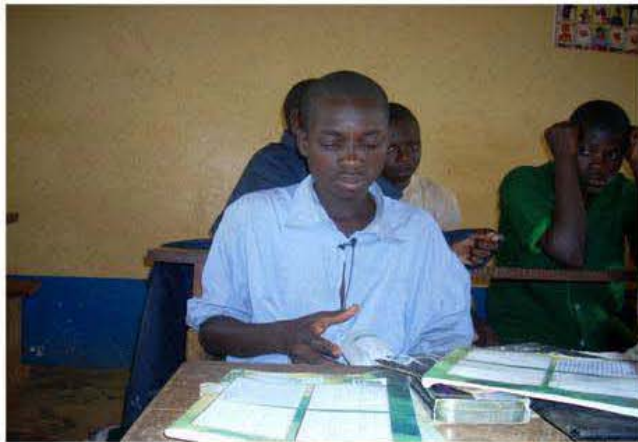


BETWEEN KONANIC SCHOOL AND THE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL SYSTEM:

THE CASE OF THE FULBE OF MAYO-DARLE, NORTHERN CAMEROON.



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Dedication

To the memory of my mother Mme Pamboundem Marie.

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LOCAL TERMS USED IN THIS THESIS

Fulbe: one of the largest and culturally diverse ethnic groups in West and Central Africa. They are well spread in Northern Cameroon.

Mbororo: nomadic *Fulbe*.

Fulfulde: language spoken by the *Fulbe*.

Pulaaku: this concept is both the *Fulbe* moral code and the key element of *Fulbe* identity.

Semteende: having or owning the virtue of shamefulness. It is the most significant and encompassing components of *pulaaku*.

Ngaynaaka: herding competence. It is another component of *pulaaku*.

Janguirde: this word means either studies or a place where one can learn how to read and write. In this thesis, it means Koranic School.

Pukaraajo: student.

Saare: compound.

Yonde: the entrance of a compound.

Jawleeru: the sitting room.

Deptere: the Qur'an, the Muslim religious book.

Andaal: knowledge.

Modibbo: one of the highest Muslim ranks.

Maalam: Koranic teacher.

Ladan: the person who calls for the Muslim five daily prayers.

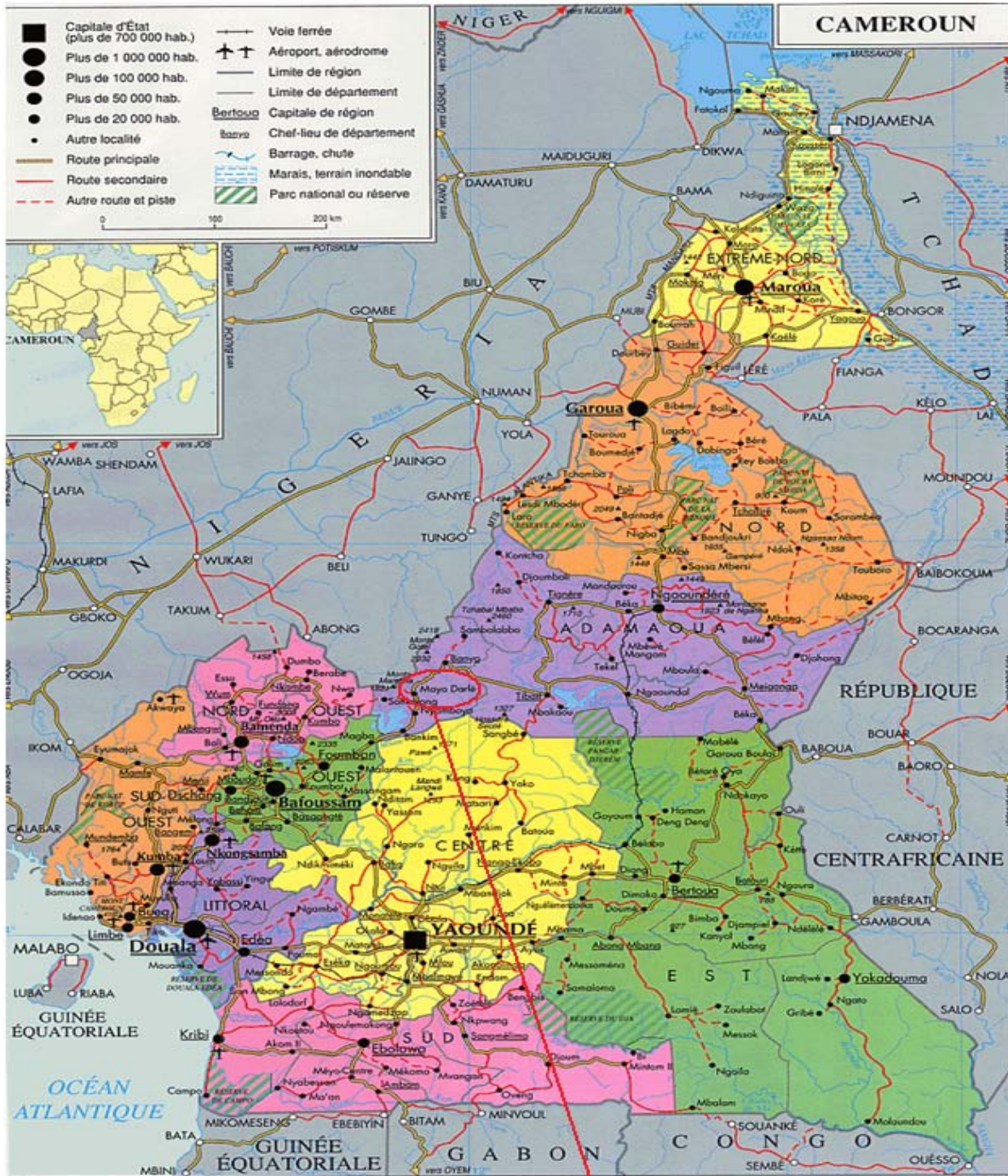
Julbe: Muslims. The singular is *Juldo*.

E.P.: école means school and *EP* is the abbreviation of '*école publique*' which means public school.

Debrouillard: one who knows how to handle thing.

Map of Cameroon indicating the 10 provinces with their headquarters.

Mayo-Darle is inside the red circle



MAYO-DARLE

Source: Division Géographique du Ministère des Affaires Étrangère

<http://www.izf.net/pages/cameroun/3484> (Page consultée le 10 Avril 2009)

ABSTRACT

This thesis is about how the *Fulbe* of Mayo-Darle, Northern Cameroon are coping with two educational systems: the Koranic and the governmental. My focus is mainly the reason why they enroll their children to both educational systems and their expectations and how the whole process affects the life style of the local community. I am also interested in the challenges faced (by both parents and children) within this coping situation and the strategy used to fight against the said challenges. The challenges identified are the incompatibility between both educational systems and the strategy is to keep their *Fulbe* Muslim identity while acquiring the governmental education knowledge. In my fieldwork, I focus on a governmental primary school, a Koranic school and the family of the owner of the Koranic school. I have made use of participant observation and the observational film style to collect both text and non-text data. Some theoretical concepts are used to analyze my empirical material. The main theoretical sources are: Rational choices (Fredrick Barth 1981), social fields (Grønhaug1978), social mobility (Ernest Gellner1983), Ideological state apparatuses (Louis Althusser1970).

The film *Pukaraajo, growing up Muslim in Mayo-Darle* and this thesis are of a complementary kind.

Key words: Cameroon, *Fulbe*, Muslim, Mayo-Darle, Education, koranic School, Government school, *Modibbo*, *Malam*, Rational choices, Social fields, Social mobility, Ideology, Knowledge, Identity, Culture, Job.

INTRODUCTION

1-Problem statement

The main concern of this thesis is how the *Fulbe* community in Mayo-Darle, Northern Cameroon relates to the question of education, be it formal or informal, be it the koranic or the government school system. Barth's (1981) concept of rational choices in connection with Grønhaug's (1978) concept of social fields will be used as a theoretical base for the discussion.

Barth's concept is that people in the course of their interactions, make choices governed by interests. The said interests are influenced by structural limitations. Based on statistic frequency this will generate social forms which are patterns of behaviour. The task will be to discover and explain these social forms throughout the thesis. In addition to Barth's theory, I will be using Althusser's (1970) theory of ideological state apparatuses and Gellner's (1983) Social mobility approach. By using these theoretical frameworks I will attempt to analyze the complexity of being in between two different educational systems.

In Cameroon, education is given great importance by the government. There is at least a primary school institutionalised by the government in almost every village. Religious education is a private concern since Cameroon is a Country with A diversity of religions. With the ethnic diversity, the Northern part is influenced by Islam whereas the Southern part is influenced by the Christian Missionaries. Due to these different religions, there is also a significant difference when it comes to educational system. The South is more involved in government school, whereas the North though involved also in government education, embraces Koranic education with the main focus of teaching people religious knowledge.

Islam was introduced in Cameroon during the period of Islamic conquest (jihad) in early 19th century led by Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio of the Sokoto Empire in Nigeria (Regis 2003). After his death, Modibo Adama his successor continued the conquest and established Fulbe hegemony in Northern Nigeria and Cameroon and gave it the name of *Adamaoua* which means the land of Adama which has become the name of one of the three provinces of Northern Cameroon. Because of their military force and their good economic situation, they became the ruling group

and established their dominance over the pre-existing population in Northern Cameroon. This is how Islam became the dominant religion in the region. Since that period, Koranic education became a process of socialisation within a Muslim milieu in general and within the *Fulbe* community in particular.

Koranic school is where people learn what is essential for Muslim life, as Islam is one of the main important aspects of *Fulbe* identity. Thus having Koranic knowledge is an important value that increases one's chances in different social and economic fields. In addition to school education, the *Fulbe* have what they regard as traditional education which aims to give children practical skills which are vital and relevant for their culture and group. Children are also involved in households' activities such as fetching water, cleaning dishes, gathering firewood, preparing food, herding, farming, trading etc. In brief, they help their parents in their daily activities and by so doing; they are getting ready to replace their parents in the future.

Furthermore, there is a form of school brought first by the Missionaries (Jamaicans and British) and later on by Western colonisers, the French and the British during the post-World War I between 1916 and 1960 (¹High Commission for the Republic of Cameroon in Canada). While the British were leading the North-western and the South-western region, the French had control on the rest of the Country including Northern Cameroon. This is how they introduced a school system based on French values and ideas about education and the education process. For this reason, DeLancey (1989: 30) opines that *education was part of the process of converting Africans into French*. The French educational system was taken over by the officials of Cameroon after the independence of the country in the 1960s and developed into government school system within the new State. Thus, the officials have conceptualised the knowledge acquired from this school as the relevant one in today Cameroonian society. Today, more and more *Fulbe* children are sent to the government school system in addition to Koranic School.

2-Research questions

In the field, I have collected data relevant for both the written and the visual work. I will end up my research with two products: an ethnographic film and the thesis which are of a complementary kind.

¹ High Commission for the Republic of Cameroon in Canada. Available in http://www.hc.Cameroun-Ottawa.org/histoire_fr.html. (accessed May 28th 2009).

My main research question is how the *Fulbe* community cope with two different educational systems – the koranic and the governmental?

From this main question arose the following three:

- if koranic education is so relevant in the *Fulbe* community then why is it that *Fulbe* children are also sent to the government school system in addition to Koranic School?
- to what extent is the government school education important for the *Fulbe*?
- What are their expectations from coping with both systems of education?

3-Anthropological film

3-1-The documentary content

There is a 30-minutes documentary on this topic. It emphasises the lifestyle and the importance of Koranic School to the *Fulbe*. The documentary is untitled: *Pukaraajo, growing up Muslim in Mayo-Darle*. It is subtitled in English mostly spoken in *Fulfulde* and French and sometimes in English. The main point of the film was to let the characters tell about the ongoing situations in the community by themselves and through their conversations with me. This is the reason why there are quite few interviews in the film especially with the *modibbo*, Aboubakar Sidiki, Roufay and Salamatou. The *modibbo* is the owner of the Koranic School and the head of the family with which I spend three months of fieldwork. While talking to camera, he referred himself to the Qur'an², to explain why unlike Roufay, Salamatou does not study in the same setting with boys. Salamatou is a fifteen years old girl attending only Koranic School. She comes from Bamenda in the North-West province. Roufay is a boy about twelve years old. His parents are refugees originated from Nigeria; a neighbouring Country. He is attendant of both Koranic and the government school with the dream of becoming a government minister and a *Ladan*³.

