Constructing history, culture and inequality: the Betsileo in the extreme Southern Highlands of Madagascar

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Citation for published version (APA):

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Chapter one

Introduction: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

Prologue

Over a ten-year period (1989-1999), I carried on research, lived and participated in the day-to-day life of the Betsileo people dwelling in the extreme Southern Highlands of Madagascar. My work took me throughout Fianarantsoa province, but it principally focussed on the village of Marovato.¹ I chose Marovato because it offered me the opportunity to observe a hierarchical society that had only recently been created. The founder and many first generation villagers are still alive, presenting an invaluable firsthand source of information. Furthermore, the village underwent fundamental societal changes during my sojourn, giving me the chance to see how village leaders implemented their ideas into practice.

Since Marovato’s inception during the 1930s, the elite group of the village has skilfully harnessed its own history and customs to maintain boundaries of exclusion and lend legitimacy to its authority. The village leaders regularly referred to socio-economic relations and fonbaga ny, the “Malagasy customs”, as a stable and timeless system. Reality was far less rigid and absolute. Socio-economic relations were constantly evolving and subject to ongoing negotiations. Fonbaga ny was often tailored to suit the needs of the moment. They, however, used a terminology which relied on the immanent nature of the system to justify and perpetuate it. It should be emphasised from the outset that Marovato is a frontier community. As such, the villagers were left to their own devices to construct their definition of the fonbaga ny. This process was anchored in the memory of their past, their tantara.

Tantara, the Malagasy term that most closely resembles the English word “history”, also signifies a tale, legend or fabulous narration (cf. Richardson 1967: 622). History, in this sense, is not a static, chronological record of past events. It is tantara, a tale “to be related”. This certainly holds true for the Betsileo of the extreme Southern Highlands, for whom the very legitimacy of tantara depends upon the extent to which it is believed and subsequently transmitted by others. Conversely, not having a tale to tell is fatal. Very tantara, which refers to something no longer remembered, can be literally translated as “lost history”.

As it turned out, I encountered a group of people in Marovato who claimed to have forgotten their history. These people were called andro (“slave” or “slave descent”) by the ruling group of the village, who had succeeded in implanting their own myth of themselves as tompontany, or “masters of the land”. They spoke of the andro as “people without history”. When I inquired as to how such a phenomenon could be possible, I was informed that the andro had lost their history by losing their tanin-draçana (“ancestral land”) and their fasana (“tomb”).² Without a tomb, it appeared, no tale remained to be told by the andro.

¹ To protect the privacy of the villagers, place names and names of individuals are pseudonyms. I selected Marovato as typifying six other villages I had examined in the extreme Southern Highlands between Ambalavao and Ankaramena (see maps).

² Most slaves lost their tombs upon enslavement. Slaves were prohibited from having permanent tombs throughout the period of slavery. They were forced to bury their dead in perishable tombs (Bloch 1971: 136, cf. chapter nine).
The *tompon-tany*, however, provided their own perceptions of the *andevo* past, even going so far as to reconstruct their history.

Based on the foregoing I developed my initial area of inquiry, i.e. the issue of how the *tompon-tany* were able to create an ancestral community in which the position of all village inhabitants is determined by the presence or absence of a family tomb. A second aspect also called for further investigation. Those labelled *andevo* by the *tompon-tany* not only accepted the underpinnings of the system, but also assumed an active role in its perpetuation.

1.1 Theoretical considerations

Existing ethnographies concerning Merina and Betsileo living in the Highlands focus on people with tombs. To date, no in-depth studies have been undertaken with respect to people who are currently without tombs. This thesis attempts to tell their story. The research methodology is grounded in an inductive analyses. In the absence of prior research and theoretical parameters, the logical point of departure appeared to be the Betsileo themselves. On this basis, I began a ten-year process of following and recording the lives of the tombless people. The manner in which this was conducted is detailed in the methodology section. My field journal entries were the first step in preparing grids on social organisation and economic activities of the tombless, their burial practices, and their views on kinship, tombs and ancestors. The investigation of these recurrent themes was based on my conviction that the most fruitful line of inquiry into the Betsileo, whose very history starts and ends with the tomb, might lie with those who do not possess one.

Eventually, my observations of the tombless Betsileo raised issues and questions which called for a comparative analysis with those who possessed tombs. Based on my ethnographic conclusions, a theoretical model has been developed which appears later in this thesis. Researchers in Madagascar studies, particularly those studying the Highlands, may find this model of use in examining a range of topics which are central to the Betsileo: ideals of socio-economic organisation, marriage practices, ontological perceptions, the world of the ancestors, burial customs, poisoning, sorcery and witchcraft. In addition, it is hoped that my research will contribute to debates on poverty, survival strategies, inequality, insider/outsider configurations, frontier societies, and slavery.

1.2 Issues of Slavery

Any discussion of slavery is problematic by definition and subject to constraints which limit firm conclusions and condition the approach which I have adopted.

Firstly, there are the myriad aspects and misunderstandings associated with the semantic field of the words slave and slavery (cf. Miers and Kopytoff 1977: 3-81). No attempt will be made to resolve this complex issue. The reasons underlying this are simple, yet, I believe, compelling. It is both beyond the scope of the thesis, and my personal expertise. Furthermore, historical research in the field concerning Madagascar is still in its early stages. Therefore, any discussion will necessarily be broad-brush and speculative. For a more detailed examination of issues surrounding slavery, I refer the reader to the works of Smith (1977: 1-172) and Smith (1979: 1-203).
stages. The literature on what has been called slavery in Madagascar is scarce and often presented from a subjective viewpoint (missionaries, French colonists, etc.). There is also a methodological problem common to existing research which often adopts top-down approaches, conditioned by macro-analyses and a need to fit events into systems. These studies, outside of their heuristic and evidentiary gaps, are problematic, as they try to encapsulate a diverse range of situations under one general and ill-defined rubric: “slavery” in Madagascar.

The forms and degrees of inequalities imposed by conquest, law or custom cover a wide scope. What has been labelled slavery emerged in particular regions of the country and was usually the creation of the dominant power of a given era (local kingdoms, the Merina hegemony). The forms of slavery varied from household slavery to slaves who directly worked for the king (cf. Callet 1908: 323-234, Dubois 1938: 584-585). The latter groups of slaves had a certain amount of prestige (cf. Bloch 1980: 107). Next to these forms of slavery, corvée labour performed by free Malagasy, particularly in the nineteenth century Merina kingdom, was another category of unpaid labour that was crucial to economic life. It is said to have been even harsher than slave labour (Brown 1995: 218-129, Ellis 1985: 25-26). Some corvée labourers even went so far as giving themselves up for slavery (Knight 1896: 146). However, corvée labour, despite its extreme form of exploitation in Madagascar, was never characterised as slavery.

