



THE KODE / WIDALA

A collection of ethnographic and historical data from fieldwork 1989-1993

Series

Ethnographic and Historical Profiles of the Peoples of the Muri Mountains
- The Southern Groups

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The Kode/Widala

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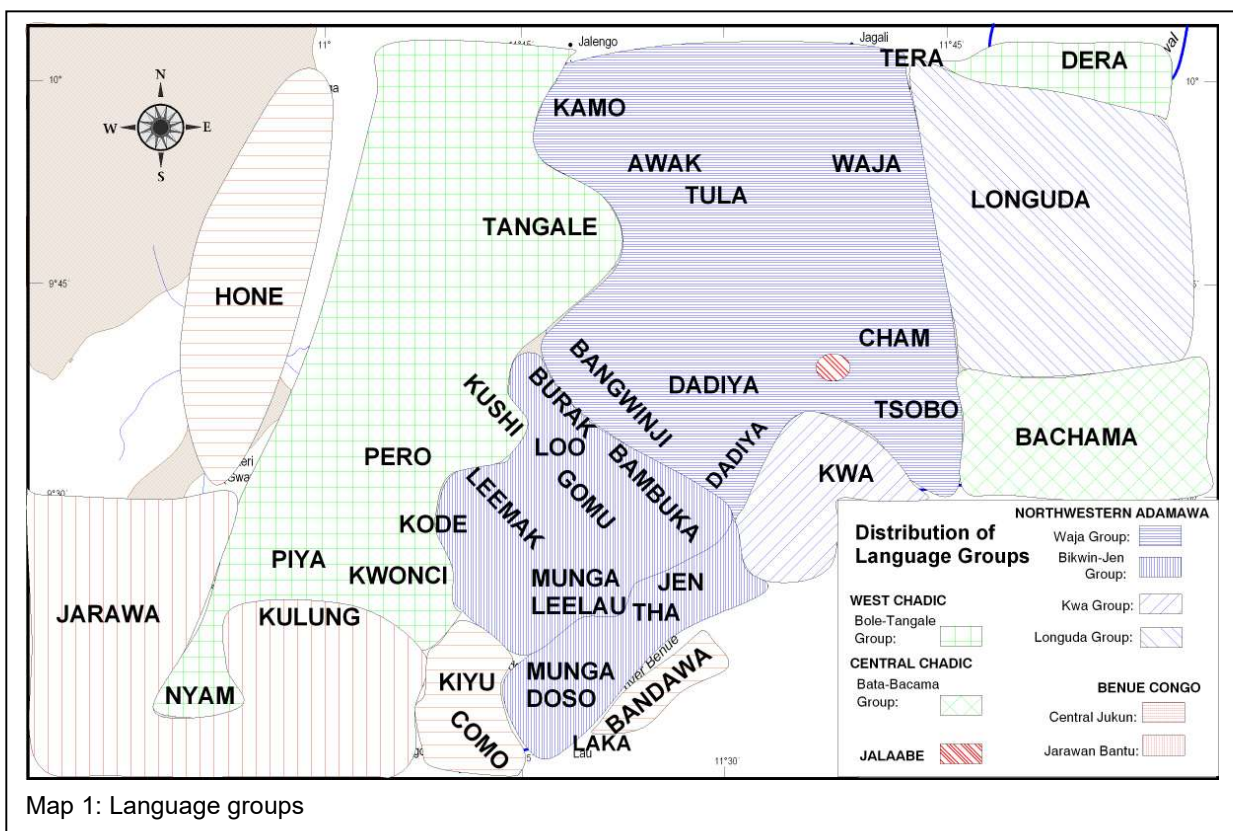
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Introduction

Ethnographic field research was undertaken within the framework of the interdisciplinary research project "Cultural Development and Language History in the Environment of the West African Savannah" (SFB 268) in the years 1989 to 1993. The information provided below reflects the situation at that time.¹

The Kode, (or Widala as they call themselves), consist of two sections: Kholok and Tala/Maghdi, each speaking a completely different language: while the language of the Kholok [ktc] is a member of the Bole-Tangale group of the West Chadic languages, the language of the Tala/Maghdi [gmd] belongs to the Bikwin-Jen group of the North-Western Adamawa languages of the Niger-Congo phylum and is closely related to Mak [pbl], their immediate neighbours to the east.² Maghdi



(meaning 'Magh of the house') is the autonym of the section, Tala is the name used by the Kholok for them; Tala and Maghdi may be used synonymously. Whilst the Kode/Widala acknowledge their linguistic diversity, they consider themselves as being one ethnic group. Widala, (meaning they came from a cave), is the autonym of the whole group; Kode, (informants state that it means

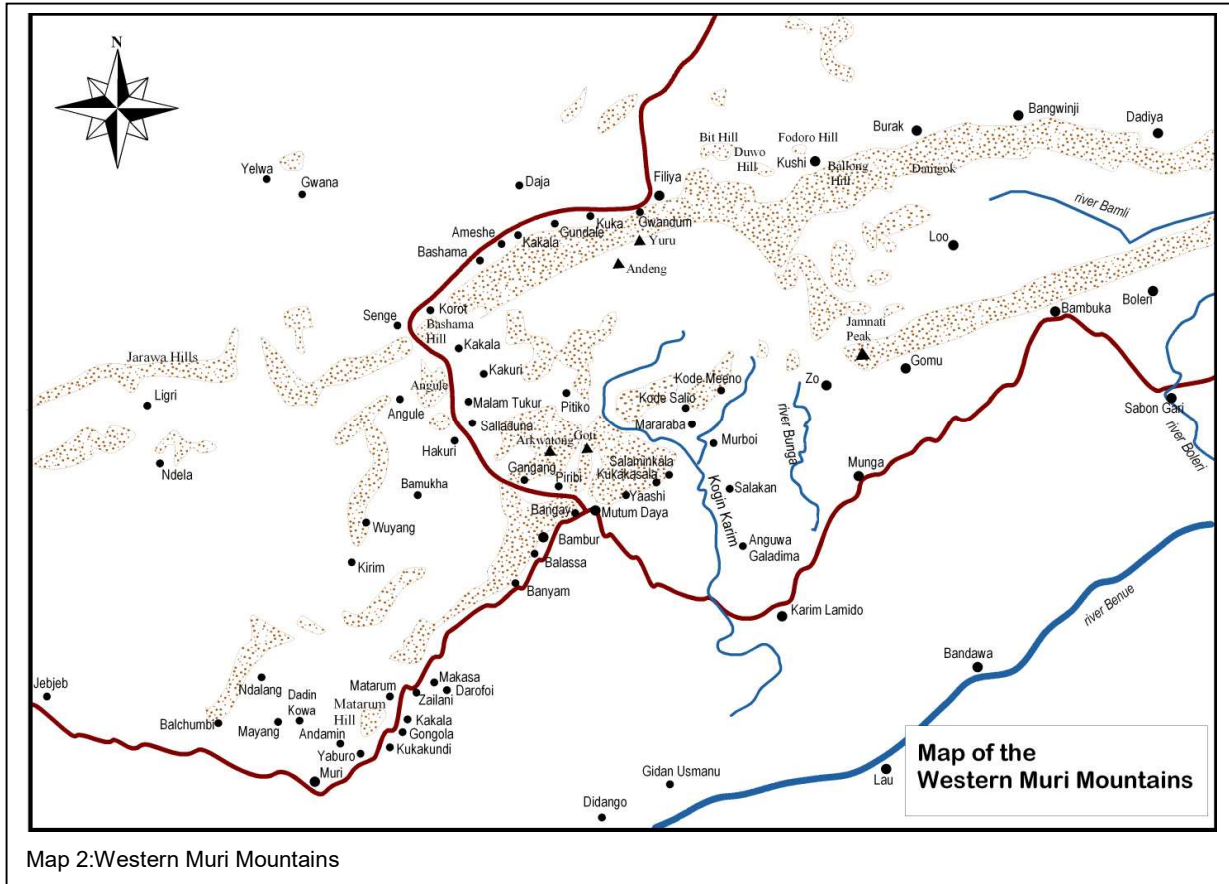
¹ I am grateful to Ibrahim Yibli (Village Head of Kode), Adamu, Bakari M. Salihu, Balla Wiyagang, Barajungo, Bitrus John, Dan Juma, Daniel Majidadi, Ibrahim Hasan, Johnny T. Y. Vem, Joshua, Joel Biyam, Kaduna Ibrahim, Kefas Garba, *sarkin boka* Malam Sule, Markus, Sabo, Samuelia, Sol Makama, Tuta Nyamje, Wambay and Yakubu Dogo for their co-operation during my research. My special thanks go to Manu Ahmed, Abrahams B. Jawro and Estefanus T. Y. Saleh for their untiring and invaluable assistance. I am grateful to Pete Eccles for correcting my English.

² Cf. Kleinewillinghöfer 2015, see also Othaniel 2017. In square brackets are the ISO 639 names.

“stars”, because they lived like stars on the top of the mountains), was the name given to them by the Fulani during the *jihad* of the 19th century.³

Settlement area and demography

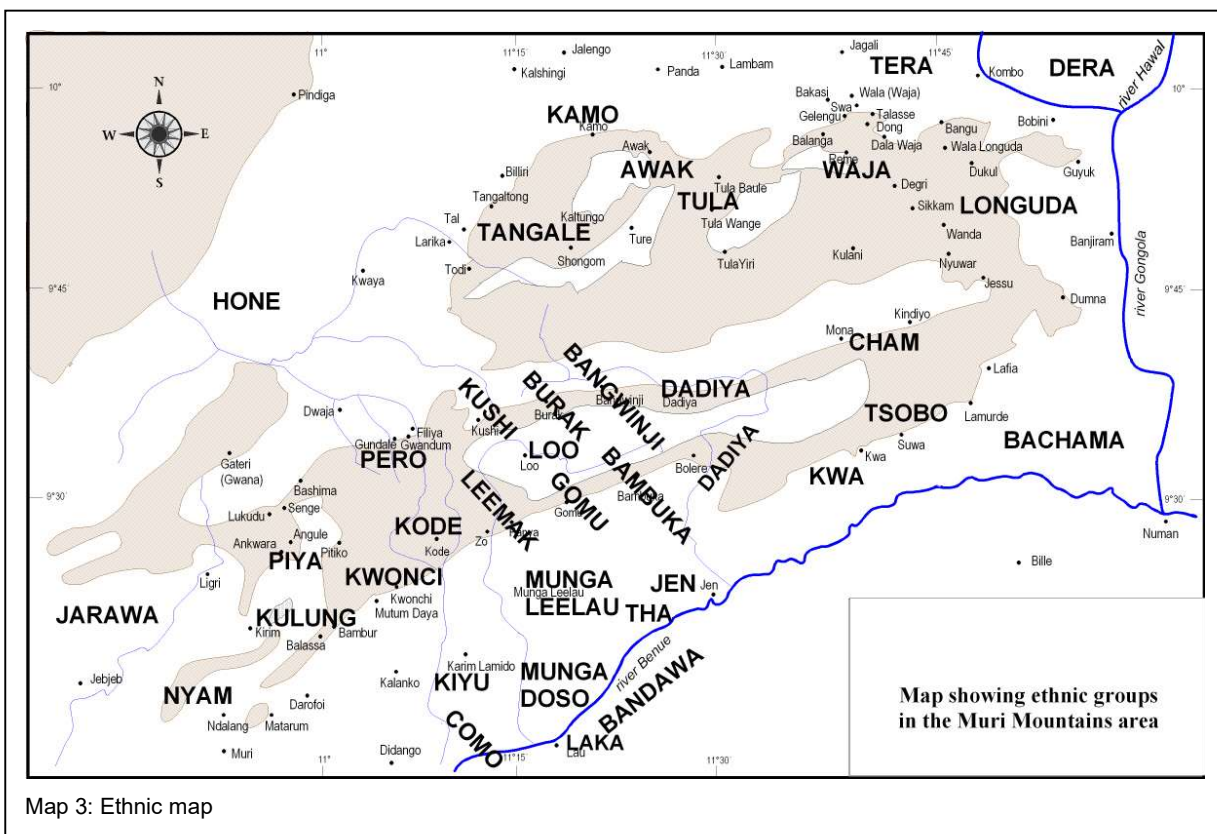
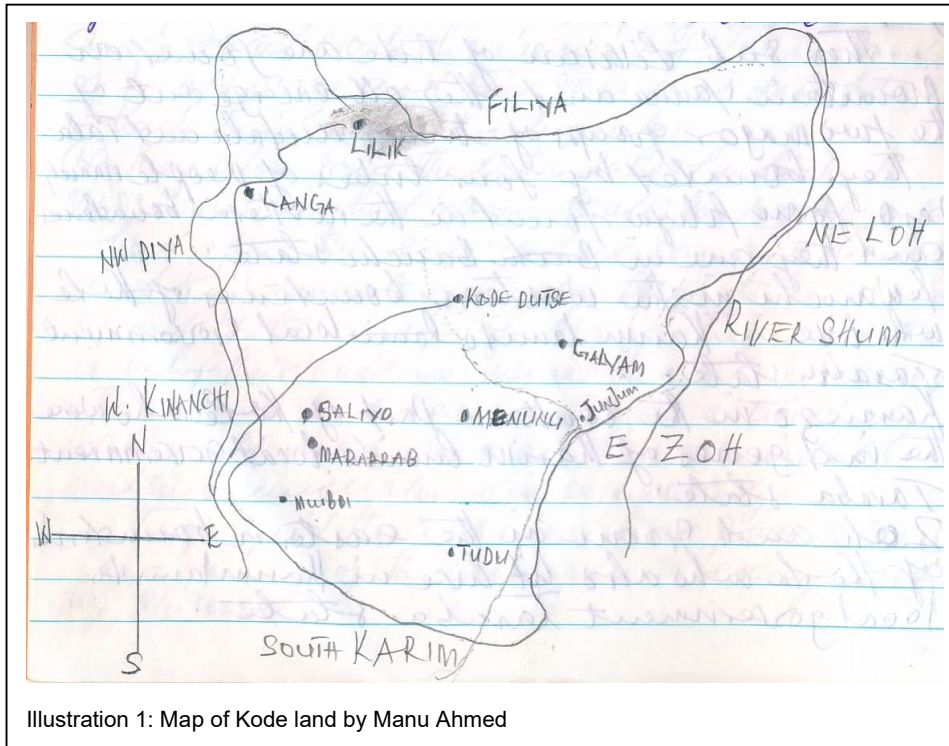
The Kode live in the southern part of the Muri Mountains. At the time of research there were 292



taxpayers registered in Kode; that may be extrapolated to a population figure of about 2,000 people, which, however, seems to be too low. According to Ethnologue, they number 4,500 people.

³ In the ethnographic survey by CAPRO (1992: 402) they are called Kodei or Wedala.