² The Muslim religious book.

³ One who calls for Muslim prayer.

Another person who strongly appears in the film giving important explanations is Aboubakar Sidiki, the *modibbo*'s son. He explains the aim of Koranic School, the meaning of ⁴*pukaraajo* which is the title of the film and he also gave his opinion about education. For him any kind of education is good so it is for the father to choose where to enrol his child. The film also portrays the difference between both educational systems when it comes to their aims, the settings and different activities. So, there are images of pupils sitting on mats reciting Koranic verses with the supervision of Maala Yousoufa the Koranic teacher. At the government school we see pupils sitting and Monsieur Mbaka Valentin, their teacher is walking between the benches.

My choice of children characters was based on their *Fulbe* Muslim background. The choice of the different teachers either at the Koranic school or at the government school was not really a choice but the consequence of the direct link (teacher) they have with the children.

3-1-Conclusion of the documentary

According to Paul Henley (2006: 376), documentaries are made for a general public. Because of the expectations of the public, the documentary needs to “tell a story”. In this case, Henley sees narrative as “the guilty secret” of documentary. I would argue that although narrative is perceived as a story teller, it helps to construct scenes and gives meaning to the images. In the editing process of the film, one of the aims was to insert in the storyline, the comparison between Koranic School and the government school. So with the final outcome of the film was a notice to the relevance of digging into the impact of colonisation on the educational system in Cameroon. In fact, the documentary has allowed me an insight in the government school; some ideologies like national identity and nationalism are inculcated on children. This made me consider the importance of using the concept of ideology as one of my theoretical tools of analysis. Then this theory has suggested hypothesis on the idea of nationalism and national identity as a consequence of the implication of the colonial institutions on the Cameroonian system of education.

The film is observational with some moments of self-reflexivity (Barbash and Taylor 1997: 31) which reveals my presence and shows that it is a film.

⁴ student

4-Structure of the thesis

This thesis is built up around five chapters in addition to the introductory part and the conclusion.

Chapter I: fieldwork and its realities. This chapter emphasizes how I got access in the field, how contact was made with informants and how cooperative they became all along my fieldwork period. I will also have the opportunity to present my position in the field as both “insider” and “outsider” and how it has influenced my creation of knowledge.

Chapter II: Theoretical approach. This chapter will be presenting the theoretical tools I used to analyse systematically the empirical material. Those theories are the following: the concept of rational choices (Fredrick Barth 1981), ideological states apparatuses (Louis Althusser 1970) and the concept of social mobility (Ernest Gellner 1983). I will also present some of my hypothesis.

Chapter III: The *Fulbe* of Mayo-Darle, traditional knowledge and identity. This chapter presents the historical background of the *Fulbe* in Africa and in Cameroon, their settlement in Mayo Darle and how the everyday knowledge is distributed among the *Fulbe* of Mayo Darle. It will also deal with the analysis of *Fulbe* identity and its influence on the choice of educational system.

Chapter IV: *Andaal*, knowledge acquired from books: the difficulties linked to the process of its acquisition. This chapter aims to present and analyse the two educational systems and the struggle through which children have to go in order to acquire knowledge. It also emphasises the importance of Koranic School for the *Fulbe*. It will allow me to discuss different fields, codes and values which bring tension between koranic and government school system.

Chapter V: The extension of the knowledge acquired from books. In this chapter, I will analyse the advantages and disadvantages of this specific kind of knowledge.

CHAPTER I: FIELDWORK AND ITS REALITIES

In order to learn about societies and people, to contribute in the field of knowledge production, Malinowski (1922) realised that it is important to perform a fieldwork, to live among informants and make use of a research methods such as participant observation for instance.

In fact, I believe as more social scientists these days do that the way the researcher relates to people in the field and the way they perceive her has an influence on the data collected. Thus, in this chapter, I will first introduce the setting of research and the people. Second, I will describe how I carried fieldwork in a Muslim community being a non-Muslim; then I will analyse how it has influenced the knowledge created.

I-people and setting

1-My interest

In fact, my interest comes from my childhood. I used to follow my friends to the koranic school of Maala Yaya, a famous *Fulbe*⁵ *maalam*. I was playing when my friends were studying and afterwards we could go back home together. More to that, two daughters of the *maalam* were my friends and I used to pay them a visit and every time I went in their compound, I could see pupils sitting on mats and reciting koranic verses. I was also amazed by the ability of the *maalam* to follow at the same time all his pupils each one reciting a koranic verse different from the other one. So my proximity with the Koranic School has created a curiosity in me.

I took interest in this multiethnic community, in the customs of my Muslim comrades being myself non-Muslim.

2-The saare

Firstly, *saare* is generally translated as compound. Secondly, *saare* means a house that has a man who is recognized as his head and a wife with or without children. Thirdly, *saare* means the entire inhabitant of a house in one word, the family. The *modibbo*'s *saare* is my main fieldwork

⁵ Koranic teacher

setting. The *modibbo* is the head of this compound and the owner of the Koranic School where I have followed pupils and their *maalam*. The said compound is inhabited by the four wives of the *modibbo*, their children and grandchildren and the two student girls (Salamatou and Hadjara). I have been in touch with almost everybody in the *saare* including the visitors.

I have also talked to my neighbours, my childhood friends, young and old *Fulbe* people and non-*Fulbe* people as well.

3-The administration offices

I have gone through the archives of the District of Mayo-Darle with the permission of the head of the District. Likewise, for some administrative rules, I have been in the delegation of education office in order to have the permission to enter the primary school setting with the video camera.

II-Participatory -observational cinema as my main tool of research

Mac Dougall (2003:43) defines observational camera as *an approach with which ethnographer shots the people doing what precisely they would have been doing even if the researcher and his camera were not there.*

Mac Dougall goes into details how the relations we have with the other should be taken as an opportunity to gain more knowledge and understanding and accept it as part of the film project and the reality we represent. That is why he changes the name to participatory-observational cinema. This is the tool used for fieldwork because not only have I recorded images, but at the same time I have been close to my informants, participating in one way or another in their daily experiences. Spradley (1980: 58-62) describes the different types of participant observation: non-, passive-, moderate-, active-, and complete observation. I would say I did active participation in Mayo-Darle. At both schools (Koranic and modern), I was observing pupils and their teacher in the learning process. Although I did not participate in the teaching process, rather I had participated in some activities as I remembered to have shared food once at the modern school during an assignment given to pupils what they call ⁶“*activites pratiques*”. Girls prepared food and boys made cars with bamboo. The food was served and eaten by the teachers and I was

⁶ Practical assignments.

invited to share it. Within the local community (the *modibbo*'s compound), I was involved in women activities such as cutting vegetable in the kitchen, making flour or plating hair. I will mention that almost every day, I shared the ⁷"*nyiri*" with the women.

Paul Henley (2004:109) opines that *the film making based in this process of observation lays particular emphasis on following the subjects' actions and recording them in their entirety rather than directing them according to some preconceived intellectual or aesthetic agenda.*

The camera has helped me to film the real life of my informants. They have never been asked to perform in a specific way although they would have preferred to be filmed when they are not acting naturally. I remember the first day I started filming, one of the *modibbo*'s son told me that pupils were very dirty so it was good if I could let them go and take a bath, change their clothes before I could start filming them. But I told him I would be filming them every day for three months so I do not think they would be able to pretend for such a long period. Again, the camera has helped me to capture and save some situations that had not been repeated during my fieldwork period. For instance, the interactions between Roufay and Salamatou have been very rare. So at the first month of fieldwork, I film them together at the river washing clothes. For the rest of the time I stayed there, the same situation never happened again. That was one of the rare opportunities of interactions between the two children main characters.

It must be noted though that the camera did not always make things easy for me as it will be described in the following sections, but at least, in the end, I happened to learn something from the experience. The first time I took the camera in the *saare* and started adjusting the iris, the husband of one of the *modibbo*'s daughters saw it and became scared. He went and called for Ya Jika, the *modibbo*'s son. But when he came and realised that it was me, he said:

I have heard about a woman with a very expensive and huge camera but I did not know that it is you. Alhadji is my father and also yours. You can not do anything bad to him since you are my sister. But I hope you are not working with people of Human rights and politicians otherwise the film will be very dangerous for my father. You know with this war against terrorism, people are maltreating Muslim's leaders.

⁷ Maize porridge

Then the *modibbo*'s son in Law asked me: *What will we gain from your research?* I told him that there is no financial interest. What they could gain is that the Koranic School will be known all over the world and at least people will know what is taught in the said school.

Few minutes after he left, the *modibbo* called me in his living room and said:

I have asked my people to tell you that you should not film yet. You know there are a lot of politics in this Country and Muslims leaders are their focus. I hope you are not working for politicians.

I told him that I am a student and have nothing to do with politics. In fact, like his son, he was also talking about war against terrorism but indirectly. After some times, he allowed me to film and to feel free in his compound but he said: *You should not ask children questions like: Who is your father, where is your compound...* Two hours later, I went inside the compound and Nenne, one of his four wives told me that she is scared of the camera because my film could cause trouble to her husband. She then mentioned the case of a big Imam in Ngaoundere, the main town of the Adamaoua province, who got filmed by someone who brought the film to the president of the Republic and he put him in prison. His Koranic School has been locked and the man is humiliated. She also said that I might use the film to send them to *famla*, a black magic used by the *Bamileke*, an ethnic group from the West Province. It is said that the practice of ⁸*famla* consist of selling people to those who eat them magically in exchange of money. This means the camera is sometimes a subject of distrust since one never knows what meaning images can create.

Now we can see how the presence of the camera has pushed people to react in a way that could have hardly happened without it. They have expressed their feeling, the fear through which they go in their everyday life. From my informants' reactions, I would say I have learned that after the events of the 11th September 2001 in the United States, the relationship between Muslims and the outside world is full of distrust. For them, the US war against terrorism is almost synonymous of

⁸ Claude Abe. Université XXX. Le populaire comme catégorie d'observation des dynamiques d'interpellation du politique. Available from CODESRIA, 12e assemblée générale, Administrer l'espace public Africain http://www.codesria.org/Links/conferences/general_assembly12/papers/claude_abe.pdf (accessed April 2009)

war against Muslim because most of the wars are happening in Muslim's countries and the Taliban and its leaders are all Muslims. So, everything and everybody (including the researcher and her camera) coming from the Western country is suspicious to my informants. Again I was surprised by the fact that they could link the camera to *famla* which consist of killing people to have money.

III- My project and me

In the field, I could say I was both “insider” and “outsider”. To speak like Holliday (2002, 156), I was “insider” because I have grown up in Mayo-Darle and I speak *Fulfulde*. So I can say I was doing fieldwork in my own culture. But still I was an “outsider” for being a non-Muslim. In this section, I will describe the impact of being a non-Muslim in a Muslim community especially in a koranic school and the way it has affected knowledge production.

1-Being a researcher at home, what does it imply?

I have grown up in Mayo-Darle and have done my primary education in the same primary school where I was doing research which means I speak both *Fulfulde* and French. So either at the school or in the local community, nothing was new for me. But having studied anthropology made me a different person in the sense that I had got orientations at what to look at and what to ask for. So I was going to look at things with scientific eyes. So I took the opportunity to ask naive questions. Thus I could ask children questions such as: *How many times do you pray per day? How have you learnt to pray?* It could have been difficult for a Muslim researcher to ask such questions and get the answers. In the same way, I asked Monsieur Mbaka Valentin why there is no class on Wednesdays and Fridays afternoon which is not new for me. He told me that children go home at noon on Fridays because Muslim children have to prepare for the Friday prayer. As for Wednesdays, he does not know. However, my position as insider has almost blinded me in the sense that I took many things for granted and could not see them any more. It is after fieldwork that such things become important but unfortunately there is no way to catch up. In the other hand as an insider, my knowledge of Mayo-Darle and the *Fulbe* community has helped to acquire deeper understanding of the phenomena I am studying such as the aim and the importance of Koranic School for the *Fulbe*, the concept of *pulaaku* and so on.

