CHANGES IN LAND TENURE AND LAND USE IN A BAMILEKE CHIEFDOM
CAMEROON, 1900 - 1980:
AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN CONTROL OVER PEOPLE,
LAND AND PRODUCTION

J.H.B. den Ouden

Essays in Rural Sociology in Honour of R.A.J. van Lier
Department of Rural Sociology of the Tropics and subtropics
Agricultural University, Wageningen, the Netherlands, 1981
CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION
1.1 The problem 173
1.2 Traits of Bamiléké society 182
1.3 The Ngyemba land-tenure system 188

2 THE CONTROL OVER PEOPLE, LAND AND PRODUCTION IN TWO TSA AGNATIC FAMILIES, 1900-1980
2.1 The Letsi case 196
2.1.1 Principal heir X 196
2.1.2 Principal heir A and his first successor AII 200
2.1.3 The present principal heir 209
2.2 The Latchuet case 233
2.2.1 The principal heir in ca. 1900 233
2.2.2 Principal heir A and his brothers 237
2.2.3 'Principal heir' AII: events after 1967 241
2.2.4 Latchuet: concluding remarks 243

3 RETROSPECT 245

REFERENCES 260
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The problem

The high Bamiléké plateau (1000-2000 m) of western Cameroon, with a population density in some areas even surpassing 300 per km² (Ouden, 1980: 42), is economically the object of much appraisal, surprise and fear.

J.L. Dongmo writes (1974:46): 'Alors que les fortes densités de population, l'éloignement par rapport aux deux grands centres du pays (Douala et Yaoundé) et le succès éclatant de la caféculture semblaient condamner l'Ouest à consommer lui-même ses produits vivriers et peut-être même à importer des denrées alimentaires d'autres régions du pays, cette province est actuellement l'une des principales pourvoyeuses des villes du Sud-Cameroun en denrées alimentaires. C'est le grenier à maïs de tout le Cameroun, la principale région maraîchère du pays (en quantité et en variété), une de nos zones d'élevage du petit bétail.'

During 1977 and 1978 I was research professor for a year in the Department of Rural Extension and Rural Sociology of the 'Ecole Nationale Supérieure Agronomique' of the University of Yaoundé (since 1979 part of the 'Centre Universitaire de Dschang'). My work in Cameroon took place within the framework of the bilateral project of the Agricultural University, Wageningen, and the University of Yaoundé/Ecole Nationale Supérieure Agronomique. I was thus in a position to do anthropological research in the Bamiléké region of Cameroon. Since October 1978 my contacts with the research area continued through investigations carried out under my supervision by two Dutch research-assistants from the department of Home Economics, Rita Joldersma and Niki Dieckmann, from June to December 1979, and by two research-assistants from the department of Tropical Agriculture, July Leesberg and Connie Witte, from January to October 1980. In May and June 1980 I revisited 'my' chiefdoms to collect further information. I am grateful to these students who collected very valuable data. I am also grateful to Stephen Anderson who, in 1980, solved many linguistic problems in Nqyembay, the Bamiléké language spoken in the area.

I am very much indebted to the paramount chief of Tsa, H.H. Tatang Robert, to the paramount chief of Ngang, H.H. Zange Momo Joseph, and to the Cameroon authorities for their permission to work in their territories and for the help they gave me. I am very grateful for the assistance given to me by Foudji Dieudonné (Tsa) and Ngouané Simon (Ngang) during my research in the Bamboutos area. The success of my stay in Batcham, as well as the success of the investigations by the four students of the Agricultural University, Wageningen, was furthered greatly by the good care of the Roman Catholic mission in Tsa under the excellent 'herdsmanship' of the Reverend Father Fons Huisken.

All the maps in this article were drawn by P. Holleman of the Agricultural University, Wageningen.
In this region, the Cameroon government is directly intervening in the economic and political field namely during and after the tumultuous period of the Bamileke rebellion of 1957-1963 (Ouden, 1979: 17-26), not only by its policy to enforce its administrative, military and political grip on the region, but also by intervention in questions of land use (the promotion of coffee production) and of land tenure (the gradual but inevitable imposition of a system of individual land titles). In order to understand what is going on in this region, with an economic importance even surpassing national frontiers for the production of coffee and food-crops, it is necessary to analyse the process of economic, political and social change instigated by market- and institutional incorporation into national and even international co-ordinating systems (the terms I took from Pearse 1968/1971: passim). This analysis will be concentrated on the land tenure system and the use of land in order to understand the rights of control over people, land and agricultural production. Only then can we ask ourselves questions about further developments in the future and about steps which could be taken to correct bottle-necks resulting from the process of incorporation.

The material presented in this paper was clearly obtained to satisfy my anthropological curiosity in the subjects indicated and it is a question whether this 'knowledge for understanding' can easily be translated into 'knowledge for action' (I am referring to Scott and Shore, 1979: Appendix, 224-238). Though the field of problems I was invited to analyse was also a policy-maker's problem - bottlenecks in the agricultural system - my question was 'what do we know' and not 'what do we do'. Perhaps it would be better to consider the material presented in this paper as background-information useful for an 'applied anthropologist' (not me!) whose research is directed towards advising government agencies in preparing a regional development plan. In my opinion, research aimed at 'knowledge for understanding' creates a picture too complex and too confusing to be used for formulating policy-decisions directly. However, such research might be important in warning 'applied anthropologists' for simplifications. 'Knowledge for understanding' and 'knowledge for action' are to some extent contradictory but certainly can also be considered as complementary in which 'pure' anthropology, not tied up with or even manipulated by political and economic forces, can warn 'applied anthropologists' or interdisciplinary action teams for models of development in which only few variables from the complex human world are taken into account. In
short, if in the 'Retrospect' I discuss future changes and eventual ways of intervention I am advising 'applied anthropologists' or development teams not the policy-makers; I am unable to give feasible solutions for agricultural problems in this Bamiléké area.

My research in 1977/78 and 1980 in the two Bamiléké chiefdoms Batcham and Bangang (people themselves speak of respectively Tsa and Ngang) was concentrated on the political, economic and social consequences of the process of incorporation, a subject much wider than the one commented upon in this paper. Part of my research was the analysis of the history and present situation of dead and living members of six minimal patri-lineages, three in Tsa and three in Ngang. Some of this material I will use to illustrate the process of change concerning land tenure, land use and, in general, the rights of control (I intentionally avoid the term 'ownership' so clearly associated with what Eric Wolf, 1966:53, calls the 'mercantile domain') over people, land, cattle, trees/bushes, annual crops, and the non-agricultural produce. It is clear that an analysis at micro level cannot be done without a thorough knowledge of the developments at the meso- and macro levels of the chiefdom, the Bamiléké ethnic community/the West Province of Cameroon and the Cameroon colony/state. Nevertheless, I decided to dedicate the major part of this paper to the discussion of two families (with some comparative remarks). Situation and developments at the meso- and macro levels will be touched upon to some extent in sections 1.2 and 1.3 on 'traits of Bamiléké society' and 'the Ngyemba land tenure system', and in (3) a 'retrospect'. Another paper in which the developments at the meso- and macro levels were analysed in greater detail (Ouden, 1979) will be published separately.

If in the title of this paper and in formulating the problem I speak of 'land tenure and land use', I do not want to suggest that in this part of Africa or elsewhere, in situations characterized by 'War(re)', land was the most important scarce good.

In the use of the terms 'War(re)' and 'Peace' I follow M.D. Sahlins (1968:5) who writes about the meaning Thomas Hobbes gave to these terms: 'In the social condition of Warre, force is a resort legitimately available to all men. There need not be violence, but neither is there assurance to the contrary'. Societies with Peace 'have "a common power to keep the all in awe", a Government, which precludes that anyone take the law in his own hands,....'.

With 'War(re)' the most important scarce 'good' will be safety, a situation in which people can propagate themselves, in which safety of women
and children, the matrifocal households, is somewhat guaranteed and in which people can stay alive by the obtainment of food and other, culturally dictated, necessities in one way or another. In such situations 'good' and 'useful' relations with other people will be of utmost importance and 'our land' will mean the area where we defend ourselves, which we use as basis for offence, where we bury our dead and care for their peace, where our women are and where we raise our children, where we produce or store food, in short, where we try to stay alive and keep up with the culturally defined conditions of life. In fact, in this paper I try to analyse what happens with the relevance of scarce 'goods' and especially with land when people enter a situation of 'Peace' with its immediate concomitants of improved infrastructure over wide territories, commercialization of crops and other produce, and the process of monetarization.

Of course, here we remember remarks of, for instance, V. Turner (1957:113):

"Farm heads were disencumbering themselves of many of the obligations of kinship, and retaining for their own use and for the use of their elementary families money they earned as wages and by the sale of cashcrops or surplus subsistence crops."

or of Jack Goody (1976: 20):

"...the scarcer productive resources become and the more intensively they are used, then the greater the tendency towards the retention of these resources within the basic productive and reproductive unit, which in the large majority of cases is the nuclear family."

Literature suggests that the process of market- and state incorporation into co-ordinating national and international systems implies the disintegration of broader corporate family groups.

Compare Guyer, 1980:371: 'This poses the wider question of whether African small-scale production is evolving from very different indigenous structures towards the classic type of peasant organisation, with the household as an economically undifferentiated unit. Many studies of West African household economies suggest to the contrary that male and female spheres of activity remain relatively independent.'

Moreover, we see an increase in the economic value and use of land, individualization of land titles and other rights of control and a tendency towards what Goody (1976:7) calls 'diverging devolution'. Let us see what happened in the real situation of a Bamiléké region.

---

2 See Goody, 1976:7: '..'diverging devolution', the property which an individual disposes is not retained within the unilineal descent group of which he is a member but is distributed to children of both sexes and hence diffused outside the clan or lineage'.
If in this paper I try to analyse changes at the micro-level, I in fact chose the 'residential agnostic family group', one of the household groupings, as point of departure. To me 'households' are the small residential groups in which people live together for the purpose of defence, offence, production, consumption, the care of children and others who cannot look after themselves properly, and for the socialization/enculturation of children. The relevant household functions in a specific society are usually not united in one household: it is very normal to find a series of overlapping households. For the Bamiléké one can point to five levels of residential groupings:

- the matrifocal household of mother and children, the 'cooking-unit';
- the monogamous or polygynous household consisting of a man with one or more matrifocal households plus, possibly, unmarried brothers, fathers' wives and other additional people;
- the residential agnostic family group in which the houses of members lie close by, though not inside an enclosed compound or 'kraal';
- the quarter, or sub-quarter, the nucleus of which is most often formed by the residential agnostic family group of the chief of the quarter;
- the greater chiefdom with a close knit internal family network and as some maximal unit of production, consumption (see the principle of 'redistribution' and the equalizing mechanisms within the chiefdom), defence, etc...

In the man's world the term 'village' is used for three of these five groupings. One says of a young man: 'Il a déjà son village', meaning that he is already separated from his father's and mother's households and has his own house. This 'village' then becomes the more real if he lives there with his wife. If someone within the greater chiefdom is asked to name his 'village' he will mention his quarter, sub-chiefdom (a quarter of somewhat higher status) or a quarter within a sub-chiefdom. If a Bamiléké migrant is asked where he comes from he will say that his 'village' is ..., followed by the name of the greater chiefdom to which he belongs. 'Village' is also used for the nucleus of a quarter where the houses are and where the plots of land are enclosed by impenetrable walls of nkyuy-nkuyuy, 'l'herbe de la paix', a dracaena deisteliana, or by barriers of strips of raphia-palm. This inhabited area for which the term nka' (field) is used in a loose sense, is then contrasted with tsaw, uninhabited areas. When in 1980 I found that an area bordering the Bansoa frontier (tsaw land) was not cultivated by women, in contrast to the situation in 1978, my informant answered: 'Nos femmes cultivent maintenant en village', our women shifted cultivation to fields in the nka' area of the quarter.
For my analysis of changing rights of control I chose three residential agnostic family groups in Tsa and three in Ngang. Firstly, for both chiefdoms, I thought I had selected families with a low, moderate and high land scarcity. Of course - this always happens to an anthropologist - reality appeared to be more complex. For two reasons I tried to get a 'three generation perspective', for those families. First of all, in this way I would normally be able to obtain as starting point the period around 1900, the beginning of the 'modern' incorporation process. A starting point in about 1900 often means that we are dealing with a grandfather who 'saw the coming of the Germans' and who acted from pre-colonial situations and attitudes. His son then 'reigned' in the transitional French period, and his grandson, the present head of the family, 'saw' the Bamiléké rebellion of the fifties and sixties and the profound changes after Independence. A 'three generation perspective' in the Bamiléké situation very often stands for three periods which differ in the political, economic and social fields and which can be characterized by the terms 'tribal authority', 'indirect colonial rule' and 'direct rule' with heavy state intervention. Dealing with two family-cases in the second part of this paper, it appears to be too difficult to introduce three periods in the developments at a micro-level. There, the main caesura between the 'old' and 'new' situations appears to be marked by the beginning of the fifties when, amongst others, coffee became a cash-crop for almost all men in the region.

In 1924 the first coffee-nurseries were established in Dschang. The cultivation of Arabica coffee was strongly regulated and controlled to safeguard the quality (Illy, 1974:283). An authorization for the cultivation was only given if, amongst others, one possessed fertile land and if a man controlled an important labour force (Tchouamo, 1980:18). In fact almost only chiefs were accepted as coffee-growers. It was only in about 1950, during the confusion accompanying Independence that cultivation was liberalized and coffee became the main cash crop of small producers all over the Bamiléké area. Buying up of coffee is the official monopoly of UCCAO (Union Centrale des Coopératives Agricoles de l'Ouest) and its cooperatives, the producer price being fixed by the government. Farmers with a coffee area of 0.5 ha and more can and officially have to be members of the UCCAO coffee co-operative in their area (Tchouamo, 1980:31, 112).

Secondly, with a 'three generation perspective' I was able to trace all the living men who, as discussed later, can be acknowledged as and normally feel to belong to the same patrilineage.

---

3 In 1899 the then Governor, the German Jesko von Puttkamer, created the 'Gesellschaft Nordwest Kamerun' to exploit the Bamoun and Bamiléké regions. See Victor LeVine, 1964/1977:26.
As will become clear in the second part of this paper, I broadened the agnatic families to some extent by also paying attention to the brothers of the family head in about 1900 and to their descendants. Only in this way could I establish the meaning and 'depth' of the corporate patrilineage, and at the same time I increased my knowledge about 'other' but related families.

When through the present head of the family I traced the name of his paternal grandfather; I tried to obtain the names of all his male descendants. Of course this part of the research was full of traps, not least because of a policy, especially in former times, to incorporate strangers (perhaps even slaves) into the family. In many genealogies we can find inconsistencies between the 'de jure' agnatic ideology and cognatic practice.

I welcomed all possible information about the individual descendants, dead or alive, of the paternal grandfather, but I concentrated on:
- their occupations;
- their rights in land, cattle, trees and bushes;
- the buying and selling of land and the leasing and renting of land or trees/raphia palms/bushes;
- the wives, how many wives they had;
- permanent and temporary migration including the reason.

These questions were mainly put 'on the spot' on the land, where at the same time measurements were taken of the various plots of land, the extent of raphia palm possessions, etc. Because the investigation in the six micro-regions took place over a period of several months, it was possible to obtain and verify contradictory information from the same persons, from different members of the family and from 'strange' neighbours (not belonging to the family), which made it to some extent possible to approach 'reality'. I not only tried to contact people living in the chiefdoms, but also migrated lineage-members visiting their home-chiefdom or (some) living in towns or colonization areas.

Asking people questions about other people appeared to be difficult for my Bamiléké informants (the anthropologist's nightmare!). I often obtained answers such as: 'You please ask him yourself'. People, even those presenting themselves as 'non-believers', fear that neighbours and relatives could sell them to the secret and imaginary organization Famla or Nkong in order to become rich suddenly and mysteriously.

4 See for a semi-scientific discussion of Famla or Nkong: Dongmo, A., 1980: e.g. 20: '... une société secrète de magiciens qui s'enrichiraient en tuant mystérieusement les gens par la maladie ou l'accident pour les vendre dans un marché magique ou pour les utiliser comme manoeuvres dans leurs plantations'.

- 180 -
In the first family to be discussed (2.1) many people were so alarmed by my measuring plots of land that they insisted that the most educated member of the family, a high railway functionary in Douala, make a statement that my investigations could not harm them (see 2.1:A IV). One elderly man accompanied me to Douala (A III). After our return next day we learned that his wife and other women of the family mourned him all night: the women were convinced that I had taken their relative to the Famla and that he would never return. It is quite understandable that in chiefdoms where land is very scarce it took me long hours of talking with European-educated members of the families concerned, often migrants, to explain the purpose of my research and to let them explain to the others that I really had not come to take away their land. It is worthwhile noting that the efforts of these educated relatives was of much greater help than the assistance which was sincerely given to me by the traditional chiefs. In land-questions I could ascertain an undeniable suspicion vis-a-vis some of the chiefs.

And what about the women? I admit that because of great distrust I failed to have much contact with them. I tried to find out about the female descendants of the power-holders of 1900, but this information was mostly transmitted by men. That is why after January 1979 I sent four female students to Tsa to concentrate on contacts with women. This resulted in valuable additional information, though it did not change fundamentally my original interpretation of the situation. I should mention here that these girl-students were also often confronted with a discouraging averting behaviour by many of the women. In 1978 in both Tsa and Ngang it appeared to be fruitless to ask for mediation of influential female functionaries of the greater chiefdom or sub-chiefdoms/quarters at which level I carried out my research.

Of the six 'residential agnatic family groups' I studied in some detail in Tsa and Ngang I will only discuss two cases from Tsa. I will however, do so with and from a further knowledge of families and the developments at the chiefdom, provincial and state levels. I chose a family where patterns are still rather traditional, in spite of many changes, and another family which is disintegrating and fast losing power, not necessarily because of the process of incorporation. In the context of this paper I cannot possibly pay attention to the other detailed case-studies. What can we learn from the two case-studies? They both depict 'normal' situations because they concern Bamiléké families. In fact the two cases cover quite a number of people and events in order to give an idea of the subjects we are discussing here, which are summarized in the Retrospect (3). As the reader will understand I am writing these lines because I am aware of the problem of 'representativity'. In connection with this question I humbly state that the history of the two
families can only explain the effects of the process of incorporation at the household level in a very limited way. The two examples nevertheless can illustrate the tendencies already known, on the basis of two rather arbitrarily chosen families. In addition to these remarks I should like to give a (more) serious warning: the reader has to understand that the information about the two families is very limited and perhaps not always correct. The number of informants was always limited and these informants may have intentionally given wrong information, had a 'wrong' notion of the historical and present events, were ignorant or were not interested.

1.2 Traits of Bamiléké society

The Bamiléké traditionally are organized in about a hundred independent chiefdoms (Illy, 1976:38). The Ngyemba chiefdoms are subdivided into a great number of quarters and sub-chiefdoms, each with their own hereditary chiefs. The core of a quarter is formed by members of the agnatic family of its chief and strangers who have put themselves under his control because of their confidence in his political and economic strength. Formerly strong chiefs also managed to control a number of slaves and now also in many quarters we can trace people who are probably their descendants.

Quarters consist of a number of polygynous, monogamous and one-man households (adult boys leave their parents' household, even if not married). The houses were and, after the rebellion of 1957-1965, to a lesser extent, are hidden in the valleys, only approachable from the roads on the hill-ridges by a network of twisting pathways passable to people and goats, bordered by thick hedges of evergreen plants and wicker-work of strips of raphia palm. An unexpected and unknown 'intruder' would be observed immediately without knowing that his penetration into the guarded area had already been noticed. Here, the women who cultivated plots of land were quite safe. Land-scarcity of course often existed even in pre-colonial times: female farming outside the protected areas was only possible if well-guarded by men, because there was always the risk that women and children would be kidnapped by slave-raiders from other chiefdoms. The hills outside the protected area were mainly used by men for stock breeding (especially goats).

---

5 The five Ngyemba chiefdoms - Ngang, Tsa, Mougong, Latchi and Lessing - constitute a linguistic entity within the Bamiléké cultural province notwithstanding slight differences in dialect and even attitudes and behaviour (Ouden, 1979: 3-4).

6 Hurault (1970:236) is of the opinion that the elaborate raphia-palm plantations came into existence only in the second half of the nineteenth century and that the enclosures before that time were made principally from 'sissongo grass'.
In the eastern and southern parts of Cameroon the German government effectively forced the people to settle in villages along the new roads. In the Bamiléké area the very dispersed settlement type continued. It was only during the rebellion in the fifties and sixties that the Cameroon government (independent since 1960) forced the people to live in 'regroupements', nucleated settlements, in order to be able to crush the Bamiléké rebellion. When peace was restored in about 1968 people were free to leave the 'regroupements' and return to their 'concessions'. Many people took the opportunity (most of the houses were completely destroyed) of leaving the original site down in the valleys and constructed their houses along the roads. The 'regroupements' did not disappear completely: the process of institutional- and market incorporation stimulates the development of centres for e.g. administrative, policing, educative or medical purposes and as markets. These centres attract people from the surrounding chiefdoms and strangers from far away.