Their main settlement Kode consists of two parts: Kode-Saliyo in the west – with the seat of the



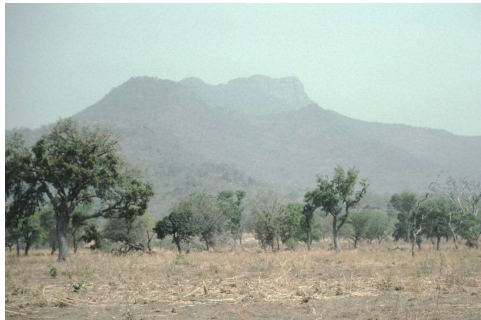


Photo 1: View of Mt. Yanna from the south

Village Head, a primary school and church – and Kode-Meenung in the east – with a dispensary.⁴

Other villages of the Kode people are Tudu, (also called Janga), Mararab, Kode-Dutse, Wororo, (also called Kaldumia), Junjum, Murboi, Lilik, Denden, Langa, Balmi and Galyam.

Manu Ahmed in his MS identifies the following landscape features that mark the boundaries of their territory: to the west, the river Duwin represents the

border between the Kode and the Kwonchi, to the east the river Shum is the boundary between the Kode and the Zoo/Gomu; to the south, there is a flatland (marsh?) called Losowam between the Kode and the Karimjo, and to the north, between the Kode and the Pero is the mountain Kuma Beshanlang, and between the Kode and the Loo is the mountain Wanghang.

Interethnic relations

Their neighbours to the north are the Pero [pip], to the east the Loo [Ido] and the Leemak of Zo [pbl], to the south the Karimjo [cfg] and to the west the Piya [piy] and Kwonci [piy].

The Kode acknowledge being part of the supra-ethnic Wurkun cluster, consisting of the Kwonci, Kode, Piya und Kulung [bbu].⁵ At the same time, the Kode are part of the array of ethnic groups who speak closely related languages, calling themselves *ambandi*, (meaning “owner of mountains”), including Kode, Kwonci, Piya and Pero.

Depending on who is asked, the traditions about which section settled with whom differ. From the perspective of the Kholok, at some time in the past, the Tala migrated from Zo due to a conflict and settled with the Kholok on Mount Yanna. From the perspective of the Tala, the Leemak and (Kode-)Tala lived close together, then the Kholok arrived from the Wurkun area in the west and settled with the Tala. Be this as it may, subsequently, and despite their different languages, the Tala and the Kholok formed the Kode ethnic group. The Tala call themselves Maghdi, (“Magh of the home”), because they consider themselves as the original (Lee)Mak. The relationships between the Kode-Tala, the Leemak of Zo and the Karimjo-Lewoma are considered so close that intermarriages are prohibited. The Kode/Widala had mostly friendly relations with the other Wurkun- and *ambandi*-groups such as Pero, Piya and Kulung; relations with the Loo were also cordial, until an incident occurred around the beginning of the 20th century and their relation became strained, resulting in conflicts; the reason related by the Kode is that the Loo exhumed and ate the corpse of a Kode person, which led to inter-ethnic fighting. Besides the conflict with the

⁴ At Kode-Saliyo also people of the Saa clan of the Leemak-Zoo are living.

⁵ For the Wurkun groups see Adelberger 1992.

Loo, there was also fighting with the Wallo (Piya) from Wurkun area whom the Kode had wanted to overpower but were repelled.

Joking relationships exist with the Karimjo [cfg], the Gomu [gwg], Loo and Wurkun.

The Botomo clan has a special relation with the Banyiri clan of the neighbouring Kwonci group, as they join each other's rituals and did not intermarry in the past.

Table 1: Kode names for neighbouring ethnic groups

Ethnic group	Kode-Kholok name	Kode-Tala name
Bambuka	Bambuka	Lee Bambuka
Burak	Burak	Lee Burak
Gomu	Shakhmu	Lee Shakhmu
Jen	Jen	Lee Jen
Karimjo	Kay	Lee Kay
Kulung	Kulung	Lee Kulung
Kushi	Goji	Lee Goji
Kwonci	Fulan	Lee Wong
Loo	Chongo	Biyak
Munga Leelau	Leelau	Leelau
Pero	Pipelo	Lee Pipelo
Piya	Wallo	Lee Wallo
Tangale	Tungale	Lee Tungale
Leemak/Zoo	Tatal	Lee Tatal

History

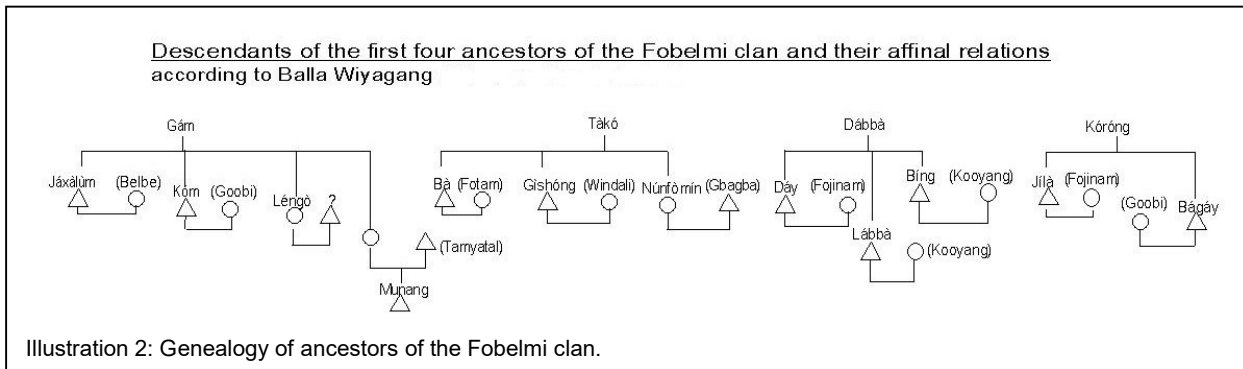
Pre-colonial migrations and movement of settlements since the beginning of the colonial period

Most of the clans claim a vague origin from the east, but when asked for more details, many clans - be these Kholok or Tala clans - state to have come from Mount Yanna (i.e. Kode Mountain), or from other mountains, like Mount Korok, (the clans Bashi and Wayang), or Mount Kumia (the Goobi clan). Several clans of the Widala came from other ethnic groups such as the Gomu, Bambuka, Munga Leelau, Loo, Tangale, Kwonci or Pero. During the colonial era, the Kode moved downhill from Mount Yanna and settled in the foothills and in the plains.

Manu Ahmed in his MS recounts this order of arrival in their settlement area: the first Widala were **Bha** and his wife **Lenwo** who emerged from a cave. Then came the **Dira** clan who were found by the dog of a **Gbagba** man who came from Gomu. The Dira brought fire with them and taught the others how to cook food, in exchange they were allocated land on Mt. Yanna. The **Gbagba** man had left Gomu due to famine and war, and he met Bha and Lenwo emerging from their cave. The third group were the **Peyina** who came from an anthill on Mount Yanna. Fourth were the **Munang** and the **Takko** who came from Wala. The fifth were the **Belbe** who came from Loo, where they had left because death was decimating them as they had killed a dog in order to be able to celebrate funerary rites. Other groups that came to Mount Yanna were the **Junjum**, the **Wayang** and

the **Beshi**, the latter came from Mount Korot. Further there were the **Bayiri** who left their land because of war.

An oral tradition⁶ regarding the ancestors of the Fobelmi clan recounts that there were four men,



called Gám, Tàkó, Dábbà and Kóróng, who were living in a cave near Kode Dutse, and worshipped the spirit Límbì (Limmi). Because they could not understand the spirit, they had a translator called Kobiong from the Pimaaro clan who lived on Barbe Mountain. These four ancestors, each with his wife, decided to leave the cave and settle at Kode Dutse. Gám begot Jákálùm as his first son, then Kóm, then a daughter Lóngò and another daughter. Tàkó begot the sons Bà and Gishóng and a daughter Núnfòmín. Dábbà begot Dáy, Bín and Lábbà. Kóróng begot Jílà and Bágáy. Jákálùm married a wife from Bèlbe clan; Kóm married a wife from Góobi clan, of Lóngò it is not known whom she married. Bà married a wife from the Fótam clan, Gishóng married a wife from the Windali clan, and Núnfòmín married a husband from the Gbagba clan. Dáy married a wife from the Fójinam clan, Bín married a wife from the Kóoyáng clan, Labba also married a wife from the Kóoyáng. Jílà married a wife from the Fojinam clan, and Bágáy married a wife from the Goobi clan. The daughter of Gám, whose name was lost, married a husband from the Tamyatal clan, they had a son named Munang. The genealogy is shown in the preceding diagram. It should be noted that there are other accounts, in which Dabba is the father of Gam, Tako, Day and Korong. These latter traditions are probably more plausible, as they are consistent with the subdivision of the Fobelmi clan into lineages.

Relations with the Fulani emirates⁷

The Bauchi Emirate was founded by Yakubu, who had already received a flag from Uthman dan Fodio prior to 1804. In 1809 Bauchi town was founded and in the following years a vast area, including the Wurkun hills in the western Muri Mountains, down to the rivers Benue and Gongola, was conquered. Yakubu pitched a war camp in front of Bambur Hill, (McBride, n.d.:15; Fremantle 1972:27) and it is said that he destroyed Kode and Gomu and received slaves as a sign of sub-

⁶ Told by Balla Wiyagang, approximately 80 years old, from the Fobelmi clan, at Kode-Meenung, 14.03.1990.

⁷ The following is largely taken from Adelberger 2009; see also Adelberger 2018.

mission, but no regular tribute was paid.⁸ Under Yakubu's successors, however, the control over the subject peoples weakened, especially under Umaru (1883–1902). The region inhabited by non-Muslim peoples in the south of Bauchi Emirate was a regular target for slave raids (Yakubu 1992:147).

Although suffering from the various raids, and at least being nominally under the administration of the Emirate of Muri, parts of the populations were able to retain their independence. It is said that the Wurkun groups were never successfully subjugated by the Fulani.⁹ Many groups were strong enough to be able to disrupt trade routes. For instance, the German traveller Eduard Vogel noted in 1855 that the road from Muri to Yola was blocked by the Bachama, who had already defeated the troops of the Emir of Adamawa. It seems that they were supported by troops of the Shehu of Borno (Vogel 1858:32).

The military strategy of the Fulani emirates was largely based on their cavalry, with noble horsemen leading the attacks (Marjomaa 1998:218–19, 232–34, 254–56; Smaldone 1977:29–32).

Mounted warriors could employ their military tactics to great effect on the undulating plains of the Northern Nigerian savannah, but could not exploit their superiority in the craggy and hilly landscape of the Muri Mountains area nor in other mountainous regions. The inhabitants of the plains surrounding the hills, especially in the Tula area, built defensive stone walls and thorn hedges, which were successfully used to check attacks by horsemen. As a protective measure, the villages were strategically well-placed in the steep and rocky hills. Usually, they were protected by stone walls and could only be reached through narrow, winding paths, partly obstructed by gateways. These could be well defended against emirate raiders, even if they approached armed with rifles.

Firearms were part of the weaponry of the emirate forces, especially since the middle of the 19th century, but since they were of the front-loader musket type and, compared with contemporaneous European standards, few in numbers, their effect was mostly psychological inducing fear through their loud discharge. The arms of the mountain dwellers consisted of spears with varying, often quite vicious, tips, bows and arrows, the latter often poisoned, daggers, short swords and clubs. For protection, shields made of buffalo hide and elephant ears were used.

Thus, although the different emirates exercised considerable pressure by undertaking frequent raids on the population groups of the wider Muri Mountains area and adjacent regions, their control of the area was rather loose and varied over time. Supported by a suitable terrain, the mountain dwellers could successfully defend themselves or were able to withdraw into even more inaccessible regions. The acephalous nature of their societies and the existence of a multitude of factions on the one hand made it difficult to form alliances for more successful defence, on the other

⁸ NAK SNP 10 - 77P/1913, Muri Province, Gwomu District, Lau Division, Assessment Report by T. H. Haughton.

⁹ NAK SNP 7 - 3803/1909, Patrol Tangale-Waja, Report on: From the Resident Bauchi Province to the Secretary to the Administration, Zungeru, by E. H. Lewis Resident Bauchi 5th July 1909.

hand the subjugation of a single community did not entail the conquest of any wider political network.

Mountain dwellers, such as the Awak, Cham, Dadiya or Pero, were able to retain their independence against the Fulani (Temple 1922: 34, 87, 88, 365).

Colonial encounters¹⁰

A combined patrol of forces from Gombe and Muri, with officers from both provinces, toured the Muri Mountains proper in May and June 1909.¹¹ They went along the northern edge, then crossed the hills to the south and returned along its southern edge. Several places in that mountain refuge were visited for the first time. At Gomu a violent conflict arose which resulted in about 30 Gomu being killed. The Gomu warriors were defeated at the same place where they had beaten the Fulani forces years before.¹² The proclaimed intention of the patrol was to bring the area under control and to stop offences being committed on traders disturbing the important trading centre of Lau.

On 20th April 1909 Colour Sergeant Bailey, with 22 rank and file, left Nafada and marched via Deba Habe, where they joined Assistant Resident of Gombe Carlyle, to the Jukun town of Gateri where they arrived on 28th April. Here they expected to meet with the party from Muri Division, but, due to an illness of the Assistant Resident Fitzpatrick, the meeting was delayed. Eventually on 12th May they were joined by Resident Lau Division K. V. Elphinstone, Assistant Resident Brice-Smith and Lieutenant Feneran with 54 rank and file. The combined patrol left Gateri on 14th May.

From here they first marched east and then south along the boundary line on which, however, both parties had differing views. That stretch of country was covered for the first time by a British patrol. They first visited the Pero settlements of Gwandum and Filiya, and Elphinstone remarked that he was repelled especially by the Pero. As the Pero and Tangale claimed the same saltings on the river, that topic was discussed during the visit by the Galadima of Tangale and Sarkin Filiya. The next settlements they reached were Kushi and Burak. The Burak expressed their contentment with the new administration protecting them against the neighbouring Loo and Pero, and they prepared a road to Gomu. Then the patrol continued to Loo, Gomu and Bambuka. Bambuka

¹⁰ The following is largely taken from Adelberger 2009; see also Adelberger 2018.

¹¹ NAK SNP 7 - 147/1911, Boundary Muri - Bauchi: Extract from report on Wurkum Patrol, 1st July 1909 by Elphinstone;

NAK SNP 7 - 5093/1907, Wurkum Patrol 1909:

- Report by Col. Sergeant C. Bailey 15th June 1909,
- Report on Wurkum Patrol by Resident Lau Division Elphinstone 1st July 1909,
- Extract from report from AR Gombe to Resident Bauchi by Lt. Hugh de Putron, OC Nafada.

¹² NAK SNP 7 - 147/1911, Boundary Muri - Bauchi. NAK SNP 7 - 3803/1909, Patrol Tangale-Waja, Report on: From the Resident Bauchi Province to the Secretary to the Administration, Zungeru, by E. H. Lewis Resident Bauchi 5th July 1909.

NAK SNP 7 - 5093/1907, Wurkum Patrol 1909.

NAK Yola Prof Acc. 15, Misc. Papers re Wurkum and Muri 1912: Gwomu District Wurkum Country Assessment Report Nov. 1912 by AR T. H. Haughton.