2-Being a non Muslim and its implications

People have taken into account my religious background therefore; they mistrusted me as it will be presented in the following sections.

-“*Famla*” woman in the Koranic school

The first time I entered the Koranic School with the camera, all the pupils ran away and the class became so empty. They said a woman has come with a camera to send them to “*famla*”. When pupils got used to the camera, I asked them why they suspected me of being a “*famla*” woman but no one answered. Fortunately, the *modibbo*’s second wife has answered and used the experience of the *modibbo* in Ngaoundere as described above. The *modibbo* and his son have mentioned several times words such as “politic” and “human rights”. The question I asked myself is if I was a Muslim woman, would they react in the same way? My answer is definitely no because they would rather trust her since it is her own society. Or if I was in a Christian community where I belong to, would it have been the same? Definitely no because they would take me as one of theirs and there would be no distrust. Later on, I have been to the government school several times with the camera but no one mentioned the word “*famla*”, not even the first day. They were rather curious to see how I was able to manipulate the different buttons of the camera.

Another problem created by my outsider position is that because I do not have any knowledge of the Qur’an, I was filming children reading Koranic verses without understanding anything. My entire problem was just to shoot what was going on. So I was busy searching for a good angle to film. Before leaving the field, I decided to have the translation of the visual material with the reading of the verses of the Qur’an. But it was so difficult for Maala Yousoufa to help me because while recording, I was cutting the shot in the middle of a text or a verse obviously because I did not know what they were reading. So my translator sometimes could not help. While translating a text for example, I realised the reading was telling a story but unfortunately my translator could not continue because of the bad cut and the story stopped suddenly without a natural ending. This is how I have lost some of my visual material. The same problem has occurred during the editing of the film.

3-The implications of being a woman doing research in a male milieu

Being a woman has given me a wider access in women setting since I could go in the *modibbo*'s wife living rooms and bedrooms and in the kitchen. With the daughters and wives, we could talk about marriage, love, beauty... But the men community was a bit closed for me especially old men. Another point is that I was not allowed to go in the Mosque and film the *modibbo* during the Friday prayer. However, for young men it was a bit better because I could meet them in their shops or at the motor park and initiate a conversation. Obviously, I could not discuss with them about various topics as I did with women because interaction between men and women in this specific community is restrictive as we shall see in the following chapters. Ahmadou, a town council worker, once invited me in his office to talk about the new strategies of herding. Tidjany also invited me in his pasture to talk about herding.

To sum up with this chapter, I have tried to present my data collection methods and the circumstances in which I have collected data and the influence it has had on the knowledge produced. First of all, despite my status of literate Cameroonian who has some knowledge on the government school system in Cameroon, I had forced myself to ask some naive questions to the teachers at the government school. But it was a bit paradoxical because this same status did not allow me to go too far with naive questions since I was also concerned with my own dignity. This has handicapped my production of knowledge. Second I had this status of non-Muslim woman carrying research in a Muslim community and sometimes in the male Muslim settings which has created distrust between me and my *Fulbe* Muslims informants at the beginning of my fieldwork. But in the end, they became cooperative. However, the same non-Muslim woman status has helped me to ask questions which I guess a Muslim woman could not ask. Again although I was not one of their religious mates, I was considered as part of the *Fulbe* community because of my childhood past. In fact, my status was both “outsider” and “insider” but from my experience, there are always advantages and disadvantages for each position.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL APPROACH

This thesis focuses on how *Fulbe* people in Mayo-Darle relate to the question of education. Indeed, education is of great importance in this community be it Koranic or governmental since it is both a process of socialization within the local community and integration in the national and international level of the society. Barth's Models of social organization will be the basic approach which I hope will enable me to analyse fieldwork material. However, I will also use Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatuses theory and Gellner's Social mobility approach.

1-Fredrick Barth: The concept of rational choices

The Structural-functionalism approach of Radcliffe Brown looks upon society as a kind of body in which all the parts are occupied with the stability of the body. Barth criticises this model. According to him, structural-functionalism model is not suitable to explain social change. His contribution in the field of Anthropology is the concept of rational choices based on his fieldwork findings. He focuses on the actor that he met in the field.

As an actor oriented, Barth describes the society as a social form. According to him, social form consists of a *series of regularities in a large body of individuals' item of behaviour* (Barth 1981:32). People in the course of interactions make choices governed by interest. He calls those interactions, transactions. Transactions are interpersonal relationship governed systematically by reciprocity. They are never random. Thus, in the course of transactions, actors make choices in such a way that the value gained is equivalent or greater than the value lost. However, such choices are influenced by some structural limitations which are known as ecological limitations and status governed by rights and duties or some institutionalized patterns. Status here is a concept used in a specific sense. It can be for example son, student, husband, father and so on. Likewise, the concept of status can be related to identity. According to Barth (1969), identity is the way people perceive themselves and the way they are perceived by others. Meanwhile, people depend on the confirmation of their identity by other people. The experiences we learn

from our everyday's activities and life are also part of our identity. Thus, knowledge is closely connected to identity.

Grønhaug (1978) also is in the same anthropological perspective as Barth. Thus, he is occupied with how the actor is entering into different social fields, a huge society. He is looking into the macro-micro levels of the field of social organization. According to him, the actors do not move from the micro to the macro level of the field. In the same given field, one can find patterns of both macro and micro levels. In the same way, the same actors belong to both the macro-level of social institutions and the micro-level of interaction. Thus, from the micro level, they are linked to the macro level. Social field consist of values, dynamics and culture codes which distinguish it from other fields. It is not predefined. One discovered it when one is in the field. The said fields *can be identified in terms of their quantitative attributes -of space, numbers and time* (Ibid: 3). We can thus speak of the “range”, the “extension”, the “scale” or simply the “size” of an organization isolated as a field (Ibid:3). The scale can be defined as the extension of the field. Complexity has to do with the status repertoire and people involved in the society. Extension is somehow dealing with how far a social field reaches. Thus, some fields can be dominant to such an extent that what goes on there might influences what is going on in another field.

2-Louis Althusser: ideological state apparatuses

Althusser (1970 in Richard Wolff)⁹ bases his work on the analysis of capitalism. He is occupied with the functioning and the impact of ideologies in societies and what social sites serve as mechanisms for their functioning. He names the said sets “apparatuses”. He distinguishes between two apparatuses that condition the capitalist mode of production. The first one is the Repressive State Apparatus (RPA) which works by power and politics. It is constituted by the state and its branches, activities and officials. The Second one is the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) constituted by the schools, the family, religions and religious institutions and so on. Unlike the RPA, the ISA works with ideology. In fact, Althusser means that the ISA functions to

Inculcate children and adults in specific way of thinking about and thus understanding the relationship to the societies within which they live (Ibid: 2).

⁹Richard Wolff. University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA. Ideological States Apparatuses. Available in DOGMA. Ideological State Apparatuses, http://dogma.free.fr/txt/RW_IdeologicalApparatuses.htm. 01.04.2009. (accessed April 1st 2009) 10 pages.

Barth regards individuals in society as actors who make choices governed by structural limitations pursue goals and maximise values. In this case, my assumption will be that the State has officialised the knowledge acquired from the government school because intentionally, there are some ideologies which the State transmits to children through the said school. That might be its interest. Therefore, the RPA and the ISA are part of structural limitations identified by Barth in his model.

3-Ernest Gellner: Social mobility

Gellner (1983) opposes local community to social mobility. According to him, the immediate consequence of the modern State is the mobility of its members. They should be able to shift from one activity to another. As he said,

When the system of roles itself is changing, the occupants of positions within it can not be, as some leftwing sociologist claim, tied to a rigid stratificational system (Ibid: 25).

Thus, education gives the skill of social mobility or to compete within the so called modern society. The concept of social mobility allows the individual to find space in between the micro and macro levels of the society as long as he knows the status which feats to each situation.

I am using the concept of social mobility to explain the immediate impact of schooling. Since people are obliged to make a living in the modern State and also to take part in the political sphere, some *Fulbe* parents enrol their children to the government school in order to fit with the economic competitiveness and the exigencies of modernity as it is visible in the film *Pukaraajo*, Aboubakar Sidiki in one of his interviews says *The French school knowledge is the knowledge of the world; it helps you to know about modern life*. Indeed, children who are enrolled in modern school will face mobility after completing their studies. They will be employed in the modern bureaucracy and in the course of their job's activities they will have to meet other people (colleagues) who are not necessarily Muslim and interact with them which may have an influence on their lifestyle. The second impact is the use of French. By learning and speaking French, Mayo-Darle will be connected to the global world. Nevertheless, we can see the extension of formal knowledge. But does education give automatically access to great position

in the society? One has to bear in mind that one thing is to be educated and another one is to get great position.

In brief, the educational system gives the possibility for social mobility. The values and structural limitations are changed and the choices made are different. A new social form is created which implies social mobility.

4-The different social fields of my research

Since I am dealing with the influence of tradition on the educational choice, I will use the concept of knowledge to describe the different social fields in the context of Mayo-Darle. There, I have found three particular fields of knowledge: the traditional field, the Koranic school field, and the government school field of knowledge. In this section, I will describe what characterizes each of them.

4.1-The traditional knowledge field

By traditional knowledge field, I mean local knowledge, the everyday knowledge, and the kind of knowledge which enables a child to have some specific skills. It is more concerned with means of surviving where women men and children are all involved. People make use of skills such as herding, trading, farming, healing, preparing food ... according to age and gender. In fact, the traditional knowledge is the one inherited from ancestors and accumulated through years of individual and collective experiences. This is the reason why respect to elder is very important in this particular society. Thus, children look carefully at what elders are doing and try to copy from them. The respect and the attention paid to elders is the corollary of *pulaaku* which is a kind of *Fulbe* moral code.

4.2-The Koranic school knowledge field

The koranic school field consists of religious knowledge, the one acquired from the Islamic holy book. The aim of the said school is to teach people to have religious knowledge. It is an

important step in the socialization within the *Fulbe* community since Islam is one of the main pillars of *Fulbe* identity such as *Pulaaku* and *Fulfulde*. *Fulfulde* is the *Fulbe* language.

4.3-The government school knowledge field

The government school is the school system institutionalized by the State. They teach about national identity and they also make them ready to take part to the economical and political debate in the Country. Turning back to Mayo-Darle, children are more and more enrolled in government school with the dream of having good position in the society. In the film *Pukaraajo*, in one of my interviews with Salamatou when talking about her plan for the future, she said she will enrol her children in the government school so that when she will be old, they will take care of her. In my opinion, she meant that they will have a job and will earn money which will enable them to take care of her.

Summing up:

To sum up with this chapter on the theoretical tools of analysis, I would like to come back to my research question: How does the *Fulbe* community cope with these two different educational systems – the koranic and the governmental? Thus I have two assumptions:

1-In order to both secure the transference of religious and traditional knowledge, values and identities to their children and give the possibility for social mobility, they send their children to both school systems.

2-The incompatibility of these two school systems create several dilemmas for both the children and their parents, and the main strategy of coping is to try to promote some kind of continuity between the different social fields.

Based on my empirical material, by the help of the theoretical tools presented and comparative literature of relevance, I will discuss the assumption in the following chapters and then conclude upon in the final part.

CHAPTER III: THE *FULBE* OF MAYO-DARLE: TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND IDENTITY

This chapter has two main foci: the traditional knowledge and identity. The traditional knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation. It is transmitted from elders to children. It is a kind of experience knowledge. People learn by taking part and by doing. So, it becomes a kind of embodied knowledge. It is what Ellen, Parkes, and Bicker (2000:325) call practical knowledge:

The local man or woman often select data according to a survival strategy...accumulation of information is therefore not directed by theoretical models as in science, but by a desire to have a pool of information which is essential for the flexibility that real life situations require.