In order to understand the changes which took place between 1900 and 1980 it is necessary to summarize relevant elements of Bamiléké society. In addition to the political structure and the settlement pattern I should like to stress the importance of five other traits, the land tenure system being discussed in a separate section (1.3).

1. Bamiléké society is fundamentally inegalitarian.

If I compare attitudes and behaviour of the Bamiléké with 'my' south Indian villagers, in both cases the first problem which has to be solved in contacts with others is: 'Who is superior, he or I', or as a Bamiléké in Tsa furiously shouted at another man: 'Qui est le patron, moi ou toi'. Thus in the Bamiléké area in personal communications we find a linguistic and, even more important, extra-linguistic etiquette which to some extent takes account of equality and inequality in status. For south India see Ouden, 1979: e.g. 34, 37.

In the stratification system, ascribed status plays only a very restricted role. Or, perhaps we should say that ascribed status in the explicit ideology is important, but is very much contested in a counter ideology which at the same time is accepted. If a man dies he nominates his principal heir who takes his position (see point 3). The same, to some extent, can be said for women (Ouden, 1980:46,47; Dieckmann/Joldersma: 1980:138, 139). From this general rule one can conclude that ascribed status is to a certain extent important. But, the successor is one of the children of the deceased and it is not at all prescribed which child of which wife will succeed; here some scope for achievement is apparent. As a concomitant we often find much rivalry between brothers and potential conflicts between fathers and sons. In practice however a man can only

---

Compare LeVine, R.A., 1976:120: 'Giving orders and discussing whether or not they have been carried out, like deference and respect behaviour, account for much of the content of social interactions between unequal persons in African societies'.
succeed if he is strong enough to fight his way into the position of his predecessor. During this struggle he has to cope not only with his brothers, but also with the 'neighbours' who wait for an opportunity to annex people and other useful control rights. Only strong people manage to enforce their rights and if possible, get even more. People who cannot be trifled with are respected ('On ne peut pas se moquer de lui!') whether they acquired their position by inheritance or by usurping power.

Theoretically speaking we can say that with the Bamiléké not only the 'chiefly model' is relevant: also the 'big-man model' should be used for the interpretation of the real situation. Here I refer to Sahlins (1968:88,89). A 'big man' with his 'calculated generosity' 'is one who uses and creates social relations that give him leverage on other's production and the ability to siphon off an excess product. He requires special skills and personal qualities such as magical power, oratorical ability, perhaps bravery; but the economic manoeuvres are usually decisive'. This is quite different from the situation in which 'reciprocity between chiefs and people follows from established rights and privileges'. Here the existing rank order evokes certain economic relations, whereas with 'big men' economic relations are used to evoke an order of rank. Now, in my opinion, in the Bamiléké situation principal heirs, and even paramount chiefs, cannot be understood properly if we do not also include the 'big man' model in our considerations: those who obtained their positions via the legal rules of succession cannot function as true leaders without forcing themselves into a 'big man' position. If they do not, their 'rights' will fade away and even their lives will be endangered by opponents and 'rebels' who fear the degeneration of the existing socio-political structure.

2. Traditionally, individual achievement is promoted by the organization of the chiefdom. In this respect too the Bamiléké have much in common with their cultural relatives the Nigerian Ibo (e.g. Gosselin, 1970:129-139).

Geographically and culturally, the tribes of the Bamenda area of West Cameroon are, of course, much closer. If we look at the excellent work of Phyllis M. Kaberry (1952: 'Women of the Grassfields'), resemblance in the economic, political and social fields is obvious. In fact, for many remarks in this article it would have been necessary to draw attention to Kaberry's findings among the Nsaw and other tribes on the other side of the old colonial frontier.

Each chiefdom knows a range of secret society (k'22h) with their own houses in the chief's compound. These were responsible for matters concerning dangerous sorcery, religion, medicine, defence, maintenance of order, the dealings with suicide, and advising the chief (also Hurault, 1962:70-80; 1970:4-9) and even controlling the chief (e.g. Ouden, 1979:29-32). Normally they are stratified on the basis of the prestige of membership. Even if it is quite normal for a principal heir to succeed
his father in these societies, one has to prove himself capable of bearing the expenses of entry and membership: the costs of membership and entertainment of the members during the meetings vary with the standing of the society. Vertical mobility in the prestige and power scale is possible, but one has to fight hard for it, especially if one is not a principal heir.

The Ngyemba chiefdoms I studied no longer gave a clear picture of the situation of the women's societies, but Delarozière states for the Bandjoun-Bangou area that (1949,11:129): '...toutes les femmes de la chefferie sont également groupées en Associations, qui fonctionnent parallèlement aux Associations des hommes'. Also for Tsa and Ngang I got the idea that 'expensive' and 'less expensive' women-sodalities existed/exist.

3. In the third place I have to call attention to the descent and inheritance system. The Bamiléké have a limited patrilineal descent system in which every non-heir is the potential founder of a new lineage and (Illy, 1973:297): '... establishes his individuality from a group which in genuine patrilinear societies is often very large'. In section 2.1.2 we will discuss the relativity of this statement. In Bamiléké society this type of descent system is combined with a form of impartible inheritance in which a man (and, somewhat less important politically and economically, a woman) chooses one of his sons (daughters) to take his (her) 'office' after death. The successor becomes head of the family and guardian of the 'family property'. The heir to the head of an agnatic family, a minimal patrilineage, also becomes the new leader of that lineage, normally losing any control over the descendants of his father's father's brothers. To be successor does not mean to get full control over the undivided (the control was not accorded to brothers, sons and others by the deceased father) family property. As a form of lateral inheritance a successor has to look after the well-being of his brothers. He has to give them land and, if possible, has to pay the bride wealth for a wife. Traditionally, and in many families even now, this is as important as the help for their own children; all non-heirs call their brother-heir 'father'.

It is with the coming of 'mercantile domain', greatly furthered by the commercialization of crops, that some principal heirs start considering themselves and behaving as 'owners' with full control over the undivided land and other goods inherited from their fathers (compare Ouden, 1980: 58–60, example IV). In that case we find that principal heirs are only prepared to grant tiny bits of land to brothers and sons, just enough to
build a house, and in fact drive them away from the chiefdom. I do not want to suggest that formerly principal heirs 'suffered' from altruism, but what can be found in these few 'modern' families must be considered as revolutionary in this society.

As mentioned, adult brothers and sons settle apart, but often in the vicinity of the principal heir, and start their own living, 'economic' activities included. However, the dependency of brothers and sons and even father's brother's descendants on the principal heir should not be underestimated. In the two examples discussed in section 2 we shall try to find out the extent to which non principal heirs were dependent/ independent in former and present days politically, economically and socially.

About the process of lineage fission Illy (1973:297) writes: 'This splintering process would ultimately lead to the disintegration of the social fabric, but it is counteracted by other factors. These are the chief, the (secret) societies (sociétés coutumières), which create new links'. I suspect that this 'splintering process' was very functional during the Bamiléké tribes' colonization period in their present dwelling region after their arrival in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Delaroziere, I, 1949:12-16) and now greatly furthers migration.

4. From the three points mentioned it follows that structurally, levelling mechanisms were and are restricted in specific ways.

First, a strong man is someone who resists others from appropriating too much of his wealth. If envy and hatred feelings make others to accuse him of sorcery, then he will try to turn this 'valued stigma' in his favour; all important men in Bamiléké society are supposed to be 'complicated', to be sorcerers. To defend himself and to restrict somewhat the circuit of the 'ceremonial fund' he has to produce (the costs of participation in social relations; compare Wolf, 1966: 7), a strong man will also try to enter a high secret society which, to some extent, places him apart from 'the others'. For this he has to 'pay' considerable gifts, but being a member he will share in the gifts of new candidates. Furthermore, in Bamiléké society we do not find clans and maximal lineages with high claims on socio-economic assistance and hospitality for great numbers of people. I do not want to underestimate the 'danger' of levelling within the circle of the family and

---

8 Compare Hurault, 1962: 127: 'Mais la société Bamiléké repose entièrement sur le chef. La poussière de petits lignages agglomérés sur le territoire d'une chefferie n'ont d'autres liens religieux que ceux qui les unissent à la personne du chef, détenteur d'un pouvoir d'essence suprahumaine'.
of 'patrons-clients'. I am warned sufficiently if I only remember my Tsa assistant whose trouser pockets were gone through in the market place by his father's brothers in order to find out whether he had some money for them.

Still, we can speak of another kind of levelling. Here we have to differentiate between commoners dependent on and followers of chiefs of minimal lineages, and those in power in quarter and chiefdom. As we will see in section 2, before the start of large scale migration commoners experienced difficulties in improving their politico-economic and social position: their dependent position was accompanied by some sort of levelling because of lesser life-chances (they, for instance, in normal circumstances married late or not at all with consequences for an economic and political take-off) and the appropriation of surplus value by those in power. At a higher level we find some levelling of heads of minimal lineages and their dependants within quarters and within the larger chiefdom. In these instances, however, I speak of 'levelling' as a consequence of asymmetric relations and not of levelling amongst equals.

5. To understand the specific changes in the Bamiléké area it is important to remember that, as already suggested, the political, economic and social worlds of men and women were and are relatively strongly separated in this Guinean society. I use this indication of the broader African area on purpose to point out that in this respect the Bamiléké form part of a group of societies each of which, of course, presents its own variation on this theme (compare Kaberry, 1952: 145-154, and Boserup, 1980: passim). Without becoming too specific, in the political field one can or could establish that traditionally the paramount chiefs and their important sub-chiefs, the fuؤ and the fuؤ-ntyؤ, had a female counterpart, the 'queen-mother, ma-fuؤ, with great influence on the women and on the women's societies of the chiefdom. The female power-structure is weakening, at least in the Nqyemba area, partly because modern administration does not incorporate the female functionaries in its administrative machinery. In the economic field, women hold and control an autonomous sector in the agricultural chain including production, distribution and consumption. Elsewhere I argued that the economic independence might have increased by the commercialization of food-crops, men's decreased control over the utilization of the land and, in general, a growing disintegration of family life (Ouden, 1980: 61).

For 'patron-client' relations compare e.g. R.A. LeVine, 1976:124: 'Every African of relatively great wealth is besieged by potential devoted followers seeking financial assistance and hospitality'.

---

9 For 'patron-client' relations compare e.g. R.A. LeVine, 1976:124: 'Every African of relatively great wealth is besieged by potential devoted followers seeking financial assistance and hospitality'.

This might also be true of the social life of the women: the threat of coffee-cultivation to female agriculture, the urgent need of money for many goods, services and 'taxes' met with by men and women might be related to a situation of growing mutual distrust in which women try to defend themselves by a greater social isolation. This isolation then not only springs from the original differentiation, but more than before is also connected with separation in order to avoid strong male-domination.

At the time that land became scarce because of demographic and ecological crises (Ouden, 1980: 49, referring to Wolf, 1969: 280, 281) and geographical mobility became possible by the 'peace' enforced in a wide territory, the factors mentioned created an 'eruption' of the Bamiléké population causing them to stream from their plateaus into the surrounding plains and in fact into the whole of Cameroon and even Gabon. The same factors, combined with the close contact the Bamiléké keep with their home-chiefdoms (structurally and culturally Bamiléké migrants maintain their ethnic identity), enable these migrants to dominate populations with other ethnic backgrounds in the economic field, especially so in a country developing in a capitalistic way. Dugast (1949: 122) recorded in the French period that the Bamiléké migrants:

'Débutant avec peu de chose, comme simples manoeuvres ou marchands ambulants, ils ont l'ambition et la volonté de réussir. Aucun travail ne les arrête, et réellement ils réussissent dans toutes leurs entreprises. Il ne fait aucun doute qu'ils sont la race de l'avenir du Cameroun, que bientôt ils tiendront serré dans tous les fils de leur toile'.

1.3 The Ngyemba land-tenure system

In this introduction I am discussing the land tenure system separately because of its special relevance in understanding the intertwining of the various control-rights and even in understanding the Bamiléké society as a whole. This separate treatment also has a pragmatic reason: it enables me to explain the system and the relevant terms so that the reader can more easily understand the cases discussed in section 2.

In the traditional land tenure system the unity of the agnatic family is very important: the principal heir of the minimal patrilineage should guard 'his' territory, acquire land, but certainly not lose it. Land, like trees, is the materialization of one's bond with the chiefdom. It is a place to live, to make one's living, to hide, to defend
and to die and where one will be remembered and pacified in rituals and ceremonies by one's descendants up to and including one's great grandchildren.

Paramount chiefs honour all the skulls of their family-predecessors: they all remain important for the well-being of the living.

If one of the family is threatened in his dreams he gives a present to the head of the family who takes some earth from 'the village' in a gourd, from the place where the founder had his fire-place, and touches the roof and walls of the house of the troubled relative with it. Female relatives can also most certainly go to 'the father' when in trouble and he will take the necessary steps to restore 'peace'. Here we will have to remember that the 'God of the children', the God of fertility, is situated on the concession of a woman's parents. As an informant indicated to me: 'The woman's family is more important than the husband and his family and therefore it is also necessary for her to have some land on her father's concession'.

If we want to draw a model of the traditional land-tenure system, it is best to start with a somewhat important man who is the controller, pwa of a nkw+)nta, of an independent concession with its own God of the children, of fertility, and probably also with the cop of his grandfather and father (the places where those men had their fire-places and where now earth is taken for the rituals to restore peace in the family and pacify those forefathers). Perhaps such a concession, mbyua, even has a som, a place where the abandoned houses of the founder were situated and where the family rituals take place. Perhaps this concession is even considered the lesa'a by a great many people. The lesa'a is the concession where grandfather was born. Everybody has two lesa'a, the one where FF was born and the one from where MM originated. Sorcerers may advise an offering to be made on these concessions, but not on the concessions where FFF or MMM were born. Further, it is possible that the concession is situated in an area which was won from another chiefdom; in such a case, the paramount chief might have given it as permanent nna, gift. Or the paramount chief may have already conveyed the area to a chief of a quarter and he granted it as a permanent nka'-nna (gift of land). Such a nna can only be taken back if someone leaves the chiefdom without leaving anybody behind, or can be confiscated if someone is evicted from the chiefdom.
Such a concession might include special plots of land which are bought, nka'-ju, and for which the 'owner' still possess the shyu', a piece of raphia-bamboo accepted as invoice.

If someone contests the legitimate ownership of the land, some powder is scraped from the little piece of bamboo, mingled in raphia wine and drunk by the two parties: he who lied will die. The buying of land, the obtainment of a nka'-ju, is not only a recent development. I even found shyu' indicating land bought by grandfathers. I was always puzzled by this buying of land in times when there was still a great deal of free land, tswa. The answers given by my informants were not very convincing: 'Strangers wanted to become real inhabitants of Tsa and the quarter where they lived'. However, it was not difficult to find examples of real natives who bought land. For instance: 'In about 1925 my widowed mother bought a piece of land, of some thirty by twenty metres, from her late husband's elder brother. This man went to live in another quarter and needed money to build a house. My mother paid twenty 'mark' for it. It was a nka'-ju and not land given temporarily as security for a loan. Being the eldest son of the chief of a quarter, nobody dared to stop this man from selling this land'. As mentioned, I am of the opinion that also in former times scarcity of land existed in the well-protected nka' land of the residential area of a quarter.

We might also find land obtained as nka'jyj', as security with the right of usufruct for a loan, or transferred to another person as nka'-jyj' until the loan is paid back. With a nka'-jyj' it is possible that the creditor only obtains the usufruct of the coffee-bushes and pasture-land; in other cases also the creditor's women start the cultivation of crops (see Ouden, 1980-60). In the case of nka'-ju, formerly and now an act that is condemned if the land is inherited, the seller's women have to leave.

Now the kwj'-ntag, the estate directly controlled by the principal heir, is surrounded by concessions ceded from the main estate to brothers and sons of the successive principal heirs. This land is given as ttyp and cannot be sold.

When a brother or son reaches maturity, the 'father' (the brother who succeeds his father is also called 'father' by his brothers) asks him to build a house in a particular place. The 'father' will not urge the boy to leave his house (where the boys live after about their fifth year), but in a diplomatic way will ask now and then whether he has already got the necessary stones, etc. If the boy has completed this 'examination of maturity' he will give the 'father' some firewood 'to warm himself'. The father will then stake off the boundaries of the ttyp he wants to give him with some boundary trees. The boy then is nta, controller of this terrain ceded to him, if he stays and starts agricultural production on his land. Obtaining a ttyp is a right of the grown boy; it does not oblige him to offer special tokens of gratitude apart from the normal respect he has to show to the 'father'. In many cases we find that the principal heir takes back a ttyp which is not used.
A strong principal heir can take back a ntyyg which is abandoned and he can stop the selling of a ntyyg if it concerns land given to descendants from his paternal grandfather. Most probably the paramount chief of Tsa formulated the law in a better way when he stated: 'My successor, like myself, can stop the selling of land I gave as ntyyg, but his successor cannot'. Here, of course, is much scope for the demonstration of power by a principal heir. To mention only one difficulty: is a ntyyg given by our grandfather to his son, or by our father to his brother? But, in the question of selling land, we can also establish the demonstration of power/authority by the chief of the quarter or sub-chief.

In 1980 in some sub-chiefdoms/quarters the selling of land was made extremely difficult by the chiefs as they eagerly admit the claims of principal heirs to a ntyyg which they say they control, or in using their own influence and power to stop the selling of land. The easiest way for a principal heir to stop the selling of a ntyyg is to ask his chief of the quarter or even the paramount chief to let his men plant the wele, a bamboo with the branch of a plant forbidding any person to enter the field concerned until the chief's verdict is given in this land-dispute. This will of course cost the principal heir at least a goat. The chief can decide that the trouble arose because a nka'-iyj was confused with a nka'-ju. The solution is clear: the principal heir repays the amount of money obtained by the vendor and thus regains the family-land which was threatened. But here buyers can also make use of the weakness of chiefs or their representatives: what do they have to pay and what can they pay for a verdict which is in their favour?

The grandfather's brothers' descendants will have their own God of the children and other sanctuaries on the concession of their principal heir, which does not mean that for special matters they will not ask the help of the principal heir of their paternal grandfather.

It is not clear when a person feels strong enough to start his own nkwj'ntaft and to manage his own ritual affairs, and then, offering presents (a sheep, oil, etc.), begs the principal heir to plant the tree where the 'God of the children' will be situated. This is often requested by the grandfather's brothers, or even the father's brothers.

In Tsa, daughters or sisters cannot usually obtain a ntyyg if there are sons or brothers. Here the principle 'men own the land' is very strong. If a man should decide to give a ntyyg to a woman, his brothers or sons will take the land back upon his death. Land cannot be taken back if the ntyyg is given to a daughter's son. A ntyyg, however, is given to a ma-fuj, a 'queen-mother'; this land can only be inherited by a son (never by a daughter) who is born
during her reign as *ma-fuj* and otherwise it will fall to the chief when the *ma-fuj* dies.

Somewhat contrary to Tsa, in Ngang it is more normal to find women who possess a *ntyq* where they cultivate their own coffee. This difference can be due to the population-density being less in specific areas of Ngang.

In the families of the paramount chiefs of Tsa and Ngang it is not uncommon to give a *ntyq* to 'daughters'. Not only do chiefs control more land than commoners or even chiefs of quarters, political factors may also play a role, namely, by giving a *ntyq* to a sister or daughter, it is her husband and his family who 'profits' (economically, politically and socially) and the act can therefore be seen as the creation of a relationship with specific men and their families.

In addition to the *ntyq* s 'surrounding' the *nkwob-nta* of an important principal heir, we also find some *nka'-nna* given to strangers who have requested it. The plots of land ceded by principal heirs to strangers are now, because of the land scarcity, normally very tiny and can even be restricted to a *ncyo-nda*, a foundation, or *nda*, house. The immigrant will call the principal heir *ta*, father, and the latter will call the stranger *mu*, son. The receiver of a *nka'-nna* will normally pay money for this favour, contrary to the receiver of a *ntyq* who only continues giving the small gifts to the father expressing his respect. Obtaining a *nka'-nna* or a *ntyq* does not involve special one sided economic relations: loyalty and goodwill to the principal heir is more important.

I do not include here the chiefs of quarters who are still in a position to give a *nna* of *tesa*, of uninhabited land, to strangers. Nor do I include important *nna* s formerly granted by principal heirs, chiefs of quarters or the paramount chief to people (often refugees) from other chieftdoms or quarters, or to *pu'*, slaves. In chieftdoms with areas bordering the Noun valley *nka'-nna* s to strangers are still quite normal.

A *nka'-nna* to a stranger, be it a real field or only a *ncyo-nda*, a foundation, cannot be taken back as long as the person or his descendants live there and behave normally.

