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Fulbe Voices: Marriage, Islam, and Medicine In Northern Cameroon

Helen A. Regis

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Contemporary Fulbe identity is rooted in a history of nomadic pastoralism, migration, slave trading, and religious jihads, even though the Fulbe today are sedentary farmers and merchants. Much of The Fulbe of Northern Cameroon is concerned, then, with defining what it means to be "Fulbe" in a plural society composed of people of diverse physical types, with tensions between Islamic and non-Islamic elements and between former rulers and former slaves. In this book, central Fulbe beliefs and practices are illuminated through consideration of key moments in the life cycle: marriage, circumcision, and birth. Supernatural sources of illness are also considered for their effects on the social fabric of families and villages. One conclusion of the book is to challenge the idea of culture as an integrated whole, to see it rather as composed of a diversity of coexisting practices and beliefs.

About the AuthorHelen A. Regis is assistant professor of anthropology at Louisiana State University. She is coauthor (with John Bartkowski) of *Charitable Choices: Religion, Race, and Poverty in the Post-Welfare Era* and is currently writing a book on race, politics, and performance in New Orleans.