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Ethnic Identity and Social Interaction: A Reflection on Fulbe Identity

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Abstract

We have been accustomed to reading, in the abundant literature on the Fulbe, that these people are "unique" in West Africa, based on physical, linguistic, and cultural attributes. Moreover the Fulbe themselves insist strongly on their particularities at different levels. But, isn't it in their very diversity that their so called "uniqueness" lies? If the existence of an ethical code is so remarkably attested among different groups of the Fulbe, it is certainly because it works as an ideology that provides them with an ethnic identity. It seems, however, that the more they are immersed in Islam, the more they tend to forget about this ethical code and identify themselves as members of a larger Islamic community. Their ethnic identity as one people becomes necessarily more and more fictitious, and the reality is as well that there are among them many Fulbe groups whose identity differs from each other.

The Fulbe-Jenngelbe of Senegal live principally by pastoralism, practicing seasonal transhumance. Their ethical code as Fulbe is quite strongly recognized among them and functions as an ideology of group unity. Many people mention frequently the importance of *pulaagu* to distinguish themselves from the agricultural Wolof people with whom they co-habit. So, in their usual discourse, the difference which makes the "Fulbe-ness" is stressed, but as a matter of course the Fulbe-Jenngelbe and the Wolof and also the *maccube* (former slaves) form a complementary complex, and they themselves know it very well.

I will attempt in this paper to show how these complementary relations operate on different levels, such as that of mode of life or of people's sentiments. My final aim is to suggest that in each area of West Africa where the different groups of Fulbe have settled, new ethnic identities are being formed.

The goal of this paper is to consider the ethnic identity of the Fulbe, pastoral peoples who are scattered all over the Sahelian region of West Africa. In the first part of the paper I will present the problem of the Fulbe identity, and in parts two through four I will present data collected among the Jenngelbe—a Fulbe group living in the Djolof region of Senegal, with particular attention to how they interact with their neighbors, especially the Wolof. Finally, in the last section I will discuss Fulbe identity in light of theories of ethnicity.

Images of the Fulbe of West Africa

We have been accustomed to reading in the abundant literatures, especially of the 19th century and the beginning of this century, that the Fulbe are a 'unique' people in West Africa, from physical, linguistic, and cultural standpoints. For example, Gaspard T. Mollien, after the famous wreck of the frigate "La Méduse" in 1816, had received the order to explore the interior of Senegal in 1818. He wrote:

Le Fouta Tor est selon ses habitants le pays le premier du monde, et le Poule est l'homme par excellence. Malgré leurs défauts, ils ont une grande qualité; ils ont un esprit national (Mollien 1820: tome I, 285).

Heinrich Barth who travelled widely in West Africa in the mid 19th century wrote on his side:

There is no doubt that, if any African tribe deserves the full attention of the learned European, it is that of the Fulbe (...). In their appearance, their history, and the peculiar character of their language, they present numerous anomalies to the inhabitants of the adjacent countries. No doubt they are the most intelligent of all the African tribes, although in bodily development they can not be said to exhibit the most perfect specimens, and probably are surpassed in this respect by the Jolof. But it is their superior intelligence which gives their chief expression to the Fulbe, and prevents their features from presenting that regularity which we find in other tribes, while the spare diet of a large portion of that tribe does not impart to their limbs all the development of which they are capable, most of them being distinguished by the smallness of their limbs and the slender growth of their bodies (Barth 1965 [1857]: vol. 3, 110-111).

J. de Crozals, taking these contentions in account, writes:

Ils (Les Peuls) s'éloignent profondément par là de la race nègre qu'ils regardent comme condamnée à l'esclavage pendant sa vie et aux feux de la damnation dans l'autre monde (de Crozals 1883: 174).

We could cite numerous accounts of the Fulbe by travellers and explorers, but here we will conclude the discussion by noting that these views are found even in the French literatures between the two World Wars. In fact, A. Martinkus-Zemp examined how the women of African colonies were represented in the French literatures of this epoch, and found that the Fulbe women were in a sense given a special status. She says in the form of conclusion that:

La Noire, pour ainsi dire, n'avait pas de tête: son rôle de mouso se réduisait à prêter son corps au Blanc. La Peul n'est pas seulement un corps, elle est aussi un visage: elle a donc des sentiments, une âme

(Martinkus-Zemp 1973: 74).

These claims are not of course without some basis, since it seems true that the Fulbe themselves insist so strongly on their particularities at different levels—physical, linguistic and cultural—that they sometimes give the impression of being discriminationists, if not racists, among the Black peoples among whom they live. But in fact, if the so called “uniqueness” of the Fulbe really exists, isn’t it in their very diversity that it lies? As Charles Frantz rightly notes, we can find a wide range of diversity at all levels: mode of life, milieu of life, social organization or social system, political status in a given state, system of kinship, biogenetic characteristics, degree of acceptance of Islam, degree of integration of other tongues in their language, and so on (Frantz 1981: 89). I think we can presume without any risk of error that there is no other people in Africa that have dispersed over such a wide geographic area, and that have adapted to so many different natural and social milieus.

