

FROM NOMADIC PASTORALISM TO URBAN MIGRATION

TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES IN A GROUP OF FULBE WODAA'BE IN NIGER

[Florian Köhler]



NARRATIVE INTERVIEWS
AND COMPLEMENTARY
MATERIAL

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MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY
DEPARTMENT 'INTEGRATION AND CONFLICT'
FIELD NOTES AND RESEARCH PROJECTS XX

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Transformation Processes in a Group of Fulbe Wodaabe in Niger
(Narrative Interviews and Complementary Material)

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SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

(GÜNTHER SCHLEE)

ABOUT THE SERIES

This series of *Field Notes and Research Projects* does not aim to compete with high-impact, peer-reviewed books and journal articles, which are the main ambition of scholars seeking to publish their research. Rather, contributions to this series complement such publications. They serve a number of different purposes.

In recent decades, anthropological publications have often been purely discursive – that is, they have consisted only of words. Often, pictures, tables, and maps have not found their way into them. In this series, we want to devote more space to visual aspects of our data.

Data are often referred to in publications without being presented systematically. Here, we want to make the paths we take in proceeding from data to conclusions more transparent by devoting sufficient space to the documentation of data.

In addition to facilitating critical evaluation of our work by members of the scholarly community, stimulating comparative research within the institute and beyond, and providing citable references for books and articles in which only a limited amount of data can be presented, these volumes serve an important function in retaining connections to field sites and in maintaining the involvement of the people living there in the research process. Those who have helped us to collect data and provided us with information can be given these books and booklets as small tokens of our gratitude and as tangible evidence of their cooperation with us. When the results of our research are sown in the field, new discussions and fresh perspectives might sprout.

Especially in their electronic form, these volumes can also be used in the production of power points for teaching; and, as they are open-access and free of charge, they can serve an important public outreach function by arousing interest in our research among members of a wider audience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to a number of persons and institutions who have contributed in some way or the other to my work. First, I want to thank my numerous Wodaaɓe interlocutors in Niger for endless hours of conversations during which they have shared with me their stories and histories which figure prominently in the texts of this volume. Many people in Niger were very welcoming and helpful in providing emotional, intellectual, logistic, administrative or other support during my fieldwork. In particular, I want to thank Amadou Siddo, Moussa Baouada, Abdou Issa, Mamane Ousseini, Anna Coendet, Mirco Göpfert, Eric and Halima van Sprundel, Karl-Heinz and Heidi Siekmann. I am grateful to the Max Planck Society for the financial and institutional support that made this work possible, and in particular to the supporting members of the Max Planck Society for enabling me to extend my fieldwork with an additional grant for language learning. I particularly profited from the generous working environment of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle/Saale, Germany, that provided ideal working conditions with an excellent library service, cartographers and scientific assistants. My particular gratitude goes to Günther Schlee, the director of the Department 'Integration and Conflict', who trusted me to be able to do this scientific work after almost a decade outside academia, and to Nikolaus Schareika, who had helped me during that decade to hold on to the aim of developing an anthropological research project on the Wodaaɓe and to develop ideas for it out of my experiences in different development projects in Niger. The help of my wife Mariama was indispensable for both recording and transcribing the original texts of this volume. The Fulfulde transcriptions have also benefited greatly from critical readings by Al-Amin Abu-Manga and Martine Guichard.

The greatest thanks, however, I owe to my family, both in Niger and Germany, for their patience, trust, support and love. I therefore dedicate this work to them.

INTRODUCTION

FLORIAN KÖHLER

The present volume assembles a selection of ethnographic material that has been gathered during a period of 15 months of fieldwork in Niger, between November 2010 and January 2012, in the framework of a research project at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle/Saale, Germany. This project has already resulted in a number of smaller publications and will soon be completed with the finalization of the book *Space, Place and Identity in a Group of Fulbe Wodaabe in Niger* (Köhler in preparation).

In my project, I have taken up the example of a regional lineage fraction of Fulbe Wodaabe – the Gojanko'en Kuskudu in the Zinder province of east-central Niger – to examine transformations in the relations of pastoralists to space and place in a context of changing mobility patterns. I have analysed the impact that this change has on processes of social group formation and collective identification, and the consequences this has for questions of integration into the wider society and the structures of the modern nation state. Questions of social and cultural reproduction under conditions of translocality have been explored in the contexts of mobile pastoralism, on the one hand, and contemporary urban work migration, on the other.

As the format of the monograph generally limits the possibilities of including ethnographic data of any greater length, the aim of this volume is to make available to the interested reader of the projects' main publication at least a part of the data that has been collected during fieldwork and that the generalizations made in the book are based on.

REGIONAL AND ETHNOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

The Wodaabe have generally been represented in the literature as highly mobile pastoralists, specialized in the breeding of Zebu cattle. Today, however, they are increasingly engaged in a transformation process towards a more diversified livelihood based notably on agro-pastoralism and urban work migration. This development encompasses two seemingly disparate trends: On the one hand, urban sedentarization of long-term migrants and increasing territorialisation and local fixation of (agro-)pastoralists in rural proto-villages (so called *centres*) can be observed; on the other hand, mobility is not abandoned, but it takes on new forms and new dimensions. In recent years, this double and inverse phenomenon has been of growing importance among various groups of mobile pastoralists in the West African Sahel region, yet has remained widely understudied.

I argue that the contemporary forms of mobility and the resulting translocal phenomena build up on, and have to be understood in a line of continuity with, well-established patterns of mobility aimed at levelling out ecological

uncertainties. Even the reduction of mobility, i.e., the tendency towards a stronger local fixation, is often very directly motivated by considerations of resource appropriation: The creation of *centres* has often been a strategic and opportunistic response to the requirements of development projects that are generally conceived with a sedentary logic and demand a permanent local presence of the beneficiaries. Although fixation is difficult to harmonize with the grazing needs of the cattle, the resources provided by such projects are too significant today to be neglected. Therefore, concessions are made and new models of mobility developed, for example the temporary dissociation of herds and households.

As migrant workers in town, the Wodaabe enter into new relations of neighbourhood, and they integrate into different urban communities. Above all, however, the ties to their pastoral home communities generally remain strong and have led to the emergence of translocal networks that connect urban- and rural-based actors and integrate them in a more encompassing socio-economic space of interaction and exchange that spans both, the rural and the urban sphere, and constitutes the living environment of many contemporary Wodaabe.

CULTURE CHANGE AND THE QUESTION OF AGENCY

While literature on pastoral mobility has often put a considerable focus on the agency of pastoralists, emphasizing the option of choice and the constant need for decision-making (e.g., Gulliver 1975: 371), in the contemporary condition, in which nomads and other indigenous minority groups are faced with radical and sometimes existential change, forced to adapt and find economic alternatives, they are often depicted one-sidedly as victims in a global power play (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 44; for the Wodaabe, see e.g., Loftsdóttir 2000). It is, however, not simply the conditions that bring about change in a society, but ultimately the people, who react on changing conditions, challenges and opportunities with conscious and strategic action that can also challenge or subvert existing orders (see Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 47). Although my interlocutors also sometimes depicted themselves as victims – as a minority-group excluded from political participation and processes of resource distribution – I perceived them just as much as rational agents, thinking, planning and deciding strategically.

In my research, my aim was therefore to put a focus on agency and to document strategies to integrate into the wider society and state structures in order to participate at processes of resource distribution, on the one hand, but also the opposite tendency of the reproduction of difference and withdrawal from the state in order to subvert imposed structures. I followed this aim with an actor-centred approach, putting a particular focus on individual experience in order to show the ‘incommensurable contradictions within which people survive, are politically active, and change’ (Bhabha 1989:67).



Map 1: The research area

COLLECTIVE SOCIAL HISTORY REVEALED THROUGH AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVES

My aim was thus to record a social biography – or, collective social history – of a particular group of Wodaaɓe, i. e., of the Wodaaɓe Gojanko'en in the Zinder province. Principally based on extensive participant observation at different urban and rural locations, my research methods involved mainly semi-structured and open interviews encouraging thematically focussed autobiographical narration.

Since, towards the end of the 20th century, biographical approaches increasingly made their way into the social sciences, it has been widely recognized that biographical material can show how social group processes translate on an individual level and how abstract historical processes of cultural change actually take place (Bertaux and Delcroix 2000: 73; Fischer-Rosenthal 2000). The life history approach in the social sciences generally puts the case history of a selected personality, presented as his or her own autobiographical account, into the centre (e. g., Bertaux 1981; Kohli 1981; Bertaux and Kohli 1984; Fischer and Kohli 1987).

In the Fulɓe literature, there are successful examples of such an approach based on privileged narrative accounts, notably by Bocquené (1986) and Bonfiglioli (1988). Especially the latter's monograph *Dudal* is a good example of how oral accounts can shed light on individual agency in the context of wider historical processes. As the life history approach focuses on isolated biographies and thus on an individual perspective, it can, however, be problematic in terms of a broader validity of the results where the interest is not in revealing individual particularities but generalizable trends (Kohli 1981: 63).

In my case, in order to reveal the variety of economic, political and social strategies that can be found within the group of Wodaaɓe that I studied, a focus on one privileged biographical account would not have made much sense. An example might illustrate this point: The life stories of the brothers Nano, Taafa and Maalam Buuyo (see also Text 13), if regarded in isolation, seem to present almost antithetic schemes: While the youngest brother has never turned away from pastoralism, the other two have spent a considerable part of their lives as migrant workers in different urban centres. What might seem disparate at first reveals itself as two aspects of a joint project in which different roles are attributed to the different actors. The brothers follow a common strategy in which two of them seize urban job opportunities to subsidize the pastoral family economy, while the herds are managed by the third. The principal interest in the migrations of the first two is rooted in the local concerns which all three of them share. Such complementarities of seemingly disparate patterns in biographies could easily be concealed by an approach focusing too narrowly on the life story of one or a few central individuals (see also Bertaux and Delcroix 2000: 73). I have therefore collected a greater number of biographical accounts that reveal how recent

change is experienced and coped with by the people, what strategies they pursue, what answers they give to the new questions and challenges, and what obstacles they face. In juxtaposition, the cases complement each other and illustrate trends that are of more general importance today among the Wodaabe Gojanko'en in Zinder.

The framework for such a study of multiple biographical accounts of larger social formations can be a subsociety, a migration flow, or a kinship group (Bertaux and Delcroix 2000). The Gojanko'en Kuskudu in the Zinder province represent the latter two: As members of one kinship group, they or their parents were part of the same historic migration flow that led them into the region where they live today and where they formed as a regional clan fraction (see Text 1). A genealogical chart in the appendix of this volume (see Figure 3, Appendix) situates my different interlocutors in the framework of the Kuskudu maximal lineage of the Wodaabe Gojanko'en, and gives the reader some orientation about the complex relations between the numerous other lineage members mentioned in the texts and interviews.

The biographical study of kinship groups has become the object of an approach in itself, called the 'family history approach' (e. g., Bertaux and Delcroix 2000; Miller 2000). Its proponents argue that case histories of families can function as 'small mirrors of general cultural and social patterns, of societal dynamics and change' (Bertaux and Delcroix 2000: 71). The extended family, or kinship group, offers a system of interconnected actors, embedded in nets of reciprocal commitments, sharing common goals, strategies and values or being in conflict over them (ibid.: 73f.).

However, instead of recording complete life histories of a great number of individuals – an approach that, if taken seriously, would demand an extremely high degree of depth and complexity with a questionable usefulness of the envisaged results – I have put a focus on chapters or 'portions' of life histories, as proposed by Vansina (1980: 266): I mainly concentrated on collecting biographically based yet thematically focused accounts of specific events.

The present volume assembles full transcriptions or longer excerpts of a number of these accounts that I have transcribed and translated into English. I have particularly chosen those accounts to which I refer in detail in my main publication, and which I believe illustrate well the points that I make. This volume thus offers emic perspectives on some of the main issues dealt with in my study, and the format of this series allows to appreciate them in due detail and to put them into larger contexts.

RHETORICAL STRATEGIES IN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS

Narratives about the self cannot be expected to be objective in terms of factual reality or 'truth' (see Kohli 1981: 69ff.). When people relate autobiographical events, they give meaning and logic to what they did or perceived

and they can be expected to have a tendency to render their actions more plausible and legitimate than they might objectively be. I was less concerned, however, with exactitude or objectivity than with the perceptions and interpretations that people make of what they do and what happens to them (of their actions and their experiences). To put it in the words of Barbara Cooper (2005: 202), the aim was ‘to bring out not simply “what happened” but also the complex and contradictory subjectivities of [those] who experienced the events, as well as their active involvement in constructing a self, a life, and a world.’ In their justifications and explications, actors explicitly or implicitly make reference to existing codes, morals and values, and their narratives can thus reveal a lot about group ideologies.

Historians and anthropologists concerned with oral history have pointed out the role of subjectivity in history as a socially produced construction (Tonkin 1998: 96), and they have therefore come to accept that it is useful to focus on the inconsistencies and contradictions of different versions of history (Cooper 2005: 195). History in this perspective is ‘not the past itself, but struggles over the meaning of the past’ (ibid.: 198). Such contradicting versions of past events can shed light on relations within a social group or between groups. They show how actors make sense of the past according to their individual understanding of things and according to their interests and loyalties. The interpretations of actors who belong to a particular group often mirror the position of this group and diverging interpretations can thus become the basis for an analysis of inter-group relations (see also Text 6). In order to assess the possible biases in accounts on other individuals or other groups, it is therefore essential to consider the relation between the actors and groups involved.

Diverging perceptions of the ‘truth’ of narrated events can sometimes be revealed by discussing the same matter with other actors directly or indirectly involved. Since my fieldwork basically took place in the framework of one lineage group, it was sometimes possible to collect different versions of accounts of a particular case or of particular historical events. The collected narratives complemented and completed each other with a variety of cross-references. For example, Texts 2 and 3 offer complementary perspectives on the historic migrations of the Gojanko’*en* Kuskudu. In some cases, such complementary narratives also contradicted each other, but this should only remind us that they are not objective facts but personal accounts of historical events and individual testimonies of experiences. When the plausibility of a narration was put into question by other sources – either the accounts of other interlocutors or written sources, I took care to indicate this in the edited text.

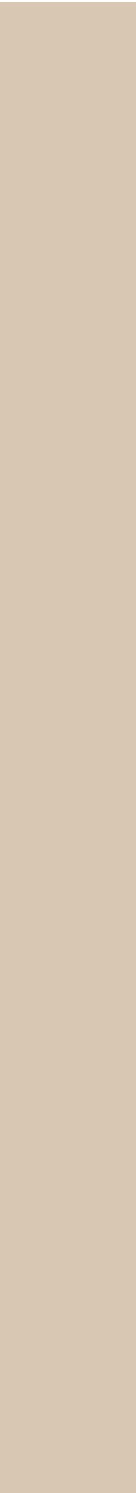
Such diverging views due to subjective interpretations of historical facts are one, but not the only reason why I have chosen not simply to edit the ethnographic material in an uncommented form, but to add sometimes more,

sometimes less elaborate introductions, explanations and comments to the texts. My other obvious reason for doing so was that my aim in publishing this volume was not simply to make publicly available some additional material as a sort of appendix to the project's main publication. Rather, my aim was to make this volume a widely autonomous publication that, although many issues that come up in the texts must inevitably be left uncommented here, can nevertheless also be appreciated in its own right.

THE QUESTION OF LANGUAGE AND TRANSCRIPTIONS

The communication with my interlocutors and the interviews and narrating sessions took place mainly in Fulfulde and Hausa, the most important language of interethnic communication in the region. My principle was generally to let my interlocutors the choice of language. Most interlocutors (especially the younger ones and those who have stayed in cities) speak Hausa more or less fluently and with ease, and since, especially in the initial phase of my fieldwork, my own Hausa skills were more developed than my Fulfulde, many interlocutors have deliberately chosen to speak in Hausa, sometimes switching to Fulfulde in the midst of talking when they lacked specific vocabulary. Inversely, in other situations, when the principal language was Fulfulde, the speaker sometimes abruptly switched to Hausa to stress a point when he wanted to make sure that I grasped what he was saying. Some, especially young, interlocutors who had attended school, even decided to narrate in French, but then occasionally switched to Hausa or Fulfulde. Others would speak entirely in Fulfulde in one session and on another day, when I continued discussing with them and recording them, they began quite naturally in Hausa. This had the effect that in the final edited version, switches from one to the other language occur. In my original transcriptions, I indicate the language with an '(F)' for Fulfulde and an '(H)' for Hausa texts to facilitate differentiation for the non-familiar reader. If language switching occurs within a text, this is indicated in the same way at the beginning of the respective sections.

The Fulfulde transcriptions follow the orthographic conventions agreed upon at the 1966 conference of Bamako, with exceptions due to specificities of the regional version of *Wodande*, as the Wodaabe call their own language if they want to emphasize the difference from the Fulfulde of sedentary Fulbe *Ndoovi'en* (Bonfiglioli 1988: 63). For example, the phoneme 'ɟ' in Fulfulde, generally written as 'c' in standard transcriptions, is often rather pronounced 's' by Wodaabe speakers in the study region and has been transcribed accordingly. Another peculiarity is that long vowels are often split and pronounced as two short vowels separated by a glottal stop, hence for example 'o'o' instead of 'oo'. My Hausa transcriptions equally render the language actually spoken rather than applying a standardized orthography that would level out regional and idiosyncratic peculiarities. I followed the conventions applied by the Nigerian media and administration insofar as I did not use diacritics



to mark vowel length and tonality. I considered such a precise phonetic transcription as used in Hausa linguistics not relevant for the purpose of this study, especially since the Hausa spoken in Niger, and in particular by non-native speakers such as the Wodaaabe, tends to lose much of its tonality so that an exact linguistic transcription would be as awkward for Hausa linguists as would a transcription using the standard tonality falsify the impression of the language as spoken by the Wodaaabe. Also, since the text is not primarily addressed to linguists, I have opted for relatively free translations of the original accounts. My aim was to privilege a text accessible to the reader, focusing on semantic content rather than trying to be true to structural peculiarities of the spoken language when they would have risked to obscure the meaning or made the reading difficult.

TEXT 1: THE ORIGIN OF THE WODAAABE

MYTHICO-HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

Although characterized by several rather obscure passages, this mythical account of the history of the Wodaaabe, related by a Njapto'en elder from central Niger, is interesting in at least two regards: (1) It shows the significance of Usman dan Fodio as a historical personality and identification figure; (2) it explains the mobility of the Wodaaabe as a curse rather than romanticising it.

Usman dan Fodio (1754–1817), the founder of the Fulbe empire of Sokoto, plays a significant role in the collective memory of the Wodaaabe, and he is mentioned repeatedly with clearly positive connotations as a quasi-mythical hero (e.g., Paris 1990: 196f.; Loncke 2015: 28). This might at first seem astonishing, since Usman has become famous as a religious reformer, and Islamic religion plays a lesser role among the Wodaaabe than among many other Fulbe groups. However, Usman was also a great Fulbe leader and as such serves as an important identification figure. It has thus been contended by Wodaaabe that he defended, and indeed encouraged, the mobile way of life of the pastoral Fulbe by personally advising them to lead their animals to the rich pastures of the north (Bonfiglioli 1988: 191f.; Paris 1990: 200). In this account, it is remarkable how even Usman himself is associated with a mobile pastoral lifestyle.

The second aspect, i. e., the interpretation of the nomadic way of life of the Wodaaabe as the effect of a curse, is interesting, because it counters the widespread romanticized idea that nomads are emotionally attached to their mobile lifestyle. Nomadic mobility has often been regarded as irrational and as a primarily cultural element, a 'traditional' way of life, following an emotional ideal ('*élevage contemplatif*') rather than an economically valid logic.¹ More profound analyses of pastoral systems in the region, by contrast, have shown that systems of stationary livestock keeping are less adapted to the environmental conditions of the Sahel and less productive than mobile systems (e.g., Colin de Verdières 1998; for eastern Africa see also Schwartz 2005). Colin de Verdières (1998: 76) has aptly called the mobility of pastoralists a 'necessary evil', thus clearly arguing against any romanticizing image of nomadism. In the same vein, Dupire (1972: 52) stressed that there is nothing mystical to Fulbe mobility. Rather than an ideal or a value in itself, it should be regarded as a necessary submission to the environmental conditions. With regard to the Wodaaabe, Maliki (1981: 103) has similarly pointed out that they are not

¹ See Herskovits' (1926) 'cattle complex theory' and its discussions in the literature on pastoralism (e.g., Bonte and Galaty 1991: 9f.).

nomads by principle, but in order to be better adapted to their environment and to make more profitable use of the scattered and unsteady resources. In keeping with the law of least effort, mobility is readily reduced or given up if sufficiently good pastoral conditions allow for constant grazing in a limited area around a water point (Dupire 1962: 79).

The following account brings together these two aspects: the mobility of the Wodaabe as a necessity (in this case even a curse) rather than an ideal, and the role of Usman dan Fodio as an identification figure. Here, the narrator even claims a direct genealogical link with Usman, since the Wodaabe are presented as the descendants from an illegitimate union of Usman's daughter and his slave.

The ending of the account features a variation of a theme often encountered in Wodaabe, and more generally in pastoral Fulbe origin myths, namely, the motif of their founding ancestor having been expelled for varying reasons from the greater Fulbe community – and sometimes explicitly by Usman dan Fodio.²

Njuuri Hassan, Wodaabe Njapto 'en, Tchintabaraden, April 2011

In the beginning... The history of the Wodaabe... Have you heard of Usman dan Fodio?

Since he was a small boy, he went and worked with the [other] children. They would spend the day in the water. They would take some kola nut and eat it until someone found out about it.

Usman had to look after the goats. While he was herding the goats, his father, Fodio, was waiting for him at the well as he wanted to water the goats, but Usman did not come. So [later] Fodio asked him: 'Why didn't you bring the goats so that they could get water?' 'Father, you had just left the well when I arrived.'

His father wanted to pursue the matter further and followed him. He asked him: 'Where do the goats

(F) Arande fuu, taariifi Bodaado: 01
Bodaado... Anana, Shefuujo e inne, Shefuujo 'Bii Fooduye.

Ila mo bilki, mo dille e mo huuda 02
e bikkon. Gada nder ndiyam be ngintata. Gada gooro be koo'oyta e be nyaama. Faa dum yi'i, faa dum annditi.

Sey mo wada e durngol be'i. Nden 03
mo wada durngol be'i, kanko Shefuujo, toon to mo duri be'i. Fooduye e renti mo buli yarna be'i, mo reegataako. Sey Fooduye yami mo: 'Ko je, a wadaay be'i yari.' 'Baaba, a naba tan, ngar mi.'

Faa yannan baaba tokki mo. Nde 04
tokki mo, sey yami mo: 'Di'i kam be'i, toy njarata?' Mo wi'i: 'Ka, kul

² For two versions of this motif very similar to the one featured here, see Dupire (1962: 31–33).

get their water?’ He answered: ‘If you are thirsty, here is some water. Drink!’ And his father went and saw a big waterhole in the bush. He drank some water, and when he returned [home], he said: ‘This boy is a sage; we have no command over him. He shall never have to work anymore.’ And Usman dan Fodio never had to work again.

05 He became a young man and an adult and he married. His wife had a first child and another one and then many more. At that time, they lived in the north.

06 One day, Usman dan Fodio said to his father: ‘Get up, let us leave this land!’ His father said: ‘No, I will not leave.’ But Usman insisted: ‘I beg you, please, let us move.’ So they finally left. Usman dan Fodio’s wife was pregnant. They had a great number of cows and they moved alone with them, without any other people. Only the father, Fodio, the son, Usman, their wives, and their slaves. They moved on and on.

07 Once, they made camp in Tafadek³ and spent the day there. Here, Usman dan Fodio’s wife gave birth to her child. There were no pastures for the cows and Fodio angrily said to Usman: ‘Let us move on. The cows do not find anything to eat. And your wife has given birth.’ Usman dan Fodio said: ‘There is water, get up and dig over there and you will find some hot water.’

08 They did so, and the wife [was able to] wash herself [with hot

a domdudo, yah, raa ndiyam, njara!’ Sey mo yahi, mo tawi ndiyam e hewi nder ladde. Gada mo yar, nden mo warti, mo wi’i: ‘O’oya, mo jajngudo en jeyaa mo. To mo yaaltu huugo.’ Sheefuujo yaaltaay huugo.

Ra dum doon no kayeejo, ra dum doon faa mawni, faa hoowi. Nden mo hoowi, yeyriijo makko afi, rimi, rimti. Maa dum woyla mo woni naa do’o.

Nden mo wi’i baaba makko: ‘Umma, ndimden ndi lehidi.’ Nden baaba wi’i: ‘Mihin, mi rimtataa.’ Mo wi’i: ‘Mi torake ma, ndimden ma.’ Nden be ndimdoy. Yeyriijo makko no gamdo. Na’i no duudi e be njoyi, e be njoyi. ‘Be ngalda e duuniya faa, dum kambe tan faa. Fooduye, Sheefuujo, yeyri’en mabbe, kambe tan. Sey massube mabbe tan. E be njoyi, e be njoyi.

Sey be ngintini Tafadek. ‘Be kodi, be ngintini, sey kore Sheefuujo rimi. Na’i kebaay ko nyaami. Nden Fooduye wadi ga huutago, wi’i: ‘A rimdoy en, raa na’i ngala ko nyaama. Yeyriijo rimi.’ Mo wi’i: ‘Raa ndiyam doon. Umme njahe, ngase doon. Raa ndiyam doon pohu dam.’

Gada be ngas, yeyriijo yiggi, bikkon gada no njar pewdam. Mo wi’i:

³ A location north of Agadez with thermal hot springs.

water],⁴ and the children got some cold water to drink. And Usman dan Fodio said: ‘Now go towards the trees over there and eat.’

And they found dates, the fruits of the doum palm⁵ and the fruits of the Indian jujube⁶ to eat. For the cows, there were heaps of doum palm leaves to eat. They ended up spending the whole week in the place.

They also had a tame little goat, which had followed them [to the trees] and ate some of the jujube fruits. This is the reason why eating the jujube fruits sometimes causes vomiting. As for the big fruits of the doum palm, a child was not able to eat them. They had to be broken up first. That is the reason why the fruits of the doum palm are not much estimated. Only the dates passed as good and nourishing to eat.

When Usman dan Fodio’s wife finished her quarantine of washing herself with hot water, they moved on and they went to the area of Agadez. They spent three months there. Then Usman dan Fodio again said: ‘Let us move on.’ This time, they went to the Damergou region.

[The people there] heard that a wise man had come from the north and wherever he went, water flowed. They began to pound a lot of millet flour and put it to dry [in order to

‘Saake ra e lede doon, nyaame.’

Dibiinooje, gelleeje, jaabe, kanyum 09
be mbaɗi ga nyaamgo. Na’i baɗi ga nyaamgo baafe bali. Faa be mbaɗi yontitande.

To e be ngoodi botel njanel. Botel 10
do’o to toki be, sey nyaami jaabe. To mafaari tuutki jaabe. To yellere mawni, biɗngel salora nyaamgo yellere, sey tappinde. Raa yellere maa, ko iti albarka muudum. Dibinoore tan foti, mari, nyaami.

Faa yeyriijo yiggodi, gaɗa be 11
ndimɗoy, gaɗa be koot Agadez. Be mbaɗi lebbi tati Agadez. Nden mo wi’i: ‘Ndimden ma.’ Gaɗa be ndimɗu, nden be ndimɗi lehidi Damergu.

Sey nani godɗo iwoy woyla jaɗngudo, 12
ko mo yaab, ndiyam no butoto. Gaɗa sondeje be uni, gaɗa be liir. Gaɗa mo anndit, gaɗa mo wooroy. Gaɗa ngol mo tokki, ngol Jiibale. Gaɗa

⁴ It is customary for women after childbirth to wash themselves with hot water for a period of forty days.

⁵ *Hyphaene thebaica*. The fruits of the doum palm have a very hard shell. The endocarp of the unripe fruit is eatable, yet rarely used. The fibrous mesocarp of the dried fruit is ground into a powder that is used in the preparation of cookies and other meals.

⁶ The fruits of the Indian jujube (*Ziziphus mauritiana*), called *jaabe* in Fulfulde, are rich in vitamins and serve as a complementary nutritional source as they can be dried and stored. However, their consumption is said by some to cause vomiting.

give Usman dan Fodio a reception], but he understood this and avoided them. He took the road to Jibale⁷ and headed towards Sokoto.

- 13 When he arrived in Sokoto, a big rain came up. They found wild animals resting in the town of Sokoto. The wild animals fled, and they tied up the calves [i. e., they made camp].⁸ Then the water came. A [veritable] ocean separated them from here.⁹ So they settled down there.
- 14 Usman dan Fodio had a slave who herded his cattle for him. Usman's eldest daughter always brought food and water to him, as he stayed alone with the cattle in the bush. They fell in love and she became pregnant from him and she gave birth to an illegitimate child.
- 15 One week after the delivery, Usman dan Fodio asked to prepare some millet gruel. He loaded his daughter with the millet gruel and told her: 'Go to your slave and tell him that the two of you have to leave with the cattle and look for a place to herd them.'
- 16 When the girl had left, Usman dan Fodio followed her with a small camel. He made the camel run and put himself in front of her and the cows [and he reached the slave before her]. He separated four cows from the others [to give them to the couple] and he said to the slave: 'When she comes, go with the cows

Sokoto mo ummani. Gaɗa Sokoto mo waroy.

Mo waroy Sokoto sey iyoonde ho'ynoy. 'Be tawi nyiibi e mbaali nder si'ire Sokoto. Gaɗa nyiibi no puss, nde pussi e be kaɓana na'i, be kabi, be kabi. Sey ndiyam waddini. Sey maayo henditi be e do'o. Noon be njoodori. Toon be njoodi.

Massuɗo makko o, kanyum duroyta na'i. 'Bii Sheefuujo mawɗo debbo e yaharna massuɗo ndiyam e njaram e nder na'i no biggankeejo toon ladde. Gaɗa mo heptu mo, gaɗa mo sawnu mo, gaɗa mo rim jaalu.

Nden mo rimi yannan faa mo yontitini, Sheefuujo wi'i sobbal waɗe. Gaɗa sobbal waɗa, gaɗa no roond biɗɗo debbo, wi'i: 'Yahu toon to massuɗo, wi'a mo dimde na'i, ndaare to mbaɗon nduroy on di.'

Nden biɗɗo debbo ruugi, Sheefuujo gaɗa biɗɗingel molel waɗi, gaɗa no saamnu. Gaɗa no saamnu, gaɗa no artoy biɗɗo debbo e na'i. Gaɗa na'i nayi hakkiti. Gaɗa no wi'i massuɗo: 'Kul mo wari, ndimde na'i ndaare to nduroy on di.' Nden mo wari debbo wi'i: 'Baaba wi'i njowen na'i daaren toy nduroy en di.' Mo

⁷ A village in the area of Dakoro, Maradi province, Niger.

⁸ The obscure reference to the wild animals in the town of Sokoto that fled upon Usman's arrival might be interpreted as an image for the submission of the city in the course of Usman's jihad.

⁹ The sentence is not altogether clear, but the reference seems to be the location of the speaker, i. e., central Niger.

and look for a place to herd them.’ When she arrived, the woman said: ‘My father told us to leave with the cattle and look for a place to herd them.’ He replied: ‘But he [just] came here [himself], look, there are the traces of his horse.’¹⁰

So they moved. From Sokoto, they moved to Mali. They moved to Kidal¹¹ and to Inbangare. And they returned towards Libya, from where her father had come. With the time, the woman gave birth to many children and they even began to have grandchildren. Then they returned. They headed towards Agadez and then finally returned on the way they had come [i. e., to Sokoto].

Usman dan Fodio had become old and had settled down. When he saw the woman [his daughter] approaching in front of her many children and grandchildren, he recognized her and chased them away, saying: ‘Stay away from me!’ As he chased them, they went away.

That is how the Wodaabe originated. That is their history. They continue endlessly to be on the move, without houses to stay, only making camp in the bush.

Ceaselessly, they follow their cattle and look for pastures for them. That is how the Wodaabe are. That is how they came to be. They moved on and they migrated to Bima,¹² where they multiplied, and to Adamawa. Then

wi’i: ‘Ay, do’o mo war no. Raa kosngal pussu makko doon.’

Gaɗa be ndimdu, gaɗa Sokoto, gaɗa 17
nihi be tokki. Gaɗa Mali be mbaɗi.
Gaɗa be ndillu, gaɗa Kidal be mbaɗi.
Gaɗa Inbangare be mbaɗi. Gaɗa
be ndillu, gaɗa be koot diya Libiya,
toon to baaba iwoyno. Faa yeyriijo,
o’o, biɗɗo debbo, faa rimi, faa heɓini,
faa wadi taaniraabe. Gaɗa kadi maa
mo yabtoy. Gaɗa ngol Agadez mo
tokkoy, kadi maa ɓangargol.

Sheefuujoo naywi, e joodi. Yannan, 18
naaki nden yi’i yeyriijo e arɗoy
bilki’en, mawni, ɓiɓɓe no keɓ e
taaniraabe. Nden annditi be, gaɗa no
tuuf be, wi’i: ‘To on ngar do’o to am
fuu!’ Loowi be, be ndilli.

Ee, Wodaabe noon, raa rimbe 19
ɗum. Raa taarihi Wodaabe, do’o
Wodaabe mburti. Dum kambe ngoni
Wodaabe noon. Mafaari ko Wodaabe
rimdata. Dum no duugi, ngala gure,
e te’enaade kodata.

Dum no ndimdu. Na’i tan durata. 20
Wodaabe noon. Kambe ndimi
Wodaabe. Raa no Wodaabe ngontiri.
Taarihi Wodaabe. Doon be njjili.
Nden be peri, nden be njahi Biima,
nden be duudi, Adamaawa, nden be

¹⁰ This passage is inconsistent, as Usman dan Fodio was said before to have left with a camel and not with a horse.

¹¹ Town in northern Mali.

¹² Possibly the town of Bima in Borno State, Nigeria.

they returned and finally came here [i. e., to central Niger]. But they still move on. That is how it is with the Wodaabe.

so'itoy, nden be mbaɗoy do'o. Faa jooni raa be njiilo. Wodaabe noon. Ee.

TEXT 2: HISTORIC AND MORE RECENT MIGRATIONS

HISTORICAL/AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT

One of my principal interlocutors with regard to the history and origins of the Gojanko'en Kuskudu, the group of Wodaabe that I principally studied, was Dawra Egoyi. In his account, he gives a broad picture of the historic migrations that his ancestors have undertaken, leading them from Sokoto over Birni N'Konni, Madaoua and Tahoua (Ader region) to Ingal in the region of Agadez, and from there further on to the Damergou region north of Tanout (see map 2).

Since the Wodaabe do not have specialists for, nor an institutionalized way of remembering history, the time span that can be covered with decently reliable information often does not exceed more than two or three generations back from the oldest living generation. Nevertheless it is interesting to note that the oral information has in some cases meticulously been transmitted over the generations. Tiny details like the name of a cow that was presented as an honorary gift to a colonial officer are remembered just as the name of a slave who was charged with transmitting such gifts. Historical events are often remembered and located in time with reference to memorable events like the appearance of a comet, the succession of political leaders, a new presidency or a military *coup d'état*, or with reference to memorable droughts and famines, which have each their own, commonly known, local name (e. g., *gandaw*, *banga-banga*).



Photo 1: Dawra Egoyi

(F. KÖHLER, 2011)

In the beginning the Wodaabe were in [the area of] Sokoto. My paternal grandfather [Giye] was there in Sokoto. All the Wodaabe and the Mbororo'en and the others, they were all in Sokoto. It was the time when Usman dan Fodio came. He also gave to my grandfather his office of an *ardò*.

When they were staying in Sokoto, it was for a long time. Then they moved and went to Birni N'Konni. They were there when the French began to rule. When the French burned down Birni N'Konni, our fathers were in the area. From the distance, they saw the fire. They said: 'Alas, today the Europeans have destroyed Birni N'Konni!'

He [my grandfather] migrated, he [Usman dan Fodio] gave him his title, and he [my grandfather] migrated to Birni N'Konni. Then the white men took the power. At that time, my grandfather was in [the area of] Bouza. He met a white man who had mounted a bull. When he called him and asked him to approach, he did so and the man asked him about the Wodaabe. My grandfather told him that the Wodaabe had moved away with their animals during the rainy season.

My grandfather then went to his uncle¹ Atiiku and he told him that

(F) Wodaabe arande... Sokoto 01
Wodaabe njoodi. Maama amin, kambe lesti Sokoto. Wodaabe fuu e Mbororo'en e koobe, nden be lesti Sokoto. Lookasi Sheefu dan Foodye wari. Kanyum hokki mo giifol.

Nden be lesti doon Sokoto, nden 02
be neebi doon, nden be neebi, nden be ummoy, nden be ngarti Konni. Doon Konni, be ngari Konni, e dum doon Nasaara jabi mulki. Nasaara doon wuli Konni. Lookasiire nde, baabiraabe amin e be doon gafa Konni. Naaki nden be gi'i nyiite. Sey be mbi'i: 'Ay hannde Konni Nasaranko'en nyaami dum.'

Nden mo ummoy, nden mo hokki 03
mo giifol, nden mo ummoy Konni, nden Nasaara maa jabi iiko. Nden Nasaara jabi mulki, e doon Abuza. Nden maama amin, dimfo baaba amin, kadi maa, nden Nasaara noddi mo. Nasaara nden ngoogaji badi, nden wi'i mo: 'Ware'. Nden mo wari. Nden bi'i mo: 'Toy Wodaabe?' Nden maama amin wi'i: 'Ay, Wodaabe tijake balde deen kama balde ndunngu.'

Nden maama amin yahi to mawnum, 04
mawnum bi'eteedo Atiiku, nden

¹ The term used by Dawra is *mawni* (*mawniraawo*), which basically means elder sibling. The term is also in a more generalized sense applied to all the children of all of an ego's mother's elder siblings, but its use here is rather surprising. Atiiku was, in fact, Giye's FFBS (see Figure 3, Appendix), generally rather referred to as *bappa* or *bappaanyo*, a term indiscriminately used for paternal uncles of first or second degree. In the present context, Dawra might simply not fully rationalize the exact genealogical relation between his two ancestors and use the term *mawni* to generally express the seniority of Atiiku.

the French had asked him to come to Bouza and to present the Wodaabe. Atiiku said: 'No, Giiye, leave me out of this. I am afraid of the white men.'

05 Atiiku gave him [Giiye] his slave Laydo and he loaded him with butter. My grandfather caught one of his bulls² and brought everything to the French in Bouza.

06 Giiye told the French that the Wodaabe had moved away [with their cattle]. They told him to come back in the early dry season and gather the Wodaabe. Giiye gave them the bull and the butter. When the early dry season came, the people were back and they presented themselves to the French.

07 The French attributed to Giiye a title of a chief in the colonial administration.³ But his uncle Atiiku had stayed behind in Sokoto⁴ because he was afraid of the French. From Birni N'Konni they moved to Madaoua,

mo wi'i Atiiku: 'Raa Nasaara noddi am Abuza, wi'i yaharane Wodaabe.' Nden Atiiku wi'i: 'A'a, min Giiye, taa wadanam, mihin mi hule Nasaara.'

Nden Atiiku hokki kordo muudum bi'eteedo Laydo, nden roondi mo nebbam, nden o'on, maama amin narngi ngaari, nden be njaharani Nasaara Abuza.

Nden maama amin, o'on, wi'i Nasaara: 'Ay, Wodaabe tijake.' Nden mo wi'i mo: 'Too, kul yaawi ware, hawritoy Wodaabe.' Mo yaharani mo ngaari, mo yaharani mo nebbam. Nden yaawi be so'itoy, nden Wodaabe njahi.

Nden mo hokki maama amin Giiye giifol, kadi maa giifol Nasaara maa. Ammaan o'on, mawniko Atiiku, ngonoodo Sokoto, o'on no hul, o'on kanyum wi'i no hule Nasaara. Gada Konni, Madaawa, gada Madaawa,

² On a later occasion, Dawra even cited the name of the bull, which is Burdabi.

³ After the *giifol laamiido juulbe* (literally 'the turban of the chief of those who pray', i. e., the title attributed by the chief of the Sokoto empire) and the *giifol kaado* ('turban of the Hausa', i. e., the title attributed by the authorities of the state of Kebbi), which Maliki (1982: 30) mentions, this new class of title is consistently referred to by Dawra as *giifol Nasaara* ('turban of the Europeans', i. e., the title attributed by the French colonial authorities). On the transformation of the functions of the *ardo* from the original pastoral leader, via a sort of intermediary in the Sokoto empire, to an administrator and tax collector in the colonial era and to the present, see Bonfiglioli (1988: 126); on the relationship between the Wodaabe and the Islamic states, and the role of leadership of *ardube* and *laamiibe* therein, see Stenning (1966).

⁴ The expression *ngonoodo Sokoto* (the one who had stayed behind in Sokoto) represents a logical contradiction in the account. After all, these events have taken place, according to Dawra himself, after the migration from Sokoto to the area of Bouza. It is possible that in the oral record of historic events, two episodes have been mixed up: that of Atiiku and Giiye and that of Ardo Mbuuwa from the Goje segment of the Gojanko'en, who had stayed behind in Sokoto when the bulk of the Gojanko'en migrated to the Ader region (Maliki 1982: 36–7). The latter aspect might serve to claim supremacy of the Gawanko'en over the Goje segment, while Dawra's account is apt as an argument for the supremacy of the Kuskudu over the Mbuuldi, both maximal lineages within the Gawanko'en segment of the Gojanko'en.

from Madaoua to Bouza. Then the white men took the power and they called our grandfather to Bouza.

