The assertion of rights to agro-pastoral land in North Cameroon: a cascade to violence?
Noorduyn, R.E.

Citation for published version (APA):
Leiden: African Studies Centre
Acknowledgements

A long and winding road has led me to the doorstep on which I am now standing. But it was not a lonely travel. A host of people and institutes have helped and guided me along the way. Some of them I will thank here, others I thank in my heart, so even when names are not mentioned here, know you are not forgotten.

The first steps where taken in the inspiring ambiance of the Centre of Environmental Sciences, Leiden. There, Wouter de Groot and I managed to formulate the proposal for this PhD-research. Therefore Wouter, your sober and level-headed Ruth wants to thank you for your continuing trust and aid and the fact that you welcomed me in the institute in the first place. I hope that you enjoyed my stay as much as I did.

When the road seemed to darken, because of some complex and incomprehensible bends in funding spheres. Ton Dietz and the University of Amsterdam helped me out. Ton, I thank you very much for your efforts of getting me in. Along the route your busy agenda nevertheless allowed you to be there whenever I needed you.

My work has led me to the doors of many people in Cameroon, who offered me their hospitality. I want to thank all families that shared with me their houses and meals, their sadness and hopes. In Kila Kubadje the old lavan Elhadji Ngoura, his son Hassana and their wives and daughters made me feel at home despite the difference of our languages. To overcome that problem, Jacob, from Kila, was a great help. All inhabitants of ‘quartier Dandé’ were always willing to share meals and thoughts with me or take me on excursions into the bush, but I specifically like to remember my old friend Asta, the oldest woman of the neighbourhood, and to thank her for her friendship. In Oudda Bariki a warm welcome was given me by lavan Ardo who immediately organised both a good interpreter and a place to stay. Joël, thank you for your growing enthusiasm during the weeks we worked together. And Dairou, I will never forget your wrinkled face, your friendliness around the house, and the fact that you were so happy to share your grandsons with me: my precious Abdou, Bakari and Adam. Your wife Amina and your son’s wife, Abou, who was always laughing and singing, enlightened my stay with their constant care. Inhabitants of Oudda, I hope to see you back and join again in talks and merriment, sharing again the sugar feast and Christmas ceremonies and festivities. I also have to thank the neighbourhood chiefs and the two lamibe involved for their help and permission to do the research. Both Lamido Issa Tizze of Mogodé and lamido Hamidou Loumbi of Guili also offered me a nights rest when I was in need.

While introducing me to the heartland of the Tupuri, Philippe Douryang took me to Bahana Elisabeth in Tchatibali, who served as an interpreter there later on. When I fell ill, the wife of the sub-prefect, Colette Djioogue, aided me as a nurse and friend, taking me up in her family. I like to express a warm ‘thank you’ to all three. My road also led me to Sirlawé and to the house of lavan Djabe. His sons Bonané and Flaubert helped me as guides and interpreters, and his wives, daughter Mailamma and daughter in law Mwaniwà, always saw to my morning porridge of red millet. This family remains in my heart for ever. Thank you for showing me that intel-
lectual thinking, joy, and empathy for neighbours and the wider world can exist together in a small, rural Cameroonian village. In Kolara I was willingly accepted in the home of my interpreter Birvê Santoing and his wife Amina. With Birvê I roamed the wild bush, knowing that Amina would have the millet and a superb sauce ready when we returned. One day she even had the little Tchaoba Jan ready, having given birth without telling us that he had announced himself already in the morning. The choice of his name (after my husband’s) and the numerous hugs from their little daughter Aimée ensure an enduring link between our families.

