memory of the bearer of that name will last, which is expected to be very distant.

10 Conclusion

Concluding, I recall two challenges that emerged from my research on Lugbara time. The first refers to the "traditional" and "modern" measurements of time. These measurements do not so much contrast the phenomenal and the mathematical visions of time but rather the personal and the impersonal visions of it. The second challenge is that although the analysis of linguistic sentences is essential to the understanding of time, this alone is not enough. A full understanding of time requires a wider approach, encompassing the entire language, literature, traditions, and life of the people. The future dimension of time considered above offers a small example of what a comprehensive approach to the study of time may eventually yield.

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Language, Diet, and Ethnicity in Mayo-Darlé, Adamaoua, Cameroon

Anne Elise Keen and David Zeitlyn

Introduction

Mayo-Darlé, is located near the escarpment of the Adamaoua Plateau (it is also near the international border with Nigeria). The escarpment is a natural boundary of several different kinds: between working languages (English or French vs. Fulfulde as lingua franca), religion (Christian vs. Muslim), ecology, and social/political geography (north vs. south). Located in the Mayo-Banyo district of Cameroon's Adamaoua Province, Mayo-Darlé is the largest town between Banyo and Bankim with a population of approximately 10,680 in 1,335 compounds.[1]

The town contains many ethnic groups speaking a variety of languages. As well as the numerous indigenous languages[2] spoken, Pidgin English[3] and/or French[4] are widely used. However, the language which dominates Mayo-Darlé and the surrounding areas is Fulfulde,[5] spoken originally by the Mbororo and Fulbe people and now the standard lingua franca.

Unusually for the area, the population of Mayo-Darlé is ethnically extremely heterogeneous. (The heterogeneity is also religious: the population of Mayo-Darlé is largely Muslim with a significant Christian minority.) This diversity is largely attributable to the Mayo-Darlé tin mine, which be-

1 Mayo-Darlé had 846 compounds in 1987 when the last national census was completed.

2 The different languages documented in the field are Fulfulde, Gbaya, Mambila, Kondja, Mbembe, Bamoum, Tikar, Lamso, Wimbum, Musgoum, Boute, Hausa, Wawa, Kanuri, and Bamileke.

3 Cameroon Pidgin English (C.P.E.), explains Echu, is the lingua franca of western Cameroon (2004: 2). A number of residents, primarily of Banso ethnicity, are originally from the Northwest Province and continue to speak Pidgin English after moving to Mayo-Darlé.

4 Officially bilingual, Cameroon is divided into ten provinces (C.I.A. 2004: 5); two of which are Anglophone (Northwest and Southwest Provinces). The remaining eight (which includes Adamaoua Province) are Francophone (Echu 2004: 1).

5 Schultz refers to Fulfulde as the lingua franca of the northern provinces, which include Adamaoua, North and Extreme North Provinces (Schultz 1979: 221). Burnham suggests that various forms of Fulfulde are spoken throughout the northern provinces. He concludes that most individuals, regardless of ethnic affiliation, "speak at least 'market' Fulfulde as a vehicular language" (1996: 51).

gan operations in 1933 (Dolley 1989: 39). Individuals from different ethnic backgrounds travelled, in some cases considerable distances (see Gausset 1999), to work at the mine. They settled at the mine, some 10 km from Mayo-Darlé town. Such migration in search of employment parallels, on a smaller scale, events in the African Copperbelt (described, e.g., by Mitchell 1956), which underwent an astonishing transformation with regards to the ethnic configuration[6] in a relatively short period of time, as did Mayo Darlé.

During the years of active and productive tin mining, the development of Mayo-Darlé mine continued including the construction of a primary school, church, hospital, and houses. The mine reached its apogee by the 1970s.[7] Throughout the 1980s the tin mining industry stagnated and, in 1987, the collapse of world tin prices, compounded by the diminishing ore reserves, led to the closure of the mine.[8] After its closure miners and their families abandoned their accommodation[9] and either returned to their natal homelands or moved to Mayo-Darlé town and its surrounding areas. Miners that moved to Mayo-Darlé town often remained there for a short period of time before leaving the area completely. Mayo-Darlé now has several abandoned houses, which had housed miners and their families after the closure of the mine. Those who chose to remain have contributed to the ethnic heterogeneity that exists in present Mayo-Darlé.