Then they moved to the Tahoua region and had their title acknowledged there. Finally, my father's elder brother, Jaataw, moved to the Agadez region.

He was the first who migrated to the Agadez region. He was the first Bodaado there. There were no other Wodaabe beside him, only Tuareg. And he became a *chef de groupement* there.

It was there, in the region of Agadez, that I grew up.

The name of our father is Egoyi. His older brother, the one who was the first to come to the Agadez region, was called Jaataw. He became a *chef de groupement* there. Apart from him, our father had another older brother who was called Kardaw. They were both older brothers of our father.

They stayed in the Agadez region, south of Ingal. This is where we constructed a pastoral well of the name of Alala. It was the first well in the region. My father and his brothers made this well accessible to all the other Wodaabe.

That is where we were staying. While their paternal cousins continued to carry the title of a *chef de groupement* in the Ader region, our fathers went to the Agadez region and [Jaataw] acquired a title of *chef de groupement* there. They stayed there until the bad years came.

We moved to the Damergou region, because there were no pastures [in

nden Abuza. Nden Nasaara jafi iiko. Nden noddi maama am Abuza.

Nden be ngartiri laamu mabbe 08
Taawa, be lesti Taawa. Nden mawnu baaba amin dilli, nden rimdi, wadi Agadez.

Mawnu baaba amin, bi'eteedo 09
Jaataw, kanyum ariti yahaago Agadez, kanyum ariti Bodaado fu, kanyum ariti Agadez fu. Bodaado fuu walaa, gada kanko sey Pe'eli. Kadi maa kanko woni laamiido Agadez.

Minon toon min yoy'i, Agadez. 10

Innde baaba amin Egoyi. Mawnu 11
baaba amin, bi'eteedo Jaataw, kanyum ariti yahago Agadez. Kadi ma kanko woni laamiido Agadez. Kadi ma gada kanko e woodi goddo mawnu baaba amin, bi'eteedo Kardaw. 'Be fuu dum mawniraabe baaba amin.

Nden be lesti Agadez nden fombina 12
Ingal. 'Doon min badi bunndu wi'eteendu Alala. Ka'iru ariti bulli fu. 'Bebeen, baaba amin, kanyum kolli Bodaado fuu woyndu.

'Doon min lesti. 'Bibbe baaba'en 13
mabbe lestani laamu Taawa. Been ma nden yahi, nden kokka laamu Agadez... Naaki nden duubi boni.

Nden min jowroy lehidi Taanus. 14
Geene badaay. Min ngari Taanus,

the Agadez region any more]. We spent the hot dry season in the Damergou region. It was the year Alaji⁵ was born that we entered into the Damergou region. Eliko Njaptooji, that is where he was born. That year, a star with a tail was seen at the sky. That year there were no pastures, although the millet harvest was not so bad.⁶

- 15 After we had spent three or four years in the Damergou region, we left again and went to Tesker. We spent two years there until the *gandaw* drought came. We went to the area of Tesker in the year Abdua was born. He was born there in Teram.
- 16 When we were in the area of Tesker, Laamiido Saga mounted a car and he came. He came to give me my title. I gave him six cows and Ardo Umaru took them to Birni N’Kazoé. He took them to their place. It was there that he gave me the turban.
- 17 Then we moved again because of the *gandaw* famine. We moved to Matsena in Nigeria and spent the hot dry season there. It was the lack of pasture that pushed us there. We spent the bad rainy season and the dry season there. But in the following rainy season we returned to the Damergou region.
- 18 After that, when there was a famine again, we returned to Damagaram Takkaya. We passed four years there and I was Ardo there. I was the one all the others followed. Ardo Umaru followed me, it was with me that he paid the taxes until we returned to

min seedi. Kama nduṅgu Alaji rima, nden nattoyki amin Taanus. Eliko Njaptooji, doon Alaji rima. Hitaande nde wo’nde hoodere wurtoyto nde bokorde. Hitaande nde gawri e woodi, geene walaa.

Nden min badi duubi tati, nayi Taanus, kadi maa nden ndimdu min, kadi maa nden njaha min lehidi Tesker. Nden min mbadi duubi didi, naaki nden gandaw wari. Nden njaha mi Tesker hitaande nde Abdua rima doon Teram.

Nden min ngari lehidi Tesker, nden Laamiido Saga, nden mo wadoy moota, mo wari. Nden mo hokki mi giifol. Nden kokku mi na’i joveego, e Mofaada laggi di faa wadi di Kazoe. Kambe laggoy di suudu mabbe. Doon giifna mi.

Too, nden min jowoy gam hitaande gandaw, nden mi seedi Maasina, lehidi Najeeriya, dolo na’i laggoy min. Naaki nden min njahi Maasina. Nden min njahi Maasina, nden min nduumi, nden min seedi. Nden ruumi min, so’iti Taanus.

(H) Daga baya kuma, sai aka yi yunwa, sai muka dawo Damagaram Takkaya. (F) Doon ma mi wadi duubi nayi e mi joggi giifol. Ni ne baruma. (H) Ni ne wannan suke bi duka. (F) Ardo Umaru, mihin tokki mo. Doon mo biyoto, naaki nden so’iti mi

⁵Dawra’s eldest son.

⁶Apparently this refers to the comet Bennett C/1969 Y1, which was visible at the nocturnal sky between December 1969 and May 1970.

the Damergou region. They were all my people. They all followed me. At that time there was his [Arđo Umaru's] father in Damagaram Takkaya, but I was superior to them all. I was their leader until we moved back to the Damergou region. At that time I said to the *sous-préfet* of Damagaram Takkaya that I would return to the Damergou region, so he erased me [from the register of chiefs].

Arđo Umaru, did not go. Even before, he had not stayed in the Damergou region. He would stay in Damagaram Takkaya. Even before he had stayed between the areas of Tesker and Gouré. He paid his tax money at Gouré to Laamiidō Saga. From Damagaram Takkaya he came here [to Ganatcha].

When he came here, everybody was surprised. You know, when someone is appointed *arđo*, the commander or the *laamiidō* would have to come to appoint him. In his case, however, nobody ever saw that. Only he himself called himself an *arđo*, but nobody has seen his appointment. When they appoint an *arđo*, normally the *laamiidō* has to come and put him on the turban and tell the people: 'This is your *arđo*.' But he only said himself that he was an *arđo*.

As for me, I went back to the Damergou region. And from there, finally, that year, I came here [to Ganatcha] because of the school.

At the time of the *banga-banga* drought, the hunger chased us. That year [1984] there was no grass. All the cattle and all the small stock

Tanus. (H) Dukan su talakana ne. Ni suke bi duka. Lokacin nan akwai ubanshi Damagaram Takkaya, duka ni ne babansu. Ni ne barumansu, sai dai muka koma Tanus. Na ce ma komandan, ni na koma Tanus. Sai ya karkare ni.

Umaru bai tashi ba. Da ma, bai san 19 can ba. Sai ya zamna Damagaram Takkaya. Da ma, shi, Tesker, ƙasar Guree, yake. Wurin Guree suke biya, Laamiidō Saga. Daga Damagaram Takkaya sai ya komo nan.

Daga ya komo nan, mutane duka suna 20 mamaki. Ka san in mutum ya zamna arđo, sai komandan ya zo, ko sarki, ko? To kowa bai gani ba. To shi da bakinshi ya ce baruma ne, amma ba su gani wurin da suka zamna. Arđo in suna nađe shi, sai sarki ya zo ya yi mishi rawani ya ce yau kun ga arđo. To shi sai da bakinshi arđo.

(F) Mihin kam, nden kot mi Taanus. 21 Hitaande kadi ngar mi dō'o. Kadi maa gađa Taanus nden ngar mi dō'o sabo da lokol.

Min njahi banga-banga nden veelo 22 laggi min. Hitaande nde geene ngalaa. Na'i fuu, jawdi fuu dillidi Najeeriya, dillidi fombina Kano.

were taken to Nigeria, to the region to the south of Kano. But I refused to do so. I did not go to Nigeria but we moved to Zinder instead. We stayed at Kanya⁷ with nothing but a few goats. We even planted fields. It was there that our father [Egoyi] died, towards the end of the drought, when things were beginning to get better. We had stayed there for two years.

- 23 When I returned, it was with the help of P.⁸ He had found us a house to stay, he had brought a television and put it there and he said to me: ‘Here is a house for you to stay.’ I said to him that I could not stay in town. I told him to take the television back and so he did. The next morning he took a car and we went to the market in Zinder. He bought five donkeys and two camels. And he said to me: ‘Alright, since it is the pastoral life that you want...’
- 24 So I returned. The next morning we started to move. We went to Guezawa⁹ and made camp in the south of the village. Then he [P.] bought seven young cows and gave them to Bello who led them to our camp. He found us in Guezawa. That is how we moved.
- 25 So I returned to the Damergou region. I re-established myself as an

Mihin nden sali mi. Mi rimdaay, nden min njahi Damagaram. ‘Doon lestu mi, e mi wondi e be’i tan. Nden min lesti Kanya. ‘Doon faa e geesa min baddi. ‘Doon baaba amin maayi. Bottinirngol banga-banga. Duulbi didi e mi lesti doon.

So’aki am... Ko so’iti mi, P., nden wadi, nden raarani mi suudu, nden wadi ‘télé’, wadi, wi’i mi: ‘Leste raa wuro.’ Bi’i mo mi, mi waawataa zamna gari. Nden mo hoo’i ‘télé’ makko, bi’i mo mi hohoru. Nden nde fini, mo hoo’oy mootaa, min njahi luumo Damagaram. Nden mo soodi jaakiji joovi, mo soodi geloodi didi. Mo wi’i mi: ‘Tole, tun da ladde ngida...’

Nden ngartu mi, nden fini, gada mi yowo. Min njahi Geezawa, min hodi fombina. Nden mo soodi bijji joveedidi, nden mo hokki Bello’o, nden laggi yaharani mi, hewti am doon Geezawa, dimdol am noon.

Kot mi Taanus. Kadi, nden nanngu mi barumansi am doon. Nden jaha

⁷ A small pond located a few kilometres west of Zinder at the time and nowadays directly at the margins of the city.

⁸ A French anthropologist and development agent who had just married one of Dawra’s daughters. The case exemplifies how the 1980s drought and the period in Zinder was also the time in which contacts with western expatriates (Nasaranko’en) first became important, both socially and economically, the two aspects being intrinsically linked. In Dawra’s case, the relation was established by way of a marital link between his daughter and a European, which was, however, rather exceptional; in the majority of other cases, work as night watchmen for western expatriates was the entry point into such relations with often far reaching impact (see also Text 12 and Text 13).

⁹ A village between Zinder and Tanout.

ardo there. I went to the area near Farak. It is in this pastoral area that we were staying now. Finally we began to dig a well, the well where Boyi is staying now, near the well of Nano, at Salaga.

When their father had died, that well had dried and fallen down. So I repaired it. They all [the children of Buuyo] stayed at my place. It was me who took care of them all. During all the bad years of *banga-banga* I took care of them. Until they had got their own cows and goats and sheep and camels. When they had grown up, they separated from us.

I repaired the well. We cleaned it until we reached water. When they [the children of Buuyo] had grown up, I said to them: 'Here is the well of your father for you. As to me, I built another well, not far away from this one [i. e., the one in Intrika].

When we moved back to the Damergou region, I transferred my title [of *ardo*] there.

mi ladde Taanus, diya Farak. 'Doon kadi ladde doon lestu mi. Faa ko ummi mi bunndu ndu, doon ndu Kittiwa woni, bunndu Nano, Salaga.

Nden baaba maɓɓe maayi, nden ndu 26
waati. Nden ummi mi. Kadi ma, doon to am, ɓe fuu ɓe ngoni. 'Be fuu mihin joggi ɓe. Hitaande wa'ande fuu mihin joggi ɓe e nder banga-banga. Faa ɓe mbaɗi na'i, ɓe mbaɗi bisaaji, baali, geloodi. Nden ɓe mawni, nden ɓe seedi.

Nden njaasi mi bunndu. Min njaasi 27
bunndu naaki nden kyewtu min ndiyam ma'iru. Nden ɓe mawni, nden bi'i mi ɓe: 'Raa bunndu baaba moodon.' Nden ngas mi ndu doon ndu gada ma'iru.

Nden ndimdu min, njah mi Taanus. 28
Nden kohoru mi giifol am toon.



Map 2: Migrations of Dawra Egoi and his ancestors

TEXT 3:

FROM THE HISTORY OF THE
SETTLEMENT OF TESKER
TO SETTLEMENT IN GANATCHA

HISTORICAL/AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT

This account of Arđo Umaru Siddi offers a complementary perspective on the historic migrations of the Wodaabe Gojanko'en. Even before the 1970s drought, Umaru's father Siddi's family came to the Damergou region. But instead of establishing themselves in the area as did Dawra's father, they moved on to the region of Tesker. Umaru's testimony offers interesting details about the history of the settlement of Tesker, a rural town in eastern Niger, that at the period of Siddi's migration did not yet exist, but was established as a military outpost shortly after. In reaction to this, Siddi continued to the region of Termit, where he and his family finally met Dawra's father for the first time. Today, Umaru and Dawra stay together in the area of Ganatcha, where they have established a semi-sedentary *centre*. Umaru's perspective of the settlement in Ganatcha sheds light on the place-making process characterized by negotiations with autochthonous populations and authorities about the access to water and land.

Umaru Siddi, Wodaabe Gojanko'en, Ganatcha, July 2011

- 01 When our father first came to Tesker, there was nobody there. He was the first. He had come from the West, from Alala. That is where he had come from. After his arrival in the Damergou region he first stayed in the area of Gangara and Kirkedi, near Goubobo. He built wells there and he stayed, the people stayed until they had become many. But since they were in search of pasture, they packed up their things again and went on to the region of Tesker. When they came there, they found no one but Aza,¹ even Tubu, there
- (H) Lokacin da babanmu ya zo Tesker, babu kowa a can. Ya zo daga yamma, can Alala, kasar Alala. Daga can ya zo. Da ya zo, ya zamna, ya zamna kasar Tanus. Wajen Gangara, wajen Kirkedi. Ya zamna Kirkedi. Kasar Gurbobo wannan. Ya yi rijiyoyi a can. Sun zamna a can. To, da suka zamna kasar, sai mutane sun kai yawa a can. Sun koma. Kiwo suke so. Sai suka daura. Sai suka koma wajen Tesker. Lokacin da suka zo Tesker, babu kowa sai Aza. Ko Tubawa babu. Su da Aza suka shiriya. Shi ne arđo na wuri duka. Shi

¹ The Aza, hunters, are a caste of blacksmiths of the Tubu.



Photo 2: Umaru Siddi

(F. KÖHLER, 2011)

were none. But they came to terms with the Aza. Our father became *ardò* there, he became the leader of the whole area.

When we came to Tesker, there was no village, there was nothing there. Tesker did not exist. The origin of the name of Tesker is the following: When we were there, gazelle hunt was very common and there was a thicket in a depression that was called by this name. ‘Esker’ means to hunt [antelopes] in Fulfulde,² so

ne arđò na wuri.

Lokacin da mun zo Tesker, babu 02
gari, babu kome. Babu Tesker. Dalilin sunan Tesker, lokacin da aka zamna, ana kase barewa, naman daji, cikin kori. Sai an ce, wannan kori, sunanshi. Ka san kase barewa, a Fulanci ana ce mishi ‘esker’. Shi ke nan, wuri ya zamna Esker. Esker ma shi ya kawo Tesker. Lokacin, kori

²This etymology of the place name seems questionable and no confirmation for it could be found. It seems more probable that the name comes from the Tubu or Tamasheq language. In Tamasheq, *esker* refers, on the one hand, to a fodder plant (*Astragalus corrugatus*) that is prevalent in the region and, on the other hand, to rain water resting in a depression without draining away (Ritter 2009: 453). An origin of the place name in this term would fit well with Umaru’s description of the depression with dense vegetation. Umaru’s claim for an origin of the place name in an alleged Fulfulde term is remarkable, however, as naming can generally be regarded as an important key to the claiming of land. On the significance of naming places as part of the process of place-making, see also Tilley (1994: 18); Appadurai (1995: 206); Bender (2006: 306); Schareika (2007: 207f.).

the place was called 'Esger', which finally became 'Tesker'. At that time, it was a thicket, so dense that even if you shot an arrow it would not find its way into it.

- 03 Our father and the Aza came to terms, but there was a quarrel. They went to Gouré [to settle it]. At that time there was no administration [in Tesker], only in Gouré.
- 04 The quarrel arose because the Aza did not want the Wodaaße to stay. There were many gazelles at the time and many ostriches. [They were afraid that,] if the pastoralists became many, if the cattle became many, they would chase the wild animals away. You know, the Aza at that time hunted wild animals. They also raised camels and even cattle, they were also pastoralists.
- 05 When ostriches pond eggs, there can be many of them. Sometimes 30 or 40. We also ate them at that time. We took them and ate them. So they were afraid that if the people became many, they would eat them their bush meat and the ostrich eggs.
- 06 We were staying there until that year, the year when the white men gave Niger its independence. The year when Diori Hamani [came to power]. That is to say, first, they gave the power to Bakary Djibo, he stayed in power for one year, before Diori Hamani replaced him.³ When Diori Hamani took office we were staying in the area of Tesker. We spent around 20 years there.

ne kawai, sai itatuwa. Ko kibiya ka halba, ba ya samu wurin shiga.

To, da babanmu da Aza suna shiriya, suna rikici, suna rikici. Sun je Guree. Lokacin nan babu bariki, sai Guree.

Rikici, basu so makiyaya su zamna. Akwai barewa da yawa. Akwai jimina da yawa. In makiyaya sun yi yawa, shanu sun yi yawa, sai su kore su, su tafi. Ka san Aza lokacin, suna kama naman daji. Duka suna kama. To, sun yi kuma kiwon rafuma, har shanu suke da. Ke nan, su ma makiyaya ne.

Amma wannan, jimina, in ya haifa, ya'an su, kwai na su da yawa ne. Wani talatin, wani arba'in. Mu da kan mu muna dauka, muna ci. Muna dauka, muna ci. Shi ne suke tsoro. In mutane su yi yawa, za a ci musu naman daji, da kwai.

Muna zamna a nan, har an kai shekara... shekara da an kai, sai Turawa, Nasaru, suka ba Nijer inci. Shekara da suka ba Nijer inci, da suka ba Jori Hamani. Ka san, Bakari Jibo suka ba na fari. Da suka ba shi, ya yi shekara guda, sai su ba Jori Hamani. Da aka ba Jori Hamani, muna can Tesker. Mun kai har shekara ashirin can Tesker.

³Diori Hamani (1916–1989) was the first president of independent Niger. Before being elected president in 1960, he was president of the provisional government council since 1958, when he replaced Bakary Djibo (1922–1998) in this function. The year to which Umaru refers is thus probably rather 1958 than 1960.

After Diori [Hamani] took office, he was the one who established a military outpost in Tesker.⁴ During the colonial period there had been none.

We arrived at the time when the RDA⁵ won the elections and Diori [Hamani] took the power. It was in the ninth year of his presidency that Diori came together with a European man. They came on camel back and they descended at our place. We made a shelter for them. They [really] came on camel back, not in a car. Diori himself and a European. They spent three nights at our place. They said to my father that a military post was to be established in Tesker soon. This would be necessary because there would be hostilities, soon. Tubu were coming to the area and thieves. That is why they were going to establish a military outpost. My father said: ‘Oh, I see.’ Then some Aza came. [...] They said to my father: ‘Do not let them establish a military outpost in Tesker or it will all be over with Tesker.’ But my father said: ‘I am just a subject. They who have come are the rulers. I do not have the power to stop them.’ Hence, when Diori came and said to my father that a military outpost was to be established in Tesker, he said: ‘So shall it be.’

To Jori, da aka ba shi, shi ne ya kawo 07
bariki a Tesker. Zamanin Turawa
babu shi.

To, da aka zo, lokacin da suka zo, 08
sai aka wannan jawabe, wannan
da RDA. An kai shi mulki, Jori ya
hau iko. Da Jori ya hau iko, ya yi
shekara tara, ina sani, sai an kawo
Jori da wani Nasara guda. Sai suka
zo bisa raƙuma. Suna bisa raƙuma.
Da suka zo, gidanmu suka sabka. Da
suka sabka gidanmu, aka yi musu
rumfa. Suna zamna. Da raƙuma sun
zo. Babu mota. Jori da kan shi yana
bisa raƙumi. Da shi da wani Bature
guda. Da suka zo, suka sabka. Suka
zo, suka zamna, kwanansu uku a
gidanmu. Sai suka ce ma babana:
‘To, za a yi bariki a Tesker. Za a yi
wani yaki a nan. Tubawa suna zuwa,
barawi suna zuwa. Za a kawo bariki,
a kafa. Sai tsoho ya ce: ‘Ashe, ashe.’
Sai Aza suka zo. [...] Suka ce ma
tsohona: ‘Kada ka yarda a yi bariki a
Tesker. In ana yi bariki a Tesker, ya
mutu.’ Sai tsoho ya ce: ‘Ni talaka ne.
Iko ya zo. Ba ni da inci in hana su.’
Sai tsoho, da ya zo, wannan kin, Jori,
ya ce za a yi bariki. Sai tsoho ya ce:
‘To, shi ke nan.’

⁴ The Hausa word ‘*bariki*’, derived from the English term ‘barrack’, generally refers to a military camp or a military post. The Wodaabe also use the term in the sense of an administrative post (see Text 4, section 21). Historically, Tesker was at first only a military outpost and officially established as an administrative post only in 1978, i. e., during the presidency of Seyni Kountché (Giraut 1999: 35).

⁵ Parti Progressiste Nigérien – Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (PPN-RDA). This was the party of Diori Hamani that won the 1958 elections for the constituent assembly.

09 He [my father] called his children. At that time we were not older than Peri⁶ [i. e., maybe six years old]. He called us children and told us to build a shelter. Thus, two shelters were built from the branches of *Lepdadenia pyrotechnica*. When they were ready, my mother brought a bed and put it into one of the shelters. And Diori told my father to construct another shelter. The next Sunday, the *chef de poste* would arrive. And that Sunday, he [Diori] came with the *chef de poste*. He was a Pullo, a brother of Diori's wife Aïssa. His name was Amadou Souley.⁷ He came and he stayed. He came with three soldiers. One Pullo, one Tubu and one from the Iklan caste of the Tuareg.⁸ They said that these were [the three groups of] pastoralists [present in the region]. These three soldiers arrived together with Amadou Souley and they stayed. Finally, my father said: 'We have stayed here for three years. But now the place has become a military post. It has become a town.' They packed their things and went to the Termit region. We stayed in the Termit region among Tubu for 17 years. Later they brought thirty more soldiers to Termit. Thirty plus three. That makes thirty three who stayed in Tesker then.

10 Our Gojanko'en lineage mates with whom we went to Termit continued to migrate to Chad. There

Sai ya kira yara. Mu, lokacin nan, ba mu wuce Peri wannan ba. Sai ya kira yara, ya ce a yi rumfa. Sai an kai rumfa biyu na kalimbo. Da aka kai rumfa biyu, sai tsohuata, uwa da ta haife ni, sai ta huto gado irin wannan, irin namu, sai ta kawo, ta sa cikin daki. Sai Jori ya ce ma tsoho: 'To, ka karo mumu daki. Ran ladi za a kawo maka komandan.' Ran ladi. To, sai ya zo ran ladi kin, sai ya zo da komandan. Komandan dānuwan matan Jori ne, dānuwan Aisa ne. Bafulace. Ana ce mishi Amadu Sule. Shi ya zo, ya zamna. Ya zo da gume uku. [...] dāya Bafulace, dāya Batube, dāya Buzu. An ce: 'Ku ne makiyaya.' Su uku aka kawo tare da Amadu Sule. Suka zamna. Sai tsohona ya ce: 'To wannan wuri, mun kai shekara uku a wurin. Sai an ce wannan wuri ya zamna bariki, ya zamna gari.' Sai suka dāura, suka je Turmus. Shekaranmu goma sha bakwai a Turmus, cikin Tubawa. Sa'an nan aka kawo ma Tesker gume talatin. Ga uku, ga talatin: talatin da uku. Su, suka zamna a Tesker.

Sauran Gojanko'en wanda muka zo da su shekara da muka tafi Turmus, su suka dāura, suka tafi Kasar Cadi.

⁶A boy of about six years present during the interview.

⁷Not identified.

⁸The Iklan, locally also called Buzu by other populations, are the former servant caste of the Tuareg.

were good pastures there. A lot of our lineage mates went there to the area of Dourbali.⁹

Apart from my father, only a few others stayed in Termit. Until, later, Dawra came with his sons. At the time we did not know them. We had only heard of them, other Gojanko'en.

They came in the year of Kountché's *coup d'état* against Diori,¹⁰ seven years after they had come to the Damergou region from Alala. To be precise, when they came to Tanout, they continued to Tesker where we met them. They spent maybe four years in Tesker until a drought came and chased them, the drought during which Diori was ousted by Kountché. At that time we came back here. And that is when we again met with Dawra's family around Damagaram Takkaya. We stayed in the area of Damagaram Takkaya around ten years. Finally, Dawra returned to the Damergou region and we returned to Tesker. But in Damagaram Takkaya, we were staying together. Later, when there was another drought,¹¹ we returned, first to the area of Birni N'Kazoé and finally to Zinder.

Dengin namu, sauran Gojawa, sun tafi Cadi. Akwai ciyawa da yawa, gidanmu duka suna can. Suna wajen Durbali.

To, shi wannan, daga babanmu 11 wannan, sai gidan wannan, suka je suka zamna. Su suka je Turmus, suna zamna. Har su Daura suka zo, daga baya. Da, ba mu san su ba, tun da lokacin da babanmu suna Tanus, su suna baya. Ba mu san su ba. Sai mu ji sunan Gojawa, Gojawa.

Sai da shekara da an kai juyin mulki 12 na Kunce da ya yi ma Jori. Shekaran nan, su Daura sun zo nan, suna da shekara bakwai sun huto daga Alala. Suna shekara bakwai suka zo Tanus. Da suka zo Tanus, sai suka wuce, suka je can, suka tar da mu can wajen Tesker. Sun je Tesker, sun samu shekara ko huɗu a can, sai an kai yunwa, wannan da an kai, wanda Kunce ya kama Jori. Kunce ya yi juyin mulki. Daga nan sai muka koma. Da muka koma nan, muna tar da su Daura wajen Takkaya. Muka zamna Takkaya, muka zamna Takkaya, mun kai shekara goma. Sai Daura ya koma Tanus. Da Daura ya koma Tanus, mu, sai muka koma can wajen Tesker, hal lau. Amma a Takkaya muna tare. Da ya koma can, mu ma mun koma Tesker. Daga baya, sai an kai mugun shekara, babu ciyawa. Sai muka d'aura, muka koma. Muka koma, muka biyo wannan, bisa Kazowe wannan. Sai muka je, muka zamna, hal lau, da muka zamna a Zinder.

⁹ A small town, located some 100 km east-south-east of N'Djamena.

¹⁰ I. e., the year 1974.

¹¹ The *banga-banga* drought of 1983–1985.

13 We stayed west of Zinder, near the pond of Kanya. That is where we spent the worst of the drought. Dawra and his family were also there at the time. We were staying together. At the time, a lot of Wodaabe went to Zinder because of the famine. There, in Zinder, Kountché[’s government] organized the distribution of relief food. We camped in the range land near Zinder. They distributed the relief food in Zinder, they did not bring it to the remote areas. There [in Zinder] we were given food. Our animals had died and so we were staying there.

14 Later, when the worst of the famine was over, I gradually got new goats until I left. By that time my father had died. I left and went back to Damagaram Takkaya, only me alone. I spent two years there and later, the other people from my family also came and joined me there at Damagaram Takkaya. We now stayed for seventeen years. All my children were born during this time in Damagaram Takkaya. Then I went to Jere in the area of Adjeri and Garaji¹² for three years before returning again to Damagaram Takkaya. After another two years, I came here [to Ganatcha]. I have been here now for thirteen years.

15 At that time, we did not have a well here. But we [already] had fields. Since the time of Kountché we were farming. When we were in Zinder, we had fields near the pond of

Mun zamna yamma da Zinder, inda wannan tabki yake... Kanya. A can muka zamna lokacin da an yi yunwa sosai. Su Daura ma lokacin, suna can. Muna tare, hal lau, mu da Daura. Lokacin, Wodaabe da yawa sun koma Zinder, sabo da yunwa. Can Zinder, Kunce ya ba da taimako. Kusa da gari muka zamna. A daji ne. Amma can gari sun kai taimako. Ba su kai har daji ba. Can aka ba mu. Dabbobin mu sun kare. Sun kare, muna zamna.

Daga baya, can kin da yunwa ya yi dama, muka samu awaki kaɗan kaɗan kaɗan. Da muka samu awaki kaɗan, sai na tashi. Lokacin nan babana ya mutu. Sai na tasho, na komo Takkaya, ni kadai. Na komo Takkaya. Na yi shekara biyu. Sai wadannan masu gida na suka zo su ma, su tar da ni. Da suka tar da mu, muna zamna a Takkaya. Mun yi shekara goma sha bakwai. Da mun kai shekara sha bakwai a Takkaya... wannan yara duk a Takkaya aka haife su. Daga nan ni kuma, hal lau, na tashi. Na koma Jere, ƙasar Ajeri, ƙasar Garaji. Na koma can. Na yi shekara uku, kuma na komo Takkaya. Da na koma Takkaya, na yi shekara biyu, sai na zo nan. Ina da yanzu shekara goma sha uku a nan.

Lokacin, ba mu da rijjiya a nan. Amma muna da gona. Tun lokacin Kunce mun yi gona. Ka ga can Zinder, Kanya wannan, to can muna da gona. Maire kin Zinder, wannan,

¹²The place names refer to an area north and north-west of the Koutous mountains.

Kanya. It was the mayor of Zinder at the time, Garba Katambe, who gave me farm land.

Since we first came here we engaged in agriculture. In the beginning, however, we obtained fields only on the basis of informal grants. But then, with the late *chef de canton*, Bukarbul, we obtained written titles. It is a big piece of land. We have attributed fields to a lot of people.

I also attributed farmland to Arđo Ali. I went to the *chef de canton* of Moa, or rather, to his representative, Umara, since he had just died. I think that I gave him 5,000 FCFA and another 5,000 to the *chef de village* of Tchiroma. They showed me the place and I gave it to Arđo Ali. As far as Dawra is concerned, he does not have a field of his own. I have just informally granted him a place for a field.

When I came here, at first they [the neighbouring villagers] did not want us to do farming. But I went to the late *chef de canton* in Moa, Bukarbul. I told him that I wanted to obtain farm land. And he gave me this land. I was staying here [at first] without a well [of my own], until the year when Tandja ran for the presidential elections.¹³

It was three years after I had come here. They said that pastoral wells were to be built. They said that Tandja had written a paper asking them to look for an *arđo* who was not quarrelsome. They wanted to attribute a well to him. Well, I was staying there in the area. I was ill and I had gone to

Garba Katambe, shi ya ba ni gona.

Tun lokacin da mun zo nan, mun yi 16 noma. Amma da, gona aro ne, ba a da takarda. Amma wannan da ya zamna sarki, wannan da ya mutu, Bukarbul, mun yi takarda da shi. Fili ne, da yawa sosai. Har mutane nawa mun ba su gona.

Wannan, Boka, ni ne na ba shi. Na 17 tafi wajen sarki. Ko na ba shi jika goma. Na kai, na ba. Lokacin da sarki waccan ya mutu. Babu sarki sai ‘riƙa ƙuriya’? Umara. Na je na ba Umara jika biyar, na ba wannan sarki na Ciroma jika biyar. Suka nuna mini wurin da Boka yake so. Shi ke nan, na ba shi. Daura ba ya da gona. Na ba shi wuri. Aro ne.

Da na zo, sai suka hana mu gona 18 a can. Sai na zo, na samu sarkin Mowa, wanda ya mutu, Bukarbul. Na samu, na ce gona nika so. Sai na samu wannan fili. Ina zamna, babu rijiya. Ga daji, ba rijiya. Sai shekaran Tanja yana siyaasa.

Ni, na zo nan, na yi shekara uku, sai 19 an ce, za a gina ma makiyaya rijiya a nan. Sai an ce daga can Tanja ya rubuta takarda, ya ce a samu arđo na Fulani wanda ba ya da halin shi, ba ya da bambamci, ba ya da kabilanci, a ba shi rijiya. Kuma ina nan. Na yi rashin lafiya, ba ni da lafiya, na tafi

¹³ I. e., the year 1999. Mamadou Tandja (born 1938) was president of the Republic of Niger from 1999 to 2010.

Gouré to see a doctor. When I came back, the *chef de village* of Gongoboul told me that the *chef de canton* of Moa was looking for me because I had to supervise the workers who were constructing the well. I was not doing well but I mounted a horse and went to Moa to meet the *chef de canton*. He said that they were constructing a well at this and that place and that they had the intention to attribute the well to a local Fulbe leader. They had written down my name which he had given to them.

20 When I came [to the place], I found them at work, digging [the well]. They had just begun to dig. I said: ‘Wait, tomorrow I will come and I will tell the people.’ I slaughtered a young goat and sent it to them. I took care of them. I gave them meat to eat, we gave them milk, and we obtained a well.

21 Finally, one day, the prefect of Mirriah came. They came with three cars in order to denominate an administrator for the well. They assembled everybody. [...] He [the prefect] asked: ‘Who is Ardō Umaru’, and I said: ‘Here I am.’ He said that the well would be entrusted to me and the *chef de village* of Tchiroma. And he took papers and wanted to write it down. But I said: ‘Don’t write it down! I have something to say.’ There was a European from the funding organization who had come with them. He asked: ‘What did he say?’ ‘He wants to speak.’ ‘Go ahead speak!’ I said: ‘Have we pastoralists not engaged enough in the construction work. Is that why you want to put me together with a

likita Guree. Kwananan sun kai ni likita Guree. Na zo daga likita, sai mai gari wannan, na Gongobul, ya ce: ‘Sarkin Mowa yana nemanka. Kana da gadi masu ginan rijiya.’ Na zo. Ba ni da lafiya. Sai na hau doki, na tafi Mowa. Da na je, na tar da sarki. Ya ce: ‘Wuri kaza an kama rijiya, ana gina. Rijiya, an ce a ba wani arđo Fulani da yake nan, wanda ba ya da kabilanci. Sun rubuta sunanka, na ba da.’

To, sai na zo, na tar da su, sun gina. Sun gina bakin nan, bakin nan kawai, baki. Na ce, to, ku beri, gobe na zo nan na gaya ma mutane. Na samu abun yanka, đan akuya. Na kai musu. Na kulla da su. Ina ba su nama suna ci. Ana ba su nono, aka tar da rijiya.

To, ran nan prefet na Mirya [...] da mota uku, sun zo, suka ce, to, za a ma rijiya wakilinshi. To, da aka zo, sun taro duka. [...] Ya ce: ‘Wa ne ne Ardō Umaru?’ Sai na ce: ‘Ga ni.’ Ya ce: ‘To, kai aka ba rijiya.’ Sai an ce an gama ni da mai gari [...] na Ciroma. Ya đauko takarda haka bisa mota, ya rubuta. Na ce: ‘Kar ka rubuta.’ Na ce: ‘Ina da magana bisa wannan.’ Akwai Nasara, suka zo da su wanda ya ba da kuđi aka gina. Nasara ya ce: ‘Me ya fađi?’ ‘Ya ce yana da magana.’ ‘Ka tambaya!’ Na ce: ‘Yanzu wannan makiyaya duka in resa da na yi aiki a bisa rijiyana sai kun gama ni da Kaadō. [...] Kuma sai mun ba kuđi mun sayi ruwa? Kun ga rijiya mun gina don Fulani... ka ga sa’an nan rijiya nan, an ce ‘puits

Kaado?¹⁴ In the end, will we have to pay money for the water? This well, has it not been built for the Fulbe? Is this well not called a *puits pastoral*? And you want to attribute a pastoral well to a *Kaado*? I don't agree! If you don't leave our work to us, if you want to give it to the *Haabe*, we will leave.' They translated for the Frenchman, they changed everything and they left the management of the well to me. I was the only one [from the pastoralists] that they knew. They wrote an [other] paper and fixed everything accordingly.

The well is now ten years old. It was built three years after our arrival. Before, we took our water in Gongoboul or in Gueza. Ganatcha would have been nearer, but at the time we did not get along with the people of Ganatcha. We were in confrontation with them. They did not like pastoralists. So we did not go there [to get water]. Today, there is no problem between us and them. But at that time...

We have not put a committee in place. I simply manage the well. But I do not ask any money for the use. Nobody will be asked whatsoever. If we see that the well needs repair, we call the people together and we collect contributions for the materials and for the repair work.

Concerning 'Dawra's well, when 'Dawra came here, he wanted to construct a well. When he went to the *chef de canton*, he told him to come together with me since the land belongs to us. He came to me

pastoral'. Na ce 'puits pastoral' za ka mai da *Kaado*? Ban yarda ba. In ba ku beri mumu aikinmu, ku ba *Haabe*, mun beri.' Sun kai Franse, sun kase, sun beri ni rijiya. Ba su san kowa ba in ba ni. [...] Aka rubuta takarda, an d'aura.

Rijiya yanzu shekaranshi goma. 22
Mun zo nan, da shekara uku aka gina shi. Kafin mun samu rijiya, mun tafi mu dauka ruwa Gongobul da Geza. Ganaca ya fi kusa, amma lokacin, ba mu sa ba da Ganaca. Mutanen Ganaca lokacin nan, gaba muke da su. Ba su so makiyaya. Ba mu zuwa. Yanzu tsakanin mu da su babu matsala. Amma da...

Ba mu sa komite ba. Kawai ni ne 23
mai kulla rijiya. Ba ni amsa kudi a rijiya. Babu wani mutum da ya ce: 'Ba ni kaza.' In mun ga rijiya ya bace, bakinshi ya bace, sai in kira mutane, sai a zo a samu, a taro kudi. Mu samu amalenke, ya dauka wani fasa, wani duwatsu, wannan bisa abun nan duka.

'Daura, wannan rijiyanshi, da ya 24
zo, ya nema ya gina rijiya. Da ya tafi sarki, sai sarki ya ce mishi, ai sai ya je da ni, tun da kasar namu ne. Ya zo. Muka tafi. Ya yi magana. Mun yi magana. Sarki ya ce: 'To, ni, ban

¹⁴*Kaado* (pl. *Haabe*) is a derogatory Fulfulde term for any non Fulbe peasant.

and we went together to talk to the chief and he said: ‘Since I do not know the place, just go with Umaru and he will show you the place [to build the well]. Then we also went to Ganatcha to inform the *chef de village*, since we are on good terms with him. He and one of his brothers came with us to the place of the well.

- 25 After we had determined the place for the well, ‘Dawra did not come any more. It was me who supported the difficulties of the construction work until we reached the well’s water. When we reached the water, I took some and brought it to the *chef de canton* in Moa to show him that we had succeeded. Then I informed ‘Dawra and told him to come. Only then he came. At that time, they had been in the Damergou region. Even after the construction of the well, they took two years to come. [‘Dawra’s son] Abdua was the first to arrive and stayed for one year. Only then ‘Dawra also came. [...]

- 26 I am a member of the local land tenure commission that was put in place upon the installation of the decentralized municipalities.¹⁵ I was elected a member since that time, since the time the municipal councils took up their work. When the local land tenure commission has work to do, they call me. I am the representative of the pastoralists. If there are problems between farmers

san wannan kasar ba. Ban san wuri ba.’ Ya ce: ‘Ku je, Umaru ya nuna muku wurin.’ Sai mun tafi Ganaca. Sai na gaya ma mai gari Ganaca, tun da muna amana. Sai ya gama da kanenshi guda. Sai muka zo bakin rijjiya.

Tun da muka kama bakin rijjiyan nan, ‘Daura bai zo ba. Ni nike wahalan ginan rijjiyan nan. Sai da aka tar da rijjiya. Da aka tar da, na dauka ruwa, na kai na sarkin Mowa. Ni na dauka, na kai! Na ce: ‘Rijjiyanmu an tar da.’ Daga nan, na aika ma ‘Daura. Na ce: ‘Rijjiya, an tar da, sai ka zo.’ Sa’an nan, ‘Daura ya zo. Lokacin, ba su nan, suna Tanus. Da aka gina rijjiya, sun kai shekara biyu ma ba su nan. Abdua ne ya zo na fari. Aka gina, an tarda. Abdua ya zo, ya yi shekara guda. Daga baya, su ‘Daura sun zo. [...]

Ina cikin Cofob. Ya dafɛ. Tun shekara da aka kawo wannan proje na komin-komin da yawa. Tun lokacin aka dauke ni. Aka jafe ni a Cofa. Tun lokacin da aka kawo komin-komin wannan. Konse-konse wannan aka sa aiki. To shekaran nan ne. Ke nan ina cikin Cofob. Yanzu in Cofob yana aiki, sai su kira ni. Kuma ni wakilin makiyaya ne. In akwai matsalolin makiyaya da manoma, sai

¹⁵The first municipal elections took place in 2004. Before the introduction of directly elected municipal councils, administrators on the local, district and regional levels had been centrally appointed. The first municipal elections meant a major step in the process of implementation of the project of decentralization, giving the local and intermediary levels of the state administration considerable planning and decision-making power (on the history of decentralization in Niger, see also Salifou 2008).

and pastoralists they come to see me. If the matter is beyond my competence, I delegate the case to the municipal commission. The matters are discussed.

