

**Property and Marriage in the Blue Nile rainlands,
Northern Sudan**

Philip S. Hoyle

Ph.D.

University of Edinburgh

1981



I declare that this thesis is an original piece of work,
and that it has been wholly composed by myself.

Signed: Philip S. Hoyle

ABSTRACT

The objective of this thesis is to examine various trends in domestic and marriage patterns among a rural population in the Blue Nile rainlands in Northern Sudan in the context of the shift to a more intensive system of farming, characterised by new forms of socio-economic differentiation. The theoretical and methodological framework of the thesis is provided by a discussion of Goody's comparative analysis of productive systems and domestic institutions. Particular attention is given to his treatment of marriage payments in the context of the variations in Muslim marriage payments. I argue that where a substantial proportion of the marriage goods are given to the bride by the bridegroom, this kind of marriage payment constitutes what Goody calls 'indirect dowry'. However, I suggest that intensification of such payments may occur relatively independently of the system of transmission of property, since dowry payments are more concerned with the expression of differential life-styles, than with property relations as such.

New property relations have emerged with the uneven transformation of an extensive system of farming based on hoe cultivation, supplemented by animal herding, to a more intensive system entailing the use of the plough in rainland cultivation and new methods of irrigation in riverain gardens. Economic differentiation has occurred through the adoption of different labour migration patterns and farming strategies. On the one hand, seasonal agricultural labour supports the maintenance of traditional patrimonies operated mainly by family labour; on the other, regular employment in non-agricultural occupations, and petty-trading and larger commercial activities, provide cash for investment in small-scale capitalist farming enterprises. In examining these processes I pay particular attention to changing patterns of female participation in farming activities, and to new forms of provision for women. While many unpaid female

activities are replaced by male paid services, many women are nonetheless drawn into new forms of agricultural wage labour that have arisen with the growth of commodity production.

The main trends in marriage that are discussed are the increase in marriage payments, especially goods given to the bride, the elaboration of wedding ceremonial, the deferred age at marriage, and the increase in marriage stability with the decline in the rate of divorce, remarriage and polygamy. These tendencies are associated less with the system of transmission of property and more with the establishment of a conjugal fund, derived mainly from achieved earnings; through the conjugal fund differential life-styles are expressed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The field of research on which this thesis is based was carried out in the Sudan between January 1977 and April 1978, following an initial visit to the research area in December 1975.

I am greatly indebted to the people of Abu Haraz and Kumur who showed me great kindness and hospitality throughout my stay, and who willingly assisted me in my inquiries. In particular I would like to thank my assistant, Mirghenni Abu Agla Hamad al-Nil.

Many people in Khartoum and Wad Medani also rendered me valuable services which facilitated my studies. I would especially like to thank Dr. Mohamed Al Awad Galal El-Din, of the University of Khartoum, who drew my attention to several implications of the social survey he directed in the Rahad Project area, particularly concerning patterns of migration.

I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Ms. Judy Cumberbatch, who helped me in several of my inquiries in the field.

Concerning those who have given direction to my studies in Edinburgh, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Roy Willis, and to Professor J. Littlejohn and Dr. A. Jackson for their comments and advice.

Finally I wish to thank Mrs. Jenny Maisels for typing the thesis.

The system of transliteration of Arabic words that I have used is a simplified version of that used in Sudan Notes and

Records. I have omitted diacritic dots, and have abbreviated personal names somewhat for easier reading. Place-names follow the usage of the Survey Department, Khartoum. My main concern has been to be consistent.



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

PAGE ORDER INACCURATE IN ORIGINAL

LIST OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgments	v
List of Contents	vii
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Chapter 2 The Historical-Geography of the Blue Nile Rainlands	22
Chapter 3 Economic Differentiation in East Bank Villages	56
Chapter 4 Rainland Cultivation Strategies	90
Chapter 5 Patterns and Trends in Household Organisation	117
Chapter 6 Changes in Marriage Payments	152
Chapter 7 Trends in Marriage Stability	186
Chapter 8 Conclusion	225
Glossary	250
Bibliography	254

TABLES AND FIGURES

	Page
TABLE 1 Household consumption budgets	39
TABLE 2 Wedding expenditure, 1977-8	169-70
TABLE 3 Population of Abu Haraz and Kumur by sex and age-group	190
TABLE 4 Marital status - Abu Haraz and Kumur	193-4
TABLE 5 Marriages contracted by men and women in Abu Haraz and Kumur	199
TABLE 6 Number of marriages contracted by men and women in Gezira and Blue Nile Provinces, as recorded in various social surveys	217
TABLE 7 Number of marriages contracted by men over 50 and by preceding, deceased generation in Abu Haraz and Kumur	219
Genealogy of Arakiyin	39
Figure showing lay-out of related households in Fariq Khandagawi	131

MAPS

Map of Gezira and East Bank of Blue Nile	24
Irrigated and Mechanised Agricultural Schemes in Gezira and Blue Nile Regions	46
Map of Abu Haraz and vicinity	57

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis may be defined as twofold: first, to examine the process of economic differentiation among a rural population in central Sudan, and to account for the varied contribution of women to farming activities; and second, to examine changes in marriage payments and trends in marriage patterns in the course of the emergence of differentiated lifestyles. In brief, it may be said I am interested in the relationship between particular systems of production and domestic institutions. More specifically I am interested in the way changes related to the intensification of agricultural production and the emergence of new forms of socio-economic differentiation affect the processes whereby social reproduction is carried out. By social reproduction I do not mean some abstract formulation according to which the social relations of production or mode of production are reproduced. I refer to the social and cultural practices in which the human needs for food, shelter, care, sex and recreation are met; and also the manner in which the generations replace each other, not only in a biological sense, but, more importantly, transmitting with them their customs and stores of social knowledge, their specific forms of property and social distinctions. Since in the society in question familial relations provide the main locus for social reproduction, I will be concerned with patterns of family organisation and trends within the institution of marriage. I will address particular attention to patterns of domestic consumption, the nature of marriage payments, and the frequency and durability of marriages.

At the empirical level of study which fieldwork entails, causal factors are revealed as complex, and never one-directional. A materialist analysis which has real explanatory value must embrace an empathic approach which takes cognisance of the full

range of factors involved in social processes. But at the same time a materialist approach necessarily involves giving greater weighting to certain factors rather than others. This entails making reasoned associations, assessing the relative influence of a number of factors, establishing the main direction of cause and effect, and the testing of findings whenever possible. This approach is neither more nor less fallible than other approaches, and must be evaluated in relation to its authenticity in portraying reality 'out-there', and according to its explanatory value. Thus in identifying factors related to the system of production as conducive to particular trends in domestic institutions, I acknowledge the presence of other factors, which may complement the key factor or which may pull in other directions. I trust that in the presentation of my argument I take sufficient account of these other forces which are involved. As will become clear shortly, my general hypotheses are hardly original; in fact they serve more as a test of the wider formulations of Goody and others that I consider in a moment. However it is a test carried out in a cultural area which has been held by some writers to confound these wider formulations which postulate a vectorial correlation between particular productive systems and associated domestic institutions.

Sudan is an enormous country, almost one million square miles, comprising markedly different terrains, ranging from desert and savanna lands to tropical forests. Consequently many different kinds of farming systems are found there. Historically the areas which have attracted the most dense settlement have been the riverain lands since these afford the potentiality of more intensive utilisation through irrigation. As a result of such developments many areas adjoining the riverain lands are in a state of transition from extensive rain-fed cultivation to more intensive irrigated cultivation. This is the case in the area in which I carried out my field research.

The population that form the subject of this study inhabit the

east bank of the Blue Nile in the Gezira Province of the Sudan; they are Muslim and Arabic-speaking. Formerly the population subsisted from the rainland cultivation of sorghum millet, combined with the herding of sheep, goats, cows and camels. Cultivation was performed by hoe in semi-permanent fields; animal herding involved the use of both local and distant pastures, depending on the size of herds and the kind of livestock. During this century this area has witnessed the decline in animal herding, the commercialisation of rainland cultivation and the intensification of production in riverain gardens through the introduction of pumps. These changes have been accompanied by an increase in population and an increase in both seasonal and permanent migration from the area to the towns and neighbouring irrigated schemes. Some of these changes date from the implementation of the famous Gezira Project between the two World Wars, but others arise from political and economic forces which predate this important venture.

New forms of socio-economic differentiation have emerged in connexion with these changes. Before the spread of monetarised relations there was little distinction between the life-style of the tribal and religious leaders and that of their followers. Nearly everyone was engaged to some extent in subsistence activities, notwithstanding the existence of long-distance trade routes and the varying contacts of local communities with wider state formations, which came into being largely through their control of these trade routes. Today the circulation of money and differential access to it and to other forms of property has increasingly undermined traditional forms of social organisation. The operation of capital and the circulation of a wider range of commodities has brought about new forms of socio-economic differentiation, transforming both the individual's relation to the means of production and the life-style which he and his family enjoy.

It is in the framework of these changes that I wish to pursue

the two interrelated objectives outlined at the beginning of the chapter. The work of both Boserup and Goody has a clear bearing on this project.¹ Both Boserup and Goody are interested in the relationship between specific systems of production, as characterised by particular farming techniques and level of intensity, and forms of domestic organisation, especially those concerning the relations between the sexes. Boserup is more concerned with the social and economic status of women, their participation rates in agricultural work, and the conditions leading to their seclusion within the home. Goody's approach deals with a wider complex of domestic institutions, such as the manner in which familial property is transmitted, marriage payments, marriage choices and different familial roles. Both, however, accord a preeminent position to the level of intensity at which specific farming systems operate as a conditioning factor of types of domestic institutions. Both recognise major differences between societies which cultivate extensively by means of hoe and those which cultivate intensively by means of plough or with resort to irrigation.

The changes which have occurred among the population that I studied may be interpreted as constituting a transition to the second type of farming system, characterised by the use of the plough and irrigation. Although cultivation by hoe is still practised, it is on a much smaller scale, and the patterns of cooperative work traditionally associated with it have long since lapsed. Even before the widespread introduction of ploughing of rainlands and the installation of pumps in riverain gardens, the inhabitants of the east bank of the Blue Nile have been affected by the introduction of irrigated farming in the neighbouring Gezira area, between the Blue and White Niles. Thus this shift to a more intensive system of agricultural production provides a relevant case-study for testing the broad

1. E. Boserup: *Woman's Role in Economic Development*. London, 1970.

J. Goody: *Production and Reproduction*. Cambridge, 1976.

comparative findings of Boserup and Goody.