Thus, for the *Fulbe*, traditional knowledge is not only practical knowledge but it is also an important element of their identity.

I-Herding, pastoral nomadic life

In Mayo-Darle, I have noticed that *Fulbe* people define themselves as pastoral although some are not even in touch with cow. Some of them do not have a single cow but they still claim pastoral life as an element of their identity. This might be linked to their historical background.

1-The *Fulbe* Historical background: the *Fulbe* in Africa and in Cameroon

The *Fulbe* are among the best pastoralists of Africa. According to an oral tradition (Eldridge 1976, 1978, 1983 and 1988), Cameroonian *Fulbe* came from a place called Malle (current Mali) in a migration that began in early sixteen century. They went as small groups of pastoral people with their herds of cattle passing by Hausa and Bornouan lands in Nigeria and reached Northern Cameroon. Early eighteen century, they were present in the Adamaoua plateau.

The Cameroonian *Fulbe* have two fractions among them: the *Mbororo* or *Fulbe ladde* (*Fulbe* of the bush) and the *Fulbe* of the village or *Fulbe wuro*. The *Mbororo* are nomadic. They depend entirely on their herds to obtain product for subsistence. They use tents for dwellings and move continuously from place to place in search of pastures for their cattle. The *Fulbe wuro* settle and

live in a fixed area. They have learnt some activities like trading for instance. But this distinction based on nomadic and settle life is paradoxical because the settled *Fulbe* who are owners of cow for instance although they do not move from place to place are still nomadic. The reason is because they hire people from the *Mbororo* to take care of their cow and they move during transhumance period with cow in search for good pastures. My point is that their cattle are their basic source of economic. This means if the settled *Fulbe* do not move physically with the cow, they do in their mind. Meanwhile both the *Mbororo* and the settle *Fulbe* are nomadic the difference is the extent of involvement.

2-The case of Mayo-Darle

2.1-The geographical position of Mayo-Darle

Mayo-Darle has 60 km of length in the East-West side and 32 km large in the side North-South which gives a total of 1 920 km². It is limited in the North by Nigeria, in the South by the Bankim Division and West by the international border of the Republic of Cameroon and the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The total population of Mayo-Darle is 16 480 with a diversity of ethnic groups such as: The *Fulbe*, *Kwandja*, *Mambila*, *Caca*, *Bamoun*, *Banso*, *Gbaya*, *Tikars*, *Bamileke* (¹⁰ *Guide Monographique des unités Administratives*) and a group where I put the officials from the Far-North and the South. People practise Islam, Christianity and other traditional African religions. The most spoken languages are *Fulfulde*, French, Pidgin and English. People live thanks to herding, trade, agriculture, fishing and transportation (car driving and motor-bike riding).

2.2- The Settlement pattern

First Mayo-Darle was a periphery. The main village was called Mine or Kuza. In this village, people came from all the Countries in the central African region¹¹ to work in B.R.G.M, a French company which was occupied with the exploitation of the tin. From the archive of the District of Mayo-Darle (*Guide Monographique Ibid*), I have learnt that the said company has been there

¹⁰ Guide Monographique des Unités Administratives. District de Mayo-Darle. Fait par le chef de District Sadou Ahmadou, Secrétaire d'Administration.

¹¹ Chad, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinee, Gabon, Congo and Cameroon.

around 1933 to 1986. At that time, Mayo-Darle was full of pastures. There were however, few settle *Fulbe* people living there such as Alhadji Jawro Maana, Alhadji Iya and Hammadu Kafay. There were few tents inhabited by some *Mbororo* herders (*waynaabe*) coming every year during the dry season to feed the *Lamdo* Yaya's cattle (the king of Banyo). Banyo is the main town of the Division. When the French company left, people were running out of job and they started settling in Mayo-Darle for two reasons: first, a transcontinental road was built and it crosses Mayo-Darle with all the advantages of trading and so on. Second, the presence of herders was important because they could sell them food, salt for cow... This is how Mayo-Darle became the main village rather Mine disappeared. I got this information from Sarki Power, a man of about eighty years old who have been living in Mayo-Darle for sixty years as he said. The point here is that the company has strongly contributed in the creation of Mayo-Darle because its former workers have move from the former village (Mine) and settle in Mayo-Darle. So 90% of the population is constituted by former workers of the said company and their descendants. But despite the ethnic diversity of the population of Mayo-Darle, the *Fulbe* are seen like the elite group though they are not dominant in number. They are in power and this is because Mayo-Darle is part of the kingdom of Banyo which is headed by a ¹²*Pullo* ¹³*Lamido* as some of the northern Cameroonian kingdoms after the Muslim conquest as explained earlier in the introductory part of this thesis. So they have culturally strongly influenced other ethnic groups through the process of ¹⁴“islamisation” which have almost converted them into *Fulbe* identity.

Turning back to the herding knowledge, I would say it has been a tool of migration and settlement for the *Fulbe*. Now, let see how it is transmitted among them. In fact, it is mainly practised by men. But in the case of the *Mbororo* where women participate actively to the economic issues of the family, women extract milk from cow together with their daughters and sell it to the village market. Likewise, the person who has the responsibility on a boy has the duty to teach him the techniques of herding. It can be the father, the elder brother or an uncle. In the *modibbo*'s compound, there is a little boy whose duty as a child is to take sheep to the pasture every day after Koranic School and take them back home. As for the cow, he has hired herders to

¹² This word is the singular of *Fulbe*.

¹³ King.

¹⁴ Conversion into Islam.

take care of them but children go to the pasture almost every week to give salt to the herders for the cow.

As we have seen all along the *Fulbe* history, herding is not only element of their identity, but it is one of their main economic and cultural activities. Herding is relevant to the extent that the entire economic of Mayo-Darle relies on it. The following statement is from the archive of the District of Mayo-Darle (*Guide Monographique* Ibid):

¹⁵*L'élevage, en dépit que les éleveurs ne savent pas se regrouper en associations, restera une activité sur laquelle on pourra compter pour l'avenir de Mayo-Darle.*

II-The concept of Pulaaku or what is to be a real Pullo

First, it is important to clarify the word I use to identify the group I am dealing with. In fact, *Fulbe* is the name of this particular ethnic group and it is used to identify many people. The singular of *Fulbe* is thus *Pullo*.

Indeed, the word *pulaaku* is built on two main components: the root *pul-* derived from the words *pullo*¹⁶ or *pulfulo*, and the nominal class *-ku* which designates the way of being (Riesman 1977). Thus, *pulaaku* means the *Fulbe* own way of life.

To understand *Fulbe* culture and what is relevant for the education of *Fulbe* children, it is important to grasp this concept of *Pulaaku*. There are many writings on the concept of *pulaaku*. Dupire (1962 : 169) sees *pulaaku* as a moral and social code. *Pulaaku* is also an elementary codification of social relationship. It is also a key element of *Fulbe* identity. Several authors have used different words to describe the concept of *Pulaaku*. This might be the result of the fact that the *Fulbe* are found in Anglophone and Francophone Africa and their appellation varies according to their geographical area as it is written in Regis 2003 :2 :

The Fulbe are variously known as Fulani (in Anglophone Africa), Peul (in Francophone Africa), woodaabe, Mbororo, fula, Toucouleur, and Alpulaaren.

¹⁵ Although herders do not want to gather in association, herding will remain an activity of hope for the future of Mayo-Darle. (This is my translation).

¹⁶ Sing. *Fulbe*.

In Cameroon, the common name is either *Peuls* or *Fulbe* mainly for the settle group. As for the nomadic group, they are known as *Mbororo*. The people themselves use the words *Fulbe* or *Mbororo* (depending on whether they are settled or nomadic) to identify themselves this is the reason why I have decided to use the same words (*Fulbe* and *Mbororo*). Indeed, Regis (2003) described the concept of *pulaaku* as Fulbeness while Riesman (1977) called it Fulani-ness. As for Bovin, she perceived it as ‘the moral code of behaviour, the Fulany way’. Indeed, *Pulaaku* imposes certain behaviour like shame, patience, prestige and honour.

VerEecke (1988) identified nine elements considered as the main components of *pulaaku*: *semteende* (sense of shame), *munyal* (patience), *ngorgu* (bravery), *neDDaaku* (humanism), *enDam* (charity, maternal love), *chaaku* (generosity), *goongaaku* (truthfulness), *ngaynaaka* (herdsman ship) and *ndimu* (freedom). I will pay attention to *semteende*, *munyal* and *ngaynaaka* because those are the most components relevant for my thesis and the most used among my informants as well.

Very often, when I asked what *pulaaku* is, some people said it is *semteende*, other said *muunyal*. *Semteende* can be understood as discretion, respect, modesty, shyness and the sense of shame. *Semteende* is undoubtedly the main pillar of *pulaaku*. It is also a subject of pride. Goggo Lay, an old woman told me that commonly other people (non-*Fulbe*) say

Do not be calm like a Pullo, do not be shy like a Pullo, do not be like this..., do not be like that..., but do have the sense of shame like a Pullo (“amma semtu bana Pullo”).

Meanwhile only a *Pullo* can have the sense of shame. When I asked Sardi, one of the Modibbo’s granddaughters her opinion about the concept of *pulaaku*, she said it means *semteende*, when they propose food to you, you answer you are full. You always eat little and you never get fat. Thus, *Pulaaku* means “self control”. Riesman (1977:129) says a person who has *pulaaku* is one who does not let his needs or emotions dominate him and who keeps his self- control in front of people. This is where *munyal* joins *semteende*. *Munyal* means endurance, reserve, patience and tolerance. A *pullo* must have *munyal* to such an extent that he will never allow people to know that he is suffering otherwise, it will be shameful (*semtudum*). *Pulaaku* is seen as one of the

main elements of *Fulbe* identity to such an extent that telling a *Pullo* that he lacks *pulaaku* means he is not a real *Pullo*. Being a *Pullo* also means having a good knowledge on cattle herding (*Ngaynaaka*) although one might not have a single cow for himself. Indeed, *ngaynaaka* is more attributed to pastoral *Fulbe*.

However, as their interpretation of self-control imposed on the *Fulbe* by *pulaaku*, non- *Fulbe* say *pulaaku* is pride and hypocrisy because a *pullo* man is always pretending. He will never let people know his real life.

During my stay with my informants, I realised that they also talk of physical traits as another component of *pulaaku*. In this paragraph, I would like to answer the following question: What does a *Pullo* look like?

When I asked people how to recognise a *Pullo*, they always talk about light skin, long straight nose, and soft skin, long and soft hair. Some talk about slim body. They always describe *Fulbe* people as beautiful. But when I asked the same question to Aboubakar Sidiki, the *modibbo*'s son, he gave me a different answer: *A Pullo can have light or dark colour, he can have long straight nose or not. A pullo can look like everybody.* But Sanda, a *Hausa* man told me that even if a *Pullo* has dark skin, the skin is soft and the reason why nowadays a *Pullo* man can look like anybody is because they have married people from other ethnic groups. This happened since the period of the Islamic conquest. After the war, *Fulbe* people enslave other ethnic groups and the inter marriages happened among the younger generation and they gave birth to children who can not be hundred per cent *Fulbe* "*Pullo maamaje Jo e didi*" (*Pullo* for seven generations). Then he took the example of African women who were deported in America during the time of slavery. He said for beautiful African women, White masters never sent them to work in the farm. They rather kept them in their homes for domestic works and this is how in the end, they abused them sexually and they have given birth to children who are neither Blacks nor Whites.