The problems here in the municipality of Moa have diminished. It is not like in the past when there were frequently deadly incidents. Since this commission has been installed, it has become much better, only the *chef de canton* of Moa is a quarrelsome man. Last year during harvest, he pursued the people [i. e., the pastoralists] and he charged them without reason in order to extort money from them.

Nevertheless, it is he to whom we are administratively attached. [...] When the rural municipalities were established, it was said that everybody would have to register and pay his taxes in the municipality where he was residing. As for those who possessed a well, they were supposed to pay their taxes in the municipality where their well was located. This is why I decided to affiliate myself here [i. e., with the Kanuri *chef de canton* of Moa].

Before, when we were staying in Damagaram Takkaya, Dawra was our *ardò* to whom we paid our tax money. At the time I was not an *ardò*. My father paid his tax money to Dawra. When he [Dawra] returned to the Damergou region, while we were not going, I told him that I would now also establish my own family register [i. e., become an *ardò*] and return to the area where we had been staying with our father. This is what brought us here.

sun gan ni, ni ma in ya fi ƙarfina, sai an kai ma Cofo. Sha'awara ne.

Amma matsaloli wannan, na ƙasar 27
Mowa wannan, yanzu ya yi dama.
Ba kamar da ba. Da, ba a wuce ba
a kase mutum. Amma tun da an kai
wannan tsari wannan, yanzu dai
sarki wannan, shi ne dai munafuki,
sarki na Mowa. Shi ne munafuki.
Shekara ya seka, an sake gonakai, ya
bi mutane, ya rika cin kuɗin mutane
a banza. Haka ne.

Amma muna bi shi. Shi muke bi. 28
[...] Lokacin da an kai komin-komin
wannan, an ce kowa inda ya ke, a nan
zai biya kuɗinshi. Komin in da ka ke,
ka biya kuɗinka nan. In da rijiyanka
ka ke, ka biya kuɗinka a nan. To, shi
ne na yi sha'awara na koma nan.

Lokacin da mun zamna Takkaya, 29
lokacin nan Dawra wannan, shi
ne ardonmu. Muna ba shi kuɗi a
Takkaya. Ka san lokacin ni ba arɗo
ba ne. Babana ya ba Dawra. Da muka
gani ya koma Tanus, mu ba mu zuwa
Tanus. Sai na ce mishi, to mu ma, mu
ɗauka girgam ƙin namu, mu koma
nan inda babanmu ya beri mu. To shi
ne ya maido mu nan.



Photo 3: Dawra Egoyi (left) and Umaru Siddi

(F. KÖHLER, 2012)

TEXT 4: A CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH IN THE PASTORAL REALM

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT

Apart from providing another complementary perspective on the historical accounts of Dawra Egoyi (Text 2) and Umaru Siddi (Text 3), this autobiographical recollection of a childhood in the pastoral realm shows, from a very personal perspective, one particular context in which translocality plays a role: As a first-born child, Dawra Egoyi's eldest daughter Naana (born around 1960), grew up for about the first ten years of her life not with her parents, but with her maternal grandparents – a practice that used to be more widespread but is still found today (see Dupire 1962: 192). In her case, due to her father's migration to the area of Alala (Agadez region) and the fact that her maternal grandparents remained in the area of Abalak (Ader region), this meant a separation over a long time and over a considerable geographical distance. Another issue that the account addresses are the dramatic ecological changes that have taken place in the pastoral sphere of the study region over the past decades.

Naana Dawra, Wodaabe Gojanko'en, Zinder, November 2011

- 01 As a small child, I lived in the bush. My maternal grandparents had taken me, and I grew up to the age of ten years at their place in the area of Abalak. I remember that my grandfather Buuyo taught me to mount horses. At that time, I did not know my father and not even my mother. I had forgotten about them. My father had migrated to the Agadez region, to the well of Alala. When I was about ten years old, he took me to his place, but I ran away to the bush, back to Abalak [to my grandparents], and my maternal uncles had to bring me [back to my father's place] on camel back. One of my maternal uncles stayed with me until I had got
- (F) Ladde mihin gada ko taw mi. To maamiraaɓe am koo'oy am. To maamiraaɓe am kewtu mi, faa baɗ mi duubi sappo, toon Abalak. Ay, toon nden Buuyo pussi wadinta mi, ko anndu mi fu. Mi anndaa ndottiijo amin, mi anndaa faa e nayeejo amin, mi yegiti dum. Kanko mo hoo'oya mo wa'aroya Agadez, bunndu Alala. Duubi am sappo ko ngar mi do'o. Gadon nde kohora mi, mi anndaa gada mi nyaare gada mi doggitoy e mi yaha ladde. E mi nyaara e mi mbaɗa Abalak. Mi wadi Abalak, kadi maa, gada kaayiraaɓe am no mbaɗin am ngeeloodi ngartira mi. Sii kee nan, faa godɗo kaawo am wari, joodi faa booftu mi, faa mi woowa



Photo 4: Naana Dawra

(F. KÖHLER, 2014)

used to the place, until I had got used to do the work at the well.

At that time my father did not have anyone but me to help him with his work, and there were many cows then. [But] my paternal grandfather Egoyi was there as well, and my grandparents tried to comfort me in order to make me stay. To me, the place was strange and I said to my mother: ‘Let us go away. You are here among strangers, suffering.’ I just did not understand all that.

Finally my uncle left. He told me that he would come back. He said: ‘Just stay, do you hear? This is not any stranger’s place but your father’s.’ I had been staying there and I did not even understand that it was my father’s place. When my father swore at me, I also swore at him.

wuro. Faa ngartu mi, mi regoyto mi dōwoya.

A yi’i nden Daada walaa mo aiki, 02
dum mihin tan woni doon. Nden na’i no duudi. Raa Egoyi nden be fuu mi tawi be. Sii kee nan, sey be ndeerotoy am mi jooda. Mi anndaa wuro. E be ndeerotoy am, sey mi wi’a Kinnal:¹ ‘Umma kooten a joodi wuro duuniya a yara wahala.’ Mi anndaa.

Sii kee nan, faa mo dille. Nden mo 03
wi’i do’o maa mo yowoyta, mo warte. Mo wi’i yam: ‘Jooda, anani. Walaa dum wuro Wodaabe, dum wuro baaba maada.’ Sii kee nan, e mi ndoon kadi mi anndaa dum wuro baaba am. To mo hudu yam, mihin ma mi huɗe mo. Faa yanan mo wi’i

¹Kinnal is the nickname of Naana’s mother, Kaita.

One day, he wanted to beat me and I started to insult him. He drew his sword and we started to fight. The others had to separate us.²

04 Since my father was so nasty with me, I felt that this was not my home. My home was at my grandparents place. You know, at that time, the first-born children used to grow up with their grandparents.

05 Finally, I had got used to it. Together with [my father's youngest brother] Boyi, I was in charge of drawing water at the well. As long as I can remember, Kitti and I were always together. One day, a jackal chased Boyi. He had said that he would not follow the same path as I did and on the path that he followed, he was pursued by the jackal. The jackal wrested Boyi's stick from him and he started to cry. We [i.e., she and her father] were already at the well. Boyi called [my father for help] and so he went to look after him and found him with the jackal.

06 But since Boyi was older than I, we went together to draw water at the well. Since the cows were so many at the time, I spent days and nights on the back of the draught ox. We watered the cattle and when they had drunken their fill, we returned home. So it went on and on.

07 At that time, my paternal grandparents were alive, Egoyi and Inna.⁴

no fiye yam gaḍa mi huḍum, gaḍa no hoo'oy kaafahi, gaḍa min kaḍ, e min kende. E min kende, bi'i mi.

Mo wadni yam yawaare ay walaa ḍum wuro am. Mihin, wuro am e to maama am. A anndi nden maamiraabe no joggoto arambe.

Sii kee nan, gaḍa dum wuti, gaḍa mi waḍ ga dowgo. Gaḍa ḍoon nder ladde, minon ngoni dowooḍe, mihin e Kitti.³ Gaḍa ummi mi ko anndu mi, mihin e Kitti e min ngondi. Faa sayakiire tuufi Kitti. Kitti wi'i tokkataa laawol ngol tokku mi, sey tokki laawol gaḍa sayakiire no tuuf ḍum. Te'eti ḍum sawru garaaje, mo waḍi ga yokkaago. Minon boo, min deggoyake. E mo nodda o'o, e mo nodda o'o, nden taynani mo. E mo wondi e sayakiire.

Ammaan boo, e mo he'esi yam. Sii kee nan, min njahi min ndegoy bunndu. Nden na'i no ḍuudi. Nden mi yinta dow ngaari, mi waala dow ngaari. To min njarni, min karni bunndu Alala. Min ḥaboya, kadi maa min ngarta. Kayi amayak faa abada.

Nden raa Egoyi, raa Inna. Nden jo'onde amin Alala. Nden ga'i

²The conflicts with her father and the harsh behaviour of the latter should not be interpreted as a lack of paternal love or as an indicator for a difficult character, but rather as an expression of the behaviour culturally expected from a father towards his first-born child according to the norms of the *pulaaku* (see Dupire 1962: 183), yet which cannot be understood and appreciated by the child.

³Kitti is the nickname of 'Dawra's younger brother, Boyi.

⁴This term for grandmother here refers to 'Dawra's mother, Asbine.

We were staying at Alala. At the time, oxen were used as draught animals at the well. I just mounted them [and they did the work]. There were many milk cows and we had milk and everything in abundance.

I was about 10 years old when I started to do the work of herding my father's animals and watering them at the well. There were good pastures at Alala at that time. There were all sorts of wild animals then: giraffes, lions, and even spirits. One day, Egoyi had a dispute with a spirit. He insulted it and then, the spirit also insulted Egoyi. I have never forgotten this.

Once, a male giraffe attacked me when I was all by myself in the bush, looking after the cattle. I ran away from the giraffe and I hid behind a tree. It came after me, but could not find me and finally turned away. One day, also, we were followed by a lion when we went to the well together with [my cousin] Nyalle. We abandoned our bucket-bags and held on to the tails of the cows to be able to run faster. The cow tails saved us from the lion! The bush was really full of wild animals then. But my parents protected me [against such threats] with blessings.

One day, I found four ostriches with a clutch of many eggs. As they frightened the cattle, I first had to reorganize the cattle and then I had a closer look. I wanted to see what the ostriches were doing there. As I approached them, they were craning their necks. When I arrived at the place, I found a lot of eggs. In the evening, when I returned home with

kanyum maa njarnata, kanyum so'oyto. Mihin mi wadi tan. Nden na'i bireteedi, nden kosam, nden koomi min ngoodi.

Nden duubi am sappo ko nanngu 08
mi dowki e jaarnde baaba am, e mi duroya. Alala nden dum geene, mi ndurdata. Nden ra, ngeeloodi ladde e ngoodi. Koomi walaa ko walaa. Tookaaji e ngoodi, raa gini e ngoodi. Egoyi faa hudhudtiri e ginol. E mo wi'a: 'Ciit maada.' Nden ginol maa wi'a: 'Ciit maada, ahan maa, Egoyi.' Faa jooni mi yegitaay dum.

Too ma ngeelooba ladde tuufoy 09
am, amaleeri ladde. Mihin tan feere am, e mi nodda na'i, e mi raara di. Amaleeri ladde gada mi suudi. Ndi wari, ndi fili, ndi fili faa ndi somi, ndi dilli. E mi suudi, e mi afki e te'enaaki. Too, doon maa, e min ndegoyo nden tookaaru tuufi min, minon e Nyalle'en. Min kibini paali, min nanngi bokorde na'i, min nyaari. 'Bokorde na'i min dadri tookaaru ndu! Nden a anndi ladde do fuu diiwe e keewi. Ammaan be saagoy am, kama ninni be mbada ayaare, be saagoy am.

Nyandeere go'o, sey tawu mi 10
ndawuuji nayi. Di ndimi, di kefini yande. Sii kee nan, gada di kulnoy na'i, gada mi so'oy na'i. 'Di so'oy gada mi moorti yande. Bi'i mi, too, mum mi yi'a dume di ndawuuji mbadta do'o. Sey ndillonoy mi di, e di mbadana mi daade ninni. Sey tiimtu mi yande, tawu mi bosoodfe, bosoodfe e keewi. Sii kee

the cattle, I told everyone what I had found. I told them to come and see the eggs. And everybody went and we took the eggs. For a week, we did not eat anything else but omelettes. Egoyi even had stomach aches.

- 11 There is not a thing that I have not seen in the bush! I herded the animals, I watered them, alone in the bush, only me and Allah, and the cattle. And it was also me who milked the cows. I learned to milk them when I was still a small child. There were more than sixty calves and if my parents were away for two days to go to the market, it was me who milked them all, and I gave my younger siblings milk to drink.
- 12 Once I mounted a bull, you know at that time we used oxen [as drought animals], not donkeys. I had to go about twenty kilometres and all along the way I sang to myself. The way was so long, I had to spend the night in the bush. But I never got lost, even if I was far away from home. I remembered the trees along the way, or, at night, I oriented myself with the help of the stars until I had arrived back home. When I lay down to sleep, the cows lay down as well. And in the morning I continued to walk and lead them home.
- 13 At one moment, [my father's brother] Araba came back from a visit to my maternal uncles in the region of Tesker, near the mountain of Tilo-Tilo and told the people that he had seen very good pastures there.
- 14 At that time, there was a category of people in the pastoral region [of

nan, faa alaasara gaḍa mi ardi na'i mbolwonoy mi duuniya. Bi'i mi, be ngara, be ngi'a bosooḍe. Nden faa e Wodaabe nden dum wari, nden min koo'i bosooḍe. Yande naaki nde min koo'iri yontitande. Yontitande bosooḍe tan min koo'ata, min baḍa omlet. Faa dum nanngi Egoyi.

E mihin dume woni mi yi'aay jo'onde ladde amin fu! Walaa ngaynaaka ka mi waḍaa. Kaway ra mi yarna, ra mi duri. Feere am gaḍa mihin sey Allah, sey na'i. Kadi maa, mihin birata na'i. Ekitii mi birki ila walaa no pod mi. Nyalbi buri sittin, mihin birata di. 'Be njaha luumo nde go'o baldē didi, mihin birata di. Mi hokka minyiraaḍe am njara.

Kadi maa nde go'o, ga'i mbaḍoto mi. A anndi, googaaji min baḍoto, walaa dum jaakiji. Faa mi waḍa kama ba kilooji asirin, fuu e mi dilli, e mi yima feere am. Mi waala e wartoygo, faa mi hoota. Mi halkata faa, e mi anndi kul dum baḍaaki. Kadi maa, e mi anndi te'enaḍe, to iwee mi. Kadi maa koode tokkee mi. Koode tokkee mi faa mi warta wuro. Kadi maa, kul mi waali di baali. Sey to fini, kadi maa, mi arḍo, mi dilla.

Too, sey Abba warti ḍoon, dum kaayiraaḍe am nden to Hawgaare ḍoon Tilo-Tilo. Mo wi'i ladde toon e woodi hudo.

Ladde e ḍoon, a anndi nden henoobe e ngoodi, bebeen nanngēḍe

Alala] who caught our animals. They were called *Fakasi*. The *Fakasi* were a sort of *goumiers*⁵ – at that period there were no soldiers, only *goumiers*. They wore grey uniforms and shoes. They were a sort of tax collectors, sent by the government. They were sent from the bigger towns and came on horses or camels, since there were no cars at the time. They came and just caught the people's animals and took them by force – just as they also took children to school by force at the time. Some people would sign papers with them, like tax receipts. Some people would flee from them; others would give them animals in order to be left alone. They were called *Fakasi*.

Egoyi said that he would migrate because there were no *Fakasi* there [in the Tesker region]. [But before he migrated,] they came and caught cows and oxen. They made the women descend from the oxen. You know, if they caught the oxen, sometimes the people would give them [some animals, in order to get the oxen back]. Egoyi gave them a young bull and they wrote down his name.

In the year [my younger sister] Ba'asonka was born, Araba had gone to Tesker for an exploratory mission and it was decided that we would migrate to the Tesker region. And so we went – a long migration and we had a lot of cows then. Once, while we were on our way, the *Fakasi* found us at night. Some people abandoned their oxen, others their things. My paternal grandfather Egoyi told me all this.

jawdi. Fakasi. Fakasi, kama dūm be mbi'ata gume'en. Nden wasaki ma'ajum sooji'en ngalaa dūm nde gume'en. Kama iri godfi do'o tiisiji puri-puri, kanji be bornoto e pade de. 'Dum iiko, janga. E be mbađi pussi, a anđi, nden moota hebtaaka. Pussi e ngeeloodi be mbađoto. 'Dum lildoyta pussi e geloodi gađa toon si'ire nden dūm ummoyo dūm te'eta. 'Be ngare tan, be te'eta, kamar dūm bibbe lokol. Wodbe boo, be mbađa dereeji, kama aiki ninni, kama aiki kokka seede. Wodbe ndađa, wodbe kokka, be ngoora dūm, wodbe boo, to be anđi dūm, sey kokka. To kanjum dūm wi'ata Fakasi.

Too, nden Egoyi wi'i dūm yowa tun 15 da toon Fakasi waawataa yahago toon. Sii kee nan, e be ngara, e be naŋnga na'i e googaaji. E be njippina yeyri'en. A anđi, to be naŋgi nder googaaji e woodi kokkeebe be. Egoyi hokki be ngaari. Nden Egoyi e be anđi dūm, nden winndi innde muudūm.

Gađa be mbi'i tan min jowa, Abba 16 wari doon woosi. Nden hitaande nde Ba'aso'en ndime do'o. Mo wari do'o, mo woosi Hawgaare. Sii kee nan, wi'a min joowa, min joowa, gađa min jow. Nden na'i no duudi. 'Bebeen, be Fakasi, nde go'o kewti min jamma. Wodbe kibini googaaji, wodbe kibini siriji. Mo wi'i am ka, maama am, Egoyi.

⁵ The term *goumiers* originally refers to indigenous soldiers in the colonial army.

- 17 Finally, we arrived in the area of Tesker. When we arrived there, the maternal kin of Araba received us with welcoming exclamations. They said: ‘They have arrived, they have arrived!’
- 18 Before we knew the region of Tesker, we did not know what real cold was. We arrived in the cold and we had to cover us with blankets. It was only me and Ba’asonka then. Our other brothers and sisters had not been born yet. There as well, I was in charge of herding and watering the animals. I was the only girl among many men.
- 19 Before we came to the Tesker region, I did not know what money or what a market was. One day, we went to Adjeri and that was when I made my first experience on a market. I accompanied my father who had asked me to drive a cow to the market [to be sold], because with anyone else the cows would not advance. When we arrived, my father gave me 25 FCFA and I decided that I wanted to buy a pagne from that. I did not know anything about the market, but that day I learned how the market worked. A merchant asked me to choose anything that I wanted and I picked a cloth much too expensive for the little money I had. This brought me into a quarrel with the merchant. But there, at Adjeri, I understood much about markets.
- 20 Finally, the bad season⁶ came and we had to leave and migrate as far as the region of the Nigerian border. We walked all that way. It was really
- Faa min do’oy Hawgaare. Nden min do’oy Hawgaare, bebeen kaayiraabe Abba’en, kanyum tabi min, min ngari. ‘Be mbi’a: ‘Be ngaroy, be ngaroy!’
- Nden min anndaa Hawgaare, min anndaa peewol. Min njahi toon peewol na min sudake. Mihin, dum mihin tan, sey Ba’aso. ‘Be’e fuu nden ndimaaka. ‘Do’o be’e fuu ndima. Too, e min doon kadi kaway mihin woni duroowo, mihin woni jarnoowo. Mihin tan woni njarnoowo. Mihin tan nder worfe.
- Ko min ngarti Hawgaare, nden mi anndaa seede, mi anndaa luumo fu. Faa min njahi Ajeeri anndu mi luumo. Laggoy mi nagge, arfoy mi nge. Ndottiijo amin wi’i mi mi ardonno dum. Kul naa mihin di njatta. Nden arfoy mi, sii kee nan, nden ngar mi luumo mo hokki yam joovi, bi’i mi wudere soodee mi. Mi anndaa luumo fu. Ammaan nden anndu mi ko wi’ete luumo. Kaado wi’i mi batto mi hoo’a ko gidu mi fu, sey ittu mi wudere kudiire. Too, kudiire no sa’nde, boo seede am no sedaaje. Kanjum kaβ mi e Kaado. Toon Ajeeri, toon anndu mi luumo.
- Faa hitaande najngi min, min kuulti faa min njahi baakin Najeeriya. ‘Doon maa e kosde amin. Hitaande nden nde wadi dum. Bali pe’inir mi

⁶I.e., the major drought of 1973–1974, locally called *gandaw*.

a very bad season. I had to make the cows survive by feeding them the leaves of doum palms. I removed the lower parts of the leaves [where they are thorny]. Then I cut the leaves in pieces and I fed the cows with them. This went on for about ten months until the rains finally came. Then my father and I led the cows back and finally we reunited with the others [who had remained back] in the Damergou region.

And finally I began to stay in town. When I got married, I began to stay in town. At first it was in Tanout. I stayed there for about a year. I had never known the town, but now I began to live there. At first, I did not like it, but then I got used to it. And then we moved to Toukounous,⁷ where my daughter was born. We stayed for about a year and then I returned home [to the Damergou region]. I stayed in the bush at first, but then I decided to go to town since [my brother] Alaji had found work in a project in Tanout. I decided to enrol my children to school. And so I first enrolled them in Tanout and then they continued to go to school in Zinder, and that is why I ended up staying in town.

na'i. Buudi bali di ittee mi, kamar roogo. Sey dum fuu mi tay'a, mi tay'a, mi wada e akali. Mi hokka di faa di pe'ii, faa lebbi sappo, faa iyoonde tobi. Fuu nder kadi maa, min arday huultinoy di, faa be kewti min do'o Damergu.

Ko ngartu mi do'o si'ire... gada mo 21
hoowi yam, gada koofgal am, ngartu mi si'ire, baariki. Nde mo hoowi yam, min joodi baariki, Taanus, faa min badi hitaande. Mi anndaa baariki. Jooni kam jo'onde si'ire kaway nanngi yam. Mi yidaa dum, faa booftu mi, faa min njahi Tukunus. Faa ndimtu mi e Tukunus. Min badi hitaande, nden so'itoy mi wuro. Too, mi njoodi ladde, mi njoodi, nden yannan bi'i mi too, mi yahe si'ire tun da Alaji nanngi aiki proje e Taanus. Too, nden bi'i mi, mi wade bilki'en e lokol. Sii kee nan, gada mi wad be lokol Taanus, faa ngartu min do'o Damagaram. Gada lokol dum gada nden be njoofaay dum. To jo'onde am si'ire noon.

⁷ A town in the area of Filingué, in western Niger.

TEXT 5: RELATIONS WITH AUTHORITIES

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT

The following excerpt from a longer account of Dawra Egoyi shows how contacts of Wodaabe Gojanko'en with political authorities have sometimes become relatively close yet were often of an opportunistic nature. The account refers to contacts in the 1960s to the then head of state, Diori Hamani (1916–1989), the first president of independent Niger. The fact that Dawra first of all refers to Diori's wife Aïssa (or Aïchatou) and to Diori himself merely as her husband (*kore Aïsa*), is telling with regard to the role of women in weaving indirect ties to authorities. In the more recent case of president Mamadou Tandja, it was also women from Dawra's family who established links, in this case to one of the president's daughters, which later significantly facilitated, e. g., the establishment of the school in Ganatcha.

The encounter related here took place during one of Diori's tours to the interior of the country, which he made in a yearly rhythm during his presidency and during which his wife used to accompany him. Dawra's depiction of Aïssa Diori is consistent with the active role that she took during her husband's presidency in promoting the participation of women in the nation-building process.¹ Aïssa Diori (1928–1974) was a Fulbe woman and indeed accompanied her husband on occasions such as the one related here, engaging in an agenda of political education aimed especially at the rural women. The anecdote gives a vivid impression of how Nigerien political campaigns have been characterized, from the very beginning, by costly feasts during which money and presents were distributed to potential electors. It also demonstrates what is still true to some extent today, but what was much more pronounced then: that the Nigerien society is in many ways still a face-to-face society, where the acquaintance with somebody close to somebody else can open up doors that can even lead to direct contacts to the ruling authorities.

Dawra Egoyi, Wodaabe Gojanko'en, Ganatcha, July 2011

- 01 When the French gave up the power, I was a youth, not a small child, but a young man. We went to the administrative centre. We went there with the *goumiers*.² The French mounted
- (H) Lokacin da Nasara sun beri mulki ni samari ne, ba yaro karami. Mun tafi bariki. Muna tafiya da gume bariki. Nasaru suna hau rafumi, suna zuwa wurin ubayenmu. Mun sani. Ni

¹ https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aïchatou_Diori, accessed 22 July 2015.

² Indigenous soldiers serving the French colonial army.

camels and they came to our father's place. I remember that I was a young man then; I did not have my own family homestead yet. But when they [the French] handed over the power, I had three children: Naana, Ba'asonka, Siibi. When the French left, the husband of Aïssa, Diori, took the power.³

Diori Hamani, yes, at that time we were very close. His wife stayed with us like you⁴ and I. [Once] he and his wife came for a gathering. We knew him. At one time, his wife Aïssa took some money and gave it to us: 5,000 FCFA. At that time even for 1,000 FCFA you could buy a camel!

We knew her from the region of Ingal. They had come to the gathering from Niamey. There were Wodaabe and Tuareg. Diori was there. Aïssa was there. And there we were. There was also a certain Mokao, a father of ours.⁵ We were only four of us directly in the place where they were staying.

[Aïssa] had a bag, like a bag where you would keep your tea. She put her hand into it and she said: 'Take this money.' She gave us [money], but she said: 'Give the women also some of it. When you

samari ne, amma ba mu yi ðaki ba. Amma lokacin da suka beri, lokacin muna da yara uku. Nana, Ba'asonka, Sibi. Lokacin Nasara suka beri, wannan ya kama; (F) o'o nanngudo, o'o kore Aisa, Joori.

(H) Jori Hamani. I, lokacin Jori 02 Hamani bisanmu, matanshi kamar zamanmu, ni da kai. Duka suna zuwa. Shi da matanshi, suna zuwa taro. Mun san shi. Matanshi, Aisa, sai da suka fid da kuɗi wurin da abun da suka ba mu. Jika biyar. Lokacin nan jika ma sai ka sayi rakumi.

Daga kasar Ingal muka san ta. 03 Daga Niamey suka taho taro. Ya zo wurin taro. Ga Fulani, ga Bugaje, Asbinawa. To, ga Jori. Ga Aisa. Mu ma, ga mu. Ga ma wani Mokawo, uwanmu. Mu huɗu ne kaɗai, muka shigo wurin da suke.

Ya fid da cikin wani jika, kamar 04 na shahi. Ya sa hannu, ya ce: 'Ga kuɗi.' Ya mika muna. Amma ya ce: 'Ku ba mata ma.' 'In kun reba,' ya ce, 'ku ba mata.' Ya cika sukari. An yanka ðanuna, an yanka.

³ There is some confusion in 'Dawra's chronology of the events: His first child (Naana) was born in 1965; Diori Hamani's election as president took place in 1960; the transfer of power from the French to a government council and later to a sovereign government was a longer process lasting from 1957 to 1960. If 'Dawra's first three children were indeed already born when the events related here took place, the meeting with Diori and his wife Aïssa probably took place during one of the electoral campaigns of Diori when he came to the region of Agadez, probably towards the end of the 1960s during the campaign preceding Diori's re-election in 1970.

⁴ 'Dawra is referring to me.

⁵ Probably a father's brother of 'Dawra.

share it', she said, 'give the women also some.' She also distributed sugar. And then bulls were slaughtered. The Tuareg, the Asbinawa, ourselves, we all slaughtered animals.

- 05 [Diori] said that he would leave his soldiers there. At the time Kountché⁶ was among them, they were his guards. From that time we knew Kountché. They were his guards. [...] Yes, when we were there [in the Agadez region], all the *goumiers* and whosoever, descended at our place.

Bugaje, Asbinawa, mu da Fulani, duk mun yanka.

Ya ce, ya beri sojawa nan. Lokacin, Kunce sun yi mishi gadi. Lokacin nan mun san Kunce. Su ne suna yi mishi gadi. [...] I, lokacin da muka taho can, kowane gume, kowa wurinmu suka sabka, can Agadez.

⁶Seyni Kountché (1931–1987) ruled Niger after a *coup d'état* against Diori Hamani as military head of state from 1974 to 1987. At the time referred to in Dawra's account, he was a military officer and as such apparently involved in the presidential tour to the interior of Niger as a leading security force. This also indicates that the related events must have taken place in the 1960s rather than before Diori's presidency.

TEXT 6: ALIJAM AND DEGEREEWOL

VERSIONS OF MYTHICO-HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS

The Wodaabe in Niger are today constituted by fifteen clans that belong each to one of two clan clusters, Degereewol and Alijam, named after their alleged founding ancestors, Dege and Ali, respectively.¹ The two clan clusters differ in certain regards. The most readily visible distinction is in the way they apply marks (*jelgol*) to their cattle and small stock by incisions to the animals' ears. Rather than being individual property marks for animals, the incisions can be characterized as group identifiers, indicating the affiliation of the animals' owners to either of the two clan clusters (Dupire 1954).

Although the segments of Wodaabe society have been described as equal and are, in fact, politically autonomous (Dupire 1962: 307), they are at the same time conceived, by the Wodaabe, as being structured by hierarchical relations, the idiom defining this hierarchy being seniority, based on the alleged relative seniority of the founding ancestors of the clan clusters, clans and lineages. When discussing the relationship between the founding ancestors of the two clan clusters, Ali and Dege, with Wodaabe across clans and regions, a variety of different versions are heard, none of which, however, seems to correspond to the one reported by Dupire in her classic work *Peuls nomades* (1962). According to Dupire (1954: 132, 1962: 285, 1972: 27), the Wodaabe conceive of Ali and Dege as brothers, Ali being the senior and Dege the junior. On this basis, she further contends that the ensemble of Alijam clans enjoy seniority status in relation to the Degereewol clans. According to virtually all my interlocutors from both Alijam and Degereewol clans,² however, the opposite is the case: They unanimously agreed that the

¹ Although Dupire's (1962) terms 'primary lineage' (*'lignage primaire'*) for the clan, and 'maximal lineage' (*'lignage maximal'*) for the clan cluster, are still widely in use in particular in the francophone literature (e.g., Loncke 2015; Lassibille 2008), I have preferred not to adopt her terminology. A common ancestor might be assumed or acknowledged on these levels, but actual descent cannot in most cases be traced. The term 'clan cluster' which I have chosen to refer to Dupire's '*lignage maximal'*' also has the merit of emphasizing the fact that the claim for common descent to explain the relations between the clans and the clan clusters is rather a social construct than a historic reality. The fifteen clans are: Degereejji (also called Shahidooji), Gojanko'en, Jijjiiru, Njapto'en, Suudu Suka'el, Kasawsawa, Baagel'en and Hadaali (all in the Degereewol clan cluster); Bii Ute'en, Bii Korony'en, Bii Nga'en, Yaamanko'en, Bii Hamma'en (also called Kabaawa) and Alamoyo (all in the Alijam cluster).

² I discussed this matter with different interlocutors from the following clans: Gojanko'en, Suudu Suka'el, Njapto'en (all Degereewol), Yaamanko'en and Bii Ute'en (both Alijam).

Degereewol are senior to the Alijam. Although Dupire's assertion has been taken up by several authors (e.g., Loftsdóttir 2001: 3; Sambo 2007: 38f.), its apparent contradiction with the prevalent opinion on the matter among contemporary Wodaaɓe has also previously been pointed out in the literature. Angelo Bonfiglioli (1988: 43,74), for instance, implicitly contradicts Dupire's version when he states that the Degereejji (also called Shahidooji), i.e., a Degereewol clan, are considered by all Wodaaɓe as their seniors. Patrick Paris (1997: 84), relying on broad comparative data about a variety of Wodaaɓe clans in Niger across regions, explicitly mentions that Dupire's remarks about the order of seniority of the two clan clusters cannot be confirmed. Not elaborating this point further, Paris mentions it only in a footnote and announces a planned publication on the matter, which unfortunately, due to his untimely death, could never be realized. Paris has pointed out the consequences that this apparent error holds for the validity of Dupire's assumptions about two related issues, namely, (1) the question of the historic development of the earmarks (*jelgol*) that are applied to cattle by Alijam and Degereewol (Dupire 1954), and (2) the question of the relative positioning of dancers during line dances that can include dancers from different clan clusters (Dupire 1962: 314f.). On the basis of Paris' information, Loncke (2015: 49f., 122, 310f.), although also rather *en passant* and in footnotes, briefly elaborates on these two aspects and thus basically rectifies Dupire's misleading statements.

ALIJAM AND DEGEREEWOL

The following account of the story of the founding fathers of the two clan clusters has been collected among the Wodaaɓe Gojanko'en in the Koutous region. With little variation, it is also prevalent among Wodaaɓe Degereewol from different clans in at least the Ader and the Damergou region.

Dawra Egoyi, Wodaaɓe Gojanko'en, Koutous region, January 2011

Ali was the slave of Dege. He herded the cattle for him. One day Dege begot a female child, a handicapped girl, a girl without feet. Ali herded Dege's animals and he [Dege] appreciated his work.

One day he said: 'Ali, listen, since I have got that girl, and since you have been a good herder to me, I give you my child to marry.' He was talking about the girl without feet to walk. And so Ali married her. They

(F) Ali. O'o bi'eteedo Ali, kanyum 01
woni massudo Dege. 'Dum gaynaako Dege. Nden Dege rimi biɗɗo, biɗɗo taggido, biɗɗo mo walaa kosde. O'o, Ali e dura, e dura, faa mo yebi durngol muudum.

Nden mo wi'i: 'Ali, jooni kam, 02
nden mi rimi o'o, a durdini ni, dara mi hokke o'o, bii am, koowoda.' O'o, mo walaa kosde. Nden Ali hoowi mo. Nden rimi biɓɓe. Rimdi e o'on, rimdi e makko, biɓɓe mawni.

had children, many children. And the children grew up.

- 03 One day, when Ali led the cattle to pasture, he applied the earmark to all his cattle, [thus introducing] the earmark of the Alijam. He cut in their ears and he exaggerated. He made more cuts than we customary.³
- 04 Dege said to him: ‘Hey Ali, what are you doing?’ Ali said: ‘The reason why I am doing this is that death is waiting for us all. When I will die, this is the property mark of my children, the mark will show them which are their sheep and their cattle.’
- 05 This is why they are called Alijam, and Dege’s children Degereewol.
- Nyannan, toon to Ali orti na’i, na’i fuu dum jelgol, jelgol Alijam, nden mo wadi gam jabidgo, nden mo wadi ga jabidgo. Nden mo wadi ga jelgo, e mo jabbita. Nden mo jaarni.
- Nden Dege wi’i mo: ‘Ee Ali, ko mba’anda dum?’ Mo wi’i: ‘Ko mba’aru mi dum, gam maayde jogga. Ko mi maayi raa jelgol biɓɓe, jawdi biɓɓe am, na’i biɓɓe am.’
- Noon kanjum wi’i ɓe Alijam, Dege Degereewol.

A second, very similar, version has been collected among the Wodaabe Njapto’en in the Ader region, near Tchintabaraden. It features some interesting variations.

Njuuri Hassan, Wodaabe Njapto’en, Ader region, April 2011

- 01 Dege founded the Degereewol, Ali founded the Alijam. Dege had seven wives. He also had a herder. That was Ali. But Dege did not know his origin [i.e., he was not of Wodaabe origin]. He said that Ali should become his sister’s son,⁴ because he had worked for him for such a long time. He had even given him cows and they had multiplied. But Ali did not have a woman to
- (F) Dege fudi Degereewol. Ali fudi Alijam. Dege woodi suudi joveedifi, yeyri’en joveedifi ɓe hoore muudum. Too, nden Dege hebi gaynaako mo hoore muudum, maa mo anndaa to mo iwoy. Sey mo wi’i Ali mo hokki dum no baadiiko. Mo wi’i, Ali no baadiiko gada no huuwa mo, e huuwa, e huuwa. Faa wadi na’i, faa di duudi. Walaa to hoowo. Nden han Dege, yeyriijo muudum arano

³One principal criterion of distinction between Alijam and Degereewol is the way they mark their animals with incisions in their ears (see also the discussion further below).

⁴The term used here is *baadiiko* or *baadiraawo*, which means ‘sister’s son’ (ZS) in this context. More precisely, not Ali and Dege themselves, but their male descendants would be in a relation of ZS (Alijam) and MB (Degereewol) as a result of the union (see Figure 1c, this chapter). The exact implications of this relationship are discussed further below.

marry. Then Dege's first wife gave birth to a girl who could not walk because her legs were not straight. But with her hands she was working well. Dege said: 'Ali, I appreciate the work that you do for me and I want to give you my daughter to marry.' And they got married and they had children. Many children. That is where the Alijam originated.

So they [the Alijam] are sister's sons of the Degereewol. All that the Alijam have got, it is only from the Degereewol that they have got it.

One day, Dege applied the property mark to the cows. When it came to Ali's cows, the latter said: 'Father, let me apply my own mark [to my cows].' Dege said: 'Alright, I agree.' When Ali applied the mark [to the cows' ears], after having cut in [the end of the ear], he added a [lateral] incision. Ali was satisfied. Dege asked: 'And how will you call [your lineage]?' 'We call ourselves Alijam.'

They moved on with their cattle and when they made camp, Dege refused Ali to make camp in the north and told him to keep in the south [of himself]. Ali became angry about this.

You know, the Wodaabe always want to be in northern position. They do not want to be in the south [in relation to somebody else]. They want the north. Ali became so upset that he separated from Dege and he moved away. But Dege followed him and when he reached him, he said that he wanted his daughter back.

Ali's wife started to cry. 'If you take me back, what is going to

rimi biɗɗo debbo mo ruugataako. Kosɗe no nyobiide. Maa juude e mo huuwa. Nden mo wi'i: 'Ali, nihi no kuurata, a woodi jam, mi hokki ma ra biyam hoowa, biyam debbo.' Nden ɓe ndimi bikkon, kon ɗuudi. Alijam wurtori non.

Resi, no baadiraabe Dege. Ali no 02
baadiraawo Dege. Ko ɓe kefi fuu
nder Degereewol ɓe njiiloto.

Nden nyannan, Dege e jella na'i 03
jelgol. Faa waroy e na'i Alijam. Sey
Ali wi'i mo: 'Kul a yardake ndottiijo,
wora mi wada jelgol am.' Mo wi'i:
'A'a, mi yardake.' Nden mo njeli,
nden mo njabiti. Kul mo seeki gada
mo njabite. Ali jam woodi. Nden mo
wi'i: 'E noy bi'eteda?' 'Alijam min
bi'ete.'

Nden ɓe ngonsi, ɓe nkodi. Nden mo 04
hadi mo, mo wi'i mo, to mo hod
ɗoon woyla, mo hettita fombina. To
mo dororo jokkir woyla, sii kee nan,
sey mo monna.

A anndi minon Wodaabe, faa abada 05
woyla min gidi. Bodaado woyla yidi,
yidaa hedgo fombina. Woyla yidi. E
nden han Ali monna, nden sendiri e
Dege. Nden dilli. Nden Dege tefi mo,
nden hewtoy mo, nden wi'i no njapte
mo biyam.

Nden yeyriijo wadi ga woygo. 'E a 06
japti am kon bikkon noy badane mi

happen to the children that I have born? It was all your idea. Now the tree has grown and has got roots. Who is going to pull them out?’

- 07 Her father [Dege] said that he would forgive them. Then he went away and left Ali. Ali moved on with his cattle. That is what has brought us apart. That is how we separated from the Alijam.

kon, kon dimi mi? Ay, ahan wadi dum. Te’enaaki fudi, wadi dadi. E moy doofata ki?’

Nden baaba wi’i, mo yaafake be. Nden dilli. Nden dali Ali. Ali noon rimdiri. Noon, sii kee nan. Ra ko hendi min. Noon min seeri e Alijam.

THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW PROPERTY MARK AS A SIGN OF DISTINCTION OF A NEW SEGMENT

The two versions of the narrative both explicitly deal with the question of animal earmarks as a criterion of distinction between the two clan clusters: Ali decides to mark his cattle with his own mark (*jelgol*), and with this act, the Alijam distinguish themselves as a lineage of their own. It must be noted that although the animal earmark does distinguish the two clan clusters, it is, at least today, not a feature of distinction on the level of lineages or even clans: All Degereewol, on the one hand, and all Alijam, on the other, share, with slight variations, roughly the same respective *jelgol* and yet are very large, internally differentiated groups. Dupire (1954) has suggested that in the past, this principle of distinction was probably more pronounced and over time got more or less lost. The mark of the Degereewol consists of a split in the tip of each ear of the animal, while the Alijam apply an additional lateral incision to the left ear. According to Dupire (1954: 133), who bases her statement on the assumed seniority of the Alijam, the mark of the Degereewol would be derived from the older Alijam mark by omission of the lateral incision. According to the two above versions of the narrative, and taking into account Dupire’s apparently problematic assumptions on the order of seniority of the two clan clusters, the opposite seems to be more plausible (see also Loncke 2015: 122).

BROTHERS OR SLAVES?