Here I must mention some of the difficulties posed by an historical approach to the study of domestic institutions. In the first place, even though important insights may be gained by comparison with social groups where hoe cultivation is still practised, the evidence for earlier domestic practices is far from adequate. Information collected from present-day informants, whose view of the past is necessarily a coloured one, can be taken only as a general guide. Local written sources which are pertinent to these issues are scarce, and early census material completely absent - the first National Census in Sudan was carried out in 1951. Moreover, in so far as domestic institutions serve to transmit many customary forms of behaviour, they themselves may be resilient to change. Many of the trends in domestic and marriage patterns that I discuss are assessed in the time-span of living generations; a much longer time-span would, of course, be desirable, but the absence of reliable data for earlier generations precludes this. Nevertheless, in spite of these difficulties, I do not consider that they are such as to invalidate my project to test the comparative findings of Boserup and Goody. Another point I wish to raise here is that some writers have objected that Goody has paid little attention to the Middle East, and that this area provides many cases, which fit uneasily into his comparative framework.¹ Since Goody's approach has been held by Comaroff to lack demonstration (p.10), this thesis may be considered as providing such an exercise. I will return to the specific objections to Goody's treatment of marriage payments later in this introduction.

First I wish to examine the position of Boserup, particularly her arguments concerning the participation of women in farming activities. For the sexual division of labour clearly has important implications for domestic organisation and institutions,

1. J.L.Comaroff (ed.): *The Meaning of Marriage Payments*. London, 1980.

though Goody would see a less direct relation between this factor and forms of marriage and marriage payment than does Boserup in this respect. Boserup argues that there are two related factors which influence the participation of women in farming activities. The first concerns the techniques of agricultural production. Where hoe cultivation is dominant, women tend to perform the largest share of agricultural work. By contrast, where permanent fields are cultivated and the plough is used, male labour tends to predominate. Women may nonetheless play a significant part in weeding and harvesting. The second factor is the form of social hierarchy which tends to accompany the conditions which make possible or necessary the permanence of settlements and cultivation areas, and the use of more intensive techniques such as ploughing and irrigation. In these circumstances, a portion of the population, whether through being landless, or not having sufficient land, are forced to sell their labour to other farmers. The participation of women tends to vary with their position in the social hierarchy. Among the landowning families which hire labourers the women tend not to work in the fields, but are afforded the seclusion of the home. Among the small-holding farmers the women may continue to work on the family plot especially at peak periods during the cultivation cycle. But with those families which possess no land or very small plots the women may contribute a substantial proportion of the labour provided by their families to the landowners. As for the contribution of female labour to particular tasks, female labour may be displaced by male labour in certain activities; for example, ploughing tends almost universally to be a male task. However, depending on the actual form of agricultural intensification, new labour-intensive tasks may be created, thus encouraging the continued contribution of women in farming activities; cotton-picking and the transplanting of rice seedlings are examples of such activities. However, as stated before, not all women are engaged in these activities. The production of a sufficient surplus and the hierarchical ordering of social relations allows a large number of women to

devote themselves primarily to domestic activities. Boserup associates the seclusion of women and the use of the veil with these intensive farming systems which release a section of the population from subsistence activities.

This approach appears to have greater explanatory value than those arguments which consider that the withdrawal of women's labour outside the home is largely the consequence of particular cultural traditions. Many writers on the Middle East argue from the premise that women's work outside the home is not compatible with conformity to the strict precepts of Islam. Trends towards the more rigorous seclusion of women are seen, according to this approach, as the result of the emanation of orthodox Islamic practices from urban centres into the countryside. I would not deny that there are many passages in the Koran which exhort the modesty of women and demand adequate provision for them; the latter precept, made in the context of marriage and divorce, is taken as the source of the compulsory marriage payment, which the bridegroom must bestow on his bride. Together with the detailed prescriptions concerning the shares of inheritance which women are entitled to, these passages clearly propose that Muslim women should be endowed with property, and at the same time they should be enjoined to conduct themselves with modesty and propriety. Although the Koran itself implicitly associates women's property rights and restrictions on their free behaviour, most writers that stress the importance of values in determining the position of women are reluctant to see this connexion. Thus while they recognise that within an Islamic culture there may exist considerable variations in the extent of conformity to orthodox Islamic practices, they are unable to explain adequately the reasons for these variations. In short, allegiance to particular beliefs and values is not considered problematic by the adherents of this approach.

In the chapter which deals with strategies in rainland cultivat-

ion and the sexual division of labour in these tasks, I will challenge a variant of the line of argument just referred to, since it is often put forward in Sudanese sociological writings. This explanation holds that women are prepared to perform agricultural work if it entails work on family plots in the company of family members or kin. However, cultural values serve to constrain women from working alongside hired labourers, who are frequently men from outside the locality. Some women are forced to work for wages alongside male non-kin, but they would not do so if they could possibly avoid it. Thus work on family plots is seen as being an extension of domestic work, and thus permissible. On the other hand contact with hired labourers is seen as constituting a threat to the virtue and modesty of these women, and thereby to the honour of their families. I will assess the force of this argument in relation to my research findings in Chapter 4. Here I wish to raise two general points which appear to question its validity. In the first place, if the threat of contact with strangers is considered such an important value as to constrain women from working outside the home, then other situations in which women come into contact with stranger men must also be considered. However, Sudanese women of all social backgrounds come into contact with strangers in the market-place when they go there to purchase consumer goods. Admittedly girls of marriageable age rarely make such purchases, but transactions between married women of all ages and male shopkeepers are commonplace. No elaborate ritual surrounds these transactions in the market-place; indeed they are often characterised by lively conversation or informed criticism of the quality or price of goods. This indicates that there is little force in the argument that contact with stranger men per se constitutes a threat to the modesty of women. In some Muslim societies, as well as some non-Muslim ones, it is true that particular groups of women may be completely confined to the home. Here I merely wish to point to the dangers of generalising and exaggerating the significance of a particular set of values. Secondly, I would add that cert-

ain forms of work performed by women in the Sudan, such as teaching and secretarial work, entail contact with unrelated men, often in restricted space; however, these kinds of employment are widely, though not universally, considered as being 'acceptable'.

I wish now to return to Boserup's position, and consider its relevance to my area of research. First I will consider hoe cultivation in the rainlands as it is practised today. Then I will consider how these practices differ from the period when hoe cultivation was the standard pattern of farming. Finally I will examine the significance of the introduction of ploughs and hiring of labour services. Throughout these changes the main crop has been sorghum millet. Cultivation by hoe is carried out in large fields bounded by low earthen ridges which prevent run-off of water. Men prepare pockets in the soil by means of the hoe, or more accurately digging-stick, and the seeds are generally inserted by women and children. Weeding is performed by both sexes. At the harvest women reap the heads of grain, while men cut the stalks and thresh the grain. Single women may and do perform all these tasks, but generally there is a sexual division of labour such as I have outlined. Each nuclear family acts as an independent productive unit; when additional labour is required, hired labour of either sex is recruited according to the nature of the task. In the past cooperative work parties were recruited on the basis of kinship and other social ties; these were rewarded in kind and not by payment. Local holymen, in particular, mobilised large work parties thereby producing a surplus with which to support their own large households and followers, as well as needy families. Since cultivation was more frequently combined with animal husbandry, women probably contributed a larger proportion of labour to cultivation tasks than men; after planting the crops the men left the remaining tasks to women, thus leaving themselves free to manage their herds. For example, at the harvest the stalks were left in the ground for the herds to feed on. Thus

women, and children from an early age, were important components of the total labour force. With the exception of long-distance herd movements women could, and no doubt frequently did, perform all the productive tasks normally carried out by men. All but the women of a few religious families engaged in these activities. While certainly not constituting a female farming system, the contribution of women was very substantial, matching if not surpassing the contribution made by men.

Today, as I show in Chapter 4, while hoe cultivation has not been completely superseded, it is increasingly common for farmers to hire tractor-ploughs. Traditional methods of labour recruitment, i.e. mobilisation through non-economic ties and payment in kind, have completely disappeared. All labour services exchanged between farming households, and even some of the services exchanged within them, are mediated by money payments. Wages exhibit a high degree of rationalisation, with many tasks being paid by piece-rate. Most hired labour is recruited locally, i.e. from the same village or neighbouring villages on the east bank, though some labourers are attracted from other areas. The participation of women in cultivation has become more selective. Some women work only on the family land, sometimes with other unpaid family labour, sometimes with hired labour parties. Some no longer make any contribution to cultivation activities, while others, in addition to working on their family lands as in the case of the first category, hire themselves out in work parties to other farmers. Some of the latter also perform wage labour during the cotton-picking season in the Gezira after they have harvested their sorghum crop in the rainlands on the east bank. Overall the participation of women in rainland cultivation has probably declined, though, as I have suggested, the actual contribution of particular groups of women varies greatly. In spite of the prevalence of male migration from the area, this has not induced women to bear the brunt of subsistence crop cultivation. Quite the opposite, migrant men are expected to support an increased

number of dependents from their cash earnings. Thus the transformation of the traditional system of production has led to the emergence of new patterns of female participation in farming activities which are congruent with Boserup's thesis: that with the intensification of production techniques and the establishment of new forms of social hierarchy, a considerable number of women tend to withdraw their labour, while at the same time other women are drawn into new forms of agricultural wage labour.