In contrast to the *nka'-nna* to a stranger, the *nka'-nna* to women is less permanent: a *nawen*, field controlled by a woman, can be taken back by the *nya*, the controller of the estate, though normally in consultation with the women cultivating on the concession. The *nya*, for instance, will make new arrangements or demand them for the cultivation rights, if he marries another woman. Minor border-questions can be settled by the women themselves, but major problems have to be settled by the controller of the estate or even by the chief of the quarter, the highest authority always being the *fu*, the paramount chief. Naturally, if the controller of the estate concerned is weak, the position of the women
cultivating on the estate becomes stronger. Contrary to the situation prior to 1960, the holders of relatively large concessions no longer know all the women cultivating on their estate: since the liberalization of coffee-growing, the women do not give men part of the harvest of maize (often sold by the men to pay taxes), macabo, ground-nuts and sweet-potatoes, and products which can be dried and stored well such as tse-tse mekuo, the indigenous black beans, or special yam varieties. Since 1960 the women have looked after the men's coffee by clearing the fields of bad weeds and harvesting the coffee-beans (oil is sometimes given to the women as a reward for this work). On some concessions where the gwa is greatly respected/f feared we may find that part of the food-crop harvest is given to him by those women where he may not eat freely and nothing is given by women where he can eat, such as his wives, father's widows, sisters, daughters and other very close relatives, and wives of friends. Except for these traditional but rapidly disappearing customs of giving part of the harvest in return for favours, we also find exceptional cases where the controller of the concession demands that the women cultivate food-crops exclusively for his benefit in (a) specific field(s) (see Ouden, 1980: 58, 59 and 60). I found examples of this situation in Ngang and Nsoa.

In the above I have only depicted the ideal model of the land-tenure system, a picture which is more or less correct if the head of the minimal lineage is a strong man. Not only chiefs have followers, a head of the family also has his men. If it appears that people can live in peace under his leadership many people will choose and emphasize their 'dependency' upon him. Here living in peace means: good health, low infant mortality, reasonable harvests, no intrusions by neighbours, no unreasonable appropriation of movable property by notables and, in general, a concern of the principal heir for his people's welfare. A weak leader of the family was and is a threat to the family in many ways and will have a centrifugal and fissioning effect upon the political, economic, social and ritual family entity.

The traditional land-tenure system is now being severely threatened by the government's desire to perfect the 'mercantile domain', to enforce a system of personal land-titles.

According to a law of August 1974 people in the rural areas of Cameroon should apply for personal land titles within fifteen years (for urban areas this period is ten years). If after this period people still had not applied for these individual titles, the procedure for the 'bornage', the official marking out and registration of the land, is no longer free of charge and the land will be considered as belonging to the 'domaine nationale',
national domain (not 'domaine privé' like the strips of land with depths of 25 metres bordering the roads) and can be expropriated without any compensation (the government then only pays for buildings, trees and bushes).

The procedure to obtain individual land titles is as follows.

- The 'bureau des domaines', domanial office, of the divisional headquarters gives forms on which land boundaries and the value of buildings and crops have to be indicated.
- These forms have to be presented to the office of the subdivisional officer (sous-préfet) where an official receipt is sent to the office of the divisional officer (préfet).
- For one month the request for the official land bordering is posted up in the offices of the sous-préfet and of the paramount chief. After this month, the paramount chief issues a 'certificat d'affichage', certificate of notice.
- If nobody raises objections to the request, a date is fixed for an on-the-spot meeting of the commission, whose task it is to establish the official boundaries (here the 'chef de poste agricole', the local officer of the Ministry of Agriculture, seems to be an important co-ordinator).

This commission has the following composition:
1. an official of the domanial office,
2. an official of the land registration office,
3. a functionary representing the sub-divisional officer,
4. the local officer of the Ministry of Agriculture,
5. the representative or secretary of the paramount chief,
6. the chief of the quarter concerned.

- During the on-the-spot meeting, all the neighbours have to be present to give evidence concerning land boundaries and the ownership of the land. Questions arise like 'did the father divide the land among his brothers and sons?', if he did not the principal heir is the owner of the undivided estate on the understanding that the father's sons and daughters are named as co-heirs in the 'jugement d'héritidé', judgment of inheritance, which the commission also has to draw up.

In 1980, officials of the department of Agriculture estimated that some ten per cent of the controllers of land asked for a 'bornage', an official marking out and registration of their land. Every effective controller of land can ask for a personal land-title, this means that holders of a

ntyjq are also included. This will undoubtedly result in land being sold more frequently, which can no longer be prevented by principal heirs or chiefs of quarters. Land will become more and more a real commodity. Land as family-property and the position of head of the family as guardian of the patrimony are already affected by the process of market incorporation and its concomitants, but the new legislation will deal the final blow to the traditional land-tenure system.

One can doubt very much whether the registration of personal land titles will end the numerous disputes about land. I have already mentioned the frequent naming of co-heirs in the 'judgment of inheritance'; if land is sold, or transferred to brothers and sons, the co-heirs can create a lot of trouble, not to speak of extra difficulties if the transfer of land is
not properly documented with the official authorities concerned. It is also a question of whether banks will be in a position to give loans with land as security to holders of official titles; the problem of the co-heirs is still present and it may not be certain whether land, if necessary, can be auctioned by a bank at a reasonable price. If the government remains as strong as it is now, neighbours or members of the family will have greater difficulties to get hold of plots of land in the case of the 'owner' being a weak man or during the insecurity of succession. But what if corruption can turn wrong into right? It will take several years before the effects of the new land laws can be evaluated.

At the end of this section I recapitulate the most important terms used in relation to the land tenure system.

\( hwa \) : a man who controls land.

\( nkw\text{\textbar}ntar\) : independent estate (concession) symbolized by its own God of the Children and controlled by a \( hwa \) who is fully independent.

\( nty\)g : land given to a relative, a male member of the patri-lineage, who is then \( hwa \) of the terrain, but cannot sell the land.

\( nka\text{-}ju \) : land which has been bought.

\( nka\text{-}ju\text{'} \) : land given or obtained in usufruct, as security for a loan.

\( nka\text{-}nna \) : gift of land; to foreigners rather permanent, to women not (or less) permanent.

\( n\)\text{\textbar}n\text{\textbar}n : plot of land where a woman cultivates.

\( ncy\text{\textbar}nda \) or \( nda \) : respectively 'foundation' and 'house'; a minimal gift of land (\( nka\text{-}nna \)) to a stranger who is given 'a place to live'.

\( lesa\text{\textbar}a \) : estate from where we originate, where FF was born and the one from where MM originated.

\( nka \) : land; in a more specific sense land inside the inhabited area.

\( ts\text{\textbar}a\) : uninhabited area.
2 THE CONTROL OVER PEOPLE, LAND AND PRODUCTION IN TWO TSA AGNATIC FAMILIES, 1900-1980

2.1 The Letsi case

In this section I will analyse the situation under the three successive heads of the family, X, A and AI (see the genealogy). As no living man has known X, the information for his 'reign' can only be brief. The 'pre-coffee era' will be analysed when discussing A. The rights of women over land and produce can only be discussed in some detail for AI's period (2.1.3.5.); I was not able to trace the history of the cultivation rights of women in specific plots of land.

2.1.1 Principal heir X

The first residential agnatic family to be discussed belongs to the rare category where there is still a considerable amount of sparsely cultivated tswa land. The founder of the family, grandfather of the present old principal heir, held a high position in the chiefdom of Baleveng. He quarrelled with his chief, left and offered his services to the great Ts 十 chief and warrior Fomekong, great grandfather of the present paramount chief. This founder had a special skill to offer to the chief of Ts 十: he was a famous blacksmith. In fact he came together with two other men. At the beginning of my research, members of the family spoke of these men as 'brothers', but after some time they were not so sure and spoke about 'dependants'. Paramount chief Fomekong offered the founder the control over a track of land as nka'-nna. This land stretched from a river in the interior over a hill as far as a river which is the frontier with the chiefdom of Bansoa. On the hill there was an observation post of zunzu, a mandjo (age group) of warriors. If we look at this sub-chiefdom Letsi as a whole, then the family of its chief and some other lineages also originate from Baleveng. Fomekong settled new followers in a territory he conquered from Bansoa. Even today, the present principal heir after the indication of a sorcerer visits the lesa'a where his paternal grandfather was born in Baleveng, to bring offerings in order to stop a curse on the family.

In the first map of the area concerned I tried to mark the original nka'-nna given by Fomekong to the founder X (see the genealogy) in the
Letoi: Genealogy of male descendants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>X</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Y</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(u)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numbers between brackets indicate the total number of male descendants;
'u' between brackets indicate that the male descendants are unknown to me but that probably they are not absent.
second half of the nineteenth century. The division of the terrain between X and his 'brothers' Y and Z was arranged by him. The present principal heir AI, though very much interested in the neighbouring land of the descendants of Y and Z on 'his' side of the river, has no say whatsoever over these areas: after the death of X's successor A, this land no longer has the status of a ntyaq. Nevertheless, I traced the history of these plots on the southern side of the river (mainly land belonging to Y) because this offers supplementary information about the events since 1900 in the collateral lines. In this first map I also marked A's nkwj'ntari and the ntyaq s ceded to his brothers B, C, D, E, F and G.

During the reign of X and his successor A (A died in 1938), the hill side was used as pasture for goats and sheep. In X's time the nka area, the enclosures of plots for food-crops and for keeping goats, did not extend further up the hill than the terrains of G, D and F and, during A's rule, the portion given to B. Goats were free to graze on the whole concession during the dry period, from the food-crop harvest in September/October until sowing in March. From March to September they were kept enclosed on special plots in the area around the houses and were fed with, for example, chopped leaves. Chickens were similarly confined to a small space from March to the end of May. In the tswa area on the hill side, plots were used by women to grow 'black beans', tsetse-mekuo, once in three to five years.

It is said that the hill side was never communal land. However, a man without sufficient grazing grounds could ask the principal heir to include his goats in the flock. He 'paid' for this with a small goat. If we follow the river bordering Bansoa downstream, to the east, we come to an area which was communal until about 1964. AI (principal heir) and AIII (a literary man, protestant preacher and former secretary to the paramount chief) managed to obtain a plot at the time the sub-chief of Letsi divided this land amongst a dozen of his 'nobles' (see Map II, plots 48 and 49). This land was never cultivated by women in spite of its high fertility. The Bansoa swampy side of the river is still communal land. When I visited the two plots in 1978 together with AIII, it appeared that both he and AI had not seen the area for five years. Some hundred metres up the slope from this former communal land we found an area which had also lost its former function in ca. 1960. Here, girls from the sub-chiefdom who were nearly adult but still not married had the right to grow food-crops. It is said that on these plots girls learned how to cultivate, at the same time their efforts provided them with a small income (which is also true when they start cultivating with their mothers). They lost this right completely when they married.

I think that the highly fertile but marshy land bordering the river that separates Tsa and Nsoa (the border of the chiefdom of Lessing is also nearby) was in those days almost a 'no man's land' without clear-cut
boundaries, a so-called 'campagne' (Hurault, 1970: 246, 247), 'un terrain communal soumis au seul contrôle du chef,... mise à la disposition des femmes de tous les habitants du groupement, sans distinction de résidence'. Even now, because of the unhealthy environment, no houses are built in this tswa land, even though the strategic reasons are no longer relevant.

In former days houses were built close together: the distance between the houses of X, Y and Z was about 250 metres, on both sides of the raphia palm belt, an excellent hiding place. The distance between the residence of the principal heir A and five of his brothers (C, G, D, F and E) was a great deal smaller.

To me it is striking and obvious that the eldest brother, B (who died in 1910) had his residence relatively far away from the principal heir and at an outpost which was rather dangerous. In Bamiléké society, the eldest brother is often a person to be feared by a younger principal heir. He is also the one who acts as representative of a minor principal heir and who often rather cunningly tries to eliminate his younger 'father' (the successor to his father). In the case of B, I must add that he was a very strong man and that his sole 'occupation' was to be warrior of chief Fomékong.

For defence reasons houses were built close together down in the valleys of the chiefdom. It was only when French domination was established and slave raiding was really over that house-sites spread up the hill (including the enclosures of certain plots) reaching the hilltop in about 1950 (map II, plot 30).

2.1.2 Principal heir A and his first successor A II

X had six sons who reached adulthood; a seventh 'son' will be discussed separately. As his successor, X nominated the son of a princess of Tsa (probably his fourth or fifth living son) given to him as bride by paramount chief Fomékong. To choose the son of a close relative of the chief strengthened the position of the principal heir who was then a man to be feared in the quarter where he lived.

Kaberry (1952:36, 37) describes situations in which lineages with a semi-independent status try to avoid an increase in the chief's influence on their territories. Such lineages do not nominate as principal heir the son of a close relative of the chief. In Tsa or Ngang this can be expected with lineages of sub-chiefs and of members of the highest chiefdom council, the Nine, phem-lepfo or kamwu (see Ouden, 1979: 20-32). These authorities try to avoid nominating as successors sons of women coming from the paramount chief's palace.
2.1.2.1 Principal heir A

A was a blacksmith and trader (according to his descendants, in his younger years even in slaves) who in the Bali area near Bamenda learned to manufacture rifles. He was also a breeder of goats, pigs and horses, and agriculturist (palm wine and tree fruits), with his claim to part of the food-crops grown by women on his own concession (maize, black beans, groundnuts, some yam varieties, etc.). With the help of dependent males of his family, A could very well play his part in the exchange system of the chiefdom and even create situations in which other persons could not reciprocate. He obtained control over land outside the concession as a nka-ju2, as a security for loans, and enlarged the raphia area in the north-east as a nka'-ju (see plots 3 and 5 of the second map). A appeared to be a strong man who kept his brothers under control in the way 'it should be done', which meant not complete subjection. Leaving aside the ntyqg s X ceded to Y and Z, A kept the patrimony undivided and managed to transfer it as a whole to his successor. When A died in 1938 he asked his brothers, their descendants and his sons whether they had ever given him oil or other presents for the land or raphia he had given them. They all kept silent which meant that their land had never reached the status of complete independence, never became a nkwa3-ntan. A, like X, still got the lower parts of the cut trees and some of the raphia-wine they tapped, from the territories belonging to Y and Z, indicating the latter's dependent position. This economic, political, social and ritual tie came to an end with A's death.

In the genealogy of Letsi it is striking that, if we only look at sons, the life expectancies of the non-principal heirs were less than those of the successors. Principal heir A (eleven wives) had four to five adult sons and twenty-five grandsons. Two brothers, B (one wife) and E (three wives) did not have sons or lost them all before adulthood; C, D and F (one wife each) produced one son each. To follow these side-lines in the genealogy, CI (only since 1979 two wives) has one son, DI (one wife) three sons and FI (two wives) one son. Only 'brother' G (two wives) did somewhat better: he has four sons and already has six grandsons; his heir GII (one wife) already has four sons.

Amongst the six residential agnatic families I studied in Tsa and Ngang I also found that in general principal heirs have more offspring than non-heirs.
Table 1. Sons of two generations of heirs and non-heirs in six agnatic families of Tsa and Ngang, 1900-1980.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>no. of sons of heirs</th>
<th>Average no. of sons of brothers (no. of brothers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letsi (Tsa)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.6 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.6 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latchuet (Tsa)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.6 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toula (Tsa)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.8 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.5 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menguéa (Ngang)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.25 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomego (Ngang)*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>- (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biété (Ngang)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.5 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average no. of sons</td>
<td>8.9 (11)</td>
<td>2.2 (42)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Because of irregularities in the succession, migration took place and therefore figures for the older generation of principal heirs cannot be given.

If I mentioned that a non-heir is the potential founder of a new lineage, it now becomes clear that we have good reason to suspect that non-heirs have many difficulties in starting a flourishing new line. If I define a flourishing new line as a situation in which a non-heir produces at least three sons who reach adulthood, then of the 18 non-heirs of the older generation mentioned in Table 1, only 4 can be taken as such, whereas of the younger generation of non-principal heirs (numbering 24) only 12 reached a similar stage. It is important to note that in the younger generation of non-heirs the average number of sons is always higher than in the older generation; moreover the percentage of non-heirs producing three sons or more in the younger generation is much higher than in the older generation of non-heirs (50% to 234%) due to the better 'life expectancy', the process of incorporation has given them (especially by means of migration).

An analysis of the individual male members of the family can throw light on their dependency on principal heir A (and X) and the difficulties in getting a start in life. In certain cases I will continue the history of plots of land and people up to the present time. In naming the various men, I have taken as 'ego' the present principal heir AII.

2.1.2.2 Father's brother B

We have already noticed that B resided at some distance from his brothers. He married very late and died in about 1910 without living descendants. B was a warrior of the paramount chief and he helped his father breed goats and pigs. Later, X's successor A gave his ntyag to AII who in about 1955 ceded half to AIV with the consent of the then principal heir
AI. A gave his hut to a stranger from Balessing as nna. This man became a good friend of the family because during a fight with a thief he seriously injured a hand. His son lived in the hut until the rebellion of ca. 1960. In 1970, another son returned to Letsi and asked AI for 'a place to live'. He got a terrain of twenty by twenty metres as nka'-nna where he built a house (plot 27). Along the road (only constructed during the rebellion) strangers were regularly accorded a nna for a ncyo-nda in order to build a house: 'They are like the birds who build their nests; after some time they leave again'.

2.1.2.3 Father's brother C

C made baskets and mats and was also a sorcerer. He is talked of as a lazy man who did not want to look after much land. In 1930 there was a serious trial of strength between him and the ageing A, which C lost. He wanted to take the widow of the late D, but A refused to allow him and took her as his own wife because as principal heir he had paid the bride-wealth for this woman. With his wife and children C fled to Bamenkombo where he asked the paramount chief for some land. There he, and all except his wife and one of his children, died of cholera in 1947.

I understand that the quarrel between C and A was the last of a series. C, for example, tried to steal certain paraphernalia which belonged to X, such as a drinking horn, always a very magic and 'dangerous' object in these areas. My informants concluded their story with the following remark: 'Now C had to flee, but if he were a stronger person and a more serious hqaft-shyu, dangerous sorcerer, then he would have taken the control over a great part of the concession and would have caused others to flee.'

C's widow and son returned to Tsa and begged principal heir AI to accept them on the concession and to stop the curse from which they were suffering.

2.1.2.4 Father's brother D

D died before 1930; as we have seen his death caused the final rupture between C and A. D was only a smith-hand who handled the bellows for a smith in the neighbourhood who was not a member of the family. He only had a tiny ntyq (plot 11). After his death, his son DI was taken care of by his eldest sister who sent him to school aided financially by the principal heir AI. DI, now headmaster in a village east of Mbouda, before the rebellion of 1958-1962 planted coffee 'on the other side of the road', near the top of the hill (26-29) but during the riots he fled and never started cultivating in that area again. DI still has a house on his father's land (11).
2.1.2.5 Father's brother E

E, like B, C and D, was a 'little', rather poor man. He was a blacksmith who made tools used in agriculture. When I asked whether he had goats the answer was that he might have had some hidden behind his hut; if he had goats openly, notables would have asked him 'Who are you' ('Tu est qui') and would have taken them away. The principal heir, himself a notable and son of a princess of Tsa, would not have been in a position to stop his noble colleagues in an affair of this nature; it would have been his mistake because he had not controlled one of his people and had allowed him to become someone who did not know his place.

Starting with a small plot of land in the valley area (9), after some time he asked his father for a bigger parcel and got plot 17. A then added plot 9 to his 'own' land in the valley. E had died in 1929, after his sons had died of smallpox. His three wives (one of them was a slave) were taken by A, AI and AII. Now there are two sons of his two daughters in Garoua (North Cameroon) and Balessing: the family in Letsi knows them very well and feels that if they do not succeed in the regions where they now work, they could ask them for some land as a ntyog. E possessed some raphia palms in the valley (plot 8). These were later sold by AII and bought again by AIII who now holds this portion of marshy land as nka'-ju.

2.1.2.6 Father's brother F

After a period of forced labour for the Germans in which he was a road construction worker, F became a small trader in palmpits and salt, and also worked as a blacksmith. F died some years before A's death. A gave him a female slave as a wife when he was already rather old. This girl, kidnapped in Bahouan (near Bandjoun), was bought by A when she was still very young. F only controlled a tiny plot down in the valley area (12). His only son was born just after his death and that is why friends destroyed all his possessions, including hut, trees and raphia palms, saying: 'Who is going to live there now?' If a man died without grown up children it was quite normal to destroy all his possessions and for his ntyog to be taken back by the principal heir (plot 12). His son was taken care of by AIII who sent him to school, taught him to be a blacksmith (at the time including the manufacturing of rifles) and, in consultation with A, gave him a plot of land which AIII controlled (13). After a quarrel with his 'step-father' AIII, FI shifted his house from plot 13 to 25, up the hill.
2.1.2.7 Father's 'brother' G

G was in fact a son of A's sister. So it is understandable that he was much younger than his 'brothers'; G only died in 1960.

G was always pointed out to me as A's youngest brother. It was only after five months that the 'real' family relation became clearer. A sister of A married a prince of Tsa and they had two sons. During a famine the mother died and the father then took care of the elder son and sent the younger one to his wife's brother A where he stayed for the rest of his life. In this case a ntyog was given to a sister's son and when I asked whether this was alright an informant answered: 'Si sa mère était un homme elle avait quand-même aussi obtenue des terrains.' It was as if I heard M. Fortes' Tallensi informants (in Fox, 1967:231).