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the narrative, and certainly its most obvious contradiction with the version reported by Dupire, is that the controversy about the relationship of Ali and Dege does not present itself here as merely a question of the seniority of brothers. They are not conceived as brothers at all and, what is more, they are not even genealogically related. Rather, Ali is said to have been the herder (*gaynaako*), or, in some versions, even the slave (*massudb*) of Dege. He was thus originally a stranger, an outsider, and an ethnic other. But since Dege appreciated Ali’s work, Dege encouraged Ali to establish his own herd by giving animals to him, and he had the wish to

integrate him into his family. Dege had a daughter who, according to different variations, had either a deformed foot, only one foot, or no feet at all. One day, Dege married her to Ali and thus established affinal kinship ties between himself and the latter. The couple's children were to become the Alijam.

The motif of a physical handicap is widespread in versions of this story among Degereewol both from the Damergou and Ader regions. In a variation reported by Sambo (2008: 39),⁵ Ali himself, here conceptualized as the senior (*sic!*) brother of Dege, is physically handicapped and thus not suited to a mobile life-style. For this reason he settled down and married the daughter of an Islamic scholar. According to Sambo, the story seeks to explain the higher degree of Islamization observed among some of the Alijam clans, which had already been noted by Dupire (1962: 206, 285). It is noteworthy that the handicap is the deformation of a foot and thus an inability to move. Pastoral mobility being a central criterion for identification, the association of the other with such a deficiency can be interpreted as a way of discrediting him by putting into question his conformity to core cultural values.

Not surprisingly, the Alijam do not share the version with Ali being Dege's servant or slave. While few interlocutors were really determined about their exact genealogical relation, 'Bii Ute'en from Diffa and Zinder independently claimed that Ali was Dege's half-brother (FS), Ali however being the younger one. The seniority of the Degereewol over the Alijam has not been put into question by any one, neither Alijam nor Degereewol, I discussed the question with. In Alijam versions of the account, the separation is generally mentioned without reference to any conflict, but rather, it is explained as the result of both groups having grown big in numbers.

THE PROCESS OF SEGMENTATION AND THE INTEGRATION OF OUTSIDERS BY MARITAL EXCHANGE

The different versions of the relation between Alijam and Degereewol have two very different implications: If Ali and Dege had indeed been brothers or half-brothers (see Figure 1a, this chapter), the differentiation of the two clan clusters would be the result of a split within a single, formerly united kinship group. This would correspond to a very common mechanism of group segmentation that can be observed to our days: When a group has reached a certain size, there are tendencies to split up. The impulse can be an internal conflict or merely diverging opinions and decisions on pastoral migration movements. The separation of the Alijam and the Degereewol could be interpreted as the result of such a process. Other versions that claim a status of cross-cousins for Ali and Dege (see Figure 1b above) represent a variation of the same pattern.

⁵ Sambo does not indicate the clan identity of his interlocutor, but it can be assumed that he is from a Degereewol clan.

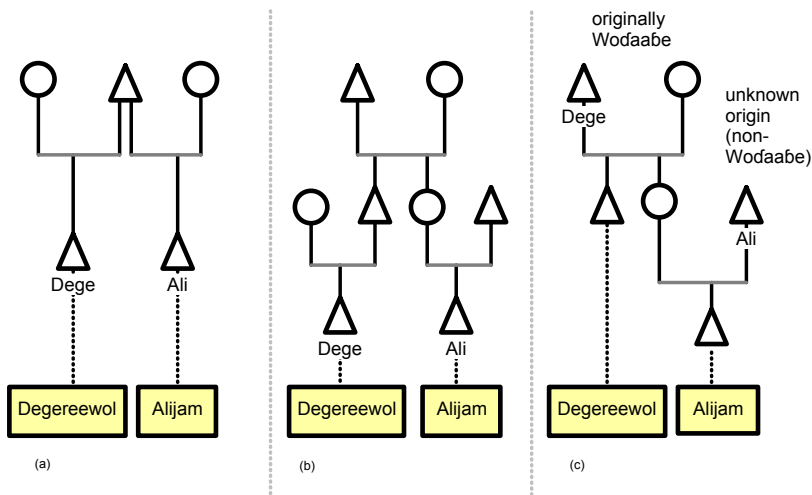


Figure 1: Genealogical relations between Alijam and Degereewol according to different versions prevailing among Alijam (a) and Degereewol clans (b, c), respectively

A completely different picture, however, emerges from the version of the narrative according to which Ali was not Dege's brother or cousin, but rather his herder and probably an ethnic other, in any case originally an outsider to Dege's kinship group (see Figure 1c above). This version is thus a narrative about the integration of an outsider into Wodaabe society: It is the wish of Dege to integrate Ali into his family that leads to intermarriage and thus to genealogical relations between the two groups in the first place. Only afterwards, the groups split, yet remain closely related.

A mechanism of integrating outsiders that is very similar to the mechanism illustrated by the second narrative has been reported by Stenning (1959: 53) for the Borno region in Northern Nigeria. According to him, impoverished individuals whose own social network was not sufficiently strong to enable them to reconstitute a herd had the possibility to pledge allegiance with leaders of clans or clan segments other than their own and work for them as herders. Having proved industrious and loyal, they were generally first compensated with cattle and finally, if the relation remained good, it was not unusual that they were given a girl to marry and thus integrated into the community. For a leader (*ardɔ*) such new followers, who were known by the term '*nastuɓe*' ('those who have come in'), were welcome as new subjects, since they could be expected to be very loyal.

The integration of larger units such as lineage segments of non-Wodaabe origin into Wodaabe society have also been documented (e.g., Bonfiglioli 1988) and represent an equally well-established mechanism. An especially well-documented example of this is the assimilation of the Kasawsawa to the Gojanko'en clan and thus their integration, or 'adoption', into the Wodaabe ethnic group. According to a number of very similar accounts,

the Kasawsawa have originated from a founding ancestor who was of Fulbe but of non-Wodaaabe origin (Paris 1997: 77; Loncke 2015: 218ff.; Lassibille 2008: 160). After he was injured and left in the bush, he was found by Wodaaabe Gojanko'en who took care of him and made him recover. In a version of this story reported by Loncke (2015: 219), the mechanism of integration perfectly resembles the mechanism described in the second Ali-and-Dege narrative transcribed above: The man is given animals and his children intermarry with the Gojanko'en. In another version of the story, the man is even said to have had beautiful daughters whom the Gojanko'en were eager to marry. In return, they married their daughters to his sons.

The different versions of the narrative thus reflect two major principles of social group formation that are prevalent among the Wodaaabe: (1) that of the fission or disjunction of kinship groups, and (2) that of the fusion or assimilation of groups after periods of co-residence and social convergence. In fact, many versions of both the narratives about Ali and Dege, on the one hand, and those about the integration of the Kasawsawa into the Wodaaabe clan structure, on the other, combine in themselves the motives of both fusion *and* fission of groups: Ali is first integrated by means of marriage, later he opts for separation; similarly, the Kasawsawa are integrated by marital exchange before they become numerous and separate, yet remain close allies.

WIFE-GIVERS AND WIFE-RECEIVERS, MASTERS AND SLAVES

Many mythico-historical narratives thus reflect a will within Wodaaabe society for the integration of others, of strangers with whom one has become socially close, into the own kinship-based social structure. Marital exchange is central in such patterns of integration (see also Bonfiglioli 1988: 44f.), as numerous narratives of group formation, in which they are a recurring motif, clearly attest. Inter-marriage is both a tool and a motivation for forging alliances. In the narrative of the integration of the Kasawsawa, the wish for marital exchange is clearly at the basis of the alliance between the two clans. In the narrative of Ali and Dege, it is the declared wish of Dege to establish affinal kinship relations with his servant.

Similar mechanisms are known from other societies – in Africa and beyond – as well. They have been pointed out, for example, by Evans-Pritchard (1940: 226–7) for the Nuer: Strangers or outsiders can be integrated into the society through a female marriage link and get attached to the respective clan. Such female marriage links tend to establish hierarchies: The wife-givers are generally regarded as superior, the wife-receivers as inferior both in cross-cultural comparison and among the Wodaaabe.⁶ Murphy and Bledsoe

⁶ What makes the Wodaaabe case particular is the fact that it comprises not only the cases of wife-givers and wife-receivers, but also that of 'wife-takers', ▶

(1987: 140), in a discussion of this recurrent theme, have pointed out with reference to Leach's (1961, 1997 [1954]) analyses of the Kachin of Burma that marital links can be 'a vehicle for hierarchical relations'. Generally, 'an initial marriage between patrilineages ranks the wife-giver over the wife-receiver, and such marriages become the idiom for structuring [...] political relations' (Murphy and Bledsoe 1987: 140). According to Dupire (1962: 308–9), the status difference between wife-giver and wife-receiver can be expressed either in the idiom of masters and slaves, or in terms of brothers' sons and sisters' sons. Both motives appear in our second version of the Ali-and-Dege narrative: Dege takes the role of wife-giver, senior and master; Ali is presented as the wife-receiver, junior and slave, and the Alijam are referred to as the *baadiraabe* of the Degereewol. Structurally, the relation between Alijam and Degereewol as proclaimed by the Degereewol versions of the narrative perfectly resembles what Dupire (1962: 308–9) has described as classificatory cross-cousinhood (*dendiraagal*) between clans, established through the female link of Dege's daughter, who had been married to Ali.⁷ The expression '*bii goggo*' cited by Dupire and translated with 'sister's son' is the equivalent to '*baadiraawo*' or '*baadiiko*' used in the second version of the narrative.⁸ The relationship of cross-cousins (*dendiraabe*) is generally characterized by mutual joking. The overall interaction of Alijam and Degereewol, however, although the master-and-slave rhetoric and the mockery about the deformed foot of Dege's daughter resemble the typical rhetoric of

↙ corresponding to the pattern of *te'egal* elopement marriage in which married women are 'taken' across Wodaabe clans against the consent of their husbands and their families (see Köhler 2016). A narrative reported by Loncke (2015: 202) sheds interesting light on this matter. It relates the story of a conflict between the 'Bii Nga'en and the 'Bii Korony'en, two Alijam clans that, according to the narrative, were formerly closely allied. In the context of a *ngaanka* meeting, a man from the 'Bii Korony'en, the junior clan, eloped with a married woman from the senior 'Bii Nga'en, which caused a rupture between the two clans. In the case of Ali and Dege the separation is marked by a different way of applying incisions to the ears of the cattle in order to mark them. In Loncke's narrative of the 'Bii Nga'en and 'Bii Korony'en, it is with a new chant that the latter establish themselves as an independent clan (note the linguistic closeness of the terms for earmarks (*jelgol*) and clan-specific chants (*jeldugol*) as markers of group identity, see also Loncke 2015: 121f.). Here, similarly as in the Ali-and-Dege narrative, the junior/inferior gets a wife from the senior/superior. However, in this case this does not happen with the consent of the latter who might else have claimed the generosity of a patriarch, but rather, it is here clearly a hostile act. Still, even in this case, the more prestigious position is that of the wife-giver. In Loncke's account, the 'Bii Nga'en get away as the sole tenants of the authentic *jeldugol* chant and refuse the 'Bii Korony'en performance of their chant during *ngaanka* ceremonies. According to Loncke (2015: 202f.), it is the very fact of giving wives – or letting others take them – that their senior status is based on.

⁷ On relations of wife-giver and wife-receiver, see also Dupire (1970: 320f.).

⁸ Literally, *bii goggo* means child of a paternal aunt. It is not used by the Wodaabe among whom I have done fieldwork.

joking partners, is characterized by the opposite of casual joking, namely, respectful distance and reserve. But in this regard it should not be forgotten that after all, the group relations are interpreted very differently by the two parties.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING THE FIRST

The two versions of the narrative of Ali and Dege are not only about inter-marriage and the question of giving or receiving a wife; they are also about the integration of an outsider into Wodaaɓe society. The hierarchical claims implied by the narrative are thus closely related to the question of firstcomers and latecomers. The wife-giver patronizes the wife-receiver and integrates him by offering him a girl to marry. Logically, the wife-giver has been there first, and thus enjoys a senior position.

The principle of firstcomer authority has been prominently pointed out by Kopytoff (1987: 148) as a widespread feature in African societies. It is visible in the social sphere (e.g., in the hierarchy between brothers according to their age or that between co-wives according to the seniority of their marriage). It is of particular importance also in the political sphere, where the order of the arrival of different groups in a given area is often in close association with the legitimacy of their claims to territories and resources. Several contributions in Kopytoff's edited volume on *The African Frontier* illustrate this principle well (Murphy and Bledsoe 1987; Packard 1987). Murphy and Bledsoe (1987: 123) write that, according to a widespread political principle in African societies, 'first occupation of a territory legitimizes the firstcomers and their descendants as "landowners" who allocate land to later arrivals and have special claims to their allegiance'. Kopytoff (1987: 122) stresses that 'the frontier-conditioned dynamic of the importance of firstcomer status continues to operate in the local politics of modern Africa'. In pastoral Fulɓe societies as well, the firstcomer principle is relevant. For instance, Kintz (1985: 103) notes that, in order to be credible, political leaders have to be able to trace their agnatic descent to a migration leader or a first arrived. Dupire (1962: 307) has equally argued along this line, remarking that the hierarchy between Wodaaɓe clans is *de facto* in direct relation to their order of arrival in a given area, although it is then often translated into an idiom of the seniority in the kinship relationship of the respective founders of the clans involved.⁹ In this light it is clear that the alleged seniority of specific clans can differ regionally: In the Ader and Damergou regions, for example, the Jijjiiru clan maintains a position of higher seniority status than the Suudu Suka'el clan (for the Ader region, see Loncke 2015: 216), whereas in eastern

⁹ In a political discussion that Schareika (2007: 305, 349) has documented among Wodaaɓe in eastern Niger the criterion of first arrival in the area is even explicitly given as the reason of the status superiority of one clan.

Niger, the situation is the inverse (Schareika 2007: 305, 348). Schareika (2007: 207) has pointed out that this hierarchy is not merely a question of status but that it actually matters in practical regards, since the firstcomer status grants priority use rights over the local resources, e. g., concerning the pecking order for watering animals at public pastoral wells.

On the other hand, as Murphy and Bledsoe (1987: 142) have shown using the example of the Kpelle in Liberia, ‘firstcomer status is not [necessarily] an outcome of actual first arrival’, but often enough a product of semantic manipulations. Where length of residence in an area is a decisive criterion for status positions, historical narratives are likely to be manipulated in order to legitimize an aspired position. Similarly, among the Wodaabe, seniority claims can be staked by verbal strategies. In political rhetoric, firstcomer issues play a significant role. Schareika (2007: 207), for example, has highlighted the importance of frequently heard claims such as ‘*baabaaji amin ariti ngari do*’ (‘our fathers have been the first to arrive here’) for establishing claims of supremacy. The politicized management of versions of historical and mythico-historical narratives is an important tool in this context.

HIERARCHIES AND THEIR SPATIAL MANIFESTATION

It seems rewarding to compare the verbal strategies of genealogical constructions of the history of group relations to another frequently applied strategy of challenging hierarchies, which takes account of the fact that these hierarchies among the Wodaabe are also spatially expressed.

In the second of the two versions of the Ali-and-Dege narrative the rupture comes about when, one day after a camp relocation, Ali presumes to install his camp in the north of Dege’s. This aspect, that certainly needs some clarification, addresses the complex topic of hierarchies and the way they are spatially expressed among the Wodaabe. Wodaabe social space is structured by multiple principles in which cardinal directions play an important role. One is the division of the pastoral camp (*wuro*) into a male (western) and a female (eastern) domain; another one, which shall concern us here, is the expression of hierarchies between groups and between individuals within a group by the relative position that they take at particular occasions on a north-south axis. The determining factor for these hierarchies is generally the relative seniority of the elements. The principle as such is general, yet the direction of the hierarchy depends on the context.

The hierarchies between lineages, clans and clan clusters all find their expression in spatial terms. In settings that assemble different lineages from one clan, or different clans from either the same or different clan clusters – notably during ceremonial inter-clan meetings (*ngaanka*) – the senior lineage or clan generally takes a northern position. This north-south hierarchization concerns notably the relative positioning of campsites and of dancers during



Photo 5: *Geerewol* dance line-up, Damergou region (F. KÖHLER, 2011)

male line dances during these occasions (see Paris 1997: 84; Loncke 2015: 310f.; Schareika 2007: 215; Lassibille 2008: 160).¹⁰

Why the north? As noted above, the relative spatial position expresses the hierarchy based on seniority or alleged seniority. Edmund Leach has pointed out that ‘[q]ualitative metaphors are not human universals but, as between one cultural context and another, they are often very similar. The politically influential are “superior”, and therefore sit “higher up”. But sitting “higher up” may mean that the chair is on a raised dais, or it may mean that the chair is at one end of the table rather than another’ (Leach 1997 [1976]: 53). Among the Wodaabe, seniority claims are the idiom in which political power relations and status are expressed, and the relative spatial position on a north-south axis is used to express this seniority status.

However, the fact that in inter-group contexts it is the northern position that is reserved for the senior group is astonishing with regard to the fact that within the commonly encountered structure of the domestic camp of a minimal lineage, generally a father and his adult sons with their respective households, the father’s household is in the south while his married sons who already have independent households of their own align themselves to the north with the eldest in the south and the youngest all the way north. The principle may be illustrated by the following statement from an interlocutor from the Njapto’*en* clan in the Ader region:

*Njuuri Hassan, Njapto’*en*, Ader region, April 2011*

Your child is born and you become a father. He [your son] will also marry and establish his own household, and (F) ‘Biiya rimi, ahan ra maa a baaba. Mo hoowake. Sey mo nyiɓa wuro, mo doororo woyla, mo besda. To

¹⁰ I was able to observe these principles at two *ngaanka* ceremonies that I attended in the Damergou region, both in October 2011. In the first of these occasions Jijjiiru Abeeji visited Gojanko’*en* Mbuuldi; in the second Kasawsawa visited Jijjiiru Daarankeeru.

he will establish it in the north [of yours]. Then his younger brother will also grow up and establish his own household and he will also make camp north of the other one [his elder brother]. The younger brother will take the north and the father will thus be left south. Such is the custom, that is how we have found it.

minirawo ma hewti, wadī kanyum ma wuro, sey kanyum ma hoḏa woyla on toon. Minirawo hettata woyla. ʿDum doori, dum wadī woyla. Nayeejo, sey hibbine fombina. ʿDum ndonu, noon dum tawi.

A second, and inverse, north-south principle, however, can explain the relative spatialization of clans and lineages: that of the homesteads of co-wives within the camp of their husband. Here, the senior wife always makes camp in a northern position with regard to her co-wives, who will align their homesteads to her south in a descending row. The following quotation illustrates this principle:

Laḅḅo Usman, Gojanko'en Damergou, May 2011

- 01 If you marry a woman, there she is. If you take a second wife, the first one will stay in the north, the second will align herself south of the first one. It is always like this. If you take a third one, she will be all the way south. And the fourth one alike.
- (H) Ka ga yanzu, in ka yi arme, ke nan, mace da ka yi arme, ga ta nan. Misali, ka kare ka yi arme. Wannan na fari ya zamna arewa, na biyu tana koma gusum. Kullum haka ne. In ka yi uku, shi na uku tana gusum. In ka yi na hudu, shi ne a gusum.

In more general terms, the direction of the north-south hierarchy in the female domain is exactly inverse of that encountered in the male domestic domain. While the male hierarchy ascends from north to south (e. g., the relative position of the homesteads of married sons within their father's camp, the order of calves at the calf rope), the female hierarchy ascends from south to north (e. g., the relative position of the homesteads of co-wives within their husband's camp, the order of calabashes on women's calabash shelves according to their size) (see Dupire 1962: 156f.; see also Figure 2, this chapter).

There has never been an attempt made in the existing literature to explain these inversed hierarchies in the male and in the female sphere, and it is, in fact, difficult to obtain opinions on the matter from Wodaabe interlocutors. 'Noon dum tawi' ('This is how we have found things') is the explanation one is most likely to obtain on the matter. However, the inversion does not appear implausible if one considers the relative spatial positioning of women and men in settings that unite both, notably the audiences of public dance performances and the *moosi* dance, which is the only dance performance in which

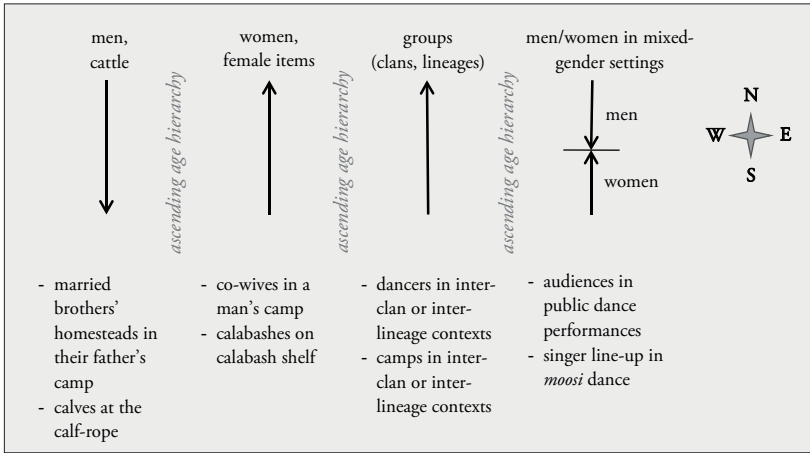


Figure 2: Seniority and spatial orders

men and women can jointly participate. In these settings, the prescribed order places the women in the south with the eldest in the north, and inversely, the men in the north with the eldest in the south (see Figure 2 above).

As far as the hierarchy of clans and their relative positioning during inter-clan meetings is concerned, the reference is thus not the situation of brothers within their father's camp, but rather that of co-wives within their husband's camp (see Dupire 1962: 314). Loncke (2015: 312) has shown that Wodaabe themselves apply this logic¹¹ when they explain why the northern position is favoured in inter-clan contexts: The northernmost position corresponds to the *suudu* of the first wife (*koowaadb*), whose children are considered to be of purer descent than the children of subsequent *te'egal* wives, who align their homesteads to the south, according to the rank of their mothers.

This reasoning reflects an assumption about the clans as having derived from the different wives of one common ancestor, i. e., as descended from

¹¹ Although indeed confirmed by numerous interlocutors, this logic is far from being commonly accepted and it can claim validity merely on the basis that it seems to be the most frequently heard. The following, contrarious statements may give an impression of the diverging views on the matter: (1) An interlocutor from the Yaamanko'en clan in the Koutous confirmed to the logic just explained by arguing that if Ali and Dege had indeed been brothers, Dege must have been the senior, because the Degereewol make camp in the north; (2) An interlocutor from the Suudu Suka'el clan in the Diffa region applied an exactly inverse logic: According to him, if they had been brothers, Ali must have been the older one, since the Degereewol dance and make camp in the north; (3) An interlocutor from the Gojanko'en clan in the Damergou region even claimed that the spatial rules for expressing seniority differed from clan to clan. While he confirmed the rule of the descending south-north hierarchy in the male domestic sphere, he claimed that among the Jijjiiru, the principle was inverse, which, however, could not be confirmed. Although contradictive, the examples show that Wodaabe themselves try to make sense of these inherited rules by applying principles that are thus not merely a construction of anthropologists.

a group of half-brothers (FS) rather than brothers as often maintained (e. g., Dupire 1962: 306). Such a view might also be suggested by a version of the account of Ali and Dege in which Dege is said to have had seven wives ('*Dege woodi suudi joveedidi, yeyri'en joveedidi be hoore muudum*'). The senior sons of these respective wives can be thought to correspond to the founders of the original Degereewol clans.

SPATIAL POLITICS – THE STRUGGLE FOR THE NORTH

The question of the northern position in inter-clan contexts is a matter of frequent challenges, contestations and even serious conflict. Notably the question of who takes the northern position in joint dance performances is highly politicized. The elders of the alleged senior clan will carefully assure that the own dancers take and, if necessary, defend their northern position.¹² Incidences in which the seniority rights of one clan were put into question by another's provocative claiming of the north during a dance performance are frequently reported by Wodaabe interlocutors and have consequently also been documented in the literature (Paris 1997: 95; Loncke 2015: 311; Schareika 2007: 215, 352; Lassibille 2008: 161). Such spatial provocations can lead to serious fighting. During my research in the Damergou region, I came across numerous references to instances of such conflicts. An incidence maybe ten years ago is well remembered: During a dance in a public place of the town of Tanout, the dancers of the Suudu Suka'el clan made an attempt to line up north of the Jijjiiru and Gojanko'en dancers. This obvious provocation caused an open fight between the dancers from these clans with the result that such public dance performances in the town of Tanout have henceforth been prohibited.

But the spatial provocations at the occasion of dance performances cannot only lead to serious fighting, but, depending on the actual power relations, apparently indeed to changes in the hierarchical relations between clans. According to Lassibille (2008: 161), there have been incidences of clans who successfully imposed themselves with this strategy and were thus able to change the established north-south order.¹³ This shows that proclaimed

¹² In October 2011, I attended a *ngaanka* ceremony between Kasawsawa and Jijjiiru, together with a small group of Gojanko'en. Since the site was quite far from the Gojanko'en's grazing areas, the delegation was minimal and finally, only three young men of the Gojanko'en joined in the dances. A leader of the Gojanko'en, who had accompanied them, explicitly reminded them to take their place in the northern end of the line.

¹³ Lassibille cites the case of Gojanko'en and Degereeeji (Shahidooji). One of her informants (from the Gojanko'en) claims that originally, the Degereeeji as the most senior clan had danced in the north, but that the Gojanko'en then claimed the north from them. During my own inquiry concerning this point, however, I did not find any confirmation for this version: Among Gojanko'en in the Damergou I have found two versions concerning this point: (1) Some maintained that the Degereeeji are the eldest and would thus dance in the north, yet since there are no Degereeeji ▶

seniority is less based on historic facts than dependant on the ability to claim and defend a northern position.

As the status hierarchy among clans is generally explained in terms of the relative seniority of their respective ancestors, it is the precise relationship between the founding ancestors that is put into question by the spatial provocations. The clans Gojanko'en and Jijjiiru, for example, claim descent from their respective founding ancestors, Goje and Jijji, who are often conceptualized as having been brothers, Goje being the elder one. Sometimes, they are even conceptualized as twins (*siwutaabe*), which gives the two clans an equal seniority status (see also Loncke 2015: 216). Such a status equality could also be explained with another version of their relationship reported by Dupire (1962: 306), according to which they would have been cross-cousins (*dendtraabe*) and thus in an informal relation of casual joking. The Suudu Suka'el, on the other hand, are said to have descended from a younger sister of Goje and Jijji (Dupire 1962: 306). Commenting on the aforementioned incidence in Tanout, my Gojanko'en interlocutor underlined that, had the Jijjiiru instead of the Suudu Suka'el presumed to the northern position, there would not have been a conflict.

Labdo Usman, Wodaaabe Gojanko'en, Damergou region, May 2011

Jijji and Goje were brothers. Goje was the senior, so we [the Gojanko'en] are in the north [of them]. However, between the Jijjiiru and us, things are relaxed. If the Jijjiiru claim the north, there are no discussions; if the Gojanko'en claim the north, there are no discussions.

(H) Da, Jiji da Goje, kamar kane da yaya ne. Goje, shi ne baba, Jiji karami. Ke nan mu ne arewa, amma tsakanin mu da Jijiru babu matsala. In Jijiru suka koma arewa, babu magana. In Gojanko'en suka zamna arewa, babu magana.

It is remarkable that the relaxed nature of the relationship between the Jijjiiru and the Gojanko'en is so strongly stressed here. Given that *te'egal* occurs frequently between these two clans, one might expect their relationship to be rather strained. However, the interlocutor's statement indicates that the order of seniority between two clans, and, in relation to it, their order on the north-south axis, cannot only be a matter of contestation and conflict, but also of negotiation and discussion, and it depends closely on the quality of the relations between the respective clans. The fact that the capacity to maintain a position of status superiority also depends on numerical strength and

◀ in the region, the question was of no relevance; (2) Others contended that, a long time ago, the Jijjiiru slayed the Degereeji with force and claimed the north from them. In fact, the question is of no major importance since the Gojanko'en do not entertain *ngaanka* relations with the Degereeji (see Paris 1997: 78f.).

actual power relations is apt to explain why the Gojanko'en in the Damergou, where they are numerically inferior to the Jijiiru, do not insist on their status superiority.

BIASED HISTORICAL NARRATIVE AS A SUPPORT FOR SENIORITY CLAIMS

The aspect of contestations, of claims and counter-claims brings us back to the different versions of historical narratives and their political implications. Where seniority is the idiom for expressing status hierarchies, such status hierarchies can be challenged by putting into question the seniority of the adversary. And where relative spatial position is the idiom for expressing seniority (and thus hierarchy), claiming the privileged position, in this case the north, becomes a weapon and a strategy for challenging the superior and putting his superiority into question. It is a way of mounting a coup or staging a rebellion.

Inter-clan ceremonies with their dance contests are a privileged arena in which political power relations are acted out and hierarchies are challenged and newly defined. But mythico-historical narratives can equally be used for the contestation of established hierarchies. The rhetorical strategies used in such narratives reveal a subtle pattern of narrators trying to establish hierarchies by playing out commonly accepted features of the history of the mutual relations against diverging versions and thus strategically rendering the established narratives. As Schareika has pointed out, among the Wodaabe the rights of individuals and groups are not once and forever fixed, but rather the result of negotiations leading to commonly accepted assumptions on the relations of the people concerned. They are formulated as claims that are legitimized with rhetorical means by referring to past events that justify the claims, and, most importantly, they must be enforced by a collective that the interested persons were able to convince with their rhetoric (Schareika 2007: 151f.).

The diverging versions of the story of Ali and Dege, just as the contestations during dance performances, are an expression of the constant struggle between clans for status and hierarchy. Claims on seniority, or first-comer status, and thus claims on status superiority, are staked here by verbal, and quasi mythical, means, by way of a manipulated and strategic use of history/myth. Spatial politics and rhetorical strategies can thus be regarded as two complementary forms of acting out power relations. Pretending to a northern position in dance has a similar function as representing the founding ancestor of another clan as a latecomer and wife-receiver or even as a slave in a mythical narrative.

While provocations by spatial imposition are rather direct and demand an immediate reaction, thus easily leading to concrete and sometimes violent confrontations, oral discourse is a more subtle, yet no less effective tool in a

society that does not have historical specialists nor a generally accepted, official version of its own history. The political strategies pursued with mythico-historical narratives generally seem to be rather indirect and not a tool used in direct confrontation. The same Gojanko'en (Degereewol) interlocutors who told me the version of Ali being Dege's slave did not repeat or insist on this detail in the presence of Yaamanko'en (Alijam) with whom I also discussed the relationship of the founding ancestors, nor did they engage in a controversy. Rather, they agreed that Dege might have been Ali's elder brother when this was maintained by the Yaamanko'en. Rules of mutual respect in the interaction across Wodaaabe clans and clan clusters were respected in the direct conversation. The versions of narratives are thus not only subjected to ideological interpretations, but also interactively negotiated depending on the context and on who is the conversation partner. The more ideological versions of the mutual relations are rather circulated behind the back of the others.

BASHING THE SENIORS – RHETORICAL STRATEGIES OF CONTESTATION AND EXCLUSION

Loncke (2015: 226) has identified a seemingly paradoxical tendency in Wodaaabe society to marginalize or even exclude the most senior segments. For the Alijam cluster, this is the case for the 'Bibbe Denke, who, although unanimously acknowledged as the seniors, have for a long time been rejected by the other Wodaaabe clans as a *ngaanka* partner because of their alleged assimilation to sedentary groups, and who were thus more or less excluded from the community (Paris 1997: 79; Loncke 2015: 224ff.).¹⁴ The acknowledged senior clan of the Degereewol cluster are the Mbororo'en (Weewebbe), a group that has today completely left the community of the Wodaaabe. Their case is somewhat different from that of the 'Bibbe Denke, however, because their conformity to cultural values is undoubted. Their separation from the Wodaaabe seems to have been the consequence of conflicts deriving from unbalanced *te'egal* exchange (Loncke 2015: 125). Other criteria than seniority thus certainly also have to be taken into account for explaining the mechanisms of marginalization or exclusion of particular clans or lineages. In the case of the Degereewol, the senior Degereewol clan remaining in the present Wodaaabe community, their geographical isolation has led some of their clan segments to abandon *ngaanka* relations with other clans and to entertain them among each other instead (Paris 1997: 77f.; Loncke 2015: 50). In many other cases, including that of the 'Bibbe Denke, group size seems to play a significant role: If the numeric strength of *ngaanka* partners is not

¹⁴ Today, they seem to have at least partially succeeded to reintegrate into the community and entertain *ngaanka* relations with several clans in east-central Niger. In October 2011, for instance, a *ngaanka* meeting took place between 'Bibbe Denke and Suudu Suka'el in the Damergou region.

relatively balanced, uneven exchange of women by *te'egal* marriage risks to turn into serious conflicts. Of course, the marginalization of a segment can also be based on new social orientations within this segment and thus self-chosen rather than the result of exclusion from the part of the other segments. In most cases, the reasons are probably a mix of different factors. However, although the marginalization and exclusion of senior segments does not seem to be a systematic principle, challenges to established seniority hierarchies are arguably likely to arise from the part of the juniors against their seniors, because coups are by definition never mounted by, but rather against recognized and established parties.

One point raised by Loncke that is of particular relevance here is that the marginalization of senior segments can be pursued by rhetoric means, by, so to speak, spreading negative propaganda (Loncke 2015: 215f.). As for the *ʼBibbe Denke*, their rejection is explained with many faults that are accredited to them: They do not conform to cultural values, they use witchcraft, they lack an own clan-specific *jeldugol* chant and, interestingly, they are said to be descendants of slaves. Most importantly, however, Loncke's example of the lacking chant shows how such reasons, which are obviously based on prejudice, can be substantiated by manipulated evidence in the form of mythical narratives: According to the myth quoted by Loncke (ibid.: 216), Usman dan Fodio¹⁵ attributes a chant to each clan, with the exception of the *ʼBibbe Denke* who, when summoned by Usman, respond belatedly, which precisely because of their seniority is inexcusable (ibid.: 226). Loncke's investigations reveal that the *ʼBibbe Denke* do have their own *jeldugol* chant and that they feel unjustly discriminated against.

In fact, in the hierarchically little structured society of the Wodaabe, negative talk about others is a highly sensitive issue and often used as a political tool. The complaint '*mo tunnini yam innde am*' ('he or she has spoiled my name') is frequently heard if somebody does not agree with the way another depicts his or her role in connection with a past event that is recalled in a narrative. *Nyo'ore* ('*mo nyo'i yam*' – 'he talked badly about me behind my back') is a term that refers to negative talk apt to spoil the reputation of a person (see also Schareika 2007: 119). The social consequences that biased talk about others can have, give it a political dimension and make it a much feared tool of political strategy in the form of selective representations of facts, twistings of truth, spreading negative propaganda about an opponent or a rival in status. However, this mechanism is not only relevant on an intersubjective level, but also on the level between clans and lineage groups. As the example of the Ali-and-Dege narrative has shown, and as Loncke's

¹⁵ The religious reformer and founder of the Sokoto Caliphate, Usman dan Fodio (1754–1817), is often cited in Wodaabe oral traditions and tends to assume the role of a prophet and cultural identification figure. See also Text 1.

example also confirms, mythico-historical narratives can have a highly political dimension. Since history is itself not fixed, it can be manipulated by rhetoric strategies, by constructing counter versions to established narratives. But what appears to be tragic and unfair in any particular case can, on the other hand, be argued to have a rather positive effect on the community of the Wodaabe clans as a whole: The plurality of versions of history contributes to the reproduction of the acephalous and relatively egalitarian structure of society. The constant internal contestations of established hierarchies prevent any particular group from getting into a permanent position of supremacy that could serve as the nucleus for the development of a more centralized power (Loncke 2015: 226f.), and they can thus be understood as an element that maintains the balance of power within the society.

COMPETING VERSIONS OF HISTORY

In the end, it is not possible to say which version comes closer to the truth and after all, they can probably best be regarded as myths aimed at explaining in a coherent way the *status quo* of group relations by postulating alternative models of genealogical links. The variations of the story reflect different prevalent patterns of fission and fusion of groups and they are thus all plausible and consistent in themselves. But since group relations are always at the same time power relations, the explanations are not objective, but determined by clear narrative intentions of legitimizing specific versions of group hierarchies. There is not one definitive version of history just as there is no definitive hierarchical order between clans and clan clusters. The alleged genealogical structure of the clans is not historically grown, but continually (re-)constructed in a dynamic and interactive process. Hierarchies are as fluid as the society itself that transforms and incessantly reorganizes itself. The relations of the groups that constitute Wodaabe society are subject to constant change and in this process, they are ceaselessly reinterpreted and renegotiated. Hierarchies are thus constantly challenged and manipulated.

In these manipulations, history becomes a strategic political tool to the extent that one could say with Kopytoff (1987: 122) that ‘political discourse thus becomes a series of exercises in folk historiography, analogous to the successive waves of “revisionist” history one finds in professional historiography, where facts previously ignored are stressed and those previously treated as crucial are de-emphasized.’ In some versions of the Ali-and-Dege narrative, the superiority of the Degereewol is asserted by the status of their ancestor as an elder brother. In the relative seniority of brothers, a hierarchy is already inherent. Other versions express the hierarchical relations between the clan clusters in the stronger rhetoric of masters and slaves and in the motif of wife-giving to integrate a stranger or to assimilate a group. The conceptualization of Ali as Dege’s slave can be interpreted as a politicized

and ideological form of postulating hierarchies, aimed at establishing a clearer hierarchical difference than that between elder and younger brother, but both patterns serve the same end: claiming the superiority of the own in respect to the other group.

Such contentions, however, are not generally accepted truths, but rather, ideological statements. The narratives feature different politicized versions of history. The implications of a superiority based not only on seniority but on a purer descent, and thus a cultural supremacy claimed by some Degereewol, is not acknowledged by the Alijam. Different constructions of the history of the inter-group relations coexist as diverging claims without a hierarchy of validity. Ultimately, both versions have clear political implications. Calling the adverse group either descendants of a brother or descendants of a slave tells a lot about how the own group is seen in relation to the other and which place is given to the other in relation to the own. The contradicting versions of the relation between the two clan clusters must in the end not be regarded as a real argument on genealogical substance, but rather as a rhetorical and political device (see Bohannan 1952).

But what are we to make of the striking discrepancy between Dupire's version of the seniority of the Alijam and the version held by virtually all my Wodaaabe interlocutors, who unanimously acknowledge the seniority of the Degereewol? It is of course possible that Dupire's informants simply provided her with false information, based on a misunderstanding or a lack of knowledge. At first glance, the contradiction might also be explained with regional differences in hierarchy. Examples of an inverse order of the hierarchy or seniority among clans in different regions let it appear plausible that such regional variations are also possible between larger entities such as clan clusters. Empirically, however, narratives corresponding to Dupire's version of the seniority order were not found anywhere even across regions and at least today they do not seem to prevail. It might also be possible that the prevalent version has changed, that Alijam were once acknowledged to be the senior clan cluster, but today are no longer. Since incidences of an inversion of the order of seniority between clans have been documented, the same should be possible between the clan clusters as well. After all, the non-fixed character of the genealogical hierarchies has been stressed in the literature. The narratives that explain the relations between clans are orally transmitted and are both gradually transformed from one interpretation to the next and consciously manipulated, and they are thus subjected to a constant process of change. However, such a complete turn of the positions of the two founding ancestors of the clan clusters without any tangible traces in the collective memory seems unlikely given the short time in which the transformation would have to have taken place: Dupire had done fieldwork in the 1950s and Paris, who first points out the contradiction, began working on the Wodaaabe in the early 1970s (on this point, see also Loncke 2015: 50).

On the other hand, it does not at all seem implausible that an Alijam interlocutor offered to Dupire the variation of the story of Ali and Dege such as she has reported it. The variety of versions that coexist today make it more than probable that different and even contradictory versions have coexisted at the time of Dupire's fieldwork as well and that her interlocutors, by reporting a particularly biased version, followed their own interests along an established pattern of rhetorically challenging established status hierarchies. The possibility of a recognition and strategic use by Dupire's interlocutors of the role of the researcher, who puts one version of history to paper and thus privileges this version in regard to others, should perhaps not be overlooked here. My own experience with my Wodaaɓe interlocutors was that they were generally very conscious about the fact that things they told me were written down or otherwise fixed. They were often explicitly reminding me to take note if they deemed a particular detail important and, inversely, they were anxious about making statements when they were not altogether certain about them, because they knew I was writing things down and they could be regarded as liars in case their statements proved wrong. If my interlocutor from the Suudu Suka'el clan in the Diffa region – certainly without any obvious interest of purposely twisting an established version – considers the possibility of Ali's seniority, then more ideologically biased versions are also likely to exist, and are likely to have existed at Dupire's time. They might be imagined as unsuccessful verbal coups, aimed at challenging an established order. Yet, on the other hand, they may not have altogether failed, since they continue to exist as claims, written in black and white in *the* anthropological benchmark publication on the Wodaaɓe in Niger.

TEXT 7: THE PARTICULAR RELATIONS BETWEEN WODAABE GOJANKO'EN AND YAAMANKO'EN

MYTHICO-HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

Wodaabe communities are generally largely homogenous in ethnic terms. Co-residence with other Wodaabe across clan lines is potentially problematic because inter-clan relations are to an important extent agonistic, based on the institutionalized rivalry about women in the context of inter-clan agreements on mutual *te'egal* elopement marriage.