Turning to the processes by which this transformation, and particularly the new patterns of social stratification, have come about on the east bank, I would stress the importance of the adoption of certain non-agricultural occupations and also particular patterns of migration. These in turn are related to local factors which have been conducive to greater economic diversification and accumulation of capital in some east bank villages rather than others. I accept, however, that these local conditions are 'articulated' with the growth of commodity production and monetarised transactions in the wider economy, and particularly with the growth of state organisations and the private services sector. By comparing two villages on the east bank and by focusing on the differential response to these conditions, I will attempt to show how at the local level economic differentiation has come about. In one village advantages have accrued to different social groups variously through money rents from titular land claims, petty-trading of produce from riverain gardens and other goods, and regular employment outside the locality. These advantages in turn have encouraged the development of marketing and educational services within the village, more extensive trading activities, and a steady flow of remittances from migrants outside. Consequently many farmers have cash resources with which to hire tractor and labour services. By contrast, denied these particular advantages, most of the inhabitants of the other village continue to rely on their traditional patrimonies of rainlands and small herds. In

order to complement their stable or declining income from these sources, they resort to hiring out their labour to other farmers, and other forms of local casual labour; and in some cases they migrate with their families to the Gezira, again to perform casual and seasonal labour.

Chapters 2 and 3 are largely devoted to the question of economic differentiation among the population studied, whether in the form of the historical background to the east bank rainlands, or in the comparison of two specific villages just referred to. What I hope to demonstrate is that new forms of social stratification have arisen partly from the transmutation of social relations associated with the traditional farming system, e.g. religious families turning from cooperative work parties to raising money-rents and investing in the introduction of pumps in riverain gardens and in commercial rainland farming. But also the breakdown of the old farming system has been accentuated by, and at the same time encouraged the emergence of new social groups, notably traders and migrant workers. Thus while landed property is one determinant of social position, other forms of property play an equal if not greater part in defining an individual's place within the social hierarchy. Most farmers on the east bank still enjoy access to rainlands; what differentiates them is differential access to cash resources with which to hire the necessary services entailed in crop production. However, I should add that with the implementation in the area of the Rahad Project, a large government irrigation scheme, some farmers will lose their traditional lands since they will not all obtain tenancies in the new scheme.

The implication of the above discussion is that the widespread introduction of ploughing on the east bank must not be treated as an isolated factor influencing new patterns of female participation in farming activities. It must be considered in connexion with the other factors discussed here which have brought about economic differentiation. Moreover, since planting by hoe

is primarily a male task, though assisted by women and children, the introduction of ploughing has not affected the contribution of female labour in this particular task, as it would if planting had been performed mainly by women. Nevertheless the association of the use of the plough with the restriction of a large number of women to the confines of the village does seem to have a general applicability. Among those farmers who cultivated by plough more than ten acres, I recorded no instances of their womenfolk engaged in any cultivation task.

Boserup's approach, therefore, provides a useful starting-point for studying variations in domestic and marriage patterns, since clearly the sexual division of labour has an important bearing on family organisation. Goody (1973 and 1976) acknowledges the work of Boserup, and draws richly from it.¹ But while recognising similarities with her thesis, he considers marriage institutions such as "polygyny and monogamy, bride-wealth and dowry, as being related less directly to women's contribution to agriculture and more to the problem of 'status placement' in societies with varying degrees of socio-economic differentiation." Since Goody's treatment of domestic institutions is considerably more elaborate than Boserup's, it is to his work that I now turn.

In his book, Production and Reproduction, Goody uses a broad comparative and historical approach to trace the development of various domestic institutions among those rural societies characterised by increased productivity of the land, high population densities, production of surpluses and unequal access to the basic means of production. Under these conditions of social stratification different 'styles of life' are preserved through the reproduction of differences of property and status. These differences are maintained, Goody argues, by direct vertical transmission of property (i.e. from parents to children), and

1. J. Goody & S.J. Tambiah: *Bridewealth and Dowry*. Cambridge, 1973.

through provision for women as well as for men. Women receive property, whether in the form of inheritance, dowry or marriage prestations, thereby preserving their relative status. 'Diverging devolution' (transmission of property through both sexes) entails the establishment at marriage of some form of conjugal fund; this fund ensures some measure of support for the woman in widowhood, and eventually goes to provide for her sons and daughters.

Goody argues that the system of inheritance or devolution of property is the salient factor in conditioning other aspects of domestic organisation, such as marriage patterns, conjugal and other familial roles, expressions of sexuality, and so on. Using data from the Ethnographic Atlas, he demonstrates that strong correlations exist between systems of diverging devolution and the payment of dowry, monogamy (deviated from by recourse to concubinage), low rates of divorce, discouragement of remarriage of widows, and endogamy. Geographically he associates these interrelated domestic institutions with areas where plough cultivation has generated high population densities, substantial surpluses and social hierarchies, i.e. in Europe and many parts of Asia. By contrast, in Africa and in other regions where shifting cultivation and the use of the hoe predominate, property descends laterally and through the members of the same sex. The corporate nature of the property-holding group, i.e. the lineage, is maintained through exogamy and the exchange of bridewealth, with marriage goods passing from the male kin of the groom to the male kin of the bride. These institutions serve to encourage social homogeneity, rather than differentiation of life-styles.

Goody stresses that other factors relating to the polity deriving from conquests, religious conversion and ethnic assimilation also have an influence on the form that domestic institutions take. For example, he notes that the spread of Islam in Africa may lead to the payment of a dowry to the bride which may

exist alongside a prevailing pattern of bridewealth payments exchanged between groups of male kin. I will return to this particular point when I discuss the nature of and variations in Muslim marriage payments, which is something Goody has been specifically challenged on. First I wish to discuss briefly some general criticisms that have been made of Goody's work. Several points raised by Comaroff (1980) in connexion with Goody's essay on bridewealth and dowry (1973) are shown to be somewhat misdirected if proper attention is given to Goody's other works (notably 1971 and 1976). The earlier work (1971) is devoted precisely to specifying what distinguishes African pre-colonial states from systems of social stratification based on unequal access to the means of production.¹ Nor is it true that Goody reduces Africa to a single ecological order; in his latter work (1976) he pays special attention to Ethiopia where he shows plough cultivation gave rise to a system of social stratification quite dissimilar to the savanna states. Moreover, in this work Goody not only applies statistical evidence in order to test his arguments, thus providing demonstration of his approach which Comaroff claims Goody's work lacks; but also Goody is very careful to explore his own methodological framework, and to examine the notion of causality. While clearly some cases cannot be easily accommodated within Goody's scheme, some of the contributions to Comaroff's work which the latter cites as contradicting Goody's arguments do not seem aptly chosen examples. For instance, I doubt whether "Goody would typify as African" (p.9) a Macedonian socio-economic situation on the grounds of patrilineal reckoning and patrilocal residence, and the production of only small surpluses; in fact the elaborate dowry system which Rheubottom describes does not seem incongruent with the economic activities he only briefly alludes to: traditional patrimonies, shepherding, migrant labour and large-scale viticulture. Similarly I do not see how the variations in bridewealth among East African pastoralists which

1. J.Goody: *Technology, Tradition and the State in Africa*. London, 1971.

Turton describes can be taken as criticism of Goody's approach, rather than as a demonstration of it. For Turton himself relates the main variations to economic and ecological factors. According to the decisive role that cattle-herding plays in relation to other forms of subsistence, bridewealth payments tend to be the largest and most fixed, distributing cattle evenly among the population.

I may now turn to the question of Muslim marriage payments. For Comaroff uses Peters' statement that in the Middle East there "are many communities which practice some form of bride-wealth, and where the plough has long been used" (1980, p.9) as evidence against Goody's analysis. For Goody broadly associates dowry systems with plough cultivation, and bridewealth systems with hoe cultivation. It is true Goody generally refers to Muslim marriage payments as being a form of dowry; so it is necessary to understand exactly how he defines the various forms of dowry. Dowry he interprets as being basically a form of transmission of property from one generation to another:

Dowry is essentially a process whereby parental property is distributed to a daughter at her marriage (i.e. inter vivos) rather than at the holder's death (mortis causa). I therefore include dowry as part of the process of 'diverging devolution'.
(1976, p.6)

As a variant of this process, Goody defines indirect dowry as "the system whereby the future son-in-law, or his family contribute to a fund which is then settled upon the wife". (p.8) In spite of the different source of the payment, dowry and indirect dowry payments both have in common the establishment of a conjugal fund and the endowment of the bride. Several other common features point to the similarities between dowry and indirect dowry payments: the goods transacted at marriage are variable in nature, since they testify to the relative status of the bride and her husband; there tends to be considerable

elaboration of the wedding ceremony and accompanying festivities; in the event of the marriage being dissolved, the marriage goods tend to remain with the bride, thus being returnable in dowry systems and non-returnable in indirect dowry systems; and, related to this, a feature which Goody does not stress, but I would - from whatever source of wealth the marriage payments originate, a large proportion of their value is transformed into household goods and clothing and jewelry for the bride. Goody notes, of course, that the composition of the goods, as well as their value, vary considerably. With the exception of the European dower, landed property tends to be a feature of dowry payments rather than indirect dowry payments; and even among dowry systems the endowment of landed property is not such a common occurrence.

Goody recognises the different implications that dowry and indirect dowry have concerning age at marriage, maintenance or break-up of the family property and marriage policies. But he considers that their common features relating to the establishment of a conjugal fund and the endowment of the bride greatly outweigh these differences. He contrasts these various forms of dowry with bridewealth payments, which he sees essentially as passing between different groups of male kin and as having little to do with the status of the bride. Goody clearly recognises that bridewealth as so defined is practised by some societies in the Middle East. For example he quotes Peters' study of the Cyrenaican Beduin as a case where bridewealth and exclusion of women from inheritance are associated with the corporate nature of their social organisation. On this point Tillion has argued that where Islam extends to tribal societies in North Africa, koranic stipulations concerning the right of women to inherit property and to receive marriage goods are very frequently broken.¹ This is so, she argues, because to do otherwise would involve the alienation of property to members of

1. G. Tillion: *Le Harem et les Cousins*. Paris, 1966.

other groups, and would thus destroy tribal solidarity. Conversely she notes that where these legal prescriptions are observed tribal society is dissolved, and more complex, heterogeneous relations are established. Zahir al-Sadaty has also supported this thesis by showing an inverse correlation between a high degree of lineage corporation and Islamic legal conformity.¹

However, among the greater part of the sedentary population in the Middle East, both rural and urban, marriage payments bear the characteristics of what Goody calls indirect dowry, since they originate from the bridegroom or his family, and devolve largely on the bride. A varying proportion of the marriage payment may be retained by the bride's father. But in very few cases is this amount sufficient to enable the father to procure a marriage for one of his sons, as would generally be the case in bridewealth systems proper. Goody ends his essay on the differences between bridewealth and dowry with the caveat that they need not be mutually exclusive; elements of each may be present in combination, or indeed the marriage payments may not be marked at all. What I attempt to show in this thesis is not that there has been a total change from one system to the other, but that the recent trend has been for the adoption of more features of the dowry system. However some customs that I describe, such as the attempt in several Gezira and east bank villages to fix a limit to marriage payments and to standardise wedding festivities, clearly reflect a concern about the disruption of relatively homogeneous life-styles.