In section 1.3, I argued that it is quite possible to give a ntyog to a sister's son. On the other hand, it is not uncommon but is disapproved of and also feared as sons try to take land cultivated by their mothers. On some concessions where land scarcity is very great this is even the reason why daughters are no longer allowed to cultivate on their father's or brother's estate (see Ouden, 1980:60). I think it is too far-fetched to refer here to the matrilineal tribes of, for instance, the Kom area in the nearby Bamenda region (Kaberry, 1952:17, see also 14 for the patrilineal Msaw: '....a man has rights of usufruct on land belonging to the mother's lineage...').

A sister of A married a prince of Tsa and they had two sons. During a famine the mother died and the father then took care of the elder son and sent the younger one to his wife's brother A where he stayed for the rest of his life. In this case a ntyog was given to a sister's son and when I asked whether this was alright an informant answered: 'Si sa mère était un homme elle avait quand-même aussi obtenue des terrains.' It was as if I heard M. Fortes' Tallensi informants (in Fox, 1967:231).

G was always pointed out to me as being himself a farmer and an assistant to women in their cultivation of food-crops. This may seem somewhat strange, because men in this region state without reserve that they do not do agricultural work. We will have to remember that not so very long ago heavy clearance of fields, guarding the crops against beasts and men, fencing plots of land and perhaps even helping in harvesting the maize, finger millet and guinea corn was normally a man's task (compare Kaberry, 1952: 55, 87, 89). Men's agricultural activities would and will include the growing of raphia palms, kola-nuts and other tree-fruits and plants (the banana is a woman's product). I take it for granted that a 'dependent' person such as G, did not possess a considerable herd of goats.

Now and in the past, we often find that brothers and sons of the principal heir perform tasks for which they are not remunerated in a direct way but their is an understanding that they keep part of the produce. G, for instance, tapped raphia wine for his 'father' (mother's brother A and mother's brother's son Al) and chopped raphia poles. It was accepted

In Tsa and Ngang many examples can be found which bear out the old (1864), and of course exaggerated, statement of Richard Burton: 'Truly it is said that whilst the poor man in the North is the son of a pauper, the poor man in the Tropics is the son of a prince' (In: Goody, 1976/1977:99).

In section 2.2.3 I will pay some attention to tendencies towards per stirpes inheritance, referring to Goody and Buckley (1973).
that he used some of the wine for his own household and that he used raphia poles for the construction of his houses and the fences around his fields. As AI said: 'Perhaps he even sold wine and raphia poles, but if that was so he was cheating his father'. That such regulations between the principal heir and his relatives can produce confusion appears from the story AI and AIII told me in 1980. After the death of G in 1960 his widow sent someone to the raphia plantation on the north side of the concession to fetch bamboo poles. AI then asked her whether her husband had given him a sheep and oil for the raphia bushes. She could not confirm this and gave AI a chicken because a neighbour also told her that she had made a mistake. AI concluded 'G had nothing in that area; he only worked there for my father and me'.

2.1.2.8 Father's first successor AII

A's death in 1938 brought about a period of disorder in the family. He left five sons the youngest two of whom were very small boys. The third son was twenty two and quite well educated; he had already been secretary/scribe to the paramount chief and was trained as protestant evangelist. This man could not succeed his father because as a Christian he would not be able to perform the sacrifices to the 'gods' of the concession, including the skulls of the deceased forefathers (see Kaberry, 1952:37 for a similar case). There remained, therefore, AI and AIII as adult men and the two little boys. After A's death his houses were attacked by a high 'noble' of the Letsi sub-chiefdom, who had married one of A's daughters who appeared to be barren. He used this as a pretext to send his women to destroy A's houses. He in fact tried to take possession of part of the concession but did not succeed because of intervention by the paramount chief (a 'maternal grandfather') with whom AIII was on good terms. Then A's friends arrested ('captured and installed as successor') the laziest and least healthy son as principal heir; they said that A ordered them to nominate AII as his successor.

Very often, if people speak of father's 'friends' they mean his co-members of a kplii, a chiefdom organization of which he was a member. So 'friend' cannot always be translated by the Euro-American 'friend': it may be his enemy.

Immediately after the nomination AI and AIII fled, AI to Bamessa and Bansoa where he worked as a blacksmith, AIII went as an evangelist to a number of places in the Bamileké area. Nevertheless, AI was 'poisoned' by enemies and got 'leprosy' but eventually recovered. AII, however, A's successor, was also 'attacked' and he got a tumour in his side; he died six months after his installation. Because of his illness, AII had to sell raphia palms and land in the northern area gained during A's reign,
also E's raphia (plot 8) was sold to a stranger but was bought back later by AIII. Moreover, the land outside the concession was regained by the debtors who paid back the original gift/loan.

If someone is dying or already dead but still not buried, everybody can explain to the family the claims he or she has on the family's property ('parler sur la tête', 'to speak on the head'). The claimant is then asked whether he speaks the truth and will have to eat some hairs cut from the head of the dying or dead man or woman. If a person were not telling the truth, he or she would die. In the case of the land outside the concession, the debtor explained the situation, paid back the loan and regained his land. This could not be stopped by A's family: 'If we had not accepted there would have been killings'.

The patrimony remained practically undamaged in this period.

A person may die, but still constitutes a force to be reckoned with. AII had a daughter with two children, a boy and a girl. The boy is blind and in 1976 a sorcerer pointed out AII as the angry person who caused the disasters: 'The skull of your father is left in the grass, in the rain'. The body of AII was dug up and the skull has since been kept in the house of AII's widow (and now wife of AI), grandmother of the blind boy. Men of the family now discuss whether the skull should be buried in the 'house of the gods' (on plot 1) with the skulls (or stones representing the skulls) of X, X's mother, A, A's mother, and AI's mother. This would not be correct, because only the skulls of successors with sons and the mothers of these principal heirs are buried in that house. It is possible that it will be decided to build a separate small house for AII's skull because apparently AII is still active and not very pleased.

2.1.3 The present principal heir

2.1.3.1 Principal heir AI

In 1939 AI, the present principal heir, at the age of twenty six took over the leadership of the family. According to the principles of the area this meant the end of the lineage-link with the families of Y and Z: the principal heir has some control over the land of his father's brothers and their descendants, but not over his father's father's brothers descendants' land. AI, 'le père' (tc) as he is called by the members of the X family, has seen many changes in his life. When he started, the old agricultural system still existed with maize as the main crop on the fertile soils near the stream in the north, sweet potatoes somewhat higher (near the road) and black beans in the hill area. At the time animal husbandry was still very important. Coffee has caused a drastic change in the system. Because of the possibility since 1950 for every man to grow coffee (coffee is a bush-crop and thus a man's affair) even 'small' people wanted to have a big plot only for
themselves and were no longer content with plots like 9, 10, 11, 12 or 14 which belonged originally to C, D, E, F and G. Now, of course it is an inexcusable simplification to 'blame' coffee for the changes which took place: the end of warfare and raids, the increase in population, commercialization of food-crops and the process of monetarization are also important. We can speak about a 'modern fund of rent', when the government in one way or another drains much of the profit produced by coffee growing. But still, in a situation in which food-crops are grown by women in a mixed cropping system, the extensive coffee plantation means a 'deus ex machina' for men compared to animal husbandry with its concomitant large scale enclosures, the growing of plantains (you have to control and protect this crop almost daily) or tree crops like kola-nuts (it takes many years to get any profit from this crop). Coffee does not require much hard work if it is being grown in a careless way and the women help with it.

After AI's succession many changes occurred in the division of the control over plots of land within the A concession, not only in the 'old' area but also near the hill top. In general, one can say that members of the family make a sharp division between the terrains north of the road (plots 1-21) and those south of the road (22-45): they emphasize that in the latter area there are no permanent ntyog s and that rearrangements will have to take place especially because older people claim too much land and not enough is left for the young members of the family, whether migrated or not. When I tried to get some idea as to how the raphia area on the north side and on the land south of plot 25 was divided I was given only very indefinite indications and then only if nobody else was around.

During AI's reign one considerable extension of his terrain occurred, in 1963 or 1964 he obtained a portion of some 55 by 200 metres of the communal area which was divided amongst Letsi notables. On the other hand, AI suffered several attacks on his patrimonium and newly-won land. I was told about two land disputes and found the stories confirmed by the official documents of the paramount chief concerning these cases.

Apart from 'taxes' in which some modern 'redistribution' principle should be visible, I distinguish a modern 'fund of rent' by which the rural population has to contribute to the well-being of the urban elite, the development of state bureaucracies or the creation of state prestige symbols such as a national air company or sport stadiums. For instance I consider as such, the surplus value drained from producers of cash crops by some marketing boards.
It is interesting to take note of both the nature of the land questions and the paramount chief's judgment of the cases. The reader will notice that the process of institutional incorporation is visible in the two documents from the chiefdom: the first one can be characterized as informal and not exact and was written by traditional high palace-officials, the second document was drafted by a young paramount chief, clearly educated in the writing of official letters. Both documents were written in French.

1. The first document concerns a conflict between A and a 'neighbour' about land bordering the river which forms the boundary between Tsa and Bansoa (plots 45-47) which was tried before the oy2'-ntx' (high palace official, 'grand serviteur') and representative of chief Djiatio (often away as a member of the national parliament).

Amicable settlement of the chiefdom by Tedjeukeng, representative of the paramount chief and Kamou-Tatchioffo, Notable of Batcham.

Concerning: AI of the village Batcham-quarter Baletsi contra: Moho-Tafouetsop, of the village Batcham-quarter Batchoueti.

Subject : AI accuses Moho-Tafouetsop of wanting to occupy without reason his land. The forefathers had already divided the land by planting some banana trees and setting poles and there was never any question about property rights. The terrains of AI and Moho-Tafouetsop are separated by land owned by Douobie.

Conclusion: The delegation installed by the paramount chief to judge the affair met both parties in the disputed fields in the presence of witnesses from the quarters of Bameleu and Baletsi. Moho-Tafouetsop, the defender, arrived presenting in public almost all his magic; his brother Foute Isaac carried a big old bag containing various poisonous objects and a rhinoceros horn which in indigenous law is of great symbolic value. Moho-Tafouetsop asked AI, the accuser, to eat the medicines in order to prove that the disputed land belonged to him and that he was not telling a lie. This land extends up to the river, that marks the frontier between the villages of Bansoa and AI of Batcham village.

Considering the criminal attitude of the defender Moho-Tafouetsop, towards AI, the accuser, the terrain can only be assigned to one of them after testimonies by both the neighbours of the disputants and by the people of the quarter.

In land disputes, customary law demands that earth and tiny parts of trees from the disputed land be eaten to prove ownership. Instead of drinking the wine from the rhinoceros horn and eating the poisonous objects, as demanded by the defender, the delegation nominated by the chief preferred to receive testimonies of the people of the quarter and neighbours rather than having a cadaver on their hands due to the consumption of malevolent medicines.
Two men of the Bameleu quarter, neighbouring the disputed land, the chief and people of the quarter in which the disputed land is situated, publicly and on the spot certified that AI is the owner of the disputed land. In accordance with the testimony of the public, the delegation of the paramount chief gives the terrain to its owner AI.

In our presence the parties have agreed to this decision.

Djatio Etienne Robert - Paramount Chief Batcham assisted by Tantang Jean Pierre

Batcham Chiefdom the 1st of August 1965

The Paramount chief or his representative.

AI hesitated to eat any earth or parts of the trees and bushes in the disputed area. Members of the family also warned him not to do so, because of his bad health at the time. AI and his family were more interested in reaching an agreement with the notable of the neighbouring Batchouèti quarter who opposed them. It is quite possible that he also doubted if the chief's verdict could be carried out. AI therefore decided to give portion 47, that is the greater part of his forest and raphia possessions on the river side, to his opponent. Nevertheless, it goes without saying that disputes about the southern side of the concession did not end with this indulgence. Even in 1978 I found that the neighbour was trying to take over the raphia palms planted by AI's sons in the section I have indicated as 46 and that his wives were trying to start cultivation there.

The land disputes on the terrains near the river bordering Bansoa are certainly encouraged by the fact that men do not really use that area. Here, as in plot 48 (see following paragraphs), it was AI's third son who as a young boy at the end of the sixties was asked to start cultivation in order to some extent stop the challenges from outside: AI.3 planted some raphia palms, plantains and even some coffee on his father's behalf. Since this son left Tsa in 1974, however, there are no longer any men active in this region. Even the tapping of the raphia palms AI possesses there is now left to a stranger and it is not clear whether any of the profit is given to AI. From the foregoing and from the further discussion of the X family, it is clear that since about 1970 there are no young men left who are really interested in the expansion of agriculture in this area. In fact 'after' plots 24/25 (with the exception of 38/39) we enter an exclusively 'women's domain' where the resident and leading old men of the family (AI and AIII) are only trying to defend the family-property 'from a distance'. In 1978, women would not co-operate with me and explain who cultivated the area marked 45. I must say I was dumbfounded when the wife of AIII bluntly stated: 'We do not cultivate on the other side of the hill, behind the house of AIV' (plot 30). It was a son of AI who gave me some further information on the area south of the neglected well in plot 45; as a young boy he often accompanied his mother to her fields there. When I
revisited this tswa in 1980 I asked my informants when the men of the family had last visited this remote part of the concession and their answer illustrated the situation clearly: 'We were here in 1978 when we were accompanying you'. I think the students who were there together with me were right when they commented: 'They will fear your return'.

Some other trouble arose when after the rebellion of the fifties and sixties several 'strange' women from Tsa tried to start cultivation of food-crops in the highly fertile land along the river, arguing that this was a free tswa (undivided 'campagne') belonging to all the people of Tsa. It was AIII who stopped the women: 'They became very frightened when I started writing their names down and asked who sent them here'. The following remark in this respect is interesting: 'Now, in contrast to the Bansoa side of the river, all the Tsa marsh-land is clearly divided and only your "own" women have the right to cultivate on your land'. As I have said before, it is possible that this swampy area and part of the slope of the hill were, not so long ago, some type of 'campagne' for military and medical reasons (malaria!) and because these remote terrains were not really needed.

2. In 1964, the remaining unoccupied lands of Letsi were divided by the sub-chief of Letsi and the paramount chief. The latter must have been of some importance in this affair, because the new owners, notables of Letsi, paid him considerable sums of money (up to CFA 12,000, depending on the quality of the land). AIII helped to divide the land and managed to obtain for himself a very stony plot for only CFA 2000 (plot 49). To begin with AII was not very interested in enlarging his lands, but nevertheless was given a second chance when a son of the sub-chief of Letsi was prepared to sell him half of his own very large portion. AII paid him for this land (plot 48). When AII was in hospital in Douala at the end of 1968 a fight took place between his women and a gang of men and women led by the son of the sub-chief of Letsi. The dispute is discussed in the following official document from the palace of Tsa.

Amicable settlement of the Chiefdom of Batcham
March 31, 1969

Subject: Land question

AI son of the late A and ... (mother) of the village Batcham quarter Baletsi accuses Kueté Kenne son of Fouodjiogap of the village Batcham quarter Baletsi of wanting to occupy his terrain in the quarter Baletsi illegally.

Discussion

After reception of the complaint of AI, I Tatang Robert paramount chief of Batcham have sent to the disputed terrain a
delegation composed of the following members:
Tatcheukeng, notable of the village Batcham
Tatang André, municipality councillor
Tanfo Abraham, municipality councillor
Taniyo Samuel, president of the local division of UNC (party)
Yemefack Martin, secretary of the paramount chief
Djou David, committee of self-defence of Batcham.

After having sent a circulatory letter to the chief and in­
habitants of the given quarter in which I asked them to re­
ceive my delegation on the disputed land to give clarification
concerning the ownership of this land.

Declaration of the delegation
We went to see the disputed land. It concerns a terrain which
Fouodjiogap, chief of Baletsi quarter, gave to his son Kueté
Kenne. Six months later he divided the same terrain in two
portions and with the consent of Kueté Kenne installed AI in
one of them. Because AI planted coffee bushes, raphia palms
and many other plants, three years later Kueté Kenne wanted
to take back the land.

Declaration of the witnesses
Meo Tadjiotio: AI spoke the truth. Our chief only wants to
create disorder in the quarter without reason. He himself
sent us to divide the terrain in two parts of which one was
for his son Kueté Kenne and the other for AI. The day of
the repartition we were with three persons, Teffouo Manang,
Nantsa Martin and me.

Teffouo Manang: Everything that Meo Tadjiotio said is true,
we divided the land.

Nantsa Martin declares the same.

Result
After having heard all the declarations, I Tatang Robert,
paramount chief of Batcham have decided that each of the
two persons has to take his portion of the field given by
the chief of the quarter and that hereafter I do not want
to hear any more stories about this land. Each should re­
ceive his own part. The parties have agreed.
This question is settled at the chiefdom of Batcham before
us Tatang Robert paramount chief of Batcham assisted by his
secretary Yemefack Martin.

Given at Batcham 31st March 1969
The paramount chief of Batcham

Chief of the quarter Tatang Robert (signature and stamp)
Baletsié (fingerprint)

Now, of course, much remains to be explained in this case, such as did
AI only lend money to the Letsi notable for which he obtained the usu­
fruct of the land, or did he really buy the land? In Letsi there is a
great deal of faction fighting since the old chief's stand in the war
between Tsa and Ngang in the forties (he was imprisoned together with
Djiatio, the paramount chief of Tsa). I can imagine that some people in
Letshi would welcome a chance to give evidence against the then ruling chief of the quarter who had replaced the real sub-chief. The opponent in this case died in about 1971 and his wives accused AI of killing him by sorcery. After 1969 there were no further trials on this terrain. We should remember, however, that the men of A's family hardly ever visit this plot of land which lies some kilometres from their homes. Only AI.3, who has worked in Douala since 1974, has shown any interest in this land where his mother still cultivates a plot.

Finally I should like to mention another land conflict but, unfortunately I was not able to check the data sufficiently. In June 1980, I noticed that a neighbour had tried to annex part of the Northern raphia palm area (see plots 3 and 5). 'Of course' AI immediately informed his 'big brother' AIV in Douala and asked his intervention (the position of AIV is explained below). AIV promised to look into the affair during his visit to Tsa/Letsi in June 1980. His efforts signal to the neighbours that they will have to be very careful. Again, I think that the absence of active young men on the estate (and on many concessions of Tsa and Ngang!) is an open invitation for neighbours to try their luck.

AI is now an old man and when he is not too ill he makes wooden butt-ends of rifles, performs the rituals for the gods and forefathers and talks with people. After the breakdown of the traditional men's activities (hut building, construction of enclosures, small-cattle breeding, etc.) he, like many others, never really became involved in the main new task, the growing of coffee. Whereas in former days a principal heir could recruit the help of brothers, sons and other dependent relatives, such help no longer exists: you have to do the work yourself if your women cannot or refuse to do the job. Hiring people to work is still not the accepted way, nor is it easy to realize because of the non-existence of a real class of agricultural labourers (here I do not speak of young boys and of school-children who have to perform practical work in agriculture, often a lucrative business for school-directors) with a 'work for money' tradition and because of the financial burden this help would mean (about CFA 500 per man per day in 1978-1980).

In about 1973 AI hired a boy ('stranger', not belonging to the family) to help him cultivate his new plot 48: the boy/young man had to tap the raphia palms, collect the plantains and sell at the market. The profit from the agricultural products would be shared equally between AI and this 'labourer' and AI thought that in this way he could pay for his participation in a rotating credit association. After some time, AI broke off this association because it appeared that the man sold much more raphia-wine and plantains than he returned to
AI. No control being possible, production on plot 48 was
stopped with probably some women of the family profiting
from the man's inability to manage their affairs and
'thieves' making use of the uncontrolled situation.

Help from sons is almost impossible because this would increase the
rivalry between the sons and between their mothers; this assistance
would be suspect, as if they were already taking away part of the land,
or assuming to be the future principal heir. Furthermore, it appears
that no men want to stay to help their father because of the fear of
black magic by close relatives and because they are unwilling to stay in
'the village' where the compensation for work is some food: a business-
like contract between close relatives is still unthinkable. This means
that - just as in the case of all the old men I know in Tsa or Ngang -
AI's property in trees, bushes and cattle is in a state of utter neglect.

It is striking that even women's agriculture is neglected in his
nkw2'2-ntap (plots 1, 2, 9 and 12; see map 4) where about half the land
lies fallow. AI is no longer capable of demanding that 'his' women
continue cultivation and at the same time look after his coffee-bushes.
The principal heir, like the women who cultivate in this terrain, is
growing old.