NAK SNP 10 - 77P/1913, Muri Province, Gwomu District, Lau Division, Assessment Report by T. H. Haughton.

had been visited by W. P. Hewby in 1900, (he was an agent of the Royal Niger Company on the Benue and, later, Resident of Benue province), and the Bambuka were said to have been subject to the Emir of Yola. Recently there had been a series of disputes between the Gomu and the Bambuka. When the patrol approached Bambuka, the people, armed with spears and shields, were working in the fields, and, at first, they assumed that the patrol were Gomu warriors. To settle the discord, Resident Elphinstone decided on a fine of spears and shields from both groups, but the Gomu resented the fine. After waiting for one day, the patrol marched into Gomu town on 25th May. Half way up the pass the force was met by the Gomu ready to defend their town, so the soldiers fired two volleys at them and fighting ensued, in which the Gomu were joined by the Loo who were their allies. At the end there were 31 Gomu killed and 19 wounded, and one Loo killed and 9 wounded, with no casualties on the British side.

The patrol continued to Kode. They considered the Kode people to be at a low stage of development but friendly and co-operative. Then they passed through Panya, Bambur and Kwonchi without incident and continued to Pitiko, Bashima, Kirim, Balassa, Ankware and Batingo. The inhabitants of these settlements were considered to be friendly with the exception of those of Angule. Angule had been burnt three times and fought twice in the past, but now the inhabitants showed no resistance. The patrol did not collect the full amount of tribute, and nothing was given to the Emir of Muri as they felt he had not earned it, for the villages were not administered by him. Although the district had been placed under the Emir by the British administration in 1900, he had never visited it.

The route taken by the patrol was determined to be impractical and it was recommended that it should never be taken again.

On 27th May the two parties split and the Gombe party proceeded to Tangale country, arriving at Nafada on 14th June.

In 1914, in the southern parts of the Muri Mountains, Assistant District Officer (ADO) Haughton with a police escort visited several settlements of Wurkun groups and Jen due to what was termed "*various outrages*" and took "*executive measures*" at Bambur, Lukudu, Senge and Jen. In September 1914 District Officer Glenney reported that Bashima, Kode and Jen refused to pay grain tribute for the troops at Yola, this resistance was explained with reference to the First World War. No patrol was undertaken because there were no police available. Ankware, Kwa, Lukudu (Angule) and Lo refused to pay their tax for 1914, and further government messengers were assaulted at Ankware and driven out by Lo. Ankware and Kwa did eventually pay their tax in February 1915.¹³

¹³ NAK SNP 9 - 778/1919, Report on Wurkun District, Muri Province: A. Holdsworth Groom "From the District Officer I/C Muri Div. to the Resident Muri Province", 7th April 1915.

In the next year, 1915, there was a patrol in Wurkun country again, leaving five Kwonchi dead and their compounds burnt.¹⁴

District Officer Groom left Mutum Biu on 6th March 1915 and went via Lau to Karim, where he arrived on 10th March. Here he tried to gather information about an incident in which two messengers, who had been sent to Kwonchi to tell them to provide labourers in order to assist a gun convoy, were killed. On the next day there was also a clash between some Kwonchi and some Fulani from Yola, in which three Fulani men were killed and four cattle slaughtered. On 13th March, when Major Ellis returned from leave, the patrol, consisting of District Officer Groom, Major Ellis and 24 soldiers, together with the District Head, left Karim for Kwonchi country. Certain quarters of Kwonchi, which were suspected of having been involved in the killing of the messengers, had formed an armed camp two miles north on the road to Kode. When the patrol approached the camp on the morning of 15th March, however, they fled. Major Ellis followed them and tried to arrest some; in the skirmish five Kwonchi were killed and one wounded. On the next day, the compounds of the men found guilty were razed. This led to the submission of the other quarters of Kwonchi. The following day the compounds of the men who had clashed with the Fulani were also destroyed. The patrol then moved to Angule via Pitiko. On arrival at Angule Lukudu, the tax was collected without resistance. At Ankware the man who had assaulted the government messengers was arrested. In 1910 ADO Houghton had forbidden a resettlement on Ankware hill, but nevertheless a highway robber had established himself with some followers on the hill overlooking the Bauchi trade route. He escaped, but his houses were destroyed. The patrol then returned to Kwonchi on 20th March. On 22nd March they proceeded to Zoo and arrested two men. These were sentenced to up to two years' imprisonment. Two others from Kode and Gomu were sentenced for resisting Native Authority. It was reported that the Loo had prepared for a fight before they learnt about the patrol's dealing with the Kwonchi, and so the Loo brought in their tax without resistance. In the report, the Loo and the Kode are described as being the least developed groups in the district. Groom then returned to Karim on 24th March, left Major Ellis at Lau and proceeded to Mutum Biu on March 27th, 1915.

¹⁴ NAK SNP 9 - 778/1919, Report on Wurkun District, Muri Province: A. Holdsworth Groom "From the District Officer I/C Muri Div. to the Resident Muri Province", 7th April 1915. R. Fairfax Ellis "From Major Ellis, Assistant Commissioner of Police to the D.O. in charge Muri Division", 24th March 1915.

Social Structure

The Kode comprise two sections: the Kholok and the Tala, each speaking their own language. Both sections consist of a number of named, patrilineal and co-residential units or clans.

Clans

The clans or major lineages (*mír* in Kholok) are often subdivided into smaller units or lineages (*yámèná* in Kholok, *leede* in Tala, meaning “in the house”). The rule of exogamy applies to the lineages.

Some clans share the worship of certain spirits/idols (*dodo* in Hausa) which have their own name, and these clans bear those names as an additional designation:

Belbe and Junjum have the *dodo* Lumo and therefore both are also called Lumo

Kaldumia and Botomo have the *dodo* Jere and therefore both are also called Jere

Gbagba and Fotam have the *dodo* Endeng and therefore both are also called Endeng.

Some clan names were elicited on which no further information became available: are these synonyms of clans already mentioned or are these distinct clans of their own?

There are several units which were described to me as clans of their own, but which are also mentioned as sub-units, for instance Peyina and Windali-Peyina, Munang and Fobelmi-Munang, or Tamyatal and Damu-Tamyatal. Further research is required to clarify these topics.

If there are variants of clan names, my transcription is listed first, followed by variations in the local manuscripts by Manu Ahmed.

Table 2: Widala clans

Section	Clan	Lineage	Sub-Lineage	Origin	Comments
Kholok	Anyagayi/ Yagai				
Kholok	Bagoggo				
Kholok	Baaguli				
Kholok	Barbe			Mt. Barbe	Barbe is name of clan as well as mountain. Probably identical to Fobelmi-Munang?
Kholok	Beshi// Basshi			Mt. Andeng or Mt. Korok	did not know death
Kholok	Bayiri				
Kholok	Bélbè (Lumo)			Mt. Gabi near Filiya, or Lo	did not know death and killed a dog to celebrate funeral. Have joking relationship with Kaldumiya clan.
Kholok	Bélbè (Lumo)	yamina Bola			
Kholok	Bélbè (Lumo)	yamina Kalkeune			
Kholok	Bélbè (Lumo)	yamina Munga		Munga	
Kholok	Bélbè (Lumo)	yamina Tangbe			

Section	Clan	Lineage	Sub-Lineage	Origin	Comments
Kholok	Botomo/ Cengera- Botomo (Jere)				founder Yalma. Have close relation with Banyiri of Kwonci, did not intermarry with them in the past, perform joint rituals. Closely associated with the Fotam. Have joking relationship with clans Fobelmi, Gbagba and Fojinam
Kholok	Botomo/ Cengera- Botomo (Jere)	Deng			
Kholok	Botomo/ Cengera- Botomo (Jere)	yamina Gangang			
Kholok	Botomo/ Cengera- Botomo (Jere)	yamina Guma			
Kholok	Botomo/ Cengera- Botomo (Jere)	Laddi			
Kholok	Fobelmi			a cave near Kode Dutse	ancestor Gám. Clan is associated with chieftaincy titles. Have joking relationship with Botomo clan
Kholok	Fobelmi	yamina Dabba		Mt. Yanna (=Kode)	
Kholok	Fobelmi	yamina Dabba	Dayi		
Kholok	Fobelmi	yamina Dabba	Gam	a cave in Mt. Yanna (=Kode)	
Kholok	Fobelmi	yamina Dabba	Korong		
Kholok	Fobelmi	yamina Dabba	Tako		see Fobelmi-Takko
Kholok	Fobelmi	Jexe		a cave in Mt. Yanna (=Kode)	Mo of Jexe came from Anyagai
Kholok	Fobelmi	yamina Munang (Barbe)		Wala, or Mt. Yanna (=Kode)	
Kholok	Fobelmi	yamina Munang (Barbe)	Bene		
Kholok	Fobelmi	yamina Munang (Barbe)	Naban		
Kholok	Fobelmi	yamina Shakay/ Shekke			
Kholok	Fobelmi	yamina Shakay/ Shekke	Belem		
Kholok	Fobelmi	yamina Shakay/ Shekke	Jobo		
Kholok	Fobelmi	yamina Shakay/ Shekke	Kongyi	Kwonci	
Kholok	Fobelmi	yamina Shakay/ Shekke	Manjaw		

Section	Clan	Lineage	Sub-Lineage	Origin	Comments
Kholok	Fobelmi	yamina Takko		Wala	see Fobelmi-Dabba-Tako
Kholok	Fójinàm/ Forjinam				Have joking relationship with Botomo clan
Kholok	Fójinàm/ Forjinam	Giyang		Tangale	ancestor was Banam from Kwaya
Kholok	Fójinàm/ Forjinam	Kafo		Mt. Andeng	
Kholok	Fójinàm/ Forjinam	Luwa			
Kholok	Fójinàm/ Forjinam	Totila			
Kholok	Fótàm (Endeng)				ancestor Dayong from Mt. Andeng
Kholok	Fótàm (Endeng)	Diyang			
Kholok	Fugtu/ Fukutu			Mt. Kode	
Kholok	Gbagba/Bh akbha/Kwa kwa (Endeng)				brought dambang (rain ritual) from Gomu. Have joking relationship with Botomo clan. Ancestor Dayong from Mt. Andeng
Kholok	Gbagba/Bh akbha/Kwa kwa (Endeng)	yamina Godi		Gomu	
Kholok	Junjum (Lumo)			Mt. Gabi near Filiya	Have joking relationship with Kaldumia clan.
Kholok	Junjum (Lumo)	yamina Bandang/G wandang			
Kholok	Junjum (Lumo)	yamina Ge			
Kholok	Junjum (Lumo)	yamina Lem			
Kholok	Junjum (Lumo)	yamina Munding			
Kholok	Kaldumiya/ Kandumiya (Jere, Barbe)				Have joking relationship with Belbe and Junjum clans.
Kholok	Kaldumiya/ Kandumiya (Jere, Barbe)	Taalu		Loo	
Kholok	Maana/ Manah			Mt. Kode	Have joking relationship with Windali clan.
Kholok	Munang			from Wala	see also Fobelmi-Munang
Kholok	Peyina			hill at Mt. Yanna	see also under Tala
Kholok	Pigrigo/ Pikrigo				see Windali-Pigrigo
Kholok	Pimaaro			Mt. Kode	
Kholok	Pine				
Kholok	Piribi			Mt. Andeng	
Kholok	Wayang			Mt. Korok	
Kholok	Windali/ Windala			from Lilik	were originally Piya-Windali. Have joking relationship with Maana clan.
Kholok	Windali/ Windala	Mana			?, see also Maana

Section	Clan	Lineage	Sub-Lineage	Origin	Comments
Kholok	Windali/ Windala	Peyina (Barbe)			?, see also Peyina
Kholok	Windali/ Windala	Pigrigo			?, see also Pigrigo
Kholok	Yamina Balle				
Kholok	Yamina Shanbam				
Kholok	Yamina Yankeh				
Tala/ Maghdi	Biidi/ Bidir			all Tala are from Zo	
Tala/ Maghdi	Biidi/ Bidir	leede bay			
Tala/ Maghdi	Biidi/ Bidir	Loowuyan			
Tala/ Maghdi	Biidi/ Bidir	leede Maliya			
Tala/ Maghdi	Damu				
Tala/ Maghdi	Damu	lee Tamyatal			see also Tamyatal
Tala/ Maghdi	Damu	lee Biidi			see also Biidi
Tala/ Maghdi	Damu	lee Yàkú/ Yakuwo			see also Yaku
Tala/ Maghdi	Difir				
Tala/ Maghdi	Diira			a cave in Mt. Yanna	were found by Bhakba; the Dira brought fire to the Kode
Tala/ Maghdi	Diira	leede Day			
Tala/ Maghdi	Diira	leede Fore			
Tala/ Maghdi	Diira	leede Mallo			
Tala/ Maghdi	Góóbi/ Mirgobi			Mt. Kumia	said that originally belonged to Kholok, but settled with Tala and acquired the language. Have joking relationship with Shaa clan.
Tala/ Maghdi	Góóbi/ Mirgobi	leede Balle		Kode Dutse or Loo	
Tala/ Maghdi	Góóbi/ Mirgobi	leede Camam/Ca mbam			name means a sp. snake
Tala/ Maghdi	Góóbi/ Mirgobi	leede Nyangle			
Tala/ Maghdi	Góóbi/ Mirgobi	leede Peyina		Pero	see also Peyina under Kholok
Tala/ Maghdi	Góóbi/ Mirgobi	Pindele		Mt. Arkwatong	were met by Goobi on Mt. Arkwatong; some of the Pindele went to Piya,
Tala/ Maghdi	Guma			from Zoo	
Tala/ Maghdi	Kóóyang/ Kuwuyan/ Kuhuyang			ancestor came from heaven with his dog	the imprints of the ancestor and his dog are on Mt. Kode close to Mt. Barbe
Tala/ Maghdi	Kóóyang/ Kuwuyan/ Kuhuyang	leede Lowyang			