What may be questioned I think in Goody's approach is his close association between dowry payments and inheritance practices as constituting alternative or complementary methods of transmission of property. Probably it is this factor which has

1. F. Zahir al-Sadaty: *Aspects of the Interaction of Islamic and Customary Family Law in Selected African and Other Societies*. M.Phil, London University, 1976.

made many writers reluctant to recognise that many Muslim marriage payments have more in common with dowry systems than bridewealth systems. For the goods which Muslim women receive at marriage do not prejudice their rights to inheritance. Certainly among the population that I studied no woman forgoes her share of inheritance on account of goods she has received at marriage, whether from her husband or her own family. Nor, would I suggest, is there necessarily a close connexion between the value of the goods which the bridegroom brings to the marriage and the prospective inheritance of the bride. I agree with Goody that in dowry systems there is a tendency to match like with like, but the marriage alliances which dowry payments help to create may serve to maintain and enhance an individual's social position by means other than matching and combining family estates. Moreover, only in some cases does the payment of the dowry by the bridegroom constitute an early call on his own inheritance prospects. For indirect dowry not only leaves the bride's family estate intact, but it may also leave the bridegroom's family estate intact, requiring him to save up for the marriage payment through other means, entailing, for example, migration and achieved earnings.

I would relate dowry payments less directly with methods of transmitting property, and would associate them more with the means of expressing relative social position. For at least in part dowry payments provide a vehicle through which different modes of life, embracing patterns of consumption, sexual mores, manners and etiquette, are expressed. The goods inscribed in such payments may also communicate forms of knowledge, such as about the relations between the sexes, which are not just specific to certain social classes, but which are widely shared within the culture in question. I would agree with Goody nonetheless that where dowry payments are pronounced, this indicates a hierarchical ordering of social relations, but I hold that they have less connexion with property relations in the strict sense than with the expression of different life-styles.

This suggests, therefore, that the intensification of marriage payments, especially those associated with the establishment of a conjugal fund and the endowment of the bride, may be related to economic differentiation relatively independently of the system of inheritance of property.

This last point has an immediate bearing on my research findings. In the course of this thesis I argue that recent trends in marriage practices among the population studied have involved the increase in marriage payments, particularly those goods given to the bride, delayed age at marriage, elaboration of wedding ceremonies, and an increase in marriage stability with the decline in frequency of divorce, remarriage and polygamy. These tendencies are what Goody associates with the establishment of a more binding conjugal unit. The ties which unite the conjugal couple, he argues, are both material and ideological. For property is endowed on the couple which in time they devolve to their own children; also the family is imbued with particular value emphasising its honour and the proper sexual conduct of its members. However, what characterises the conjugal fund among the population of the east bank of the Blue Nile is property of a primarily domestic nature, and this derives mainly from earned incomes rather than heritable property. There is little overlap between inherited property and dowry goods. Inherited property is mainly wealth which can be used potentially for productive ends. Except for the house and its furnishings, many of the personal effects of the deceased are distributed among poor and needy families; this takes place at the alms-offering ceremony (sadaga) held towards the end of the mourning period. Jewelry belonging to women is generally sold, and the proceeds distributed among the heritors. But although absent in inherited property, personal effects are one of the main components of marriage payments; on the other hand productive property is rarely involved in marriage transactions.

The population on the east bank of the Blue Nile have been Muslims for several centuries, at least since the late seventeenth century, and perhaps earlier. Though our knowledge of domestic institutions throughout this period is somewhat scant, it appears that there have not been major changes in the system of inheritance. Women inherit rainlands and livestock, though generally in much smaller proportions than their stipulatory share. At most it can be said that with the emergence of new forms of property, women tend to assert their inheritance claims more forcefully. A weak form of diverging devolution has thus long been practised, and so cannot be held attributable for the trends noted above. However I do not consider that this invalidates the basic tenets of Goody's approach. Among the population that I studied I have emphasised the role of achieved earnings, derived from regular employment and petty-trading, in effecting socio-economic differentiation. Under these specific conditions intensification of marriage payments and related marriage trends have come about relatively independently of the system of transmission of property.

CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORICAL-GEOGRAPHY OF THE BLUE NILE RAINLANDS

The area with which I am concerned in this thesis lies on the east bank of the Blue Nile, extending northwards and eastwards from the confluence of this river with the Rahad River, a seasonal tributary (14°30'N. 33°30'E.). The area forms part of a semi-arid zone, and so the use to which these lands may be put depends to a large extent on their proximity to the Blue Nile, not only because of water availability but also because of the contribution of accumulations of silt to the quality of the soil. Thus we can categorise the lands of the east bank according to three ecological types: the riverain lands, which comprise the lands immediately bordering on the river as well as those exposed by the river at low flood; the clay rainlands, comprising the plains stretching back from the river, whose soils are composed chiefly of sediments deposited over many millenia by the shifting course of the river and by high floods; and the hinterland grasslands.

The topography of the riverain lands varies considerably according to the course of the river. Stretches of silt terraces are interspersed by strips of wind-deposited sand, banks of coarse sediments and some areas of exposed rock. Thus not all the land bordering on the river is suitable for cultivation; moreover, the high terraces require some method of raising water from the river, and while this does not pose too great a problem during the flood period, it entails raising water some twenty metres at low water such is the variation in levels of the fast-flowing Blue Nile. During its low water, from December to June, the river exposes sand-banks and areas of heavier textured alluvium; according to the steepness of the slopes a vary-

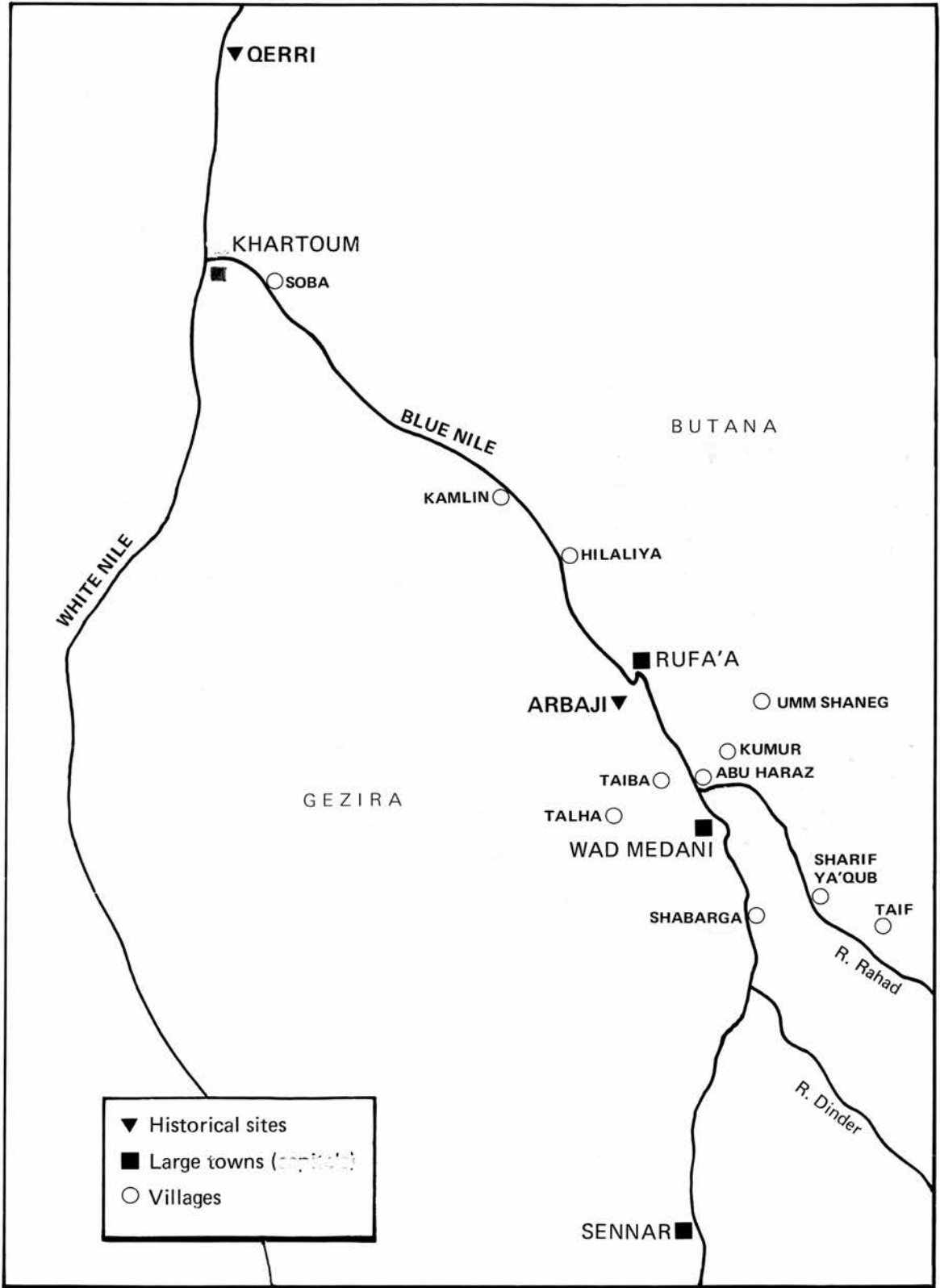
ing amount of land on these lower terraces (jerf) is available for cultivation. Scattered between riverain settlements and areas of cultivation on the high terrace lie areas of natural vegetation.