On the other hand, if the existence of the ethical code, *pulaaku* or *pulaagu*, is so remarkably attested among different groups of Fulbe, it is certainly because it works as an ideology that provides them with an ethnic identity. But the fact seems that, the more they are immersed in Islam, the more they tend to forget about the Fulbe ethical code and identify themselves as members of the larger Islamic community. Thus, because of this and other factors their identity as one people has become increasingly fragmentary, and the reality is that there are many Fulbe groups with different identities.

Fulbe-Jenngelbe of Senegal

The Republic of Senegal has a population of more than seven million people, of which more than one-third are Wolof. Fulbe account for 17 per cent of the total population, being the second most numerous ethnic group. Although the Fulbe in Senegal are much less numerous than the Wolof, they are not a small group among the more than ten ethnic groups in Senegal. A large percentage of the Fulbe live in the southern region, close to Guinea, and many of them also practice rice cultivation, besides their cattle herding.

The *Jenngelbe* (sing. *Jennello* or *Njenngel*) people live in the arid Djolof region which is part of the Ferlo that lies just to the south of Futa Toro. The region’s administrative center is at Linguere, about 310 kilometers from the country’s capital, Dakar, to the north-east. As will be seen later, Djolof was the name of a Wolof kingdom which came into existence toward the end of the 12th century (Boulègue 1968: 28–29, cited by Charles 1973: 15). In the Ferlo area there live, besides the Jenngelbe, other Fulbe peoples, the *Laccenabe* and *Haaboobe*, all of whom practice much more pastoralism than agriculture. It seems that, among these groups of Fulbe, the Jenngelbe have for some time occupied a leading position, especially since they were in charge of the wells in the area (Ba 1977: 114). Ba

also reports that the Jenngelbe enjoy the reputation as the best "interpreters" of the language of the cattle, meaning that they are the best pastoralists. At the same time, they are more receptive than other groups to modernism and as such are more inclined to become sedentary (Ba 1977: 116, see also Hampate Ba and Dieterlen 1961).

Most of the Jenngelbe live alongside the agricultural Wolof in the Djolof region, and in fact, statistically, there are more Wolof than Jenngelbe in this region. According to the census done in 1978-1979, 50 percent of the population of the Department of Linguere (which corresponds almost to the Djolof) are Wolof, 46 percent Fulbe, and four percent belong to other groups (Ogawa 1980: 677).

Knowing this social situation of the Jenngelbe, we can understand easily that they are under the strong influence of the Wolof. One will easily note this influence, for example, in the style of their huts which are no longer of the traditional Fulbe type (semi-spherical), but rather have separate roofs and walls. But the most significant influence is on the linguistic level. A Jenngello, usually by the age of fifteen, is bi-lingual, knowing Pulaar as his maternal language, along with Wolof. On the contrary, there are very few Wolof in this region who know how to speak Pulaar. When a Jenngello encounters a Wolof, their conversation is held necessarily in Wolof, and his version of Pulaar contains many words borrowed from Wolof. The borrowed terms are not only for the usual concrete things, for example *njegenaay* for *gaflaare* (pillow), but also for terms expressing abstract notions such as *cosaan* for *aada* (custom or tradition) which, itself, is borrowed from Arabic.

How have the Wolof influenced Fulbe subsistence patterns? The Wolof are essentially agricultural, cultivating small millet and peanuts, and tending very few animals except some sheep for their auto-consumption. On the contrary, the Jenngelbe live mainly by herding cattle, but they are not indifferent at all to agricultural activities. Almost all of them are involved in cultivation of small millet during the rainy season (from the beginning of July to the end of October). Some young men also cultivate peanuts as a cash crop. Peanut cultivation is purely an individual activity, and the money earned from it is owned by the cultivator alone, which is, of course, not the case with small millet. Nevertheless, cultivation in this region depends solely on rainfall; people do not practice any kind of irrigation.

Can we affirm that Jenngelbe cultivation began only under the influence of the Wolof? This may be so, but I myself think that the form of cultivation among the Jenngelbe is a tradition which can be traced far back in time. It is said among many Jenngelbe that "the tradition of the Fulbe is cultivating and herding" (*cosaan Fulbe ko remde e aynude*), which suggests that they have for long been involved in agricultural activities. In fact, there are very few borrowed terms in the local Pulaar concerning cultivation; almost all can be said to be of Fulbe origin. Here are a few of the terms:

<i>gawri</i>	grain in general
<i>gawri ndiimiri</i>	small millet (<i>Pennisetum americanum</i>)
<i>gawri muutiri</i>	sorghum (<i>Sorgho</i> spp.)
<i>maaro</i> *	rice
<i>gerte</i> *	peanuts
<i>nyebbe</i>	beans
<i>ngesa/gese</i>	field of cultivation
<i>sooynde/cooye</i>	fallow land
<i>biitngal/wiitde</i>	manured field
<i>ruujde</i>	to clear waste land
<i>aawde</i>	to sow
<i>uulde</i>	to sow before rain comes
<i>remde</i>	to cultivate, to weed
<i>remtude</i>	to weed for the second time
<i>sonyde</i>	to harvest (millet)
<i>sufde</i>	to harvest (beans)
<i>jasde</i>	to harvest (peanuts)
<i>sax</i> *	a granary