The example of the Gojanko'en and Yaamanko'en in Ganatcha indicates, however, that the co-residence of Wodaabe from different clans can in some cases also be close to the point of forming a tightly knit community that shares important ritual and social institutions. In the case of these two clans, Gojanko'en and Yaamanko'en, such close co-residence is facilitated by the fact that their mutual relations are of a particular nature: In contrast to the majority of other clans, *te'egal* intermarriage has been prohibited between them by an ancient ritual ban (*kippol tummude* – 'the reversal of the calabash'¹), which is still widely functional today (see Paris 1997). This has the effect that one major source of inter-clan conflicts, i. e., *te'egal*, was in principle dispelled from the beginning of their cohabitation. In practice, however, the situation of close inter-clan co-residence in Ganatcha bears nonetheless a certain conflict potential, because elopement with partners from the other clan, although forbidden and condemned by the elders, does occasionally occur.

¹ A calabash is turned over at the foot of a tree and no one is to ever touch it or turn it around again. The leaders of the two clans speak a sermon formally forbidding the abduction of women from the adverse clan (Dupire 1962: 253). The calabash is associated with womanhood and marriage (see Köhler 2013). A calabash which is turned over and shall not be touched again might therefore be interpreted as expressing the negation of marriage. Loncke (2015: 206) further interprets the symbolic of the imagery as expressing the termination of the reciprocal *ngaanka* ceremonies, because the calabash is also the bowl in which food is offered to visitors.

Some Yaamanko'en youth had gone for *biggal*.² Our fathers, Gojanko'en Kuskudu, as well as 'Bii Korony'en were in the area. Some 'Bii Korony'en aggressed the Yaamanko'en boys and beat them up severely. Some [Gojanko'en] Kuskudu intervened. They beat the 'Bii Korony'en and chased them away. They defended the Yaamanko'en and then they took care of their wounds. They looked after their cows until they had recovered and their fathers had come. When they had recovered and when their fathers had come, they turned over a calabash. They said that since the Gojanko'en had shown real friendship towards their people, since they had shown solidarity with them when others wanted to beat them, since they had looked after their cattle until their fathers had come, there should not be any *te'egal* between them, because marriage is a source of quarreling.

(F) 'Biβbe Yaamanko'en kanyum 01 badi biggal. Baabaaji amin e ngondi e 'Bii Korony'en e beenbe amin Gojanko'en Kuskudu. Nden 'Bii Korony'en pi'i sukaaβe Yaamanko'en. Eli βe, pi'i βe. Nden beenbe amin, Kuskudu, nyaaroy fii 'Bii Korony'en, nden loowi 'Bii Korony'en, nden kendani βe. Nden βe jii βe, βe ndeeni na'i faa βe koo'ii baabaaji maββe ngari. Nden βe koo'ii, nden baabaaji nden ngari. 'Be kippi tummude, mbi'i: 'To dum amana dum Gojanko'en badni bandiraaβe meeden, pi'i en, jinganii en, ndenanii en na'i, faa en ngari.' Nden βe kippi tummude. Nden βe mbi'i te'egal walaa, βe mbi'i kooβgal no wadde habre.

²A pastoral strategy of separating households and herds for a part of the year cycle (see also Bonfiglioli 1988: 130).

TEXT 8: INTERETHNIC JOKING BETWEEN KANURI AND FULBE WODAABE

TWO CASE EXAMPLES

Interethnic joking relationships are known from many contexts throughout Africa¹ and elsewhere, and from many groups of Fulbe between themselves and their respective neighbouring populations (Diallo 2006: 193). In Niger, relations of institutionalized joking are established between numerous pairings of ethnic groups, subethnic groups and socio-professional groups. The Fulbe in the study region entertain such a joking relationship with the Kanuri and to a lesser extent with a subgroup of Hausa, the Gobirawa (see also Dupire 1962: 325). A similar relationship is entertained with butchers, i. e., with a socio-professional group.

This ritualized form of inter-group relationship is generally based on the particular historic relations between the groups concerned. In the case of Fulbe and Kanuri, it seems to go back to the time of the Borno empire, when pastoral Fulbe groups first stayed for an extended period in close neighbourhood and exchange with the sedentary populations of Borno, i. e., with the ancestors of the contemporary Kanuri population (Dupire 1962: 324, 1970: 225; Maliki 1982: 12). Inter-group joking relationships have been interpreted in terms of alliances, pacts or contracts (Mauss 2013 [1928]; Tamari 2006), aimed at bringing conflicts or hostile relationships to a term (*ibid.*) and to regulate the conditions of coexistence of different groups who use the same territory (Fay 2006: 758).

Today, the institutionalized practice of joking is generalized between Kanuri and Fulbe. This means that any members of the respective groups, even strangers, can ritually exchange verbal provocations and insults with impunity. The victim of a verbal assault is expected either to react passively or with a counter-insult, yet the exchange remains at the level of verbal offenses without escalating into serious hostilities.

The joking discourse is often characterized by specific stereotyped images of the other. A recurrent theme are the respective roles of Kanuri as farmers and Fulbe as pastoralists, and the typical conflict potentials that exist between them, notably crop damages. The two examples of joking conversations documented here show how the aspect of damages, and the

¹ See, e. g., several articles in a thematic issue of *Cahiers d'Etudes africaines* ('Parentés, plaisanteries et politique', No. 184, 2006) and another number of articles in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* (No. 131, 2006).

mutual blaming for them are a core element of the joking discourse. It also becomes obvious from the examples that the joking discourse between Kanuri and Fulbe is dominated by and at the same time consolidates stereotyped images that both groups hold of the other. It is thus a performative discourse that produces and reproduces ethnic identities based on juxtaposition and alterity (see Fouéré 2005, 2006; Canut and Smith 2006: 703). As such, it is part and parcel of a process of ethnicity and ethnic boundary maintenance (Barth 1969). The joking partners serve each other as constituting other in a process of identification through mutual construction of the other as a polar opposite (Fay 2006: 757).

However, the reproduction of difference by emphasizing the contrast between the groups at the same time contributes to maintaining a perception of complementarity, that can also be understood as an integrating factor (Canut and Smith 2006: 703f.; Fay 2006: 757). The joking relationship gives both groups their place in a ritualized relationship and structures their coexistence by defining a framework for social interaction.

CASE EXAMPLE 1: INTERETHNIC JOKING ON THE ISSUE OF CROP DAMAGES

The following conversation that illustrates the joking practice between Kanuri and Wodaabe took place in Ganatcha in August 2011, when a few Kanuri neighbours came to the camp of Ardo Dawra in Ganatcha for a camel race organized by the latter on the occasion of a name-giving ceremony. The occasion is thus removed from any conflictive situation, yet from the beginning, stereotyped images of Kanuri as farmers and Wodaabe as pastoralists, and of the permanent conflict potential of crop damages, are a central theme. It becomes obvious that the joking discourse between Kanuri and Wodaabe is dominated by and at the same time reinforces stereotype images that both groups hold of the other.

FARMER

Greetings!

(H) Asalamu Aleikum!

01

DAWRA

Greetings to you! You have come to our place! It has been a while!

Wa aleikum as salam! Woyo, kun zo gidanmu? Sai yau?

02

FARMER

Indeed. We said to ourselves that since you have slaughtered [an animal], we will come and get our share of the meat. Or have you not slaughtered yet? In that case you can also

Sai yau, wallahi. Amma tun da kun yi yanka, mun ce: 'Beri mu tafi mu samu yankin nama da ya ke namu.' Ina ne nama? Ko ba ku yi yanka ba har yanzu. In dai haka ne, kawo rago

03

just give us the ram and we take it along home.

kawai mu tafi da shi gida mu yanka.

DAWRA

04 No, we have slaughtered, only we have already eaten all the meat. Here is some millet gruel, is that not your habitual food? Feel free, eat! We have bought this millet expensively from you. Or are you tired of millet gruel?

A'a, mun yi yanka, amma nama, mun ci shi, wallahi, mun ci shi duka. Ga tuwo, shi ne abuncinku, ko. Bismillah! Ku ci! Wannan hatsi, mun saye shi da tsada wajen ku! Ko ka gaji da tuwo?

FARMER

05 This year we have hardly harvested any millet.

Haba, bana ba mu samu ba hatsi, ko kaɗan.

UMARU

06 Of course you do not get much millet, since you do not like to work! And whenever you have some earnings, you take another wife. I have seen it with my own eyes last year: At the time of harvest, everywhere the Kanuri were celebrating marriages.

Dole ba ku samu ba hatsi. Tun da ba ku son aiki. Kuma, in kun samu kaɗan, kuna yi arme. Bara, ni da idona na gani: Lokacin sakin gona ya zo, ko ina Beriberi sun yi arme.

FARMER

07 No, it is not our marriages that eat up our millet, but your animals. Only yesterday, I had to chase a donkey that was eating crops in my guinea-corn field.

A'a, abun da ya ci mumu hatsi ba armen mata ba ne. Kawai dabbobinku ne. Jiya ma mun kori wata jakiya da ta zo ta ci dawa cikin gonanmu.

UMARU

08 A donkey? We are [cattle breeding] pastoralists, we do not raise donkeys!

Jakiya kace? Haba, mu makiyaya ne. Ba mu yi kiwon jakai.

FARMER

09 I swear, it was a white donkey with a property mark as yours, a split in the ears like you apply them.

Wallahi jakiya, ko naku ce? Fari ce, kuma wutanshi kamar naku. Kamar yankan kunne wannan da kuke yi.

UMARU

A white donkey, you say? If you find such a donkey in your fields, go ahead and keep it. It is not ours.

Jakiya fari ka ce? In ka ga jakiya 10
irin wannan cikin gonanka, ka dauka
kawai ka rike shi. Wannan ba namu
ba ne.

CASE EXAMPLE 2: DISCUSSION ABOUT CROP DAMAGES WITH RECOURSE TO JOKING

I witnessed the following discussion when I visited Umaru Siddi at his camp in Ganatcha in the morning of 27 June 2011 together with Abdua Dawra. Shortly after our arrival, a neighbouring Kanuri farmer showed up and complained that the Wodaabe's cattle had entered into his recently sown fields at night. Although the damages caused by animals in newly sown crops can be substantial, the emotional aspect of such cases is generally less pronounced than that of damages on ripe crops just before harvest. The visit of the complainant was first of all meant as a reprimand addressed to the Wodaabe community at large, demanding them not to let their animals roam freely at night without supervision. It was, however, brought forth very seriously. The reaction of Umaru, on the other hand, was characterized by provocative remarks according to the interethnic joking pattern, which immediately mitigated the accusation of the neighbouring farmer by refusing, so to speak, to give the discussion too much gravity. The institutionalized joking relationship is here used to move the conversation to a level where the relation, and not the facts, are put in the centre.

FARMER

Do we not always tell you to look for your cows to prevent them from destroying our fields at night?

(H) Diba, kullum muna gaya muku 01
ku yi gadin shanunku, kada su shiga
gonanmu da dare.

UMARU

What? I cannot guard my cows at day and night. Guard your fields yourselves, I am tired of it. After all, your fields are not moving about, are they? All you have to do is to sit down and guard them, where is the problem? But we? Our cows are always moving about. We cannot stop them.

Kai, ni ba ni iya yi gadin shanu da 02
rana da dare duka. Sai ka yi gadin
gonanka da dare, kai ma. Ni, wallahi
na gaji. Diba, gonanku basu yi yawo,
ko? Ke nan, ka zamna kawai, ka yi
gadin gonanka, ina wahala? Amma
mu, shanu kullum tafiya suke. Ai ba
mu iya hana su.

FARMER

03 By Allah, please be reasonable. Your cows are going really far. This is not alright.

Don Allah, ku yi haƙuri. Shanunku suna tafiya da nisa. Abun bai yi ba.

UMARU

04 I tell you, our cows are not moving far. They just move until they get into your fields. From there, they will not go anywhere... But since you have come to chat with us: Don't you have any news about the area of Daoutcha? Have the rains started over there?

Kai, shanunmu suna tafi nisa? Ina? Suna tafiya har gonarka kawai. In sun kai gonarka za su tsaya, ba su tafi ko ina... Amma, tun da ka kawo mu magana, ka da labari wajen Dauca? Akwai damina can?

FARMER

05 No, there has not been any rain.

A'a babu, babu ko kadan.

TEXT 9: SETTLEMENT OF A CONFLICT ABOUT CROP DAMAGES

A CASE EXAMPLE

In the morning of 18 December 2010 an upset and angry Kanuri farmer showed up in 'Dawra Egoyi's camp in Ganatcha, complaining that during the night, five donkeys of the Wodaabe had entered into a heap of harvested guinea-corn crops left for threshing in the vicinity of his farm. 'Dawra's son Abdua assured the neighbour that he will come around after breakfast to see the damage and identify the donkeys that the farmer had caught and attached at his home. On our arrival at the farmer's place (about 1.5 km from 'Dawra's camp), we found only his wife and children at home, as well as the attached donkeys. After long and friendly greetings with the woman, much in contrast to the behaviour of the farmer before, Abdua addressed the issue of the crop damage in a joking way, remarking that apparently some donkeys had come at night to eat from the farmer's harvest. The woman, laughingly, responded that yes, and she asked whether Abdua recognized the donkeys as his own. Abdua remarked that indeed two of them looked as if they might belong to his wife.

The farmer himself, whom we finally met in the field where the damage had occurred, was less inclined to joking. He led us to a heap of harvested



Photo 6: Assessing a damage on harvested stalks stocked in a field in the presence of local authorities, Tirmini (F. KÖHLER, 2009)

crops and showed us the traces and even droppings of donkeys. The farmer claimed to have found three donkeys amidst the harvested crops, eating, and two others in the field, where the guinea-corn had already been cut, yet the harvest of the beans had not yet been completed. The farmer's anger diminished somewhat when Abdua immediately admitted his guilt and signaled his willingness to pay a compensation. Abdua began to negotiate straight forwardly by making reference to the good neighbourly relations; the farmer stressed the fact that it was not a small damage in a field, but a substantial one on already harvested crops. Finally, Abdua proposed to pay a compensation of 1,000 FCFA (about 1,50€) per animal for the three donkeys that had eaten from the crops, but to drop the cases of the other two, who, apart from some beans, have presumably eaten just some residues and guinea-corn stalks in the field. The farmer, although grumbling at first, finally accepted this first proposition without further negotiation. Abdua was satisfied: Not only was his proposition for a moderate compensation fee accepted, but more importantly, the case was thus settled without implication of a third instance in the person of a village chief or other Kanuri neighbours who might have influenced the outcome of the case in the interest of the farmer. Later Abdua told me that the permanent relations of neighbourhood with the farmers generally facilitate negotiations in comparable cases in a substantial way.

It is remarkable that Abdua appeared more sovereign than the farmer throughout. In contrast to the farmer, who was upset and shouting, Abdua was serious and constructive, trying to ease the other's anger, and he sovereignly achieved the solution he wanted. He readily admitted his guilt and was ready to pay a reasonable compensation. Such a sovereign attitude of Wodaaabe *vis-à-vis* Kanuri farmers was striking also in other, similar cases I witnessed. This is due to the special constellation in which the two groups find themselves: Concerning crop-damages, Wodaaabe are generally the ones whose animals cause damages, while Kanuri farmers are the victims. Since discussions generally revolve not about the question of guilt, but about how much compensation should be paid, the particular relationship shaped by permanent close neighbourhood and the joking relationship between Kanuri and Fulbe, which both have an impact on expected behaviour, generally plays in favour of the Wodaaabe if the case can be resolved on an interpersonal level. As Abdua made quite clear, this is generally the declared aim of Wodaaabe.

TEXT 10:

ROLE AND PERCEPTION OF PASTORALISTS' ASSOCIATIONS

A CASE EXAMPLE

Next to sanitary measures like vaccination campaigns for animals, one central role of pastoralists' associations is the defence of the rights of their members and target groups. However, their functionality and efficiency depend both on the initiative of individuals and on external support. Sometimes projects with international funding support the associations or co-execute projects aimed at pastoralists with these associations as local partners. In Zinder, FNEN Daddo¹ has been the most active association in recent years, due to the fact that it has been supported since 2005 by a project initiated and accompanied by German development agencies.² One central approach in this project has been advocacy work for mobile pastoralists. For example, a manual has been elaborated that gives recommendations to pastoralists concerning possible responses to situations of conflict or to situations in which their rights are at stake (ZFD 2011). In September 2011, a workshop took place in Zinder, to which, among others, two leaders of the Wodaabe Gojanko'en (Laɓɗo Usman and Umaru Siddi) were invited. At this workshop, the pastoral leaders were informed about new laws and institutions (e.g., the land tenure commissions) and about legal procedures (e.g., how to proceed in order to obtain a well). Despite the declared efforts of such projects for '*sensibilisation*' of their target groups for the importance of the knowledge of their legal rights and the procedures necessary to defend them, the following statement makes it quite clear that membership in pastoralists' associations often seems to be regarded primarily as instrumental for getting access to resources and material advantages. It is aimed at assuring participation at the aid distribution in which pastoralists' associations are involved as a result of their close collaboration with relief and development programs.

¹ Fédération Nationale des Eleveurs du Niger.

² This project has been financed and supported by the German development service (DED) and later by its successor organization, the German association for international cooperation (GIZ) in the framework of the civil peace service program (ZFD).



Photo 7: Information session of a pastoralists' association in a Wodaabe camp, Ganatcha. (F. KÖHLER, 2009)

Umaru Siddi, Wodaabe Gojanko 'en, Ganatcha, July 2011

At the moment I am a member of FNEN Daddo. But I want to change to AREN.³ AREN is committed to its members. They distribute animals, animal fodder and relief food to their members. We as members of FNEN Daddo did not even receive animal fodder. Now we want to leave FNEN Daddo for AREN, since one cannot be a member of both at the same time. While I was a member of FNEN Daddo, they did not arrange anything for me. They just come and assemble the people and tell us to do this and that. They say, the women are facing difficulties, they should do this and that. If we did this and that we would receive this and that. They just do not bring us anything of any worth. I even went to Zinder to their office and told them that what we wanted was support and relief food.

(H) To, ni yanzu, ina bi Dadɗo. 01
 Amma ina so in beri, in koma AREN. AREN yana aiki a waɗanda mutane da suka bi su. Ko taimako, dabbobi, dussa, abuncin mutane, duka AREN yana ba da, in kana bi su. To, mu da muka bi Dadɗo, ko dussa ba mu gani ba. Yanzu muna so mu beri Dadɗo, mu bi AREN, sabo da baka iya bi su biyu, sai ɗaya. Da na bi Dadɗo, basu gyara mumu kome ba. Sai su zo, mu shiriya, mu magana. Su ce, mata sun sha wuya, su yi wannan. Ku yi wannan, za a kawo muku wannan. Ka gani, babu wani abu mai kirki da suka kawo. Ni, na je a biro kinsu Damagaram. Na ce gudunmowa nika so, da abunci.

³ Association pour la Redynamisation de l'Élevage au Niger.

TEXT 11: A SCHOOL PROJECT

ACCOUNT OF A FAILED EFFORT FOR CONCERTATION

The following account is Laḃḃo Usman's recollection of a case that took place several years ago. At this time, Dawra Egoyi, now based in Ganatcha, was still based in the Damergou region as a *chef de tribu*. The case example shows in an exemplary way how group-internal competition hinders the achievement of common goals. An educational program was ready to finance a school for the Gojanko'en community, but the three local Gojanko'en chiefs at the time, Arḃo Dawra, Arḃo Usman (both from the Kuskudu maximal lineage) and Arḃo Kiiro (from the Mbuuldi maximal lineage) were asked to agree on a location for the school to be built. When asked by the project agents, each of the leaders proposed his own well and they were not able to find an agreement. As a consequence, the community did not achieve to obtain the school that they had wished for and that had already been offered to them, because of the internal fragmentation and the inability to consolidate for a common cause.

The reputation of Fulḃe and other pastoralists of not being capable of collective action has been pointed out by researchers (e. g., Bierschenk 1995: 462) and is also frequently brought forth particularly against the Wodaaḃe by both, local populations and development agents (see Loncke 2015: 251).



Photo 8: Children in front of the school building of a rural Wodaaḃe *centre*, Ganatcha (F. KÖHLER, 2012)

Analysing the difficulties of political and pastoral associations founded by Wodaabe in central Niger to organize themselves for concerted action, authors have recognized the same oscillation between fusion and fission, between communal action and individual interests, the same struggle of centripetal and centrifugal forces at work that is characteristic also of the continual process of societal structuration and reproduction (Boesen 2009: 86; Lassibille 2009: 311). Temporary consolidation, notably in opposition to an external other, is possible if common interests are strong and commonly shared values make a situational coalition seem plausible (see also Schareika 2010). The power of the political leaders to unite larger groups in order to pursue common goals, however, is often insufficient and particular interests and power struggles easily interfere with efforts of forming interest groups (ibid.: 221). Hence, the limitations in collective mobilization and concerted action seem to be conditioned by structural aspects of the socio-political organization: The decentralized political power, i. e., the relative independence of individual family heads to decide on political matters, and the relative weakness of political leaders when it comes to enforcing decisions, have the effect that political projects are difficult to realize on the higher societal levels of the clan or the regional clan section, and even on the level of the maximal lineage (see Schareika 2007: 192). Schareika (2010: 221) has called this a ‘paralyzing balance of forces’.

Labdo Usman, Wodaabe Gojanko'en, Ngel Tireeji, May 2011

A Frenchman who worked in the educational field came. I had heard about his arrival, so I went to see him and ask him [about the possibilities to establish a school for the Wodaabe community]. I told him that we were a group of pastoralists and that we solicited either a school or literacy classes for adults. I told him that we wished to leave our ignorance behind.

He replied that in order to succeed, we would have to find an agreement among three leaders and build one school for them. I told them that there were three Gojanko'en leaders: Ardo Kiiri, Ardo Dawra and Ardo Usman. He said that the three of them should find an agreement

(F) Nden mo wari, nder lokol mo huuwata. Nasarankeejo o'on mo Faransi. Kee nan, nden mo wari, nan mi habaru makko. Mi yahi yami mo. Nden yamo mi, bi'i mo mi, minon do'o waynaabe, e min gidi lokol. E min gidi 'cours d'adulte'. Sabo da min burto nder jahilci. Kanjum yamo mi.

Nden yamo mi, nden mo wi'i, dum fu kul e min baawa wadgo dum, e min baawa hawritgo ardube tato nder Gojanko'en. Bi'i mi: 'E woodi Ardo Kiiri, Ardo Dawra, Ardo Usman.' Sii kee nan. Mo wi'i: 'Jooni on baawa hawritgo, mi tuuroyo tagu.' Gada Niamey wara, wada 'enquête'.

among themselves and that he would send someone. Finally, a man came from Niamey and made a survey. First he came to the well of Arđo Usman and asked him where he wanted the school to be built. Arđo Usman said that he wanted the school right there, next to his well. The man wrote everything down. Then I took him to the place of Arđo Dawra. He again asked where the school should be built and Arđo Dawra said that they wanted it right there, near Salaga. Then he also asked Arđo Kiiri and he also said that the school should be built next to where they were staying.

03 Later, another Frenchman came. He was the superior of them all. We went to see him and he came with us to our well.¹ He asked where we wanted the school to be built and we showed him the place. He said: ‘Alright, if God permits, the school shall be built there.’ He even brought some Hausa workers, who were to build the school, and showed them the place. But then, when we returned [to the other *arduƙe*], they did not find an agreement. Those [of Arđo Dawra] said that it should be at Salaga, and Arđo Kiiri said, no, it should be over there, where they were staying. Everybody wanted the school close to the place where they were staying. Later, the man returned to Niamey and told [the other one] everything. And after that, he did not come back on the matter of the school.

04 Now look how these things have begun. This is how it all came about.

Mo yahi bunndu Usman. Mo yami Arđo Usman. Mo wi’i: ‘Arđo Usman, toy gidon lokol?’ Arđo Usman wi’i: ‘Do’o bunndu Usman yidi lokol.’ Sii kee nan. Mo winndi. Min dilli, min yahi to Arđo Dawra. Arđo Dawra nden mo yami dum toy yidi lokol, wi’i nihi ƙe ngidi lokol, faraw Salaga. A nani. Mo yami Arđo Kiiri. Mo yami mo, mo wi’i mo: ‘Toy gidon lokol?’ Kanko maa mo wi’i doon to ƙe ngoni, doon takol Salaga. Doon to ni jooni ƙe ngoni. Sii kee nan.

Nasarankeejo dilloy, gađa Farans, mawđo ma’ajum fuu. Nden mo dilloy gađa toon han, mo wari, min dilli, min njahi bunndu Usman. Nden min njahi, mo wi’i: ‘Toy dum yidi lokol?’ Min kolli mo, min bi’i mo, do’o dum yidi lokol. Mo wi’i: ‘To, to Allah yardake, do’o dum wađa lokol.’ Mo waddi faa e Haabe, wadobe lokol dum, mo holli. Sii kee nan, min bittoy. To, nden min bittoy, o’on mo dum fottaay beya bi’i Salaga, Kiiri maa wi’i, kanyum maa doon to ƙe ngoni. Doon dum ni ƙe fuu takol doon to ƙe ngoni jooni. Sii kee nan. Muuseejo so’iti Niamey. Nden so’iti Niamey yesi mo, kee nan, gađa e ma’ajum mo fuditaay wolwugo dow haala lokol.

Kee nan, ra no dum fudiri kanjum. Ii, kanjum iwoy ma’ajum noon. Sabo

¹ I. e., the well of Arđo Usman in Ngel Tireeji.



Photo 9: In the case of the rural Wodaabe *centre* of Ganatcha, the efforts for establishing a school were finally successful. Here, the two leaders of the Gojanko'en community, Ardo Dawra (right) and Ardo Usman proudly pose with the keys in front of the new school building. (F. KÖHLER, 2012)

Yes, that was it. The reason was that Ardo Usman had asked for the school to be built at his well, Ardo Dawra proposed Salaga and so didi Ardo Kiiri. Everybody said that the school should be built next to their well. That was the end of it all.

da Ardo Usman wi'i dow bunndu Usman, nihi Ardo Dawra wi'i ni Salaga, Ardo Kiiri kadi. Be fuu, kowa bunndu muudum wi'ata. Kee nan, noon dum re'eri. Noon dum darori.

TEXT 12: URBAN WORK MIGRATION AND NETWORKS WITH EXPATRIATES

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT

In this transcript of an interview from October 2011, Laḃḃo Usman gives an account of the history of work migration to Zinder among the Wodaabe Gojanko'en, in which he claims to have played a central part. According to his account, he was the first of all his lineage ever to find employment as a watchman with a European expatriate.

The account also shows the historical background and the economic significance of the close relations to expatriates that the Gojanko'en in Zinder were able to establish since the 1980s.

Laḃḃo Usman, Wodaabe Gojanko'en, Ngel Tireeji, October 2011

- 01 When we started to work in Zinder, I was the first. From all of us who went to town, I was the first to work for a European. It was during the years when the cattle died, during the *banga-banga* drought about 28 years ago. At that period, everybody had gone south. But there were no Wodaabe who had worked for Europeans at the time. I was the first and it was with a German that I found work. His name was F.
- 02 When the *banga-banga* drought came, the cattle died. It lasted for two terrible years, only in the third year it became better. It was in the second year that I came to town. It was after the rainy season. I came to take my wife home to visit her family.¹ When I wanted to return, P. and Ba'asonka² took me to a European, a
- (H) Da muka fara aiki a Damagaram, to, na fari, ni ne. Duka, duka, duka, da muka tafi, ni ne na fara aiki a cikin Nasaru. Ni ne na fari. Lokacin da na fara, ka san lokacin mutuwan shanu. Yanzu ya kai shekaru ashirin, ko da takwas. Banga-banga. To lokacin nan ne. To lokacin nan, mutane duka sun tafi gusum. Amma, lokacin da muka tafi Damagaram, babu Bafulace duka mai aiki na Nasara. Ni ne na fara da Nasara na Alman. Sunanshi F.
- Da banga-banga ya yi, shanu suka mutu. To, ka sani damina biyu... damina banga-banga bai yi ba kyau, wadanan biyu bai yi ba kyau, sai na uku ya yi kyau. To, wannan din na biyu. Cikin shi na zo. Damina ya wuce. Lokacin na tafi Damagaram, na kai Bude ta gani gida. Shi ne Ba'asonka da P. sun dauke ni sun

¹ Laḃḃo's wife is a daughter of 'Dawra Egoyi, who at that time had moved to Zinder because of the drought (see also the account of 'Dawra Egoyi, Text 2).

² Another daughter of 'Dawra Egoyi and sister of Laḃḃo's wife.



Photo 10: Labdo Usman

(F. KÖHLER, 2011)

German who had agreed to give me a lift to Belbeji. When I arrived at home, the cattle had all died. Well, not all, but... yes, one can say all, since they had been more than five hundred before and I found only a small rest, some eighty perhaps. When I saw them, I started to cry.

That is when I decided to go to town together with my younger brother Haarika. I went to ask for work at the homes of Europeans, but they said that they did not have work for me. There were a lot of us in Zinder then, even those who are now in Ganatcha, Umaru and his people. They were staying near Kanya, where relief food was distributed. That day, I had gone to a woman to have my hair plaited and I was about to return when I saw F. stop his car. I went and greeted him and he gave me a lift downtown. When I told him that I was looking for work, he said that he did not have any work for

kai ni wurin Nasara na Alman. Ya ce, zai kai ni Belbeji. Da na koma na tar da shanu duka sun mutu. Ba duka ba, amma... i, duka, tun da shanu wajena sun yi dari biyar. Na tar da ai saura, kamar shanu tamanin suka yi saura. Tamanin kawai. Ni da na tar da, na gani shanu, ran nan ina kuka.

Daga nan ma sai na tafi gari, ni da 03 Harika. Sai na zo gidan Nasara, na tambaya, na ce ina so aiki, ya ce babu aiki. Shi ke nan. Nan in da gidan Sibi yake, lokacin nan duka akwai Fulani nan, duka namu wancan ma, wanda suke Ganaca, Mofada. Duka suna nan, wajen Kanya. Ana ba su taimako. Na zo wani mace, ta yi mini kitso. Da ta kare, na tashi, na ga mota, wannan Nasara, F., yana tsaye. Na san shi, sai na tafi, sai muka gaisa. Sai na hau mota, cikin gari muka tafi. Da muka tafi, sai na sabka. Kuma na ce mishi ina son aiki. Ya ce babu aiki. Na tafi kamar bakin waccan itace, inda tumaki suke. Ya ce: 'Yaka!' Shi ke

me, but before I had continued far on my way, he called me back and told me to come to his house the next day. He said: 'Tomorrow, house.' He did not speak Hausa well.

04 Originally, I had planned to leave for Nigeria the next morning to look for work there. I had my hair plaited because I wanted to travel. Instead, the next morning I went to F.'s place. He asked me via his domestic servant what I wanted. When I repeated that I was looking for work, he said that he did not own cattle. I replied that I was looking for employment not as a herder but as a watchman. He accepted. He said that there was already a dog that was guarding his house but that he would take me anyway.

05 He paid 4,000 FCFA³ per week. At the time that was a lot. That is how we stayed together. In the mornings, all the Wodaaɓe of Kanya were coming to my place to spend the day. One day, F. came out and complained about the disturbance. He said that he would allow only me, my brother and my brother's wife on the compound. I asked him to tell his domestic servant to tell it to them, since I was ashamed to do so. Instead, he went himself and told them to leave. But they would not stop coming. Later the same day, when he came back home, he could even hardly pass. The people came in numbers in order to share some food. You know, when they came, I generally bought something and we would eat together. Most of the people did not have any money

nan. Ya ce: 'Gobe gida'. Bai iya ba Hausa. Shi ke nan.

Da, da safe za ni tafi Najeriya kawai. Ran nan na yi kitso kawai in tafi Najeriya, ni da Harika, da safe, neman aiki. Da safe, sai na tafi gida, sai ya dauko moshe, wanda yake aiki. Ya ce, ya tambayi moshe, me nike so. Na ce, aiki nike so. Ya ce, ba ya da shanu. Na ce, a'a, ba shanu ba ne, ni gadi nike so. Ya ce, to, zai dauke ni, ga kare yana yi mishi gadi, amma yanzu zai dauke ni gadi.

Ya ce, sati zai ba ni jika huɗu. Ka san lokacin, jika huɗu kuɗi ne. Shi ke nan, sai muka zamna. To, da safe, mutanen Kanya duka nan suke wuni wurina. Sai ya fito wata rana, ya ce, shi ba ya so mutane da yawa. Shi, yana so kawai daga ni sai kanena, sai matanshi. Yana so ya yi barci, magana muke da yawa, shi, yana so ya yi barci. To, na ce, mai aikinshi ya gaya ma, na ce, ni ina kumiya in yi Fulani magana. Ya ce zai gaya ma Fulani. Sai ya zo, ya gaya ma Fulani. Ina suka beri? Ran nan ma da suka komo, da ya zo ma, bai samu ba wuri inda ya biyo ma. Da yawa sun zo neman abunci. Ka gani, da suka zo, in sun zo, sai in tafi in sayo wani abu mu ci. Mutane ba su da kuɗi, babu kome. To, bayan nan, sai ya zo, ya zamna cikin mu, ya tar da mu a nan. Akwai matanshi, da shi soye su zo

³ Today this would correspond to ca. 6€.

at all. They did not have anything. Later, however, F. began to socialize with us. It was his wife who pushed him to do so. She spoke a little Hausa while he did not. Finally he stopped complaining. He was patient, he really was.

After a year, he left and E. came. When E. was there, it was as if I was not the watchman any longer. I was like the landlord! He shared all his meals with me. And when he had to go somewhere with his car, we went together. We spent a lot of time together among Wodaaɓe and with the time he even learned Fulfulde. One night, we talked until one o'clock. E. stayed [in Zinder] for two years and for another four years in Filingué. [Laɓɗo accompanied him to Filingué to continue working for him.]

After this time, after I had returned to the bush, one day I went to Zinder. At that time, an Italian had just newly arrived. Ba'asonka asked me whether I was interested in a job. She said that there was an Italian who was looking for a Bodaadɗo to work for him. Originally, I was not looking for work, it was rather jokingly that I said yes. But he accepted me and I stayed with him for two years, even a bit longer.

His house was near the big mosque built by Lawali Bala⁴ and the Italian did not support the calls for prayer. He asked me: 'Is that always [as loud] as this?' I said: 'Always.' So he decided to leave the house and move to another one, otherwise he would not find any sleep any more.

su zamna cikin mu duka, mu zamna. Shi bai iya ba Hausa, matanshi tana iya kaɗan-kaɗan. Shi ke nan. Ya beri magana. Ya yi haƙuri, lalle.

To, bayan shekara ɗaya sai E. ya zo. 06
Kai E. da ya zo, ni ba mai gadi ba ne, kamar mai gida ne! Abincinmu ɗaya ne. In ya fita, sai mun tafi tare, kawai na hau mota mun tafi. Mun tafi cikin Fulani. To E., nan da nan, sai ya koya Fulanci. Wata rana, muna zamna, muna yi hira har ƙarfe ɗaya. Muna hira. Kai... E. ya yi shekara biyu, kuma shekara huɗu a Filinge.

To, daga lokacin da na koma 07
daji, wata rana na zo Damagaram kawai. Da na zo Damagaram, sai wani Nasara ya zo daga Itali. Sai Ba'asonka ta tambaye ni, ta ce, kana son aiki? Ga wannan Nasara daga Itali yana nema Bafulace na aiki. Da, ba na so fa. Sai na faɗi ina so, kamar wasa. Gaskiya kamar wasa ne, shi ke nan, sai ya ɗauke ni. Shekara biyu na yi da shi. Na fi shekara biyu ma.

Ka san wannan masalaci, wannan 08
babba na Lawali Bala, to nan gidanshi ne. To, ana kira Salla, Italyen wannan ba ya so. Ya ce: 'Kullum haka ne?' Na ce: 'Har abada.' Ya ce, kai, zai gusa wannan gida, ya hana shi barci. Ya ce, za mu gusa can baya. Da ya je can ya gusa

⁴A wealthy local personality who built a mosque in his neighbourhood which rivals the Friday Mosque of Zinder in prodigiousness and monumentality.

The owner of his new house said that he would not dismiss his own watchman who was a Hausa. But the Italian said that he would find me another job. And it was not more than a week or two until he had found me a job with an American woman. At that period, there were a lot of expatriates. That is how I got a new job, for that lady. With her as well, I stayed for about two years. Two years with her, two with the Italian, six with E. That makes ten years.

- 09 During all this time, I did not send any money home! Only once, E. gave me 300,000 FCFA⁵ in order to buy sheep and goats from it. So I went home and bought them. Twenty animals altogether.
- 10 After E. had arrived, we went and asked him [about jobs]. There were numerous German expatriates then.⁶ My younger brother Haarika found a job, and after him Atta, the younger brother of my father. He also worked in Zinder for a long time. After him, still with German expatriates, we put one person called Adawla, and Mawnde, Gado's father. You see? Him as well, we put him into a job with a German. Then we put one man of the name of Duro. Each time it was E. who asked me to propose people. And finally Dengi,⁷ but in this case it was not with a German, I do not remember where this one came from. He did not keep him for long, and afterwards he [Dengi]

gida, sai mai gida can, Bahaushe, ya ce, shi ba zai fid da mai gadi ba. Shi ke nan. Amma ya ce, sai in zamna nan. In na zamna nan, zai nema mini aiki. Kai, bai yi ba sati, ko biyu ma, sai ya samu mini aiki wani mace Ameriken. Lokacin akwai Nasaru da yawa. Sai na samu aikin mace. Shi ma shekara biyu. Italyen, shekara biyu, Ameriken, shekara biyu, E. shekara shida. Ke nan, shekara goma ne.

Lokacin da na tafi... kome ban aiko ba! In ba E. ya ba ni jika dari uku, ya ce in tafi in sayi tumaki da awaki, na tafi gida na sayi tumaki da awaki, duka, rai ashirin.

Da E. ya zo, sai muka tambaya. Ka sani lokacin akwai Nasaru na Alman. Harika kanena ya samu aiki. Na biyu: Atta, kanen ubanmu. Shi ma da, ya yi aiki a Damagaram. Ya daɗe ma aiki Damagaram. To, bayan shi... duka na cikin Nasara... muka sa wani Adaula, muka sa wani sunanshi Maunde, uban Gado. Ka ji, ko? Shi ma, cikin Alman muka sa shi. Muka sa wani sunanshi Duro. Duka E. yake tambaye ni, ina kai mutane. Ke nan, sa'an nan har da Dengi. Amma shi ba na Alman ba ne. Ni ban sani ba wane Nasara ne. Bai daɗe ba. Kuma ya sake, ya samu wani. Daga baya ya samu aiki wajen Peace Corps. Amma lokacin, Peace Corps basu nan. Ke nan: ɗaya, biyi,

⁵ Today this would correspond to ca. 450€.

⁶ The German development agencies, DED and GTZ entertained an elaborate program with numerous posts for expatriate development agents in Zinder during the 1980s.

⁷ Laɓɗo's eldest brother.

found work with the Peace Corps. But at first, the Peace Corps had not been there yet. Let me count: one, two, three... eight. We put eight people into jobs with expatriates at that time. And in all these cases it was E. who asked us to propose them.

It had all started during the *banga-banga* drought. Before *banga-banga*, there were no Wodaabe working for expatriates. When I started, there was no one apart from me. It was only later that we put all the others. Later, many Wodaabe found work and all of them as watchmen.

uku... takwas, mutane da muka sa cikin aikin Nasara. Kuma duka E. ne yana tambaya ana sa su.

Amma da ya fara, duka lokacin 11 banga-banga ya fara. Kafin banga-banga babu Fulani da suke aiki cikin Nasaru. Ni da na tafi ban gani ba Fulani. In ba ni ba ne. Sai sa'an nan mun sa waƙanan duka. To daga baya, Fulani da yawa suka samu. Kuma duka masu gadi ne. Duka.

TEXT 13: HISTORY, STRATEGIES AND CONDITIONS OF URBAN WORK MIGRATION

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT

Taafa Buuyo is one of three brothers from the region of Damergou. For several years, they have followed a joint economic strategy combining pastoralism and urban-based work. While both Nano and Taafa work as watchmen in urban centres, Maalam as the youngest brother remained in the pastoral zone of the Damergou region in order to manage their joint herds and to assure a presence at the well of Salaga, which the three brothers inherited from their father.

Taafa was the most mobile of the brothers and his work migration led him to distant regions such as the capital, Niamey, the far eastern Diffa province and different locations in Nigeria where he has worked mainly as a watchman. Apart from giving a complementary perspective on the history of migrant work among the Gojanko'en in the study region and its close link to the 1980s drought and famine, Taafa's account offers insight in the strategies and rationalizations behind work migration.

Taafa Buuyo, Wodaabe Gojanko'en, Diffa, May 2011

- 01 If a man from the bush [i. e. a pastoralist] goes to town, it is because he is in need, because in the bush he does not have enough [animals] [to survive]. He may perhaps not lose all his animals at once. If he loses them at once, he will go to town. If they are just a bit reduced, he will not want to settle down. He will live off the remaining ones until they will be finished. (Or) he might leave them with a relative and go to town to make a living. If he manages to earn enough money to buy new animals and return to the bush, he will do so. If not, he will stay in town and
- (H) In ka ga mutumin daji ya zo gari, to, abin da ya rike ne, ya rena. Ba ya isa shi a daji. To, wani ba zai ya resa gaba daya ba. Kamar abunshi, dabobinshi, sun kare. Sun kare gaba daya, yake tahowa gari. In sun rage kamar kaɗan, ba ya so ya zamna. Yana cin su har sun ida. In ya rage waɗanan da ya rage, sai ya yi dubara. Yana cin su har sun ida. In ya rage waɗanan da ya rage, sai ya yi dubara, ya beri wani ɗan'uwanshi, kamar wanda yake a daji. Shi sai ya taho gari, yana yi nemanshi. In ya samu yadda abun da ya koma, ya kara, sai ya koma, ya kara. In kuma bai



Photo 11: Taafa Buuyo

(F. KÖHLER, 2011)

only visit his relatives in the bush from time to time. This is how we did when we first came to town. And finally, we stayed for a long time.