On the Kapsiki plateau a difficult road, encroached with bushes and rocks, led me to the house of Iwvan Yaya Guidang and his enthusiast and intelligent wife Djenabou, who even managed to understand my fulfuldé. With her foster daughter Amina and their neighbours’ daughter Djenabou-‘tje’ she welcomed me home every evening after a long and warm day. Thank you for the hugs, the buckets of water, the tea with milk, the meals (which were prepared specifically to my taste) and, last but not least, the evening visits and chats in my hut. Djenabou also brought me in contact with her brother Zra Jesaja in Dzambou Centre, who opened his door for me with the same enthusiasm. Dear Zra, I will never forget the way you rushed down the slope, bare footed, to close me in your arms after a year of divorce. You, your wives and mother took me and my family up in your circle as if we belonged there. The singing around the camp fire during Christmas and New Years Eve, the numerous little services my two little friends, Hadjera and Samuel, rendered me, the laughing and the quarrels are engraved in my heart. I have to thank you and Sini Kodje, your co-interpreter in Baba Deli, sincerely for all the efforts and joy with regard to the work.

I could never have reached my study villages without the help of many people in Maroua. First of all, the travel grant of WOTRO made the preliminary study possible. At that time, Hans Bauer, the co-coordinator of CEDC, helped me to start my journey in the Far North of Cameroon. He organised my valuable guide and interpreter Fatma Feuget, put me on the route to Stephanie Kerstens in Mayo Oulo, to the continuing cares of Kaskala in Zina (may he rest in peace) and to the ‘stories’ of Jan van der Ploeg in the house of Iwvan Yiero of Kolara. All of them helped me a lot in the first phase of my research. Hans also send with me the driver Bapetel, with whom I shared more than half of my trips and who became a trustworthy friend. The CEDC guards and staff, the dormitory father, Papa Maliki, the drivers, and all the Dutch and Cameroonian students offered a warm environment to come home to after months in the bush. After each return trip to town somebody shared his house with me: Tineke Ceelen of SNV. Mark and Lesley, Martine Prins, Janneke and Eric. and José van Santen, thank you all for your hospitality and the possibility to discuss my findings and thoughts. Special thanks to Madi Ali, the director of the CEDC, for all his help and to Jean-Pierre Mvondo (at first member of the staff, later the new director) for his always willing ear and advice. The CEDC co-ordinators José van Santen and, later, Stephen van der Mark, helped a lot in financial and other difficulties. My thanks also go to all line-officers in Maroua, Mokolo, Mogodé, Bourah and Doukoula who were willing to share their information with me. For the same reason I have to thank my friend Arabi Mohammed of MIDIMA.

When my road led me back to the Netherlands, to my happiness I always found my colleagues from the “Africa room” in Leiden – Diny, Aad. Hans, Natazza - and members from our PhD-study group Milantro willing to discuss experiences, data and texts. I want to thank Koen and Marco for their never faltering help to this computer illiterate and Edith for her help
in the kingdom of books. All other colleagues of CML. I want to thank for their friendship, laughter and inspiring ideas, especially during coffee breaks! I also have to thank the institute for the working place they offered me and for the possibility to attend international academic workshops. I am most grateful to colleagues and staff at AMIDST, the Uva, for always welcoming me back at discussions and meetings, despite my seeming difficulty of finding my way to Amsterdam. Karen and Adano, thank you for sharing your room (with my box of things), your ideas and your friendship. The organisation of the long, but not so winding road to and from Cameroon I owe to Clinton Siccama: thank you. Francis Gouda has opened up my mind to broader theoretical issues in the socio-political sphere of post-colonial critics. A word of thank has to be expressed to the CERES research school as well. The network and meetings with staff and fellow PhD-students proved to be very helpful.

I also would like to express my gratitude to Howard Turner for improving my English, to Isabelle Lewin and Bonane Lawa for the French summary and to the people of Io-Graph for their work on the lay-out and pictures of the book.

Last but not least, the work on the PhD research moved along a wider path of life where my friends and family provided me with lots of distraction and understanding. It is good to see and hear that many more is going on in the world than struggles for land in north Cameroon. My two gorgeous boys, I hope you can forgive me for going away so far, so long and so often, but I am sure it made you grow. Jan, my fellow traveller. I do not thank you here, but you know the words of my heart.

Ruth Noorduyn

Leiden. August 2004