Among these words, only the three marked with* are apparently borrowed: *maaro* from Mandingo, and *gerte* and *sax* from Wolof. I must add that rice (*maaro*) is not cultivated by Jenngelbe themselves, but has been adopted in their diet quite recently and is favored especially by women because of its ease of preparation compared to millet. There are also several very specific and precise Pulaar terms which correspond to different parts of the millet plant, e.g., *gawyal* (a cane), *kommbol* (the very beginning of a leaf), *nyaaykolol* (a leaf), *wutaandu* (a spike), *gommbal* (a pith of a spike), *soolobere* (a calyx), *suututere* (an envelope which contains *gawri*=grain), and *buumanngal* (a tiny flower on top of the *soolobere*). When we see, for example, that there are three terms which mean "to harvest" and are used differently according to the specific kind of crop, and also that different parts of the millet plant are designated by so many specific terms, it is quite reasonable to suppose that the Jenngelbe knowledge of agricultural activity has been anchored in their traditions since long ago. I would suspect that this knowledge is not limited to the Jenngelbe but is shared by many groups of Fulbe in West Africa, except the Wodaabe-Bororo (true pastoralists).

The Jenngelbe came to inhabit the Djolof where there were already Wolof people: they were the newcomers in the region. Dupire situates, according to the oral traditions, the arrival of the Jenngelbe in the Djolof at the epoch of Koli Tenguella, in the 16th century (Dupire 1970: 261). The data I collected also suggests their arrival in this region in the 16th century, when the Wolof kingdom was already firmly established.

Everyone of Jenngelbe origin knows very well the name of their putative ancestor-founder, Njaajaan Njaay. When a Jenngello speaks of his genealogy, he

will begin inevitably by mentioning the name of Njaajaan Njaay, the founder, and he will say that before Njaajaan Njaay the world was in chaos, and people lived without the distinction of Wolof from Fulbe. As it is shown in this expression, and as the name (Njaay is the famous Wolof patronym) itself suggests, Njaajaan Njaay is supposed to be the very founder of the Wolof Empire. Wolof oral tradition says that it was Njaajaan Njaay who succeeded in unifying the small Wolof kingdoms to establish an empire, and he reigned for 44 years, from 1212 to 1256 (Gaden 1912: 127). Of course this dating has no other grounds except in oral tradition, but what is certain is that the Jenngelbe arrived after this time and they adopted the legend of the formation of the empire in their oral history.

In one version of Jenngelbe tradition, Njaajaan Njaay appears by an unknown river or emerges from the water, but utters no word for a long time. An intelligent woman devises a trick to make him speak. She places two stones on the ground upon which to put a cooking pot, but she never succeeds. Seeing the woman's action, Njaajaan Njaay tells her instead to place three stones (*kaaje tati*). He speaks in the Pulaar language, which proves to the Jenngelbe that he was a Pullo. The woman then began to live with him and gave birth to three boys: Goor Njaajaan, Cukkuli Njaajaan, and Sere Njaajaan. Goor was the first man of the Jenngelbe, and Cukkuli was the first man of the Wolof.

Many old men recounted to me the genealogies of the Jenngelbe from the time of Njaajaan Njaay and the proliferation of the Jenngelbe lineages. I then compiled the different genealogies collected from different persons (Figure 1). One can see that from the time of Njaajaan Njaay to the actual living people there are fourteen generations. If we calculate the total years of the genealogy (with a generation totaling 30 years), we get a total of 420 years. From this we may postulate the arrival of the Jenngelbe to the region in the mid-16th century.

The Ambivalence of the Relations between Jenngelbe and Wolof

Here it is necessary to mention how Wolof people are conceptualized by the Jenngelbe. It is well known that the Fulbe in other regions of West Africa generally designate other black peoples by the term *haabe* (sing. *kaado*). It seems that this term is applied to all black skinned and not Islamized peoples. It has both biological and cultural connotations. This word should surely exist in the Jenngelbe glossary, but it is not employed in their speech. The name which is employed among Jenngelbe, in the place of *haabe*, is *sebbe* (sing. *ceddo*), and I suppose it is known, among many groups of the Fulbe, only by the Fulbe of Djolof in Senegal. Gaden says that "the word *tyeddo* is the equivalent of the word *kâdo*, and designates all the indigenous black skinned peoples" (Gaden 1912: 123, footnote 2), but precisely speaking it is not the same. Jenngelbe designate by this term only Wolof people, since when they designate black skinned peoples in general they say *baleebe* (sing. *baleejo*). When they want to specify a people they call it by its proper name, for example *seereraabe* (sing. *seerero*) for Serer and *tukuloor'en* or *haal-*