Finally, the present study is not about slavery as such, but, at the risk of repeating myself, an inductive study, starting with the Betsileo people of the Marovato region. In a sense, my research in the field coincided with the occurrence of a historical event, i.e. that of the creation of inequalities in present time, using the guise of a stable and timeless system to justify the imposition of these inequalities. Keeping the foregoing in mind, certain historical facts and events, provided they satisfy the double criterion of being relatively certain and relevant to the Marovato experience, are worthy of inclusion as historical context to the current socio-economic relations.

For the purpose of this historical overview, and in view of the above, I will use a general definition of slavery, proposed by James Watson (1980: 8):

'Slaves' are acquired by purchase or capture, their labour is extracted through coercion and, as long as they remain slaves, they are never accepted into the kinship group of the master. 'Slavery' is thus the institutionalisation of these relationships between slave and owner.

Defining slaves as property and outsiders to society has given rise to its own sets of problems, particularly when applied to African slavery. Miers and Kopytoff (1977: 7-11) point out that the term property is sui generis in the African context. Miers and Kopytoff refer to the concept of “rights-in-person”, i.e. the rights that one person or group exercises over another. This means that kinship groups to a certain extent “own” their members,

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4 The most important works on slavery are: André 1899, Bloch 1980: 100-134, Cousins 1896, Piolet 1896: 447-480, Sewell 1876.

5 Ellis (1985: 26) stresses that slaves sometimes were better off than the corvée labourers within the Merina kingdom in the later nineteenth century: “The people who suffered least from the heavy burden of unpaid labour, oddly enough, were probably household slaves. They were traditionally exempt from state labour, the origin of which lay in the obligation of a freeman to his lord ... Many slaves farmed or traded on their own accounts and even prospered.” Chapter nine will further elaborate on the socio-cultural position of slaves as compared to the free population of the Highlands.
who constitute the wealth of the group. In this sense, even the "free" might be said not to be totally free themselves (ibid.: 11). Miers and Kopytoff therefore argue that, in order to be able to understand slavery, one has to examine the actual position of slaves, whom they refer to as acquired outsiders, in relation to other members of the society where they dwell (ibid.: 12).

Miers and Kopytoff also postulate that slaves are not excluded from the host society (ibid.: 15). Slavery, they assert, depends upon the relative inclusion of the slave, which they call the "institutionalization of marginality", a term first suggested by James Vaughan (1977: 85-102). According to this analysis, the slave is initially a non-person, but through the "slavery-to-kinship continuum", he/she moves from total marginality towards greater incorporation into the host society (Miers and Kopytoff op. cit: 19-24). This goal is achieved principally through adoption and marriage. Thus, in their view, the problem of slavery is not the dehumanising of a person into property, but its precise opposite, the "rehumanising" of the non-person within a new social setting (ibid.: 22). The system of slavery described by Miers and Kopytoff is often referred to as open, and is more common in African communities, unlike the closed systems prevalent in Asian societies, where the dominant kinship groups are rather exclusive e.g. India, Nepal and China (Watson 1980).

Slavery in the Highlands of Madagascar, to the North of the Marovato region, if categorised according to the aforementioned analysis, can be viewed as a closed system of slavery. “Closure” is principally effected through group endogamy.

**Early kingdoms in the Highlands**

The Highlands topographically are comprised of hills and mountains alternating with extensive lowland areas. The Merina, who dwell in the North and the Betsileo in the South are socially organised around their rice paddies in the valleys. This attachment is materialised in their tombs. The land is co-owned by members of the kin group and is kept within the kin group through in-marriage. In the past, kin groups had high levels of independence, as they governed themselves through assemblies led by elders. These committees organised communal work related to their systems of irrigated rice cultivation and settled disputes within the kin groups (Bloch 1989: 50-51, 1971).

Until the nineteenth century, the Highlands were divided into numerous small kingdoms. The military rulers lived in fortified villages on hill-tops (cf. Mille 1970). They principally originated from the agricultural villages, which they left to resettle on hilltops dominating a series of valleys. The radius of these kingdoms generally did not extend further than fifteen

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6 Nieboer (1910) developed the thesis that slavery principally occurred in regions with "open resources", i.e. where land was available for exploitation. This was opposed to "closed resources" where this was not the case. Baks, Breman and Noort (1966) tested this thesis further, but found that the cross-cultural evidence showed no significant correlation between the occurrence of slavery in societies with "open" resources. Watson (1980: 9-13) postulates that, in Asia, slavery also was practised in areas with "closed resources". The form of slavery, however, was more exclusive than in many African societies where land was abundantly available: "It is possible to read the history of entire civilisations in Asia as a struggle for land and, hence, control over land meant automatic control over people. Rather than being "absorptive", therefore, the institutions, kin groups, and communities of Asian societies were more exclusive - the problem was to keep people out" (Watson ibid: 12) The Malagasy situation of Imerina represents an interesting intermediate model where land for exploitation was available but, at the same time, kin groups married endogamous to "keep people out".

7 Slavery has taken on diverse forms in Madagascar. The Sakalava, a people living in the Western regions, for example, are said to have employed an open system of slavery (cf. Feeley-Harnik 1991).
kilometres from the hilltops. Villagers were controlled and exploited by their rulers, who nevertheless left them free to determine their own political organisation in the village communities. The rulers lived from informal gifts of meat, rice and other products presented by the villagers, who considered themselves under their authority (Bloch 1989: 52-53).

Prior to the nineteenth century, local politics was the principal creator of slavery. Individuals, and occasionally entire descent groups, could be reduced to slavery if they fell into disgrace, were captured in local wars between kings or were bought to relieve debt within the kin group (Dubois 1938: 584-585, Ellis 1985: 8, Granddier 1920: 205). For our purpose, two conclusions are material. Firstly, slavery was local in nature, which meant it developed its own distinctive features within each of the kingdoms. Secondly, due to the scale of the economies, the actual numbers of slaves remained limited (cf. Bloch 1980: 106). The slave population, however, dramatically increased with the onset of the nineteenth century Merina expansion.