III-Fulfulde, the *Fulbe* language

Fulfulde is one of the main elements of *Fulbe* identity. But does it mean that one who does not speak it is not a *Pullo*? It would be difficult nowadays to use this language in order to identify

Fulbe people. Boutrais (1994) notices the same difficulty to identify *Fulbe* people by the use of *Fulfulde*. Thus, he mentions on the one hand the case of some *Fulbe* groups who have lost completely their *Fulfulde* but who still claim to be *Fulbe*. This is the case of the *Fulbe* in Northern Nigeria and the *Fellata* of Chad and Sudan. On the other hand, he mentions the case of some groups of people who claim to be *Fulbe* but who have never use *Fulfulde* as their language. This is the case of the *Fula* of *Wassoulou* in Mali. The late case is the reverse of the above ones, the case of some groups of people who speaks *Fulfulde* but who are not *Fulbe* such as the *Fuladu* of Senegal.

Referring to Mayo-Darle, every *Pullo* speaks *Fulfulde*. The debate here is about sedentary life and pastoral nomadic life. Sedentary life through neighbourhood and exogamous marriages favours a mixture of language which is the contrary with nomadic life where endogamous marriages are more practised. Some of my informants say the settled *Fulbe* do not speak good *Fulfulde*. They say only the *Mbororo* speak good and pure *Fulfulde*. The reason why settled *Fulbe* do not speak good *Fulfulde* comes from the fact that after the Islamic conquest, the *Fulbe* enslaved other ethnic groups and during their interaction with their subjects, they have tried to simplify their level of *Fulfulde* to that of their subjects. Sometimes, they borrowed some words either from their subjects' language or from their *Hausa* neighbours. As for the *Mbororo*, they did not take part to the holy war and there have hardly been intermarriages among them and other ethnic groups. This is the reason why their *Fulfulde* is still "pure".

However, not only *Fulbe* people speak *Fulfulde* in Mayo-Darle, Non- *Fulbe* do also speak it. In some Islamised non-*Fulbe* families, people have lost their own language and have adopted *Fulfulde* as their language but they still claim the belongings to their ethnic group. Thus, *Fulfulde* is the language of communication in this village. Even in churches, while the priests preach in French the translation is done in *Fulfulde* for those who do not understand French. *Fulfulde* is the lingua franca for the population of the Adamaoua Province.

IV-Household's activities

In *Fulbe* community, children take part in households' activities. It is important to mention that the household's activities are also part of training in the Koranic School. In fact, koranic

education is linked to the everyday life. In the course of their koranic education, children end up by gaining both religious knowledge and practical skills as means of subsistence. The involvement of children in the everyday life is made in respect of one of the principal of *pulaaku* which is also concerned with the gender issue or *semteende*. In fact, in the domain of social interaction, *semteende* regulates the behaviour towards in-laws, between husband and wife, elders and parents. In the presence of in-laws for instance, a *pullo* must be shy, in the presence of a parent of the opposite sex, a *pullo* must also be shy. In this way, the division of labour is done according to sex. So while men are involved in outdoor activities such as farming, herding, trading, and gathering firewood and so on women are occupied with indoors tasks such as preparing food, cleaning dishes, sweeping the compound etcetera. This is where Koranic School joins *pulaaku* and herding which constitute identity.

Linking this discussion to the case of the *modibbo*'s Koranic School, I have observed that boys take part in the farming and trading activities in addition to some other domestic works. The *modibbo* used to send all male students to the farm especially during the rainy season which is the farming period. They grow maize, manioc, tomato... mainly to feat the family and the students. In some shops, young boys work as employees (*derke'en*) and this is how they learn about trading. The transmission of knowledge from generation to generation implies the fact that very often, the son inherits his father's activity as it is popularly said *like the father, like the son*. This is similar to what Abdoullahi (2004:61) observes among the *Mbororo* of Ngaoundal, Northern Cameroon. Habibou, one of his informants is trying all his best *to transmit what he himself received as knowledge from his parental uncle who took care of him when he got the cattle he has today*. So he makes sure that they learn how to look after cows and other domestic chores in other words, he is preparing them for a future herding life.

As described above, some kind of knowledge is share only between people of the same sex, information about sexuality for instance. So the father find embarrassing to discuss women matter with his daughter and it is to the mother to teach her daughter what to be a woman in this community is. She prepares food together with her daughter, clean dishes, sweep the compound yard and so on. The mother also explains the daughter how to dress like a respectable *Pullo* woman, (two wrappers: the first one is wrapped down, then a top, the headscarf and the second wrapper is used to cover herself). I have observed that sometimes, Salamatou fully replaced in

the kitchen ¹⁷Subaado who stands for her mother. Every evening, she was occupied with distributing the *nyiri* (maize porridge) in different plates. She knew each person's plate and she had to make sure no one missed the food. That could allow Subaado to do something else in the interior house.

However, the mother can ask both boys and girls to perform some domestic tasks such as fetching water, washing clothes and sending them to the neighbour or to the market. In fact, in this community, because of the routines, every child knows his duties. The child contributes to the life of the family like parents as well. By so doing, he/she learns to become a man or a woman.

V-Islam and Fulbe identity

In Mayo-Darle, *Fulbe* people always identify themselves as Muslims. They use two words, Muslim (*Julbe*) and *Fulbe* to say one thing. In their mind and view, their identity is linked to Islam. This might be once more due to their historical background. Early nineteenth century, the Cameroonian *Fulbe* called for the Islamic holy war well known as Jihad conducted by Sheik Usman Dan Fodjo of the Sokoto Empire in Nigeria (Regis Ibid). After the conquest, they established their dominance over pre-existing population in Northern Cameroon and created powerful kingdoms known as the *lamidats*. In the Adamaoua province, the *lamidats* are located in towns like Ngaoundere, Tignere, Tibati, and Banyo...

According to my informants, a *Pullo* must be Muslim. He must perform the five daily prayers, fast during the Ramadan period, and give alms to poor people. If he is capable, he can achieve the pilgrimage to Mecca. I have observed that any time I was talking about *Fulbe* people, they rather talked about "*Julbe*" which means Muslims. One, I asked Aboubakar Sidiki:

How do you manage to know that someone is a Pullo? He answered: You feel it. You know, even among white people, when you see a Muslim, you feel it. You will have a sensation which tells you that this is a Muslim.

¹⁷ In fact, this woman is not Salamatou's mother but she is considered like that because she is the modibbo's wife with whom she will stay during her Koranic education.

I was a bit confused since I was talking about *Fulbe* but he turned to Muslims. Afterwards, I told him that *Mbororo* people do not live in the village but I think they are also *Fulbe* people just like those who live in the village. He told me that:

People call us (both Mbororo and Fulbe of the village) Fulbe because they do not know. When you have your cattle, you pay an Mbororo boy to take care of them since they have good knowledge in herding. He starts working for you and you do not even have time to ask him whether he was born a Muslim or not. Then he starts going to the mosque and they call him a Pullo. After sometimes, they will say you people are all Fulbe not knowing that he is not a Muslim.

Looking at this excerpt, I would say *Fulbe* identity is linked to religion. For them also, there is no gap between being *Fulbe* and being Muslims. More to that, Islam is not only an element of *Fulbe* identity but a subject of pride due to the hegemony that they have established in Northern Cameroon after the Islamic conquest. It has also become an element of socialisation both within the *Fulbe* community and in the course of their interactions with other ethnic groups. It helps to reduce ethnic boundaries in the way that the non-*Fulbe* who are Islamised become part of the *Fulbe* community. Sometimes, the integration of the non-*Fulbe* become so important that it become difficult to identify who is a “real” *pullo* or who is not.

Thus, everyday in the *Modibbo*'s compound, I could hear either him or his wives or Maala yousoufa reminding children to perform their daily prayers. It is a duty for each parent to make sure that his children practise Islam. However, I have not seen them learning how and what to say when they are praying. They pay attention to adults when they are praying together and they get words from them. This is similar to what Souleymane Diallo (2008) describes among the Igorareine Tuareg in Echagh, Northern Mali. When I asked Ousoumanou how he had learn to pray he said he was born and he saw people praying then he also started praying. Meanwhile, here, people learn by observing and by doing.

Summing up

To sum up with this chapter, some findings have to be highlighted:

First, for the *Fulbe*, *Fulbe* is synonymous of Muslims (*Julbe*) because the border between both concepts is blurred. *Fulbe* have integrated Islam to such an extent that sometimes Islam seems to be considered as part of the *pulaaku*.

Second, Koranic school does not only give access to religious knowledge, but also implies transference of traditional knowledge. Children in the course of their Koranic education gain religious knowledge, practical skills of subsistence and they also learn how to behave like “real” *Fulbe*. For these reasons, I would argue that the Koranic School and the traditional field are strongly tied.

CHAPTER IV: ANDAAL, KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRED FROM BOOKS: THE DIFFICULTIES LINKED TO THE PROCESS OF ITS ACQUISITION

This chapter deals with coping with koranic and government school. *Andaal* in *Fulfulde* stands for knowledge. It is a common knowledge which is to the disposal of anyone who wants to have it and use it. It is knowledge acquired either from the Qur'an (*deptere* in *Fulfulde*) or from the government school. Anyone who has completed (*yottini*) the reading of the *Deptere* or who has a diploma from the government school system is said to have *andaal* (*mardo andaal*).

I-Cases studied

1-*Janguirde* or Koranic School

Janguirde came from the verb *jangugo* which means to read. *Jangugo* can also have the meaning of learning or studying. Thus *janguirde* is a lieu where you can learn how to read or where you can study from books. *Janguirde* then stands for school. It also means studies. Students are called ¹⁸*pukaraabe*. In fact *pukaraabe* means student.

1-1.The setting

In Mayo-Darle, in almost every quarter, there is a koranic school at the entrance (*jawleeru*) of the *maalam*'s compound. The Koranic School where I have conducted my research is a little building in the *modibbo*'s compound. The said school is for beginners. In the school, you have sheep skins on which pupil seat holding their slates where koranic verses are written. These slates stand for their blackboard. Some of them who are getting closer to the accomplishment of the first stage of their studies, read from the Qur'an. The *maalam* seat on the sheep skins just like pupils. Both boys and girls seat together but only little girls under the age of fourteen do study in the said building. As for girls over fourteen, they study in the compound separately from boys because they are growing up and getting ready to get married so they can not be mixed in the same setting with boys. In fact the reason of this separation is because a girl must be a virgin when she is getting married. So getting closer to boys might generate sexual relations and she

¹⁸ Sing *pukaraajo*

will lose her virginity. This is the reason why Salamatou studies and prays in the house of Soubaado, her mother. The *modibbo* explains it in the film *Pukaraajo* when talking to camera.

There is always at least one *Deptere* in a big plate and many slates and a cop of black ink used for writing. Pupils read all at the same time with high voices which apparently seems like a disorder. But one can be surprised by the ability of the *maalam* to listen to them and rectify any mistake made by each one. In fact, unlike the government school where people in the same class have the same level of studies, pupils in the *janguirde* have different levels of studies. They all read at the same time but not the same verses. Each one is reading a different verse from the other one and this is what gives the impression of disorder.



Figure2: the Qur'an in a big plate



Figure 3: the sheep skin

1.2-The learning process and the routines

I am dealing with a specific category of pupils, the beginners or elementary pupils. They first learn the Arabic alphabet, then they will learn how to recognise the letters of the alphabet, later on they start reciting and memorising koranic verses and learn how to pray. Then they end up by reading the whole Qur'an without understanding it. After the accomplishment of the elementary stage, those who want can continue to the secondary stage which gives the opportunity to open a Koranic school and become a *maalam*. Then he can continue to the advanced level which the stage of translation, commentary of the Qur'an, in brief, the stage of specialisation. At this level women are almost rare. Maala Yousoufa their teacher belongs to this category.

In the Koranic School, the reading is done in Arabic but the *maalam* and pupils both communicate in *Fulfulde*. After memorising a verse, each pupil come to the *maalam* and recites what he has learned. When the reading is approved, he washes the slate and writes down the next verse. When the child reaches a certain level, he no more writes on the slate. He is allowed to read from the Qur'an.