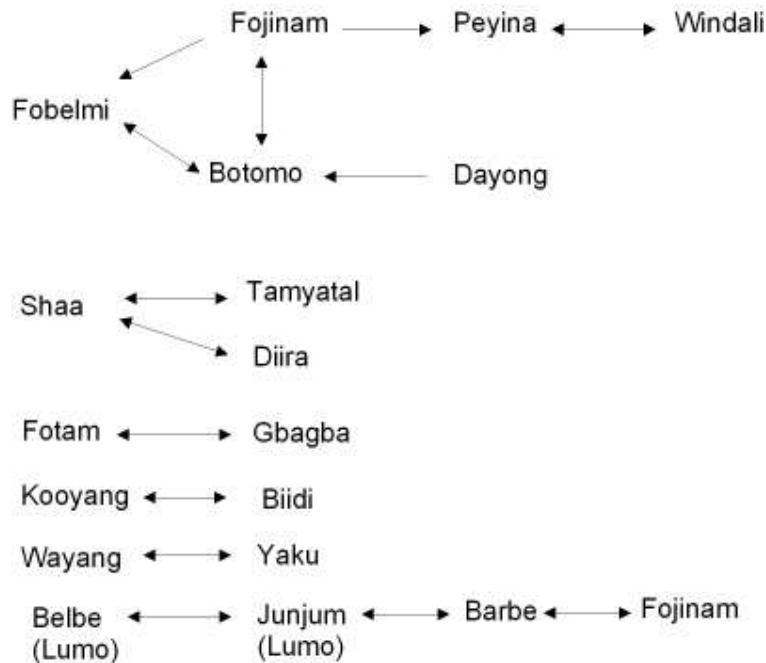
Section	Clan	Lineage	Sub-Lineage	Origin	Comments
Tala/Maghdi	Kóóyáng/ Kuwayan/ Kuhuyang	leede Mere			
Tala/Maghdi	Sháà/ (Lee) Sah			Bambuka	have joking relationship with Goobi clan.
Tala/Maghdi	Sháà/ (Lee) Sah	leede Abuxa			
Tala/Maghdi	Sháà/ (Lee) Sah	leede Bato			
Tala/Maghdi	Sháà/ (Lee) Sah	leede Biyam			
Tala/Maghdi	Sháà/ (Lee) Sah	leede Bozang			
Tala/Maghdi	Sháà/ (Lee) Sah	leede Dawe			
Tala/Maghdi	Sháà/ (Lee) Sah	leede Libo			
Tala/Maghdi	Sháà/ (Lee) Sah	leede Muntu			
Tala/Maghdi	Sháà/ (Lee) Sah	leede Tija			
Tala/Maghdi	Tamyatal/ Tamiyatal				see Damu-Tamiyatal
Tala/Maghdi	Tamyatal/ Tamiyatal	leede Gonyo			
Tala/Maghdi	Tamyatal/ Tamiyatal	leede Taji			
Tala/Maghdi	Yàkú/ Yakuwo				see Damu-Yaku
Tala/Maghdi	Yàkú/ Yakuwo	Bitál			

In his manuscript, Manu Ahmed provides the following information on selected clans:

the **Belbe** and **Beshi** clans did not know death. A man from the Belbe met a girl in the bush who was a buffalo turned into a human being; he married her and they had children which became the Belbe clan. They met Kholok people and envied them because they could drink beer at funerals, so the Belbe killed a dog and buried it like a human being in order to enjoy the beer, subsequently they started dying. The **Dira** came out of a hole or cave, where they were found by the dog of a Gbagba man who was on his way to his farm. The dog went into the cave and the Dira gave him cooked food which the dog did not eat but brought to his master. He relished the food and went into the cave where they gave him more food, and then went outside with him; they showed him how to use fire and in exchange he gave them a place to settle on Mount Yanna. In this way the Kode got fire for cooking. Before the Dira brought fire out of their cave to the other clans, these had used the rays of the sun to warm their food.

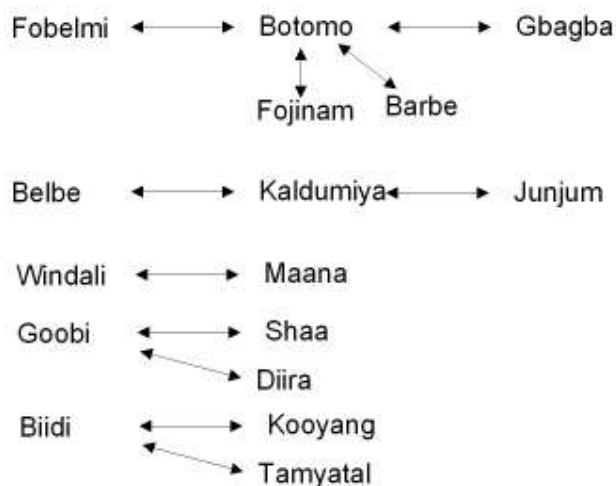
Kode: assistance relationships between clans

Explanation: $x \xrightarrow{\text{assists}} y$



Special relationships exist between clans, more specifically: each clan has an associated clan to help with various tasks, be these agricultural, ritual or otherwise. So far, I can only point out the existence of such relationships, and further research is necessary to clarify their nature. Informants state that this assistance relationship does not entail marriage preferences between the clans. The illustration shows some of these relationships between a selection of clans.

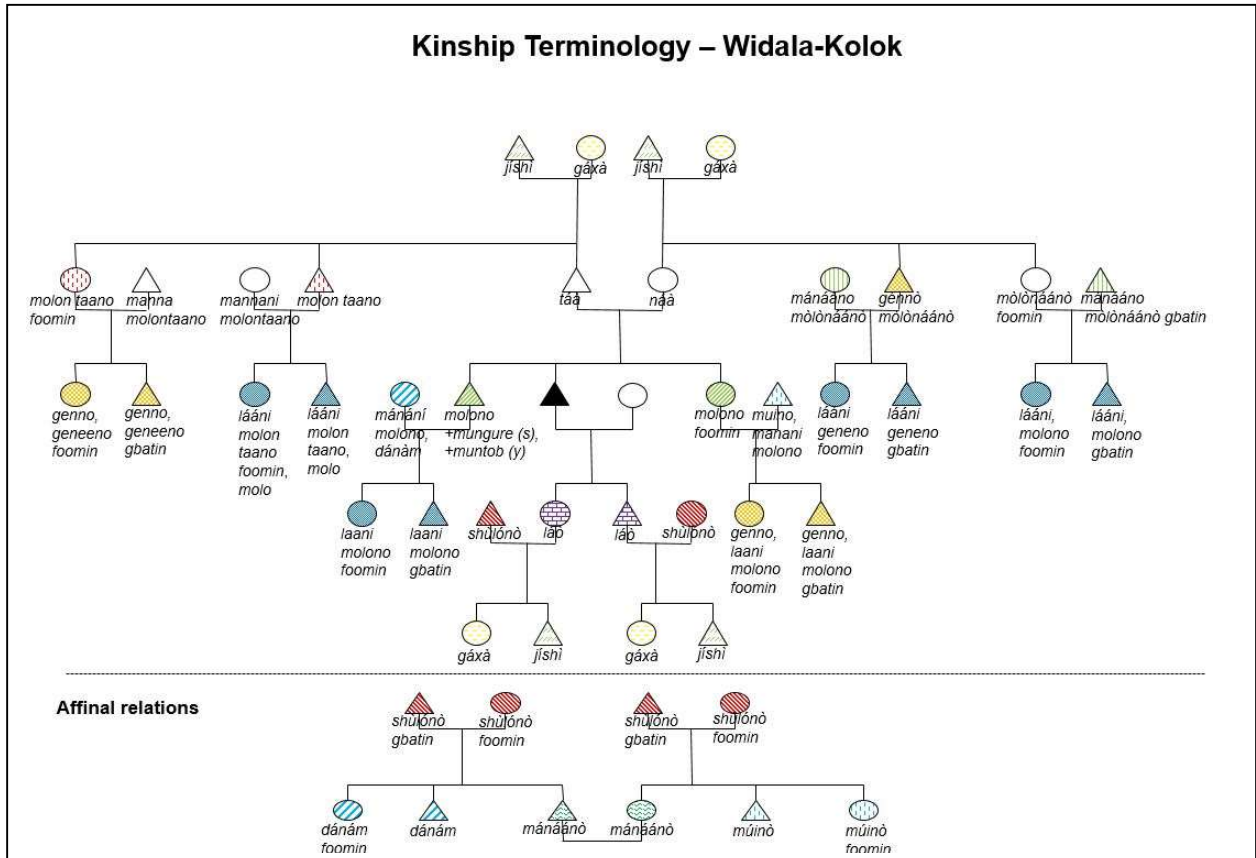
Joking relationships (*fòlliiyo* in Kholok) also exist between clans.

Kode: joking relationships between clans

Further, there may exist a relationship between clans as wife-givers and wife-takers. From the Fobelmi clan it is said that they get wives from the Botomo clan, and that they give wives to Gbagba, Shaa, Diira and Botomo. Further research is needed to clarify this issue.

Kinship terminology

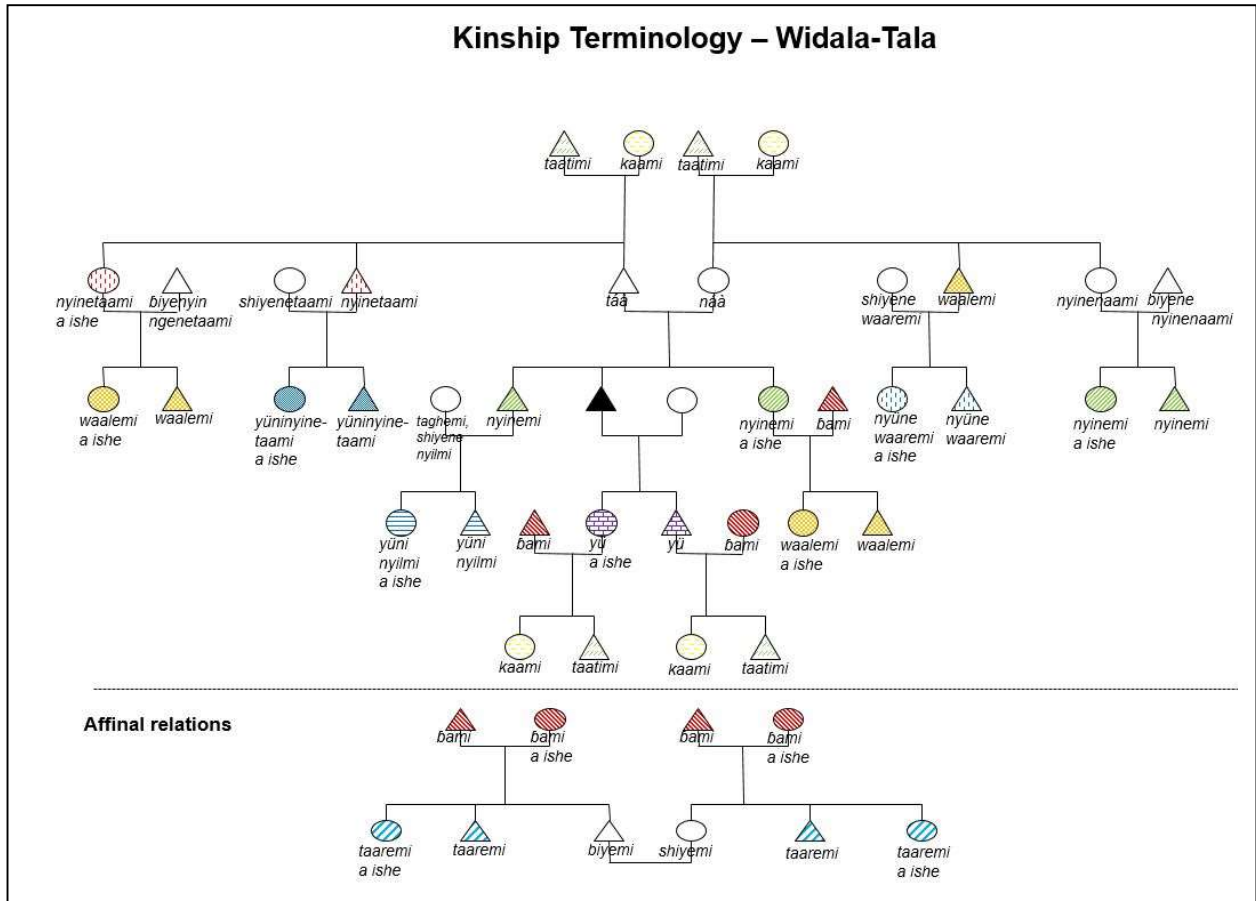
The kinship terminology of the Widala defies easy classification. According to their different languages, the two sections Kholok and Tala are treated separately.



Kholok: the terminology would qualify as an Eskimo system, where cousins are called by the same term, only differentiated by gender, and distinguished from Br and Si, but in Kholok language there are separate terms for the patrilineal cross-cousins. In the first ascending generation it can be classified as bifurcate collateral.

Tala: the terminology would qualify as a Sudanese system, with the exception of the matrilineal parallel cousins bearing the same term as the siblings, moving it towards a Hawaii system. In the first ascending generation it is a bifurcate collateral system like Kholok.

In both cases we find the structural conspicuousness ($FaBr \approx FaSi$) whereby the terms for FaBr and FaSi are very similar, differentiated only by a gender marker.



Family

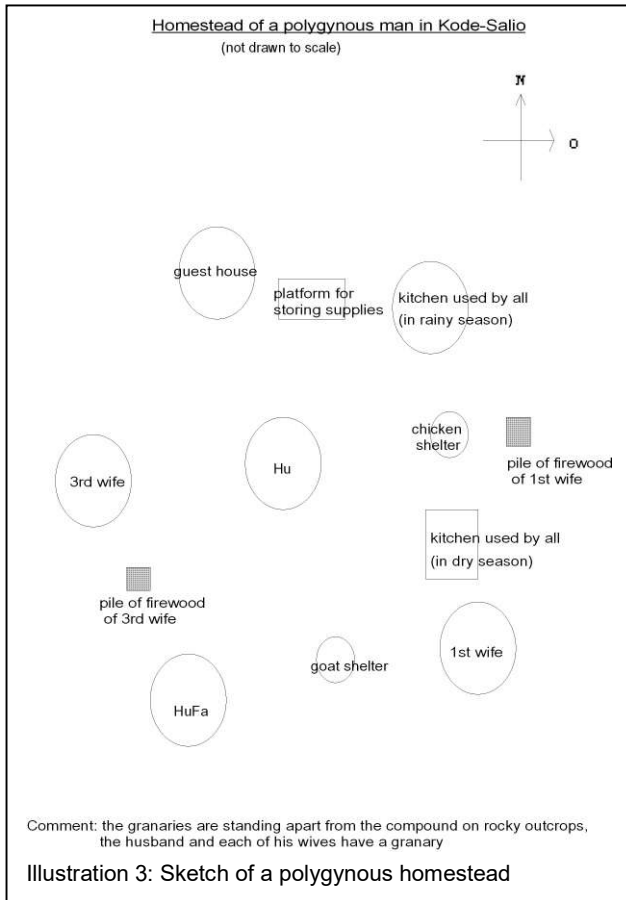


Photo 2: Interior of a homestead, with kitchen (*kúdāk*)

A core family consists of a man with his wives and children.

Case study: A polygamous man in Kode lives in a compound with his three wives and children. Each wife has her own house in the compound, he has none; he has a bed in each of the wives' houses and spends two days at a time with one of the wives. He has 7 sons and 12 daughters. Adolescent boys build their own houses near the homestead. When they marry, their wives move in.

When a husband dies, his widows will continue living in the homestead.

Marriage

The two sections Kholok and Tala do intermarry. Marriages within a clan or major lineage are permitted, but the clan sub-divisions or lineages are exogamous units. For instance, the Goobi clan has several sub-divisions or lineages and marriage is allowed within the clan, but husband and wife must be from different lineages. Due to a shortage of women, relative clan endogamy was agreed upon; the Goobi lineages Nyangle and Peina are an exception as they did not agree to that and prefer to marry outside the Goobi clan.

Unresolved conflicts between clans or line-

ages may result in the cessation of intermarriage between the units concerned. For example, the clans Shaa and Fojinam do not intermarry because the Fojinam had killed a horse of the Shaa and did not compensate for this act. And there is no intermarriage between the clans Shaa and Fobelmi-Gam, because the latter started to cultivate land on the riverbank belonging to the Shaa without their consent.