For the most part this vegetation consists of clumps of bushes and a few scattered trees, but in a few protected areas dense woodland can be found. Various species of acacia are common, namely: *a. tortilis* (samr), *a. nubica* (la'ot), *a. mellifera* (kitr), *a. seyal* (talh), *a. nilotica* (sunt), and *a. albida* (haraz); also the following fruit-bearing species can be found - *ziziphus spinachristi* (sidr), *balanites aegyptica* (higlig) and *calatropis procera* (ushar), the Sodom Apple. Several villages take their names from the vegetation dominant in their locality, such as Talha, Umm Sunt and Abu Haraz; the latter village, where I stayed for the greater part of my fieldwork, takes its name from the most imposing species of acacia. It attains a height of 60 feet, has a broad canopy, and is distinguished by its orange seed-pods much relished by goats and by the fact that it sheds its foliage in the rainy season.

Stretching back from the riverain lands are the alkaline clay plains. They are extensively used for rainland cultivation and pasture for village herds during the rainy season. Rainfall is variable, usually occurring between late July and mid-September, falling in a few heavy outbursts and some light showers. The mean annual rainfall is about 300 mm. During the rains those parts which are not cultivated afford a light cover of vegetation, comprising both annual and perennial grasses. However for the greater part of the year this semi-arid region provides a flat, bare vista, completely denuded of any significant growth, interspersed by much smaller areas of scrub and scattered trees.

These clay plains extend up to twenty miles east of the Blue Nile. They are similar in soil structure and relief to the

MAP OF GEZIRA AND EAST BANK OF BLUE NILE.



Gezira plain, the region between the Blue and White Niles, where the same patterns of land usage of rainland cultivation and pastoralism were practised before the implementation of the famous Gezira Irrigation Scheme. Inhabitants on the east bank of the Blue Nile draw drinking water from the river, or, if their settlements are further inland, from man-made wells, sunk to a depth of between 100 and 200 feet into the underlying Nubian sandstone. During the last fifteen years the Government has provided many settlements with borewells and installed pumps powered by diesel fuel.

To the east of the clay plains lies the vast grassland area, known as the Butana. Here the clay thins, and there appear small uplands and outcrops, formed of basement complex rocks. Seasonal watercourses and low-lying areas afford some cultivation, but the terrain is most suited to animal husbandry. This area of low savanna is bounded on three sides by river-systems (the Main Nile, the River Atbara and the Blue Nile); to the south-east it is effectively bordered by the Sennar-Gedaref-Khashm el Qirba railway (built in 1926), which more or less follows the 600 mm. isohyet. To the south and south-east of the railway the vegetation becomes more dense, and towards the higher reaches of the Rahad and Dinder tributaries there abounds a wealth of woodland and wildlife.

These last two zones, the Butana grasslands and the southern woodlands, are of importance, at least historically, to many inhabitants of the east bank, in providing them with wet season pastures for their herds and various dry season activities (hunting game, gum-collecting and more recently charcoal-burning). However it is with the riverain and rainland areas that I am more specifically concerned, for this is where in recent decades many semi-nomadic groups have settled and existing settlements have steadily expanded. Throughout the thesis I use the terms 'east bank' and 'Blue Nile rainlands' interchangeably, and I use them to include the riverain as well as

the rainland areas east of the Blue Nile. This is partly for brevity and convenience; but also I would justify this usage since the productive activities associated with the two zones have also been interrelated. At least until the introduction of pumps for irrigating riverain gardens, riverain cultivation has always been combined with rainland cultivation, herd maintenance or both of these activities.

These activities will be examined in greater detail at a later stage. Here I merely wish to point out that ecological factors and the low level of development of productive techniques have favoured extensive rather than intensive methods of appropriation from nature. The rainlands on the east bank extend, of course, both north and south of the area with which I am primarily concerned, adjacent to the confluence of the Rahad River with the Blue Nile. Randell (1958) has shown that rainland cultivation can be continued where mean annual rainfall is even less than 200 mm. This is made feasible through the construction of low ridges which prevent run-off of water (terus). South of Sharif Ya'qub and latitude 14°15', as rainfall increases, the construction of these terus becomes much less prevalent. Thus the rainland area which I studied lies, more specifically, in the southern part of the area where terus cultivation is practised.

Little is known of the indigenous population which inhabited the Blue Nile rainlands or the western Butana before the infiltration of the Arabs into the central Sudan between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries. On the basis of historical and archaeological evidence it seems probable that the majority of the riverain inhabitants were Nubians, and that they formed part of the Nubian kingdom of 'Alwa whose capital was at Soba. Several sites near Rufa'a and another at El Eleila two miles to the north of Abu Haraz have been claimed¹ as evidence

1. H.G.Balfour-Paul: Early Cultures on the Northern Blue Nile. Sudan Notes and Records, Vol.33, 1952.

of Christian Nubian culture. The historian Ibn Khaldun, writing in the late fourteenth century, gives a general but contemporary account of the relations between the Kings of 'Alwa and of Muqurra to the north with the Arab tribesmen:

The kings of Nubia, at first, tried to drive them /the Arabs/ out by force. They failed, so they changed their tactics and tried to win them over by offering their daughters in marriage. Thus it was that their kingdom disintegrated, for it passed to the sons of the Juhayna from their Nubian mothers in accordance with the non-Arab practice of inheritance by the sister and her sons.

This passage, quoted by Yusuf Fadl Hasan (1973, p.127), and the latter's own researches suggest that much intermarriage and assimilation took place between the matrilineal Nubians and those Arabs who settled in the riverain areas. Following a long period of both peaceful penetration and occasional raids by various Arab groups, the Kingdom of 'Alwa was finally overrun by the 'Abdallab Arabs in the late fifteenth century. Spaulding states that the people in the Kingdom known as the the 'Anaj came to be generally referred to as the 'Abdallab following this change of rulers.¹ However, Holt records a Sudanese tradition which asserts that the Nubian inhabitants of 'Alwa abandoned the region following the 'Abdallab conquest, and fled to the Nuba mountains in southern Kordofan.² Which-ever was the case it seems likely that a mutual adaptation of customs and institutions took place between the 'Abdallab and other Arabs on the one hand and any remaining Nubian inhabitants on the other. In support of the Sudanese tradition it may be said that there is no legacy of a Nubian dialect along the Blue Nile as there is to the north along the loop of the Main Nile.

1. R.S.O'Fahey & J.L.Spaulding: Kingdoms of the Sudan. London, 1974.

2. P.M.Holt: A Modern History of the Sudan. London, 1977, p.18.

Arab traders and travellers noted other indigenous groups living to the south of the Nubians, but historians have failed to identify these with any certainty. The eighteenth century traveller Cailliaud refers to one group as the 'Reds'; they appeared to have a reddish complexion because of their custom of smearing the hair and body with ochre. Spaulding claims that their homeland was to the south of Sennar in the highland area bordering on Ethiopia. They or another indigenous group also had settlements at the foot of various outcrops in the Butana; apart from such settlements the central and western Butana appear to have been but sparsely inhabited before their occupation by nomadic Arab groups, who will be referred to shortly. There is historical record of one branch of the 'Reds', the Hamaj; they were to reassert themselves during the latter period of the Funj rule, for in their capacity as wazir to the Funj Sultan they effectively controlled power at the Sennar court.

Little is known either of the origins or background of the Funj who established their sultanate at Sennar in 1504-5 and who ruled there until the early part of the nineteenth century. Spaulding argues that the Funj "were a southern Nubian people whose homeland lay along the White Nile below the great swamps." (p.24) They extended their authority over the southern reaches of the Blue Nile, and, to the north, at least as far as the central Gezira. They amassed wealth through the imposition of taxes on local communities, but primarily through their control of long distance trade in gold, slaves and various natural products (skins, feathers, horns, etc.). The allegiance of local tribal chiefs was maintained through their obligation to marry from within the royal clan, and through the ideologies and ritual surrounding this clan and the Sultan's office. Ultimately the power of the Funj rulers rested on their heavily armed horse-back soldiers whose numbers were continuously replenished from annual slave-raids in which favoured

tribal chiefs were encouraged to participate.¹

From the early sixteenth till the late eighteenth centuries the east bank of the Blue Nile was something of a border zone between the lands claimed by the 'Abdallab chiefs, based at Qerri to the north of the Nile confluence, and the lands claimed by the Funj rulers based at Sennar to the south. 'Abdallab advances to the south were checked at the beginning of the sixteenth century when their forces were defeated by the newly emergent Funj at Arbaji in the central Gezira. But towards the end of the sixteenth century Sheikh 'Ajib of the 'Abdallab obtained from the Funj Sultan the right to appoint judges at Arbaji and at Abu Haraz on the east bank. However, at a subsequent treaty the same 'Abdallab Sheikh was forced to concede the Gezira to the Sultan, though the 'Abdallab ruler maintained his authority over the Arab nomads who occupied the Butana. Spaulding admits that the allegiance of cultivators on the east bank was not clear; he suggests that the treaty signed between the 'Abdallab and the Funj "implies that some rainland cultivators of the Butāna were politically subject to the Funj Sultan, but that their tax revenues should go to the 'Abdallāb." (p.39) Evidence of Funj influence on the east bank still exist today, in the form of oral traditions, extant land charters and place-names. For example, the forest near Abu Haraz and the one on the opposite bank, named respectively Babalenge and Bankyo, are remembered today as having been the royal domain of the Funj rulers. In fact it seems that the distance between the inhabitants of the east bank and either the 'Abdallab or the Funj meant that the former enjoyed considerable autonomy in

1. See Spaulding's work on the Funj Kingdom (1974).

The social formation of the Funj bears resemblance to the various West African savanna states, which Coquery-Vidrovitch and other French Marxists have described as representing an African mode of production, in which the ruling group intervened only indirectly in the conditions of production and appropriated surplus from long distance trade and predatory raiding (See Seddon, 1978). Goody's emphasis on the extensive nature of cultivation and the control of the means of destruction (horses, chain-mail, lances, etc.) seems to complement this approach (1971). See also my own forthcoming article on the Funj.

their dealings with either overlord. This is of relevance to my discussion of the two social groups I wish to examine next - the Arab nomads and the Muslim holymen. For many of the settlements on the east bank are associated with members of these groups.