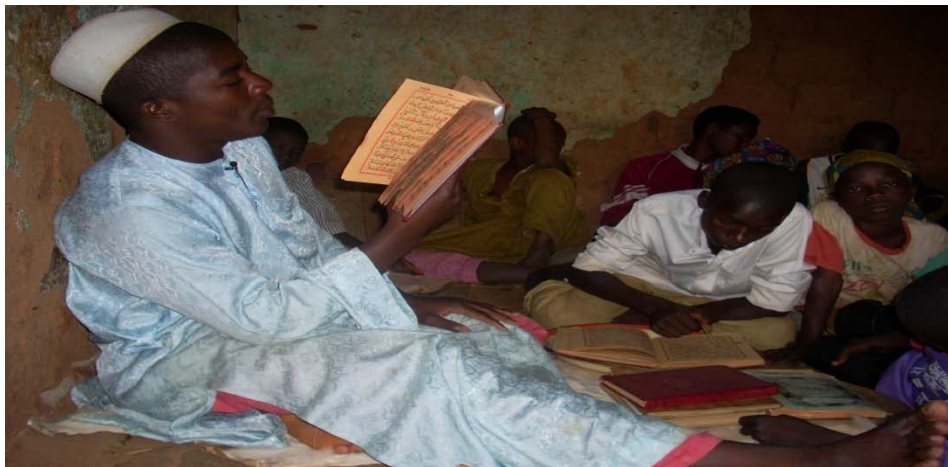


Figure 4: Pupils and the *maalam* in the Koranic School

As for the routines, I have observed that pupils begin their day by performing a prayer in the Mosque at 5 o'clock in the morning. Then they drop in the schoolroom at 6 o'clock and start reciting koranic verses in the presence of the *maalam* until 8 o'clock. They will come back to school at 2 o'clock after having performed the prayer of half past one in the afternoon. They will

keep on reading and when it is half past three, they will go back to the Mosque and pray. After the prayer, they continue reading until 5 o'clock. They will eat and perform the prayers of half past six and half past seven, come back to school and read until 9 o'clock. There is no fixed time for breakfast or lunch. Any time that the food is ready, pupil can eat or any time one is hungry, he complains and gets what is ready. But they have dinner after the prayer of half past six in the evening. They do not have school on Thursdays. As for Fridays, school begins at 2 o'clock after the Friday prayer.



Figure 5: Salamatou praying in the house

Unlike at the government school where the rules are very strict, when a child is in the *janguirde* reading, he can be interrupted and asked to perform a domestic task when needed. Ninety per cent of the students live in the *modibbo's* compound. Boys sleep in some rooms located at the entrance of the compound and girls sleep in the houses of the *modibbo's* wives. Since there is no class on Thursdays, they can go either to the farm or to the pasture. During their spare time, they play football or other games. Some of them work in restaurants or in shops to earn money. The *maalam* is a motor bike taxi rider during his spare time. He sometimes asks pupils to help him by writing some Koranic verses on slates for his customers who are either ill or looking for protection. When pupils finish writing, they wash the slates and give the liquid from the slate to the *maalam* who will give it to the customer and get paid. There is no salary for either the *maalam* or the *modibbo* for their teaching. But the *modibbo* sometimes receives gifts from

parents to take care of their children during the period of their studies. People from the Muslim community also take care of him by giving him alms.

The Koranic school field generates a sub-field which is constituted by three categories of actors: the *modibbo*, the *maalam* and pupils. The relation between these actors is mainly based on submission. Pupils are submitted to the *maalam* who is submitted to the *modibbo*. This sub-field is stratified by religious knowledge. The more knowledgeable a person, the more respectable and powerful he is. This is why the *modibbo* is on the top of the hierarchy followed by the *maalam* and the pupils at the bottom. Thus, submission in this situation can also be seen as the process of learning. One who is after knowledge has to be submitted and obedient to his teacher.

We have seen that pupils recite and memorise verses without understanding them. They do not ask questions. The reason given by my informants is that the pupils are too small to understand the ¹⁹“Book”. The next step of their studies will be the translation and commentary. I would argue in addition to my informant’s opinion that it is necessary for the child to acquire this knowledge and it is a duty for parents and the *modibbo* to put the knowledge at their disposal. So, even if they do not understand anything, they still need it for their spiritual life. It is the process of bringing up a child in an Islamic culture. It is also part of the maintenance of cultural values.

2-²⁰“Ecole Publique de Mayo-Darle, Groupe II”, the primary school

2.1-The classroom

The abbreviation of the name of this school is “E.P”. This is the school where I have followed Roufay. It is located next to the main street with a lot of traffic. The said school has many buildings for classrooms. Each classroom is equipped by many benches for pupils with a big black board. Unlike in the Koranic School, Pupils at EP seat three per bench without any distinction of sex. The teacher has his own bench at the front stage of the classroom. Pupils use chalk to write on slates and pens or pencils to copy a text from the black board to their exercise books. The teaching is done in French.

¹⁹ The Qur’an

²⁰ Public primary school, group II of Mayo-Darle



Figure 6: The teacher and pupils in the classroom at the government school

2.2-The routines

At half past seven o'clock in the morning, both pupils and teachers lift the flag up and sing the national anthem. Afterwards, they go in the class room. They take the first break from half past ten to half past eleven and the second one from half past twelve to half past one in the afternoon. At half past two, they go back home. They have class every day except weekends (Saturday and Sunday). But there are some exceptions on Wednesdays and Fridays because school ends at half past twelve o'clock. The teacher told me that they stop class early on Fridays because they want Muslim children to go home and prepare for the Friday prayer. When I asked why they stop early on Wednesdays, he said he does not know.

II-The objectives of both school systems

Whether Koranic or the government school, they both struggle to give children values which are relevant for the society or the community where they live and also prepare them for their future adult life. Meanwhile, education is a process of socialisation within the society (Durkheim 1985).

But to make the difference between both educational systems, I would argue that the main aim of Koranic School is to know the scriptures in the Qur'an and to know what it is to be a "good" Muslim as it is visible in the film *Pukaraajo* when Aboubakar Sidiki is talking to camera. He said that people can study to have job but the main aim of Koranic education is to teach people how to pray, make ablutions, give alms and perform pilgrimage to Mecca. According to Cheikh Hamidou Kane (1961), the farming, the household activities are the entire struggle through which a human being has to go in order to get spiritual virtues. Meanwhile, the main objective of this kind of education is teaching religious knowledge. As for the government school, Kane (Ibid: 21) argues that it is school where "they teach how to link wood to wood": ²¹ *il est certain que leur école apprend à lier le bois au bois...*

The governmental education is therefore more concerned with preparing children for a future carrier and not religious life. Kane also sees it as an element of social change since he calls it the new school ("*l'école nouvelle*").

III-Social change among the *Fulbe*: The governmental school attendance nowadays.

The change I am dealing with is the fact that in addition to Koranic School, more *Fulbe* children are enrolled in the government school system than it was twenty years ago. This means the parents have decided to cope with both school systems. In this section, I will focus on the coping situation and the reason for the change.

To my knowledge of Mayo-Darle, the rule is that all *Fulbe* children attend Koranic School although not all of them go further (in the secondary and advanced stage). This is how it has always been twenty years ago. So it was common to find children at the age going school (seven years old) not attending the government school. But few of them were enrolled to the government school either at the same time with the Koranic School or after they have completed the first stage. But today, the situation has changed. The attendance of *Fulbe* children at the government school has increased. I could not get the number of *Fulbe* children enrolled at "EP"

²¹ No doubt, their school teaches how to link wood to wood.

because the teachers only give the entire number of the pupils in each class according to sex and not according to ethnic groups. So I have done my quantification in households with the specific case of the *modibbo*'s compound.

The *modibbo* has 18 children which I divide into two groups. The first group which I call the older generation is constituted of 14 children. Those children are between the age of 20 and 40. The second group, the younger generation, is constituted of 4 children. They are under the age of twenty. Among the 14 children above twenty, 2 have been enrolled to the government school whereas all the 4 children under twenty attend the government school, 3 of them in the primary school and 1 in secondary school. From this excerpt, we can see that 100% of the children under twenty attend the government school unlike the elder ones. Almost all his grandchildren at school age going living with him are enrolled to the government school. And not only his children and grandchildren attend both school systems, but also Roufay who came in his compound especially for Koranic education.

To put Barth's terms, a new social form has been generated. For the time I was in Mayo-Darle, I have realised that it is not very common to see *Fulbe* children at the school age going hanging around in the weeks during school hours. Also, a general high school has been created since 2000 and I have seen *Fulbe* children at the age of heighten and above attending the said school. Twenty years ago, that was the age that *Fulbe* students used to drop out from school. There is a large community of *Mbororo* refugees from Nigeria who have finally settled in Mayo-Darle and the teachers at the primary school has shown me most of their children both girls and boys attending the said school. In those days, the *Mbororo* were the people who were strongly resisting to the governmental education. They were focused on their pastoral nomadic life.

The question now is why do *Fulbe* people enrol their children to both school systems? Or to what extent is the governmental schooling important for them? All along chapter three, we have seen how important it is for *Fulbe* children to have the religious and the traditional knowledge within the local community. When Foucault (1972-1977) says power produces knowledge and knowledge always constitute power, he means that those who have power decide which knowledge they will make relevant for the society. In Cameroon, the State through the

government gives importance to the knowledge acquired from the government school. So this is the “official” or the institutional knowledge. I could say having the governmental education knowledge is important at the national level while the Koranic and traditional knowledge is relevant within the local community. But the people are not just *Fulbe*, they are *Fulbe* Cameroonian. In this case, I agree with Grønhaug that there are no fixed macro and micro positions but both micro and macro is present in the same social situations. Mayo-Darle is part of Cameroon so any decision taken by the officials affects the whole country including Mayo-Darle and the *Fulbe*. Yaounde is the capital, the headquarters of the state institutions such as ministries and so on. From the ministry of education, important decisions about the educational system are taken and applied to all the schools in the country, so from the capital to the provinces, divisions, sub-divisions, districts and villages. Besides, the problem of education seems not to be a national concern only. It is also important to the international level by the United Nations system through UNICEF which promotes education in all parts of the world.

In fact, the direct consequence of the institutionalisation of the knowledge acquired from the government school is that, being in the possession of such knowledge can give access to great positions in today Cameroonian society which implies having a good job (working as civil servant or in factories) or being a political leader for instance. Thus, this is the reason of the change in the *Fulbe* community. They are aware of the fact that change is there whether they like it or not and now they most cope with it. They would like their children to be competent in a globalised society. Ahmadou, a *Pullo* man and town council worker told me that they can not continue resisting to the government school because a non-literate man is a handicap. He said in Mayo-Darle, they have an association called APESS²² (*association pour la promotion de l'élevage au sahel et en savane*) which aims for the promotion of herding in the Sahel and savannah and by nature *Fulbe* people like leadership. One of them want to lead the said association but people have refused because they are wondering how a non-literate man can represent them during a conference. He has only attended Koranic School when he was a child but he can neither speak nor write in French. How is he going to write down what they have said at the meeting? He added: *Fulbe have overslept and time has passed. They have to walk on the rhythm of the global world.*

²² Association for the promotion of herding activities in the sahel and savannah.

Meanwhile, they do not want their children to phase the same situation. Facing the same situation of *Fulbe* vis a vis the government school (“the new school”) in West Africa among the Diallobe in the sixties, Cheikh Hamidou Kane (1961:20) ask the following question:

²³*Nous refusons l'école pour demeurer nous-meme et pour conserver a Dieu sa place dans nos coeurs. Mais avons-nous encore suffisamment de force pour résister à l'école et de substance pour demeurer nous meme?*

IV- Incompatibility between Koranic School and the government school

In this section, I will first mention the impact of colonial institution on the educational systems in Cameroon then I will analyse the crisis of compatibility between both educational systems.

1-1The implication of colonial institution on the educational system in Cameroon

As I said earlier at the introductory part of this thesis, the government school system in Cameroon is a kind of education inherited from the Western colonisers. Cameroon has become independent since 1960 but it is still noticeable that the Country have been colonised by the French and the British. But how is it noticeable? How does the colonial institution impact today on people? How does it affect the way people think?