The population of Mayo-Darlé also increased in the twentieth century due to the location of the town alongside a recently improved (part-paved) road, which is the principal route for lorry drivers carrying goods from Douala (Littoral Province) to Maroua (Extreme North Province). It is also an official crossing point (with a customs and immigration post) to Nigeria, although the road is not good, so only light vehicles can pass. In the years 2002–3, there has been an influx of Mbororo refugees arriving from neighbouring Nigeria due to ethnic conflicts.[10] Many have settled in Mayo-Darlé and the surrounding areas.

The town is divided into four quarters: Fada, Tike, Bonaberi, and Residence. Fada is the oldest quarter and Residence the most recently settled. The majority of Fada residents have lived in Mayo-Darlé between 30–49 years, while most of the inhabitants of Residence have lived in the town for less than 20 years[11] (Keen 2004: 60). Mayo-Darlé is a relatively young town; many of the residents were born elsewhere.[12]

Changing Ethnic Identity through Fulbeization

Throughout Cameroon disparate ethnic groups are incorporated under a common regional cultural identity such as "Grassfields" or Bamileke. Whilst in northern Cameroon the Fulbe ethnicity is not categorized as a regional identity, the boundaries of the Fulbe ethnic group are permeable,[13] indeed many non-Fulbe change their ethnic identity to Fulbe within their own lifetimes (Burnham 1996: 47). Burnham suggests that the transition

6 In the early 1900s vast amounts of minerals were discovered in the centre of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). The actual mining boom did not begin until 1926 and at one point, Epstein estimated that there were seventy distinct tribes in the Copperbelt along with Indians and Europeans (1958: 1–5).

7 As early as 1969, Stipp and Slatick report that the ore from the tin mine in Mayo-Darlé has been virtually depleted and that unless alternative reserves are uncovered, the mine faces imminent closure (1969: 875).

8 The possibility of reopening the tin mine in Mayo-Darlé was a constant source of conversation with residents during our fieldwork in 2004. A number of individuals reported that they had observed representatives of a Korean company surveying the Mayo-Darlé mine in search of tin. During an exploration of the area A. E. Keen encountered several residents at the former mine and they explained that small-scale mining for tin continues since there is a market for it in Nigeria.

9 Census data for 1987 placed the number of compounds in Mayo-Darlé mine at 162. While the number of compounds was smaller than those of Mayo-Darlé, by 1987 the mass exodus of residents from Mayo-Darlé mine to the surrounding areas was well underway.

10 In 2002 a grazing/farming dispute arose between Fulbe (Mbororo) herders and Mambila farmers. Almost 100 Mbororo herders were killed, prompting approximately 26,000 Mbororo to flee into neighbouring Cameroon. By the end of 2003, about 17,000 Mbororo were still living in Cameroon, in close proximity to the border between Cameroon and Nigeria (*afrol News* 2004: 1).

11 During the research in Mayo-Darlé, Keen questioned inhabitants, participating in questionnaire two (n = 150), about the length of their residency in Mayo-Darlé. Over 50% (n = 36) of the respondents from Residence explained that they had lived in town for less than twenty years. Approximately 77.2% (n = 34) of the inhabitants interviewed from Fada had lived there for more than thirty years (Keen 2004: 60).

12 Our questionnaire data included information on the birthplace of the informant's parents (Keen 2004: Appendix II) as well as their own birthplace (2004: 61 f.).

13 Burnham contrasts the boundaries of the Fulbe identity of the present with that of the past and notes that during the colonial period the Fulbe retained an exclusivist position. Rather than assimilate conquered groups from disparate ethnic backgrounds, the Fulbe allowed them to retain their "natal ethnic identities" (1996: 42).

from non-Fulbe to Fulbe offers multiple advantages. Podlewski (writing in the 1960s as cited by Burnham) suggested that adopting the Fulbe identity was considered a viable option during the colonial and postcolonial periods for exslaves who had lost contact with their natal villages, (or, in other words, their natal ethnic group). Furthermore, acquiring Fulbe identity was often viewed as "socially and economically advantageous," primarily due to the pervasiveness of the Fulbe in the trading and market sectors of the economy (Burnham 1996: 47).