The expanding Merina kingdom

Until the nineteenth century, the ruling families rarely engaged in agriculture. This changed when Andrianampaninasavana came to power (1787-1810). He ordered the undertaking of large-scale drainage works on the edge of the Betsonimory marsh in the Central Highlands (described by Delrivé 1967, Dez 1970, Isnard 1953, Raison 1971). The wide-reaching, labour-intensive, hydraulic rice culture formed a solid foundation for the creation of an imperial army and administration. In order to solve labour shortages, Andrianampaninana forced free descent villages into corvée labour (fanampandra). These villagers worked the agricultural land, but also engaged in "unproductive" activities, notably in the administration and imperial army (Campbell 1988: 463-486). Slaves either served the king, for the most part working in the royal rice paddies, or toiled as household slaves to replace their masters who had to perform corvée labour. These slaves were principally comprised of prisoners-of-war captured during the army's campaigns against neighbours (Ellis 1985: 27). The conquered lands were absorbed into what later became the Imernina kingdom (ibid: 38-61).

Andrianampaninana's system had now come full circle, which in simplified form may be expressed as follows: the victorious army captured prisoners-of-war. Some prisoners were forced to labour as slaves on the recently conquered land, which was converted to rice production. Others were sold to European traders for arms and ammunition, allowing for conquest of further territory. With the means of production and labour now united, irrigation capacity increased, as did rice production. As the exploitation of land under rice cultivation grew, so did the demand for slaves (Bloch 1989: 56).

Andrianampaninana's expansionist policies were continued by his son Radama I (1810-1828). He proved even more successful than his father, developing the slave trade networks of Andrianampaninana with the Europeans, particularly the English and French (cf. Filliot 1974, Larson 1997: 131-145). By selling slaves to European traders,
Radama gained access to more arms, which facilitated the conquest of Radama’s army. The slave population in Imerina increased accordingly (Campbell 1988: 463).

In 1820, however, Radama concluded a treaty with Farquhar, the British governor of Mauritius, which had fallen into British hands in 1810. This treaty formally brought the export of slaves from the Merina kingdom to an end (Brown 1995: 123-126). The treaty opened the door for Radama to modernise his kingdom. In October of the same year, he allowed the first representative of the London Missionary Society (LMS) to arrive in Antananarivo. Radama had little regard for the religious role of missionaries. He viewed them principally as educators. The missionaries founded the first schools and, within a period of years, introduced the printing press to the kingdom, in addition to modern techniques of handicraft (Valette 1979: 177-193).

The 1820 treaty also provided Radama with an ongoing supply of European weaponry. Furthermore, under its terms, a contingent of British controllers were to monitor breaches of the new prohibition against exporting slaves. The British also had to ensure that enemies of Radama were prevented from acquiring arms. With these safeguards in place, Radama faced little resistance and was free to conduct his expansionist campaigns unhindered. Ironically, this ultimately led to an increased number of slaves in Imerina, as internal slavery had not been abolished by the 1820 treaty (Brown 1995: 158, Raison-Jourde 1997: 117, Valette 1979: 173-177).

By 1825, the Merina controlled the entire eastern littoral, with the exception of the extreme North (around Antsiranana), large parts of the Sakalava region and the Highlands. At the end of Radama’s reign, some three-fifths of Madagascar’s landmass was under Merina control. Only areas in the South, Southwest, centre South and extreme North were still independent (Valette 1979: 184). Thousands of slaves were transported from the areas of colonisation to regional slave markets. People who were not enslaved were forced to work as corvéé labourers and farm their lands under the control of Merina supervisors (cf. Campbell 1988: 474-477, Ellis 1985: 40).

Subsequent Merina kings and queens continued to use the networks created by Radama. Corvéé labour and slavery remained important. Many authors have made estimates of the numbers of slaves working and living in Madagascar just prior to the abolition of slavery by the French in 1896. In an article on slavery in Madagascar, Razafimanantsosa (1993) sets the proportion of slaves as being 15% of the total population in 1896. As the population of Madagascar was then approximately two million, 300,000 inhabitants would have been enslaved if Razafimanantsosa’s estimate is accurate.

9 Radama I tried to organise his army along Western lines and wished to clothe his soldiers in Western uniforms. The Merina elite considered it an honour to serve in Radama’s forces. During campaigns, their rice paddies were cultivated by their slaves. Radama was soon able to count on 25,000 men-at-arms, although he had great difficulty in sustaining them. They were not paid, as Radama regarded it as an honour to serve in his army. He did feed his troops while they served in the field, as his father had done, although much less effectively. During Radama’s expansion, soldiers were as likely to die of starvation as on the battlefield. This eventually led to anarchy, as one of the survival strategies the soldiers employed was to exchange prisoners-of-war for food (Chapus 1839: 41-54, Ellis 1838: 255).

10 Farquhar had already entered into an earlier treaty with Radama I to abolish the export of slaves from Madagascar. The terms of this treaty, however, were not respected by the British themselves (Valette 1979: 173-175).

11 These regions corresponded respectively to those occupied by the Antandroy, Mahafaly, Menabe-Sakalava, Bara, Tanala and Antankarana in the extreme North (Valette 1979: 184).
In the Highlands, the proportions would appear to have been considerably higher. According to Bloch (1980: 110), the pre-colonial economy was totally dependent on slavery. Bloch calculates, as does Raison-Jourde (1976: 284), that the proportion of slaves in the Highlands may have been as high as 50%. Campbell (1988: 463-486) argues that rather too much weight has been placed on the role of slavery in the Imerina economy. He points to the high level of corvée labour as an important stimulus for rice cultivation and consequently estimates the slave population of the Highlands to be in the order of one-third of the total population (cf. Molet 1972: 45). The foregoing estimates are somewhat contradictory and difficult to verify. They do, however, concur on one point. Slaves were numerically a significant part of the Highlands population, existing in higher proportions than elsewhere in the country.

Conclusion

Keeping the previous historical outline of slavery in mind, I chose to limit my focus to one sphere of investigation, which might be phrased in a question. How might the Betsileo in the Marovato region ontologically be linked into this experience of slavery? The question arose from the decade of research I conducted in Marovato, as my notes and observations of village life seemed to revolve around two recurrent themes. First, Marovato history, as told by the villagers, appeared to be anchored in the history and semantics of slavery. Secondly, the memory of the trilogy of kinship, tombs and ancestors, so important in both past and present social relations in the Highlands, had been reproduced in the Marovato region. These issues will be examined in subsequent chapters. In chapter nine, I will return to the socio-cultural position of slaves during the period of slavery in the Highlands, with the aim of offering some insight into the current position of the andevohi dwelling in the Marovato region.