To answer these questions, I would argue that from the use of French and English as the official languages, one who just comes to Cameroon notices that it is a postcolonial Country. Thus being a Cameroonian implies being able to speak either French or English if not both. And that is not all. Some institutions such as health centres, airports, educational system and so on are almost copied from the western models. Ideologies are conveyed through these institutions enumerated above especially the school system which Althusser (1970) calls the ideological state apparatuses (ISA). In fact, education does not only give children skills for job. It does other thing. Schools serve as the sites for the functioning of the said ideologies (Ibid). In schools, teachers and pupils rise the flag up every morning, sing the national anthem...Meaning that they get in touch with

²³ We resisted to the foreign school to remain ourselves and to preserve for God his place in our hearts. But do we still have enough strenght to resist the school and enough substance to remain ourselves ?

ideas about nationalism and national identity. It is visible in the film *Pukaraajo* when pupils are singing during the national day celebration. , the following song: *we are Cameroonian from north to south, east to west. We will build up our country in tranquillity and peace. We will build our country in unity.* Another example is also in my film (*Pukaraajo*) with the boy reciting in school during the end of year celebration: *Let the children go to school. They will learn to read and write. They are the future leaders of this life.*

This is a kind of promotion of the “universal literacy”. Behind the idea of education, one can also find the introduction of some behaviour like boys and girls sitting on the same benches, girls without headscarf, imposing the wearing of the school uniform, the concentration of children mainly on school and so on which are not that coherent with the lifestyle of some local communities. I will come back to this point later on the next sections.

From all these situations described above incompatibility between the government school and Koranic school become inevitable.

2-Local community versus social mobility

From my observations, the cohabitation of the government school system and the Koranic School is characterised by the crisis of compatibility. Barth (1981) argues that each of us has a repertoire of many statuses and when we are interacting, we ought to know which status in our repertoire is relevant for the situation. Likewise, the situation will work, to use Barth’s words: *if all participants have a status in their repertoire which articulates with those of the others and are willing to act in this capacity.* (Barth1981:122). Thus, a juxtaposition of different social fields opposing different cultural values and goals can undoubtedly be subject of tension. Here we have two social fields (the koranic education and the government school education fields) in presence with two different goals and values.

In Gellner’s (1983) view, Mobility means instability. We can thus talk about mobility not necessarily physically of person from one field to another. Also, mobility breaks off with stratification in a sense that it claims equality. But this does not mean that there is no

stratification and inequality at all in such a system. Rather, it means that they are attenuated. Local community on the other hand is based on stability, inequality, customs and religion.

Talking about goals, I agree with Durkheim (1985), when he says each type of society has its educational system and each system of education has its own goals. The *Fulbe* rely on Koranic education in order to bring up their children in a spiritual life and keep their cultural values (*pulaaku* and practical skills). Through farming, domestic chores... they acquire the sense of modesty, simplicity, obedience to elder and so on. As for the modern State, government school is regarded as more important because it is “global”. The academic program is wider; they teach mathematic, moral, biology, civic education etcetera. They also promote literacy as described above. Ideas about nationalism are present in this system of education. Every morning, teachers and children raise the flag up and sing the national anthem. Thus, putting together such different systems is undoubtedly subject of tension. The said tension is caused by discontinuity of some cultural values (*pulaaku*, practical skills, modesty simplicity and so on). Mobility tends to break off with the rigidity of the local community. One who has acquire both Koranic knowledge and the governmental education knowledge is no more the same as if he were only a product of Koranic education. He might end up giving more priority to his carrier than to his religious life. He might end up arguing that he is free to pray or he will pray if he wants. He might even end up not praying at all as it is described in Kane (Ibid) where Samba Diallo, the hero of the book after he came back from France where he went to the “modern school”, was conversing with his friend who asked him to pray. He answered to him that they do not oblige one to pray. In the office for instance, a *Pullo* man might not control his interactions with his non-*Fulbe* female colleagues by sharing the same office, hands shaking, eating together and so on which are against the principles of *pulaaku*. In brief, mobility implies the risk of ending up by not being that much in touch with religious and traditional knowledge.

After this discussion about discontinuity, I will briefly mention some patterns of continuity from Koranic School which pupils still carry with them while they are at the government school.

I have observed that when the teacher gives chalk to Rufay in order to write on the black board, he takes with two hands as I used to see him taking things from the *maalam*. Also, pupils bend down in front of the teacher when they are asking permission to go out. Gender issue is also

present in the behaviour of pupils although the administrators of 'E.P' claim that the division of pupils according to sex is not present at the school. In fact, there was a practical course called 'activites pratiques' in which each pupil was going to make use of practical skills such as plating, cooking, making car with bamboo...the teacher told me that boys were going to prepare food just like girls. Meanwhile there would be no distinction of activities according to sex. But surprisingly, all the girls prepared food while boys made cars.

3-Language barriers

In the *janguirde* as described above, the language in use is *Fulfulde*. The *mallam* is a senior student in the said school which means that both pupils and the *maalam* share the same cultural codes. As for E.P, the language in use is French and the teacher is an outsider. Thus, *Fulbe* children find themselves in difficult situation because they are not used to French. In fact, unlike children from Southern Cameroon, *Fulbe* children do not speak French until they are registered to the government school. They speak *Fulfulde* at home, in the *janguirde* and with friends when they are playing. So when they come to E.P, because of these language barriers, they become shy. They can not answer questions orally. This reminds me a situation I have observed during an oral evaluation. The teacher asked each child to tell a story about topics such as wedding ceremony, naming ceremony and so on. Roufay was standing in front of fellow students and he was not able to speak aloud. He was telling a story about his brother's wedding day but I could not really hear the whole story. He was putting his finger in his mouth, looking down and turning his face from the teacher. He was really feeling uncomfortable. From this excerpt, I would say another problem is individualism versus community life. Because in *janguirde*, even when a child is reciting after the *maalam*, other continue reciting their own verses whereas in EP, When one person is talking, other keep quiet and listen to him. So when Roufay was talking, all the attention of the audience was on him. This is what he is not used to.

4-The school time table

The school schedule is settled more strictly in such a way that children who are registered have little time to help parents at home with domestic chores as discussed above. This is similar to

what Serpell (1993) observed in a rural Zambian community called *Chewa*. In his book *The Significance of Schooling*, Serpell (Ibid: 114) describes how *the dictates of school enter in competition with the demand of socialisation in the traditional framework*. He describes that around January and February, people are occupied with weeding including children over the age of about five or six. However, the school year begins in mid-January and obviously; the class attendance is very low until the end of the weeding period. By then, several weeks of the first term would have gone.

Turning back to Mayo-Darle, children go to “EP” from half past seven in the morning to half past two o’clock in the afternoon. We should not forget that Roufay has to pray at five o’clock, then goes to *janguirde* until they close at eight o’clock then he has to go to EP and stay up to half past two o’clock in the afternoon. By the time he is at EP, his school mates in *janguirde* are helping the *modibbo*’s wife at home. Definitely, he can not participate fully to the household’s activities as a *Pullo* child has to do. Anyway, the school policy is that school children should concentrate all their energies and time on their studies which is really incompatible with *Fulbe*’s view of education. For these reasons, many *Fulbe* parents perceive the government school as a school where children learn to be lazy and stubborn. In *Janguirde* in the contrary, children are at the disposal of the family as we have seen in the previous chapter. When they are reading in *janguirde*, parents can ask them to perform a domestic task and after that, they can go back and continue reading. The schedule is not that strict.

Likewise, similarly to the case of the Zambian rural community, Monsieur Mbaka Valentin told me that during the period from late March to mid-June, the class attendance of Muslim children is very low because that is the beginning of the rainy season and people are occupied with farming. Almost all Muslim children go to their *maalam*’s farm to help. I have been to farm several times with all the *modibbo*’s students. I remember that Roufay attended all the farming works while his class mates were at EP. During this special period, he was missing at EP.

The question now is what is the fate of children in both situations? The reason why I ask this question is because both school systems are struggling to have the ideal man through these children, the government school promotes its ideologies while the Koranic keep them working in

houses, pastures and farm for the sake of culture and religion but none of them care about the interest of children. Concerning farming, pastures etcetera, I would not use the concept of child labour but with regard to Koranic School, I would say be it for the sake of religion or culture; these children need more attention from educators and parents. They spend more time working than studying. I remember two days after Roufay had completed the first stage of his Koranic studies, one of the *modibbo*'s daughter said he has taken more time than enough to complete this stage. I asked why and she replied that it is because of too much work. They send him too much and he has less time to study.

5-The school regulations

The rules of EP break off with the “home culture” to use Serpell’s (Ibid) word which is the characteristic of the *janguirde*. In the *janguirde*, *pulaaku* is taken into account. For instance, big girls do not study together with boys and the dressing of the girls is still wrappers and veil but boys’ clothing is a bit liberal. In EP however, girls must remove headscarf. When I asked monsieur Mbaka Valentin the reason why girls have to remove their headscarf, he said because they do not want them to feel like at home. They should know that they are at school. I was not expecting this answer because I myself have been an attendant of the same school when I was a child but according to the teachers at that time, girls were using scarves to hide their dirty hairs so they had to force them to remove their scarves once they were in class just to make sure that their hairs were plated and cleaned every week. Coming back to the answer of monsieur Mbaka Valentin, what can be said about the idea that they do not want the girls to feel like at home? As Althusser (1970) says school is an institution that serves as the site for the functioning of ideologies. Now, this excerpt means breaking down with the home culture. It means that the *Fulbe* culture in which girls have to cover their body ends at home. Which culture is then applied at school? Probably the “culture of modernity” is the one applied.

Another pattern of discontinuity is the school uniform imposed at school. Boys wear green short trousers and short-sleeved shirt whereas girls wear green dress. The problem here is mainly with girls because when they wear dress uniform, their legs are uncovered just like the arms and the head which is not allowed either by their religion or by the principles of *pulaaku*. As Goffman

(1959) describes using the concept of impression management, people in the course of their interactions wear specific mask according to context and status. In this way, when girls are going to school, they use a wrapper on the dress to cover their legs then use a headscarf or a little veil. When they get at school, they remove immediately before entering the classroom because on the street, they have to behave as good *Fulbe* Muslim girls and in the classroom, they have to be good students who respect the school regulations. Likewise, the government school is fashioning girls on the way of modernism.



Figure 6: In the classroom: girls without headscarf sitting together with boys.

To conclude on this chapter, the regulations of the governmental education have intentionally created discontinuity with the home culture of children. The teachers seem to have an agenda of change while the children and their parents try to promote a minimum of continuity between the different social fields. The teachers express it. They say they do not want children to feel like at home. They should know that they are at school. Even the learning process does not make things easier for the children. They are used to collectivity in the Koranic School but once they are in the government school, they face individualism, one person is speaking and all the attention is on him. As for children, they do not break off with their home culture. For instance, on the street, girls use wrappers to cover their legs and scarf to cover their hairs because they feel too exposed by the school uniform. In the classroom, pupils keep their home sign of respect and obedience vis a vis the teacher.

CHAPTER IV THE EXTENTION OF THE KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRED FROM BOOKS

I-Limitations of Koranic knowledge in the job market

As we have seen, Koranic school trains children in a specific domain which is not adapted to the social economic realities of the global job market. In my opinion, this is due to the fact that it is not recognised by the State as a valuable system of education and also, there is no diploma to certify their level of studies. So after their Koranic education, students end up by being “debrouillard” (resourceful) as Waage (2006) put it. For those who go further with studies, there is an exception because they can become Imam which is a very high rank in the Muslim community with all the social economic advantages. As for the other, they do consultation and clairvoyance. Some of them open Koranic schools and become *maalam* living tanks to alms and students’ labour, other hold small shops.