Schultz revisits the topic of constructing ethnic identity among distinct ethnic groups during her research in the town of Guider in northern Cameroon. There, Fulbe culture is predominant although the majority of residents acknowledge their non-Fulbe ancestry (Schultz 1979: 185). She discusses the transition of some non-Fulbe to Fulbe ethnicity and refers to the process as Fulbeization[14] (1984: 48). Fulbeization enables the non-Fulbe, referred to as "Pagan"[15] by the Pullo (the singular form of Fulbe), to establish a secure position in an urban setting by adopting the markers of Fulbe identity. Moreover, Schultz's research suggests that the development of the Fulbe identity is essential if a "Pagan" intends to make the transition from rural to urban life in Guider (1984: 48 f.).

According to Schultz, the three principal markers of Fulbe ethnic identity in Guider are the Fulfulde language, urban Fulbe custom, and Islam (1979: 266). Schultz suggests that the entire process of Fulbeization can occur within one generation and is pervasive in Guider (1984: 60). The first step is proficiency in Fulfulde and most "Pagans" have a working knowledge of the language on account of their interaction with rural Fulbe pastoralists[16] and occasional journeys to Guider. The variances between Fulbe and "Pagan" customs parallel the differences between urban and rural life. There are differences in dress, division of labour between men and women, social interaction between men, and the career choice of men. Within the domain of economy, the lifestyle differences between the "Pagan" and Fulbe male are evident. A Pullo male will usually seek employment in commerce or trade. If he remains involved in horticulture, he will choose to supplement his income by participating in light trade. The "Pagan" male is usually involved in farming or herding with no time to seek additional economic opportunities (Schultz 1984: 51). The variations in lifestyles attributed to the Fulbe and "Pagans" by Schultz in Guider are applicable in Mayo-Darlé but could be considered as general ethnic stereotypes. Usually the final step a "Pagan" will take before attaining the Fulbe identity is to convert to Islam (Schultz 1984: 50–56).

One might ask why a large number of non-Fulbe are disassociating themselves from their ethnic origins and assimilating into the Fulbe urban milieu. Schultz asserts that the "Pagans" are being slowly pushed out of their traditional subsistence farming due to the shortage of available land. Furthermore, the economic pull of the urban life as well as the possibility to augment one's social status is attributed to the mass movement of "Pagans" from the rural areas to Guider. "Pagans" perceive Fulbe identity as a means by which social and economic mobility can be attained and, therefore, many attempt to acquire the Fulbe identity (Schultz 1984: 52 f.). The migration to Guider by the non-Fulbe, however, is not without repercussions. Often ties with the non-Fulbe's rural ethnic group are severed largely due to conversion to Islam (1984: 56).

Evidence of Fulbeization in Mayo-Darlé

Establishing Boundaries of Ethnicity via Language

Multiple identities exist in Cameroon[17] and are a source of confrontation within the political paradigm. The divisive power of identity within the context of the political framework is most aptly illustrated through ethnicity, one of the many permutations of identity. Furthermore, language serves as a proxy for ethnicity and, therefore, the

14 Schultz defines Fulbeization as "the incorporation into the Fulbe ethnic group of individuals with biological and cultural origins outside the Fulbe ethnic group" (1979: 25).

15 The Fulbe, comments Schultz, classify all of the various non-Muslim ethnic groups as "Pagans," disregarding the fact that these distinct groups share no common language nor culture (1979: 16). In a later article, Schultz notes that the Fulbe refer to all non-Fulbe as Haabe (infidels). The Fulbe utilize the term Haabe as a general ethnic label for all non-Muslims who speak Haabere, "the language of unbelievers" (1984: 54).

16 Schultz presents two subgroups of Fulbe or Fulani; rural Fulbe (Mbororo'en) and urban Fulbe. The Mbororo'en share the same language and religion (Islam) with the urban Fulbe but live in the hinterland as pastoralists rather than in a sedentary life as traders (the stereotypical position that an urban Pullo holds) (1984: 50 f.).

17 See Monga 2000; Mentan 1996; and Geschiere and Gugler 1998.

language an individual speaks will often serve as the primary way by which an individual is linked to an ethnic group (*Encarta* 2005: 6).