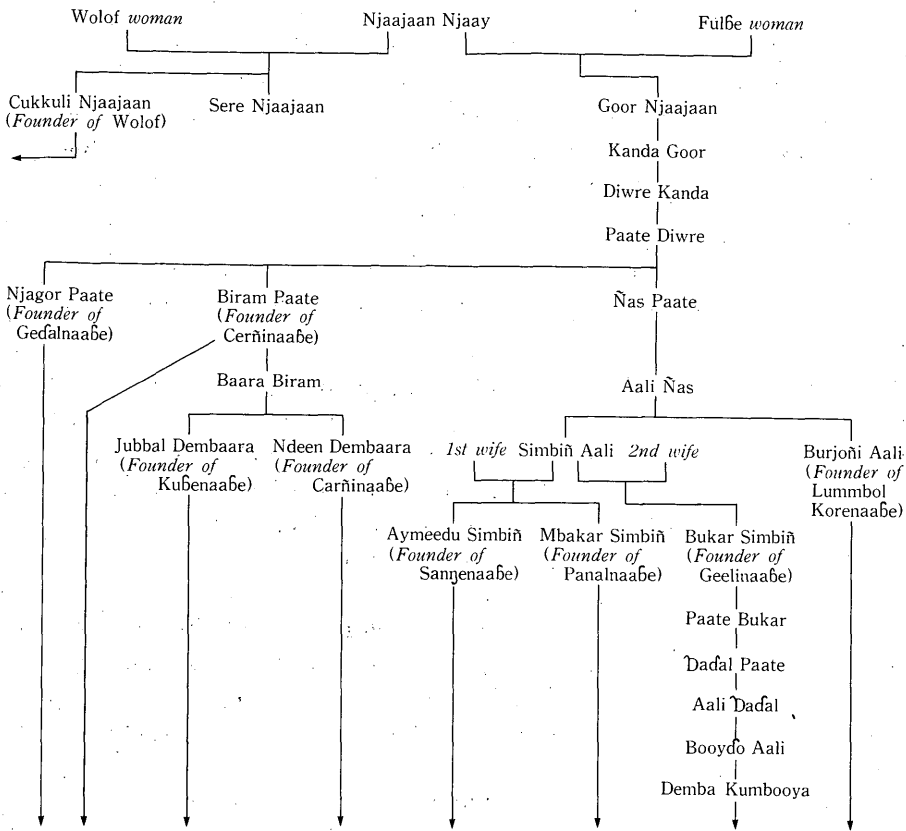


Figure 1. Genealogical History of 8 Lineages of Jenngelbe

puulaar'en for Tokolor. The word *baleebe* means literally “the black skinned peoples,” and it appears to have only a biological meaning, but it has in fact strong pejorative connotations culturally.

If only a Wolof is called a *ceddo* and the Wolof language is called *ce'aar* (another proof that this term is limited only to the Wolof), why and in what context did the word *ceddo* come to be employed by the Fulbe in the Djolof? The word “ceddo” is originally Wolof (pronounced *ceddo* in Wolof) and means “the warriors” who served their king in a Wolof kingdom. They were chosen from among the free Wolof men to serve the king as his guards, and also as warriors when the king declared war against other kingdoms. But over time they increased in number and formed a powerful group. In the 17th century, European merchants had begun commerce with Wolof kings, especially of arms for capturing slaves. It was the *ceddo* who assumed the role of capturing slaves for the king, and they inevitably took full possession of this commerce, capturing poor people to sell as slaves to the Europeans in exchange for arms and alcohol. In the mid-19th century, l'abbé David Boilat wrote that the word *ceddo* had become a synonym for “dangerous pagan warriors.” He wrote:

Le mot *thiédo* est l'opposé de marabout; il signifie un incrédule, un impie, un homme sans foi ni probité. Ces sortes d'hommes répandus dans le Walo, le Cayor, le Baol, les royaumes de Sine et de Saloum, forment la milice de ces pays. Ne vivant que de vol et de pillage sur les grands chemins, ils sont plus propres à la guerre. Chaque chef de village entretient à son service un certain nombre de *thiédos* qu'il fournit d'armes et de chevaux (Boilat 1984: 308).

Ils ont tous aujourd'hui des fusils et des sabres. Sans croyance aucune, ils s'adonnent à tous les vices, et spécialement à la boisson de l'eau-de-vie (Boilat 1984: 309).

Hearing of such tyrannical behavior of the *ceddo*, we can easily conclude that they attacked Fulbe villages to capture slaves. For the Fulbe in Djolof, the *ceddo* (Wolof warriors) should have been the terror from which they had to protect themselves. It is easily imaginable that the Fulbe spoke of the *ceddo* with serious fear as their enemy, and the word finally came to designate all Wolof. I add here that the plural form *sebbe* has been derived from the word *ceddo* according to the grammatical rules of the Pulaar language.

This brief discussion has shown that the Wolof had been the enemy of Jenngelbe, and this contentious aspect of their relationship still exists at present. The competitive and contemptuous relation between the Jenngelbe and the Wolof becomes especially stern in the rainy season (*ndunngu*) from the beginning of July to the end of October.