Nano¹ was the first. We experienced an extremely difficult year. It was the year Nigeria expelled people from Niger. At that time, our animals stocks were largely reduced. [...] The market prices for animals were extremely low. You would get maybe just 5,000–10,000 FCFA² for a cow. On the other hand you had to sell them because they were exhausted. As we saw that our stock was largely reduced, Nano decided that he would follow Dawra who went to Zinder with his family. I was charged with looking after the remaining animals until we knew how to continue and how the year would develop.

samu ba, kuma yana nan garishi, sai dai wani lokaci yana iya ya je ya ga zaman wancan. Yanda yake ya dawo gari. Mu dai, lokacin da muka zo gari, haka muka tafi. Har muka ðan jima cikin gari.

Nano ne na farko. Lokacin da muka ga wani mugun shekara sosai. Ai ka ji labarinshi: shekaran da Najeriya ya koro mutanen Nijer. To, lokacin ðin nan ne, da dabbobinmu suka rage. [...] Sai muka ga shekara nan ya gaba da dabbobi ba su da kuɗi. Sai ka kai shanu wajen biyu ba su da kuɗi. Sai ka sai da su kamar dix mille, cinq mille haka. Kake sai da saniya tun da ba da karfi. To, da muka gani sun rage sosai, Nano ya ce zai biyo su Dada, tun da za su nufo Zinder, su. Nan za su zo su zamna. Ni wannan abun da ya yi saura, sai in kulla da su har muka yi abun da za mu yi. Mu ga shekara, abun da ya yi.

¹ Taafa's eldest brother.

² Today this would correspond to ca. 7,50€.

- 03 So I stayed with the remaining animals. I was together with Boyi. At that time we were the only ones in the bush, me and Boyi. I was herding, I was watering the animals. I was a small boy of only about ten years of age at the time.
- 04 Later, when the conditions failed to become better, I said to Boyi: ‘I want to go to Zinder to see the people [from my family] there.’ I left the remaining animals with Boyi, and when I went to Zinder, Nano replaced me in the bush for a while and took care for the animals. Later, he returned to Zinder as well and found me there. In Zinder, I established a little vendor’s tray to earn a little money. That was my first work in town. I sold tea and bread and I stayed in town.
- 05 Later, P.,³ who was staying in Zinder then, decided to buy some animals and bring them to the bush. Nano said: ‘Look, Dawra will return to the bush with his family, go and stay with them and look after our animals. As for me, I will stay in town, since our animals are not many.’ So I returned to the bush. I did not find Boyi at his place. He had left the animals with Ja’anyi, a relative of ours. I stayed at his place and I took care of the animals until, later, P. bought a number of animals for Dawra and he took them to the north. That is where I met them. P. had bought about five cows for them. Their remaining animals were with us. At that time, P. said to Nano: ‘Stay together with Dawra since you

To, na zamna da sauran bisaje wurin. Ina tare da Kitti. Mu kadai ne lokacin a daji. Ina tare da Kitti. Kullum ina yi kiwo, ina yi bai ruwa. Lokacin, ina da shekara goma. Ba ni da shekaru da yawa. Shekara goma kadai.

To, daga baya, tun shekara bai ida gyara ba, sai na ce Kitti: ‘Gaskiya, ni zan je Zinder in gani mutanen can. Ina so in gan su.’ Na beri sauran bisajen ma wajen Kitti. To, da na je Zinder, Nano ya tafi ya kulla da bisaje. Shi ma ya jima kafan, kuma hal lau, ya komo nan Zinder. Ya tar da ni. To, da na zamna Zinder kin nan, har na yi wani tebur haka, kamar kanti. Shi ne aikina a gari na farko. Ina sayar da shahi da brodi haka. Ina zamna.

Daga baya, sai P. ya ce, ya kamata ya sayi bisajen a hud da su daji. Lokacin, P. yana Zinder. To, sai Nano ya ce mini: ‘Yanzu ka ga wannan, su Dada, su ma za su koma daji. Sai ka je, ka kulla mumu da sauran bisajenmu. Ni, ka beri ni a nan in zamna. Tun da bisajenmu kafan ne.’ To, sai na koma can wurin Kitti. To, da na je, ban tar da Kitti ma, na tar da bisajenshi a wurin wani mutumin, Ja’anyi aka ce mishi. Shi ma dan’uwanmu ne. Sai na zamna a wurinshi, ina kulla da bisaje. Ina kulla da su har daga baya, P., da ya sayi na su Dada bisaje, ya fid da su, suka je arewa, can muka gamu. Ya sayi musu shanu kafan, kamar rai biyar haka. Sauran su bisaje da muka gama, muna tare da su. To, P., lokacin, ya kira mu, ya ce:

³ A French anthropologist and development worker who was closely related to the family of Dawra.

are of one family. I will help you to rebuild your stock.’ So we stayed together with them until the conditions became better.

P. was in Zinder at the time. He asked Nano to move to his place and work for him as a watchman. And Nano agreed and he worked for him. They were together and Nano just did not return [home]. As for me; I was there in the bush. At one point, I was asking myself what I was doing there, and I decided to leave. After all, Maalam and Waantudi⁴ were there and they could easily take care of the few animals that were there. I decided to leave them and go to Nigeria as the two of them were able to manage the animals alone. They were not far from Dawra and we had our own well there, so there was really no problem. I left and passed by Nano’s place in Zinder and I told him that since there were really not many animals to be taken care of, I preferred to go to Nigeria. Ba’asonka⁵ was upset and asked me why I wanted to leave for Nigeria. She said that P. had bought animals and asked us to stay and look for them, and that it was not a nice thing to just leave. But I said that it was not a matter of not being nice. I just did not see the point of staying in the bush and so I had to leave. But they hindered me and brought me back home. Later, however, they left because P. continued to work in Maradi and he took Nano along. That day

‘Nano, ya kamata ku, tun da *famille* ne, ku zamna kusa da su. Ni, ina iya in kama muku, muna taimake ku har kun samu bisajenku su karo.’ To, muna tare da su. Har wani lokaci mai dan dama.

P., lokacin, yana Damagaram. Ya 06
ɗauka Nano, ya ce ya komo wurinshi, don Allah ya zamna ya yi mishi aikin gadi. Nano, ya komo nan wurinshi. Suna aiki tare. Suna yi aiki, suna aiki, har daga baya... Nano bai koma ba. Ni ma ina can daji. Wani lokaci, na gani, kamar zamna da nike a can, ba ni gane shi sosai. Shi ne, na ce, za ni tafi. Tun da Malam, ga shi nan, shi da Wantudi, kanen Baji, suna iya su kulla da bisaje, tun da kaɗan ne. Ni, za ni taho Najeriya. Ke nan na beri su. Na ce, tun da su biyu ne, suna iya su kulla abubuwanmu da muka beri, bisajen nan. Tun da suna kusa da Dada. Kuma rijiyar namu ne, babu wani matsala. Sai na taho. Na taho wurin Nano, yana Zinder. Na ce: ‘Ni gaskiya, zamnana can, tun da babu wani bisaje gare mu mai dama, yanzu, ina so in tafi kawai Najeriya.’ To, sai Nano... Ba’aso, ya yi haushi, ya ce don me zan tafi Najeriya. P. ya sayi bisaje, ya ce mu zamna can mu kulla. Ba mu da kirki, don me nike...? Na ce: ‘A’a, ba rashin kirki ba ne. Can ban gani abun da nike. Kawai za ni tafi can, Najeriya.’ Sai suka yi mini wayo, suka mai da ni gida. Da suka mai da ni, daga baya, sun tafi, P. ya koma can, wajen Maradi. Ya dauka Nano. Ran nan kawai, na gaji, na taho. Na sai da wani ragona, na biyo Zinder, na wuce Najeriya. Kawai

⁴ Maalam is Taafa’s younger brother, Waantudi his half-brother (FS).

⁵ A daughter of Dawra, married to P.

I simply left, since I was tired of staying. I sold a ram that belonged to me, went to Zinder and continued to Nigeria. I just took a car and went to Kano. I was maybe fifteen years old at that time. I stayed in Nigeria for three years, in the towns of Mubi and Yola in Adamawa State. I spent two years there before moving on to Kano, where I spent another year.

- 07 In Kano I worked as a watchman at a private house. The landlord was a very reasonable Nigerian, not an expatriate. Then I also worked for a company in Kano where expatriates worked. They were engaged in different things, even road construction. I worked there together with several others from our lineage, together with Baji.⁶ But we did not work there for long. One day we were all fired. During the night shift, some of our colleagues had fallen asleep. The expatriate boss fired us all, although only some of us had been sleeping, not all. But we were all fired.
- 08 Later, Nano came and took me back home. He himself continued to stay in Maradi where he was working for P. as a watchman until, one day, P. told him to better return to the bush, as this [urban] work was not good for him. He said that he could help him to make a living in the bush, he could take care of some animals that P. owned. That is how Nano returned to the bush. And when he went, he also took me with him.
- 09 So, Nano and I have stayed in town, but Maalam was always staying in the bush. Only while still a small boy he was also staying in Zinder.

⁶Taafa's half-brother (FS).

na biya mota na nufa Kano. To, ga dalilin na tafi Najeriya, na yi aiki can. Lokacin, shekaruna sun kai goma sha biyar. Na yi shekara uku can Najeriya. Na koma Mubi, Adamawa, Garin Yola. Nan na yi shekara biyu. To, daga baya na je Kano, na ce za ni kara wani shekara.

A Kano gadin gida na yi na wani mutumin Najeriya mai hali. Ba Nasara ba ne. A Kano, na yi aikin wani Nasara, wani baban kampani. Aiki da yawa, har da kolta suka yi...Da, tare da sauran mutanenmu nika, tare da Baji. To, da muka zamna nan, ba mu jima ba, kawai ran nan an hud da mu. Wane mutane, sauran masu aiki, abokanmu, sun yi kwana. To, Nasara yana yi patron da dare. To, shi ne, an hud da mu, an ce ba mu iya aiki ba, an hud da. Waƙanda suna kwana, waƙanda basu yi kwana ba. Su, gaba ɗaya, sun hud da. Shi ne. An hud da mu duka.

To, ni, daga baya, Nano ya zo, ya ɗauke ni. Ya kai ni gida. Amma, ya jima da P., har da Maradi. Suna aiki tare. To, P., Nano ya yi mishi gadi. Sai ya ce mishi ran nan, kawai ya koma, wannan aiki bai yi mishi, ya je daji, ya riƙe dukiya nashi wancan. Yana iya ya taimake shi a zaman daji. Dalili Nano ya koma daji. Da ya koma, ya ɗauke ni, ni ma muka koma.

To, lokacin, ni da Nano mun zamna gari, amma Malam kullum yana daji, sai lokacin da ya yi ƙarami, shi ma, ya zamna Zinder. Daga baya mun

But later, we sent him back home to the bush. Since the time that he was in Zinder, he was taken care of by an elder sister of ours who had married a relative from the area of Gouré. When we returned to Salaga, Nano said that he would take care of Maalam and bring him home.

Thus we were herding our animals. At that time they were multiplying again. The conditions were good. We thus continued until we were even able to buy camels, all of us: Nano, Maalam, even Baji, we helped him to buy a camel. It was no camel breeding; we kept them only as mount animals.

At that time we were staying with the family of Dawra. Later, we left them but only to come back close to them again. That is how it was. Only later, when the incident happened that I once told you about,⁷ from that time on we were not so close any longer, until finally they left for the place where they are staying now, for Ganatcha. At that time I was not even there, I was in Niamey.

When I worked in Nigeria, I was not yet married. Later I returned to the bush until a lineage mate who was married to our eldest sister found work with an expatriate in Zinder. He ended up owning many animals and decided to abandon his work [in town]. He worked for a young French development worker. He offered Nano to take over his job in order to earn money and multiply his animals, as well. Nano agreed

mai da shi daji. Tun yana Zinder, wani yayanmu, mace, wadda ya ke daji, yana aure wani dan'uwammu, amma nan suke zamna, wajen Guree. Da, shi ne ya dauka Malam. To, da muka koma can bisa Salaga, Nano ya ce ya dauka Malam, ya mai da shi gida.

To, shi ke nan, muna yi kiwon 10 bisajenmu. Suna karowa lokacin nan. Daji yana da albarka sosai. Muna ci gaba, har mun sayi rakuma cikin bisajen nan. Mun yi rakuma, mu duka. Nano, Malam... Baji ma, mun tanye shi ya sayi rakumi. Shi ma ya yi rakuma. Ba kiwon rakuma – na hawa ne kawai.

To, muna tare da mutanenmu gida. 11 Wannan na Dada lokacin nan. Daga baya, mun rebu da su kafan kafan. Amma kuma, in mun rebu kuma wani bi, sai mun koma mu gama da su. Haka ne. Sai daga baya, nan da aka yi wannan abu da nike gaya maka wani lokaci, daga lokacin ba mu sake zamna sosai, har suka tafo nan wajen inda suke yanzu, Ganaca. Amma lokacin, ina Niamey, ba ni can daji.

Lokacin aikina Najeriya ban yi aure 12 ba. Yaro ne. To, daga baya muna can daji, sai wani dan'uwammu wanda ya ke aure da yayanmu, babba namu, mace. Yana aiki da Nasara can Zinder. To, ya yi bisaje sosai. Ya ce, zai beri aiki. Yana aiki da wani 'volontaire' daga Faransa. Ya ce Nano, in yana so, sai ya zo ya zamna don ya samu ya karo can bisajen shi. Nano, sai ya tafo. To, daga Nano ya tafo, ya samu aikin nan, ni ma na

⁷ Here, Taafa refers to an intra-lineage conflict between the children of Buuyo and the children of Dawra.

and I left the animals with Maalam and also followed him. I did not stay long before returning to the bush, but I returned again to Nano's place and stayed for maybe one or two months.

- 13 When I returned to the bush again, I established my own household. I was now staying together with Yoofo.⁸ Finally, an expatriate called A. took me to Niamey. He had first been employed in Zinder and he had told Nano that he was looking for someone to work for him. A. wanted me to work for him if I was available. He took me and I worked for him for two years, until his contract ended. And then F.⁹ came to replace him on his post and I continued to work for him.
- 14 It was in Niamey that my first children were born: Hadiiza, Adama, Assamaa'u and Faati, all four of them were born in Niamey. We were staying for about ten years in Niamey.
- 15 There were a lot of other Wodaabe there, even [Gojanko'en] Kuskudu, but they were all from the west, from the regions of Abalak and Tahoua. There were no other lineage mates of ours from Tanout. But we were staying [in close contact] with them [i.e., the other Gojanko'en migrants], we would regularly visit each other. Whatever activities they were involved in, they would tell me and we would go and participate together. If there were dances or meetings, they would always invite me. We were very close.

biyo shi, na zo. Na beri bisajen da Malam. To, ni, ba ni dade, sai na koma can daji, wurin Malam, kuma in zo wurin Nano. Kamar in yi wata daya, wata biyu haka.

Daga baya, na koma daji, lokacin nan na samu gida. Ina tare da Yoofo. Sai wannan Nasara, aka ce mishi A., ya dauke ni, ya kai ni Niamey. Ya yi... an yi fostenshi nan Zinder, ya ce, to, don Allah, Nano ya nema wani, yana so in yi aiki da shi in in iya. To, da ya dauke mu, mui yi aiki tare, mun yi shekara biyu, sai aiki ya fare. Sai wannan, F. ya zo. Ya zo kinshi, kuma muna yi mishi aiki.

Can Niamey, na fara haifu yara: Hadiza, Adama, Assama'u, Fati, su huɗu duka an haife su a can. Duka an haife su can Niamey. Mun yi shekaru har kamar goma a can Niamey.

Akwai Wodaabe da yawa da suke zamna can, akwai Kuskudu, amma duka na can yamma ne, na wajen Abalak da Tawa. Su ne. Babu sauran mutanen mu daga Tanus. Amma muna tare da su. Suna je wurina, ni ma kullum ina je wurinsu. Kuma, abun da za su yi duka, sai su aika mini, mu je mu yi shi tare. In wani wasa ne, in wani harka ne, suna aika mini. Ko wani harkan 'réunion' haka. Kullum haka ne. Muna tare da su. Ka san Bodaado, in yana zamna gari, haka ne. Ko babu mutane na iyalinshi ne, amma tun da akwai

⁸Taafa's wife and daughter of Dawra's brother Araba.

⁹A French expatriate.

When a Bodaado is staying in town, this is how it is. If there are no other members of his family, but other Wodaabe, then of course he will stay [in close contact] with them. It is like here in Diffa right now. We are the only Gojanko'en, but there are 'Bii Ute'en and Suudu Suka'el here, the people of Laamiido 'Baḡol. We are always [in close contact] with them. Back then in Niamey, it was similar.

It was there [in Niamey] also that we received an invitation to go to Europe, to Belgium. This came about because even back in Zinder, there had been interest in our dancing. At that time, P. was in Zinder. He filmed us together with some Tuareg, and then we just went and tried our luck. When we gave the film with our dancing to some Europeans, they saw that it was beautiful. They said that since we did not have a postal address, in order to reach us quickly they would send us an answer via P. If they returned to France and our film was appreciated, we would be invited to dance there.

Finally, they really sent an answer to P. and he called our leader at the time, a certain Atta, Baji's mother's brother. He was the leader of our dance group. P. told him: 'They appreciated your dance performance, there was a positive answer. Now, you will have to get passports in Niamey because you have been invited to travel to France.' [...]

Later, it was changed into Belgium. The organizers asked for more dancers. That is when I also got involved. They came and asked

sauran Wodaabe, dole ana zamna tare da su. Kamar nan Diffa kuma. Yanzu mu kadai ne a nan daga cikin Gojanko'en. Akwai 'Bii Ute'en, akwai Suudu Suka'el, mutanen Laamiido 'Baḡol wancan. Ai muna tare da su. Kullum muna tare. To, da, a can Niamey ma haka ne.

Can ḡin sai an kai mumu wani invite mai zuwa Turai, Beljik. To, akwai abun da ya sa. Tun a nan ma Zinder an neman mu wasa nan lokacin. P., lokacin, yana Zinder. Aka ḡauke mu, muka je, muka 'essayé', mu da waḡansu Bugaje. Da mun kai wasan nan, suka ga 'film' ḡin ya yi kyau. Suka ce mumu, yanzu, lalle mu ba mu da wani 'poste', amma suna iya su mai da mumu repons a P. In sun koma Farans, film ḡin namu ya yi kyau, ana ḡauke mu, an kai mu can, mu yi wasa. 16

To, da aka yi haka nan ḡin, daga baya muna jira, sun aiko 'réponse' a P. P. ya kira wannan samarinmu lokacin, wani Atta muka ce mishi. Kawon Baji ne. Shi ne samari namu. Sarkin samari. Ya ce mishi: 'Ai, wasan da kuka yi, ya yi kyau. An ba da 'réponse'. Yanzu za a kai ku Niamey, a yi muku 'passeport'. An yi envite ku a Farans.' [...]

Daga baya, kuma aka sake su Beljik. 18 Ya turo, shi ma waḡilinshi, ya ce a zo, a nema mutane irinshi. Sa'an nan aka zuwa, aka neman mu, mu ma.

for more participants. When we went, they said that they had liked our film and that we were invited to Belgium, to Brussels, and to the Netherlands. Later, when they invited us for the second time, we went to Belgium, Brussels, and we went to Switzerland.

- 19 The first time we went was before the year 2000. The year 2000 came later, but it was not long before. The second time was in 2002.
- 20 When I went [to Europe] for the first time, I did not have even a single cow. Some had died, others I had sold. I had a considerable number of sheep and goats and one camel. When I returned, I bought seven heads of cattle. I gave two to Maalam and kept five for myself. I was staying in Niamey at the time, I could not keep the cattle. That is why I entrusted them to Maalam and told him to keep two for himself and take care of the others for me. Until I returned to the bush, the cattle had multiplied to become almost 30. It was shortly before 2003 that I left Niamey. In the rainy season of 2003, Jamiila¹⁰ was born. We were in the bush near Tanout at the time. When we returned from Niamey, we spent about one year in the bush. Finally, V.¹¹ came, looking for somebody to work for him. He asked us to come and work for him.
- 21 In the past, we had many cattle. When our father died, he really left us with many cattle. At that time,

Mu ma, muka shiriya. Da mun kai, suka ce, i, film kin da muka yi, ya yi. Za'a yi envite mu, mu je Beljik, mu je Briksel, mu je Peyiba.' Daga baya, da muka je na biyu, da suka envite mu na biyu, muka je Beljik, muka je Briksel, muka je Swis.

Shekara na fari, ba a ida cika 2000 ba. Daga baya ne an yi 2000. Lokacin amma 2000 yana kusa, shekara na fari. To, na biyu cikin 2002 ne.

To, da muka je, ni na farko da na zo, lokacin ba ni da shanu, ko guda. Sauransu sun mutu, sauransu mun sai da su. Ina da tumaki mai dama, da awaki, da rakumi guda. Da na dawo, na sayi shanu rai bakwai. Na ba Malam biyu, ni ma na dauka rai biyar. To, ni, ina Niamey, ni ban riƙe shanu ba. Da na sayi, na ba Malam, na ce sai ya adina, amma shi ya dauka biyu. Ni ma, ya beri ni ma saura. Amma shi ne ya riƙe su a suna na. To, daga baya, kamin in zo shanu sun zamna kamar kusa rai talatin. Kamin in zo daga Niamey cikin lan 2003 yana kusa, na bero Niamey. Cikin damina lan 2003 an haifu Jamiila. Lokacin, muna daji, can wajen Tanus. To, da mun dawo daga Niamey, mun yi shekara guda a daji. Kuma sa'an nan, wannan, V., ya zo, ya nema wani mai aiki. Ya ce mu zo nan in yi mishi aiki.

Da, akwai shanu. Lokacin da babanmu ya beri, ya beri mu da shanu da yawa, gaskiya. Lokacin,

¹⁰ Taafa's youngest daughter.

¹¹ A German expatriate who brought Taafa and his family to Diffa to work for him. The contact had been established by Taafa's brother Nano who was working for a colleague of V. in Zinder at the time.

I alone had thirty cows, Maalam as well, and Nano even more. They were many. When he [our father] died, our cattle counted more than one hundred. That was in the year that I have told you about, *buhari*,¹² when Nigeriens were expelled from Nigeria. It was also a year of famine here in Niger. Our father had been dead for three years when Seyni Kountché died.¹³

After this, many cattle died and we had to sell others. And at that time the prices for animals were very low. If you wanted to buy millet, you had to give two cows for a sack of 20 measures. And because we had lost the cattle, we had to begin our errancy in town. But nevertheless our mind is in the bush. We stay in town but our mind is always in the bush.

We reflected about this. Nano said that he wanted me to stay in the bush. I told him that I would like to stay, but now our animals were few and so it was better if I did not stay. Maalam was enough. After all Dawra was like a father to us. Maalam would stay together with him and he would take care of our animals. That is why we decided that we could go to town. When we lost our father, Dawra gave us the

ina da shanu talatin, ni kadai. Nano, ya fi talatin, shanunshi. Malam ma shanunshi kamar talatin ne. Suna da yawa. Lokacin da ya beri mu, shanunmu sun fi dari. Shekara ne da nike ce maka, lokacin nan buhari, wannan, Najeriya, sun koro mutanen Nijer. Lokacin nan ma aka yi yunwa a nan Nijer. Ka san Saini Kunce, kamin Kunce ya mutu, babanmu yana da... ya mutu da shekaru kamar uku, babu.

To, daga baya, shanu sun mutu, 22 saura mun sayar da su. Tun da, lokacin nan, dabbobi ba su da kuɗi. Wannan, in zaka sayi hatsi, za ka kai shanu biyu, santola guda, kamar tiya ashirin. Ka ga? Shanu babu kuɗi. To, dalilin da suka kare mun kai wannan zaman na muka je yawon gari haka. To, duk da haka hankalinmu yana daji. Muna zamna gari amma hankalinmu kullum daji yake.

Mun yi lissafi. Nano, yana so shi 23 ma in zamna daji haka, ya ce. Amma ni, na ce mishi, gaskiya, ina so in zamna daji, amma yanzu ba mu da dabbobi da yawa. Bai kamata ba in zamna daji, Malam ya isa. Tun da wannan tsoho, wannan, Dada, kamar babanmu ne. Malam ya zamna nan, kusa da shi, ya kulla da waɗanan dabbobi da muke tare da su. Dalilin da ya sa mun tafi gari. Tun da mu, kamar lokacin da muka rebu da

¹² *Buhari*, or *al buhari*, is a local term that refers to the year 1984. The term is derived from the name of the then president of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, whose government, in 1984, closed the borders between Nigeria and its neighbouring countries (see Spittler 1993: 123). An estimated 700,000 foreigners were expelled by force from Nigeria under Buhari and his predecessor Shagari, who had started this policy in 1983 (Nwachuku 2004: 198). 1984 was also the worst year of the major Sahel drought of 1983–85 that is locally called *banga-banga*.

¹³ I. e., in 1987. Seyni Kountché (1931–1987) was the Nigerien head of state from 1974–1987.

impression that our father never died. At this time, whatever we did, we told Dawra. If we had a dispute we brought it before him. If we wanted to sell an animal in the market, we consulted with him first. That is how it was at the time. Although the animals belonged to us, we would go and tell him. We respected him a lot. That was our way of handling things at the time.

24 Later, our well in Salaga caved in. When this happened, we sold our animals in order to reconstruct it. In all, this well caved in three times. The first time was when I was there, in the bush. Before I went to Niamey and before I lived together with Yooŋe, it caved in for the second time. I was still a boy. When it caved in, we still had animals and we sold many of them to reconstruct it. When we reconstructed it, we let the people use it. You know, at the time there were always Gojanko'en there and it was the only well in the area at the time. There was no other well near it.

25 Our father had bought it from a former senator, an old man from Tanout. He used to have animals that were tended in the bush and for this reason, he inspected the area there. At the time, this was a good pastoral land. He said: 'If I build a well there and someone takes care of the well for me, how will my animals prosper?' He dug the well and found water. But then a terribly bad year came. I do not know which year exactly, I only heard that it was a bad one. All the animals died. That is what I have heard. As for the well,

babanmu, Dada, kamar mun gani babanmu bai mutu ba. Lokacin nan. Kome ne za mu yi, sai mun gaya ma Dada. Ko wani magana mun kai, da wanda babu kyau, sai mun je mun gaya mishi. Lokacin haka ne. Kuma ko dabba ne muka kai kasuwa, sai mun gaya ma Dada. Namu ne, amma sai mun je mun gaya mishi. Muna tsoronshi sosai. Muna jin kumiyarshi. I, haka ne muka yi, lokacin.

To, daga baya, rijiya namu ma ya fadi. Na Salaga. Da ya mutu, dabbobin da gare mu kuma muka kare muka sayar da su, muka tar da Salaga nan. Rijiyar nan, ya yi faduwa kamar uku. Lokacin wannan na farko, lokacin ne da ina daji. Tun ban tafi Niamey ba, tun ba ni tare da Yooŋe, rijiya ya yi fadi sow biyu. Tun ni yaro ne sosai. Da ya fadi, muna da sauran bisaje nan, mun sayar da su da yawa, mun tar da rijiyar nan. Da muka tar da shi, ana sa mutane suna sha. Ka san, da, kullum Gojawa suna wurin. Kuma shi kafai, lokacin, rijiya a wurin. Babu wani rijiya duka kusa.

Babanmu ya saye shi na hannun senator, tsoho daga Tanus. To, yana da dabbobi a daji, dalili ya je, ya ga dajin nan. Kuma lokacin, daji ne mai kyau. Ya ce, in ya gina rijiyar nan, za a kula mishi, yadda dabbobinshi nan sun yi kyau. To, da ya gina rijiyar nan, ya tar da ruwanshi. Sai aka yi wani mugun shekara. Ni ban san shekaran nan ba. Na ji wani mugun shekara. Dabbobi duka sun mutu. Ni ban sani ba, na ji dai suna fadi. To, rijiyar, da ma ba a tar da ruwa ba sosai, an gani ruwa kawai. Sai ya binne. Iska ya binne shi duka. Ya mutu.

even before, the water had not been abundant. And now the well sanded up. The wind sanded it up and it ran dry. That is how it was left until our father came. Before he had dug several small wells in Tumulle, the place that has today turned into a village. When our father saw that the well of Tumulle started to run dry, he heard about that senator who still owned that other well, although it had completely caved in. There was no well there any more, only the knowledge of it by hearsay. So our father decided to ask the senator who turned out to be a retired old man of maybe eighty years of age. Our father said: 'I would like to buy your well, and build a new one at its place.' The man answered: 'I can only sell you the ground since the well has since long ceased to exist.' Our father said: 'Indeed, it is the ground that I want to buy'. And the man agreed: 'Alright, since I do not own animals any longer, what use will I make of it anyway? I will sell you the papers certifying that the well and surrounding land of about 10 km is yours. I will give you the papers and you should take them to the *chef de canton* in Tanout for confirmation.' He sold the well for a high price, or, as he said himself, the bush land, since there was no more well. He sold him that bush land for a high price.

Yana nan, yana nan, har daga baya tsohon namu... nan Tumulle, ka san wurin akwai rijiyoyi karama, to, tsohin mu, su ne suke gina su. Yanzu akwai gari a wurin nan. To, muna nan. Tsohonmu da ya gina Tumulle, daga baya sun ga ruwan shi, nan na Tumulle, ruwanshi ya rage. Sai ya samu labarin senator din. Shi ne mai rijiyar nan. Amma rijiya ya mutu. Babu shi. Amma akwai kwatanci. Sai ya ce, ya tambayi wancan senator. Senator ya yi 'retraite'. Tsoho ne sosai. Yana da shekara kamar tamanin. Ya tambayi senator, ya ce mishi: 'Rijiya naka, inda yake, ina so in sayi, in gina wani.' Ya ce: 'Sai dai in sayar da maka wurin. Rijiya babu. Tun da rijiya, ya dade da ya mutu.' Ya ce: 'I, wuri nika so in saya.' Ya ce: 'To, tun da ba ni da wani dabbobi, me nika da wuri? Amma ka zo yanzu in ba ka takardan rijiya, in yi maka kuma kilo wajen goma, ka jira wurin, duka wurinka ne. In yi maka takarda, in sa hannu, ka je wajen sarkin Tanus, ya yi hannu.' To, ya sayar da rijiyar da tsada. Ya sayar da mishi, ya ce: 'Wuri na sayar da maka, ba rijiya ba.' Tsohonmu ya sayi rijiyar da tsada. Wuri ya ce, shi daji ne, ya saya. Da tsada.



Photo 12: Maalam, Nano and Taafa Buuyo (from left to right) (F. KÖHLER, 2011)

TEXT 14: RURAL-URBAN MOBILITY, WORK MIGRATION AND RELATIONS TO WESTERN EXPATRIATES

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT

Hamma is a son of 'Dawra'a eldest daughter, Naana. His parents divorced when he was still a small boy, and he grew up with an attachment to two different regions: the region of Ingal, where his father continued to live, and the Damergou region, to which his mother returned after the separation. Hamma's account of his early youth shows what effect such constellations can have on the lives of individuals in terms of spatial orientation and mobility. On the one hand, the biography of Hamma exemplifies the common pattern of frequent changes of residence and of a lifestyle between urban and pastoral settings, and it also gives a lively impression of the difficult working conditions of watchmen in the northern Nigerian metropolis Kano. On the other hand, his account shows once more the impact that relations with western expatriates can have on the range of mobility. In the case of Hamma, such relations took him as far as to the USA.

Hamma Beleti, Wodaabe Gojanko'en, Zinder, June 2011

- 01 When my father first took me, it was there [at my father's place, in the Agadez region] that I grew up to the age of becoming a bit reasonable. When he took me, I was about five or seven years old, I do not know exactly how old, but it was there that I grew up. I ended up becoming a bit reasonable.
- (F) 'Dum arande, nden ndottiijo am hoo'i yam, toon bad' mi waayo. Ko mo hoo'i yam, nden duufi joovi, ko joveedidi nden ngon mi, mi anndaa nden, ammaan toon mawnu mi. Faa puflu mi wadgo waayo.
- 02 Then my mother came to take me. At first, she wanted to take me away with her, and she took me and we even reached the bush taxi station. But they [the people of my father] followed us and they found us at the station in Agadez, where the cars to Tanout leave. That was where they
- Nden naayeejo yahani yam. Nden arande, kama no hoo'oy am, faa hoo'oy am maa, faa min ngari tasha. Nden be tefoy, be tawi min tashar, nder Agadez, to di'i mootajji dillereedi Taanus. Doon be tawi min. Doon min baali faa fini. Nden min baali faa fini, doon be tawi min.



Photo 13: Hamma Beleti

(F. KÖHLER, 2011)

found us. We had spent the night there and in the morning they found us. They took me back with them. My mother cried, she did not like it.

I do not remember exactly when they [my mother's family] took me back, but I think that I spent the next dry season and the rainy season there, before Dawra and our mother's oldest brother¹ came to take me. They took me with them and henceforth, I stayed there, I did not return any more.

When I was about ten or eleven years old... At that time, my mother was staying in the house of her sister Ba'asonka. She did embroidery work. [With the money she earned] she bought a number of sheep, I do not know, four or five, and I herded them.

I was staying at my grandmother Kaita's place [i.e., in the Damergou region], taking care of the sheep

Nden be so'iti yam. Naayeejo e woya, nanaa beldum.

Mi anndaa nden be so'iti yam. 03
Kammi mi, mi yaawi, mi ruumi toon.
Nden Daada e o'on, kaawo meeden mawdo, kambe njahi, koo'oy am.
Nden be koo'oy am, be ngartiri am, gada nden, a yi'i, mi woni, mi sottaay.

Naaki nden, ay mi yahari duubi 04
sappo ko e go'o... Nden naayeejo amin e doon to Ba'aso woni. Nden landi mo wadta. Nden soodi baali, mi anndaa ko dum nayi, dum kolse, ko dum kolse joovi. Kandi bad mi ga durgo.

A yi'i, e mi wuro, do'o to Kaita, e mi 05
dura faa baali di duudi kworey. Kai, mihin nden lokasiire, mihin e hoore

¹I.e., Dawra's eldest son, Alaji.

until they had multiplied. At that time, I alone had more than ten sheep.

06 But later they were affected by a disease and a good number of them died. The other part, my mother sold them. I do not know for how much she sold them. But with a good portion of the money she clothed me and bought me everything that I needed at that time.²

07 [My mother's sister] Ba'asonka and her family moved to Maradi. And later they came back to Zinder. My mother took me [to Zinder] and there I was. I think that I spent the bad hot season there in Zinder. But after that I went back to Kaita's house [i.e., to the Damergou region]. That is where I grew up, till the age of about twenty years. Together with [my matrilineal cousin] Kirbori, I was responsible for herding the sheep until they were affected by that disease. After this, I returned to Zinder. I think that I spent about ten years there. [During that time] I also began to travel to Kano.

08 At one time I went with the family of 'Dawra, when they moved to Tesker with their animals. We spent about a year there. P. had helped them construct a well there.³ They spent one rainy season and the dry season over there. One day, Usman, [a relative of ours,] came with an expatriate and when they returned, they asked me to accompany them.

09 So I accompanied them to Gouré. That is where I met F.⁴ At that time Ja'o⁵ worked as a watchman

am, mi buri baali sappo.

Nden gada doon, di badi gaaye. Nden siyaaji fuu waati. Nden naayeejo soori siyaaji. Mihin mi anndaa seede noy mo soori di. Ammaan siiya goddum fuu, mo nyotana mi nden kolte am, mo wadana mi koomi nder seede nde.

To, gada ma'ajum, a yi'i, Ba'aso'en kooti Maraadi. Gada doon kadi maa, Ba'aso'en so'oy do'o Damagaram. Mihin, mo hoo'oy am, ngar mi do'o. Mi anndaa nden mi sedi do'o Damagaram. Kadi maa so'itii mi toon to Kaita'en. To, nden mawnu mi, mi yahari kee nan duubi asirin. Mihin e Kirbo gada doon, minon badi ga durgo baali, nden di badi dedeen gaaye. Gada ma'ajum dum wuti, min ngartoy do'o Damagaram. Mi yahari do'o duubi sappo kammi mi. Pudu mi kadi maa, yahago Kano.

Kadi maa gada ma'ajum, nden dum yowri Tesker'en. Toon maa min badi hitaande. P., Allah hini dum, toon yiri bunndu, a yi'i, be ruumi, yaawi. Nden Usman wardi e goddo Nasarankeejo. Usman nden yahadi e makko, nden wi'i mi doftira dum.

To, nden doftirmi be Guree, doon gi'i mi F. Nden Ja'o kanyum reenanta Ameriken be Guree, F. e goddo higo

²At that time, Hama's mother had left her husband, but was not yet remarried.

³More precisely at Teram in the region of Tesker.

⁴A young woman who worked for the U.S. Peace Corps in Gouré at the time.

⁵A lineage mate.

for the Americans at Gouré, F. and one friend of her's. We spent two nights there. After the two nights we left. They said that there would be a festivity in Birni N'Kazoé, but when we came there, there was no festivity.

Ja'o and F. returned [to Gouré]. Me too, I went back home. At that time the camp was north of Daoutcha. At that time we spent the hot season there. After I had returned there, my uncle Alaji who worked in Zinder as a driver, passed by Gouré in the course of his work and visited Ja'o. Then F. asked Ja'o, if I was a relative of his. Ja'o replied in the affirmative and asked whether she did not want to go and visit me. So when my uncle came by during his work mission, [they told him], and when he came back, he told me that there was an American woman who wanted to come to visit me. I said: 'Okay, fine.'

The market day of Daoutcha came. And that day she also came. I had come to the market with Kaita and Jaane.⁶ And there, at the market, I met her. When we returned home in the afternoon, she came with us and stayed, not for a whole week, but about three days. Then she returned to Gouré.

You see, after that, she came to work in Zinder. She worked in a project there, called 'Kaatutu'. So at that time, me too, I moved to Zinder. She found a house in the neighbourhood of where Siibi⁷ used to have her house, the quarter of Gawon Katari.⁸ She rented the house and we

muudum, nden min baali balde didi. Nden min baali balde didi, kadi maa, min dilloy doon. 'Dum wi'i juulde ma woodi do'o Kazowe, boo min ngar juulde de badaay.

Ja'o e F. so'iti. To, mihin dilloy mi, 10 ngartu mi wuro. Nden wuro doon woni, woyla Dawca. Nden doon min seedi. Nden so'itoy mi, a yi'i, nden gada doon, kaawo am o'on e huuwa do'o Damagaram, ibri ni Guree, yaali Ja'o'en. Nden o'o, F., wi'i dum, wadi ga yango Ja'o, wi'i mi bandu Ja'o'en? Ja'o wi'i: 'Ee.' Nden mo wi'i, kaway, mo dilloy, mo wara. Nden o'o, kaawo am wari, iwoy gada toon dum 'mission'. Nden wari, nden wi'i mi, nden wi'i, kaway e woodi godfo Nasarankeejo, nder Ameriken wi'i, no ware ga'am. Wi'i mi, aay deydey.

Luumo Dawca yaalti. Kango ngo mo nattoy. Jahadu mi e Keita, e Jaane. Nden min potti e makko doon luumo. Min kiirndoy. To, kanko ma nden mo wari, mo waday saatiire. Balde makko tati mo waali. Mo so'iti Guree.

A yi'i, gada ma'ajum do'o kanko, 12 aikiwal makko, mo sottiroy do'o Damagaram. Mo huuwi godfum 'projet' dum Kaatutu. Nden mi maa, ngar mi do'o. Nden mo nanngi wodngo wuro, do'o toy Siibi sottoy jooni, Gawon Katari. Min nanngi ngo haya. E min doon, e min doon.

⁶ Jaanajo, the second wife of Dawra.

⁷ Hamma's maternal aunt.

⁸ A neighbourhood in the north of Zinder.

lived there together. When we had stayed there for a while, the rainy season came, we went to stay with the family in the bush, near Tanout. We spent the rainy season there, about two months, until the harvest time came.

- 13 Then we went to Niamey. She said that we would go to America. So I went to get a passport. But they refused to give me a visa. They told me to come back after three months. In the meantime she already went and left me back there. I passed my three months of waiting. In the fourth month, I finally got my visa.
- 14 And so I travelled to America. I travelled together with a Pullo called Habu, his younger brothers and two Americans [with whom they were acquainted]. I stayed in America for four days less than three months. Shortly after I came back home, Muusa⁹ was born.
- 15 It was because of the attack of Bin Laden¹⁰ that I had to leave [the USA]. My visa had almost expired [and they would not extend it]. They said that I did not have the right to stay. Also, what had brought me there in the first place was to get married to F. But her parents were not ready for this. They said that they wanted to think about it, but we had to wait in the meantime.
- 16 So I returned home. Upon my return, I found work at a garage. I worked there for about one year. When it was over, I went to Kano for the first time. I went and I came

Faa ruumi. Nden ruumi, min njahini ladde Taanus. Toon min nduumi. Min njahari toon lebbi didi. Nden yaawi.