First Language of Respondent

Our data show that Fulbeization is widespread in Mayo-Darlé. One of our questionnaires[18] investigated the extent to which language could be used as a proxy for ethnicity (see caveats below about Fulfulde usage). When considering the ten most populous groups in Mayo-Darlé, the first language spoken by the respondents overwhelmingly corresponded to their ethnic group (93.9%, n = 125). However, the majority of the respondents *not* speaking their ethnic group's language, as their first language spoke Fulfulde (Keen 2004: 75). Eight individuals spoke a first language that did not coincide with the language of their ethnic group, seven of whom gave Fulfulde or both Fulfulde and their ethnic group's language as their first language.

First Language of Spouse

Responses from eighteen individuals (13.5%) demonstrated the possible existence of interethnic marriage (the first language of the spouse contrasting with the respondent's ethnic group indicates interethnic marriage). Moreover, half of these respondents (n = 9) had spouses that spoke Fulfulde as their first language (Keen 2004: 77). The data collected suggests that some respondents have married Fulbe spouses, which Schultz believes to be one of the first steps in the process of assuming the Fulbe identity (1979: 229). Due to the dominance of the Fulbe ethnic group's culture (which would include the Fulbe language), gaining fluency in Fufulde may take precedence over an individual learning his/her ethnic group's language. Instead of language, other diacritical makers of ethnicity may be emphasized.

Language Spoken in the Compound

The responses of interviewees about the language spoken within the family compound illustrated the propensity for non-Fulbe and non-Mbororo'en in Mayo-Darlé to utilize Fulfulde as the primary form of communication. A significant number (18%, n = 27) of the respondents conversed in a language other than that of their ethnic group within their compound. Furthermore, 77.7% (n = 21) of these respondents gave Fulfulde as the primary compound language (Keen 2004: 78). Recall that, as both Burnham and Schultz suggest, adoption of the Fulbe language is the first in a three-part sequence which allows non-Fulbe to move across the ethnic "boundaries" separating their ethnic group from the Fulbe (Burnham 1996: 48; Schultz 1979: 220). Whether a given individual is relinquishing original ethnic identity and assuming that of the Fulbe is uncertain, but our results show that language as a marker of ethnic identity in Mayo-Darlé is of diminishing reliability since some respondents no longer spoke their ethnic group's language within their own compound.

Ethnicity and Food: Leaf Staples of Mbororo, Fulbe, and Hausa in Mayo-Darlé

Dietary staples are yet another way to gauge ethnic identity.[19] In Mayo-Darlé, dietary staples are a significant means by which the ethnic identity of an individual can be determined. Alternatively, within a growing number of families residing in Mayo-Darlé the staple foods of their ethnic group are being substituted for the main foods of the Fulbe. Acquiring the main foods of the Fulbe is a possible indication of Fulbeization. Two particular ethnic groups, Mbororo and Hausa, have almost identical principal foodstuffs, which may have less to do with Fulbeization per se and more to do with a wider shared history. (It should be noted that on some accounts Mbororo are not a separate ethnicity from Fulbe but are better characterized as being nomadic pastoralist Fulbe. This is controversial and cannot be resolved here. Our analysis attempts to be even handed with regard to this issue).

Interviews with females from different ethnic groups at their compounds were undertaken in order to explore their views of the food staples of the various ethnic groups living in Mayo-Darlé as well as those of their own ethnic group. The female informants involved in the lengthy

18 Questionnaire Two (n = 150) included the following questions: ethnicity of the respondent, mother tongue (first language spoken), first language of spouse, and primary language spoken within the compound (Keen 2004: 65).

19 See Caplan 1997; Counihan and Van Esterik 1997; Fischler 1988; Fox n.d.; and Lupton 1996.

compound interviews[20] usually mentioned various leaves as being among the dietary staples of their ethnic group as well as including them in their lists of the staples of other ethnic groups. Some women claimed that it was the type of leaf utilized in the preparation of a sauce which distinguished one ethnic group from another.

Leaves are essential elements in the diets of all ethnic groups in Mayo Darlé. They are the principal ingredients for the sauces, which accompany the different cereals and tubers. All women interviewed included Maggi (industrially processed flavouring), salt, and onions as the initial ingredients of sauces. The leaves, as main ingredients, are subsequently added and tend to mark ethnic differences. While the leaf is usually the main ingredient, a woman may also include meat (beef or chicken) or fish with the sauce. Some women prepare a sauce without using leaves, using palm oil as the base, and adding beef, chicken, or fish. Leaf sauces may also be prepared by women using a groundnut base.