As noted already, the pastoral Jenngelbe and the agricultural Wolof live side by side in the same region, the Djolof. In spite of the fact that the Jenngelbe cultivate in addition to herding cattle, the Wolof devote themselves solely to cultivation and undertake no pastoral activities. This form of Wolof agriculture is found throughout Senegal, as is noted by Pélissier who says that "the divorce of cultivation and herding is the general characteristic of Wolof agriculture" (Pélissier 1966: 150). Naturally there are great differences between Jenngelbe cultivation and that of the Wolof. For example, Wolof cultivation is a family activity, but Jenngelbe cultivation is rather an individual enterprise, especially since their fields are open and are owned and worked individually (although the harvest is shared by the family). The scale of cultivation also differs among the two peoples. My own data concerning the size of fields cultivated in a Jenngelbe village (Guely) show a great difference among individuals: from 0.85 hectares to 10.2 hectares, with a rough average of 3.5 hectares. But large fields are owned and worked jointly by two brothers, so taking this fact into consideration the average size of Jenngelbe fields is 2.6 hectares. I do not have precise information on the average size of Wolof fields, but it can be estimated at more than 10 hectares, since the average size of Wolof family farms in the region of Jurbel, which is just next to the Djolof, is reported to be more than 10 hectares (Bara Diop 1981: 306).

A more important difference lies in the fact that the Jenngelbe always enclose

their fields using branches of thorny trees, while the Wolof do not. The enclosure is done, of course, to prevent cattle from damaging the crops, and people can use the same field for a long time since they can manure it with cattle dung. The Wolof do not enclose their fields, principally because of their big size. This may cause tension between the Jenngelbe and the Wolof in the rainy season, when a Jengello herdsman is not sufficiently vigilant and his herd enters a Wolof's field and damages his crops.

This contentious aspect explains why Jenngelbe and Wolof speak of each other in such a contemptuous or despicable way. For the Jenngelbe, the Wolof are viewed as poor cultivators who are damned to scratch the surface of the earth, and are obliged to stay forever in one place. If a drought attacks, they can do nothing else but starve. For the Wolof, on the contrary, the Fulbe-Jenngelbe are seen as dangerous poor people who know only about animals and who are obliged to roam the land always in search of food.

This kind of tense relation often occurs when pastoralists and agriculturists live in close proximity. D. Paulme analyzes a Dogon tale in which the Fulbe are made sport of, and says that, for the Dogon, a Pullo is "l'homme de race différente, l'ennemi né du cultivateur et dont les bœufs piétinent le maigre champ; un Dogon ne manquera pas une occasion de tourner un Peul en ridicule" (Paulme 1961: 41).

But should we take these contemptuous expressions to the letter? These expressions are in fact a kind of discourse which makes clear the cultural identity of each people, so that pastoralists and agriculturists can live in a complementary or even symbiotic way. In the case of the Jenngelbe and the Wolof, their complementary relation becomes clear in the dry season.

Every year, at the end of October or mid-November the rain ceases; it is the beginning of dry season. Ponds which were scattered in the fields dry up, and the watering of cattle becomes difficult for Jenngelbe men. Drawing water from well is hard work, since a cow drinks 20 to 30 litres during one watering. Men say in fact that watering is the hardest task for them. As the pasture becomes scarce, the time arrives for them to transhume. They migrate 40 to 150 kilometers away from their rainy season villages, and they usually make their way to the south where it rains more abundantly. This land is inhabited by Wolof agriculturists who wait for the coming of Jenngelbe with their cattle.

When the Fulbe arrive, the harvest of millet and peanuts are all finished in Wolof farms, and their remnants are left in the fields. Those of millet and especially of peanuts are fed to the cattle of Jenngelbe, which manure the fields. Needless to say that the Jenngelbe and Wolof also exchange milk and grains. During all the dry season, which lasts for seven months, the Jenngelbe and Wolof assist each other.

During the dry season of 1979-1980, there were many Jenngelbe who kept this mode of transhumance, but it became obvious that more and more people were giving up this system of exchange. Many Jenngelbe ceased to migrate to the Wolof villages and would instead make short distance migrations to places in the Djolof

where there is watering equipment with a pump for cattle. Others would go to the large towns, such as Kaolack, where there are large markets. Moreover, the Wolof no longer expect the Jenngelbe to come with their cattle, because they have begun to use chemical fertilizer (cf. Ogawa 1980).

Nevertheless, we should recognize that Jenngelbe-Wolof relations at the level of subsistence are in fact rather complementary and symbiotic, in spite of the people's easy expression of their antagonistic relations.

Pulaagu as an Ideology of the Group

Until now I intentionally have not touched the topic of the "ethos" of the Jenngelbe, and I have spoken thus far of the Jenngelbe relation with the Wolof. The discussion suggests that a people rarely lives by itself, and an ethnic identity is therefore constantly being shaped by interactions with other peoples. Now we turn to Jenngelbe identity, from their point of view.

It is true that the region of the Senegal is where Islam first penetrated in all Black Africa. The conversion to Islam of the leaders of the ancient Ghana and then of the Tekrur took place as early as the 11th century, especially during the Almoravid movement. But it was only in the 19th century that the general Islamization of the Wolof kingdoms of Senegal took place (Clarke 1982). Today, more than 80 percent of the Senegalese population reportedly is Muslim (Colvin 1981: 248).

The acceptance of Islam by the Fulbe-Jenngelbe of the Djolof seems to have taken place in the 1860s and 1870s after the jihads led by Ma Ba Diakhou and then by Shaiku Amadu Ba, a man of Futa Toro (Charles 1973: 93-147; Clarke 1982: 140-145). Thus Jenngelbe conversion to Islam was rather recent in comparison to that of Futa Toro.