In his book The Arabs and the Sudan Yusuf Fadl Hasan has given a very carefully documented account of the Arab penetration of the Sudan in the centuries up until the early sixteenth. I wish to give here merely a simplified account of the main tribal groups who occupied the western Butana and the Blue Nile rainlands during the Funj sultanate. To a large extent these are the same groups that the Turkish and British rulers found to be strongest in the area and so in whom they vested powers of local government; since the early nineteenth century, however, numerous members of other tribal groups have settled on the east bank. For the sake of brevity I cannot match Yusuf Fadl Hasan's scrupulous treatment of different indigenous historical traditions and of the manipulation of genealogies. When referring to the nomads as 'Arabs', I take it as understood that in the course of their migrations, whether through Egypt and up the Nile or across the desert region between the Red Sea and the Nile, the composition and identity of these groups underwent many changes as a result of intermarriage and contact both with other 'Arab' groups and with various indigenous inhabitants. As to the degree of disparity between the Sudanese Arabs and the tribes in Arabia with which their forebears may be identified, I refer the reader to Yusuf Fadl Hasan's book.

The main tribe associated with the central plains of the Butana, even till the present day, are the Shukriya, who are usually classified as part of the Juhayna group.¹ However the

1. For the usual classification of the Arab groups that I am referring to, see MacMichael, H.A.: A History of the Arabs in the Sudan, 1967 (2 vols.)

chiefly clan of Abu Sin claim to be Talibis, that is descendants of the Prophet's grandfather. One of their traditions records how their ancestor, Sha' al-Din - living in the late sixteenth century - recaptured some rebellious, heavily-armed slaves who had deserted the Funj ruler; he was rewarded by being given a daughter of the Funj ruler and several of her personal slaves, and from all of these he begat many followers. Under the leadership of the Abu Sin family the Shukriya began to exert influence over other groups in the Butana. In 1779 at a decisive battle at Mandara in the central Butana the Shukriya seized control of several villages and wells previously controlled by the Rikabiyin and the Hamaj. Subsequent Shukriya expansion witnessed their encroachment on Rufa'a lands adjoining the Blue Nile, and raiding and feuds directed against the Batahin and Kawahla nomads. At times they met setbacks, such as when their leaders were deceived into assembling at Abu Haraz under the protection of the Arakiyin holymen and were then massacred by the Hamaj, but no other group seriously threatened their hegemony over the central Butana. The Abu Sin family contracted strategic marriages with religious families, such as the Arakiyin,¹ and with other important tribal chiefs, such as the Ja'ali ruler, Makk Nimr of Shendi. The Funj rulers came to recognise in effect the independent power of the Shukriya; in 1800 Sultan Badi wad Dakin empowered Sheikh 'Awad al Karim Abu Sin to collect for himself land dues from the occupants of an area covering millions of acres. (Abu Salim, 1967). In return the Shukriya supported the Funj rulers against other factions, and frequently assisted them in their slave-raids against dissident tribal groups and against the negroid peoples to the south. Similarly their subsequent support for both the Turkish and the Condominion rulers was rewarded with political office and economic privileges.

1. The most important marriage alliance between the Abu Sin family and the Arakiyin was that between Ahmed Bek Abu Sin and Taiya bint Yusuf Abu Shara in the early nineteenth century.

The Rufa'a Arabs, also classified among the Juhayna group, may be divided into the northern and southern groups. During the Funj period many sections of the northern group became settled, providing the nuclei of such villages as Hilaliya, Rufa'a, Abu Haraz and Shabarga, all on the east bank. The southern, predominantly nomadic groups may be subdivided into the Rufa'a al-Hoi in the southern Gezira, whose background and movements are described by Abd-al Ghaffar (1974), and the Rufa'a al-Sharq, whose migrations take them from the Butana in the wet season to the Rahad and Dinder Rivers in the dry season. Of particular relevance to my study is one section of the Rufa'a, the Arakiyin, who intermarried with some men claiming Sharifi descent (i.e. from the Prophet) and who settled in Abu Haraz, as well as in other villages on the east bank and some in the Gezira. Their history will be recorded shortly.

The Kawahla are believed to have migrated later than the Juhayna Arabs into central Sudan, and this is why most of their sections moved further west into the Gezira and towards the White Nile. However, one section remained in the Butana. Their rivalry with the Shukriya led to many hostilities between them. One of their sections, the Margomab, broke away and eventually attached themselves to the Shukriya. The Scottish traveller Bruce records many of the settlements along the Rahad and Dinder rivers as being occupied by the Kawahla during his journey in the Sudan (1768-73); these settlements were decimated by famines, disease and warfare in the nineteenth century, and the area was reoccupied mainly by other groups, including West African settlers.

The Batahin, belonging to the Ja'ali group, also occupied the central Butana plains, and, unlike the majority of the Ja'ali group, continued to lead a nomadic life despite their frequent harrassing by the Shukriya.

By the early nineteenth century the tribal distribution on the

east bank and in the western Butana may be summarised as follows. The grasslands were occupied by various nomadic tribes, notably the Shukriya, Kawahla and Batahin. Along the Blue Nile and scattered through the rainland plains were numerous settlements, varying in size and permanence; some were the dry season camps of the nomads, others the permanent villages of riverain and rainland cultivators. Of the latter various sections of the Rufa'a Arabs and assimilated indigenous groups probably comprised the greater part of the population. However, through time other groups joined and extended these settlements - Arab immigrants from other regions, traders and religious families, as well as nomads who had lost their herds and slaves. While compared with the nomadic groups the settled population was more open to pressure from centres of power, such as the Funj, they often maintained a considerable degree of autonomy through their association with local religious families. The Arakiyin of Abu Haraz provide just such a case.

The history of the Islamisation of the Sudan, and the important part played in that process by the Sufi orders has been considered by many writers, including Trimmingham (1949), Yusuf Fadl Hasan (1971), and several Islamic scholars.¹ Until the early sixteenth century the main agents of propagation of the Islamic faith were traders and nomads, neither of whom were well grounded in Islamic doctrine. However, from that period the Funj rulers and their 'Abdallab viceroys welcomed individual scholars at their courts and encouraged the spread of Islamic learning in their territories. Islamic teachers came from many parts of the Muslim world, including Iraq, Yemen, Egypt, the Hijaz and the Maghreb. Many of them stayed in the Sudan long enough to build mosques and khalwas where they taught the Koran. Local Sudanese trained in these centres, and some of

1. J.S.Trimingham: Islam in the Sudan. London, 1949;

Yusuf Fadl Hasan: 'External Islamic influences and the progress of Islamisation in the Eastern Sudan between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries', in Sudan in Africa, ed. Y.F.Hasan. Khartoum, 1971.

them continued their studies in Egypt. Thus the work of the early missionaries was carried on by local holymen, and the flow of Islamic knowledge into the Sudan was maintained through the travels of Sudanese to perform the pilgrimage and through other external contacts. The Funj rulers endowed lands and slaves on several of these Muslim holymen, and utilized their services as judges and jurisprudents, and also as mediators of disputes; for example, the famous feki or holyman, Idris wad al-Arbab, mediated the peace treaty between the Funj and 'Abdallab.

Writers have noted two tendencies in the dissemination of religious knowledge carried out by the fekis. Some of the religious centres, notably those along the Main Nile, were devoted to the teaching of orthodox Islamic subjects; for example many jurists and theological commentators graduated from the colleges at Turunj and Qoz. On the other hand many of the fekis in the Gezira and on the east bank adopted one of the Sufi orders (tariqa). The Gadiiriya tariqa, introduced by the Baghdad teacher, Taj al-Din al Bahari in the 1570's, was the dominant order until the eighteenth century, from which period other orders, such as the Majdhubiya, Sammaniya and Khatmiya, were introduced. Although in some cases Sufism was taught as an extension of the basic Islamic subjects, it often came to serve as a substitute for the literate, orthodox tradition, with the ceremonies of the tariqa relegating the functions of the khalwa to a subsidiary role. This tendency was reinforced by the growth of folklore surrounding individual holymen concerning their miraculous exploits, which were attributed to their possession of mystical powers. Some fekis led ascetic lives, often wandering extensively and apparently forsaking social ties. Others, however, adapting to local conditions, identified themselves with particular localities, and their descendents inherited not only their claim to religious authority and mystical power, but also the ties of their followers - to whom they dispensed various services, and from whom they derived their means of support.

Thus the Sufi orders were prone to particularisation and segmentation. For example in the Gezira and on the east bank the Gadiiriya tariqa was adopted and diffused by three mutually competitive religious families, the Arakiyin, Sadigab and Yaqubab. Of these the influence of the Arakiyin has been the most enduring.

Yusuf Badri¹ gives two main reasons for the far-reaching influence of the Arakiyin, compared with rival religious families on the east bank: first, that they demonstrated considerable ingenuity in combining Sufism and orthodox Islamic studies in their teachings; and second, that they have always possessed important economic resources, such as extensive rainlands in the early period, and irrigated lands in the Gezira and income from trading activities and government employment in the modern period. The first reason meant that through their maintenance of the tradition of literacy they attracted followers from other religious families and other social groups, and remained of use to traders and rulers alike; at the same time, by perpetuating local folk customs and forms of reverence which abstracted ordinary people's conceptions of social realities, they retained popular support. The second reason is related to their dexterity in accommodating their interests to wider political forces and to economic change.

The following summarised history of the Arakiyin relies substantially on traditional sources, notably a collection of biographies of local holymen and a chronicle of the Funj period, extracts of both of which are reproduced by MacMichael (1967); these are supplemented by oral accounts and some modern sources (Badri 1970 and Hill 1970).