Time constraints in the field made it difficult to assess whether each ethnic group utilized a distinctive leaf combination. However, certain ethnic groups appeared to gravitate towards particular leaves that other ethnic groups rarely or never consumed. Our female informants perceived the leaf *kumbi*[21] as a dietary staple of six ethnic groups (this was confirmed by informants from these groups). The Fulbe, Mbororo, and Hausa, on the other hand, were generally perceived by women from other ethnic groups to share similar dietary tastes since they were usually identified as consuming three particular plants; *bokko* (baobab leaf),[22] g*uhbohdoh*[23], and *baskoge* (okra)[24]. All of these leaves are mucilaginous, making the sauces "sticky" unlike sauces made with *kumbi* or other leaves. Furthermore, women from these three ethnicities associated these plants with their ethnic group (Keen 2004: 80). The link between the Fulbe and Mbororo is acknowledged and, therefore, a similar diet is not unusual. Hiskett suggests that, similarly, the Hausa share a history with the Fulbe that dates back to the 19th century (1973: 9). In the early 1800s, the Fulbe, led by Uthman dan Fodio, gained control of much of "Hausaland" after a successful jihad against the Habe (Fulbe term for the various ethnic groups living in northern Nigeria prior to the arrival of the Fulbe) (Anonymous 2005). Over time, the Habe aquired the ethnic label "Hausa" since this was considered the language spoken by the various ethnic groups formerly referred to as Habe (Hiskett 1973: 4). Over time the Fulbe rulers adopted the lifestyle of the local Habe (Hausa), including their customs and language. Currently, the term "Hausa" can be utilized to describe the Habe or those Fulbe that have assumed the markers of identity that were formerly associated with the Habe (Anonymous 2005).

The long-lasting ties between these three groups set them apart from other groups as do their dietary choices (the leaves they consume in soups). Other ethnic groups of Mayo-Darlé are aware of the main foods consumed by the Fulbe, Hausa, and Mbororo due to their extended interaction with one another in Mayo-Darlé, however, these three leaves continue to be primarily associated with Fulbe, Hausa, and Mbororo and are consumed in varying degrees by other ethnic groups who maintain that the leaves are "Fulbe food."

Our interviews with women suggest that Mbororo, Fulbe, and Hausa have a common diet with regards to the leaves used in sauces. The similarity in diet, however, did not extend to all main foods. The interviewees said that milk and/or sour milk was the main food of the Mbororo and, to a lesser extent, the Fulbe. The informants, however, did not list these items as staples for the Hausa. The responses of the female informants confirmed data[25] collected from Mayo-Darlé residents that milk was both a perceived and self-associated dietary staple of the Mbororo and Fulbe. However, the Hausa were neither perceived to consume milk as a main food nor did they self-associate milk with their ethnic group (Keen 2004: 71, 79). Although

20 The women participating in the compound interviews had been selected on account of their ethnicity and their availability since the interviews lasted approximately 5–8 hours. The primary research assistant, a teacher in the local public school, used his local contacts within Mayo-Darlé to gain entry into the compounds.

21 *Kumbi* (*Solanum scabrum)* (Taylor 1932).

22 *Bokko* (*Adansonia digitata*) (Blench 2003).

23 *Guhbohdoh (Ceratotheca sesamoides)* (Blench 2003).

24 *Baskoge* (*Abelmochus esculenta*) (Blench 2003).

25 During the earliest weeks of fieldwork, individuals from 350 compounds were questioned about their perceptions of which ethnic groups inhabited Mayo-Darlé as well as the dietary staples they associated with these ethnic groups. Their ethnicity was requested in order to map the ethnic configuration of the town. The perceptions of food staples consumed by particular ethnic groups were contrasted with the self-associated main foods of an ethnic group. The results of the comparison displayed similarities between the diets of most groups. The Mbororo and Fulbe, however, stood apart from the groups. Milk was consistently described as one of their food staples by other ethnic groups as well as self-associated by individuals from the Fulbe and Mbororo ethnic groups.

the association between Hausa and milk was not noted by residents of Mayo-Darlé, reciprocity between Fulbe pastoralists and Hausa farmers exists in Northern Nigeria (see Nicholls 1989: 1). According to Nicholls, the reciprocity extends to the exchange of food products. The Fulbe depend on the Hausa for various grains and materials while the Fulbe provide milk and meat to the Hausa (Nicholls 1989: 1). Milk was the most frequently mentioned self-associated dietary staple of the Mbororo[26] respondents (93.7%, n = 15), which was consistent with the perceptions held by other ethnic groups about the main foods of the Mbororo. Fulbe informants mentioned milk as one of their own dietary staples with less frequency (12.6%, n = 13), which is consistent with the documented perceptions of the Fulbe held by other ethnic groups.