Certainly many Jenngelbe pray five times a day and fast for about one month a year following the Islamic calendar. They avoid drinking alcohol in the village and say that their great hope in life is to make a pilgrimage to Mecca or to see a mosque constructed where they live. But upon closer examination it appears that the Islam of the Jenngelbe (and of the Senegalese in general) is only a religious idea to be attained one day and not a principle which regulates their general way of life. Here, needless to say, I am not making any value judgements but only seek to describe some aspects of the reality. For example, the seclusion of women, which is normally practiced among the Muslims of Arab countries, is not observed among the Jenngelbe: no woman wears a veil to hide her face, there is no interdiction for a married woman to go to the market for the daily purchases, and a man enters, with permission of course, into a woman's hut without any hindrance, and so on. Concerning alcohol, it is quite frequent for Jenngelbe young men to go to town to drink, and they even reproach some old men for drinking alcohol while hiding themselves in their huts. I also met many young men who told me that the religion is necessary for old people who need preparations for the other world which is coming, though

it is not yet a concern of young people. According to the elders, it is unhealthy mentally for youths to be indulged always in religious thinking. All these practices suggest that Islam among the Jenngelbe is not an overriding principle which regulates their daily life. This aspect of the Jenngelbe religion becomes obvious when compared for example to that of the Muurids among the Wolof. For the Muurids life seems to be synonymous with religion, as is shown in their belief that to work is to pray (Sy 1969; Copans 1980). The principle which deeply regulates Jenngelbe daily life is, it seems to me, not their religion but their traditional ethos which is known as *pulaagu*.

If the concern of the Fulbe with their physical particularities represents an identity at the biological level, and the fundamental uniformity of their language represents this identity at the cultural level, the fact that they are aware of a shared code of conduct is, one could say, the consciousness of this identity expressed at the ethical level. While biological and cultural particularities are important in maintaining an ethnic identity, a shared ethical code is no less fundamental. Moreover, this code of conduct is not something abstract or something vaguely expressed, but is a clearly conceived set of notions which possess a particular name in the Fulbe language: *pulaagu* in Senegal or *pulaaku* in other regions.

The notion of *pulaaku* seems to be so fundamental and universally found among different groups of the Fulbe in all of West Africa that almost all ethnographers who are concerned with the Fulbe do not fail to mention it (e.g., Reed 1932; Vieillard 1932; Stenning 1959; Dupire 1962, 1981; Riesman 1977). As Riesman puts it, "a Fulani (...) defines himself largely in relation to all those from whom he differentiates himself" (Riesman 1977: 116) and so *pulaaku* defines what it means to be a Fullo, and indicates, in Riesman's expression, "the qualities appropriate to the Fulani" (Riesman 1977: 127). There are several qualities considered appropriate to the Fulbe as will be shown below, and these qualities are often explained by the Fulbe in negative form, e.g., "a Fullo does not do this or that." As Riesman puts it, "in an extreme hypothesis, one would say that the Fulani ideal would be a man without needs, a man capable of living without eating, drinking, or defecating, for example. In other words, a being entirely cultural and independent of nature, a being whose actions are never involuntary" (Riesman 1977: 129).

Some scholars discuss *pulaaku* as having three or four core elements. Stenning, in his study of the Fulbe of Northern Nigeria, explains *pulaaku* by showing three essential aspects: modesty and reserve (*semteende*), patience and fortitude (*munyaal*), and care and forethought (*hakkiiilo*) (Stenning 1959: 55). Dupire, on the other hand, divides the components of *pulaaku* into four groups: patience or resignation (*munyaal*), intelligence (*hakkiiilo*), courage (*cuusal*) and most important, reserve (*semteende*) (Dupire 1981: 169).

These categorizations of the components of *pulaaku* are found among the Jenngelbe of Senegal. But the most important aspect of *pulaaku* is, I think, not as a value system by itself but the fact that it is always defined in relation to other

peoples or cultures. Jenngelbe say in explaining pulaagu, "we the Fulbe do not do this kind of thing, but the Wolof for example will do it," or "if you are a Pullo, you should not do this" (which means that another group will do so), or again, "we the Fulbe feel too ashamed to do this kind of thing (even if the other peoples see nothing wrong in it)." When a Pullo thinks or speaks about pulaagu, he necessarily has in mind an image of some other people. Pulaagu is always defined in contrast with others, and this "otherness" is of absolute necessity. It is a system of ideas or symbols which makes the Fulbe distinct from others.

In fact, such a system of ideas which symbolically distinguish one group from others is found in many societies. Among the Songhay-Zarma of Niger, the status of a free man is conceptualized or clarified in relation to the servile persons among whom they live (Olivier de Sardan 1983: 136). The Samburu of Kenya have a notion like pulaagu, which they call *nkanyit*, and which prescribes respect, a sense of shame, the ownership of honor, a sense of duty, politeness, avoidance of affines, and decency. They say that the surrounding peoples such as the Dorobo behave like children, especially since they are not aware of this code of behavior (Spencer 1965: xxii). The Kabyles of Morocco express the notion of honor by the term *h'urma*, which is also defined in relation to others. Bourdieu states that:

the point of honour is the basis of the moral code of an individual who sees himself always through the eyes of others, who has need of others for his existence, because the image he has of himself is indistinguishable from that presented to him by other people (Bourdieu 1966: 211).