To conclude, it should be noted that none of his adult sons are resident
in Tsa at the moment (1980). AI.1, born in about 1943, left the chiefdom
in 1961; he now works in the port of Douala as a supervisor. As a little
boy he accompanied AII to other parts of the Bamiléké region. In 1961
AIV took charge of him and managed to give him a start in Douala. Some
temporary land-reservation is made for him (plot 35). The second son
left in 1968 and is now a railway-labourer in Douala. Also AI.2 was
taken care of by AIV. Like AI.1 he still has not constructed a house on
the concession: his plot of land might be 40. AI.3 is now a labourer in
a factory in Douala that makes batteries. As already mentioned he devel-
oped some interest in agriculture before he left in 1974. He still owns
coffee on plot 37, looked after by his mother. Here his coffee was once
burned by women of his own family or neighbours, either accidentally or
on purpose: the real situation was kept secret from me. This burning
down of coffee also happened to AI in the vicinity of the little water-
source on plot 44, and to AIII on plot 41 (and 18). On this almost waste
land (as far as the men are concerned) women burn down bushes and grass
before starting the cultivation of food-crops and then 'unhappily enough',
if the wind comes from the wrong direction, they can damage men's crops.
AIII assured me that this can happen accidentally; he once had to pay
four sacks of sulphate fertilizer because his wife caused the burning of
a neighbour's coffee in this hill area. AI.3 also made efforts to start
cultivation on Al's new plot 48. Here he had to overcome the resistance
of women of the family who refused the cultivation of coffee; in an
angry mood AI.3 destroyed the women's crops whereupon they left the area
and refused to clean the ground around the coffee-bushes, to pick the
coffee-beans, etc. Now it appears that AI obtains the profit from the
plantains and from coffee produced on plot 48 and that only the mother
of AI.3 has some land where she cultivate.

As I mentioned, the aspirations of AI.3 to cultivate in Tsa
have now stopped to some extent; his mother is in charge of his
remaining coffee and plantains. He also left for Douala, but
I ask myself whether he left of his own free will or was sent
away by his father. This last possibility implies that, prob­
ably, he will be the successor nominated by his father. Time
will tell if I am correct. In Tsa I found several cases in
which it appeared afterwards that principal heirs sent their
future successors away from the chiefdom in order to protect
them against the growing suspicion and envy of brothers and
the co-wives of his mother which could threaten his life. In
this Ngjemba region it is quite characteristic to see old
principal heirs wither away with, perhaps, only a 'neutral'
cousin or nephew in their immediate proximity 'to look after
the fire in his house'; this boy might be given a ntygg by
the old man to thank him for his assistance during the last
years of his life.

AI.4 was taken to Douala as a little boy by AIV in the early sixties;
AIV found him a job as a labourer in the railway department. Some provi­
sional land-reservation has been made for him on the Letsi concession,
but AIV wants him to build a house next to his own bungalow on plot 31.
In 1980 AI reacted very prudently. 'I have made no regulations in that
area; he has not asked me'.

AI.5 is a student at the university of Yaoundé and AI.6 a college-student
in Nkongsamba. So far no land-provisions have been made for them. The
four remaining sons still attend a primary school in Tsa.

2.1.3.2 The descendants of father's brothers

Before discussing AI's brothers AIII and AIV and their descendants I will
pay some attention to other members of the agnatic family who can be con­
sidered as AI's traditional dependants. Here - as in the case of sons,
brothers and brother's sons - we will have to ask ourselves whether and
in what way they still are 'dependants'.

CI together with his mother returned from Bamenkombo out of fear for the
curse which apparently threatened them (see 2.1.2.3). After the sacri­
fice to the forefathers X and A, AI allotted to CI a plot formerly man­
aged by B and afterwards controlled by AIII. CI refused because he
wanted the ntyjq where his father had lived (plot 10), this was then
given to him. He took up his father's profession of basketmaking and
the manufacturing of bamboo beds.

Now the plot of land controlled by C, had had a complicated
history since 1930. After C had left Tsu, A installed a
nkate (adjunct) of the paramount chief of Baleving who,
like X, had to flee after a quarrel with his chief. After his
return to Leving some years later A gave the terrain as
nka'-nna to a friend of D from Balessing. This man had to flee
when he abducted a married woman from Baleving. D told him that
his 'father' (= brother) would have a good place 'to hide. Some
time later this man took the hut of YI (plot 50) who refused
to pay his father's debts (four 'pagnes', traditional clothes)
and fled to the chieftom of Bafounda; now it was the stranger
who paid the debts. This had in fact recently caused diffi-
culties. After the death of the stranger, YIII.1 took the hut
in ca. 1955 and planted coffee. Then in about 1965 a daughter
of the stranger (who returned toLetsi for marriage) argued
that her father 'bought' the land as nkai-ju including the
hut and that she had the right to live there. She asked AI
to intervene but he is said to have answered: 'Ton père a
ramassé ta mère pour venir dans le champ de YI. S'il l'avait
acheté je n'étais pas témoin de ton père. Va t'en devant moi!' Anyhow AI did not think he had any say in land controlled by
the Y family.

After the two strangers who occupied plot 10 had left, this
land was given to one of A's younger sons, AIV's twin-brother
who later died. When CI regained his father's ntyjq, this son
(not mentioned in the genealogy) moved to plot 20, where his
surviving twin-brother is now in charge. Plot 20 was ceded
to him by AIII who, as a protestant evangelist, was stationed
most of the time elsewhere in the Bamiléké region.

Now that coffee had become an important crop for men, CI asked the prin-
cipal heir for an additional plot, for cultivation by both himself and
his wife. AI agreed to let him use a plot on the hill side (38 and 39)
in the area where no definitive division had taken place. My informants
did not like it at all when I tried to measure CI's land in this area,
because it is considered only as a temporary nna and not as a ntyjq.
CI's only son (so far), a tailor in Foumbot (the Bamoun area), has some
coffee bushes on plot 39.

In 1978, AI developed a plan to shift CI completely to the hill side, I
think in order to enlarge the plot of land AI's future successor will
get in the old valley area. This might have been a reaction to my
question as to what land his successor would receive after his death.
He found that a very interesting question indeed! In the period between
1978 and 1980 nothing had changed.

Whereas CI's land in a way still forms part of the greater estate (he
cannot sell land), as with the other ntyjq s it is no longer true that
the principal heir has any right to part of the agricultural production
(wood or raphia wine) or labour. AI only gets gifts if he is asked to
perform certain rituals. Living on the greater concession CI participates in all discussions on family problems. Whereas contacts with DI are friendly and rather intensive, participation in the family affairs of this headmaster in another village is less compared with, for example, CI or FI (see 2.1.2.4). In his function as adviser, DI is less important than AIV.

FI's position is very much comparable to that of CI (see 2.1.2.6). The special family relation with G (F Z S) was discussed in 2.1.2.7. We came to know him as a man who was more interested in agriculture than his other 'brothers'. He also started to plant his own coffee immediately after 1950. In 1949, G obtained a nka'-ju from YIV (a notorious squanderer of family land) who could not pay his taxes (plot 55). G's eldest son was taken to Koumba (the Mungo plantation and settlement area) in 1945 by his mother's brother; he was never interested in his father's land. Gossip says that GI left for Koumba with a wife for which he did not pay the bride-wealth. GII was much more interested in the Letsi affairs and after 1950, with the consent of AI, started to plant coffee in the hill area (plots 30-37). He built a house on plot 30 (destroyed in the sixties) where, in 1978, AIV started to build his luxury bungalow. In about 1960, GII was nominated as successor by his father. During the rebellion his life was once in serious danger and he fled to Koumba and subsequently became driver and owner of a taxi in Douala. At present he owns a house on the tiny plot 24 (in fact only a ncyo-nda, near his mother's ncyo-nda on plot 22 (where the coffee is owned by AI.3). G's ntyog (30-37) was taken back by the principal heir AI in the sixties. When I asked AI whether this was correct he answered: 'If you offer someone wine and he does not drink it then you also take it back'. At the end of the sixties, a provisional reservation of raphia trees was made for CI, DI and FI as well as for GII (see plot 3-6). I could only guess the size of these plots because my informants would not allow me to measure them. In 1978 or 1980 these tiny, but valuable plots, because of the raphia, did not even have the status of a temporary nna. AI only agreed that, for the time being, the relatives mentioned may profit from the raphia palms growing there.

GIII also fled to Koumba in 1960 and has now, with some help from AIV, got a job in Douala as a railway-labourer. GIV is taken care of by GIII and is now a college-student in Buea (south-west province). This means that the whole G family has left the area and will probably not return before old-age. G's widow is still in charge of the land and even looks after men's products such as coffee and plantains. She lives in a house (only a ncyo-nda) on plot 22.
2.1.3.3 Brother AIII

AIII, born in about 1916, was the first educated man in the family. Advised by his teacher at a protestant primary school in Balessing, he became an evangelist and was stationed in various parts of the Bamiléké area. Though not a principal heir, his financial independence enabled him to marry in his early twenties (monogamous) and to buy some land as nka'-'ju (plots 8, 16 and 49). On plot 2, AIII planted a number of raphia palms, although the plot belongs to the Al's nkwj-njog. AIII is the owner of the palms and may even sell them or use them as security for a loan. Here is an example of the law which stipulates that the controllers of the land and of the trees can be different people. The history of AIII's estate is very complicated and in fact proves his lack of interest in agriculture and his interest in the well-being of the family. The core of AIII's ntyaq is formed by the former ntyaq of B and E (18 and 17). From A or AI he got plot 13 which, as we saw, he later ceded to FI with the consent of AI. AIII now ceded, in a temporary arrangement plot 41 to his fourth son and the coffee grown there is for the latter's benefit. Plots 20 and 21 were also a ntyaq of AIII (after B), but he ceded these terrains to AIV after CI regained control of plot 10 where AIV's deceased twin-brother had planted coffee. Plot 6 belonged to E and, the raphia palms included, was sold by All to a stranger in 1939. AIII managed to buy this portion and the raphia in 1947. Plot 16 originally belonged to the estate but 2's women cultivated there. 2's successor ZII gave it, in 1929, as nka'-juj' to the husband of a sister of AI and his brothers. Here again we see the danger that sons of the women are to an estate: ZII argued that he was jwa of the terrain because his father's women cultivated there. AI's sister's husband used the plot as an enclosure for his goats/sheep. In 1934 AIII stopped the legal uncertainties by paying twenty 'mark' to his affine and taking the plot, thus rescuing the honour of the family and increasing his control over the middle section of the X estate. In 1980, it is still not obvious to an anthropologist what rights AIII acquired by paying this amount. It is sufficient that everybody in the X and Z families considers the rights of this honourable and influential man to be nka'-ju. Now AIII has planted coffee-bushes here on behalf of his son AIII.4.

In spite of his Christian faith and contacts with Europeans, AIII is very loyal to the old Bamiléké values concerning the unity of the agnostic family. He treats his brother AI in a very respectful way (he also always calls him 'father') and completely accepts his control over the land of the X concession. He never forgot to inform AI and
ask his consent when he wanted to explain certain particulars about the X concession to me. He even continues his father’s profession and, like A and AI, he is a skilled blacksmith and rifle-maker. Like most of the other men of the family he has some coffee, but like the rest of the family he is not at all interested in a maximalization of the agricultural output which would mean ‘hard’ work in agriculture. The tapping of raphia wine is sufficient agricultural work for a day. As for most of the men, agriculture is an irksome affair and the way AIII manages his agricultural interests can hardly be called serious.

After much discussion (‘It is really too far away, I have not been there for the last five years’) I, together with AIII, visited his plot 49. There it appeared that his neighbour’s women had started cultivation on a strip of his land of some 10 by 135 metres: ‘I will tell my neighbour that this action is not correct’. The same attitude we find when women burn down his coffee-bushes or do not obey his demand to leave some plots fallow for his goats: ‘Be more careful in future’ and ‘You will have to listen more carefully to what I have to say’ is all he will say.

AIII’s adult sons all migrated as workers or students to regions outside Tsa and, as with AI’s sons, the much appreciated help of AIV is again remarkable. The eldest son, AIII.1, is foreman in the textile industry in Douala; after his failure at the secondary school he went to AIV in Douala in 1968, where he started as a cart-driver in the market place. AIV helped him to get a job in CICAM (textiles). A little plot, more a ncye-nda, has been accorded to him by AI to build a house (plot 26), but so far he has not started construction. AIII.2 left for Douala in 1971 and likewise was helped by AIV; he is now a train driver. No land reservation has been made for him because he has still not asked for it. AIII.3 and 4 are students in secondary schools in Bafoussam and Douala. They both left Tsa in 1970 to live with their brothers or other relatives. As we saw, AIII.4 already has some coffee on plots 16 and 41. AIII.5 is a boy of twelve (1978), he was taken to Balessing by a sister of AIII in 1975.

2.1.3.4 Brother AIV

AIV is the youngest of the A brothers and was born in 1936. He had already left Tsa in 1957, before the rebellion. He was able to profit from the Cameronian and French efforts to create a Cameronian intellectual élite. He concluded his technical training in France and got a high post in the rolling-stock department of Cameroon railways. He grew rich and in 1978 owned three houses in Douala. On the Letsi concession, his ntyag is formed by plots 20 and 21. In 1977, he started building a bungalow
on the hill top (30), on the spot where, prior to the rebellion, GI'I's house was situated. As a rich man, one who helped many younger members of the family and as the supporter of the family-interests whenever members were in trouble with the 'outside-world', he could permit himself to choose a site without consulting anybody. He just broke through the provisional arrangements AI had made for the area. The attitude of the family versus AIV is very ambiguous: he is feared, envied and honoured. Whereas AI is the traditional leader of the family, AIV is the adviser in all those matters with which the family is confronted during the rapid changes connected with the process of incorporation into the new state of Cameroon. As members of the family say: 'We are blind, he has to tell us what to do'.

Now we can ask ourselves who is the 'leader', who is the most important person, AI or AIV? This question cannot be answered in a simple 'black and white' way because of the 'dualistic nature' of Bamiléké society at present. If Bamiléké are asked questions in a direct way, they are forced to take a traditional viewpoint. As the influential chief of a neighbouring quarter said to me in 1980: 'During a meeting in the court of the fua-ntyg' (sub-chief) of Letsi or in the court of the fu (paramount chief) AI will be seated on his chair/stool, while AIV will have to sit with the commoners. AI will be asked to speak on important topics and AIV will have to be silent. AIV can never be a member of a kjìh (chiefdom organization) which is more important than the one of which AI is a member. Of course with his money he can obtain from the fu a title and position which makes him independent of AI and enables him to start his own nkwo'3-ntaf. In that case he can even become more important' (see Hurault, 1970:10 for the 'segmentation dans le lignage, quand un individu est devenu notable'). The point, however, is that AIV stands above the traditional chiefdom situation, he is too much a member of modern Cameroon society to feel the necessity of obtaining an independent and honourable position in the traditional order, regardless of his interest in the well-being of the members of the agnatic family to which he belongs. On the basis of his 'modern' politico-economic position, AIV wants to be honoured in the family, in his Bamiléké homeland, in the Bamiléké society of Douala, Yaoundé and of Cameroon in general, and in the new Cameroon 'urban' world.

This is the situation in a number of families who have been lucky enough to produce a fairly important man in the new economic and administrative world, who can and wishes to play the role of protector of the family. With some bitterness AI remarked: 'I did not mark AIV's ntyg around his new house; I will have to do it when it is ready. Meanwhile I do not mind if he wants some coffee there'. Now, arbitrarily, AIV wants one of his protégés, AI.4, to construct a house next to his. The family has taken on a waiting attitude in this matter, but will certainly not object to this arrangement. AIV's six sons are still young and all live with their parents in Douala. No land reservation has been made for them in Letsi.
Most probably in the future they will not even feel the necessity of having a house in the chiefdom they only know from summer-holidays. Compared with many other families of Tsa and Ngang, the X family described can be called a traditional (in the sense of following the old rules) and well-disciplined group. They have managed to overcome former periods of weakness and the old men now in charge of the affairs, assisted by a much younger high Cameroon official, succeed in maintaining a status quo. However, I am rather pessimistic about the unity of the X estate when AI dies. In 1979, he regrouped the houses of his compound and built a house back from the road on plot 18 (with the consent of AIII), thus creating a considerable courtyard suited to a dignified funeral ceremony. In 1980, AI said to me: 'I am old now and ill and I will soon die, so I had to make preparations for my funeral'.

2.1.3.5 Women's position in agriculture

So far, I have only spoken of men's rights in land and only as an aside mentioned the rights of control by women. As mentioned, women (except a 'queen', ma-fuj) cannot obtain a ntyqq: their land rights are characterized as nna which can be retaken by the jwa of the land. Women may only grow food-crops and are forbidden to plant coffee, plantains or fruit-trees in their fields (with the exception of bananas). On the X-concession, we find a very traditional attitude regarding the land-rights of women. Moreover, women have a great deal of freedom in settling their own affairs. There are important reasons for this: (1) land is still not very scarce on the estate and (2) men are not very interested or active in agriculture, all having occupations which they consider more important.

Even before the tumultuous years accompanying Independence, the great independence of women in this specific family was also a fact. When AIII married in about 1940, he wanted his wife to cultivate in his dead mother's fields, it then appeared that the women of the family did not 'remember' the situation of those fields. In a diplomatic way, AIII advised his wife to assist the women of the X concession with their agricultural activities. 'She was well accepted and after some time women indicated the plots to her where she could start cultivation herself, but, even now, I do not know exactly where the fields of my mother were'. Now AIII's only wife is fully incorporated in what the men here call 'the secret world of the women': it was she who answered bluntly that in the tswa area, 'after' plots 30/31 no women of the family cultivated and she refused to accompany AIII and me to that area.

Contrary to the tswa area south of the road, the men of the family have a fairly good idea about the women's njijn in the nka' area north of the road: there they appeared to be able to indicate most of the women's tiny plots and they often even knew which friends, mothers, sisters or daugh-
EXAMPLE I

LETSI
PLOTS 1, 2, 9, 12

Temporary fallow in 1978

Coffee

1 cm = 10 m

Situation of the compound of the principal heir destroyed in 1964. Now Koll’s house and cop.
Example 1.

Cultivation rights of women on AI's plots 1, 2, 9 and 12. The family relations of the women with AI and the places where the women actually lived in 1978 are indicated. B = brother; D = daughter; F = father; M = mother; S = son; W = wife; Z = sister.

A  1-5  Wives of the principal heir
    B  1-2  WM
    C  1    WZ
    D  1    Z
    2
    3
    4-5
    E  0    ZSW
    F  1    D
    2
    G  1    BW
    H  0    BWZ
    I  0    BD
    J  0    BSW
    K  1-3  SW
    L  1    SWM
    M  1    FBD
    N  1-2  FBSW
    O  1    FZSW
    P  1    FFWD
    Q  0    Wife of friend

Same quarter
Other quarters of Tsa
Same quarter of Tsa
Same quarter
Douala
Other quarter of Tsa
Other quarter of Tsa
Same quarter
Same quarter
Other quarter of Tsa
EXAMPLE II

LETSI
PLOTS 16, 17, 18.
Example II

Cultivation rights of women on AIII's plots 16, 17 and 18. The family relations of the women with AIII and the places where the women actually lived in 1978 are indicated. B = brother; D = daughter; F = father; M = mother; S = son; W = wife; Z = sister.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Relation</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Wife of the controller of the ntv g</td>
<td>Same quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>W M</td>
<td>Same quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>W Z</td>
<td>Same quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Other quarter of Tsa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Z S W</td>
<td>Other quarter of Tsa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Same quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>B W</td>
<td>Same quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>B W Z</td>
<td>Other quarter of Tsa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>B D</td>
<td>Same quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>B S W</td>
<td>Douala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>S W</td>
<td>Douala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>S W M</td>
<td>Other quarter of Tsa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>F B D</td>
<td>Bamendjo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>F B S W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>F Z S W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>F F W D D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Wife of friend</td>
<td>Other quarter of Tsa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ters in fact cultivated on behalf of the nna holders if such was the case. In an earlier publication I gave four examples of the division of nka'-nna on men's estates; one of them outlined the situation on the main part of AI's estate (Ouden, 1980: 55-56; example II). In this article, I repeat this example depicting the situation on plots 1, 2, 9 and 12. As a second example, I now add information about the situation on the AI11 plots 16, 17 and 18.

The core of the women controlling a nka'-nna on a man's estate in a rather traditional situation is and should be formed by his wives (including his father's widows), sisters, daughters and sons' wives. Now it is quite probable that the ха grants nka'-nna to other female consanguines, affines or even to 'strangers'. Perhaps, on the estate, there are also women who controlled a nka'-nna at the time he obtained his ntyog and whom he did not evict. Women normally have the right to invite others to share work and produce with them, or to work alone and give some compensation to the real nka'-nna holders. Now here lies the basis of much confusion when asking men which women are cultivating which plots of land. I was not always able to solve this problem and so, now and then, might have mentioned women who did not cultivate independently. It is clear that wives, sisters, daughters and sons' wives can always invite their mothers, sisters and daughters to assist them and share the produce. That is why the rights of the categories B (WM), C (WZ) and H (BWZ) can almost always be indicated as derived rights. Furthermore, we can often ascertain that E (ZSW) obtained their rights from the sister concerned and that category I (BD) often obtained their rights through the brother's mother, being (one of) the mother(s), or will cultivate in a more or less independent way supervised by the brother's wife. The mothers of sons' wives (L) have to be mentioned separately.