A decreasing number of inhabitants in Mayo-Darlé speaking their ethnic group's language as their first language suggests that Fulbeization is underway. However, one may point out that one should look at the changing patterns of inhabitants as another sign of the increasing dominance of the Fulbe, and furthermore, regard the Fulbeization process addressed by Schultz as applicable to the process of incorporating "Fulbe food" into the diets of other ethnic groups. The responses of the female informants suggest that one may link each leaf/vegetable that is identified as a Fulbe food to a corresponding stage in the process of Fulbeization as described by Schultz.

The prevalence of *baskoge* in the diets of various ethnic groups corresponds to the dominance of the Fulbe language in northern Cameroon, the first step Schultz proposes in the bid for individuals to assume the Fulbe identity (1979: 220). Appropriating the different elements of the Fulbe culture are vital to making the transition from non-Fulbe to Fulbe. According to Schultz, this includes assuming the appearance of a Fulbe through clothing and involving oneself in Fulbe employment. Acquiring the Fulbe culture is more time-consuming and is considered the second step in the process of Fulbeization (Schultz 1979: 222 f.). We argue that the consumption of *guhbohdoh* corresponds to the second step. Most of the women interviewed acknowledged consuming *guhbohdoh* but distanced themselves from the leaf when listing the dietary staples of their ethnic group. While *guhbohdoh* did not dominate the diets of most groups, some of the women (excluding the Fulbe, Mbororo, and Hausa) explained that they prepared *guhbohdoh* frequently and, moreover, that their usage had increased. Lastly, Schultz discusses the conversion to Islam as the final and most difficult step before the transition to the Fulbe identity is complete. Many individuals will reject this step or wait a great while before accepting Islam since it may often necessitate rejection of their non-Fulbe relatives (Schultz 1979: 226). We suggest that the delay in religious conversion parallels the apprehension women (excluding the Fulbe, Mbororo, and Hausa) voice with regards to including *bokko* as a dietary staple. The interviews with the non-Fulbe female informants indicate that the process of assuming the Fulbe dietary staples is quite slow in comparison (no women included *bokko* as a main food) to the process of Fulbeization as described by Schultz. According to Schultz the process of Fulbeization may be completed in a generation (1979: 231). Perhaps the dietary staples of an ethnic group are the last remnants of one's identity to be relinquished in order to adopt the Fulbe identity. The language, customs, and religion of the Fulbe are acquired and it is the food staples which are the final marker of one's natal ethnic identity which must be erased before the Fulbe identity is adopted.

Some questions about the possible significance of these ingredients and whether they are connected to patterns of milk consumption will be discussed in another article. Schultz and Burnham do not consider diet in their discussions of Fulbeization. Yet choices of diet are important elements in the cultural composition of ethnicity, and adoption of "urban Fulbe custom" is the second stage of the three-part-process of Fulbeization. As we mentioned above, the widespread use of Fulfulde as a lingua franca has led some people in towns such as Mayo-Darlé to speak it as their first language yet still assert a non-Fulbe ethnic identity. Little discussed choices such as the type of leaf used for making the staple sauce provide a reliable index of major ethnic differences, in this case between those from the north (e.g., Fulbe, Hausa, and Mbororo) and those from the south (e.g., Mambila and Yamba). However, the impact of Fulbeization is palpable since some leaves are coming to dominate the diets of other ethnic groups.

In this article we have explored ways in which ethnicity, language, and food are connected in an unusual multiethnic town in rural Cameroon and provided further documentation of the process of Fulbeization, as people change ethnic identity to become Fulbe.

26 All Mbororo respondents were living within the boundaries of Mayo-Darlé when interviewed. Many of them were refugees from Nigeria and others had become sedentary. They still claimed the Mbororo ethnic identity rather than the Fulbe one.

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