

TREATMENT

Getting along in the Grassfields: Aspects of village life in Misaje (North West Cameroon)

Video documentary by Michaela Pelican and Judith Orland, 2002, 37 minutes, English subtitles

Sequence	Sub-sequence	Content	Actors	Start	End
Intro		<p>Rolling text: The following film is based on fourteen months of fieldwork (August 2000 to January 2002) conducted for my PhD-research in North West Cameroon. It introduces the fieldwork situation visually and illustrates the processes of data-gathering and theory building around the themes of interethnic relations and identity politics in a culturally, religiously and ethnically complex setting. I understand ethnographic film-making as an interactive and reflexive enterprise. To achieve a combination of etic and emic perspectives, I shared the video-recording taking turns with my assistant Haruna Kadiri, and presented the footage to the local population for feedback. Together with my colleague Judith Orland, I structured the film with the purpose of enticing the viewer to reflect about overlaps between politics, economy and culture. We also want to raise questions about the exchange of different understandings of film as a visual medium of communication and representation.</p> <p>Themes of the film: Culture: presented and lived Socio-economic organisation, individual life plans and interethnic relations. Anthropology and film: reactions, comments and participation from within the local community.</p>		00:00:00	00:02:05
Title		Getting along in the Grassfields: Aspects of village life in Misaje (North West Cameroon)		00:02:06	00:02:26
Part 1: identity politics				00:02:27	00:17:55
	1.1. Cultural policy: Cameroon national day celebrations (20.05.2001)			00:02:27	00:07:15

Sequence	Sub-sequence	Content	Actors	Start	End
		Arrival of state officials, welcoming of traditional Grassfields authorities	- Divisional and Sub-Divisional Officer - Heads of armed forces - Mayor - local Grassfields chiefs - Mbororo leaders - Hausa chief	00:02:27	00:03:36
		March pass:		00:03:37	00:05:48
		- schools	- Nursery School Dumbu - Government Primary School Dumbu - Islamic Primary School Bridge 5	00:03:37	00:04:08
		- political parties	- Cameroon People's Party (ruling party) - Social Democratic Front (main opposition party)	00:04:09	00:04:46
		- civil society organisations and professional associations	- Islamic Youth Association Misaje - Mbororo (Fulbe) Women Chako - Transport Company Guarantee Express - Merry Sisters Misaje (women's association of government employees)	00:04:47	00:05:46
		Cultural entertainment: - traditional music and dance performances and horse display	- Dumbu dance group (<i>duru</i>) - Bush cow masquerade (<i>nyamnfuh</i>) of Nkanchi - Masquerade (<i>manjong</i>) of Government Secondary School Misaje - traditional Grassfields rulers joining in the dance - Hausa music and dance performance (<i>gumba</i>) of Misaje - Mbororo music and dance performance (<i>baralla</i>) of Misaje - Horse display by Mbororo (Fulani) of Kibo	00:05:47	00:07:15
	1.2. Lived traditions			00:07:16	00:17:55
	a) Annual dances in the palace of Lakabum (18.12.2000)			00:07:16	00:11:35
		Traditional ruler of Bum addressing his people in the palace yard, palace scenery	- <i>Fon</i> (title for Grassfields ruler) Peter Kwanga III of Bum - Members of the warriors' ward greeting each other with ceremonial swords - Bum musicians - Bum women cooking	00:07:16	00:09:03