The Fulbe also are keenly aware of their image as viewed through the eyes of others, and they behave according to, so to speak, the imagined eyes of others. Many Fulbe say that the most important notion of the pulaagu is *semteende* (Jenngelbe say *kersa*, a term they may have borrowed from Wolof), and if we can translate this notion as "a sense of shame," it supposes necessarily the presence of others, since shame, different from sin, is felt in the presence of others. It is in this sense that I stress that the presence of others is of absolute necessity for the Fulbe to be conscious of their pulaagu.

Several ethnographers have remarked that, among the Fulbe, physical corpulence is not appreciated at all and that to be thin or slender is part of pulaaku (Vieillard 1932: 10-11; Stenning 1959: 56; Riesman 1977: 127). My informants did not mention the negation of corpulence as an element of pulaagu itself, but agreed that fatness of body is not well regarded in their society. They often ridicule Wolof or *maccube* (former slaves), saying that they are fat because they do not know how to control their appetite. Being thin is valued among the Jenngelbe as well, largely because they are conscious that the body is something which is looked at by others. This consciousness of "body which is looked at" reminds us of the attention paid to the gracefulness of body among the court people of the 18th century Europe. In the European court of that epoch people paid much attention to their physical

grace, and gracefulness of the body was valued, not because it aided some social achievement, e.g., for commercial negotiations or social promotion, but because court people were conscious of being "looked at" and "observed" by others. Physical grace was a value in itself (Nomura 1982: 189-190). In short, the Jengelbe do not like to be fat; it is not because thinness serves some social function but because they are conscious that the body is something which is looked at, and so bodily thinness is a value in itself. In this sense also, for a Pullo to be Pullo the presence of others who look at him is of absolute necessity.

I asked several men for explanations of pulaagu, one of whom (a man in his sixties) gave me an account which is quite significant. It gives us a very vivid image of pulaagu, but the account is too long to be cited integrally. I present it here in a short version.

What I know about pulaagu is that pulaagu and the Fulbe are the same thing. Only the Fulbe have pulaagu. When you say a Pullo, he must be a free man, and he must never be a maccudo, nor a man of any other group.

A Pullo, what he has in particular is cattle. That is the means by which he lives. You follow the cattle, you should not do any other work. When the sun rises, you take your herd to the pasture, and when the sun sets, you make a simple bed made of branches and you sleep among the animals.

If you find a sheep or a goat dying, you call a maccudo of your own, and he will kill it, skin it and prepare the meat. We, the Fulbe, do not do that kind of work. Anything which does not maintain the dignity of Fulbe should be avoided.

A Pullo, wherever he is, ignores hunger, ignores thirst, and ignores tiredness. He will never go to another person's hut in quest of food, or to pass a night there.

If you leave your place to come to this village, wherever you come from, you will be received as one of ours. The things you eat, the water you drink, or the bed on which you sleep, we prepare it for you. If I have a sheep, I will kill it for you. If five or six persons happen to come at one time, I will kill a cow and every visitor will eat to his satisfaction. The bed I use myself, I will cede it to you. I myself will go somewhere else to pass a night. Can you imagine some other act which can surpass this in matter of hospitality?

If you are a man of free Fulbe, you will not steal, you will not lie, you will not go with someone who is not equal to you.

When a child comes back from the circumcision camp, he is a man. He knows he is a man. When we make a razzia, we must give him a gun, he will come as an adult man. Anything an adult man dares to do, he must do it also. Anything an adult man does not accept, he

must refuse it also (Given by Demba Kummbooya Ka, Village of Gueily, October 7, 1981).

From this discussion, we may note the following features of pulaagu:

- Purity of blood as the Fulbe is fundamental for sharing pulaagu;
- Only free Fulbe, in contrast to other peoples, have this code of conduct;
- The importance of cattle herding;
- The notion of dignity as the Fulbe;
- The notion of hospitality, which is reciprocal;
- The distinction between Fulbe conduct and that of other peoples; and
- The feeling of certainty that pulaagu is succeeded to the next generations.

As I emphasized earlier and as shown in this passage, otherness is a necessary condition for pulaagu to be evoked.

Concerning the problem of Jenngelbe distinctness, I would like to mention a kind of popular fortune telling called *gaabgol* (pl. *ngaabdi*) which is practiced among the Jenngelbe. I call it, for convenience, fortune telling, but in fact *gaabgol* is for the Jenngelbe a good or bad sign which is carried in some elements of nature and which can be detected by special knowledge. A good sign is called *gaabgol moyyol*, and a bad one *gaabgol bongol*. Jenngelbe men say that these signs are found in cows, horses, sheep and goats, some kinds of trees, and in women. For example, a cow which has a clear white spot on its frontside is a cow of good sign; if one finds this kind of cow in his herd, he should never kill nor sell it since it brings good luck. On the contrary, if one finds a cow with one spot on its side, he should kill it or give it to someone else, because it has a bad sign and it may destroy all his herd. Or else, a cow with a white tail-end signifies good fortune, but one with a tail-end with hair as long as a man's hand (from the tip of finger to the elbow) indicates misfortune. Thus, if one has a cow manifesting a bad sign, it is not good to sell it and use the money earned for himself; he should give it to someone else without saying anything. If he keeps this kind of cow in his herd, he will find one day that all the herd has been destroyed.