Gaɗa ma'ajum min njahi Niamey. Mo wi'i min dillide Amirka. Jahu mi baɗ mi 'passeport'. Mihin mi hebaay 'visa'. 'Be kaɗam. 'Be kokki am lebbi tati. Siyu. Kanko nden mo dilli. Doon mo ɗali am. Mihin naaki baɗ mi lebbi di tati, e nayabru nden kebmi 'visa'. Sii kee nan.

Nden dillu mi Amirka. Mihin e godɗo Pullo bi'eteedo Habu. E kanko e minyiraaɓe makko e Ameriken wodɓe dido. Nden jaha mi Amirka, baɗ mi lebbi tati balde nayi ngoni ngalaa. So'itoy mi, gaɗa ma'ajum Muusa riima.

'Attaque' dum Ben Laden kanjum dillinoy am, kadi maa 'visa' am re'i. 'Be mbi'i jooni mi walaa ijini mi jooda. Nden maa ko yaharunoy am, gam mi hoowo F. Boo danyooɓe makko bi'i, sey to baɗi sa'awara, to min ngoora faa wo'nde lokasiire.

A yi'i, mi ndilloy ngartu mi. Nden ngartu mi do'o kadi maa naŋgu mi aiki gareeji do'o. Kuru mi gareeji hitaande wo'ore. Nden nde yaawi, dilliri mi Kano, arande am. Gaɗa

⁹Hamma's half-brother (MS).

¹⁰I.e., the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001.

back, and after I had come back, I married Leele.¹¹

We were together for seven months before I broke off with her. I went back to Kano for eight months and after my return we separated.

In the second year [after our separation] I returned again to Kano. That was my second trip. [This time], I spent nine months in Kano. I passed the hot dry season and stayed until the rainy season.

When I came back [to Zinder], I spent the rest of the rainy season staying in different places.

Then I again returned to Kano for the third time. But I did not stay for more than a week before I went to Maradi. There I passed the next hot dry season together with Ja'o and his family. I spent three months there, working as a watchman in a garage. In the next rainy season, I returned. And last year, I again went to Kano for the fourth time.

[One day,] some thieves entered [the house in Kano where I was working as a watchman]. They came on a Friday, around two o'clock, while I had gone to the mosque.

They were four men and they came in a taxi. Two of them did not enter the compound but stayed outside. But they did not leave the car right in front of the door through which I entered, so that I would not

ma'ajum kee nan nden ngartu mi, nden koowi mi Leele.

Min ba'adi lebbi joweefidi. Nden 17
seed mi e makko. Kadi maa so'iti
mi Kano, badoy mi lebbi joveetati.
Nden gada ma'ajum, kee nan dum
ko ndillu mi, min seedi.

Hitaande didabre kadi maa so'iti mi 18
Kano. Kee nan jahaale didi. Nden
kadi maa, nden jaha mi Kano, sed
mi lebbi am joveenayi, sed mi naaki
nder ndungu.

Kadi maa, ngarti mi do'o. Kadi maa 19
nduumi nder gureeji.

Nden so'iti mi Kano. Kee nan kanjum 20
woni tatabum, jahaaki am e Kano,
kanki woni tatabre. Nden so'iti mi,
mi buraay yontitande, mi neebaay.
Dilliroy mi do'o Maraadi. Toon sed
mi Maraadi, to Ja'o'en, bad mi lebbi
am tati. Gaadi dum gareeji bad mi,
a yi'i, sed mi toon dum. Naaki nden
bad mi lebbi tati, ruumi, ngartu mi.
Kee nan rowani kadi maa, do'o nden
min dilliri Kano. Jahaande nayi.

To nden dum wuybe nattan am. 21
Ko be nattoy yannan dum nyande
teddunde. (H) Kusa karfe biyu. (F)
Mi yahi teddunde.

Worbe nayi ngari e takasi. Nden be 22
ngari, be dido nattaay. Yaasi doon
be ndari. Kadi maa badaay 'garée'
deydey e dammugal doon toy ngon
mi. Kee nan ga toy mi anndit. To boo
mihin, mi anndaa.

¹¹A urban-resident girl from the 'Bii Ute'en clan. Although an inter-clan marriage, the union between Hamma and Leele is not based on elopement after the model of *te'egal* marriage, but was based on negotiations between the families concerned and can thus be referred to as a *koobgal* marriage. On the different types of marriage among the Wodaabe, see also Text 16.

understand what was going on. And I did not understand.

23 I entered, but I had not even entered my room yet where all my things were.¹² Besides, I had taken up my work at the place only three days ago. I did not know anyone. The landlord was rich and there were six people who worked for him. There were those who were in charge of washing the cars. I did not know them yet. What can somebody who has taken up a new job just three days ago possibly know?

24 When I saw the gangsters, it was when one of them came out [of the house]. He told me that the landlord's wife was asking for me. I did not understand [that it was a ruse] and so I went inside. When I entered the house, I saw the landlord's wife and children who had been tied with adhesive tape around their hands and over their mouths so that they could not even cry.

25 The man told me to come in and when I entered, I saw his accomplice who had been hidden behind the wall hangings. Now he came out with a gun, pointed it on my ear and told me to lie down immediately.

26 When I wanted to refuse, one of them kicked me with his foot and so I kneeled down. They were searching the house for money, yet did not find any. So they took the landlord's three-year-old child with them [as a hostage].

27 After they had left, the landlady threw a knife towards me [and I was

'Doon toy ngartu mi, mi nattaay ko suudu, toon to kome am woni. Sii kee nan, doon toy ngartu mi, boo... kadi maa, rah, mi naṅngi aikiwal ngal balde tati. Mi anndaa kowa. Boo o'on mai-gidaajo am seede woodi. Kee nan e woodi worbe joveego'o kuwaneebe dum, kambe lootata mootaaaji. Kee nan, mi anndaa be. Balde tati tan tagu naṅngi aikiwal, e moy anndi?'

To, nden gi'i mi be, beenbe fashi, o'oo go'oto wurtoy. Sey wi'i am, yeyriijo o'on, mo mai-gidaajo e nodda mi. Mihin mi anndaa. Sii kee nan. Sey ndilloy mi. 'Doon toy nattoy mi, tawu mi yeyriijo o'on, mo mai-gidaajo, be mbadanii dum 'scotch' e honnduko e juude fuu. Ko boyol, bikkon maa be mbadanii dum.

Sii kee nan, o'on e wi'a mi natta. 'Doon toy nattoy mi, tawu mi o'on bandiiko, natti nder 'cache-mur'. Natti, wurtoy, doon toy wurtoy kaway bindiga wurtoday, yawani am ka dow nofru, wi'i am majja, mi waalo.

Nes mi kama salaago, go'oto lati am. Nden soppini mi. Gada be ko biṅngel, ngel duubi tati. Kadi maa, be natti nder wuro. Kamar seede be ndaarata, boo be kebaay.

Sii kee nan. Hajjyaajo faa be ndilli, nden fertonoy am go'ki labi. Ko,

¹²I. e., he came straight from the mosque and was thus unarmed. Otherwise he would have kept a sword or at least a stick as watchmen generally do.

able to free myself]. But when I was outside, I did not [even] know whether they had fled in northern or in southern direction.

Six days later, the landlord got his child back. Some said that he paid eight million FCFA, others claimed that he paid twenty million.

After this incident, I stayed for two more weeks. Then I quit the jobs since I had found another position.

Working in Nigeria is dangerous. But it has to be said: You can make a lot of money there. You will never pass a day there with your pockets empty of money. And there are always generous people who will give you clothes or any other thing for free.

In Nigeria you can make more money than in Niger, but it is more dangerous. Employers pay between 12,500 and 15,000 FCFA per week.¹³ Today it can even be more than that. Today, some better off employers will even pay up to 20,000 FCFA per week. But on the other hand, once you have found such work somewhere, you will never be allowed to lie down any more, you will always have to either stand or sit on a chair.

You can really make savings, since the food is not very expensive. For example, you might be able to live on about 5,000 FCFA per week and save the remaining 10,000 FCFA.

ko mburti mi, mi anndaa woyla be mbadi ko fombina.

Naaki biɗɗo wadi balɗe jovego'o 28 e nden gaɗa doon baaba muudum heptoy dum. To wodɓe bi'i milyooji joveetati mo hokki, wodɓe bi'a arba'in.

Mi joodake, naaki nden baɗ mi 29 yontitandɗe didi. Nden burti mi ngal aikiwal kadi maa go'ngal aikiwal keɓ mi.

Aikiwal Najeeriya matsala e woodi. 30 Ammaan gaskiya, tagu no hebe seede. Gam toon faa abadaa, tagu yintaay e jiiba muudum walaa seede. Kadi maa e woodi wodɓe duuniya no baɗanee dum alheeri, kama kyawta e kolte e godɗum.

Najeeriya tagu buri heɓgo seede, 31 dow Nijer. Amma toon matsala dum woodi. Wodɓe e mbiiye dubuuji tati saatiire. Godɗo moseede sedaaje e hokke dubuuji didi e keme joovi, sey tati. To hannde gaskiya dum buri maa. Hannde saati maa godɗo no biiyete dubuuji nayi. Ammaan kadi maa, dum aikiwal, nyande naŋgi banye, walaa no ɗaanato, kaway sey ni daro ko joodo dow kujerewal.

Tagu e waawa resa seede seɗa, kadi 32 maa njaram sadaa kworey. Tagu e waawa resa seede kama e yontitandɗe, kee nan e yontitandɗe a waawa resa dubuuji didi, nyaama dubu. Ammaan

¹³ 1,000 Francs CFA roughly correspond to 1,50€. Hamma makes his accounts in *dala*, the traditional Nigerien system of accounting money. *Dala* is not a currency, but all prices on local markets are negotiated in *dala*. One *dala* equals 5 FCFA. *Dubuuji didi e keme joovi* literally translates 'two thousand and five hundred', but corresponds to a worth of 12,500 FCFA.

But others will spend more than that. They might spend 10,000 FCFA per week. It is really not difficult to find work in Kano. You can find work and it will bring you rewards. But it is dangerous.

godɗo buri noon. Godɗo no nyaame dubuuji didi saatiire. Gaskiya, ɗum sadaa tagu hebaay aikiwal e Kano. Tagu no hebe aikiwal, kadi maa to ɗum hokki ɗum daraja. Amma matsala ɗum woodi.

AMBULANT MEDICINE TRADE

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT

One particular kind of migrant activity that Wodaaabe of different regions engage in is the selling of traditional medicines, herbal potions and magical charms (collectively called *maagani*) to villagers and urbanites. This activity, its organization and logics have been documented notably in several articles by Boesen (2004, 2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2010) under the term *tigu*.¹ This activity, which seems to be more widely spread among Fulbe across regions – Osman (2013: 84) mentions a similar practice for pastoral Fulbe in Sudan who travel to Khartoum and other cities to sell herbal medicine – leads to important seasonal migration movements among Wodaaabe in central Niger.

Among the Wodaaabe Gojanko'en in the Zinder province ambulant medicine trade plays a certain role, yet it differs in several respects from the phenomenon described by Boesen. Besides being of much less statistical importance – Boesen (2010: 37) cites the case of a group in Central Niger, in which more than 50% of the adults regularly engage in medicine trade journeys of several months – it generally also does not involve long-distance, nor long-term travelling. The journeys, typically to the areas of Kano or Abuja in Nigeria, rarely exceed a few weeks and serve not only for the selling of products, but at the same time for procuring medicinal plants, many of which do not grow in the northern grazing areas of the Sahel (see also Maliki et al. 1984: 491). A pronounced specialization of women in these activities, as noted by Boesen (2010: 36), cannot be observed here, either. Among the Gojanko'en in Zinder, medicine trade is also sometimes combined with an urban sojourn for a different kind of migrant work. Migrants, both men and women, profit from contacts with urbanites to sell their products and some of them can make considerable additional earnings in this way.

In the case of medicine trade, the Wodaaabe, generally looked down upon by villagers and urbanites as 'savages' (Bovin 1985), seem to profit from the prevailing stereotypes: Due to their life in the bush, they are also associated with an esoteric knowledge of wild plants and their medicinal effects (Boesen 2004: 214, 218).

In general, ambulant medicine trade can have significant financial outcomes² and is a good example for a type of migrant activity that, rather

¹ According to Bonfiglioli (1998), the term *tigu* originally means 'peddling' and is more generally applied to all sorts of small scale income generating activities, see also Maliki (1981: 118).

² See Boesen (2010: 40) for approximate gains of Wodaaabe medicine traders from central Niger. In her sample group, individual gains from a two month journey ▶

than being primarily destitution-driven, is an opportunity for those who can afford their temporary absence from the family herd or who are staying in town anyway. The example of Boyi Egoyi, which is also featured in the text, is a case in point: Although he is rather well off and highly respected as a successful owner of considerable herds, he regularly embarks for trading journeys of several weeks to Nigeria. He reinvests the output into his herds, which prosper, and the regular work migration thus adds to his wealth and social status rather than being a coping strategy in the face of crisis.³ The example confirms Hampshire and Randall's (1999, 2005) thesis that work migration can, under specific circumstances be a viable strategy of economic diversification.

In this account, 'Dawra Egoyi's senior daughter Naana recalls a journey to the region of Kano on which she accompanied her uncle (FB) Boyi Egoyi, probably in the late 1980s or in the 1990s. The first part of her account gives a fairly good definition of the term *tigu* and describes how it is practiced and how it was adopted by the Wodaabe Gojanko'en. The second part is a more personal recollection of her experiences during this journey. It gives a good impression of the relative liberty of movement that Wodaabe women widely enjoy, and indeed attests to a certain *Wanderlust* (Boesen 2014: 187) that sometimes seems to motivate *tigu* traders.

Naana 'Dawra, Wodaabe Gojanko'en, Zinder, February 2012

Tigu means to travel, going from village to village selling traditional medicine in order to earn money. You will find people [among these traders] who do it only for the money. Some might have knowledge about medicines, others might not. There are some who just sell medicines but do not know anything about it.

Sometimes men go with their wives and [while the women sell medicines] the men might work as herd-ers [for the villagers]. I have seen that the Jijjiiru do this and they make good money in this way.

(F) Tigu, kamar njaha a hokka01
maagani ga kefa seede, kamar a
tokki si'on-si'on. Kefa do'o tawa
wodbe, kaway seede den. Wodbe
e ngidi maagani, wodbe anndaa
maagani. Sey kokka. Wodbe anndaa
maagani.

Kul worbe ngardi e yeyri'en, sey02
worbe orta. Noon gi'i mi Jijjiiru'en
bada, kadi be keboya, be keboya
seede.

◀ were between 100,000 FCFA (ca. 150€) and 750,000 FCFA. Gains can vary considerably among individuals, but they seem to be generally less important in the study group.

³ See Boesen (2010: 40) for comparable cases.

03 If you arrived, the people would say: ‘Look, the Wodaabe with their medicines have come.’ Then you would put your medicines on display and the people would come and buy. The buyers might have a leg that aches, or they might suffer from guinea worm disease or stomach ache. You know, in former times the villagers did not know much about the Wodaabe. Today the Wodaabe are numerous [in this business], but in former times, they did not know the Wodaabe.

04 [At first] the Wodaabe Gojanko’*en* did not use to practice *tigu*, they only began in recent years. The Gojanko’*en* in the Abalak region do [practice *tigu*] and the Jijjiiru as well. They travel to different countries and even learn English [this way]. The Gojanko’*en* started with *tigu* after they had seen it among the ‘Bii Hama’*en*, the ‘Bii Korony’*en* and the Jijjiiru. They are the ones who practice *tigu* a lot. That is how they [the Gojanko’*en*] took it up. Even today, we do not practice it a lot. We only took it up little by little. In former times, if you have seen someone going for *tigu*, it was just for the adventure of it, like going out to see the world. If you went, the Jijjiiru would integrate you [into their groups of itinerant traders] and you would learn it yourself. That is also what we did.

05 Once, I travelled to [the area of] Kano myself. I had come to Zinder together with [my younger brother] Boyi where we stayed at [our sister] Ba’asonka’s place. When Boyi said that he would go to Kano in order to get medicinal plants, I decided to go

Toy a yahi to wodbe, sey bi’a: ‘Yoo yoo, raa Wodaabe be maagani ngaroy.’ Wodbe tigoobe no mbe’ite dum, e be ngara e be sooda. E soodeedo e mo kosngal naawata, e mo kurkunu, e mo reedu muudum fuu. A anndi nden be anndaa Wodaabe. Hannde Wodaabe duudi. Amma nden be anndaa Wodaabe.

Gojanko’*en* mbadtaa tigu. Naaki di’i duubi. Gojanko’*en* Abalak mbadta. Kanyum ma Jijjiiru nihi mbadata tigu. Faa njaha, faa lesde, faa ekito Angle. Raa Gojanko’*en* naaki gada doon kepti nden gi’i Kabaawa, ‘Bii Korony’*en*, Jijjiiru, to raa wadeebe tigu noon. Raa anndube dum. To, enen naaki jooni, dum naatoy. Naaki nden dum neebi, dum neebi. To kul giida tagu wadi tigu ilaa, dum karambani tan. Kamar rara te’*en*ade tan. To yahi toon, gada wodbe be Jijjiiru, no koo’ite dum wada ga bookago kanyum ma. Minon maa, noon min badi.

Too, jahaaki am Kano maa. Mihin e Kitti min dilli do’o, min ngari Damagaram, min joodi do’o to Ba’aso. Kitti wi’i no yahe Kano seboya te’*en*aade maagani. Bi’i mi: ‘Mihin maa, wallaahi, mi tokke, sey to mi yi’oy Kano.’ Bi’i mi kat boo:

with him. I thought that this would be an occasion to see Kano.

[On the way,] we first wanted to visit a herbalist who was called Booka Baawa. We took a bush taxi, but then had to continue on foot. We walked and walked until the night closed in and we had to continue our way with torch lights. We really got lost but [when we finally stopped at a place to ask somebody], we were told that this was the village where Booka Baawa lived.

We went towards his place but [since everyone was already asleep] did not fully approach and spend the night under a tree, me and Boyi and [Boyi's wives] Beeli and Hiiki [who were also travelling together with us]. We passed the night hungry and in the morning, when we arrived at Booka Baawa's place, we were served a very bitter millet gruel. We hardly touched it, but I still had a small basket full of groundnuts and biscuits that Ba'asonka had given to me when we left her place. I shared them with the others and when we had eaten a bit, we finally went to see Booka Baawa. With others we waited for him to receive us. When we finally met him, he started to tell each of us what kind of medical problems we had. Boyi became angry and started to insult him.

Finally, we packed our things and loaded ourselves with our bundles of small things and continued our way [to Kano]. On the way we met some other Wodaabe [and continued our way with them]. We arrived in Kano in the afternoon. I did not know Kano and I could not believe how many

'Kano, mi yi'oy dum.'

Min njahe to Booka Baawa, godfo 06
bookaajo do'o inneteedo. 'Do'on maa gaɗa min baɗi moota min dilli, gaɗa min jippi moota, kadi maa gaɗa e kosɗe min baɗi, ram min, ram min, ram min min baali e yahago. E min baɗi fitilaaji faa min njahi. Min kalka, wi'a do'o si'el Booka Baawa woni.

Gaɗa nihi kaway nde min njahi to 07
Booka Baawa min mbaɗtaa ki, min ngari e te'enaaki, min baali. Mihin e Kitti e Beeli e Hiiki. Kadi maa, min baaldi doon e dolo, faa veeti. Nden min ngari wuro Booka Baawa, min kokka ngo'nga nyi'ewa nga bokko. 'Do'on min meedi. Mihin e mi tamdi kindeyel am e mi waɗi biriji e biskit ko Ba'aso'en kokki yam. Gaɗa mi roonti kokku mi min, min metti. Nden min ndeenti mo, min njeeri doon. Min gi'i mo, mo wi'i min dum min ngoodi, dum min ngoodi. To Kitti gaɗa no monna, fudi e huɗgo mo.

Toole, kadi maa, gaɗa min sankiti, 08
min ndoondi kindehon amin, min ndilli, min njantidiri e wodbe Wodaabe. Ram min, min njahi Kano nyalawma. Min njahi Kano, mi anndaa Kano, ase mootaji koongaye e laawol muudum. Sii kee nan, gaɗa godfe balde e Kano kadi

cars there were. We spent some days in Kano and then went on to visit a number of market villages in the area around Kano.

- 09 We walked maybe thirty kilometres, we walked and walked until I was so exhausted that I started to cry. Whoever hosted us on the way told us to take some sugar cane from their fields for breakfast. I wanted to refuse to take sugar cane for breakfast, but no chance. We took the sugar cane that they had offered us and continued to the next village where we rested under a tree and found maybe a little *galette* to buy. And so we continued from village to village.
- 10 Once, Boyi left us to search for some medicinal plants and told us to continue towards a certain village where he would rejoin us. So I walked alone with Beeli and Hiiki. The way was long, certainly more than 20 km. On the way we encountered a villager who asked Hiiki for some medicine against his eczema. Hiiki gave him some Robb⁴ and when the man began to apply it, we ran away and left him there, crying with pain.
- 11 We really made silly things. That was how our trip was like. Finally we came back to Zinder. It was a hilarious trip.
- 12 The Gojanko'en do not practice *tigu* a lot. Only with the time they took it up a bit. But those in the region of Abalak do it. Some can make two million FCFA that way, some even three million. Even women, imagine! The younger sister of

maa min ndilli, min njahi godde luube toon yeeso Kano.

Kadi maa toon min badi kosde kilooji talaatin. E min duugi e min doondi, mihin faa e mi woya. Min njahi be nattini min, be mbi'i raa reke do'on, min natta, min itta, min njeba koo'ye. Bi'i mi, mihin kam mi yewata koo'ye e reke. Siyu, gada be natti min, min itti reke, min njahi si'el min njoodi. Min njoodi e te'enaaki, min kebi ko min soodi tsaalahon go'o. Gada min njoodi, min baali, min nginti do'o.

Toole, Kitti wi'i ko seboy, min njaha wo'nde si'ire toon. Kadi maa, gada mihin e Beeli e Hiiki, min dillu tan. 'Dum buri ba do'o e Miriya. Gada min dillu tan. Toole gada dow laawol goddo Kaado no tori Hiiki maagani nyaanyaare. Gada Hiiki hokku mo saaborob, gada mo wad, gada min ngoor Kaado e nyaara e woya. Gada minon ma min nyaar.

Kay, kadi dirga-dirga tan min badi. Dillol amin noon. Min dilloy, min ngarti Damagaram. Jahaangal sanadiiya tan. 'Dum te'aatir.

Gojanko'en badataa tigu kworey. Naaki gada doon, daama daama. Ammaan be Abalak, be mbaadi dum. Wodbe keboya milyooji didi. Wodbe keboya milyooji tati. Wallaahi, yeyri'en! E woodi minyiraawo Beleti, e woodi nde be kebi milyooji nayi.

⁴A popular ointment sold at all street corners in Nigeria and Niger. It contains eucalyptus and menthol and is mainly used against common cold and rheumatic body pains.

[my paternal uncle] Beleti once [went for *tigu* and] even made four million. They came back with loads of new clothes. New clothes I say, no used things!

The Gojanko'en in the region of Abalak took up the habit from the [Jijjiiru] Hambooru and the Kabaawa [i.e., 'Bii Hamma'en]. When they started, they made millions with *tigu* as well and they became fond of the practice. They form groups and travel together, many, many women together and sometimes not even three men.

Those of us who got to know *tigu*, practice it a lot. But as far as we here in the Damergou region are concerned, our people never really practiced *tigu* a lot. When we migrated here, there was millet in abundance [i.e., there was no need to engage in such practices as *tigu*]. And as far as I am concerned, when I went with Boyi, it was mainly in order to search for medicinal plants. It was not really so much with the intention of trading medicines. And our trip did not even exceed a month. But we saw how some others, like the Jijjiiru that we met, did it. As to us, we just walked through the bush, feeding on sugar cane.

Nden be mbađoya sakke kolte kesse tan. Kesse kadi maa, walaa sakaaje.

Ra be Hambooru, been e Kabaawa, 13 to kambe been Gojanko'en tokki be Abalak. 'Be Abalak naaki be kepti, be keboy milyooji milyooji, nden tigu woodife. 'Dum wada komba go'otum jahaangal, rewbe rewbe rewbe, be kebaay worbe tato.

Minon koo min anndi, koo dum 14 naatoy fuu. Ammaa enen Damergu, en anndaa dum no. Minon do'o, ko min ngari Damergu, gawri e heewi kare tep. Mihin maa naaki gada dum tokku min Kitti, wi'i no ittoy te'enađe dum maa walaa dum Booke kworey. Minon maa, min bađoya ko lewru. Min tokkuno, wodbe Wodaabe be Jijjiiru, min gi'i no be mbađta. Min njahi nder gese reke, min itti e min tokki ladde tan.



Photo 14: Boyi 'Kittiwa' Egoyi, whom Naana Dawra accompanied during his *tigu* journey to Nigeria, with his traditional medicines (F. KÖHLER, 2011)

TEXT 16:

CHANGING MARRIAGE CUSTOMS
AND NEW FRAMEWORKS
FOR SETTling CONFLICTS ABOUT
TE'EGAL MARRIAGE

ACCOUNT OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL CASE

The following account by Gado Mawnde, a Bodaado Gojankeejo from the Damergou region, relates the story of his various attempts at marriage. The related events took place over the time span from mid-2008 to early 2012.

The Wodaabe practice two principal forms of marriage. The first, called *koobgal*, is a generally clan-endogamous union. It is arranged between the families of the couple by betrothal, often from early childhood. The preferred patterns are patrilateral parallel cousin (FBD) and cross-cousin marriage. The second form of marriage, called *te'egal*, is generally clan-exogamous. *Te'egal*, other than *koobgal*, is a marriage of choice, contracted by the couple itself and not arranged by the families. The specificity of *te'egal* marriage is that it involves, as a principle, the elopement of men with women who are already married in their own clan according to the *koobgal* model. While this makes the practice highly conflictual, the mutual intermarriage between pairings of clans is nevertheless overall seen as positive, as the resulting kinship bonds strengthen the cohesion among clans. The practice of *te'egal* is ceremonially sanctioned in inter-clan meetings (*ngaanka*) that take place at the end of the rainy season on the basis of reciprocal visits (see Köhler 2016). While forms of elopement marriage are known from other groups of pastoral Fulbe as well (e. g., Burnham 1996: 111f.; Bocquené 1986: 247ff.; Reed 1932: 433), its institutionalization in a sort of a competition between pairings of clans is particular to the Wodaabe. Ultimately, participation of a group in the *ngaanka* network of ceremonial and marital exchange with a number of other clans is crucial in defining ethnic group membership (Paris 1997; Loncke 2015; Köhler 2016).

The case example shows how marriage customs are changing in the contemporary situation and how the actual practice of culture-specific forms of marriage is transformed by, and adapted to, recent socio-cultural developments. Monetary bride wealth payments tend to replace the customary transfer of animals. Despite an increasing impact of Islam, *te'egal* marriage, although incompatible with Islamic law and morality, is not easily given up. At the same time, the emergence of new networks of connectivity, in



Photo 15: Gado Mawnde

(F. KÖHLER, 2009)

particular improved public transport facilities and the mobile phone, expand the options for such elopement marriages and actors increasingly make use of them. Many Wodaabe are today involved in urban activities and move regularly between the urban and the pastoral realm.

These new developments constitute a considerable challenge to the established normative and legal framework of *te'egal*, which, as noted above, is based on politico-ceremonial agreements among Wodaabe clans. These agreements also imply that conflicts evolving from the practice of elopement marriage should be handled without the involvement of the legal authorities of the state. Today, however, the involvement of state actors has become a regular means of reacting to *te'egal* elopement, and particularly in the urban context.

Gado Mawnde, Wodaabe Gojanko'en, Zinder, January 2012

FIRST KOOBGAL MARRIAGE

As is customary practice among the Wodaabe, Gado had been betrothed while still a small child. In his case his designated wife was his second-degree patrilineal parallel cousin Laame, who is a few years younger than himself. The marriage had been arranged between the heads of the two nuclear families, who were themselves direct patrilineal parallel cousins (*bibbe baaba'en*).

This marriage was arranged between my father and the father of the girl when I was still a young boy. They

(F) Ngal doon koobgal, kangal badana mi ila mi pamaro. Mi tawi ngal. 'Be kokki yam mo. Kanko

gave her to me. My father in law gave her to me after my father had asked him to give her to me in marriage. When this marriage was arranged, myself and the girl did not even know about it, but when she grew up, I really loved her a lot and she loved me just as much. Everything had been accomplished, and finally she was given to me. Animals had been offered and slaughtered, money had been offered and cloth and a mat and calabashes. All this had been done publicly. My father was alive at that time. He had done everything necessary. When he died, everything was accomplished and I was staying together with her. Labdo gave her to me and we stayed together. At that time she was a young girl.

ngal, baaba am e baaba Laame bafi hokki yam mo. Kanko maa, baaba am, mo yami, dum hokka mi mo, mi hoowo mo. To, nde koobgal ngal wadaa, mihin mi anndaa. Kanko maa mo anndaa. Lookasiire nden min famarbe, min bilki'en. To goonga, e mi yidi mo kworey. Kanko maa, e mi yidi yam. Noon, no girru mo mi. To dum he'ini di koomi, sey dum hokki yam mo. E dum hokka bisaaji, e dum hirsaa bisaaji, e dum hokka seede, e siri, e daago, e tummudefe. To dum doon fu e dum wada dum yeeso tagu. Dum hokka tagu yeyriijo muudum, joododo e makko. Lookasiire baaba am e woodi yonki. Mo wadi koomi e koomi. Mo he'ini koomi. Nden mo maayi, dum he'ini di koomi. Gada maayde makko, sey joododi mi e makko. Labdo hokki am mo. Min joododake kama lookasiire nde mo latti pamaro.

UNILATERAL DISSOLUTION OF THE *KOObGAL* MARRIAGE BY THE FATHER OF THE WIFE

Although Gado eventually really loved his wife, as he says, the marriage did not work out, but was dissolved by his father in law, who accused Gado of having treated his daughter badly.

- 01 We stayed together peacefully. But then Labdo understood that I did not have any animals. I did not have a father and a mother, nor a job. I understood that he did not want me to stay with her any more. We had a child together. I stayed with her, until her seclusion period started. When she came back to me afterwards, I began to have problems with her.
- (F) E min joodi jam. Nden Labdo annditi mihin mi walaa bisaaji, mi walaa baaba, mi walaa jawdi, mi walaa kuugal. Mo yi'i mo yidaa mi joododo e makko. Mi hebdi e makko bidfo go'oto. Mi joododake e makko faa mo latti boofiido. Nden mo ummina, lookasiire nden puflu mi hebgo matsala e makko.
- 02 She came back to me, but not for long. Since the time that she came back it was only disputes, until we
- Mo witti wuro am, ammaan mo joodake seda. Ila nde mo he'ini boofiido, dum fuu dum nder rikisi

separated. Once, we had such a bad quarrel that they even put me into prison.

What Labdo did is really not done. He took her away from me and dissolved our marriage, and then he gave her to a man from our own family. This is a thing that is not done. Because the *koobgal* was not [correctly] dissolved. If I had said: ‘This woman refuses me, I just cannot stay with her any longer, now I repudiate her’ – alright, that would have been like a divorce and she could have married whomever she wanted in the clan. But that is not how it was. Even now, I have never said that I have divorced her. With my heart, I never gave her up. I simply did not have the power to hinder them.¹

One can dissolve a *koobgal*, but if it is the others who dissolve it and you do not say: ‘Yes, I agree that it is dissolved’ – then the woman can only go and marry in a different clan, but not again in her own family. Of course, if you see that the other party is beyond your forces, you will be obliged to say: ‘Alright, I give her up, let her marry within the family.’ But I never said so.

Even now, if I took a sword or a shotgun, or if I went to her place with

tan, faa seed mi e makko. A anndi, min badi rigima, faa dum omdì yam.

Dum doon ko Labdo wadi, dum 03
wadataa dum. Nden mo hadi am mo, mo wari koobgal am. Mo hokkitirii mo nder wuro, nder lenyol. Ila dum wadataa noon. Tun da dum waraay koobgal. Kul dum mihin wi’i, to jo’oni o’o, yeyriijo mo salake, mihin mi waawataa joododaago e makko, jooni mi woori mo, sii kee nan. Kamar dum seergal. E mo waawi hoowaago mo mo yidi fuu nder lenyol. Ammaan naa dum noon. Mihin, koo jooni mi wi’aay mi seeri mo. Mihin, nder bernde am mi wooraay, ammaan mi walaa sembe ko njahee mi mi hada.

E dum waawi wargo koobgal, 04
ammaan kul dum kambe mbari koobgal, ahan a wi’aay: ‘Ee, mi jabi koobgal ware’, to, sey ni mo dilla ngo’ngol lenyol. Mo hoowataako nder wuro. Ammaan kul a yi’i be buri sembe maada, to doole wi’a a woori, too sey mo hoowo nder wuro. Ammaan mihin mi wi’aay.

Too jo’oni, kul mi hoo’i ko 05
bindiga, ko labi, ko mi yahara

¹ Gado’s claim corresponds to what Dupire has noted about Wodaabe marital rights: ‘L’homme répudié à la manière islamique, la femme n’a pas droit au divorce’ (Dupire 1962: 258). The man has the right to divorce his wife by repudiation, the woman has not. The man plays an active role in divorce; the woman often merely has the choice to run away (ibid.). On the other hand, Gado admits that he even ended up in prison after one heavy dispute with his wife. And even though conjugal violence seems not to have been a legitimate reason for a wife to leave her husband at Dupire’s time (see Dupire 1962: 261), the case shows that it can be recognized by Wodaabe in Niger today as such. At least, this was the main argument brought forth by Laame’s father with which he finally claimed his daughter back. The discussions about the case have nonetheless been very controversial. Labdo’s brothers wanted to persuade him not to insist on the dissolution of the marriage whereas Labdo finally did.

a bunch of people and killed everyone – these people would die because of my *koobgal* marriage. Or if I killed her husband, people would know it was because of my *koobgal*. There is conflict because I never agreed on the divorce.² This is why later, when she remarried, they left the Damergou and returned to the Agadez region. Before, we were all one. Now that we have this conflict they have understood that they cannot stay here. So they went back to the Agadez region.³ And I went to look for another woman to marry.

duuniya wuro maɓɓe dum mbara duuniya fuu – to gam koobgal dum mbari be. Koo mi yi'i kore makko jooni, mi mbari dum. E dum annde dum matsala koobgal. Rikisi e woodi tun da mi yoofaay kore am. To kanjum, gaɗa toon, gaɗa mo yaha mo hoowi, be ngoori do'o Damagaram, be mbitti Asbin, faraw Agadez. Ilaa min ngondi, e wuro amin e wuro maɓɓe. 'Dum fuu dum go'otum. Jooni nden dum heɓi matsala, be ngi'i joodnde maɓɓe waɗataako do'o. Sey be mbitti Asbin. Mihin, sey ndaar mi godɗo.

ATTEMPTS TO ARRANGE A NEW MARRIAGE

Gado, who was working in Kano as a watchman when the rupture came about, left his job to return to the Damergou region in order to arrange things, but he did not succeed and found himself eventually stranded in Zinder with neither a wife nor a job. Shortly after, he started to look for a new wife. His first option was to arrange a new *koobgal* marriage within his own clan. His sister, who is married in the Koutous region, helped him to get in touch with a girl of suitable age who was not yet married. Together with a cousin, Gado made several trips from Zinder by motorbike in order to negotiate a marriage with her.

01 She had said that she loved me. All the time she had made advances to me, and she said that she wanted to marry me. So I went to her place. She was a granddaughter of Arɗo Umaru in Ganatcha, and she was a girl, she had never been married. I asked her and she was favourable. She agreed to marry me.

(F) Kanko wi'i e mo yidi yam, dum e mo liloya. Mo wi'i e mo yidi mo hoowoy am. Kanjum yahari yam to makko. 'Dum taaniraawo Mofaada, e Ganaca. Mo bilki, mo meedaay hoowaago. Ke nan yamo mi, kanko mo wi'i mo jabi, e mo yidi dum. Mo yardake.

² What Gado does not mention, but what other interlocutors have confirmed to me, is that after the remarriage of Laame, Gado came across her new husband in Kano and it was only by intervention of two cousins that he was prevented from attacking him with a sword.

³ The couple now lives near Alala in the Agadez region, from where the lineage fraction had migrated to the Damergou in the early 1970s, and where an important branch of the family still lives today around their own pastoral well. The principal reason why they moved away was that the father of Laame's new husband had migrated there.

You know, if a woman had already been married or if she is already grown up, the marriage is not as complicated as the *koobgal* which is arranged between children. [A first marriage demands] three animals, money and clothes. If the girl is already grown up and you as well, and if you say you want her and she agrees, then you will just have to slaughter an animal on one single occasion and that is it. You do not even necessarily give money, you slaughter once and that is it.⁴

When I went to Ganatcha, I said:⁵ ‘Alright, I will give the dowry and they will tie the marriage. I will give money; I will give maybe one animal.’ And so I sent them some money and they bought two sheep from it and sugar, and they bought food and prepared it. They spent the money, they bought the sheep, and then they said, no, the girl would stay at their place, we should slaughter one sheep now and the next year I should slaughter another sheep and then they would give her to me. But at first they had not said so. I said: ‘No, I cannot do it that way.’ And I added: ‘Look, this girl is already grown up. How would she stay for another year without marrying? She will become pregnant or someone will come and

A anndi, kul yeyriijo meedi 02
hoowaago, koo mo mawdo, koobgal
makko walaa matsala kama irin
koobgal ngal dum wada kul on
famarbe, ngal arande. Bisaaji tati,
seede e siri. Kul biddo debbo no
mawdo, ahan maa a mawdo, ahan
wi’i a yidi mo, kanko maa mo wi’i
mo jabi, sii kee nan. Nde wo’ore
dum hirsata jawdiri, sii kee nan.
Koo seede ngalaa, kul dum hirsu nde
wo’ore, sii kee nan.

Lookasiire nde njaha mi Ganaca, 03
bi’i mi: ‘To mi hokke be sadaaki,
kadi maa dum habba koobgal. Mi
hokke seede, e bisaa kama go’otum.’
To mi yaharanii be seede, be soodi
jawdi didi e sukul dudngal, be soodi
njaram, defetee dam. To be bari
seede, be soodi jawdiri, kadi maa
gada doon be mbi’i sey dum wooro
mo e wuro, dum hirsu jawdiri go’ori
joooni, hitaande maa wareende mi
hirsu ngo’ori. Sey be kokkita mi
mo. Ammaan arande be mbi’aay
noon. Bi’i mi: ‘Mihin mi wadtaa
noon.’ Bi’i mi: ‘O’o, biddo debbo no
mawdo, toy mo waawataa joodago
faa hitaande, mo hoowaaki?’ Mo
wade reedu, ko goddo hoo’a mo. Bi’i
mi, kul be kokki yam mi hoowo nde
wo’ore, sii kee nan. Kul be njabaay

⁴This might be too optimistically thought. The reality I have witnessed in other cases in the same clan fraction was that even though the procedures might not take long years as in the case of betrothal from childhood, the husband in a *koobgal* arrangement between adults is, however, far from being in the position to just slaughter an animal and return home with his wife. Generally, it can take a period of a year or more before the bride’s family will finally hand her over to the husband, and negotiations sometimes continue even after an initial bride wealth payment and the first ritual slaughtering of an animal (usually a sheep) have been accomplished.

⁵In fact, Gado did not speak on his own behalf, but through the intervention of mediating clan mates as is common in the negotiation of *koobgal* marriages.

take her away.' I said that either they give her to me at once, or if not, we should drop the matter. maa, kaway min ngoora.

CONSIDERATION OF A *TE'EGAL* MARRIAGE

After this failure, Gado considered taking a woman from a different clan by elopement marriage (*te'egal*). This part of Gado's account is highly interesting insofar as it gives not only a valid emic definition of *te'egal* elopement marriage, but also a detailed description of how it might be carried out in practice and how this might look like under contemporary conditions. Laadi, the girl with whom he arranged to elope with, was from the 'Bii Ute'en clan in the Diffa region.

- 01 When I encountered these problems, I gave up on her. And in those days I went and took Laadi. I did not waist much time. (F) To, nden mi hebi dum doon matsala, sey ngoor mo mi. Kadi maa, nder den doon balde njaha mi, te'oy mi Laadi, mi neebaay.
- 02 Do you know the *te'egal* of the Wodaabe? If you take a woman who is already married, that is what we call *te'egal*, even if it is done within the own clan. But this is problematic. You should not do that, because the one from whom you take her would be your own relative. And the woman as well would be your own relative. That would constitute a problem, because you could not run away. Better take a woman from a different clan and run away, bring her to your own clan. But to take a married woman from your own family, you see, that is problematic. A anndi te'egal Wodaabe? Kul a hoo'i yeyriijo koowiido, kanjum woni te'egal. Koo dum nder lenyol, ammaan matsala e woodi, dum kamataaki. Gam doon to teda yeyriijo, kore makko dum bandiraawo maada. Yeyriijo maa dum bandiraawo maada. Ke nan matsala e woodi, a waawataa dadgo. Te'a nder ngo'ngol lenyol, dada, njaha nder lenyol maada, siyu. Ammaan te'a nder lenyol maada, nder wuro maada, a yi'ii, matsala e woodi.
- 03 Laadi... Do you remember when Yooŋe⁶ came to Zinder with [Laadi's sister] Mobappa? It was then that Mobappa gave me her number, and she promised that we would get married. But afterwards Mobappa became pregnant and that was at the time when I was looking for a Laadi... A anndi lookasiire nde Yooŋe wardi e Mobappa Damagaram na? Too sey Mobappa hokki yam lamba makko, mo wi'i, mihin e makko, min koowoto. Too gada doon, sey Mobappa hebi reedu. Kadi maa, mihin lookasiire nde, e mi yidi yeyriijo. Sey keŋ mi lamba Laadi to

⁶The wife of Taafa Buuyo, a long-time Gojanko'en urban migrant in the town of Diffa (see also Text 13).

woman. I got Laadi's number from [my lineage mate] Baji. Only her number, I did not know her. But I knew Mobappa, and Yooŋe said that Laadi and Mobappa were all the same. So I called Laadi, we talked, and finally she told me to come and take her.