Sequence	Sub-sequence	Content	Actors	Start	End
		Bum masquerades dancing on ceremonial ground and in the palace court yard	- Warriors' ward - Bush cow masquerade dancing with traditional ruler - Bum masquerades (with foot rattles) - <i>Fon</i> Peter Kwanga III of Bum joining in with masquerades - Bum musicians	00:09:04	00:11:35
	b) Muslim holidays			00:11:36	00:17:55
		End of Ramadan prayers (<i>Eid-al-Fitr</i> , locally abbreviated as <i>Id</i>) on Muslim prayer ground in Misaje (27.12.2000)	- Mbororo and Hausa men and children - Hausa chief and Muslim prayer leader (Imam)	00:11:36	00:13:31
		Naming ceremony in a Hausa compound: shaving the baby's head and festivities (17.05.2001)	- Hausa women and children - Hausa drummer	00:13:32	00:15:06
		Marriage ceremony in a Mbororo (Fulbe) compound: dressing the house and festivities (20.01.2001)	- Mbororo women and children - Mbororo youths	00:15:07	00:17:55
Part 2: Local economies				00:17:56	00:25:44
	2.1. Herdsmen, farmers, traders			00:17:56	00:25:44
	a) Cattle rearing and trading	Grazing area around Chako in dry season (22.02.2001) Misaje cattle market in rainy season (12.04.2001)	- Mbororo herdsmen - cattle traders (including Mbororo, Grassfielders and Hausa) - Hausa girls selling snack food	00:17:56	00:19:52
	b) Weekly market in Misaje (07.04.2001)	Market scenery, Interviews with traders and market visitors:	- market women (mostly Grassfielders) - customers of various ethnic backgrounds	00:19:53	00:20:37
		Interview with a local market woman (Pidgin English): Magdalene is from Misaje. She buys and cultivates food stuffs to sell. She uses the money for school fees and hospital bills. Her sales-goods include beans and vegetables (e.g. okra). She is a trader and a farmer.	- Magdalene Fuh (interviewee) - <i>Fon</i> George (interviewer)	00:20:38	00:21:40
		Interview with an Mbororo market visitor (Fulfulde): Amina came to the market with her new calabash and with eggs to sell. With the money she bought a blouse for herself. In her view, it is good that women should assist their husbands with financial responsibilities.	- Amina Weldelde (interviewee) - Michaela Pelican (interviewer) - Kande (selling milk)	00:21:41	00:22:25
		Interview with a Hausa trader selling medicinal items from Nigeria (Hausa)	- Hausa trader (interviewee) - Haruna Kadiri (interviewer)	00:22:26	00:22:56

Sequence	Sub-sequence	Content	Actors	Start	End
		Interview with an Mbororo trader selling clothes (Fulfulde): Mallam Idrisa is from Binka. He started trading not more than two years ago and is grateful to Allah for the business. Sometimes he goes to Onitsha or Kano in Nigeria to buy his goods. But because of the distance and the danger involved in travelling to Nigeria, he at times prefers to buy his goods in Bamenda (in Cameroon). However, trading with goods from Nigeria is more profitable. Before becoming a trader, he was an Islamic teacher and a cattle rearer.	- Mallam Idrisa (interviewee) - Mallam Unusa (interviewer)	00:22:57	00:24:07
		Market scenery		00:24:08	00:25:12
		Interview with a local Grassfields teacher in a drinking place (English): Austin Tamfoh believes that it would be better if the selling of maize beer (<i>shah</i>) was legally restricted to the afternoon and evening period. As he argues, many locals go to the drinking place already in the morning, rather than after having finished working the farm. As he sees it, they waste a lot of money and time.	- Austin Tamfoh (interviewee) - Ngeh Jonathan (interviewer)	00:25:13	00:25:44
Part 3: images and reflections	3.1. Misaje Film Festival, 26.-28.10.2001	Screening of ethnographic video footage, taped and edited during previous period of research (2000/2001)		00:25:45	00:36:26
	a) Public screening in the market square (26.10.2001)			00:25:45	00:30:26
		shots of the audience, organisers' self-introduction (Pidgin English),	- Nfume Godfrey: moderator - Aishatu (Michaela Pelican): university student, researching village life in Misaje - Ignatius Nji: programme coordinator - Haruna Kadiri: video-photographer - Buba Ahmadu: video and sound technician - audience: women, men and children of various ethnic backgrounds	00:25:45	00:29:16