A mother, and most certainly a mother who does not have much land where she may cultivate, profits if a daughter is engaged while very young; she then obtains a nka'-nna from the future parents-in-law of the child, which she uses 'on behalf of' her daughter. When the marriage has been 'solemnized' and blessed with children the mother of a son's wife is very welcome to cultivate a plot on your estate if it is possible.

We can designate as relatively weak rights (as compared with the rights of W, Z, D, SW) the claims of BW, BSW, of the relatives through the father (FBD, FBSW, etc.) and of the wives of friends. The more land a man has, the wider the diversity of female relatives cultivating on his concession.
I will now discuss briefly some peculiarities of the AI and AIII concessions so as to further our insight into the cultivation rights of women, the extent of their independence vis-à-vis men and other women, and into the agricultural system in general.

Example I
AI is now old, the main part of his estate is old (the farm is there), his wives are old and the rights of various relatives cultivating there are old. Half fallow, many parts hardly penetrable, now far from the houses on the road-side, his estate is waiting for a new manager to come. Apart from the 'normal' categories of women, this holding makes clear that we are dealing with a principal heir of a family which is no longer 'young'. Here we find as holders of a nka'-nna, for instance, a daughter of D (FBD), the wives of CI and FI (FBSW) and the widow of G (FZSW, but for the family a 'FBW'). Here, also, we find a woman who is the successor to a daughter of paramount chief Fomekong, wife of X (FFWDD). This woman now, for personal reasons, gave part of her nka'-nna to the wife of AIII (category G1). In the same corner of the estate it is exceptional that the exploitation of the coffee-bushes belonging to AI is left to this FFWDD woman and to two of his wives. To mark this special situation here the sign of coffee (a coffee-bean) has been put in a circle.

It would be a mistake to think that all the women of a particular category are represented in this restricted portion of AI's estate. Apart from the women who should have rights in these ancestral lands (W and Z), we can observe that many women do not cultivate here because (1) they have sufficient plots of land elsewhere, or (2) they have sufficient lands elsewhere on AI's concession.

On the map of the nucleus of AI's estate, each n'ny where coffee is grown is marked. The conclusion is that on only 28 of the 75 plots we can speak of a mixed cropping system; on 48 plots, the women have the fields all to themselves, perhaps with the exception of some trees and plantain-bushes.

Example II
Similar to the situation on AI's concession, we also find uncertainties on the lands of AIII especially concerning the 'derived rights' of women. If, for instance, the sister of a sister's son (ZSW), then who should we indicate as holder of the n'ny? A brother's wife (G5) gave a plot of land to her sister. In that case I am inclined to mark the brother's wife as holder of the nna. In this specific case, I have nevertheless put H1. Some years ago, this BWZ burned down AIII's coffee and he threatened to deprive her of the land; he did not blame his brother's wife for the mistake her sister made.

I will discuss briefly the situation on five other plots of AIII's concession. Roman numbers correspond with the indications on the map of example II.

I On a plot of considerable size (30 by 60 metres) six women cultivated (AI, D1, G1, 2 and 4, and an FZSW, widow of man G). When AIII married, they decided to give the land
to his wife (KL) on condition that they would take it back if
AIII.1's wife should not use the land. Living in Douala, the
actual cultivation is done by the mother and a sister of KL,
both from the neighbouring chiefdom of Bamendjo. Most of the
produce is sent by them to the family in Douala.

II This plot of land was given by AIII's wife to the wife
of her second son AIII.2, also living in Douala (K2).
The mother of this woman in fact cultivates, sending the
produce to Douala. This mother is living in another quarter
of Tsu.

III AIII's wife gave this plot to the mother of the wife of
her first son. For weeding this woman hires a 'strange'
woman, whom she pays CFA 700 for the work in the field.
Planting and harvesting this SWM does herself.

IV This portion cultivated by a daughter of AIII living in
Douala was given to her by a sister of AIII who no longer
has any land on AIII's concession. The women of the family dis­
cussed amongst themselves which plot this daughter should re­
cive and then AIII's sister decided to leave: she cultivates
on AI's estate (D2).

V In 1978 I found that a wife of one of AIII's brothers (AI)
and of AIII's sisters, respectively G4 and D2, ignored
an explicit wish of AIII. AIII had asked them to leave certain
plots fallow so that he would have some land on which to en­
close his sheep in the period when the food-crops are ripening.
We visited the fields together and AIII was quite angry when
it appeared that G4 and D2 had continued cultivation so that
he was 'obliged' to tether his sheep: 'I will tell them that
their behaviour is not right'. Perhaps, indeed, he may have
made a disapproving remark to the two women.

In AIII's ntyg we counted 37 plots of land where the various
women cultivated; only on 18 of these plots did we find coffee
belonging to AIII.

In conclusion, as far as we could see, neither AI nor AIII excercised
any control over what the women cultivated on their estates, or how they
cultivated, neither was there any say in the transfer of their nka'-nna
to other women. I must add immediately that (a) neither men are very in­
terested in agriculture and that (b) no major conflicts arose amongst
the women cultivating. On the other hand, I should mention that the way
of cultivation could have annoyed both men. I observed that in many cases
the women, by their way of planting their food-crops and by the annual
changing of the furrows, almost killed the coffee-bushes on their plots
by destroying the roots.

Agriculture carried out by women is done individually; there are no
working-teams of women helping each other in turn. If a woman has too
much land, she invites someone to cultivate the land for her. However
this does not mean that women never help each other. It is quite normal
for the women of the family to unite and help a woman who has just married
or one who is in an advanced stage of pregnancy or who has just been de­
ivered of a child. I also found cases where friends worked in the fields
of a woman who could not possibly do the work herself, either because she or her children were ill. Women residing outside Tsa are almost always assisted by their mothers and sisters, who do most of the work for them and also send them the produce. In the case of migration, one should not underestimate the women's concern for their land in the home-chiefdom. During the important August harvest-period we find that many women living in, for instance, Douala and Yaoundé will return to the family-land to help harvest their own fields.

At the end of this section some remarks about the produce of female and male agriculture should be made. It may be clear from the foregoing that the production from female agriculture - for consumption and sale - is more important than that from male agriculture, but this is only a guess; men (including myself) have not the slightest idea of the food-crop production for consumption and sale by the women cultivating on their estates. The women, like the men, are 'poor', if they start a new enterprise or if something new is built or bought this is only possible because the necessary money was 'borrowed' (often explicitly a lie). The income of men, here and elsewhere, is not only difficult to establish but also difficult to value. We should remember that (at present still on these concessions) everybody already receives most of his or her food and that the income from products sold should cover the 'extra' expenses for industrial goods people want to buy and for taxes, church-contributions, medical care, school needs and also for the monetarized socio-political community-obligations, symmetrical and asymmetrical.

Male agriculture is hampered by excessive migration, and the fact that men have other occupations; these two factors are influenced by the men's lack of interest in agricultural work. The few men left behind in Tsa in the agricultural sector mainly restrict themselves to the tapping and selling of raphia-palm wine, the most lucrative agricultural activity. We found that even in the nka’ area near the houses there was no coffee in more than half of the fields. If the total cultivated area on the X concession(s) is some 8½ ha, we may assume that coffee is planted on 4 ha.

Finalizing this paper in January 1981 I unfortunately could not refer to the research findings of Leesberg and Witte (1981) on female and male agriculture and agricultural production in this region of Tsa in 1980.
The total annual production of these 4 ha was, in 1978, about 440 kg (peeled and dry coffee) with a revenue of about CFA 135,000 (D.Fl. 1350,-) if the coffee is sold to the cooperative and not to intermediaries before harvest. In 1977/1978 only a small quantity of fertilizer was bought. The division of the 440 kg mentioned was: AI about 147 kg; AIII 147 kg; CI 63 kg; DI 20 kg; FI 42 kg; and GI 21 kg. If the coffee-bushes are well pruned, well fertilized and spaced, one hectare of coffee should yield about 500 kg good, peeled and dried coffee (2000 kg from 4 ha) and, therefore, we can establish that the production on the X concession(s) is very meagre because of utter neglect. The land-rights of women and their production of food-crops in a mixed-cropping system is only partly responsible for this neglect.

Men may be lazy in the production of coffee (whether or not for 'good' reason such as the relatively low price fixed by the government), but their attitude to the lucrative crop plantains is even worse. The number of plantain bushes on these lands is minimal and we even find estates where no plantains are cultivated (e.g. GI).

In 1977 AI sold no more than 5 clusters; AIII sold 10; CI 2; DI 3 and FI 7. At the time AI was ill and had to pay others to harvest his plantains.

2.1.3.6 Some remarks about the collateral Y and Z lines

The relative calm of the X estate is in strong contrast to the affairs on the Y concession. Here I have to mention that I am not very well acquainted with the Y nkwitt\ны, north of the Z concession, in 1978 partly controlled by YIV.2. If I restrict myself to the events on the Y terrains on the west side, differences with the X estate and family are striking.

The loss of land started a long time ago and in a very traditional way. Land was taken by neighbours from weak or old persons, and was given away as security for loans. So, for instance, in the thirties, probably just after the death of A, the sick YII lost a portion of land to a neighbour alongside the road (57). This plot was sold again, by and to strangers, in 1945 and 1950. Especially YIV, successor to Y, was a notorious waster of family land: he sold land in the vague area 59, plots 58, 56, 54 and 51 to strangers, and plot 55 to C. It is his son YIV.1, a planter in the Mungo region, who managed to regain plots 58 and 51. In the seventies YIV.1 claimed that these two plots were only given as nka'-jy\ны and that he had the right to repay the money of the original loan. YIV.2, more or less the present principal heir in the Y family, copies his father in selling land. In 1978, he sold plot 52 (some 80 by 40 metres) for CFA 40,000 (about D.Fl. 400,-) as my informants told me: 'Just to buy some luxury food and cigarettes'. It would be too complicated to discuss the YI, II, III and IV land affairs in detail. In section 2.1.3.2, I have already mentioned some of the Y family's land affairs. The Y family is much more fragmented when compared to the X family and many members have migrated to the Mungo area.
For the Z family I will restrict myself to two noteworthy points.

1. ZI left Tsa at a young age; in Dschang he became a planter and an important man in transport, owner of many trucks. ZI, who is very old now, has no interest at all in the Z lands and he does not offer any help to the members of the Z agnatic family.

2. ZII, Z's successor, died without living children. He indicated as principal heir ZIII.1, in fact a sister's son (ZIII being a woman) who is now in charge of the estate. We met ZII when discussing how he declared himself jwa of plot 16 which was ultimately obtained by AIII.

2.2 The Latchuet case

As a comparison I have chosen a second case. The situation in this second residential agnatic family from the Tsa quarter Latchuet will be discussed more briefly than the Letsi case. This is firstly because I only want to give an outline of another very normal case, but which contrasts with the Letsi situation in many ways, and secondly because I am less familiar with the Latchuet case.

2.2.1 The principal heir in ca. 1900

2.2.1.1 Principal heir X

The Latchuet agnatic family, compared to the Letsi family, has a longer history in Tsa. Some members of the family whisper that the founder of the family, the grandfather of X and Y (see the genealogy) might have been imported as slave from elsewhere. This means that by now we have reached the fourth principal heir of this ancestor. In the nineteenth century, during the reign of chief Dju, the great-great-great-grandfather of the present paramount chief, the family profited greatly from the conquest of territory on the east side of Tsa. The principal heir at the time obtained some 13 ha tswa, including a valuable raphia-palm area near a river (see the blocks of land II and III on the map). It is quite possible that in Dju's time only 10 ha was obtained and that about 3 ha situated in the present quarter of Leghan was given (together with a wife) by chief Fomekong to X who worked for a long time in the palace compound as a ntsi-nda, servant.
Latchuet: Genealogy of male descendants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(d)</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>(ego)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(u)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(u)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(u) = unknown
(d) = a daughter of B
α and β = widows of A

A V was born several years after the death of his 'father'
LAND CONTROLLED BY STRANGERS

Forest and raphia-palms

1 cm = 40 m

LEGHAN
With the brothers X and Y we have reached the twentieth century and thus the beginning of our analysis of changes. In naming the various sections I have taken as 'ego' the present 'principal heir' of the X family All. X can still be considered as a traditional and strong principal heir, but lower in status compared to the Letsi principal heirs A or AI. After X's service in the Tsa court, at the age of about forty, he was active in animal husbandry and traded in animals (goats, sheep and pigs), he supervised agriculture carried out by the women and even farmed a bit himself. Like many principal heirs he was active in his kgw, chiefdom organization. X was a polygamist and when he died in about 1915 he left behind six sons.

Family members tell that X had four wives but that only one bore him sons. The other three only gave birth to daughters quite a number of whom were captured by people from Balessing (south of Tsa) and sold as slaves (pul').

The way X regulated his succession can be indicated as the beginning of the decline and disintegration of the family and family-estate. He nominated as principal heir his youngest son, a new-born baby. At least, his 'friends', kgy - brothers, told the family and neighbours that this is what he had decided.

It is not at all rare to find situations in which men designate very young children as their successors. This happened in the past and still occurs, often causing great trouble for and in the family. I myself still have difficulties in understanding such decisions, but I feel that it is too 'easy' to blame chiefs or 'friends' for communicating a deliberate lie to the family. During my latest visit, in 1980, I even went so far as to try to draw out some informants by bluntly asking them how some men could be so stupid as to nominate little children as successors and so destroy the patrimony and family-unity. But the answer remained the same: 'We nominate a particular boy as heir as an honour to his mother. We choose the son of a wife we trust and respect and are confident that she will guide her son in a good way so that he will become a good leader of the family'. One of my informants, a sub-chief of Tsa, immediately added that he agreed with me that much trouble could come from nominating a young child: 'In my chiefdom I even find cases in which adult brothers are prepared to pay CFA 20,000 to 40,000 to a young principal heir if he agrees to leave Tsa forever. I try to prevent such mischief, but it is often only a suspicion that adult brothers play such a dirty game'.

2.2.1.2 Father's father's brother Y and his descendant

The ntyag of Y, obtained from X or X's father, was not extensive; in the nk'a region of Latchuet he controlled a plot of land somewhat smaller than X's concession (plot no. 6). In the tswa area he had raphia palms on plot 18 and perhaps 17; it is not clear whether the land of 18 also belonged to Y's ntyag. In fact Y's 'income' came principally from his
trade in salt which took him to most parts of the Bamiléké region between
the new and developing 'German' centres of Bamenda and Nkongsamba. Though
Y was a polygamist and had several children, only one son reached adult­
hood. YI worked for the Germans, but it is not known what work he did.
He returned to Tsa only after the German defeat in 1915/1916. He then
constructed enclosures and had some goats and pigs. YI had only one wife
and he died in the early forties leaving behind a little son. Both Y and
YI had already obtained a rather independent position because of specific
occupations related to the increasing incorporation of the area into the
German Cameroon colony.

With the death of YI, the special link with the main line of descent
came to an end. In 1978, an elderly informant from the X family even had
to explain to younger members of the family how they were related to the
Y line and who belonged to that family.

Here, I briefly discuss the history of the Y family up to the present
day. YI.1 earns his living mainly as a wood-cutter and sawyer; he owns
some coffee-bushes. He has given part of his concession to his son
YI.1.1 who still saunters about Tsa trying to earn a living. I did not
come across any sale of land on the Y side. It is even possible that
they gained some land by declaring themselves Mwa of the land where they
have their raphia-palms. This may have happened on plot 18, but it is
'sure' for 17 where, in about 1970, YI.1 asked his 'women' to cultivate
their foodcrops and where, supplementary to his raphia-palms, he planted
some coffee and plantains. Until then this land was considered to be
controlled by Aß, A's second wife, who managed it on behalf of her sons.

I get the idea that both formerly and now men in control of
land where someone else owned raphia-palms had to be very care­
ful not to loose their land. The owner of the raphia may be
waiting for a period of weakness in order to take over the
land himself. Cameronian magistrates judging land-conflicts
may now further this process because their starting point is
a link between the 'ownership' of crops and of the land where
these crops are grown.

Before continuing our analysis of the principal heir's family (the X
family), it is well to mention that south of the A and E concessions in
the Latchuet nka’ area we find estates started by 'brothers' or depen­
dants of X and Y's father (plots 7 and 8; the borders are only roughly
indicated). These concessions have been independent for a long time.

2.2.2 Principal heir A and his brothers

2.2.2.1 The period 1915-1957

After X died, exactly according to the rules of succession, the eldest
son became the guardian of young A. B died five years later in about 1920 and his place was taken by the second brother C. B only had daughters and one of them still cultivates on land belonging to the A estate (Bd on plots 3 and 23). C tried to convince others that he was the real principal heir. He got into serious difficulties when he broke his promise by choosing another husband for his daughter rather than allow her to marry her fiancé, to whom he had originally given his consent. Members of the family said that the paramount chief interfered in this conflict, after which C fled to Bafounda, a chiefdom near the present town of Mbouda. He obtained a nka'-nna there from the paramount chief. C took his youngest brothers F and A with him; D and E remained in Tsa on the ntygg s which their father X had probably already given them (plots 27, 28 and 4, 5). Before C's death in 1940, a sorcerer explained illness in the family by accusing C of having stolen lands and goods from his father's principal heir. The story is that C then acknowledged A as his father's successor and paid the bride-wealth for A's first wife in compensation for his bad behaviour.

Or did C as 'principal heir' pay the bride-wealth for his dependent brother A? It was and, to a lesser extent, is quite normal for principal heirs to pay the bride-wealth of their brothers thus forming what I called (1980:44) a 'fund of women' which gives them a 'fund of power'. A man and his successors to some extent control the daughters born from marriages where they paid the bride-wealth; they obtain the bride-wealth paid for these daughters (compare Hurault, 1970; S, and the example given in 1962: 42-44).

I mention this possibility just to indicate that my informants in Tsa might have given me a very special version of the events; I am not sure that they told the whole 'truth', probably they only told their 'truth'. It is a pity that I could not contact the Bafounda family to hear their version; it would probably have been quite different.

C's family remained in Bafounda forever and never claimed landrights in the Latchuet patrimony; F and A returned to Tsa.

Before discussing the family-histories of E and A we shall pay some attention to D and F. D, a sorcerer/traditional medicine man, never married. During his life he sold his land or gave it as security for a loan (plots 27 and 28). A, hardly back in Tsa, and E at the time acting as a kind of 'principal heir' or representative, it was E who asked D to tell him whether he had lost his land as nka'-ju or as nka'-jyj' and, if the latter were the case he (E) would try to repay the loan. It is said that D also 'sold' some raphia-palms, but is it not clear where these were situated. D died in 1959 never explaining how he lost the land. F likewise never married. In the thirties he left for the plantation areas
north of Douala where he became an agricultural labourer. He gave his land as nka'-jyj' to a stranger. Later, he sent money to his brothers in Tsa to repay the loan and regain his land. It is said that his brothers have 'eaten' the money causing the definitive loss of F's land (plot 29 of which the boundaries are not clear). F died in the Mungo plantation area in 1948.

2.2.2.2 The period 1957-1967

The history of A and his elder brother E is very much interwoven and it is difficult to discuss them separately. A division of land was made in which A kept about two-thirds of the nkwa'a-ntay (plots 1-3, 11-19 and 23-26) and E obtained about one-third (plots 4-5 and 20-22). A was never very interested in agriculture (a very normal situation in Tsa, somewhat different from the situation in nearby Ngang, compare Ouden, 1979: 3); he was a medicine-man and trader in clothes, including the traditional men's dance-dress. It was in 1957 that A got into serious trouble. Like many inhabitants of Tsa A sympathized with the Kumsze political party which, until 1952, worked together with the more and more revolutionary 'Union des Populations du Cameroun' (see Illy, 1976: 76,77). In spite of the Kumsze's separation from the U.F.C. in 1952, great distrust remained towards the Kumsze members by those who backed the government, including the then reinstated paramount chief (see Ouden, 1979: 19, 20 and, in general, section 2.3.2). The paramount chief and his followers definitely exploited events at a national level to eliminate opponents who (before 1952) were loyal to a chief installed by the French colonial government. In 1955, the reinstated paramount chief had some thirty concessions destroyed. In 1957, these actions were repeated and A was one of the victims. Though his houses were destroyed, A did not flee the chiefdom like so many others (a number of three thousand is mentioned by informants in Tsa). For some unknown reason the chief's representatives considered it sufficient to give A a serious warning; apart from the destruction of his houses 'only' the wele was planted in the lands on the Latchuet side of the ts'wa area where the crops were also destroyed (especially plots 11-15).

Traditionally, the wele, branches of a tree with a 'very bad significance' is put on a bamboo on a plot of land to forbid anybody to enter the area. In a greater chiefdom it is planted by the muala tumbum, a member of the chiefdom organization kwii'-fu' kwofu, the chief's police force. At present, it is rare but not unknown for the paramount chief - who is largely controlled by the Cameroon authorities - to put his sacred interdiction on a piece of land. However, in the sub-chiefdoms or quarters with
strong chiefs we still find that by planting the wele
a chief forbids anyone entering a plot of land on
penalty of illness and death, until the land dispute
is settled in the way he considers correct. In 'normal'
times a chief will intervene in this radical way only
when he expects the conflict to end in bloodshed.