II-Government school knowledge and job opportunity

One of the reasons of the institutionalization of school given by Serpell (1993) is the promotion of economic progress. Many states in Africa since the years of independences (1960s) see in the educational system brought by Western colonisers, the way of allowing their citizen in particular and the States in general to compete effectively in the modern global market place. In this view, acquiring knowledge from the government school system leads one to great position in the society.

In Cameroon like many modern States, the accomplishment of studies in the government school system is marked by a diploma which allows competing in the job market place. Thus, many parents send their children to this particular school system full of dream to see them being employed by the government as civil servant for instance.

In Mayo-Darle, I have observed that more *Fulbe* children are enrolled to the primary school nowadays than twenty years ago according to my knowledge of the place. The idea of schooling as access to great position in the society and job opportunity is present among my informants' conversations. They always told me that *school will help me in earth*. The main aspect of this excerpt is that within the State, people are occupied by making means for surviving so they believe that being a “*fonctionnaire*” (civil servant) is the better way. For example in my film, when I asked Salamatou about her plan of future, she said she would like to have children and she will send them both to koranic and the government school. Then I asked why she would send them to both school systems. She answered:

I will send them to Koranic School so that they should know the words of God and how to respect elder brothers and sisters and to the government school so that when I am old, they should be able to take care of me.

There are two main aspects in this excerpt. First, it is a kind of distinguishing two different social fields without confusion, Koranic School on one hand and government school on the other hand. Second, it is trying to show the scale and the aim of each field. Concretely, Salamatou sees in koranic school, the aim of teaching children to have religious, cultural and moral values such as the respect to elders whereas government school knowledge offers great position because in my opinion, the phrase *I will send them to the government school so that when I am old they should be able to take care of me* implies that attending government school means preparing for job. This excerpt shows the perspective of local people on schooling. But as we shall see in the next section, being “educated” does not automatically give access to great positions in the society.

III. The frustration brought by the knowledge acquired from the government school system

1-The jobless situation in Cameroon

As said above, one thing is being “educated” and another one is having great position in the society or let me say having a good job. This is due to some reasons such as the economic crisis in Cameroon and due to the fall in the world prices of raw material such as coffee, cocoa, sugar,

plant oil in addition to the devaluation of the CFA Franc (Waage Ibid.). Most of the youth who graduated from schools and universities are in search of employment. So in Cameroon nowadays, it is a risk to enrol children to the government school system with the dream of seeing them making career in the upper echelon of the modern State. Likewise, life after school is characterised by unpredictability to use Waage's (Ibid) words.

In fact, the *Fulbe* are aware of this jobless situation in the Country. I think this might be the reason why they do not take the risk to send children only to the government school. They are sceptical and for that reason, they have decided to cope with both educational systems just to maximise the chances of children in the future. They express it all the time. I remember when I was talking to Maala Yusufa in the farm; He told me that it is not good to mix Koranic and government school knowledge together. Then I asked:

If that been the case, why do you allow Roufay to attend both types of school? He said it is because one never knows where he will find a job. If it is in the domain of the government school knowledge that he can get a job, then it is good and if it is in the domain of koranic knowledge, it is always good.

Nevertheless, priority is given to koranic education so that if children end up with no job in the government for instance, at least they will still have their cultural values. They should not lose everything. I hope the following excerpts will bring more precision to this discussion.

Once I was coming back from the farm with children and Maala Yusufa, I had the following conversation with Roufay and Abdou Ladifou.

- Roufay, if you have to choose between Koranic and government school, which one would you prefer?

- "Koranic school

- Why?

- Because Koranic knowledge will help me in earth and heaven whereas the government school helps only in this world "Janguide vallay yam ha duunya be Lahira école bo ha dunya tan"

I now turned to Abdou Ladifou and asked:

- Abdou, how about you?

- I have already made my choice. Until last year, I was attending both schools but it was so difficult for me because we used to close at janguirde at eight o'clock in the morning. By the time I got ready and walked to "²⁴école", it was half past eight. I was always late. That is why this year; I have decided to concentrate on janguirde. I have stopped with école".

-Why could you not stop attending janguirde and continue with école"?

- Don't you see that janguirde will help me in earth and even when I will die?

-How will it help you in earth?

-Don't you see the modibbo? He has never being to école but he is doing well. He has money, cows, saare and a job.

-Gain and lost

Some analysis can be done from the two excerpts described above

What can be gain and what can be lost?

Barth focuses on people interacting and making rational choices which are governed by interest. They make sure that the value gained should be greater or equal than the value lost.

First, in my opinion, saying that *Koranic School will help in earth and heaven whereas government school will only help in earth* means that both systems of education provide job. But the difference is that Koranic School gives more opportunities than the government school. Thus, opting for government school implies having access to a great position in Cameroon and becoming elite of Mayo-Darle. Whereas opting for koranic school means being a potential *maalam* who has acquired knowledge which will help both for healing people or having a job as a teacher in another koranic school and also preparing for a future life after death. This shows the scale of koranic knowledge. In fact, from my informants' point of view, the advantage of the knowledge acquired from koranic school is greater than the one acquire from the government school system because it helps to have means of subsistence also due to their religious beliefs, life after death is very important. Thus, looking through these analyses, I would argue that opting for government school and rejecting Koranic School might be a lost for them. This is similar to what Kane (Ibid) explain about the fear of the Diallobe concerning the risk of acquiring knowledge from the "new school". He argues:

²⁴ School

²⁵.. *Ils y apprendrons toutes les facons de lier le bois au bois que nous ne savons pas. Mais apprenant, ils oublieront aussi. Ce qu'ils apprendrons vaut -il ce qu'ils oublieront? (Kane1961: 44).*

Second, the two excerpts imply a kind of keeping one's identity no matter what the situation is. Even though the Cameroonian society nowadays gives importance to government school knowledge, some people still know what the values of their group and culture are although these excerpts are from children who do not know much about the realities of the society. But they might hear this from their parents.

2-Lack of socialisation

Coping with two different culture values generates a new field for the reason that it contributes to the modification of the social organisation of a group. After one has acquired knowledge from the government school system, his first challenge might be to know how his knowledge relates to that of other members of his society. The second challenge then will be to find a cultural *framework within which to explore and realise the potential of the amplifying tool he is acquiring* (Serpell 1993:107).

From my observations, I have seen that when a *Pullo* become "educated", he is not hanging any more at the *tasha* which is the main men area in the village. It is located at the village centre where men (Muslims and non-Muslims) gather in general and socialize. So the "modern" man will be in his office meeting with new people Muslim and non-Muslim. The reason of this change may be find in Barth's view when he states that for an interaction to work well, all participants should have a status in their repertoire *which articulates with those of the others and are willing to act in this capacity* (Barth 1981:122). Obviously, people at *tasha* do not have the same educational background with the new "educated" man; this is reason why he avoids them.

Schooling will then link him to other people through the use of French language. At the same time, he may move beyond Mayo-Darle and other people may come to Mayo-Darle through the

²⁵ They will learn to link the wood to the wood which we do not know. But they will also forget. What they will learn is it equal to what they will forget ? (my translation).

government process of exchanging civil servants. It will also give Mayo-Darle the ability to link itself to the global world. I would also mention the risk of losing one's identity by becoming a "literate" person as I have seen some of the "literate" *Fulbe* involved in alcohol through their interaction with non-Muslims colleagues.

The second point is an emerging class, a class of civil servant or "patron" to speak like Waage (Ibid). Now this class is challenging the former class which is that of the ²⁶*modibbe*. I have observed this situation on the independent day celebration. A thirty three year old man named Ousoumanu Bobbo came from Yaounde, the capital. He is one of the highest elite of the village. The organizer of the celebration festivity gave the microphone to the *modibbo* according to his rank to pray but he started by the following words:

I would like to say thanks to everybody here and a special thanks to Ousoumanou Bobbo who has come from Yaounde especially to celebrate this day with us.

I see here the change of a situation. As a Muslim, Ousoumanou Bobbo was supposed to "honour" the *modibbo* and not the contrary. Later on, I heard people making gossip about the *modibbo*'s speech which made them angry. This situation is a confirmation of Foucault's (1982) view when he defines the relation of power as a way in which certain actions modify others. This means power shifts from individual to another according to circumstances. The *modibbo* might be Wright, the ceremony was a public official ceremony and in such a context, power belongs to the officials.

Summing up, I hope to have analysed the socio-economic impact of the knowledge acquired from books.

²⁶ Sing. *modibbo*

CONCLUSION

My point of departure was to know how the *Fulbe* of Mayo-Darle relate to the question of education whether the Koranic or the government school system. By trying to reach my aim, I have raised some questions in the introduction which I have tried to answer.

The question of education has generated three social fields of knowledge known as the traditional field, the koranic school field and the government school field of knowledge. I have found that the traditional knowledge field and the koranic school field are linked. Some *Fulbe* have integrated Islam to the extent that it has become part of their identity also Islam has integrated the principle of *pulaaku*. Although the main aim of Koranic School is to teach religious knowledge, it is also concerned with making children to be helpful to the community. In addition to that, Koranic school takes into account the social realities of the *Fulbe*. The teaching is done in *Fulfulde*, the principle of *pulaaku* is respected and the time table is flexible with the possibility for children to go to school and still able to help parents with domestic chores. In fact, one of my assumptions was that, in order to both secure the transference of religious and traditional knowledge, values and identities to their children and give the possibility for social mobility, *Fulbe* parents send their children to both school systems. The government school seems not to favour the continuity of *Fulbe*'s lifestyle. The school regulations intentionally create discontinuity with the home culture of children. However, despite this crisis of continuity, the attendance of *Fulbe* children to the government school is increasing which shows that the *Fulbe* are eager to cope with both school systems.

The reason is that the governmental education provides literacy, communication and mobility skills enabling the local population to interact with the large world. Children are introduced to the national anthem, the flag, the independent day celebration and also the French language through which they become full Cameroonian citizens. It gives access to job opportunity and great positions in the state structures. So by attending both school systems, children gain the traditional religious knowledge and mobility skills which enable them to integrate their local community and compete in the global world.

But due to the incompatibility between both school systems, both children and parents have a challenge. Children should gain the official knowledge without losing their identity and the main strategy of coping is to try to promote some kind of continuity between the different social

fields. That was my second assumptions. Children keep submission, modesty and obedience in the *Fulbe* way even when they are at the government school. Girls maintain decency by covering their head with scarf and legs with wrappers because the school uniform exposes them too much.

Another implication of the coping situation is that the acquisition of the governmental school knowledge creates a new social field. It affects local relations in the sense that first it creates an elite class, the class of the intellectual and bureaucratic *Fulbe* which challenges the local class, the class of the *modibbe*. In public official situations, the officials (whether *Fulbe* or non-*Fulbe*) have more honour and prestige than the *modibbe*. Second, the intellectuals are more concerned with their new lifestyle and they tend to forget their social place of interaction known as the *tasha* where they normally meet their ethnic mates. Also in the offices, it is not a guarantee that the rules of the *Fulbe* behaviour (*pulaaku*) will still be taken into account. Another risk is that some happen not to respect the schedule for the five daily prayers as they used to do.

Focusing on the topic of education as a main cultural team to understand social change among the *Fulbe* of Mayo-Darle has enabled me to understand that the governmental school attendance has increased because it has become a need or necessity. My informants believe that their local knowledge fails to provide a better or stable life so they have decided to learn a new lifestyle which goes beyond governmental education in addition to theirs. They believe that the more their children get “educated”, the more chances to access great positions in the state have a good life and also represent their ethnic group everywhere. It is not sure that they will hundred per cent fulfil their dream facing the reality of Cameroon job market. Many Cameroonian with degrees can not find job.

I think *Fulbe* parents have wisely noticed this situation and for this reason, they have not abandoned Koranic education. There are two advantages in this situation: first, during their Koranic education, children gain both religious and traditional knowledge which can enable them to have substance of life if the official knowledge does not lead them to good job. Maala Yousoufa told me that none of the educational systems is to be neglected because if one does not help, the other will do. Second, Koranic knowledge help them to secure their life in hearth and after death as children express it themselves. They say they would rather abandon the governmental education than the Koranic.

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