Sequence	Sub-sequence	Content	Actors	Start	End
		<p>Comment by assistant mayor of Misaje (Pidgin English): “The market documentary that we have just watched is like a mirror reflecting the economic life in Misaje. Unfortunately, the economic life in our town is not booming. But if all of us tried to do something to promote the economic life of this place, we would move one step ahead. The Sub-Division would grow, the council area would grow and it would bring a lot of development.</p> <p>I would also like to thank Madame Aishatu (Michaela Pelican) for this documentary. It would be good if all the people in the documentary were present to watch it. At times, people watch films and feel that they can only be produced in white-man-country. We did not know that they were true things and real human beings.”</p>	- Nkenda Simon, assistant mayor of Misaje, Grassfielder	00:29:17	00:30:23
	b) Private screening for Muslim women in the house of Michaela Pelican (27.10.2001)			00:30:24	00:32:21
		Michaela Pelican welcoming Muslim women in her house (Fulfulde), shots of the audience	- audience: Mbororo and Hausa women and children	00:30:24	00:31:11
		<p>Comment by Hausa woman (Pidgin English): “I never believed that they would ever see me in the white-man-country. Now, if someone comes and asks for ‘Coco’, they will bring him/her to me. Even if I die today, I will continue to exist in the white-man-country. That’s fine with me.”</p>	- Sa’adatu Coco Adamu, originally from Bum, but married a Hausa man and converted to Islam (ethnic passage from Grassfielder to Hausa)	00:31:12	00:31:30
		<p>Comment by Hausa woman (Fulfulde): “I liked the films I saw on Friday. When the children told me, they saw gatherings and dances in television, I said: That is a lie. On Friday, I decided to go and see for myself.”</p>	- Bebi Sheikh	00:31:31	00:31:48
		<p>Comment by Hausa woman (Fulfulde): “There is a film you took in our house during a naming ceremony. I saw my mother, my friends and my children. I saw, you were sitting in the parlour. I did not know that I was in the film. Before then, I was wondering if Allah agreed that I take part in a film. But now, I no longer fear, and I speak and act openly.”</p>	- Asabe Musa	00:31:49	00:32:21

Sequence	Sub-sequence	Content	Actors	Start	End
	c) Public screening in the town hall (28.10.2001)			00:32:22	00:36:26
		Shots of the audience, while watching the video documentary on the national day celebrations (20.5.01), film introduction (Pidgin English): “Now you see the arrival of the officials, the singing of the national anthem and the women’s day hymn. Then comes the march of the women’s groups, followed by choir presentations, traditional dances and games.”	- audience: men and women of various ethnic backgrounds - Nfume Godfrey: moderator	00:32:22	00:33:29
		Comment by Grassfields entrepreneur (Pidgin English): “The idea of cross-culturisation! I have seen Christians and Muslims working together. I have realised that most Muslims do their things together. I appreciate that attitude and want encourage us Christians to copy it. One hand washes the other.”	- Nji Ignatius: proprietor of a photo and barbing studio (Microphotobarb) in Misaje, Grassfielder	00:33:30	00:34:04
		Comment by Grassfields radio technician (Pidgin E.): “I am happy about the opportunity to express my joy about the film festival. Previously, we used to watch American films without understanding the content. Now, that our sister brought everything to the local level, the whole thing has become so enjoyable. I want to thank those people who tried to show their talents and also the culture. Because of our sister, our culture – especially the Mbororo culture – has been put into use again. Although we had already started to abandon it. We saw aspects of our own culture that had almost disappeared. Even if Aishatu (Michaela Pelican) leaves today, there are aspects of our culture which she helped to bring to light and which we will continue to practice. I appeal to everybody to follow up on what he/she has learned today. We really thank Aishatu and those who supported her in organising this programme.”	- Mabah Paul: local radio technician, Grassfielder	00:34:05	00:36:26
credits		Camera: Michaela Pelican, Haruna Kadiri Music: Hausa marriage song, Mbororo <i>baralla</i> Production: Michaela Pelican, Judith Orland Copyright: Michaela Pelican, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, July 2002 Thanks to the people of Misaje and the regional administration for their support and active participation.		00:36:27	00:36:57