E, apparently a rival to his brother/'father', the principal heir A and
(therefore?) belonging to the 'right' chief's faction, in 1958 offered a
considerable gift (including a horse!) to the paramount chief, and in
this way managed to have the interdiction imposed upon the area concerned
removed so gaining control over a considerable part of A's concession
(plots 11-15). Of course, with this the question is, because of the
chief's intervention, whether the lineage lines between A and E were by
now broken and whether the E line was declared independent by the deci­
sion of the paramount chief. In fact, A never seriously challenged E's
rights to his former plots 11-15. These events, to some extent, meant a
rupture between the two brothers as becomes clear when we observe that A
stopped E's first wife from cultivating on the plot of land on the nort­
east side of his nka' land on the road side (I) now cultivated by Aa: A
evicted E's women from the lands which were still under his control.

Someone who is too weak to counter the loss of control over useful re­
sources can expect further attacks on his politico-economic and social
position. In 1961, some members of the C and E family accused him of
being a ḥqag-shyua, a sorcerer who harms and even kills people.
A had to appear in the office of the sub-divisional officer
(sous-préfet). Here he defended himself by stating that a
real ḥqag-shyua would start with the killing of his own sons
and that none of his sons had died or was ill. The officer
then asked him to name the most important person in the
family who could inform him about the situation. A named E
and this man declared that A was not a ḥqag-shyua and that
the unrest in the family was more a result of A's refusal
to ever visit other members of the family. If a brother was
ill A would never come to inquire about the situation. The
whole affair then dragged on for about a year. In 1962 A,
bored with the intrigues, went to the sub-divisional officer
asking for measures to stop members of his family dragging
his name through the mire. Thereupon it was arranged that
the woman who could be called the leader of the firebrands,
one of C's daughters, had to pay an amount of money to A as
consolation. A refused the money because he could not take
money from 'one of his children' in this way.

This story is remarkable because it shows that as early as
1961 a ḥqag-shyua case was brought before the 'sous-préfet',
when even in 1978/1980 traditional cases such as this belong
more in the paramount chief's court. Perhaps in this tumultuous
period the then paramount chief was too busy as a member of the
national parliament in Yaoundé.
From this story it is clear that A's position after 1957, and probably already right from the beginning (his return from Bafounda) was very much disputed in the family. He died in 1967 and his two wives and children are convinced that his illness and death were caused by the C and E families. Like his father, A chose as successor AII, a young son of nine years old (the eldest was then eighteen years old).

2.2.3 'Principal heir' AII: events after 1967

AII was sent by his father to a friend in Mbouda some years before A's death, probably to prevent 'some evil' befalling him in Tsa. His mother always forbade him to stay overnight on the concession in Tsa and this was still the case in 1978-1980. AII is now a temporary school teacher in another quarter of Tsa. E is in charge of the family rituals, especially the offerings to the forefathers. The new principal heir still has no power. We find, for instance, that the bride-wealth paid for daughters of Aß has been taken by her eldest son, AII who uses the money for his own education (he is a policeman now); the principal heir AII could only with great difficulty obtain part of the bride-wealth paid for his own sisters, daughters of Aß.

No grown-up men reside on A's concession and the agriculture is completely managed by the two widows Aß and Aß. They continue cultivation in the nka'-nna they controlled and try to keep up the few remaining men's crops. The boys take it for granted that their mother's fields will be the basis of their future lands. Here it is the absence of a strong principal heir which creates a situation in which land will be 'inherited' per stirpes, according to the maternal origin of the men (compare Goody and Buckley, 1973: 113). So we find that AII in the early seventies planted coffee-bushes on his mother's nna s 25 and 26 and that AIII planted banana trees (plantains) and coffee on plot 19. The very neglected coffee-bushes on plot 24 were planted by AII's son AII, the 'principal heir'. The small profit from the coffee in Bd's fields, marked as 3, is for AII, not because he is the principal heir but because he is her namesake (they are both named after X). The profit from the coffee and plantains in her field 23 is for Bd's own sons.

Both women, Aß and Aß, still have special problems because of the lack of accepted leadership, disorder in the family and further difficulties.

Aß originally cultivated on her father's concession, on that of her husband, on the concessions of her first and second
daughter's husband's father and on the concession belonging to her third daughter's fiancé's father. Her fourth daughter was engaged at the age of four and is now living with her husband in Yaoundé; Aa did not get any cultivation rights on the estate of the fiancé's father on behalf of her daughter. Now, the first daughter's husband has left with wife and children for the Mungo region, no longer bothering about his land-rights in Tsa. His land meanwhile has been sold by a brother and because of this Aa's daughter has lost her nka'-nna on this land and Aa has had to stop cultivation there. Aa still cultivates on the nna given to her second daughter since she was engaged to a boy of that concession. Part of the produce Aa sends to this daughter in Loum, Mungo region. The third daughter obtained a nna on her fiancé's father's concession and Aa cultivated there. This daughter was engaged at the age of five and when she grew up refused to marry her fiancé. Her nka'-nna was then taken back and Aa had to stop cultivation. The third daughter is now married to a man in Mbouda who neglected his land-rights on his father's Tsa arranged marriage. Aa bought land near Mbouda and now Aa often accompanies her daughter when she cultivates those fields and because of this receives part of the produce. To complete this rather sad story we will have to remember that Aa lost her land in the area taken from A in 1957-1958. On her father's concession she lost an important nka'-nna because the young principal heir (her F.S.S. or B.S.) gave this land as nka'-jyj' as a loan which was still not repaid in 1980.

In about 1946, A was engaged to an eight-year-old girl (Aß). During a period of very bad harvests the girl's father asked A for a plot of land and A gave him 17 and 19. The wele was not planted here in 1957 because the land was still in the hands of Aß's father whose women cultivated there. After 1958, A took back the land and he asked Aß to share these terrains with Aa but she refused. After A's death trouble started concerning the engagement of one of Aß's daughters. The girl wanted to postpone her marriage in order to finish her school education, but her fiancé wanted to marry immediately because her father, who had promised her to him, had died (a precarious situation for a family who has already started the payment of bride-wealth). When the girl refused, her mother decided to repay the part of the bride-wealth which had already been given. Aß estimated the bride-wealth paid at CFA 20.000, but the opposing party demanded CFA 50.000. Finally, both parties agreed upon an amount of CFA 40.000. Aß obtained a loan for which she gave plots 17 and 19 as nka'-jyj', she sold her pigs, worked hard and managed to repay the amount. In fact, in 1974, she was even capable of paying back the original loan. However, she only regained control of plot 19 and not of 17. As we have seen, this land was meanwhile taken by Yi.1 who already owned the raphia-palms on this plot. As in the case of Aa, Aß had to cope with a situation in which a daughter refused an arranged marriage after her father's death. Here also I suspect that this can be related to the weakness of the young principal heir AII. In Aß's case it is also interesting that, as we quite often find in Tsa in cases where no adult and strong principal heirs are present in the concessions, widows start to act as 'men' to protect their own and their children's positions.
The only land the A family really lost after 1967 is plot 16. This land was given as nka'-jy3' to a stranger. This man is considered a dangerous sorcerer. He planted 'trees with a very bad significance' in this forest of raphia palms and wood and nobody dares to enter this terrain or discuss its ownership.

If again, we return to the E estate we find a completely different picture regarding the loss of land. Immediately after he obtained a considerable part of A's land E started to sell portions of it. In 1959, he sold plot 13 (including some raphia-palm bushes), followed by plot 11 in 1961. Plot 12 has also been sold by E, but I could not get any particulars about this transaction. In 1960-1963 E transferred the rest of the tswa land to his three sons: EI obtained 20, Ell 21 and 22, and EIII 14 and 15. The ntyjq, belonging to EI, since 1973 a tailor in a Bamoun town, is still 'undamaged'. EIII, a small merchant in food-crops in Tsa, planted coffee on plot 14, worked in the raphia area, but left part of his land fallow (15). Seeing this, and again in need of money, E sold this portion in 1968 to a stranger. The same happened to EII (now a small shopkeeper in Tsa); he also only used part of his ntyjq for coffee and plantains. When EII was absent for a long time his father sold portion 22 to a stranger. In order to prevent further sales by their father, EI and EIII 'barricaded' their west-frontiers with banana-bushes (plantains).

2.2.4 Latchuet: concluding remarks

Can this disorder on the X concession be 'blamed' on the process of incorporation into 'modern' co-ordinating systems? I think this is only true to some extent. In the past we have also seen that agnatic families and their concessions could be ruined by misfortunes, succession troubles and weak principal heirs. The way in which the X family and their concessions have fallen and are falling into decay has now been influenced by the process of incorporation, for instance, the affiliation with provincial or even national political parties, and the less restricted sale of land (in combination with a weak chief of the quarter, or traditional functionaries who are only pleased when disasters strike this particular family). The splitting up of the family into small units and the land fragmentation is also something new. In the past we would have expected land to be taken away by powerful and strong neighbours and that members of the family would have fled from their unprotected situation and sought refuge in the families and regions of important 'big men'.
On the other hand, it is traditional for brothers to attack weak principal heirs by, for example, starting rumours about his being an evil sorcerer. Here it should be remembered that members of a family are right in blaming their principal heir for causing misfortunes if leadership is absent and they feel themselves unprotected from the dangers of this world and from those that come from 'other worlds'.

Up to the present time, no remarkable differentiation in wealth and socio-political position can be ascertained, though here we also find a growing variety of occupations. All the members of the family remained rather poor and unimportant. Members of the family hope that the two men of the Aα and Aβ lines who have had a better education (AII and AI respectively) will reach an economic position by which they will be able to help and be some sort of 'saviours' for the rest of the family. Until now (1980) no other male members of the X family have reached a position whereby they could help to push relatives into the 'modern' world. So far, the marriages of female members of the X family have also failed to help the members enter into the 'high' sectors of politics, administration or economics of the modern state of Cameroon.
In discussing the changes in the control over people, land and production we find two processes of 'household' individualization, seemingly contradictory, and occurring simultaneously. Both processes are of great importance for further development(s) in (of) this area. Firstly, there is the undermining of the residential agnatic family, the minimal patrilineage, and the growing importance of the polygynous or monogamous household. Secondly, we can point at the individualization of the matrifocal household and the disintegration of 'household-functions' of the polygynous or monogamous household. Let us summarize both developments that result from the process of market- and institutional incorporation and to a lesser extent, from acculturation because of contact between the Bamiléké and European cultures.

1. Polygynous or monogamous households could not survive independently because peace and order within the chiefdom and quarter were not sufficiently guaranteed. In the Bamiléké chiefdoms there was a great deal of internal warfare in the form of open violence, sorcery and witchcraft, and attacks from intruders, including external warfare. People needed security, physically and psychologically, and stayed together in their agnatic families lead by a strong personality. This 'homme fort' had to prove continuously during his life that he was capable of adequately repelling attacks from outside and from within the agnatic family group. He, the head of the family, guardian of the family property and their well-being, should also have an important position in the organizations of the quarter and chiefdom. This does not mean that a commoner could not become independent in this hard and merciless world, full of threats and with an ecotype as discussed in the foregoing sections. During periods of insecurity, after the death of a principal heir or during his illness, conflicts occurred because bids would be made for power either from inside or outside the family; such as the conflict between A and C in the Letsy case and the attacks by a 'neighbour' after A's death. An instance of this is the usurpation of power by C in the Latchuet case and his forced flight, or the conflict between principal heir A and his brother E, more or less won by E who obtained an independent position. Today we find both change and continuity; recently in the Latchuet case, we find the example of AII the 'principal heir' who, in fact, was not able to inherit his father's position. All these occurred in the two families discussed, but there were many more instances in other families of adult and young principal heirs who were either forced to take flight, or of agnatic family units who were destroyed by neighbours or even
attacked by people from different quarters (see Ouden, 1980: 45 and 48). Established positions were always threatened by usurpation of power by others and it is significant that in times of struggle principal heirs had to fight the battle themselves, without help from other minimal lineages. The residential agnatic family was the maximum level of 'solidarity' without many patron-client relationships or other alliance ties to minimal lineages and with only some support either from chiefs of quarters or from the paramount chief if 'appropriate' gifts were sufficient to obtain this backing.

In another publication (1980: 44, 45) apart from 'alliances' by way of marriages I indicated the importance of intergroup ties realized by women cultivating their food-crops on the estates of various principal heirs and their dependants. The socio-economic interests of women in a way strengthened the links between families and brought (bring) about a network of relations covering a vast territory, including quarters and independent chiefdoms. This integrating mechanism undoubtedly created conflicting loyalties and thus a category of potential mediators if conflicts arose, but it could never stop conflicts within the residential agnatic family groups, nor could it really prevent attacks on family units without strong principal heirs and chiefs of quarters who did not for one reason or another take sides.

At all levels, vis-à-vis the principal heir, the chief of a quarter/sub-chiefdom or the paramount chief, the dominant question was always: 'Does the relation with him give me "sufficient" security? Do I get what I am after?' If not, people are quite prepared to shift their 'loyalty' to another principal heir, chief of a quarter or paramount chief. Bonds between people not only appear to have been very 'personal', they were and are, in a way, also very materialistic (compare R. LeVine, 1976: 121-123). Somehow we will have to characterize the 'original' situation as one of 'tied freedom'. The family normally stuck together to defend itself, but the adult men were quite free to choose occupations which gave them a certain independence, even up to the point where the paramount chief granted them titles and an honorary position in a chiefdom organization resulting in a new lineage headed by the 'upstart'. Of course, only few dependants had the strength and courage to force themselves into independence in their own chiefdom or elsewhere. In section 2.1.2.1 I showed that it was in the past and still is generally very difficult to start a flourishing collateral line.

A woman did not lose her position as a member of her patrilineage through marriage. Her God of fertility was and is on the estate of the principal heir of her agnatic family. She continued, and most often continues, cultivation on the ancestral estate and her sons were and still are eventually incorporated in her patrilineage if lateral or lineal inheri-
tance was or is impossible in that family (see ZIII.1 in 2.1.3.6). A sister's son could and can be given a ntyışq and principal heirs had and have always to be on their guard against claims of sons of female relatives (Z S, D S, etc.) on land where their mothers cultivated. Furthermore, it was quite normal for a woman to store part of the harvest from plots on her 'father's' estate in the house of the principal heir or in her mother's house. She used this food for ceremonies in which she participated as member of her patrilineage.

The control over people by the head of the minimal patrilineage was in accordance with this control over family land: people, like the land given to them, obtained an independent position but were nevertheless protected from evil and alienation by the principal heir. Ntyışq s obtained from the principal heir or his father were managed independently but their fertility depended on rituals performed by the principal heir and the latter could forbid the sale of this land. It is probable that he got some firewood and raphia-wine from the ntyışq s given to relatives or from nka'-nna s given to strangers by him or his father, to emphasize the good relation with and dependency on the head of the family. Land use could not only be considered from an economic point of view. I argued that an agnatic family's territory was also important for political, social and religious reasons: it was the area where people lived and tried to secure their own and their descendants' living. In and from this territory men and women worked, performed activities considered as useful, and their work most certainly did not only include agricultural activities. As far as integration within the agnatic family is concerned, it should be noted that holders of small ntyışq s had some cattle grazing with the herd of the principal heir, who received a small goat in compensation. We found cases which show that family members 'helped' the principal heir in carrying out several activities and in return had the right to take wood, poles or palm-wine which they needed. We may conclude that in 'normal' situations at the level of the residential agnatic family, the principal heir had some control over labour and production of 'his men', which meant that surpluses needed for marriage-purposes, membership of chiefdom-organizations, presents to the tribal authorities to obtain favours, etc., could more easily be raised by him than by his 'dependants'.

14 Compare Goody and Buckley, 1973: 118: 'In agricultural economics, such a system (Den Ouden: Gluckman's 'house-property complex' in Africa sub-Sahara, per st tipos inheritance) frequently assigns to a woman's sons the land which she has been farming but which she can neither possess nor transmit.'
The political, economic and social integration at the level of the residential agnatic family was and is threatened seriously by many factors. In the German and French period, internal and external warfare diminished and slave raids came to an end. The political reasons for remaining together became less important. It was especially during and after the Bamiléké rebellion in the fifties and sixties that the political chiefdom-unit was very much undermined and it was in this system that only the heads of important minimal patrilineages were power holders, whereas their dependants were given very little opportunity of raising their voices. Present government authorities take very little notice of the position in the family structure when dealing with the chiefdom-population: for them, other criteria are much more important. We have already discussed the government policy towards the individualization of land-titles. In this respect, the agnatic family-unit is also clearly undermined because, under the new law, principal heirs can no longer exercise any control over nyugg s their fathers or they themselves gave to relatives. Here, the government only accelerates tendencies towards the individualization of land titles, a process we discussed for the Letsi Y family and the Latchuet family. These tendencies are most certainly related to three factors not already mentioned: migration, coffee cultivation and land scarcity.

Traditional migration was quite normal (we have seen examples in both Letsi and Latchuet), and usually the result of conflicts at the residential agnatic family, quarter or chiefdom level. It certainly did not automatically improve one's life-chances. The start of migration, when the 'pull'-factor, the economic possibilities of towns or plantation and colonization areas, became more important than the 'push'-factor from within the chiefdom, cannot be dated. We have seen that in Latchuet, YI already worked for the Germans at the beginning of this century, either freely or as a forced labourer (for the Letsi case, see 2.1.2.6:F). After 1930 there has been a slow migration of family-members to the Dschang-area or to the Mungo plantation/colonization zone. The disturbances of the fifties caused many men to flee. At the same time during this period many urban activities developed giving employment to a number of refugees who never returned to their chiefdom. These migrants and their economic achievements formed a considerable 'pull'-factor for those who had remained in the chiefdom, as we saw clearly in the Letsi case. Until the end of the fifties, differentiation was, usually, within the lower occupational category; it was only in the sixties and seventies that some migrants reached 'middle class' occupations (e.g. taxi owner or director of a primary school) and 'upper-class' occupations (e.g. deputy director
in a section of the state railway enterprise). In the Letsi family, apart from the taxi owner and the high railway functionary, we now find in Douala seven men with a relatively good position in state- or important private enterprises. Furthermore, at least five boys reached a promising educational level and will probably soon start a career. The Letsi X family and many other families in Tsa and Ngang, prove that one man who succeeds and achieves a high position, can often be of utmost importance for the economic take-off of many members of the family. The Latchuet family still has not yet brought forth a similar man; the only help is accommodation given by some female members living in Mbouda, Bafoussam, Yaoundé and the Mungo region.

It is clear that the process of incorporation frees many people from traditional bonds, making it easier for individuals to further their economic, political and social position, mainly by migration and activities in towns or colonization areas. New asymmetric relations are created, for instance between important migrants and 'clients' from their agnatic families, but these relationships do not further, even lessen, the political, economic and social integration of the residential agnatic family in the chiefdoms. Now migration has reached the point that heirs nominated by their deceased fathers refuse to return to the chiefdom to take on their responsibilities. In two quarters of Tsa and Ngang, I found that 34 per cent and 41 per cent of the heads of households were not living in their chiefdoms (Ouden, 1980: 50), and among them were a number of heads of patrilineages. This also diminishes the strength of several agnatic families.

Coffee cultivation, which became important after ca. 1950, resulted in a changing attitude towards land. Land became valuable for men, and even 'weak' persons who were formerly content with a small ntyog s, now wanted to have as much land as possible to cultivate coffee, leaving much of the work on their coffee plantations to the women. Coffee meant a cash income and some independence for many. Simultaneously, the rights of individual men were strengthened in the land where they had planted coffee bushes and the control of principal heirs over these ntyog s diminished. We also see that principal heirs learned the value of land for the cultivation of cash-crops and many of them became rather reluctant to share the undivided family land with their brothers and sons. More and more, the 'guardians' of family land consider themselves as 'owners' of the land. Moreover, now that the economic value of land has increased, a growing number of principal heirs and even holders of ntyog s are selling their land. In conclusion, we can say that the changes brought about by the cultivation of coffee has had a disintegrating effect on the residential agnatic family.
The scarcity of land found in many parts of the chiefdoms is related to the ecological crises caused by the commercialization of agriculture, an increasing population density, and the reluctance of many principal heirs to cede, to their brothers and sons, more than tiny plots of land. Land scarcity in many concessions not only forms a 'push' factor for migration, it also means that men try to defend their rights to land, even when they have migrated more or less permanently.

A growing number of men refuse to allow food-crop cultivation in their fields by women other than their own wives and father's widows, thereby violating the unity of the patrilineage with regard to the female section of the family.