1. Yusuf Badri: A survey of Islamic learning in the Funj state 910-1236 AH (1505-1820 AD). B.Litt, Oxford, 1970.

The traditional sources recount that the ancestor of the Arakiyin, or at least the ancestor who made them claim noble descent, was a certain Sharif Ahmed Muqbil. All that is related of him is that he was a wandering ascetic and that during a stay in Kordofan he married a local Arakiyin girl, Amna bit Hasan Ma'arik. A son was born of this marriage, and was named Dafa'Allah by his mother's clan. When he grew up he moved east and married from among the Jimi'ab at Hilaliya.* The five sons of Dafa'Allah - Abdallah, Abu Idris, Mamad al-Nil, Abu 'Asha and 'Omer - are the ancestors from whom most of the Arakiyin in the Gezira and in the Blue Nile region claim descent. The eldest brother, Abdallah al Araki was the most learned. He studied at Turunj college and subsequently wrote several treatises on jurisprudence and theology in the last decades of the sixteenth century. He was initially opposed to joining a tariqa, but changed his mind on seeing the popularity of Sufism among the ordinary people. So he travelled to Mecca and was initiated into the Gadiiriya order by the successor of Taj al-Din al Bahari. He stayed several years in the Hijaz teaching until he was summoned back by his brother Abu Idris. During Abdallah al Araki's absence his family had travelled extensively, but on his return they settled at Abu Haraz where Abdallah al Araki was appointed a qadi by Sheikh 'Ajib. He was succeeded by his brother Abu Idris who by contrast was an ascetic who lived quietly far away from the public eye. He was in turn followed by his second son, Dafa'Allah Masuban, another great scholar. He studied at Qoz in the northern Sudan and mastered both the orthodox disciplines and Sufism. After completing his studies he settled and taught first at Umm Shaneg, where he married a granddaughter of Abdallah al Araki, but he was persuaded by his former teachers to move to Abu Haraz. There, with the help of a trader at the Sennar court, and with the use of six of the Sennar ruler's ships to transport stones, he built a mosque. Furthermore the Funj sultan endowed him with rainlands in the Gezira and with twelve slaves, six of either sex. Many followers came and studied under him, and it is said that he converted to Islam many of the

* Tribe from Gezira - White Nile.

neighbouring Hamaj people. As well as paying homage to his great learning, oral traditions describe his performance of miraculous deeds, such as the taming of a crocodile. He died in 1683, and since that time Abu Haraz has remained the centre of the Arakiyin.

It seems that following Dafa'Allah Masuban's death his successors paid less attention to the teaching of the Koran, and devoted themselves to Sufi liturgies and ceremonies. But following the visit of one indignant feki koranic studies were taken up again at least for a time. It is perhaps an indication of the conflicting interpretations of the role of a feki that about this time - during the early eighteenth century - another important Arakiyin centre was established at Taiba, just across the Blue Nile in the Gezira. The next important Arakiyin teacher was Yusuf Abu Shara, a descendent of Hamad al-Nil, another of the five brothers. It is said that he taught koranic studies for 65 years. He died in 1802, and his tomb (qubba) remains today one of the most popular for the many followers and visitors that come to Abu Haraz seeking the blessings of the Arakiyin holymen, both living and dead.

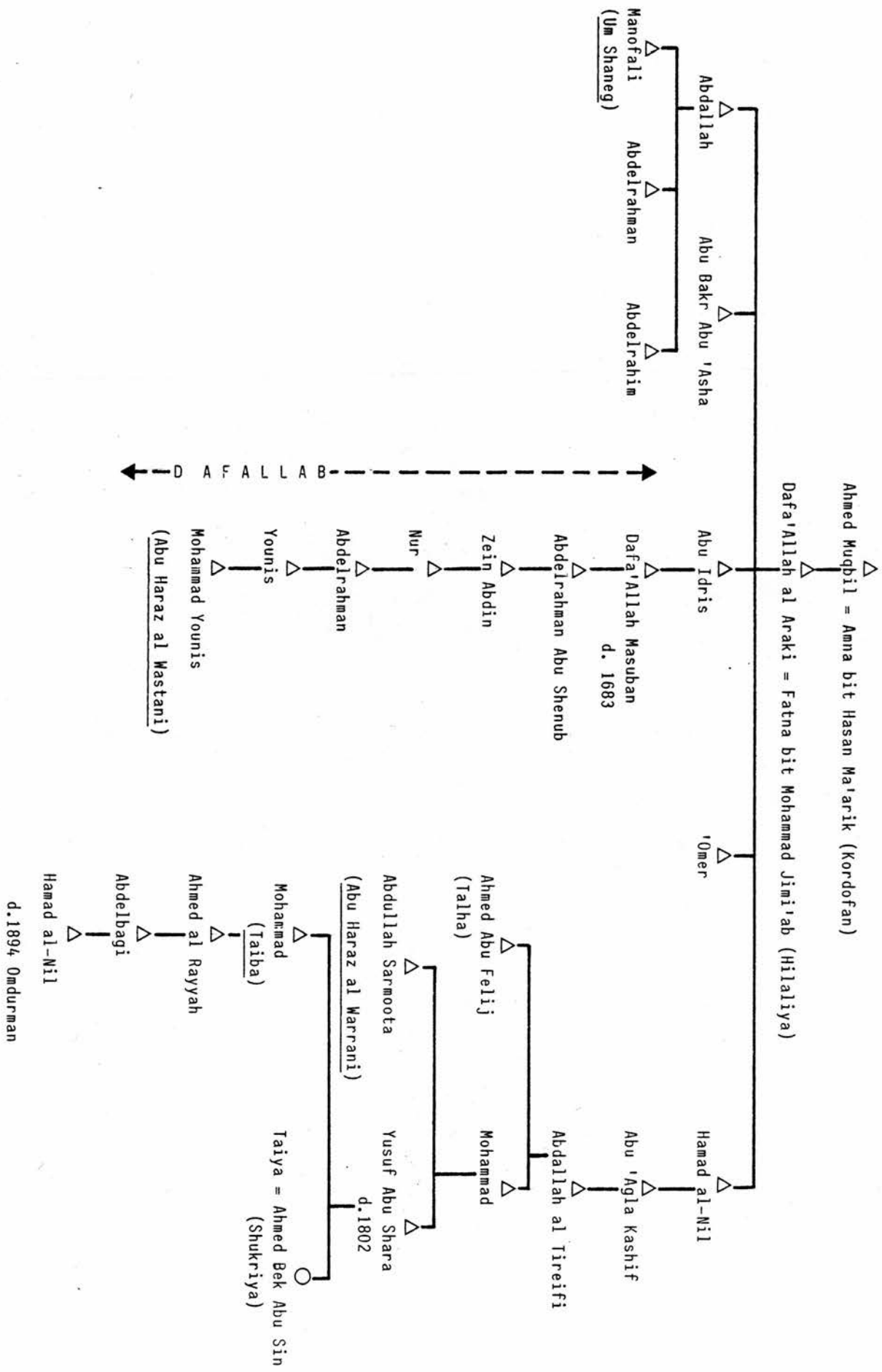
From the 1780's the Arakiyin became unwillingly embroiled first in the hostilities between the Shukriya and the Hamaj, and later in the dynastic struggle for the Funj sultanate. Although the daughter of Yusuf Abu Shara was married to Ahmed Bek Abu Sin, the paramount chief of the Shukriya, the latter were unable to provide the holymen with adequate protection; nor could the Arakiyin leaders prevent Abu Haraz being used as a base by the Hamaj for reprisals following their defeat by the Shukriya at the battle of Mandara. In the early 1800's a faction involved in the Funj dynastic struggle looted the Arakiyin, and killed both the son and a nephew of Sheikh Yusuf. A traditional chronicle relates that the other Arakiyin leaders hid in their grain-pits and were put to great shame. Similarly, following the Turkish invasion in the 1820's the Arakiyin were subjected to raids and forced levies of grain and livestock. The khalwa of Ahmed al-Rayyah, the grandson of Yusuf Abu Shara, was burnt down in 1822. In 1830 the khalifa of the Arakiyin, Sheikh Mustafa - a

descendant of Dafa'Allah Masuban - was impaled to death by the Turks, while other fekis were blown to death from canons. As a result of this severe oppression Ahmed al-Rayyah led the Arakiyin, estimated at 12,000 strong, into the southern Butana where they reverted to a pastoral life. They were persuaded to return only on the promise from the Turkish authorities that the heads of the religious families be exempted from taxes on their rainland crops. A Turkish camp was established at Abu Haraz, as an outpost from their main garrison at Wad Medani, and the Arakiyin became slowly reconciled to the new regime. When the Turko-Egyptian ruler, Mohammad 'Ali Pasha, passed through Wad Medani in 1838, Ahmed al-Rayyah appeared before him and obtained an order exempting him and his followers from all manner of taxes.

When the Mahdist uprising began the Arakiyin were reluctant to join forces with the Mahdists, especially when they saw that a leading supporter of the movement in the Gezira was Sharif Ahmed Taha, a sheikh of the rival Sammaniya tariqa. In practice they gave tacit support to the Shukriya who remained loyal to the Turks and who defeated and killed Sharif Ahmed Taha. But as the Mahdist uprising grew in strength, Sheikh Hamad al-Nil of the Arakiyin, a descendant of Yusuf Abu Shara, went to the Mahdi and asked for pardon. He was not allowed to return to Abu Haraz, and in fact his khalwa there was destroyed by the Mahdists. Some of the Arakiyin did join the Mahdist cause, but Hamad al-Nil was kept under detention in Omdurman after it had fallen to the Mahdists, and he eventually died there. Some of his sons remained in Omdurman, but others returned to Taiba and Abu Haraz where to this day the Arakiyin enjoy great prestige.