1.3 A brief overview of Madagascar

Marovato is a frontier village, although one which developed dramatically during the ten years of my study. As such, it displayed many of the hallmarks of the frontier (cf. chapter ten): relative isolation, deprivation, and particularly the resourcefulness of a people left to strike out on their own in one of the most desolate environments of the country. At the same time, despite its insularity, life in the village is very much conditioned by the realities governing everyone in Madagascar. The downward political and macro-economic spiral of Madagascar during the decade which preceded my arrival left the Malagasy, and by extension, the Marovato villagers, to fend for themselves. For this reason, the thesis proposes a general overview, one that is deemed essential, as it sets the backdrop for events I was to observe in the field.

An island of migrants

Madagascar is first and foremost an island, the fourth largest in the world. It stretches approximately 1,500 kilometres from North to South, and comprises a land area of 587,040 square kilometres, the equivalent of Holland, Belgium and France together. Broadly speaking, the East coast is characterised by rain forests, lowlands leading inland towards steep bluffs and central highlands. Tsaratanana Massif in the North is principally a high

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12 Sources of this overview are the following unless mentioned otherwise: United States Library of Congress statistics on the Republic of Madagascar (2000), Country Report Madagascar of the International Monetary Fund (IMF, October 1997), World Bank report Madagascar: Poverty Assessment (June 1996) and Malagasy newspapers as: L’Express de Madagascar, LaKroa, Madagascar Tribune, Midi Madagasikara.
range of volcanic mountains. The West coast contains many protected harbours and broad plains, whereas the Centre is featured by high plateaux covered with stretches of rice paddies, which descend into the more arid regions of the South. Marovato can be found in the South of Fianarantsoa province. The village is located between the plateaux and the semi-desert of the South, at the place where it was founded by its surviving patriarch, Rafidy Andriana (82). It is on the edge of “Route Nationale 7” (RN7), at the lower edge of a series of foothills which gradually rise into the Ifaha mountains to the North and the Andringitra Massif to the South of the village.

Malagasy trace their origins back to areas as diverse as Polynesia, the islands of Southwest Asia, East Africa and the Persian Gulf. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Madagascar has been successively settled by people coming from other parts of the globe: Comorians, Europeans (particularly British and French), Indo-Pakistanis, and Chinese. All settlers left behind traces that are visible in the social fabric of the country. Despite geographical social differences, the Malagasy speak one language which is linguistically categorised as Austronesian, but French is also commonly spoken in urban centres. An estimated fifty-five per cent hold indigenous beliefs; forty per cent are Christian, evenly divided between Roman Catholics and Protestants; five per cent Muslim.

The heterogeneous make-up of the population conditions the Malagasy mentality in two significant ways. Firstly, the country, from its origins, has been settled by people who migrated from other regions or countries. Over time, this historical reality of migration recurs as a social and cultural leitmotif, manifesting itself in rules of descent and burial customs throughout the country. The second reality is not so evident, particularly to the newcomer. An outsider visiting the country today is informed before long, whether by official guide or in casual conversation with a Malagasy, that everyone is “Malagasy” and therefore equal, but also that there are eighteen ethnic groups. This truism, which falls easily off the lips of the Malagasy, particularly in the capital, would appear to be more rooted in government rhetoric than inner conviction. The actual situation is far less certain. As one becomes acquainted with groups such as the Merina or Betsileo, it becomes clear that each of these “ethnic” groups contains a wide variety of peoples, a fact that suggests the eighteen divisions owe their distinguishing features more to the hand of bureaucrats than that of nature.

That being said, the principal demographic elements that influence Madagascar are the youth of the population, its heavy rural component, and more than anything the poverty, which will be discussed in the next section. Poverty not just as a condition born of demographics, but as a trap, one which has proven an ironically fertile ground for the breeding of other phenomena: localised forms of justice and retribution, radical expressions of inequality, and perhaps even an anchoring of the beliefs that people live in a stable and timeless universe, where things have never changed, and where the “Malagasy customs” have pre-determined their fates from cradle to tomb.

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13 Ages appear in brackets. Where possible, they are based on identity cards, and are otherwise estimated, as many of the villagers were unsure as to their exact date of birth.

14 Source: US Library of Congress data (2000). Marovato villagers show little interest in Christian religions. The direct influence of Christianity is limited in the extreme Southern Highlands, contrary to other areas of the Highlands. From the standpoint of pure physical presence, there are two Christian chapels in Marovato, one Catholic, one Protestant. They principally attract children, who attend for catechism, a term loosely applied to what in reality is group singing. Masses are intermittent, and wedding or funeral ceremonies do not take place in either of the two chapels (cf. chapter seven).
A failed socialist experiment

My research coincided with a period of political unrest. By the end of the 1980s, popular political resistance against Admiral Didier Ratsiraka gathered momentum. Ratsiraka had held power since 1975, and ruled the country under a highly centralised government outwardly committed to the tenets of revolutionary socialism, based on the 1975 constitution. The results of this “revolution” were visibly apparent by the time I arrived in 1989. Protests were a daily occurrence in the capital Antananarivo, and chronic work stoppages by public officers paralysed the country for months on end. However, it took until 1992 for the opposition to sufficiently unite and force presidential elections. In the first round of the 1992 elections, opposition candidate Albert Zafy polled 45% of the vote to Ratsiraka’s 29%. Zafy easily defeated Ratsiraka in the second round of elections which were held in February 1993.

The Malagasy placed great hope in President Zafy, trusting he could rectify the economic decline of the years preceding his election. But Zafy failed to reverse the effects of Ratsiraka’s failed socialist experiment. Nor did he show the savvy necessary to eliminate former president Ratsiraka as a political foe, leaving the terrain free for the latter to prepare his return, using his networks of political friends still active within the government and the National Assembly.

President Zafy’s short-lived mandate came to an end with his impeachment in 1996. In 1997, new presidential elections were held. With 50.7% of the vote, Didier Ratsiraka was re-elected to the post of president. The effect of Ratsiraka’s re-election was immediate. A passive, bitter lethargy seemed to grip the country. People lost their faith in national politics. Even worse, they became cynical about any possibility of effecting change. Admittedly, to a certain extent, this attitude pre-existed the events in question. Almost half (49%) of the country abstained from voting in the presidential elections. Ratsiraka’s rhetoric was based on the vague platform of “ecological humanitarianism”. Since his re-election he spends much of his time in France for medical reasons. The resulting political vacuum has led to increased corruption and worsened the country’s poverty.