In her book 'Women of the Grassfield' Phyllis Kaberry (1952; 30, 49-52) discusses the 'Ngie type' of land tenure in some parts of the Bamenda area where the lineage organization is relatively loose, the lineage head has little authority over his male dependants, and where arable land is relatively scarce. This picture corresponds to the situation in many parts of Tsa and Ngang in 1978-1980 as do the concomitants of these two points in the field of the land rights of men and women. Kaberry discusses (idem 50) how men become, on marriage, economically independent not only in relation to each other, but also in respect of their father and the lineage head. A married man is free to pawn or sell his palm trees and his land to men of the same tribe, without any reference to the lineage head, though normally he would consult his father or his father's successor. In Ngie also, 'the pledge, in theory, is indefinitely redeemable; but if many years have elapsed, there may be attempts at sharp practice, the farmer claiming that he originally bought the plot and did not receive it in pawn.' For a woman we see that once 'she goes to live with her husband, her father may bring pressure on her to surrender her claims if he requires additional land for a new wife or for a recently married son'. Also in Tsa and Ngang we find tendencies in this direction. Kaberry's findings warn us that land scarcity may be sufficient reason for individualization of land titles, the fragmentation of minimal lineages where these entities were not strong, and the weakening of the land-rights of women on their father's concessions. In Tsa and Ngang, ideological changes are slower than reality: to sell family-land is considered to be robbing brothers and sons of their opportunity to live and make a living in the chiefdom. Likewise, sisters and daughters should have land for cultivation on your estate. On the other hand, the pawning of land and trees/bushes has long been accepted.

Most of the factors mentioned in relation to the decay of the residential agnatic family-unit favour a growing importance of the polygynous/monogamous household in that formerly-'dependent' males become more independent politically, economically and socially. The two cases discussed in section 2 clearly show that considerable differences exist in the rapidity of decay of the minimal patrilineages and the growing independence of the male members. Now it is only partly true that polygyn-
nous and monogamous families as integrated units are acquiring more household functions. This brings us to the second process of 'household'-individualization: the growing importance of the matrifocal unit.

2. In the 'pre-coffee' period matrifocal households were obviously important within the polygynous or monogamous households, but simultaneously there was a political, economic and social integration of the matrifocal units within the polygynous/monogamous household. The wives and widows living in the compound of their man formed separate cooking units, each with their own plots of land for the cultivation of food-crops on the estate of the husband or his successor, on the estates of their own patrilineage and on a number of other concessions. In the Bamiléké region, it is normally the youngest wife who sleeps most often with the husband and, though all the wives have to prepare meals for the husband at the same time, a man depends in the first place on his youngest wife for his food. Grandfather's/father's widows and wives with a number of half-grown children were quite independent in their activities. Dieckmann and Joldersma (1980: 159) state that the independency of the matrifocal households was and is related to the family cycle of the polygynous household: the independence of women becoming greater as the husband grew older and withdrew from the management of his estate (without a brother or son taking over the affairs!). On the other hand, the 'original' integration at the level of the polygynous/monogamous household could hardly be compared with the situation now.

It was the head of the polygynous/monogamous household who decided which plots should be left fallow for animal husbandry and he received part of those food-crops, which could be kept for a long time, from every woman cultivating on his estate. In return, he helped his women (only father's widows, own wives and daughters) to obtain sufficient sowing material. Men needed followers to help them perform the necessary men's activities (the construction of huts and fences, animal husbandry and, last but not least, defence or even offence) and, therefore, they were very much interested in the well-being and support of brothers and sons. Brothers and sons (an anthropologist is often confused about the difference between these two categories because of the children produced by widows) entered the house of their 'father' at a very young age.

The factors undermining the integration at the polygynous/monogamous household level largely coincide with the factors 'attacking' the residential agnatic family and, consequently, are immediately related to the processes of market- and institutional incorporation into co-
ordinating systems. Disintegrating effects undermining the broader household unit can originate from both the male and female sections of societies.

The decrease in internal and external warfare, less animal husbandry and the related tasks for men (construction of fences), changes in house-construction, all mean that men's activities have become less important. 'Originally', it was necessary for men to have followers who helped in carrying out the men's many tasks, but gradually, having many brothers and sons has become a burden instead of a blessing. Men now urge brothers and sons to migrate and try to become economically independent so that they can help the people who remain behind in the chiefdom and help relatives who are trying their luck 'abroad' in towns and colonization areas. Previously, men took the boys under their protection; nowadays boys still stay in the house of their 'father' during the night from an early age, but the bond with the mother has become much more important. The mothers often pay the greater part of the sons' school fees and other expenses and, if possible, help them financially during the difficult first phase of migration.

In the fifties, animal husbandry was displaced by the cultivation of coffee as a source of income and activity. Coffee cultivation in Tsa did not mean that men really started to work in agriculture (in some chiefdoms men are more active in agriculture; Ouden, 1980: 3). Men gave up their rights to part of the women's production of food-crops in exchange for the women's work weeding around the coffee-bushes, picking the beans, etc. If their 'own' women (those who cultivate on their estates) cannot cope with the work on the coffee plantation, men are quite prepared to pay female day-labourers instead of doing much of the work themselves. If, formerly, the fwa knew the women well who were cultivating his estate, nowadays it is not rare to find situations in which the men need female assistance to indicate to a strangely curious anthropologist which women in fact are cultivating which plots on their concessions. Men now have nothing to do with the cultivation of food-crops and even on their coffee plantations their activities are limited. Last but not least, on the men's side, we find 'chefs de ménage', heads of households, eagerly leaving their responsibilities in the chiefdom in order to try their luck 'abroad', leaving their brothers, sons and even some of their wives to look after themselves in the chiefdom. Migration in many polygynous/monogamous households has furthered the increasing independence of the matrifocal households.

On the female side, we find factors which undermine the integration of the polygynous/monogamous household and further the importance of the matrifocal household.
In the first place, we will have to remember that commercialization of agriculture in these regions started with food-crops. Whereas men reacted to the process of incorporation into co-ordinating systems by migration or by starting trade and transport activities, women extended their agricultural activities, even in *tewa* areas which were formerly too dangerous for them. Women received the profits from this food-crop section of agriculture but, on the other hand, became responsible for a great deal of the increasing financial expenses of herself, her children and even of her husband. Now that land is becoming scarce in the chiefdom, women start quite independently cultivating on a type of share-cropping basis in areas that were previously empty, for instance the Bamboutos mountains and the Noun valley (Ouden, 1980: 63, 64) or they work as day-labourers in these regions or in the chiefdom itself (the picking of coffee beans) (Dieckmann and Joldersma, 1980: 32, 33 and 45). Small trade and handicrafts such as mat plaiting also provide some income for a large number of women (Dieckmann and Joldersma, 1980: 47-55).

Now women no longer have a monopoly of the agriculture in their fields: in many plots we find that coffee and food-crops are combined in a mixed cropping system. It is clear that this system causes friction between men and women and again furthers the isolation of both sexes and, of course, of the matrifocal units. In 1970, Gosselin (1970: 67) wrote about the outburst of frustrations resulting from the introduction of coffee:

'*Cette rupture d'équilibre entre les deux moitiés de la société bamiléké semble avoir joué un rôle important dans les troubles récents. La destruction de nombreuses plantations de café en a été l'une des manifestations les plus caractéristiques et, à première vue, les plus déconcertantes. Elle traduit sans doute le mécontentement profond des femmes, qui ont vu, au cours des années, les cultures arbustives empiéter peu à peu sur les terres qu'elles exploitaient entièrement autrefois. Un tel conservatisme des femmes était donc surtout une revendication antimasculine et il s'est manifesté avec une violence parfois aveugle.*'

Now we often also find that women succeed in preventing the coffee-bushes from growing 'properly' by damaging the roots and perhaps even by burning them down.

Changes have been very rapid during the last decades and new forms of integration at the level of the polygynous/monogamous households in many families are absent (especially in those where hardly any adult men are left) or develop slowly. In the field of the division of labour on a number of estates we find a situation in which both men, women and children co-operate in the cultivation of coffee. Also it is not true that we never find families where men take considerable financial responsi-
bility for expenses on behalf of the women and children. Moreover, on a number of estates we find that men restore their leading position over their women in an asymmetric pattern of relations. Here I should like to repeat that, in the economic field, on a few estates men managed to gain control over the cultivation rights of women: in some cases where land was very scarce we find that men restrict the cultivation rights to their own wives and to father's widows. It is interesting that on a very large concession in the chiefdom of Ngang the awa not only forbade all women but his own wives to cultivate in 'his' fields, but also demanded that they cultivate food-crops for his benefit on specific plots. Whether we like it or not, is this the new type of agricultural entrepreneur?

In the last part of this retrospect I will briefly recapitulate the main problems in the Tsa agricultural system, which most probably can be generalized for many other chiefdoms of the Bamiléké, and will mention eventual strategies to improve the agricultural production of this region. Starting with the female 'half' of society, what are the major problems of food-crop cultivation?

An increasing number of women do not have enough land to produce the food-crops necessary to feed their 'dependants' (children, husband, own and husband's brothers if they pass by, etc.), and must buy additional food in the market for which some additional income is necessary. The average surface area of 1000 m$^2$ cultivated by married women in the western part of Tsa as calculated by Dieckmann and Joldersma (1980: 40, and 57-60) may be too low, the difference with the ca. 5260 m$^2$ (1.3 acres) mentioned by Kaberry (1952:40) is considerable. Moreover, the fertility of the soil is deteriorating in large areas of the chiefdom because of the almost permanent cultivation without the use of sufficient manure. Cultivation of food, at a walking distance of several hours, as in the Noun valley, is only possible for strong women, who are not hindered by small children.

The mixed-cropping system on many plots where coffee and food-crops are grown can be understood as hampering the food-crop production. Now, men are often very careless about the supervision of their coffee so that

---

15 In relation to this point, investigations are now being carried out among Tsa migrants in a colonization area of southern Cameroon where the participation of men in household expenses is expected to be higher than in the native-chiefdom (Bruggen and Eynatten, 1981, for the 'Sodenkam region').

16 It is quite normal in these areas to find a sex ratio of 45% men and 55% women, with a striking female balance in the category 20-59 years. According to my census in a quarter of western Tsa in 1978 men in the category 20-39 years formed 44% of the total population and women 15%; in the category 40-59 years these percentages were 44% and 7 respectively.

17 In a quarter of eastern Tsa, Leesberg and Witte (1981) estimated an average of 0,372 ha, 3720 m$^2$, per woman, spread over some eleven plots.
women can obstruct the expansion of the coffee-bushes in order to safeguard their own crops.

At present, the government of Cameroon, like in so many other countries in Africa, is much more interested in the production of cash-crops for export than in food-crops, even if the latter could be important for export. Although the extension service of the Ministry of Agriculture should promote all sectors of agriculture, it is not difficult to establish that its efforts, in co-operation with the official coffee cooperative UCCAO, are mainly directed at the promotion of coffee. It should be noted that the extension service has exclusively male officials who almost only have contacts with men; even problems concerning the production of food-crops are discussed with men.

It is difficult to guess in what way the production of food-crops will be affected by the unwillingness of girls with a college- or even only a primary school education, to do the hard work in the fields. The same can be said about the government law promoting individual land titles and leaving out the cultivation rights of women. The tendency on a growing number of concessions to restrict the cultivation rights only to wives and father's widows, might cause great difficulties for many women and a further deteriorating of soil-fertility on concessions where land is very scarce.

A number of factors exercise a negative effect on coffee production in this area. The production is hampered in the first place by men's reluctance to do agricultural work and to invest in agricultural production. 'Tsa men do not work in agriculture' is a remark often made by the members of this chiefdom. The Letsi case makes it clear that sufficient land is not all that is required if agriculture is to succeed. If capital is available this will be invested in trade or transport and not in agriculture. The economic elite, whether residing in Tsa or elsewhere, are not interested in increasing the economic power within the chiefdom, for instance in agriculture, where family relations within the minimal patri- lineage still form a 'burden'. In their homeland, members of this elite, usually restrict themselves to the building of a beautiful bungalow as an expression of conspicuous consumption, and to giving some financial aid to close relatives.

The competition between coffee and food-crops where women have to care for the coffee, certainly has a bad effect on coffee production.

Migration is furthered by the economic situation in the chiefdom which makes it impossible for men to acquire the standard of living they are after. Traditional professional specializations such as blacksmith and carpenter, various categories of medicine men and chiefdom officials meet with growing competition from industrial goods, hospitals, Christian
priests, government authorities etc. Moreover, land scarcity in many areas means that agriculture does not offer many employment possibilities. A special problem is that migrants also get ntyag s and do not make arrangements for the continuation of the coffee cultivation because they jealously guard their land rights (often a mother is in charge of the migrant's crops).

In the Latchuet case, three men of the X family are living on the concession; the three adult men who have migrated have rights to at least fifty percent of the X land. In the Letsi X family we find, in 1978-1980, four adult men and fifteen or sixteen men living elsewhere. In the nkâ' area, these migrants control about one third of the land. Now, in the tsâ'a area, a lot of land is still not divided, but where temporary arrangements have been made, almost all the 'divided' land is allotted to sons of Al and AIII who all live outside Tsâ.

Nowadays, on many estates we find that even when principal heirs restrict the ntyag s to brothers and sons to tiny plots, they themselves often do not have enough land to continue farming. The Latchuet case illustrates clearly a normal situation in which men cannot possibly create plantations which could ever yield a sufficient income. Poultry farming is sometimes tried in these situations, but so far has appeared to be very risky because of epidemics. On the other hand, we find many estates where hardly any men are left and this hampers the coffee production. Here again we can point at a factor causing difficulties and problems in many ex-tribal societies. It is quite impossible to make definite single-stranded arrangements with members of the patrilineage or even with people of the quarter or chiefdom for the running of specific economic affairs. This is also present in another factor which has a negative effect on coffee production. If a man grows old it is almost impossible to have the supervision and work done by a son or brother; because of the inheritance there is distrust between the men and between their mothers and the fear of confiscation of the land by relatives. On estates run by ageing men, we often find an extreme neglect of agriculture. Successors think twice before deciding to return to Tsâ and trying to start growing coffee and plantains again (see 2.1.3.1).

The factors mentioned so far refer to 'internal problems' in this Bamiléké area. Besides this, the price that UCCAO, 'Union Centrale des Coopératives Agricoles de 'Ouest' (until 1978 'Union des Coopératives de Café Arabica de l'Ouest) is authorized by the government to pay for the coffee is low. The measures to renew the coffee-bushes, subsidies on fertilizer etc. can be called stimulating, the coffee price however is not (compare Tchouama, 1980: e.g. 50, 58, 127). Here we will have to remember that men often sell their coffee before harvest to farmers/business men who have sufficient money at their disposal, thereby even diminishing the profit of coffee production. The analysis of 'internal
factors' should warn us that men's production and care of coffee is not completely dependent upon the price the government is prepared to pay.

Looking back at the complex of interrelated problems, can suggestions be made to improve the situation? Three broad strategies of development, or a combination of these strategies, could be taken into consideration:

a. the promotion of migration, thus decreasing the population pressure on the land;

b. the promotion of coffee production;

c. furthering the cultivation of food-crops.

Government action at this moment is directed at increasing migration (the 'young farmers schemes') and at augmenting the production of coffee. Measures in both fields have been taken to further national interests (the start of agricultural production in under-exploited areas and augmenting the revenues from export-crops) and not so much to solve the economic problems of this Bamiléké area. One may suspect that the new development scheme for this Bamiléké table-land by UCCAO and the World Bank ('Développement des Hautes Plateaux de l'Ouest') is also directed primarily at augmenting the cash-crop production for export and solving the food problems of the towns by starting large-scale plantations (for instance maize, rice, tea and coffee) in sparsely populated areas of the Noun valley and on the slopes of the Bamboutos mountains.

From our analysis of the situation in Tsa, it will be clear that it is difficult to propose strategies for development directed at improving the economic condition of men and women in the small-scale farming system. Let us try to imagine some of the effects of the strategies mentioned.

a. In furthering migration the area will be deprived of an even greater section of its productive male population. As migrants will keep their claims on land in the chiefdom, migration does not mean that the men left behind (those who did not have or have not taken the chance to migrate or who had to return) have more land at their disposal. It appears that the migration of men is accompanied by a migration of women, although to a much lesser degree. Migration thus promotes a situation in which the burden of the matrifocal households rests on the women who have to manage their affairs without much help from the men. The effects of an increased migration of men on the development of the area would be very negative. We already know too many regions in the world where the few remaining men cannot find sufficient employment, whereas new activities cannot be initiated because the necessary man-power is missing.

b. Promoting the production of coffee means increasing the women's difficulties in growing their food-crops. If men could be stimulated
to take a greater interest in coffee, this would be followed by an in­
crease in the area where coffee is planted and a stricter supervision
over the cultivation of the bushes. As much of the work is done by women
(except pruning and treatment against diseases), in compensation for their
rights to cultivate food-crops, we can only expect some increase in the
income of women who are hired to work. It would be wrong to assume that
an increased income of the men would automatically also improve the well­
being of women and children. In promoting the production of coffee one
has to be very careful not to make the situation of women and children
worse in this area where Kwashiorkor is rife.

c. Food-crop production can only be supported very carefully. As agri­
cultural experts have assured me, radical changes can only diminish
the production in view of the very intensive way women now cultivate.
Possible improvements should start from the existing mixed-cropping system
in which coffee and food-crops are grown in the same field. On most of
the estates, women cannot spare terrains for coffee grown as a mono-crop
where they will still have to do the weeding. Soil conservation and im­
provement, better plant varieties (useful in a mixed cropping system)
and a better rotation scheme are subjects on which research can advise.
Extension should also be directed at women and should take into account
that much of the food-crop production may not be sold and is meant for
household consumption. Development authorities should be aware of the
possibility that men could try to get a grip on the food-crop production
if this becomes more profitable. If men demand part of the food-crops
and sell them, then again women and children will probably not gain much
from the 'improved' situation. I have already mentioned that nowadays it
is only on some very big estates of Bangang and Bansoa that men demand
that the women grow food-crops for them on specific plots of the conces­
sions. Another point is that improvement of the food-crop situation will
intensify the competition between food-crops and coffee and will increase
tensions between men and women.

I prefer not to consider the possibility of the government promoting the
food-crop production and also granting to UCCAO the monopoly of buying
food-crops at rates fixed by the government: to appropriate surplusses
from the rural areas through a monopoly on the purchase and marketing of
food-crops, again the demand of a modern 'fund of rent' as with the
coffee, would be disastrous. The government has already granted UCCAO
the right to diversify its activities, and this co-operative/ marketing
board has now started the marketing of agricultural inputs, consumer
goods and 'little' food-crops and has even changed its name, although
the initials have remained the same (Tchouamo, 1980: 63, 127).
For me, anthropology is important as it enables us to analyse the situation of communities or sections of communities that get into difficulties because of the processes of incorporation into co-ordinating structures. In the Bamiléké area the power-, ecological- and demographic crises and the concomitant crisis in cognitive orientation, religion, values and norms have caused serious problems. The rebellion and riots in the fifties and sixties should be considered as an outburst of frustrations. Now the government is in full control of the area, but frustration has not disappeared. Will it be possible to reduce the pressure in the boiler, direct the steam in a constructive way, or will there be another explosion? Another rebellion would again be very chaotic and would not serve a clear-cut purpose, unless dissatisfaction is used/misused by 'others', often sections of the new urban elite, without a guarantee that the situation of the 'followers' will be improved. I consider that the government should somehow implement schemes for the improvement of small-scale agriculture in the area and promote off-farm activities favouring both the male and female sections of the population.

To mention just one possibility which could be investigated in further detail. The area discussed could be considered as a pilot region for the breeding of chickens, ducks, rabbits and pigs in the small-farm units of the polygynous/monogamous households. The producers for this purpose should be united in cooperatives of considerable size which could organize and manage (with a 'neutral' management of salaried employees, Bamiléké's but not from this area), amongst others the acquisition of extra fodder, cold-storage, marketing and transport to towns in Cameroon, Nigeria etc. The government, at least in the first phase, should join the project by adding improved and upgraded veterinary research stations, an animal husbandry extension service and breeding stations. Moreover, the government undoubtedly would have to give support by giving organizational assistance and by supervising the business-like management of the cooperatives. I am most certainly not pleading for an increase of the UCCAO tasks. If, as in the case of UCCAO, the government dictates the prices, then it would be better to forget this proposal, for in that case the government would most probably only try to appropriate extra surpluses produced by the rural population for the benefit of urban development (gossips associate UCCAO immediately with the well-being of Air Cameroon and the construction of football-stadiums in Douala and Yaoundé). If I suggest the development of the breeding of small cattle I can only refer to a few small farm units in Tsa where this is done. Here it appeared that men and women were co-operating in this activity. The breeding of these small animals does not demand much land. Men 'traditionally' are well acquainted with animal husbandry and women also feel free to participate in the breeding of small animals (now, chickens are usually a woman's affair). Perhaps this kind of economic activity, if successful, will stop some of the migration of men and stimulate a new integration of the male and female sections at the level of the polygynous/monogamous households which, certainly, could also be very favourable for the children of this region.
REFERENCES


Bruggen, C. van, Eynatten, J. van, 1981. The situation of women among Tsa Migrants in the SODENKAM Settlement Scheme, Cameroon. Agricultural University, Wageningen, Departments of Home Economics and of Rural Sociology of the Tropics and Subtropics (M.Sc. thesis).


Ouden, J.H.B. den, 1979. The process of incorporation with regard to the relations between local population and outside world. The case of two Bamiléké chiefdoms, Cameroon, in the period 1900-1970. Agricultural University Wageningen, Department of Rural Sociology of the Tropics and Subtropics.