In some cases, the relation between clans or lineages is regarded as being too close to allow for intermarriage. That is, for instance, the case with the lineages Fobelmi-Shakay-Belem and Fobelmi-Dabba. The reason given is, however, counter-intuitive: it is said that the Belem were

good hunters and used to distribute a lot of meat to the other lineages of the Fobelmi-Shakay: the Jobo, Kongy and Manjaw, as well as the Fobelmi-Dabba. But the Belem had a lack of girls for marriage by exchange, so the others refused to marry their girls to them. Only the Dabba gave them their daughters, as they were happy that they often got meat as part of the hunting spoils. Since then, the relationship between the Belem and the Dabba became so close that they could no longer intermarry.

The Goobi, Goobi-Pindele and the Mirzem clan of the Kwonci do not intermarry because they once settled together on Mount Yanna.

Marriage by sister exchange (Kholok: *dīgáyèk*, Tala: *jòrèyék*) was prevalent in the pre-colonial era, but it is uncommon in recent times. If a man wanted to marry a girl, he was asked by the members of the girl's clan if he can give a sister (real or classificatory) from his clan as compensation. An exception was the Windali clan: when marrying from or into this clan, no sisters were exchanged, but bride-service had to be performed.

In the case of marriage by sister exchange, when the bridegroom could not produce a sister, then the female children of that couple belonged to the father or the brother of the wife. Courtship may last two to three years. If a girl agrees to marry a boy, his friends will, after some time, take her during night time to the house of an unmarried friend of the boy, where they will spend three days without eating or drinking, only the boy may drink local beer. It is believed that they will die if they eat food during that time. On the third day, the parents of the bridegroom-to-be offer them water for bathing and groundnut oil to anoint their bodies, as well as food prepared with a sauce containing locust bean seeds. Then the boy's parents will bring a hen or cock and a dog to the parents of the girl, if these accept the gifts it means that both parties agree with the marriage. Afterwards, the bride-price is settled which usually includes pieces of iron (*gbáamè*, the traditional form of money). The bride will stay one to two weeks in the compound of the bridegroom before she moves back to her parents' homestead. Marriage is concluded on the day when her parents and relatives bring the girl to the compound of her husband together with household utensils like clay pots, calabashes, as well as fried groundnuts, sesame, guinea corn flour and beans. On that day, her forehead and back are marked with red soil (*kulyi*). The celebration lasts until the next day (Manu Ahmed 1992 MS).

Traditionally, the bride-price consists of one nanny goat and one billy goat, 5 pieces of traditional iron money (*gbáamè*), one chicken or cock and three bundles of corn. The goat is handed over to the mother of the girl, the billy goat is given to the *dodo*-priest of the girl's clan for sacrifice. In lieu of the goat, a dog could be offered. Additionally, the bridegroom performs bride-service on the farm of the girl's father for one to three seasons. While performing his bride-service on the farm of his father-in-law, a prospective husband may not eat or drink in the presence of the parents of his future wife. Generally, a husband has to pay respect to his parents-in-law, before and after the marriage has taken place, by greeting them and bowing his knees.

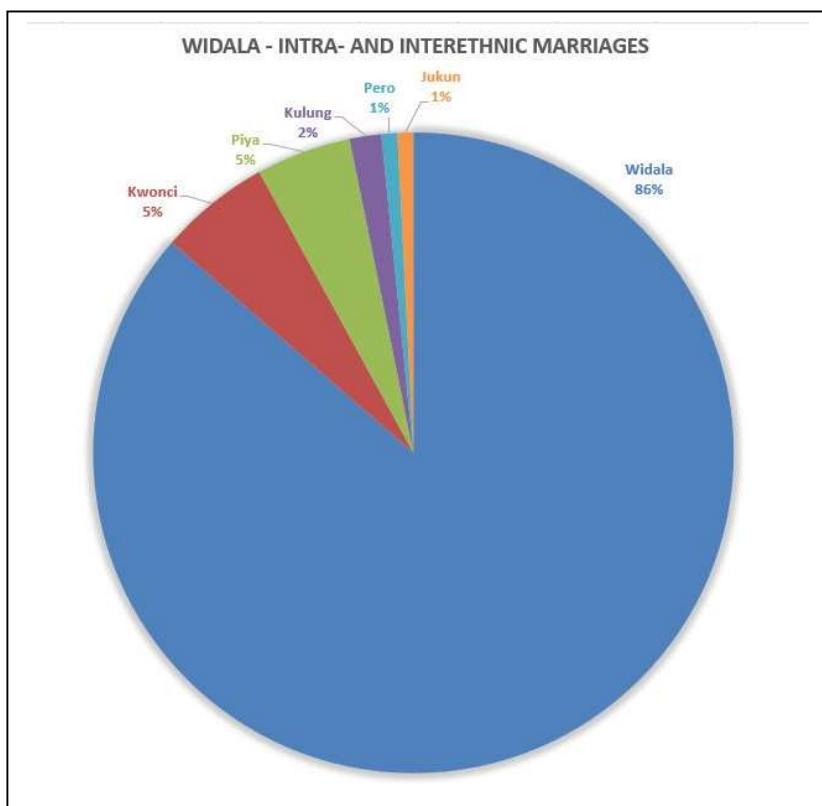
A man may marry as many wives as he pleases, the number of wives is only limited by the resources at his disposal. There are no prescribed marriage preferences, and it is interesting to note that marriage restrictions are not fixed but fluid and seem to be a matter of negotiation. Some informants state that no two wives of a husband may come from the same clan or lineage, i.e. each wife should be from another descent unit, and that a wife should not come from a matrilineally related clan or – in case of a large clan - lineage. The less related the descent unit of husband and wife, the better it is. Other informants deny this and maintain that marrying a second wife from the same clan is permitted as well as from a matrilineally related clan. In a census conducted among 19 men with a total of 39 wives, 7 of the wives were from the same clan as the men's mothers, this shows that marrying a wife from a matrilineally related clan is practised. In another census involving 46 men with a total of 125 wives, there were 6 cases where a man had married two wives from the same clan.

A divorced wife will not be married by any of the clanmates of her former husband.

Post-marital residence is patri-virilocal. Levirate is practised: if a husband dies, his widow will be married by one of his brothers. It is up to the widow to choose among his brothers.

Some statistics

In a sample of 46 married Widala men, there were a total of 125 wives, of which 108 were from



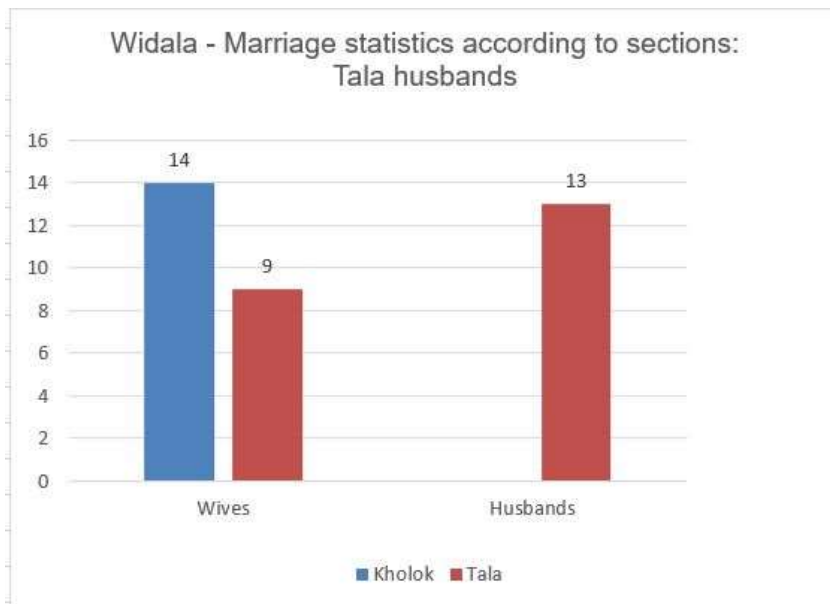
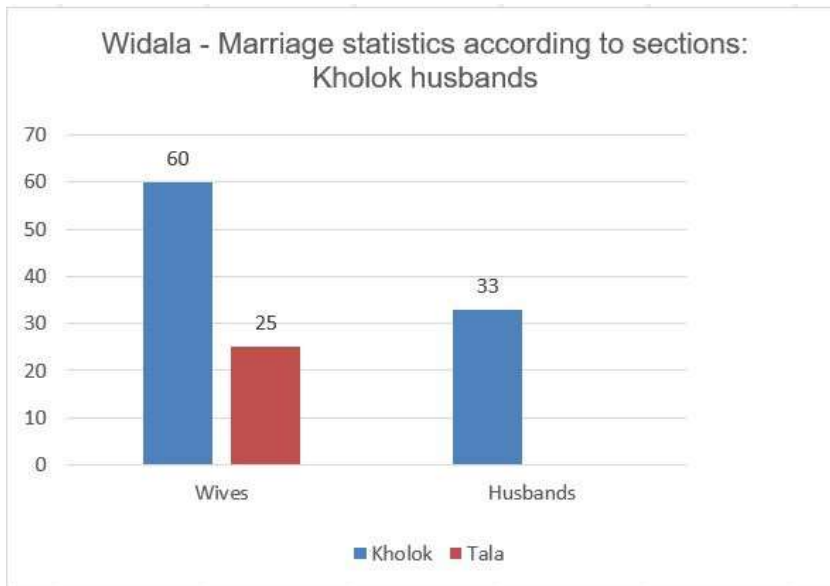
Widala, and 17 were from other ethnic groups.

The overall polygamy rate was 2.7, the polygamy rate with concurrent wives (i.e., wives who were divorced or deceased were not counted) was 1.4.

Marriages with partners from the same section (Kholok or Tala) are prevalent.

Marriages within the same section: 63.9 %.

Marriages with a wife from a different section: 36.1%.



Granaries

Granaries are usually standing outside the homestead. Commonly, only men possess granaries;



Photo 4: Kode granary (*múndùk*)

the few women who have fields of their own also have their own granaries, which they access freely. The huge granary belonging to men is called *múndùk* (Kholok) or *bulung* (Tala), the smaller granary owned by women is called *latuula* (Kholok) or *bulung a tob* (Tala). It seems that the existence of women's granaries is restricted to adherents of the traditional religion. Several granaries are needed in case of polygyny, and each wife takes over the distribution from the husband's granary for one year. The provisions for the children are always taken from the husband's granary. All granaries are built by men, irrespective whether they are a man's or woman's

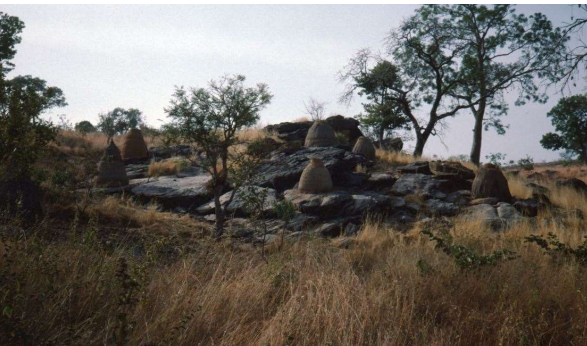


Photo 3: Kode granaries standing on rocky outcrops

granary. If a woman would attempt to build her granary, she would be punished by the *kindima* spirit.

Granary building is a dry-season activity, taking place between November and March. There are experts for building granaries; they receive 2-3 measures of guinea corn from the man commissioning the building which are sacrificed by the

expert at his *kindima* shrine before he starts the work. As payment for the work the expert receives one bundle of guinea corn. A granary may last up to 10 years if maintained well. Insects and fire are common dangers for granaries. A thatched grass cover is put on the granary as protection against rain. After opening a granary for the first time, a part of the food prepared from the content is sacrificed to the *kindima* spirit (Manu Ahmed MS).

Birth

Children are born in the homestead of their father. After a woman has given birth, the umbilical was cut with a sharp slice of cornstalk in the past, nowadays with a razor blade. The cut umbilical cord is filled with clay and fixed to a small stick from the *dargazaa* tree (H., *Grewia mollis*)¹⁵, which is stuck into the ceiling of the mother's room. Some informants state that the umbilical is taken away after 5-6 years and buried outside of the house. Sacrifices are made annually at that spot by the father: for a boy the sacrifice is a billy-goat, for a daughter a nanny goat. Without this sacri-

¹⁵ H. = Hausa

fice, illness or death would occur. Other informants¹⁶ say that the umbilical stays at the ceiling, and only when the roof has to be repaired, the stick is taken away and then re-attached to the new ceiling. The placenta is buried in the homestead under the granary.

If the baby contracts a skin illness such as a rash, this is taken as a sign that something has attacked the buried placenta and the cure will be to apply hot water on the spot where the placenta is buried; this will cure the sickness (Manu Ahmed 1992 MS).

In the case of a twin birth, a pot has to be half sunk into the ground at the entrance of the father's house, where *burkutu* (H., millet beer) made from new corn has to be put in every year as part of a ritual involving sacrifices of new corn at the *dodo* shrine. If this is not done, the children will contract illness and the mother dies.

A child will be named after seven days; it is the father's father who decides on the name.