Any small steps towards progress have been impeded since 1991 by ongoing political instability and ill-conceived, poorly implemented economic policy.15 Thus, despite the restoration of financial stability in 1995-96 (imposed by the IMF), the trend in declining real income per capita has continued. In economic terms, Madagascar is said to be caught in a poverty trap, characterised by low investment and slow growth. Poverty afflicts seventy percent of the population (as compared to approximately forty-five percent in the early 1960s), and real GDP per capita has declined by more than one-third since 1970.16

Madagascar’s post-colonial evolution is not unusual for an African country, in that it has been forced to undergo the swings of the political pendulum between ill-conceived socialist programs and outright dictatorship. Any opportunities appearing on the horizon have not been successfully translated into improvements in the standard of living.

The net result of these political developments can be summarised in a simple, yet eloquent

15 Recently a book on the political events in the 1990s appeared under the title: Identités et transition démocratique: l’exception Malgache? (François Roubaud, 2000).
Madagascar ranks among the countries with the lowest GDP per capita in the world (US$251 in 1997). The total population of Madagascar in 1993 was 12.2 million. The 1975-93 annual growth rate was 2.8. At that rate, Madagascar’s population would again double in 25 years. In the early 1990s, an estimated seventy-two per cent of the Malagasy lived in absolute deprivation, compared with a ratio of thirty-nine per cent for sub-Saharan Africa and thirty-two per cent for all developing countries. The next section will disclose statistics that provide a breakdown of this poverty. The aim is twofold. Firstly, so as to better appreciate the penury of the Marovato villagers’ daily existence and secondly, to underline the extravagance and desperation which permeate the four-day funeral ceremony (cf. chapter seven).

**Absolute poverty and the food poor**

The extent of Madagascar’s poverty from an international perspective can be measured by the World Bank’s reference level for “absolute poverty”. This is defined as a household’s inability to purchase a basket of basic food and non-food items. The food component of the basket provides a minimum per capita requirement of 2,100 calories per day, a level in line with medical research.

Based on this benchmark, Madagascar’s national poverty line was determined to be in the order of 248,400 FMG (Malagasy Francs) per capita per annum in 1993 prices. The World Bank estimated that about seventy per cent of Madagascar’s total population lived under the poverty threshold. In World Bank terminology, households consuming less than 2,100 calories per capita per day are referred to as “food poor”. The poverty line for the food poor was set at 194,460 FMG per person a year. Based on this criterion, fifty-nine per cent of the Malagasy was estimated to be food poor in 1993 (IMF 1997: 41).

Forty-five per cent of the population is under the age of fifteen. As a result, the dependency ratio is very high. For each active person (between the ages of fifteen and sixty) there is one inactive person (including children under fifteen). Average life expectancy is fifty-three years for females and fifty-one years for males.

According to the latest national survey of 1993 (op. cit.), more than three-fourths of the population inhabited rural areas. Population density was highest on the East coast and in the Central Highlands. Poverty is more widespread in rural areas than in the cities. Seventy-seven per cent of the rural population was poor (sixty-six per cent of the rural population was classified as extremely poor), as compared with forty-seven per cent of the urban population.

It should be stressed that figures concerning Madagascar should be viewed as estimates given the difficulty of obtaining correct information. In addition, most studies focus on cash income, which also might lead to misleading figures, particularly with respect to the countryside.

Data from the latest census of the Malagasy population carried out in August 1993 by the Malagasy National Institute of Statistics (Direction de la Démographie). In 1998 the population was estimated to be 14 million (IMF 1999: 3).


In 1996 prices, the poverty line would be at about 623,000 FMG, or US$146 at the 1996 exchange rate (using the food component of the consumer price index). This amount is equivalent to about 250,000 FMG (US$50) a month per household, which is twice the level of the minimum wage in the formal sector (IMF 1997: 41).
population (thirty-five per cent were below the extreme poverty line). As a result, eighty-six per cent of Madagascar's poor lived in the countryside (and eighty-eight per cent of the extremely poor). Moreover, on average, the rural poor were farther below the poverty line than the urban poor. In Toamasina province in the centre-east and Fianarantsoa province in the centre-south, where Marovato is located, about three-fourths of the population lives below the poverty line. Highland provinces Antananarivo and Fianarantsoa account for about one-half of Madagascar's poor, as population density is very high in this region (IMF 1997: 47).

Farming is the poorest occupation in Madagascar. About eighty per cent of farmers, small or large, are poor. Fianarantsoa province is a region known for its rice and manioc production. However, the isolation of its rural communities and ongoing severe environmental degradation have caused local economies to languish. Areas formerly covered with large forests have become semi-desert because of inadequate agricultural methods, and farm yields have correspondingly declined. The incidence of poverty in rural Fianarantsoa is in the order of seventy-six per cent, whereas fifty-five per cent of urban dwellers live below the poverty threshold (IMF 1997: 49).

Fifty-four per cent of the Malagasy cannot read or write. The illiteracy rate in rural areas is double that of cities, and is slightly higher for females than for males. On average, one person out of the three above the age of six has never attended school (IMF 1997: 55). There is no school in Marovato.

Infrastructure

The political disturbances of the early 1990's triggered a substantial decline in GDP (see supra) per capita and lower foreign aid, which in turn decreased real expenditures on social services and infrastructure. The country's infrastructure, in particular roads, deteriorated markedly, cutting off many rural communities and creating local monopoly conditions in spite of the more open overall economy, two developments which we will see are directly connected with Marovato's fate.

In 1994, approximately 4,000 kilometres of the 40,000-kilometer road system were paved. During the same year, there were 1,095 kilometres railway track in two separate lines: Antananarivo to Toamasina and Fianarantsoa to Manakara at the East coast. But, due to logistic and technical problems, train service is sporadic at best. Madagascar has fifteen ports of which Toamasina, Mahajanga, and Antsiranana are the most important. Of the 105 usable airports, thirty had permanent surface runways in 1994 (US Library of Congress 2000).