A MOBILE PHONE RELATIONSHIP

Gado's *te'egal* marriage with Laadi is remarkable insofar as Gado had never met her before the two finally decided to elope together and get married. The first phase of Gado's relationship with Laadi could effectively be called a mobile phone relationship in the sense that 'the phone is instrumental to the relationship and not just incidental to it' (Miller 2009: 25).

We arranged everything on the phone. I told her that I had a job. If I went, I could only stay for one night. She said that this was not a problem, I should come. And that is how we did it.

Laadi was married, but she had not yet been given to her husband. Her husband was there and they had arranged every thing for their *koobgal*. It was almost accomplished. But she told me that she did not want that marriage. She did not love her groom. So I just took her.

In Diffa, I met with her at the bus station. She showed me Taafa's house before she went on to the market. In the afternoon she came back to Taafa's house, where I had been received. When she came, we started to talk. Taafa also engaged in the conversation, he told her: 'Look, there is Gado who came from Zinder for you. Now it is up to you. If you are sure you can go with him, just go. If you cannot, just tell him the truth, because he has to return tomorrow.'

Baji Lamba makko tan, mi anndaa mo! Ammaan e mi anndi Mobappa. Kadi maa, Yooŋe wi'i kanko e Mobappa ŋe fuu ŋe go'o. Too, sey noddu mi Laadi, min bolidi, sey mo wi'i yam mi yaha.

(F) 'Dum fuu dum nder seluula min 01 siri koomi. Bi'i mo mi, e mi woodi kuugal. Kul mi yahi, nyandeere wo'ore tan baale mi. Sey min dillidoya. Mo wi'i, mi yaha tan, matsala walaa. Sey min badi noon.

Kanko, Laadi, ilaa mo hoowama. 02 Ammaan mo waldaa e kore makko. Raa kore makko, dum wadi koobgal, dum he'indi koomi, hori sedita. Kadi maa, mo wi'i, kanko mo yidaa koobgal ngal. Mo yidaa mo. Siyu. Sey te'u mo mi tan.

E Diffa mi fotti e makko e tasha. Min 03 dilli, mo holli yam wuro Taafa, mo wurtake luumo. Alaasara mo wittoy, mo wari toon to am, wuro Taafa, to njippi mi. Nden mo wari, sey min bolidi. Taafa, kanyum maa wolidi e makko. Mo wi'i mo: 'To, raa Gado mo wari gada Damagaram gam maada. Jooni siiya aiki dum maada. Kul a anndi a waawa dillidugo e makko, ndillon. Kul kadi maa a anndi a waawataa, bi'a mo ngoonga, ga kanko jahango mo dillata. Siyu.'

04 Taafa really engaged in the talk. Laadi told me to accompany her on her way home, so that she could get her things. Later we would come back together, sleep at Taafa's house and in the morning we would go to the bus station. I accompanied her close to her house. The people were not asleep yet, but she wanted to go and get her things. So she lied down until everybody else was asleep. Then she got up around four or five o'clock. Now everybody was asleep and she just took her things and left. Then she came to Taafa's house to meet me. I also took my things and we went to the Rimbo⁷ bus station. And we took the bus to Zinder.

Taafa wolidi e makko kworey. Laadi wi'i yam, to, jooni mi doftira mo, mo dilla wuro, mo hoo'oya siri makko, min bittidoya, min baala wuro Taafa. Ila bimbi min jaha tasha. To mi dillidi e makko, min njahi faraw wuro mabbe. Mo tawi wuro mabbe daanaaki. Too kanko, e mo yidi hoo'igo siri makko. Too sey mo waali, kama kambe be daanake. Kanko, sey mo ummi, kama faraw fajiri, karfe huɗu koo biyar. Mo ummi, mo dilli. Koowa daanake. Mo hoo'i siri makko kaway, mo dilli. Mo yahi wuro Taafa, mo tawi yam. Mihin maa koo'i mi siri am, kaway min dilliri tasha Rimbo, min natti moota yaago Damagaram. Siyu.

THE SECOND *TE'EGAL* MARRIAGE

Gado and Laadi lived together for about a year and a half. At first, Gado continued working in Zinder, later in Gouré, and finally he moved to Kano.

01 I went to Kano, because here in Zinder there were no jobs. There were no jobs at all at the time. I went to Kano and I found a job, and we stayed there. With Laadi, there was no problem. Since we had left, she had never asked me to take her home to see her family, nor was she tired of staying in Nigeria. That is how we were together in Nigeria until I got that other girl, Jemmassu, from the Jijjiiru clan. I came back to Zinder with her, but you know, Laadi did not know that I had taken her. The other one knew that I was with Laadi, but Laadi did not know about her.

(F) Mi yahi Kano gam do'o walaa aiki. Lookasiire nde walaa aiki fu. To mi yahi Kano, mi hebi aiki toon, mi joodake. To ngoonga, Laadi walaa matsala. Gada min njahi, mo meedaay wi'igo yam mi yahara mo mo yi'a wuro, koo boo mo tampi joodnde Najeeriya. Noon min joododi Najeeriya, faa keɓ mi kadi maa on doon bidɗo debbo, Jemmassu, mo Jijjiiru. Mi wittidi e makko. Ammaan a anndi Laadi anndaa mi te'i mo. Kanko e mo anndi e mi wondi e Laadi. Ammaan Laadi anndaa.

02 When I took Jemmassu, it was with the help of my younger brother in Kano, Muhammadu. I sent them to

Nde te'i mi Jemmassu, raa minyiraawo am, Muhammadu e Kano. Sey baɗ mi be e moota, kanko e

⁷A popular commercial overland-bus company in Niger.

Zinder in a bushtaxi, him and Jemmassu. The next day, I and Laadi came as well. Jemmassu and Mohamadu had been lodged at my uncle Dengi's house, and I was received at B.'s. I told everyone not to tell Laadi about Jemmassu. I spent two days with Laadi in Zinder, before I paid her a bush taxi to Diffa. When she was gone, I took the other one and returned to B.'s place with her.

We were staying in Zinder for a while, but when I saw that there was no work, I returned to Kano with her. I knew that this was dangerous because her husband was in Kano. You know in *te'egal*, if you have taken the woman you love, it is a problem to stay close to her people. They will separate you from her or even beat you up. I stayed with her until the month of Ramadan, when they finally found us and took her from me.

THE HUSBAND CLAIMS HIS WIFE BACK, BUT SHE FLEES AGAIN

In principle, there are different culturally appropriate ways of dealing with cases of *te'egal* elopement marriage. Generally, the original husband will try to get his wife back, if necessary with violent means, which would then also be legitimate. More often however, conflicts evolving from *te'egal* become the object of negotiations in which conventional rules play a significant role. At a first occurrence, a query from the part of the woman's family for her return will generally be positively responded. This was also the case after Gado's first elopement with Jemmassu. After having traced her, some of her paternal relatives came and formally asked for her return.

They came around noon with three elders and we sat down together, we ate and drank tea. Then they asked me to give them the woman so that they could take her back home. There was nothing I could do, I had to turn her in. Such is the custom

Jemmassu, ƙe ngari Damagaram. Ɓe mbaali wo'ore, mihin maa sey ngar mi. To sey Jemmassu e Mohamadu jippi wuro Dengi, mihin maa no jippi mi wuro B. Sey bi'i mi duuniya, to kowa muro wi'igo ka Laadi. To min baali balde didi e Laadi do'o Damagaram, bad' mo mi e moota Diifa. Nden mo dilli, sey koo'oy mi Jemmassu, min bittoyo wuro B.

Too doon min joodi, faa gi'i mi aiki 03
wala do'o. Sey mbittid mi e makko Kano. Mi anndi matsala e woodi gam kore makko e Kano. Ammaan te'egal... kaway kul a hebi yeyrijo mo ngida, kul a darake faraw maƙƙe, a anndi matsala e woodi. Dum sendete e makko, koo boo dum fi'i ma. Mi njoododake e makko faa lewru Laahiya, nden ƙe kepti yam, ƙe koo'i mo.

(F) Ɓe tuuoyake ndotti'en tato, ƙe 01
ngari, ƙe njoodake. Nyallowma ƙe ngari. Min joododake, min nyaami nyiiri, min njari assaahi, ƙe mbi'i yam ra ko ƙe ngidi; dum hokkita ƙe bidɗo debbo, ƙe mbittina mo wuro. To mihin walaa ko baawe mi wadgo,

of the Wodaabe; this is how the custom of *te'egal* has always been: They pursue her, either the woman's father or one of her in-laws and whoever else. They pursue her and bring her back home, and if she runs away again they follow her once more, a second time, a third time. If she runs away a fourth time and they come to take her, then you may call together the elders and they will talk to them. They will say: 'This time we will not give her back to you.' We have returned her once, twice, three times. Enough is enough. Such is the custom.

- 02 At first, after they had taken her, they gave her back to her husband, but they said that it was a problem for her and her husband to stay in Kano, since I was also still there. They proposed her husband to move to Benue, a city near the border of Cameroon.⁸ They said that hopefully from there she could not run away back to my place. But when they were on the road, she managed to run away. It was on the road to Kaduna, on their way they had to spend the night. They wanted to sleep and in the morning take another bush taxi to move on.
- 03 But she ran away and she found a place where she could hide. After she had fled, she called me on the mobile phone, she said that she was on her way to Kaduna, she told me that she had got rid of them, but that she did not have the means to return – could I come and pick her up? I

doole mi hokkita be mo, dum noon woni ndonu Wodaabe. Ilaa maa noon woni ndonu te'egal. Dum teftoya mo koo baaba makko, koo boo esiraawo makko e godfo. No teftoya mo gam be njahara mo wuro. Kadi maa e mo waawa wittoygo. Kadi maa be teftoya mo nde wo'ore, nde didi, nde tati. Kul mo wittoy nayabre, too kul kadi maa be ngari, ahan boo sey kawta be e ndotti'en, sey be mbolida e maɓɓe: 'Min kokkitataa mo jooni.' E dum teftoya nde wo'ore, nde didi, nde tati. Siyu. Kanjum woni ndonu.

Arande nde be koo'i mo, sey be kokkita mo kore makko. To sey be mbi'i, tun da jooni e mi nder Kano, kadi maa, kanko maa e mo do'o wondi e kore makko, e woodi matsala. Be mbi'i mo mo wuttoro, e woodi wo'nde si'ire toon faraw iyaaka Kamerun e Najeeriya. Innde si'ire nde Beenue. Be mbi'i watakiila mo waawataa no mo wittiroy to am. To nde be njahi dow laawol, kanko boo sey mo suudi. Nde be njahi dow laawol Kaduuna, be mbaali dow laawol. Be mbaali, ila bimbi be natta moota, be ndilla.

Kanko boo, sey mo dadi. Sey mo hebi wo'nde wuriire mo joodi. Nde mo dadi, e mo noddii yam e seluula, mo wi'i, to, e mo laawol Kaduuna, kanko mo seedi e maɓɓe, ammaan mo hebaay mo wittoy. Kul e mi woodi daama, mi yaha mi dillidoya e makko. Sey bi'i mo mi, to mo daro

⁸ Although Gado refers to Benue as a city here, this is probably due to his lack of local knowledge, and he actually refers to Benue state in Nigeria, which is in fact located at the border to Cameroon.

told her to stay where she was and that I would come. I promised to call her on her number. So I went there and I found her and picked her up, but the Jijjiiru saw us.

They were numerous, like before, when they had come to look for her. They saw me with her and they caught us. They called the police and we were put to jail, me and her. We had to spend the night in a cell.⁹ In the morning we discussed the matter. We explained everything to the police and they understood that this was a custom of ours.

The relatives of her husband wanted to have the case settled at court, but the police asked them to drop the matter. They proposed that the party of the husband take their woman and they would let me go. The Wodaabe¹⁰ tried to insist about going to court where they would tell [a judge] about the trouble that I had caused them. As to me, they said that they should keep me for two or three months. After all, the woman had been found at my place and I had even pursued them.

The police turned this talk down and let us go. They gave the Jijjiiru their woman and then they let me go.

The Jijjiiru left me at the police station and took Jemmassu away. They did not stop at Kano but went straight to their home area, Tchintabaraden.

toon to mo woni, mihin mi yahe to makko mi hoo'oya mo. Mi nodda mo dow du'um lamba. Mi yahi toon, mi yi'i mo, mi hoo'oya mo. Ammaan kambe maa be ngi'i min.

Nden maa be duudbe raareebe mo. 04
Be ngi'idi min, mihin e makko, sey be nanngi min, be noddi poliis, be omdi min, mihin e makko. Min mbaali nder sell. Be omdi min. Ila bimbi min bolidi. Min njesi be koomi. E be anndi dum doon dum ndonu amin.

Bandiraabe kore makko, be fuu 05
be ngidi min njaha jistis, ammaan poliis wi'i: 'A'a, min mbara ka'a haala do'o.' Kambe be koo'a yeyrijo mabbe, mihin dum woora mi. Wodaabe mbi'i: 'A'a, min njaha jistis;' toon dum wi'a be matsala am. Mihin dum jogoy am, kama lewru wo'oru koo didi koo tati, gam to am be koo'i yeyrijo mabbe, kadi maa mi tokki gada mabbe.

Poliis wari kan doon haala. Be 06
ngoori min, be kokkiti be yeyrijo mabbe. Mihin boo, be ngoori yam.

Nde be ngoori yam toon faraw poliis, 07
be dillidi e makko, be ndaraaki nder Kano, be njahi Cintabaraden. Wuro mabbe toon Cintabaraden woni.

⁹The involvement of state authorities in *te'egal* cases is possible by the fact that the Nigerien criminal code provides a penalty of fifteen days up to three months of prison and a fine of 10,000 to 100,000 FCFA (ca. 15–150€) for adultery (République du Niger 2003 [1961], paragraphs 286–289). The evidence of a woman who is caught in the company of a man other than her husband and denounced to the police by the latter is sufficient to put the accused couple into custody while the situation is being clarified.

¹⁰I. e., the Jijjiiru. Wodaabe often refer to strangers from different clans simply as 'Wodaabe'.

08 After about one month, she called me again. She said that she would not stay there any longer and that she would come back to Nigeria, since her father was there. Three days after she had come back, she ran away again. I arranged with her to go to a certain place and wait for me. I took all my things and went to her in order to flee with her. When I came to her place, we left together, you know, she had a little child, but she left it there. This time she left it behind at her father's house. But the child was really suffering, it was crying so much.

'Be mbadi kama lewru wo'oru kadi maa mo noddi yam. Mo wi'i kanko mo waawataa joodago toon. Kanko mo wittoy Najeeriya gam baaba makko e toon. Nde mo wittoy, nder bald'e tati nde be mbittoy, mo dadi kadi maa. Bi'i mo mi, mo yaha wo'nde wuriire, mo reenta mi. Mihin boo, koo'i mi siri am fuu, mi yaha to makko, min ndilla. Nde njaha mi to makko, min dilli, a anndi e mo woodi biɲngel pamarel. Ammaan mo woori mo toon. Lookasiire nden mo woori mo e wuro maɓɓe. Ammaan biɲngel ngel ngel hebi matsala kworey. Ngoonga, ngel woy kworey.

A CASE OF ABDUCTION AND A BETRAYAL BY A CLAN MATE

01 When they came, we had already arrived in Zinder. But they caught my younger brother back in Kano and they locked him up. Imagine! These are mature men after all! The father of Jemmassu and another elder from Jemmassu's house. They brought my brother to their place. They told me that they would not let him go before I brought them their woman.

(F) To nde be njahi, min ndilliroy Damagaram. Min ngari Damagaram, sey be naɲngi minyiraawo am toon e Kano. Sey be omdi mo. Ndotti'en faa! Baaba Jemmassu e godɗo ndottiijo, e wuro Jemmassu, toon be njahari minyam. 'Be mbi'i be ngoorataa mo sey to mi yaharani be debbo maɓɓe.

02 I swear, what they did was contrary to the tradition! Take someone hostage? Unheard of! I told them that I would first call my people on the phone. I called my brother, the one they had caught, and Daariya¹¹ and the others, and I told them that I would not turn in the woman. Whether they kept my brother or whether they let him go, I would not turn her in.

Wallaahi, ko be mbadi, walaa nder ndonu. Dum naɲngaga tagu? Toy? Dum walaa! To mi wi'i be, sey noddu mi duuniya e seluula. Mi noddi minyam, mo be naɲngi, e Daariya'en, bi'i mi be: 'Mihin, mi wittinantaa be debbo.' Kul e be ngidi be jogo minyam, kul e be ngidi, kadi maa, be njoofa mo, mihin mi wittintaa mo.

03 But then B. called them. He called their people and told them: Gado

To sey B. noddi be. Mo noddi duuniya woonbe toon, mo wi'i be Gado e

¹¹ A lineage mate who lives as a migrant worker in Kano.

is here, just take his brother and come to Zinder with him, that and that house, Gado will be there. Do not call Gado and tell him you are coming. Just enter the house, he will be inside. Just take the woman and leave his brother.

When they came, I did not know of anything. I was lying [on a mat]; Jemmassu was plaiting my hair. When she finished, I just wanted to call them to hear if there was anything new. That is when I saw them. As they entered the compound, I said to them: ‘Just go over to B.’s place. The elders will give you the woman, not me.’ They went to B.’s and left me alone with her.

We gathered our things and took a motorbike to the bush taxi station where we took a car to Tanout. When the Jijiiru had gone to B.’s place, he told them not to stay but to return to my place, because I would try to flee. When they returned, we had already left. B. went to the station with one of them and they asked the packers about a man and a woman who had just left for Tanout.

B. managed to find out the number of the car. He helped them with everything, which he really should not have done since they were from a different clan. Even if I were not B.’s relative, since I had come to his house, he should have helped me anyway. But he helped the others. He did everything for them. They called the police in Tanout and told them to arrest us at our arrival.

When we arrived in Tanout, the police arrested us. They told us that there were people behind who were

do’o, jooni be koo’oya minyam, be ngara do’o Damagaram wuro kazaa, Gado e doon. To koowa nodda mo, wi’a mo ka. ‘Be ngara tan. Kul be ngari, be natta nder wuro kaway, Gado e nder. ‘Be koo’a debbo maɓɓe, be ngoora minyiraawo makko.

To nde be ngari, be ndillooy. Mihin 04 mi anndaa. Mihin, e mi waali, Jemmassu e moora mi. To nde mo he’inidi moorgoy am, mi nodda be, mi nana habaru. Sey gi’i mi be, be nattoy. Nde be nattoy, bi’i mi be: ‘Too jooni njahe wuro B. Ndotti’en no kokkita on debbo, naa dum mihin.’ Siyu. ‘Be ndilli, be narngi laawol wuro B. ‘Be ngoordi am e makko.

Kadi maa, mi hoo’i siri am. Min 05 koo’i mooto, min njahi tasha Taanus. Min natti moota yahago Taanus. Kambe maa, nde be mbitti wuro B., mo wi’i be, to be njoodo do’o, be mbitta toon to am, e mi dille. Nde be mbitti be tawaay am. B. hoo’i tagu go’oto. ‘Be njahi tasha, be njami duuniya tasha. ‘Be mbi’i godɗo dillidi e yeyrijo do’o nder tasha yahago Taanus. Siyu.

B. hoo’i lamba moota, mo wali be 06 koomi, dum fuu B. walli be. Wallaahi, ammaan dum kamataaki B. wafa dum. Gam lenyol maɓɓe dum feere, ngol amin maa no feere. Koo mi naa dum bandiraawo B., tun da mi wari wuro, yaa kamaata mo walla mi. To kanko, mo walli wodɓe, mo hokki be koomi. ‘Be noddii jandarmanko’en, be mbi’i mi joge.

To nde min ngari Taanus, 07 jandarmanko’en padi min, be mbi’i, e woodi duuniya e gafa, e be ndaar

looking for us. They told us to wait until they had come.

08 Finally, one man came and the police asked him who he was and what was the matter. He said that he was a relative of the girl's father. The police gave the woman to him, and they let me go.

09 But I entered into a discussion with the Jijjiiru man there at the checkpoint; we almost started to fight. I told him that what they had done was really unheard of. It was against the custom. I asked him whether they do not practice *te'egal* in their clan, and whether they had not many women from other clans in theirs. I said that maybe he was the child of a *te'egal* marriage himself.¹² I told him all that.

10 I asked him whether nobody ever took a wife from them before me. I told him that what they did was really surprising. It is unheard of that because of a *te'egal* the clan mates would take just somebody hostage. I asked him whether he had the right to just take a person and hold him in order for him to tell them where their woman was. And if my brother had not known where I was, would they have held him until he had died? That was what I told them.

11 You know, in cases of *te'egal*, the family of the woman can catch the one who has taken her, but they cannot just take anyone from his clan. If they catch the abductor himself, if they find him, they will not let him go. They will either kill him or beat him up, or when it is in town, they

ma, dara do'o to amin faa be ngara. Siyu. Sey min ndari.

Sey tagu go'oto yahi toon. Too nde mo yahi, sey jandarmanko'en yami mo dum dume? Kanko, dum moy? Kanko dum baaba biddo debbo, kadi maa, dum bandiraawo baaba biddo debbo. Be kokki be biddo debbo, kadi maa be njoofi yam.

Ammaan mi wadi e makko rigima toon to jandarmanko'en. Min badake haŋgo. Bi'i mo mi du'um ko badon, dum kamataaki. Dum walaa nder ndonu meedfen. Bi'i mi be, onon, on mbadtaa te'egal nder lenyol moodon? Bi'i mo mi, e woodi yeyri'en duudbe be ngo'ngol lenyol nder moodon. Bi'i mo mi, watakiila ahan maa dum bii te'aado. Mi wi'i mo ka.

Bi'i mo mi, haala, dum meedaay te'ango on, sey e dum gami? Bi'i mo mi, ko mbadon kaway, kanjum haayni yam. Dum meedaay ga dum te'i yeyriijo lenyol makko, jogo goddo gam be kokkita mo. Bi'i mo mi: 'A woodi iiko ngo nanngata tagu jogoda dum, bi'a dum toy biddo debbo suuda?' Kul mo anndaa toy ngon mi, on jogato mo faa mo maaya e juude moodon? Siyu, raa ko mbi'i mi be.

A anndi, kul tagu te'i, bandiraabe yeyriijo e be mbaawa nanngugo tagu te'do, ammaan dum kamataaki be nannga goddo mo nder lenyol tan. Ammaan kul dum nanngi tagu te'do e hoore muudum, kama jo'oni kul dum yi'i dum, dum woorataa dum. Koo mo ware, ko mo fiye, koo

¹²This is a big insult.

might take him to the police. That is what they will normally do. But if he has fled, they cannot just look for anyone from his clan and hold him. They have to look for the man himself. That is how it is.

kul dūm nder si'ire, mo yahare to jandarmanko'en. Too kanjum dūm wadfa. Ammaan kul mo dadi, dūm yi'ataa godfo mo lenyol makko dūm naŋnga dūm. Doole dūm raara kanko e hoore makko. 'Dum kanjum.

What follows looks like a repetition of what has already happened before: Jemmassu was taken back to her husband in Kano. From there she first returned to Tchintabaraden together with her child. But she escaped again and when, somewhere between Maradi and Tsernawa, her money was finished she called Gado who borrowed some money to take a bush taxi and pick her up on the road. Before he arrived, her family had found her and brought her back home. Gado was stranded once again, but nevertheless full of hope.

Now this was her fourth escape. If she will run away again it will be the fifth time. If the day before yesterday, when she was in Tsernawa, she had managed to reach Zinder, this time I would not have run away, I would not have gone anywhere. If I had a job in Zinder I would stay there with her. And if they came, I would call the elders, Haarika and the others, and they would settle it with them. This time we would not turn her in. They would just have to give her up. Even if they went to court it would be in vain. They would not get anything.

(F) Jooni mo dadi nde nayi. Jooni, 01 kul mo behidi dadgo, dūm nde joovi. Too jo'oni, kul mi yi'i mo kama nde mo dadi faa mo wari Tsernaawa, kul mo wari Damagaram, mi nyaarataa, mi nyatta koo'inaa. Kul e mi woodi aiki do'o Damagaram, mi joodoto. Kul be ngari, sey dūm nodda duuniya mawbe, kama Haarika e siiya'en, be boida e maŋbe. Min kokkitataa mo kaway, siyu. Kadi maa, sey be ngoora mo. Kul be njahi to iiko maa, dūm mehere. Walaa koo be kebata.

Concludingly, Gado once more stresses that the behaviour of his Jijjiiru adversaries was clearly a breach of customary rules.

Do you see what they did? They put me into the hands of the police twice: the first time in Nigeria, and then in Tanout. That makes two times. Then they took a man hostage, who was not at all involved, and they kept him in order to get the one who took the woman from them. All that is not

(F) A yi'i du'um ko be mbadi, nde 01 didi e be njahara mi to poliis, e Najeeriya nde wo'ore, faraw Taanus maa nde wo'ore. Nde didi kee nan. Kadi maa be njogake tagu mo hoo'aay yeyrijo, be njogake mo, gam mo raara ko annduŋbe yeyrijo. 'Dum doon fuu dūm walaa. 'Dum

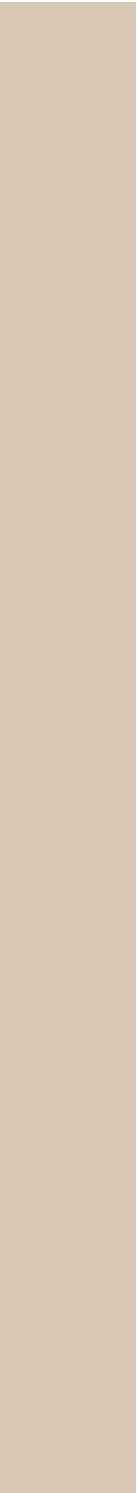
done. *Te'egal* is not an affair for the kamataaki. Kadi maa, haala te'egal
police. walaa nder haraka poliis.

In fact, Wodaabe stress their political will of keeping the settlement of *te'egal* disputes within the framework of their own customary institutions because they have an interest to 'stay united under a pact of disregard for state law and authority [...] beneath notice and, hence, interference of state authorities' (Schareika 2010: 207). This is thought to strengthen the power of the Wodaabe leaders and the position of the Wodaabe in general, since they keep a certain autonomy *vis-à-vis* the state. Today, however, the actual practice often looks quite different. Actors are likely to turn to the institutions of state law if they feel that this might be in their interest. Schareika has aptly characterized the Wodaabe's attitude towards state authorities 'not as guarantors of peace and order but as a weapon in a [...] condition of war where corrupt policemen and judges are used to best one's opponent (2010: 223).

Settlement by the police has not replaced customary ways of dealing with conflicts around *te'egal*, but both exist simultaneously today. The abduction of Gado's brother, on the other hand, is a rather exceptional 'weapon'. Presumably, this is also the reason for B.'s 'betrayal'. It was probably an indicator for him that the case had left the framework of customary rules and taken on another dimension. Had the Jijiiru attacked Gado with swords and sticks, there is little doubt B. would have defended him without hesitation.

All this suggests that the contemporary condition creates a high potential of uncertainty, in which the limits between 'traditional' and 'modern' situations become blurred and in which it is not clear any longer which rules should be applied and which institutions made appeal to. This uncertainty is symptomatic of the situation of this society at the brink of change, characterized by the conflicting frameworks of customary practice, on the one hand, and the Nigerien state and its institutions, with which the Wodaabe are more and more confronted, on the other. The normative grey area that this situation of ambiguity causes can be used strategically by some. They situationally and sometimes opportunistically refer to the competing normative frameworks in what might be characterized as an attitude of normative forum shopping. The same individuals who might challenge the cultural normative framework by involving the institutions of the state in one situation may, in another, rhetorically refer to the same framework to argue against others whom they accuse of betraying it. Such interpretations, however, are no longer sanctioned by the elders but may rather be subjected to the principle that the ends justify the means.

In view of such contradictions, the practice of *te'egal*, which has always been ambivalent, runs the risk of changing its character by degree from being a however conflictive element of ethnic cohesion towards being merely destructive. The increasing implication of external authorities as 'weapons'



threatens to render the institution of *ngaanka* with its inter-clan agreements about mutual *te'egal* marriage obsolete and thus ultimately to delegitimize this cultural practice.

GENEALOGICAL CHART

The chart illustrates the genealogical relations between my principal interlocutors and some other individuals from the Kuskudu maximal lineage of the Wodaabe Gojanko'en that are mentioned in this volume. In the case of those principally residing in one of the main sites of investigation, the locality is indicated by coloured symbols.

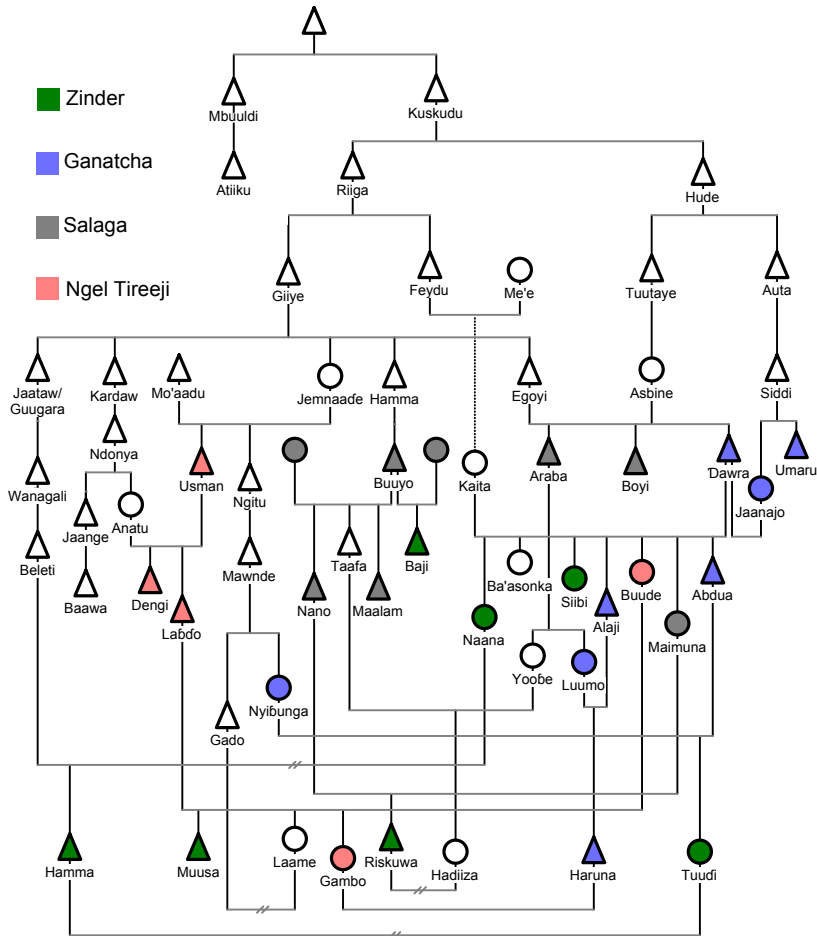


Figure 3: The genealogical relations between some of the individuals mentioned in this volume

GLOSSARY OF FULFULDE TERMS

al buhari: local term to refer to the year 1984, the worst year of the > *banga-banga* drought of 1983–1985. The name is derived from the name of the then president of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, whose government, closed the borders between Nigeria and its neighbouring countries in 1984.

aikiwal (from Hausa *aiki*): work; see also > *kuugal*

ardò, ardube (literally ‘the one who walks ahead’): (1) pastoral leader or migration leader; (2) political/ administrative chief (*chef de tribu*)

banga-banga: local term for the major Sahel drought of 1983–1985

biggal: a pastoral system of dissociated mobility. Generally only a few herders accompany the cattle, while the households remain either stationary or follow a different itinerary with other parts of the stock in cases where different species are raised which have diverging grazing needs.

biggankeejo, biggankooɓe: > *biggal* herder

Bodaado: Sing. of *Wodfaabe*

boggol, boggi: rope

daangol: rope to which the calves are tethered to separate them from their mother cows when these are driven to the pasture. The calf rope is fixed in the ground on a north-south axis, and constitutes a division of the domestic camp into a female (east) and a male sphere (west). The *daangol* is an important cultural symbol of the Fulbe.

daangol pulaaku: ban or boycott declared by the local Fulbe population against a community or an institution (e. g., a local livestock market)

dadiɗo: (1) a place in the west of the pastoral camp where the men take their meals and receive strangers; (2) the age-group institution for young men and girls; (3) the place where this group meets for their nocturnal instructions and repetitions in dance; (4) an alternative term for the > *ngaanka* ceremony

dendiraawo, dendiraabe: cross-cousin, joking cousin

dudal, dude: (1) fire that is lit every night during the rainy season for the cattle in the cattle place in the western part of the camp; (2) a group of persons, generally a minimal lineage,

with merged herds that are jointly managed	The turbanization is an intrinsic element in the investiture of local chiefs among the Fulbe and other ethnic groups of the region.
<i>duuniyaaru</i> (from Arabic <i>dunia</i> /دُنْيَا): world, people	
<i>endam</i> : (1) mother's milk; (2) by extension, kinship relations based on the ingestion of mother's milk, i. e., maternal kin; (3) compassion, solidarity	<i>girgam</i> : administrative register containing the names of all the family heads that are affiliated with a <i>chef de tribu</i> and pay their taxes to him
<i>fulfulde</i> : (1) language of the Fulbe; (2) the moral qualities and conduct expected from a > <i>Pullo</i> ; used widely congruent with the term > <i>pulaaku</i>	<i>gomnati</i> (from English 'government'/ French <i>gouvernement</i>): the state, state authorities.
<i>gaadi</i> (from English 'to guard'): the activity of guarding houses as watchmen, one of the main urban activities of Wodaabe migrant workers	<i>gonsol</i> : routine camp relocation
<i>gandaw</i> : local term for the major drought of 1973–1974	<i>goosoowo, goosoobe</i> : pastoral scout
<i>gassungol</i> : a special kind of rope that is used to tie up the household loads on a pack animal when camp is moved	<i>gume</i> (from French <i>goumiers</i>): indigenous soldiers in the service of the French colonial army
<i>gaynaako, waynaabe</i> : pastoralist, herder	<i>Haabe</i> : see > <i>Kaado</i>
<i>geerewol</i> : emblematic dance which is performed exclusively during <i>ngaanka</i> meetings	<i>habbanaaye</i> : institution of animal loans widely known among Fulbe. Rights in female animals are temporarily transferred and generally imply that the receiver can use the milk of the animal and keep the first calf (in the case of cows) or the first two or three lambs (in the case of sheep or goats) before returning the original animal to its owner.
<i>giifol, giifi</i> : (1) turban; (2) by extension, a political office locally symbolized by the turban as a central insignia.	<i>humturu, kumti</i> : name-giving ceremony for a new-born

<i>jokkere</i> : contract herding of animals that belong to others; today an important supplementary source of income among Wodaabe	<i>maagani</i> (from Hausa): traditional medicine both of ethno-pharmaceutical and magico-religious character, ranging from herbal potions to amulets
<i>Kaadò, Haabe</i> (literally ‘the bitter ones’): the Fulfulde designation for the peasant other in general. In the study area, the term applies to both Kanuri and Hausa.	<i>maalamiijo, maalamii’en</i> (from Hausa <i>malam</i>): Islamic scholar
<i>kayeejo, kaye’en</i> : young man	<i>massudò, massube</i> : slave
<i>konu</i> : war	<i>mawniraawo, mawniraabe</i> : elder brother
<i>koobgal, kooble</i> : generally clan-endogamous marriage, arranged between the families of the couple by betrothal, often from early childhood on	<i>mbodangaaku</i> (also <i>mbodangansi</i>): term notably used by the Wodaabe in central Niger as a Wodaabe-specific form of the concept of > <i>pulaaku</i> , in order to stress difference from other Fulbe
<i>kuugal</i> : work	<i>Nasarankeejo, Nasaranko’en</i> (in Hausa <i>Nasara</i> ; from Arabic <i>nasara/نصارى</i>): ‘Nazarene’, i. e., Christian); Westerner, ‘white’ person
<i>laamiidò, laamiibe</i> : Fulfulde term locally used to refer to the superior administrative chief (<i>chef de groupement</i>). Although the term evokes the great Fulbe chiefs in Sokoto or Adamawa, the status and function of the <i>laamiidò</i> in the context of colonial and post-colonial Niger is not comparable.	<i>ndonu</i> : tradition, custom
<i>laawol, laabi</i> : road, path, way	<i>Ndooviijo, Ndoovi’en</i> : term used by the Wodaabe to refer to predominantly non-pastoral, agro-pastoral and sedentarized Fulbe
<i>ladde</i> : pastoral rangeland, ‘bush’	<i>ndottiijo, ndotti’en</i> : mature man. When his own children begin to grow up and have children themselves, a > <i>Bodaadò</i> man generally abandons the hairstyle of long braids, shaves his head and ceases to participate
<i>lenyol, lenyi</i> : clan, lineage	
<i>lokol</i> (from French <i>école</i>): school	

in dance contests. He is then considered a mature adult man and participates in the council of the elders (*shuura ndotti'en*). The transition to the new status is marked by a ceremony (*unirki*) organized by the man.

ndubbitaanga: concluding dance performance before the end of the > *ngaanka* ceremony

ngaanka: ceremonial inter-clan meeting. Two regional clan fractions meet for the duration of seven days and seven nights and ritually reconfirm their mutual relations. The ceremony plays a central role for the reproduction of the ethnic group, for ethnic belonging, and identity.

ngaari ngaanka, ga'i ngaanka: bull that is sacrificed in the course of the > *ngaanka* ceremony. The sacrifice is the central ritual part of the *ngaanka* ceremony. The meat of the bull that is provided by the hosting clan is grilled in parts, which are then reconstituted in their anatomical order on the hide and thus presented to the visiting clan. Each clan delegation gets an equal share of all parts and the meat is distributed and eaten by all participants of the ceremony.

perol: migration out of the habitual range of mobility

pulaaku: (1) an ensemble of moral qualities and cultural values that are expected from Fulbe and can be roughly understood as a code of culturally proper conduct; (2) the community of the Fulbe

Pullo: Sing. of Fulbe

saga, sagaaji: calabash shelf on which the female household utensils and representational objects of married women are stored and presented

samariijo, samari'en: leader of the > *daddo* age group

santir (from French *centre*): term used to designate the proto-villages of semi-sedentary Wodaabe that emerge generally in the vicinity of pastoral wells. The term is derived from the term *centre de regroupement*, frequently used in the jargon of development agents.

seluula (from French *cellulaire*): cell phone, mobile phone

sendereaji: animals that are transferred from the husband's family to the wife at marriage and for which she receives milking rights in order to feed herself and her children

si'ire, si'e: village, town, city

<i>soro</i> : ritual flagellation contest for young men, practiced by some Fulbe groups, yet not by the Wodaabe	<i>tewu</i> : meat
<i>surbaajo, surba'en</i> : young, unmarried girl	<i>tigu</i> : the activity of selling traditional medicines (> <i>maagani</i>), generally during trading trips to urban and rural areas in sometimes far away regions
<i>suudu, suudi</i> : (1) the domestic sphere of the pastoral camp basically formed by the ensemble of the hearth, the bedstead and the calabash shelf (> <i>saga</i>) with all functional and symbolic household goods of the married woman; (2) lineage or clan fraction (e. g., <i>Suudu Kuskudu</i>)	<i>togu</i> : charm
<i>taarde, taare</i> : lineage or clan fraction, see also > <i>suudu</i>	<i>tukuru, tukuuji</i> : tent-like shelter as used by the Wodaabe in the Damergou and Koutous regions
<i>taarihi</i> (from Arabic <i>tarikh</i> /تاريخ): history	<i>waaldeejo, waalde'en</i> : age mate
<i>taimako</i> (from Hausa): help, relief	<i>Wodande</i> : term used by the Wodaabe to refer to their own specific version of the Fulfulde language, in order to stress difference from other Fulbe
<i>talakaajo, talaka'en</i> : political follower, subject	<i>wonere, bone</i> : damage, e. g., crop damage.
<i>te'egal, te'ele</i> : ethnically endogamous, yet generally clan-exogamous form of marriage, based on the elopement of married women with men from other clans. Although similar forms of elopement marriage are known in different groups of pastoral Fulbe, the institutionalization of the practice in bilateral agreements between pairings of clans is particular to the Wodaabe.	<i>worso, gorse</i> : (1) annual festive gathering of the regional clan fraction, during which ceremonies of name-giving and marriage, which had been postponed for this occasion due to the long dispersal during the dry season, are jointly celebrated; (2) any more important agglomeration of homesteads at the occasion of a lineage or clan meeting (e. g., <i>worso ngaanka</i> – the aggregation of camps at the occasion of a > <i>ngaanka</i> ceremony)

wuro, gure: pastoral camp, 'house',
home

wuumre, guume: migration group,
in the agro-pastoral setting also
the local community. Congruent
terms in the literature are *kinnal*
or *kinnidal*, which are used by
other clans or in other regions.

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Photo 16: The researcher in the field

(M. MOUSSA, 2011)

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