There is no taboo on naming a child after a dead ancestor; on the contrary: when the child resembles one of his ancestors, it will be given his/her name. Babies are carried around strapped on the back in a carrier made of goat skin, such a carrying device is called *khara* (Kholok). As a protection against the sun, a calabash is strapped on the head of the baby; such a calabash is called *samila* (Kholok) (Manu Ahmed 1992 MS)

Burial

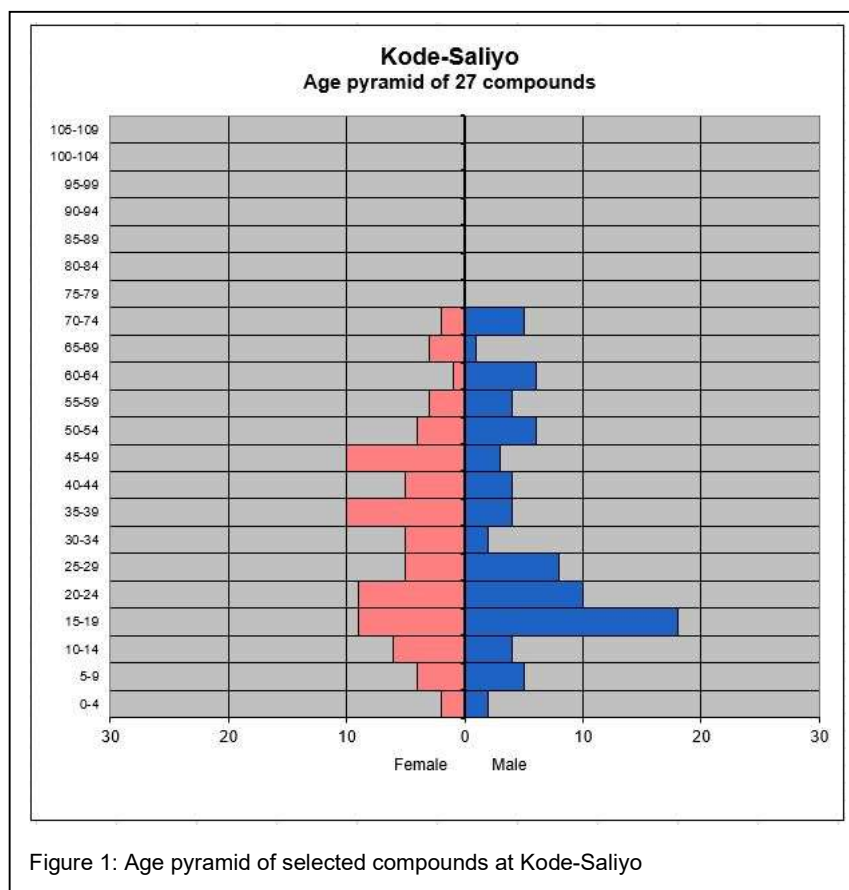
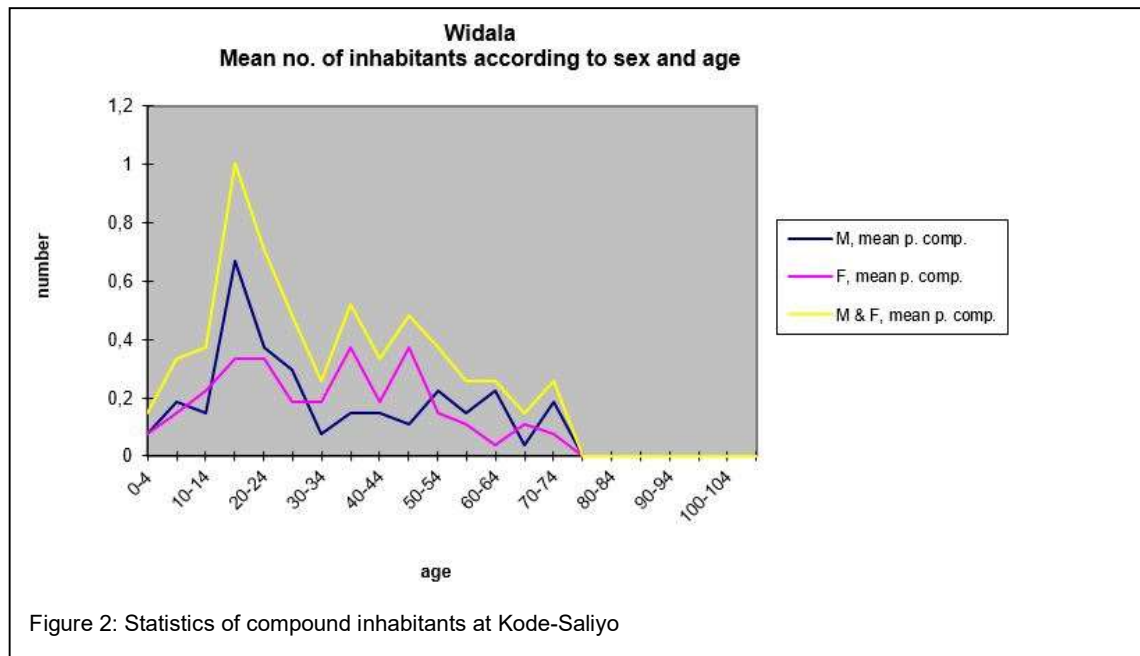
If an old man dies, a horn will be blown before his burial may take place. Before the corpse is lowered into the grave, the men carrying it will circle three times around the grave.

After someone has died, it may occur that his soul disturbs the living, for instance they hear his/her voice. In these cases, people will gather at the grave during daytime and beat the grave with stones. This will stop the disturbance. The Kode believe in re-incarnation: if a child resembles one of his ancestors, this is a sign that the soul of this ancestor is reborn. (Manu Ahmed 1992 MS).

¹⁶ Apparently, this divergence has nothing to do with the division into Tala and Kholok, because the informants interviewed were all from Kholok clans.

Village

Different clans live together in the villages: the Fobelmi-Munang, Fobelmi-Shakay, Fojinam,



Botomo, Windali, Diira, Shaa and Tamyatal clans have settled at Kode-Saliyo. The Goobi have settled mainly at Murboi, but there are also some Fobelmi-Shakay, Fobelmi-Munang, Fotam and Botomo. The Gbagba and Fotam clans are settled at Galyam.

In a census conducted among 27 compounds at Kode-Saliyo, a total of 160 inhabitants were counted, of which 82 were males and 78 females. The mean number of persons living in a compound was 5.9, with slightly more males (3) than females (2.8).

Age groups

Age groups are rather informal groupings uniting boys of a certain age. During communal hunts or collective agricultural activities, they play a role, as these may be organised according to age grades.

Political Organisation

Village head

The title of Village Head was introduced by the British colonial administration. The first village head appointed by the British was Yepu, who seems to have acted in the function of a traditional chief before. As far as informants can remember, Yepu was the first ruler and ritual leader, he ruled during the conflict the Kode had with the Loo.

Kaduna Ibrahim (son of chief Ibrahim Yibli) in his MS relates that when the British first came to Kode, they made camp at a site called Bariki. Yepu gave them a white hen and eggs, and they appointed him as chief. A Fulani climbed the roof of Yepu's house and put a bottle with a white flag on the top of the roof, and Yepu got an iron rod with a dish as a symbol of office. Jamnati, grandfather of Baba Joda Dogo, had been sold to the Jukun as a slave and afterwards to the Sokoto people. After the abolition of the slave trade, he came back to Kode, having learnt to speak Fulfulde as well as Hausa.

At the end of the war with the Loo, Yepu handed over his title to Jamnati because the latter was fluent in Hausa and Fulfulde and could thus represent the Kode better at meetings with the political administration. After Jamnati's death, his son Dogo took over and made Yepu's son his deputy. Then came his son Jawro, he was elected by the people with confirmation from Karim Lamido. He ruled for 36 years. When he was old and became ill, Ibrahim Yibli took over and is the current chief, and has been in office for 5 years. All chiefs come from the Fobelmi clan. The list of chiefs is as follows:

1. Yepu (was installed as VH by the British)
2. Jamnati (from Fobelmi-Shakay)
3. Dogo (son of Jamnati, from Fobelmi-Shakay, 1919-49)
4. Jawro (son of Dogo, from Fobelmi-Shakay, 1949-85)
5. Ibrahim Yibli (from Fobelmi-Shakay, since 1985).

While political chiefs come mainly from the Kholok section, ritual chiefs come from the Tala section. In pre-colonial times, the political chiefs mainly had judicial tasks.

The *Kub Kode* is the supreme title, the second in command is the *Wakili*, who is his deputy. Below them are 18 *Mai Anguwa*, who are the chief's representatives in the hamlets.

Kúb Kîi was the war leader of all the Kode people, only the supreme chief and his followers were not under his command. The *Kub Kode* never goes to war, in his place, the *Kúb Kîi* leads the people to the fight. He will select strong and powerful men of his retinue to accompany him.

Anyifala is a leader of hunters, there are three leaders at present.

Kub Ampiya Gangang is the chief of drums, he plays his drums on special occasions, for instance when a leopard has been killed.

Angbaxa is the supreme chief of the ritual priests, who must be consulted before any ritual may take place. He has an assistant at Kode Dutse.

Conflicts are first tried to be resolved by the *Mai Anguwa*, the chief of the quarter, before they are brought to the *Kub Kode*. If neither can resolve the case, the dispute is brought before the court at Karim Lamido. There are about 10 disputes per year: fights, thefts and field damage by Bororo Fulani are the only cases that occur.

All male adults pay 25 Naira as development tax annually.

Economic Activities

A market is held at Kode-Saliyo on Wednesdays, but only in the dry season. Important markets in the vicinity are at Filiya and Mutum Daya.

Division of labour

Table 3: Gender specific division of labour among the Kode (m: male, f: female)

Activity	Gender
clearing	m
sowing	m & f
weeding	m & f
harvesting	m & f
irrigating	m (few)
threshing	f
prepare threshing ground	f
winnowing	f
build house walls	m
build house roof	m
prepare house floor	m
cut wooden poles	m
cut firewood	f
collect firewood	f
build well	m
build terraces	m
build fence	m
weave food cover	f
weave mats	m
weave baskets	m
make ropes	m
fetch water	f
pounding	f
grinding	f
cooking	f
brewing beer	f
clean house	f
make pots	f
weaving cotton	m & f
spinning	f
tailoring	m & f
blacksmithing	m
wood carving	m
butchering	m
hunting	m
collect honey	m
produce salt	f

In precolonial times, the Kode traded iron from the Jukun or other ethnic groups by barter. They found tin on Mount Yanna. The Kode prepared salt (potash) from the ash of certain trees or groundnut leaves. (Manu Ahmed MS).

Agriculture

The Kode are cultivating guinea corn and millet, maize, groundnuts and beans as major, staple



Photo 5: Women threshing corn



Photo 6: Farmwork implements: reaping knife to the right



Photo 7: Prepared threshing ground

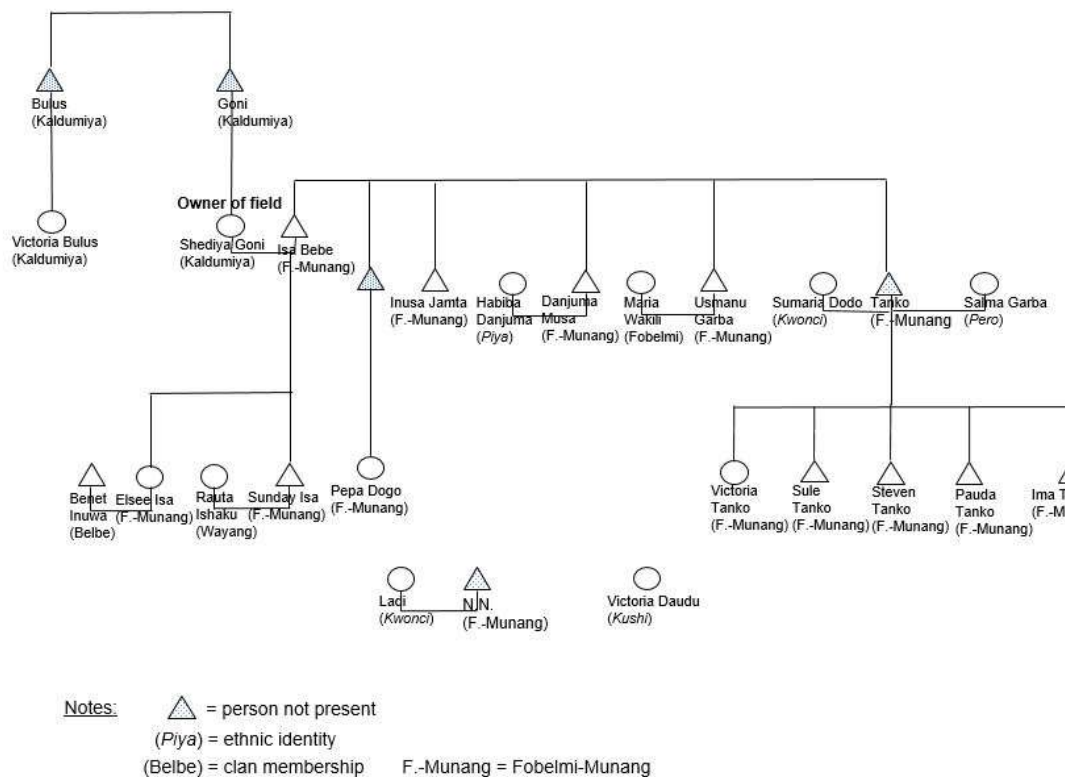
crops; on a smaller scale, rice, potatoes, tomatoes, pepper, bananas, guavas and papayas are cultivated. Waterleaf (*Amaranthus caudatus*) and sorrel (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) are grown on irrigated plots. Guinea corn may be sown as early as January in order to reduce the risk of certain birds eating the grains.

Threshing is done by the women of a family.

More demanding agricultural activities like sowing, weeding and harvesting are usually performed by work-parties (*kágèshél*). Such work-parties are mainly organised on the basis of clan membership. The participants of work-parties assist each other on their farms; additionally, the owner of the field provides local beer as provision for the workers.

Case study: a work-party harvesting a field (of about 2 acres in size) of guinea corn and millet at

Kode – Relationships of participants of an agricultural work party at Murboi (Dec. 1991)



Murboi on 5th December, 1991, consisted of 23 persons. The field belonged to a woman. She provided three 20 litre pots of local beer (*burkutu*, H.) as provision for the participants. For prepar-



Photo 8: Kode, harvest labour group

ing one pot of beer, one bundle of guinea corn is needed.

At another occasion, a work party harvesting a guinea corn field, consisted of 35 persons, (mostly of the Botomo clan), to whom about 85 litres of millet beer (*burkutu*) and 20 litres of *kunnu* (H., non-alcoholic beverage made from

corn) for the children were provided (approximately 3 litres per person). The beer had been prepared by the wives of the field owner. The amount of beer was sufficient to last for one day. The group needed one day to harvest this field. One day for planting and two days for weeding, which is usually done twice, was calculated for this field.

Rainfed land is considered communal property. By clearing a piece of unused land, the claim to its use is manifested by the farmer. Clearing is usually done March to April. When yields decline, the land is left fallow for a period of seven years to allow it to recover. Fertile irrigated land along

the riverbanks is privately owned, and is inherited patrilineally from the first settlers who took it in possession. The eldest of the brothers has the power of control over such plots and allocates usufruct rights to his brothers and unmarried sisters, but not to his in-laws or married sisters, so that no claims can arise from them.

Around August to September, rituals addressing the *kindima* spirit are performed in the guinea corn fields, and, until the rituals are completed, women are prohibited from visiting the farms during this time.

Animal husbandry

The Kode keep goats, sheep, pigs, chickens, ducks, donkeys and dogs as domestic animals. Only a few people are keeping cattle.

Table 4: Domestic animals and their uses (m: male, f: female)

animal	kept by	uses	comments
cattle	m	meat, milk, leather	men also do the milking
dwarf cattle	-	-	-
horse	m	riding	used by title holders. Horse gets a burial like human
pony	-	-	-
donkey	m	riding, beast of burden, leather used for drums, meat	In the past, the meat was not consumed
goat	m & f	meat, leather	In the past, goats were only kept by men
sheep	m	meat, leather, wool used for decoration of dance hats	
pig	m & f	meat	
dog	m	meat, guardian, assisting in hunting	only men consume the meat
chicken	m & f	meat, eggs	in the past, only elder men ate eggs
duck	m & f	eggs, meat	no ducks in the past
guinea fowl	m	eggs, meat	no guinea fowls in the past
pigeon	-	-	-
cat	m & f	meat, fur used for pouches, protection against rats	women do not eat cats

In a census of 25 households at Kode-Saliyo, the following numbers of domestic animals were determined:

Table 5: Kode - Domestic animals kept by 25 households at Kode-Saliyo

	Cattle	Horses	Donkeys	Goats	Sheep	Pigs	Dogs	Chickens	Ducks	Guinea Fowls	Pigeons	Cats
total	61	1	25	140	117	56	55	215	133	36	22	25
mean no.	2.4	0	1	5.6	4.7	2.2	2.2	8.6	5.3	1.4	0.9	1
median no.	2	1	1	4.5	4	2	3	6	5	2.5	1	1.5

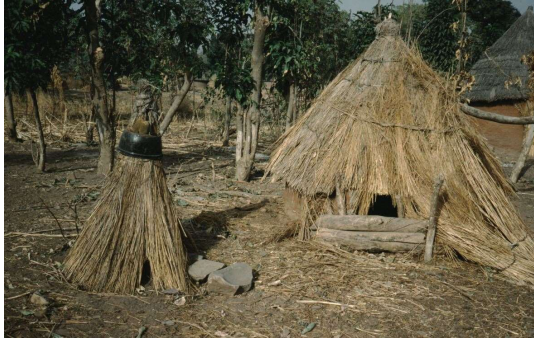


Photo 9: A chicken shelter (*gólkhò*) on the left, a goat shelter (*kólò*) to the right.