Telephone service is sparse. Most telephone lines are located in Antananarivo. Electricity is almost non-existent for the poor, and the majority of Malagasy households drink contaminated water from lakes, rivers, and natural wells without pumps. Economic decline deteriorated medical services. Thirty-five per cent of the Malagasy lacked adequate access to health services in the early 1990s. Infant mortality was 165 per 1,000 in 1994. People generally resort to traditional medicine, particularly in rural areas (IMF 1997, US Library of Congress 2000).

Expenditures were on average thirty-seven per cent below the poverty line in rural areas, seventeen per cent in urban areas, and thirty-three per cent for the country as a whole. (IMF 1997: 45).
In Marovato itself, there is no electricity, telephone service or running water. At the time of this writing, the closest telephone to the village is forty kilometres to the Northeast in Ambalavao. RN7 (see Madagascar map), which runs from Fianarantsoa through Marovato and onwards towards the West coast city of Toliara, has been paved since 1997. The closest "hospital", in Ambalavao, is a two room shanty with no medical supplies or proper beds.

On the local level, and this was certainly the case in Marovato, the generalised, pervasive poverty conditioned every aspect of day-to-day existence. Nobody was immune to its effects, from top to bottom of the socio-economic pyramid. With this in mind, it cannot be overemphasised that even the dominant tompo-tany group of Marovato would be considered as very poor by any modern standards.

Conclusion

It has been said that a single death is a tragedy, a thousand a statistic. So it goes with Madagascar, where the scale and, more significantly, the continuing decline of its economic situation is only conveyed to the outside world through statistics printed in Brussels, Geneva, Paris and Washington. However, the reality underlying these statistics has a direct, tangible effect on the daily lives of the Marovato people. Despite being relatively isolated, at a distance of over five hundred kilometres from the capital Antananarivo, the ripple effect of political corruption under the return of President Ratsiraka and its corresponding decline in the infrastructure, price for crops and the basic commodities for subsistence, accentuated and exacerbated relations, and cannot be abstracted from the radical solutions which were employed to solve the problem of surviving in Marovato. And, against this dismal backdrop, it bears repeating that the extreme Southern Highlands is one of Madagascar's most deprived regions. It is a place for the desperate, pushed there by conditions which left migrants no choice but to opt for the harsh and difficult life it offers. Further details of the settlement of this former no-man's-land will be discussed in the next chapter.

1.4 Methodological considerations

For both chronological and methodological reasons, my research falls into two periods, the first from 1989 until 1992 and the second from 1996-1999. Throughout the initial phase ending in 1992, I adhered to a principally socio-economic approach, while relying on the life history method\(^2\), the interactional perspective\(^4\) and network analysis\(^2\). However, upon my return to Marovato in 1996, after a four year absence, certain events and observations led me to immediately conclude that either life in the village had dramatically changed or that my previous conclusions, while not necessarily inaccurate, were incomplete. After

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\(^2\) These two periods cover six field trips to Madagascar, including 2.5 years spent in the extreme Southern Highlands.

\(^3\) This method was particularly useful in revealing the in-depth contents of the human stories and the real life consequences of social categories within villages in the Marovato region.

\(^4\) Using this approach, developed by Erving Goffman (1963), I reported in detail on human interactions in Marovato. This allowed me to become aware of family structures in the village and the specific position of the andro living in the western part.

\(^5\) I used the network analysis to draw up lists of local and regional kinship networks of Marovato families. It became clear to me that the tompo-tany have extended family networks whereas the andro do not.
farther reflection, I decided that the root of this incompleteness lay in large part with my initial choice of methodology, which had proven most useful in assimilating and classifying the socio-economic aspects of Marovato, but had clearly led me astray with respect to some of the nuances I would discover during the subsequent period.

In 1996, I decided to adopt a methodology incorporating a cultural analysis of life in Marovato. This decision was prompted by the villagers themselves, without whom I could not have considered such a course of action. To somewhat simplify, I had been repeatedly informed during my earlier field work that until I was "ready", i.e. until I had mastered certain rudiments of Betsileo life, many of the questions I was asking were simply not open for discussion. In short, I was perceived as a child who had to learn things step by step. As the villagers phrased it, I had to learn to "behave like a Betsileo".

Living and working in Marovato

Based on archival research on the history of slavery in Madagascar in the *Archives d'Outre Mer* (Aix-en-Provence), I chose to carry out field work in the extreme Southern Highlands. Up until the advent of the twentieth century, this region was considered to be a no-man's-land. The archives indicated that runaway slaves and, at a later stage, ex-slaves were the principal settlers of the region. Beyond this affirmation, virtually no information existed. My initial purpose then, was to determine who currently inhabited the region.

The extreme Southern Highlands between Ambalavao and Ankaramena has a colourful reputation, being notorious for out-lawy, cow thefts and supernatural phenomena which lead even the Malagasy themselves to refer to the region as *ratsy* ("bad"). Upon being informed that I intended on relocating to the area for research, Malagasy often forcefully attempted to dissuade me from going. When pressed as to why such a course was ill-advised, they generally asserted that only people who had tried all their options elsewhere would consider living there. I found this information and its accompanying lurid details very intriguing. However, from my point of view, it was more significant that the area had only been recently settled and remained unstudied by anthropologists. This indicated that it was a prime location for further investigation.

From March to October 1992, I lived in the extreme Southern Highlands. At the beginning of March, I moved into the village of Marovato, because it was newly founded and supposedly inhabited by many migrants, most of whom appeared to be recent arrivals. I first stayed with the family of Ramosa (59), my assistant. His family accepted me fairly well. Initially, they viewed me as someone who could offer them advice and help in many fields. They seemed to take me for some kind of medical wonder who could cure illnesses in no time. Not long after my arrival, the first of a series of "patients" began arriving at the door,

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26 Culture is used here in the sense of "superstructure" (cf. chapter six).

27 "milondra tena Betsileo ianao" translates as "behaving Betsileo", but was phrased in various manners, and often included the qualifiers *tabaka* or *toy*, meaning behaving "like" a Betsileo.

28 Already in the past the no-man's-land was reputed a dangerous place, as Grandidier (1916: 41) writes: "Ces endroits déserts et sauvages sont redoutés par les Malgaches, car il ne se passe pas d'année où les jinka, des brigands, soit Sakalava, soit Bara, n'y viennent piller des boeufs et même enlever des habitants pour les vendre comme esclaves." These inhabitants were refugees from the wars going on between various kingdoms in the Highlands on the one hand and in the South on the other. According to the *Archives d'Outre Mer* and informants to the North of the region, these people became slaves in the second half of the nineteenth century. At the advent of the twentieth century the area supposedly was virtually empty.
eager to have me treat a range of conditions from high fevers to gaping flesh wounds inflicted while chopping wood. After one particularly disastrous attempt at ad hoc surgery, best left unreported, and the discovery by the villagers that I could not even bear the sight of blood, my medical career came to a rapid and merciful close.