There are many other signs which can be found in horses, sheep and goats, and trees, but their description is not necessary for my purpose now. I will speak now of such signs found among women.

Jenngelbe men say that when a man wants to marry a girl, it is important to know what *gaabgol* she has. If she has a good one, there is no problem, but if she has a bad one, the man should never marry her. To determine which *gaabgol* a girl has, the potential spouse should follow this procedure. He should go to her house and ask for water. She brings the water, and waits, beside him, until he finishes. At this moment, he must observe her gesture. If she puts her right hand on her waist, it is a positive sign. If she puts her hand on the belly, it is also a good sign that she will give him many children. But if she puts her hand on her hip, it is a bad sign that she may only leave feces all over in the house. If she ever puts her hand on the head, it is a very dangerous sign, and she may kill the man one day.

There are other general signs associated with women. For example, a woman who walks bow-legged (O-legged) signals misfortune, and one who walks pigeon-toed (X-legged) indicates good fortune. A woman who walks vigorously like a man is associated with bad luck, but one who walks trailing her sandals on the ground signals good luck.

When asked what a man should do if he happens to find, after having already married, a bad sign in his wife, Jenngelbe men told me that he should immediately divorce her, before she brings him bad luck or even kills him.

Jenngelbe men say that apart from domestic animals, women alone have gaabgol, not men. Hearing these explanations, gaabgol seems to be a cultural device which is sexist, only profitable to men. Is it really so?

In fact, Jenngelbe women also know very well about gaabgol. Whether a woman is O-legged or X-legged seems apparently to depend on congenital nature; but personally I know no woman who is remarkably O- or X-legged; the women are generally straight legged. No woman walks vigorously like a man; all women walk trailing their sandals, making dust behind them. And needless to say, no girl puts her hand on her head when waiting for a man to drink. Women know very well how to conduct themselves according to what is said about gaabgol. Thus the knowledge of gaabgol of women has not any significance in the life of the Jenngelbe. If it has ever a significance, it is solely in a positive way. For example, people say that a certain girl is good for marriage since she walks trailing sandals or is seen with her hand on the waist while her fiancée drinks.

And if it works negatively, it must be in a case such as when a boy expresses his wish to marry a girl who is not suitable for him, for example a Wolof girl. People will mention a bad gaabgol in the girl to change his intention. Or, when a man ends up finally in divorce after an undesirable marriage, people will say that they had noticed a bad gaabgol in the woman.

The knowledge of gaabgol therefore seems not to be Jenngelbe men's egoistic logic, but rather a Jenngelbe general cultural device, like pulaagu, which contributes to the unity of the Jenngelbe. It is possible, also, that gaabgol, in spite of its apparent functions, is another Jenngelbe ideology which makes their culture distinct.

Conclusion

The problem of "ethnicity" has been heavily discussed especially since the study of Naroll in 1964 (e.g. Murphy 1964; Moerman 1965, 1967; Goodenough 1965; Shibutani and Kwan 1965; Barth 1969; Isajiw 1974; Handelman 1977; Cohen 1978; Kunstadter 1978; Maybury-Lewis 1984). Here I will not review all the discussions, and will mention a few to make my conclusion.

Naroll lists six criteria which demarcate ethnic entities: trait distributions; territorial contiguity; political organization; language; ecological adjustment; and local community structure (Naroll 1964). This list was criticized by Moerman who

noted the non-coincidence of these criteria, their ambiguity and irrelevance. Moerman says:

For some purposes it is necessary to view every social entity as but part of a larger system which includes its neighbors (Moerman 1965: 1216).

Before Moerman, Murphy also had said that:

membership in (any group), and incorporation within it, is dependent upon a category of the excluded, a sense of otherness... which is of importance for the definition of the social unit and for the delineation and maintenance of its boundaries (Murphy 1964: 848).

Indeed, this paper has insisted on the necessity of others for pulaagu to be salient and that "ethnicity has no existence apart from interethnic relations" (Cohen 1978: 389). Ethnicity is not dependent on the principle of purity of blood, nor is it something which is a given in a community, but is weaved, forged, and internalized within a people through frequent contact with other peoples. It is constantly in the making.

We have seen that the Jenngelbe of Senegal are in constant need of the Wolof people to maintain their livelihood, since they exchange milk for crops, and forage for cattle droppings to serve as manure. This interdependence is reflected at the psychic level as well, portrayed in the following joke told to me by a Jenngelbe man. "If there were not Wolof people, and if there were only the Fulbe and the white peoples on this earth, life would be very sad, since we would have no people to laugh at." For the Jenngelbe, ethnic identity is not something fictitious. It exists, but it always arises to define a people's relation to other peoples.

Since the Fulbe peoples are widely scattered all over West Africa, each people lives in contact with other peoples, and must necessarily forge its own particular identity in relation to the other various peoples with whom it lives. In other words, it seems to me vain to discuss an identity to encompass the Fulbe as a whole.

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