Hunting

Taminimanjau is the chief of the hunters; a brave and successful hunter is elected for this position. If someone hunts a major prey, he has to present it to the hunter's chief who will decide whether a celebration called *coloxoi* will be organised. At the occasion of a *coloxoi*, men dress like women and wear wrappers instead of trousers. Further a certain necklace called *gújò* is worn by participants.

The following animals are considered to have a

soul:

- leopard (*kung*),
- dwarf buffalo (*kyaune*, in Hausa *baunaa*),
- python (*mushi*, in Hausa *mesa*),
- hyrax (*shimo*, in Hausa *agwada*),
- porcupine (*saye*, in Hausa *beegwaa*),

therefore, a ritual has to be performed after killing one, lest the soul of the killed animal will haunt the hunter. It is believed that the soul of such an animal may be the soul of an ancestor having turned into an animal (Manu Ahmed MS).



Photo 10: Beer pots



Photo 11: Sword, daggers, spear



Photo 12: Spear tips: left /ewε, right jángà



Photo 13: Old Kode warrior



Photo 14: Kode woman grinding corn



Photo 15: Harvested guinea corn

Material culture

The Kode are using a variety of clay pots: *wúlútùlù* (Tala) is a pot used for fetching water and for

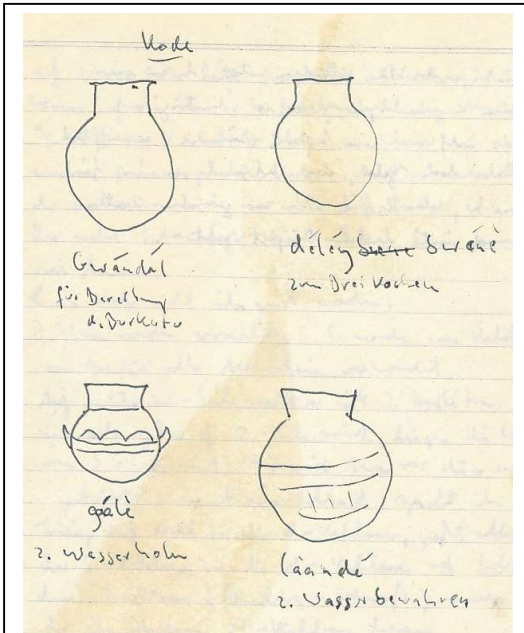


Illustration 4: Some pot types

keeping the local beer known as *burkutu* (H.), while the pot used for keeping the local beer *pito* (H.) is called *dígé còngòm* (Tala). *Burkutu* is brewed in the *gwándál* (Kholok) pot; *déléng bwénè* (Kholok) is a pot used for cooking gruel; and water may be fetched with the pot *gáálè* (Kholok), while water is stored in a pot named *làándé* (Kholok).

Flutes: the *búúsà* flute is played by young men in the time between August to January; it may only be blown after some millet has been offered to the *du-lung* spirit in a special pot kept by a ritual expert, (a man named Damboi at the time of research), of the Kooyang clan. Playing the *búúsà* flute indicates the ripening of the grain and is further intended to scare away wild animals and to protect the grain from being harmed by evil spirits.



Photo 16: Flutes



Photo 17: Horn trumpet, rattle, necklace



Photo 18: Wooden stools (*júk*)

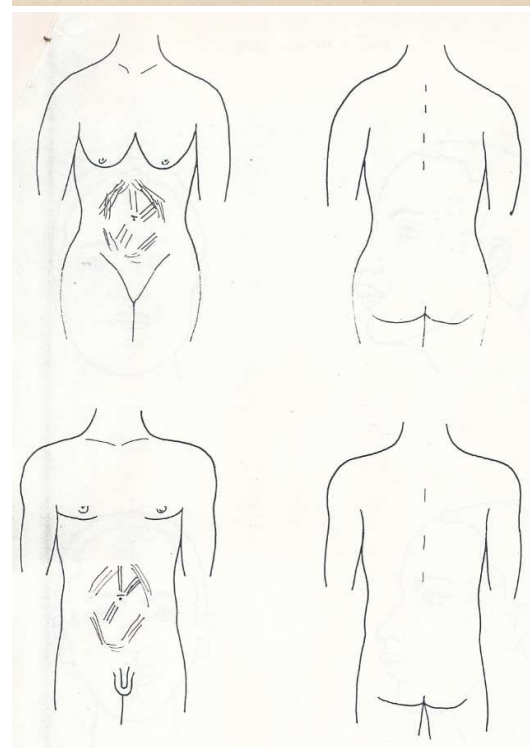
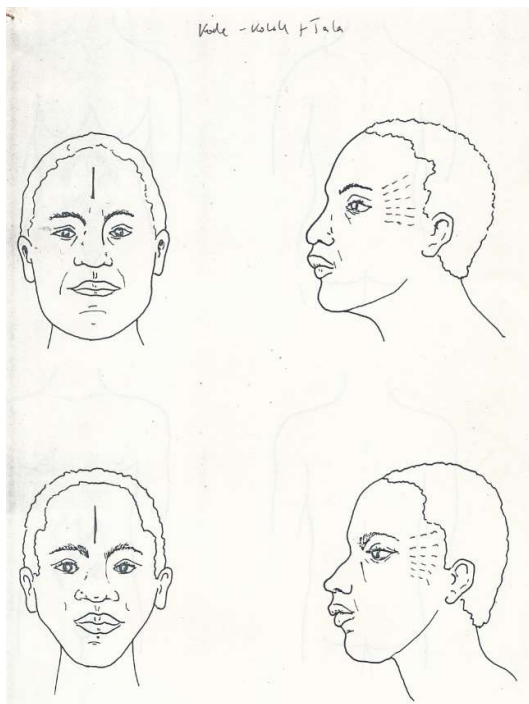
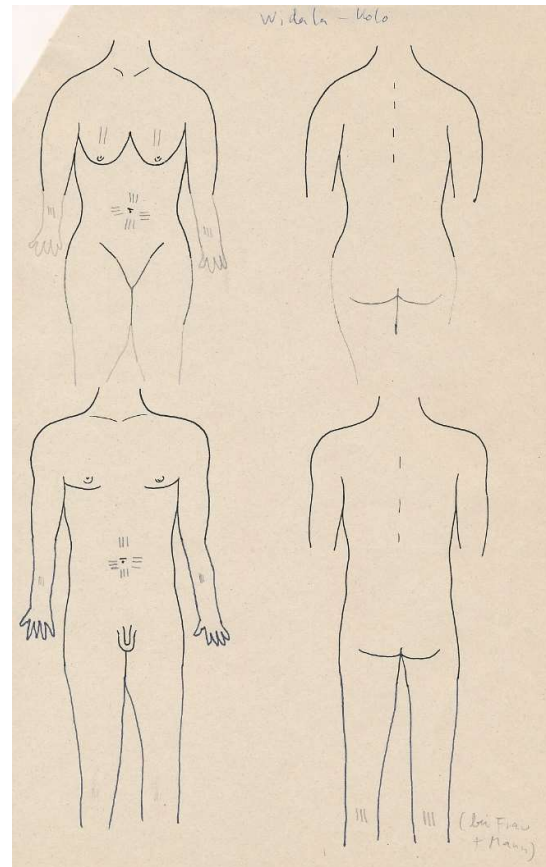
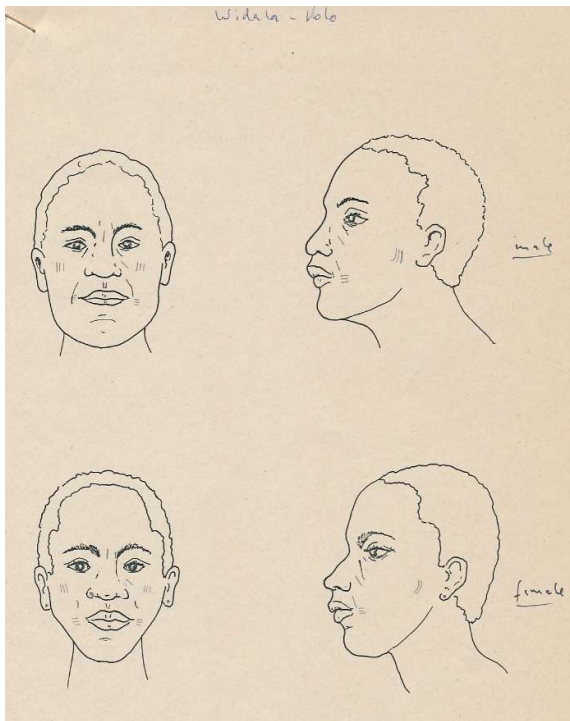
The flute *gám* is played by old men at the occasion of the *keegi* festival in November. *Jónglò* is a big horn flute that is also played during *keegi*, and as a signal instrument to announce a successful hunt. *Yangyang* is an iron rattle that used during dances, and especially after having hunted leopards.

Like other ethnic groups belonging to the Wurkun cluster, the Kode have victory drums (*pí*) standing

on three legs and being decorated by carved patterns.

Scarification/cicatrization, bodily ornamentation

See illustrations.



Rituals and religion

Spirits and associated rituals¹⁷

While in the traditional religious belief *yamba* is the creator god, *yamba* is too far removed from the sphere of humans and a spirit called *limmi* has a more active role. Only persons with a special gift are able to receive the messages of *limmi* and act as his spokesperson. His priesthood rests mainly with the Botomo clan, but there is also a *limmi* priest from the Fojinam clan named Tanga. His ancestor was a man named Banam from the Kwaya-Tangale, who had fled to Kode Dutse due to a conflict between the Tangale sub-units Tal, Banganje and Popandi versus the Kwaya. He was accommodated by the Kode Fojinam clan and was asked to learn from the Botomo clan how to listen to the messages of *limmi*. Only someone whose father was a priest and who has a special gift can become a priest. His face is washed with water containing certain herbs, enabling him to see the spiritual world.

If there is lack of rain in the rainy season, *limmi* is addressed in rituals to send enough rain for a good harvest. *Limmi* is also considered as a protective spirit for the Widala, safeguarding them against enemies. There is an annual ritual involving the sacrifice of chickens to appease *limmi*. The Kode have a sacred site on the mountain called *Bùlé Kode*, where rituals are performed before and after the rainy season (*tsukuluk*).

Angbaxa is the title of a priest of the traditional religion. Each clan has its own priest. Most of the priests come from the Tala section, and the Kooyang clan has idols that are said to be the most powerful, for example the *keegi*.

Tunjo protects a person against sickness; the spirit is worshipped in the homestead, unlike *kindima*, *mam* or *limmi* which are worshipped outside the settlements in the bush. *Tunjo* is manifested by a clay pot on which chicken or goat blood is sacrificed. The collective ancestors of a clan are represented by *kindima*, each clan has its own *kindima*, giving them strength and providing food through a good harvest. In the *kindima* shrine there is a sacred stone; if someone touches the stone he will die or be bitten by a snake. By paying a fine to the priest consisting of 7 pots of beer, 7 chickens, 7 goats and 7 bundles of corn he can lift the curse. There are wooden statues called *kundul* (*gunki* in Hausa) which protect their worshippers against misfortune; sacrifices of chicken blood and beer are offered to them (Manu Ahmed MS).

¹⁷ See also CAPRO 1992: 403-408 for some information on rituals and traditional beliefs among the Wurkun groups.

Table 6: Religious concepts and their material expression

Concept	Kholok		Tala	
	Name	Manifestation / Comments	Name	Manifestation / Comments
high god	<i>yamba</i>	creator	<i>mor</i>	creator
ancestors	<i>kindima</i>	live in caves in a grove	<i>biang</i>	live in caves in a grove
water spirit	<i>mam, damban</i>	iron spear and pot in fig tree (<i>dan-bang</i>) are for <i>mam</i>	<i>mam</i>	(see Kolok)
bush spirit	<i>weemoro</i> (=things dead), <i>limmi</i>		<i>nungmore, limmi</i>	
protecting spirit	<i>wimina</i> (in general), <i>jurugugo</i> (for Botomo), <i>waali</i> (for Windali)	are clan specific	<i>nurdi</i> (in general), <i>fugurum</i> (for Shaa & Goobi)	are clan specific
material expression:				
<i>gunki</i> (wooden idol)	<i>kundul</i>		<i>kundul</i>	
<i>dodo</i> (masked dancer, masquerade)	<i>not existent</i>		<i>not existent</i>	

Water sources

Water sources are cared for by specific clans, for instance, the Fojinam clan takes care of a spring called *yawong*. It is believed that a certain snake called *baalo* is living in water sources ensuring the constant flow of water. To the south of Kode-Saliyo is a spring called *vula* in which a

Kode/Widala Annual festivities												
Name of festivity	Jan.	Feb.	March	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>peebe</i>			—									
<i>mam gabra</i>			—								—	
<i>mam dambang</i>							—					
<i>tume</i>							—					
<i>keegi</i>											—	
<i>keewu</i>												—

large fish (*shey*) with a head like a human is living. At Murboi there is a pond called *voy* where fish, frogs, tortoises and even crocodiles are said to live. The crocodile (*kirim*) is said to safeguard the water. Water may only be fetched from a source with a calabash in order not to disturb these creatures that ensure the water supply. Women during menstruation, as well as mothers until about three months after having given birth, are not allowed to fetch water, lest the source may run dry.

Ritual calendar

The following annual rituals/celebrations with a link to agricultural activities were elicited, but further research is necessary. They are all intended to ensure a successful season and good harvest.

Mam gabra (*boori* in Hausa) – also known as arm-slashing cult; it is a possession cult and the celebrations have a bacchanalian character. *Mam gabra* is celebrated twice a year, one in the rainy season and one in the dry season. The *mam gabra* cult is considered to be able to cure diseases and chase out evil spirits. The *gabra* spirits are said to emerge from water, they are depicted as white puppets (female and male), the shrine is within the village. Celebrations last for two days after having performed a sacrifice of millet beer. Adherents of *gabra* will shun food prepared by menstruating women. During the festivities members colour their bodies or parts of them with red soil (*kulyi*). A warrior who has killed an enemy or a hunter who has killed a leopard will also be marked with red soil on his forehead (Manu Ahmed MS).