My social status went into further decline when it became clear that I was unfamiliar with the do's and don'ts of Betsileo customs, particularly those pertaining to the culinary arts. During an early dinner held in my honour, I was asked to briefly survey a pot of rice cooking over a wood fire. Rice was a luxury item and wood in scarce supply, underlining the high esteem in which I was still held at that point of time. However, after I allowed the rice to burn, the assembled gathering of approximately seventy people learned upon arrival at the dinner table that fare for the evening was to be the considerably more commonplace staple of manioc. The usual silent contentment which would have accompanied the pleasure of eating rice was replaced by a short speech given by Rafidy Andriana (82), village leader and the father of my assistant. As I did not yet understand Malagasy, I presumed his preliminary remarks were the commencement of a *kabaty*, the long elaborate Malagasy speeches which would normally go with such an occasion. So, my surprise at the brevity of the speech was succeeded by shock when Ramosa translated the words of his father.

“When you first came I wondered why you were not yet married and do not have children. Now I know. You do not know anything. You behave like a *nazaha* ("foreigner"). We will learn you how to behave like a Betsileo.”

And that was what happened. My days were well planned by Rafidy Andriana. I would be awakened at 5:00 a.m. The first task of the day was to fetch water from the Zomandao river. This involved walking about one kilometre through the fields to the river, retrieving water with a plastic bucket and returning to the village with the bucket balanced precariously on my head. This task alone took me weeks to accomplish with any degree of competence.

The next task was to cook manioc with the women over a wood fire. By 7:00, I was expected in the fields, where I worked with members of Rafidy Andriana's family for the remainder of the day. A short lunch of manioc was served on the field itself and hardly represented a break. I generally returned to the village at about 17:00, after which I could go to the river for a quick wash. Towards 18:00, I was scheduled to return to devote myself to the dinner preparations. At 20:30, I was dismissed from my charges and started working on my field notes. All of these times are estimated, as the signal to change from one activity for another was either the jostling of children against me in our large communal room, signalling the start of another day or the simple, unannounced and rapid departure of my co-workers as they completed one task and left to prepare for another.

Betting was a common practice in the village and more than one was placed as to how long I would survive my work schedule. For six weeks, I ran, tilled, wiped, struggled through the basic tasks of the day and silently cursed my choice of career as my apprenticeship into “Malagasy customs” continued. However, my work in the fields brought with it a greater price than the usual blisters and muscle aches from unaccustomed manual labour. Prior to this period, I had freely moved between family group compounds, asking questions and exchanging information. My sources of information were pluralistic. But, as time passed on, I became more and more exclusively involved with members of Rafidy Andriana’s family. This presented a twofold problem. Firstly, my sources of information had been narrowed down to one prestigious family of the village nobility. Secondly, and to my mind,
even more importantly, I now risked being perceived as loyal only to Rafidy Andriana's family. My fears proved to be well-founded, as Rafidy Andriana never lost an occasion to remind me that I was prohibited from socialising with those of Western Marovato, without ever explaining why. My contact with the other villagers decreased with each passing day. Eventually, I decided that it was necessary to alter my daily schedule.

At the end of seven weeks, I asked Rafidy Andriana whether I could get my own hut in Marovato. He was not particularly receptive to the idea. I asked him directly whether or not he felt I was capable of the daily tasks. He conceded that I had made progress, but implied that I had some road left to travel, and that I should not be living alone. To this, I countered that I could always ask a few girls to live with me. I offered to continue helping his family during harvest time, but explained that other *zavatra* ("things") would require my time and attention. Finally, he accepted this compromise and granted his consent with considerable reluctance. I was to be allowed the right to build a hut in Southern Marovato.

Two of Rafidy Andriana's sons of his third marriage were assigned the task of teaching me to build a hut. Within three days, I walked into my new home, a one-room hut made of laterite assembled vertically around a patch of sandy ground and beneath a roof of twined dried grass. Once inside, I decided that Rafidy Andriana's comment concerning company was a condition that had its advantages. I honestly didn't feel like living alone, and I still needed some help in performing daily tasks. I approached the parents of two girls of a large and seemingly poor family in Western Marovato and asked them to allow the girls to live with me. They accepted. That evening, upon my return from the river, I discovered Fara and Raozy, two pre-adolescent girls, waiting for me at my hut.

For the first time, I felt well-positioned to commence my research. I compiled a list of quantitative and qualitative questions on the origin, social organisation and economic situation of the various families. This list also served as a useful pretext to visit every household in the village and conduct my first structured interviews. My assistant Ramosa arranged the appointments, and accompanied me during visits. After these visits, I took measurements of the fields of villagers and compiled lists and statistics concerning production and consumption. Based on preliminary data, a sample of villagers was chosen for further discussions on detailed and in-depth themes.

After one month, I had covered most of the families, excluding those of Western Marovato. I disclosed to Ramosa that I next wished to visit Western Marovato. He responded that it was "pas nécessaire". When asked why, he cryptically dismissed the area as being "plus on moins paret". I expressed my surprise at this, as Western Marovato looked to be a much poorer quarter. Ramosa offered to look into things. This was succeeded by his report back to me that the people of Western Marovato were simply not "disponible".

29 This unwitting defiance of Rafidy Andriana's firm order not to associate with the people of Western Marovato was one of my many breaches of *tompon-tany* protocol, especially during the initial period of my stay. But, although not particularly advisable, these mistakes sometimes directly led to significant discoveries. In this case, for example, I became aware of the presence of people called *andrea* in the village. Two of them, as it turned out, shared my living quarters. I later discovered that living with these girls had made me "impure". The description of the "purification" ritual that was needed to eradicate this pollution can be found in the Appendices.

30 Ramosa translated from Malagasy to French. On this point, it is relevant to mention how I came to choose Ramosa as an assistant. My early attempts at recruiting a student in the capital failed whenever I mentioned the region where I planned on living. Only Ramosa satisfied the double requisite of speaking French and being familiar with Marovato.
learning this, I felt I had no choice but to find another assistant or be faced with failure and expressed this to Ramosa. He only then relented and agreed to prepare my visit to the area.

