosque
moddibbo (sing.), moddibaabe (pl.): marabout

nagge (sing.), nai (pl.): cow
ñaamude: to eat (mi nyama, nyamì)
nango honkoma: to keep ones mouth
nayeedo: old person
nebbam: oil, “lotion”, butter
neddo (sing.), yimbe (pl.): people
nduungu: the rainy season
ngeeoloba: camel
ngiiridje: peanuts
njaatigi: host relation
njattigam: host
njagaade: to ask, to beg (njaagude: asking)
njappolé: marriage
njebbe: beans
nyeenyo (sing.), nyeeeybe (pl.): “caste” person, belonging to an occupational category
nyiiri: millet porridge

ongal: pestle
oro: sauce made of leaves from the baobab tree (Adansonia digitata)

paddi (sing.), padde (pl.): sandals
podjo: horse
Pullo (sing.), Fulbe (pl.): the Fulbe
pulaaku: the Fulbe community, all the Fulbe
reedu (sing.), deedi (pl.): stomach
rimude: to give birth (lettogal rimmete)

saahel: north
sabonde: soap
sakkirajo (sing.), sakiraabe (pl.): siblings and cousins
sappo: ten (= 50 CFA)
sawru: herding stick
semtude: to have shame (mi stemti)
seeno (sing.), ceeni (pl.): sandy soils, dune
seko (sing.), sekke (pl.): mats made by the Fulbe women
sippude: to sell (sippi kossam: sell milk)
sira: tobacco (leggal sira: tobacco tree)
sokka: to pound (mi sokka gawri)
sommoyaade: do the daily shopping
suka (sing.), sukaabe (pl.): child
sukunjaabe: witch
suudu (sing.), cuudi (pl.): house
suudu baaba: my fathers house
suudu hoddo: house of straw materials
suudu toggoro: house of banco

taanirado (sing.), tandiraabe (pl.): grandchild
tagadi: the destiny
tagude: to create (tagado: God’s creation)
talkuru (sing.), talki (pl.): charm, amulet
tamoru: dates
tawaangal: custom, tradition
tengare: herding hat
tewu: meat
timmude: to be finished (timmi)
togodjo: food made of peanuts and baobab leaves
tori: ingredients for the sauce made of the bisaps plant
toubabou: white person, European

yaage, yagooto: to show respect
yagaade: respect, to have shame
yahde: to go (yahaa)
yarude: to drink (mi nyara)
yeewtude: to joke
yidude: to like (midda hiddi)

waccoare macco: nicknames
wango: spear
warude: to come (warga: come)
woalla: none
wodda: no good, evil
wowru: mortar
wuro (sing.), gure (pl.): village