Peebe – is an important celebration taking place in March and is designed to provide sufficient rain and ensure a good farming season, peace and health for the community. Beer is brewed from guinea corn from the last harvest and food cooked, samples of which are sacrificed at the shrines. The festivity lasts for one day and the people celebrate with beer, music and dances. Dancers apply a mixture of *maiwa* (Hausa, a kind of bulrush millet) flour and water on their bodies.

Dambang/dangbang – is very important and celebrated around July/August. During the ritual, the god of rain is addressed and it is intended to ensure growth and further flourishing of the crops. Its chief priest is from the Gbagba clan. Men and women take part in the celebrations. Sacrifices of chicken blood are offered at the site *Bule Kode*, then the participants move to the compound of the *dambang* priest (*báng*) where the remains of the chicken are prepared and eaten, and a celebration with dances takes place. The day before, the priest had sacrificed *burkutu* (local corn beer) at *Bule Kode* in a special pot which is also called *báng*. *Danbang* trees (fig trees) are associated with the cult of *mam dambang*. The *dambang* cult was imported from the Gomu by a man from the Gbagba clan. Because they experienced a drought, the Gbagba man went to Gomu and asked to learn about that rain ritual, and the Gomu taught him how to perform the rituals in exchange for 10 bundles of corn, 10 goats and 10 hens (Manu Ahmed MS).

Tume – takes place in August; the *buusa* flute finds its application in the celebration. *Tume* allows for the consumption of new yam and *amora* (Hausa, Kholok: *melbo*, Tala: *dalang*; *Tacca leontopetaloides*).

Keegi – is a kind of thanksgiving and is performed when people perceive that the harvest is good. The *gam* flute finds its application in the festivities. Before the general harvest begins, only a small part of corn is harvested, then beer is brewed from it and given to the ritual leader of each lineage who tastes it and then gives permission to carry out the harvest. Only after *keegi* it is allowed to eat from the new guinea corn. The rituals and sacrifices are led by the Kooyang clan, but the date of the celebration is set by the Fojinam clan.

Keewu – takes place in December and is also a kind of thanksgiving as well as a commemoration of the ancestors. Millet and guinea corn may only be harvested after the festivity. Also, beans may only be eaten boiled but not roasted before *keewu*. For the ritual, beer is brewed from old millet, porridge is prepared from new millet and flavoured with the sauce *miyang dargaza* with peanuts; all this is brought to the shrine house of *kindima* in calabashes and clay pots. The ritual chief (*angbaxa*) from each clan goes to the shrine house to sacrifice the items to *kindima*. Further research is needed to determine, if *keegi* and *keewu* apply to all Widala or only a part of them.

When there is lack of rain, a ritual asking for sufficient precipitation is performed at the shrine of a spirit called *mam* (Tala) or *naabila* (Kholok). The shrine is called *warrku mam* by the Kholok and *taalu mam* by the Tala. The ritual involves the sacrifice of a cockerel as well as oil made from *guna* (H., watermelon) seed. The priests performing the ritual are from the Kooyang-Lowiyang of Tala and Fobelmi-Munang of Kholok clans.

It is unclear whether Maanu Ahmed in his MS refers to the same rain ritual, when he writes that in case of a drought, a ritual addressing *mam* is performed, whose main priest is Kakku from the Gbagba clan, whereby beer and food prepared from guinea corn is sacrificed to *mam* or *kinnima* at the shrine on Mt. Yanna. Afterwards the participants eat and drink, dance and sing, until they leave for their homes. As soon as they reach their homes, rain will start to fall. As the head priest of *mam dambang* comes from the Gbagba clan, this is a reference to *mam dambang*.

Healing

Case study: Malam Sule is a herbalist (*sarkin boka* in Hausa), claiming that he has an approval

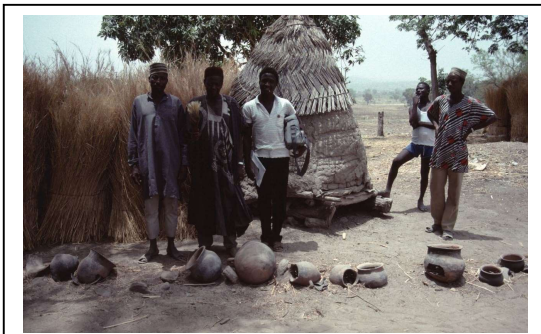


Photo 19: Healer with pots of former patients

by the Federal Government. In front of his homestead, a line of pots is placed at a right angle to an imaginary line running from west to east. This is because he has to face east when offering a sacrifice (for instance a chicken). If a person is sick, the patient visits him with a clay pot, a chicken and guinea corn. The pot will be small if the patient is a child, or larger if it is an adult. He prepares gruel from the grain and sacrifices this

and the chicken to the *dodo* spirit who will give him the power to heal the patient. Some of the millet porridge and the chicken blood stays on the pot. Then he collects herbs, roots, etc. and prepares a concoction in the pot. The patient drinks of the concoction and washes himself with it. These herbalists are also found among the other Wurkun groups such as the Kwonci, Kulung and Piya.

Miscellanea

Witches were sold as slaves at Karim Lamido.

There are two methods of divination:

- 1) the soothsayer uses a clay pot with water and three sticks swimming on it which tell the diviner the answers to his questions;
- 2) the soothsayer uses an animal skin which serves as a medium. (Manu Ahmed MS).

Taboos

Lions and the animal *battanwi* (?) are not killed or eaten by the Kode because they are considered as friends. Young persons were not allowed to eat doves, as well as eggs, otherwise they will not marry. They may also not eat kite, otherwise they will become blind.

Women have to be careful when walking in the night because an evil spirit may enter their womb.

Eating honey by a pregnant woman will lead to miscarriage.

The feathers of the bird *antakantakan* (*yautai* in H., nightjar) may be not be used because this causes impotence in men / infertility in women or the death of a child. (Manu Ahmed 1992 MS)

Glossary¹⁸

Widala	Kholok/Tala	gloss	comment
<i>alawealawe</i>	K	green	
<i>albir</i>	T	trad. iron money	one slave was 100 pieces
<i>álmáshá</i>	K	iron used with flintstone for fire making	
<i>angbaxa</i>	K	(chief of) traditional priest(s)	
<i>ánjàŋ</i>	K	bow	
<i>antakantakan</i>	K	nightjar	<i>yautai</i> (H.)
<i>anyifala</i>	?	leader of hunters	
<i>baalo</i>	?	sp. snake ensuring the flow of water in a spring	
<i>bálámtàm</i>	T	axe, sword	
<i>bàlàntám</i>	K	axe, sword	
<i>báng</i>	K	priest of the <i>dambang</i> cult, also a ritual clay pot	
<i>baatin</i>	K	hot	
<i>bóblá</i>	K	quiver	
<i>bul meseyi</i>	K	yellow	
<i>bulung</i>	T	large granary (of men)	
<i>bulung a tob</i>	T	woman's granary	
<i>búúsà</i>	T	trad. flute	
<i>bwát</i>	K	wooden club	
<i>coloxoi</i>	K	celebration of hunters	
<i>dambang</i>	?	agricultural ritual in August	
<i>déléng bwénè</i>	K	clay pot for cooking gruel	
<i>ďígyèk</i>	K	marriage by sister exchange	
<i>dígé còngòm</i>	T	clay pot for fetching water and storing <i>pito</i>	
<i>dinn</i>	K	black	
<i>ďula</i>	K	cold	
<i>dulung</i>	T	sp. spirit	
<i>dù má</i>	K	hoe	
<i>fòlliyo</i>	K	joking relationship	
<i>fúyúk</i>	K	arrow	
<i>gáálè</i>	K	clay pot for fetching water	
<i>gàm</i>	T	sp. flute	
<i>gátùl</i>	K	sword	
<i>gbáámè</i>	K	trad. iron money	
<i>gókhò</i>	K	chicken shelter	

¹⁸ K= Kholok term, T = Tala term, H. = Hausa term.

Widala	Kholok/Tala	gloss	comment
<i>gónj</i>	K	wooden trough	for feeding or watering animals
<i>gújò</i>	T	sp. necklace worn after a successful hunt	
<i>gùùlú</i>	K	sickle	
<i>gwándál</i>	K	clay pot for brewing <i>burkutu</i>	
<i>jítà</i>	K	axe	
<i>jíkhà bāràsháu</i>	K	bedstead made of cornstalks	
<i>jóm</i>	T	sickle	
<i>jónglò</i>	T	bugle, horn trumpet for signalling	
<i>jòrèyék</i>	T	marriage by sister exchange	
<i>júk</i>	K	wooden stool	
<i>kágèshél</i>	K	large work-party	
<i>kái</i>	K	spear	
<i>khara</i>	K	baby carrier made of goat skin	
<i>keegi, kaagi</i>	T	agricultural celebration in November	
<i>keewu</i>	K	agricultural celebration in December	allows harvest of millet and guinea corn
<i>kindima</i>	K	sp. spirit	<i>dodo</i> (H.)
<i>kirim</i>	?	crocodile	
<i>kólò</i>	K	goat shelter	
<i>kótòŋ</i>	K	shield	
<i>kúb ampiya gan-gang</i>	K	chief of drums	
<i>kúb kîi</i>	K	war leader	
<i>kúdàk</i>	K	kitchen	
<i>kulyi</i>	K	red soil	used for colouring pots or body parts
<i>kúndúl</i>	K	wooden idol	<i>gunki</i> (H.)
<i>kung</i>	K	leopard	
<i>kyaune</i>	K	dwarf buffalo	<i>baunaa</i> (H.)
<i>lààndé</i>	K	clay pot for storing water	
<i>latuula</i>	K	woman's granary	
<i>leede</i>	T	lineage, "in the house"	
<i>límmi</i>	K	a major spirit	
<i>lúglu</i>	K	cotton	
<i>mam</i>	T	a spirit bringing rain	
<i>mír</i>	K	clan, group of people	
<i>múndùk</i>	K	large granary (of men)	
<i>mushi</i>	K	python	<i>mesa</i> (H.)
<i>naabila</i>	K	a spirit bringing rain	
<i>pàndi másá</i>	K	flintstone	
<i>peebe</i>	K	agricultural celebration in March	

Widala	Kholok/Tala	gloss	comment
<i>peyi</i>	K	white	
<i>pí</i>	K	three-legged victory drum	
<i>samila</i>	K	sun helmet for babies made of calabash	
<i>saye</i>	K	porcupine	<i>beegwaa</i> (H.)
<i>shábúk</i>	K	scabbard	
<i>shámbéla</i>	?	calabash used as sun protection helmet for babies	
<i>shey</i>	?	fish	
<i>shimo</i>	K	hyrax	<i>agwada</i> (H.)
<i>shólók</i>	T	trad. razor blade	
<i>taalu mam</i>	T	shrine of <i>mam</i>	
<i>taminimanjau</i>	K	supreme chief of hunters	
<i>tífyùk</i>	K	trad. razor blade	
<i>toom</i>	K	blood	
<i>tooyi</i>	K	red	
<i>tsukuluk</i>	?	rainy season	
<i>tume</i>	?	agricultural celebration in March	
<i>tunjo</i>	K	protecting spirit	
<i>wái bársháu</i>	K	reaping knife	
<i>wái shípóló</i>	K	knife	
<i>warrku mam</i>	K	shrine of <i>mam</i>	
<i>wúlútùlù</i>	T	clay pot for fetching water and storing <i>bur-kutu</i>	
<i>yamba</i>	K	creator god	
<i>yámèná</i>	K	lineage	
<i>yangyang</i>	T	iron rattle	
<i>yúlù</i>	K	seed container made from calabash	
<i>yuyee</i>	T	blood	

Plants:

Widala	Hausa	English	scientific name
<i>aadau</i> (K)	<i>riidii</i>	sesame	<i>Sesamum orientale</i>
<i>anshitta</i> (K)	<i>barkoonoo</i>	pepper	<i>Capsicum sp.</i>
<i>ayaba</i>	<i>ayaba</i>	banana	<i>Musa sapientum</i>
<i>ayuya</i> (T)	<i>riidii</i>	sesame	<i>Sesamum orientale</i>
<i>bai</i> (T)	<i>roogoo</i>	cassava	<i>Manihot esculenta</i>
<i>boolong</i> (K&T)	<i>maiwaa</i>	pearl millet	<i>Pennisetum glaucum</i>
<i>bulow</i> (T)	<i>waakee</i>	beans	
<i>bwalla</i> (K&T)	<i>gujiyaa</i>	Bambara nut	<i>Vigna subterranea</i>
<i>dalang</i> (T)	<i>amora</i>	Polynesian arrowroot	<i>Tacca leontopetaloides</i>

Widala	Hausa	English	scientific name
<i>danbang</i> (K)	<i>ceediiyaa</i>	fig tree	<i>Ficus thonningii</i>
<i>dangnang</i> (K)	<i>gautaa</i>	garden egg	<i>Solanum incanum</i>
<i>dankali</i> (K&T)	<i>dankalii</i>	sweet potato	<i>Ipomoea batatas</i>
<i>dankali</i> (T)	<i>dankalii</i>	sweet potato	<i>Ipomoea batatas</i>
<i>dom</i> (K)	<i>waakee</i>	beans	
<i>gapa</i> (K)	<i>shinkaafar</i>	rice	<i>Oryza sp.</i>
<i>gbibeni</i> (T)	<i>masaraa</i>	maize	<i>Zea mays</i>
<i>gombulam</i> (K&T)	<i>kubeewaa</i>	okra	<i>Abelmoschus esculentus</i>
<i>guita</i> (T)	<i>gautaa</i>	garden egg	<i>Solanum incanum</i>
<i>ishaa</i> (T)	<i>daawaa</i>	guinea-corn	<i>Sorghum bicolor</i>
<i>joling dwana</i> (K)	<i>roogoo</i>	cassava	<i>Manihot esculenta</i>
<i>kaba</i> (T)	<i>shinkaafar</i>	rice	<i>Oryza sp.</i>
<i>keke</i> (K)	<i>kaka</i>	sp. herb	<i>Sida linifolia</i>
<i>khomo</i> (K)	<i>masaraa</i>	maize	<i>Zea mays</i>
<i>kutangu</i> (K)	<i>dankalii</i>	sweet potato	<i>Ipomoea batatas</i>
<i>laduk</i> (K)	<i>laptara</i>	?	?
<i>melbo</i>	<i>amora</i>	Polynesian arrowroot	<i>Tacca leontopetaloides</i>
<i>moto</i> (K)	<i>geeroo</i>	pearl millet	<i>Pennisetum glaucum</i>
<i>muluu</i> (T)	<i>geeroo</i>	pearl millet	<i>Pennisetum glaucum</i>
<i>shau</i> (K)	<i>daawaa</i>	guinea-corn	<i>Sorghum bicolor</i>
<i>shitta</i> (T)	<i>barkoonoo</i>	pepper	<i>Capsicum sp.</i>
<i>zula</i> (K&T)	<i>gyadaa</i>	groundnut	<i>Arachis hypogaea</i>

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