I was to ultimately agree with Ramosa on one point. The people of Western Marovato were far from available when I first approached them. But they were anything but similar to their co-villagers. Eventually, it was in the West that the richest keys to life in the village were to be discovered. Based on the 1992 research I came to the analyses and conclusions described in the chapters two, three and four.

On March 29, 1996, I returned to Marovato after a four year absence. That same day, I resumed my 1992 research methods implementing participant observation, the interactional perspective, network analyses and the registration of life stories with special emphasis on events of the past four years (more details can be found in chapter six). Next to my daily participation in village life I spoke to almost all the inhabitants of Marovato and visited their houses. As the days passed, a fuller picture of the previous four years’ events emerged. But it took me many more months before I was able to gain a fuller understanding of them.

One other event should be mentioned which directly affected the evolution of my work. Prior to 1996, I depended on my assistant and translator Ramosa. This no longer proved necessary on a daily basis in 1996, although I continued to consult him with respect to the detailed meaning of various words and concepts I considered key to my research. I am convinced that any imperfections in my Malagasy were more than compensated for by the elimination of conscious or unconscious omissions and interpretations of translators who often filter and distort meaning. As time went by, the villagers and particularly the andevs came to know and trust me. To ensure I fully grasped their intended meaning, they would often interrupt their stories with the question: "Mangy ve, Makoana?" ("Is it clear to you, miss?")

Translation and transcription

Field work makes two competing demands upon the researcher. Research requires the trust of the subject, but that research is only valuable to the extent that it is accurately reported. In my case, use of instruments such as tape recorders was simply out of the question. Most of my valuable data was gathered during conversations while participating in the daily lives of the Betsileo. This naturally raised the issue of accurate transcription. The first component of this issue was a technical one caused by the time lapse between observation and reporting. In order to address this issue, I looked to the techniques of anthropologists and other professionals within my own society such as police detectives, journalists and lawyers. Each of these fields appeared to face the common challenge of gathering and conserving data that must be subsequendy measured for its probity and relevance.

The answer to this issue appeared to lie in routine.

Unless Ramosa was present, which gave me the opportunity to take notes while he asked questions, I resorted to the following routine. During lunchtime, I would write down all the details of the morning’s conversations. At about 17:00, I repeated the process for afternoon discussions. At 20:00, I would copy down the evening’s conversations, review

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31 Only later did I realise to what extent Ramosa depended upon his paycheque, when strangers appeared at my home demanding immediate payment of his numerous gambling debts.
the notes of the day and copy down the final version of the day's record. Any gaps noted would be marked for completion on the following day. This method, as simplistic as it was, proved most fruitful, and its rigid and disciplined structure allowed me to greatly increase my recall of the day's events.

The second component of the transcription problem was that of translation. I tried to resist the temptation of making my interlocutor's discourses more “intelligible” as, more often than not, the original meaning was lost. I wrote down their words as Ramosa translated them and at a later stage, when I well understood the Malagasy language, as I recalled them. These conversations are translated into English and not “improved” upon in this thesis. Generally, whenever an expression is of specific relevance to my research, it is left in the original and its translation appears within brackets. A glossary is included at the end of the thesis.

Outline of the thesis

In this thesis, I opt for an inductive approach. Theoretical issues, therefore, will be principally dealt with in the final chapters. Through the empirical information I gathered, which is summarised, analysed and reproduced in chapters two to eight, I set out to explain the evolution of my research, its methodology and my relations with the villagers. It also should be stressed that these chapters represent the villagers' perspective. Anthropologists are sometimes justifiably criticised for identifying too strongly with the subject matter of their study. Nevertheless, for the purpose of simplicity and clarity of the text, conditional and qualifying syntaxes have occasionally been omitted. This should not be interpreted as being an unconditional sharing of beliefs held by the informants. A name index of all informants which refers back to the text can be found in the Appendices.

Chapter two describes the settlement history of the extreme Southern Highlands and the creation of the village of Marovato. It also discusses how people perceive status group configurations in the region, and in Marovato in particular. Social status principally hinges on two criteria: settlement, i.e. being tonpon-tany (“master of the land”) or nepiary (“migrants”) and descent status. People are deemed to be of free descent when they can provide satisfactory proof of the existence of a family tomb. They are called olona madio (“pure” “clean people”). Those who fail to prove possession of a family tomb are called olona maloto (“impure” or “dirty people”). The latter category is supposed to be of slave (andevo) descent.

Chapter three relates how marriage politics and practices demarcate the status groups. The chapter also provides examples of Marovato couples who have crossed the conceptual boundary between “pure” and “impure” people through marriage.

Chapter four deals with the economic situation in extreme Southern Highlands, using Marovato as an example. It explains how the social marginalisation of the andevo is intertwined with the economic relations in Marovato.

Chapter five focuses on social and economic changes that occurred in Marovato during my four year (between 1992 and 1996) absence from the region. It describes the arrival of the npikarama (“labourers) and the land eviction of the andevo, both of which had a profound impact on the socio-economic relations in the village.

32 When labels such as tonpon-tany or andevo are followed by a name in this thesis, it should be stressed that these creations do not necessarily refer to historical realities.
In chapter six, the Marovato andero are revisited, and their lives over the previous four years are recounted by them. It also explains my shift from a socio-economic analysis to a methodology better suited to analyse the “superstructure” of society. This provided me with a tool for exploring the ontological status of the andero, following their replacement as an economic group by the mpikarana.

Chapter seven outlines the funeral rituals of Marovato free descent people through the process which I have referred to as “ancestralisation”. It describes the various phases and accompanying rituals required to ensure the deceased person becomes an ancestor, thereby avoiding misfortune, illness and death for the descendants.

Chapter eight details how the lack of a tomb excludes the andero from performing the process of “ancestralisation” and becoming ancestors. The chapter further describes how the occult forces associated with the ancestors and andero deceased are manipulated and used in poisonings, sorcery and witchcraft.

Chapter nine introduces the theoretical model of “andevoness”. Its constituent features comprise the negative qualities ascribed to people called andero. Furthermore, the chapter attempts to analyse what parallels may be reasonably drawn between “andevoness” in the Marovato region and other parts of Madagascar. It also will examine how the concept of “andevoness” relates to the position of slaves during the period of slavery.

The final chapter compares Igor Kopytoff’s frontier society theory with the theoretical reflections of the previous chapters concerning Marovato’s transition from frontier to village. The thesis is completed with theoretical conclusions, and suggestions for avenues of future research.