It lies beyond the scope of my thesis to show how religious families like the Arakiyin came to adopt a position complementing that of tribal chiefs in providing a focus for local sentiment and social values. Likewise I cannot trace here the relationship of these holymen with Muslim merchants and the wider state formation. And for a discussion of these traditional elites as power groups, and their transformation during the

GENEALOGY OF ARAKIYIN



← D A F A L L A B →

← A G L I Y I N →

emergence of present-day classes, I must refer the reader to Abd-al Ghaffar's article.¹

Here I am primarily concerned with the significance of the holy-men in the local economy during the Funj period, and in the level of productive activity of the settlements with which they were associated. Not only Abu Haraz, but most of the settlements on the east bank, of which there are references in the Funj period, owe their origins and continuity to the presence of various religious families, whether offshoots of the Arakiyin, such as in Kiran and Umm Shaneg, or rival families, such as in Wad el 'Obeid and Sharif Ya'qub. Rainland cultivation of dura (millet), supplemented by riverain cultivation of some vegetables and cotton provided the main sources of subsistence. Grants of land from the Funj rulers, such as the Arakiyin obtained, were significant not as property rights, since rainland had no scarcity, but in terms of the exemptions from taxes and various dues that the beneficiaries received. Without access to labour resources entitlement to land had little or no value. The religious families were able to mobilise extensive labour resources from their pupils and followers, as well as their own family members and slaves if they had them. Other households in these settlements worked their own plots of land, calling on collective work parties (nafir) at peak periods in the cultivation cycle (weeding and harvesting). Following the harvest all grain other than that required for immediate consumption was stored in deep pits, lined and covered with straw and topped with earth (matmura). The storage of grain allowed the balancing of poor harvests with the abundance of good harvests. But also the surplus produce accruing to the religious families through their mobilisation of a large labour force assured both the continuity of the community as a whole and the enhancement of the reputation of the religious families by their gener-

1. Abd-al Ghaffar Muhammad Ahmad: "Tribal" Elite: A Base for Social Stratification in Modern Sudan, in Sudan Journal of Economic and Social Studies, Vol 2 No 1, Summer 1977, Khartoum.

osity to their supporters and their hospitality to visitors.

Collective work parties were also summoned by religious leaders in order to excavate wells, and sometimes hafirs (rain pools), to provide a sufficient supply of drinking water for the local inhabitants and their herds. While no doubt some sections of the village community continued a largely nomadic existence, travelling with their herds into the Butana in the wet season (nishug), others kept smaller numbers of livestock which foraged locally in woodland areas bordering on the river and in enclosures lying behind the jerfs (zariba), and of course from the harvest stubble. Close contacts were maintained with the nomads of the hinterland. Oral traditions assert that the area between the two villages of Abu Haraz has always been used as a watering-point for livestock (mushra') and as a ferrying-point ^{for} transporting both people and animals across to the Gezira. The neutral status of the Arakiyin holymen allowed the sharing of such facilities by diverse tribal groups, including mutually hostile groups, just as their position as arbiters and mediators encouraged hostile groups to attempt to reconcile their disputes and feuds in the presence of the fekis.

There must have taken place some exchange of goods from the hinterland, such as animals and animal products, with goods from the riverain and rainland areas, notably grain. However, communities such as Abu Haraz during the Funj period must have been largely self-sufficient, with the inhabitants growing enough food to meet their needs, and with domestic crafts providing them with their clothing, tools, housing materials and rudimentary furnishings and equipment. European travellers such as Bruce and Hartmann certainly portray such a picture. This does not conflict with the fact that Abu Haraz was situated at the intersection of two long-distance trade routes - one an overland route from Shendi in the north to Sennar in the south passing through the Butana, the other an east-west route which crossed the Blue Nile at this point. The goods which

were carried by caravans on these overland trade routes did not derive from nor impinge on the subsistence activities of local communities. The most highly valued goods were gold and slaves. They also included natural products, such as rhinoceros horns, ivory, ostrich feathers, skins, gum arabic, fragrant woods and senna leaves. The goods which merchants brought in exchange consisted chiefly of weapons, fine cloths, salt and spices, of which only the last two were destined for a wider circulation than the ruling groups. Some members of the Arakiyin may have engaged in trading activities, though the fact that they could revert to pastoralism so easily during the Turkish period suggests that these activities impinged only marginally on their largely self-sufficient way of life and outlook.

Although slaves were one of the main components of long-distance trade, their use in local production appears generally to have restrained rather than encouraged the emergence of commodity production. The dominance of local holymen helped to ensure the maintenance of patriachal forms of slavery, i.e. the labour of slaves was employed to a large extent in various domestic chores, and in cultivation only in so far as they helped meet the consumption needs of the households to which they were attached. Spaulding (1974, p.81) suggests that even merchants who employed slaves in cultivation were more concerned with having their own subsistence needs met, thus freeing themselves from such work so as to devote all of their time and attention to their commercial pursuits, than with having surplus grain produced for exchange on the market.

During the latter part of the Funj period Spaulding gives evidence that with the expansion of towns and the more widespread use of coins and other smaller units of exchange, a greater range of commodities, including grain, were being drawn into local market exchanges. However for the greater part of the Funj period it would seem that Samir Amin's generalisation (1976) stands as valid; that riverain villages in central Sudan

comprised autonomous communities linked to wider state formations through the latter's control of long-distance trade.¹ In the Blue Nile rainlands the dominance of local holymen, such as the Arakiyin, combined with ecological factors, served to encourage extensive cultivation, requiring considerable labour but simple techniques, with surpluses used primarily for local redistribution and not for commodity exchanges.

The Turco-Egyptian invasion of the Sudan in the 1820s and its subsequent occupation until the Mahdist revolt in the 1880s had a far-reaching impact on the traditional economy and society.² This is not surprising given that the invasion was closely tied up with the attempts of Mohammad 'Ali Pasha to industrialise and modernise Egypt. From Sudan's rich natural resources he sought to obtain raw materials for his country's new industries (cotton and indigo for textile manufacturing and gum arabic for paper-making), grain to meet the needs of the growing industrial centres, recruits for the new model army and gold with which to finance these various developments. As a result of these policies most of the riverain Sudan suffered an exacting military occupation, supported by forced levies, and much more stringent taxes. Also in certain riverain areas technological changes were introduced. Contemporary accounts show that forced labour was imposed on village communities for the purpose of building ships and water-wheels, for firing bricks and the construction of garrisons; livestock were requisitioned for transport, and labour conscripted for hauling ships up-river (Hill 1970). Local merchants and riverain cultivators were required to introduce water-wheels (sagia), and it was stipulated that the lands that they irrigated had to be cultivated in part with indigo, on which the government placed a monopoly. Monopolies were also imposed on other products destined for the

1. Samir Amin: *Unequal Development*. Hassock, 1976, p.318-30 *passim*.

2. See C. Issawi (ed): *The Economic History of the Middle East, 1800-1914*. Chicago 1966; and R.Hill: *Egypt in the Sudan 1820-1881*. London, 1959.

Egyptian market, such as sugar and gum arabic. New crops were introduced - a new strain of cotton, sugar-cane and various vegetables. Some new industrial enterprises were set up within the Sudan, such as the sugar, arak and soap-making factories at Kamlin on the Blue Nile. Various new consumer goods - tea, white sugar, rice and cheap textiles - circulated in new markets that sprung up. (Hill 1959)

Not all of these changes, of course, occurred in the Blue Nile rainlands, and it would take more detailed historical research to ascertain the extent of such changes in this area. In spite of the large Turkish garrison at Wad Medani, and the large number of merchants conducting business there, the only sagias known to have been installed, being referred to by name, were those at Marangan, just south of Wad Medani, though it is likely that other ones were also installed in the vicinity. Following the reconciliation of Ahmed al-Rayyah with the Turks in the 1830s, it appears that the Arakiyin, at least those living in Taiba and Abu Haraz, were protected from some of the harsh measures imposed on local communities. But other villages in the vicinity were severely disrupted. The prospect of having the greater part of their harvest seized as taxes, and of suffering forced levies for billeted troops made many farmers reluctant to cultivate. On one occasion the inhabitants of two villages in the Abu Haraz district burnt their homes and fled into the Butana for fear of conscription or forced labour. Those that did cultivate found themselves selling grain at low prices following the harvest in order to meet taxes, and then having to buy from government stockpiles or merchants at much higher prices later in the season. The wide fluctuation in prices encouraged some merchants and rainland farmers to utilise hired labour and slaves to produce surpluses which could be sold off when the prices were most favourable. However, most merchants preferred to extend credit to farmers, in the form of grain for their immediate needs, and to claim partial repayment at harvest-time, demanding a much larger quantity of grain since the

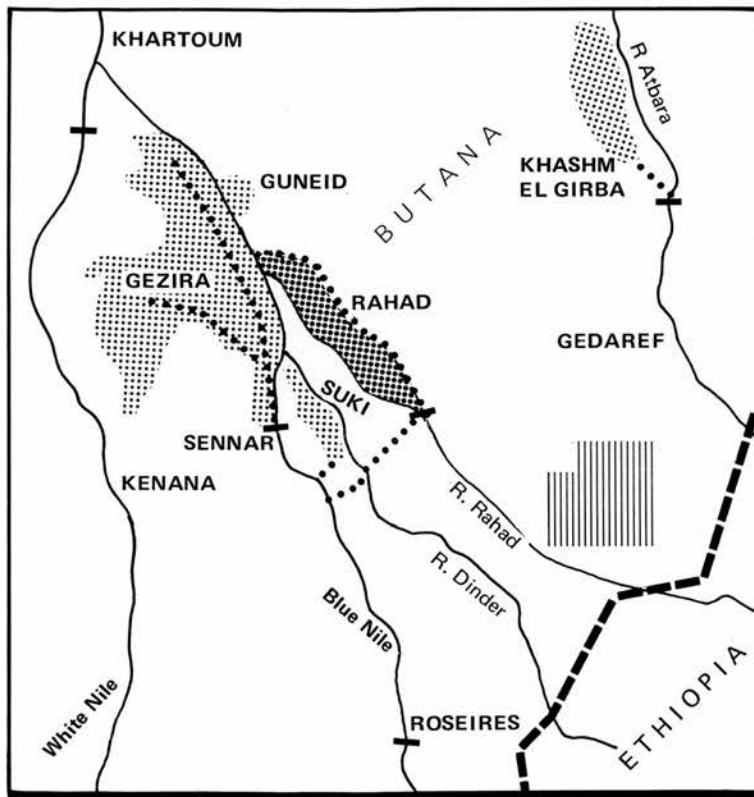
price was much lower then. Many small-holding cultivators fell into perpetual debt to merchants in this way, pledging their future harvests in order to obtain further credit.¹ Where this practice, known as shail, was introduced, and where in general mercantile activities spread, the position of local holymen was steadily and increasingly undermined.






Considerable movements of peoples accompanied the spread of commodity exchanges and the emergence of new kinds of relationships where monetary transactions tended to replace older social ties. Many northern Sudanese moved south and settled in the Gezira and Blue Nile regions during the nineteenth century. Many were Ja'aliyin but other groups from the north were strongly represented - Shaigiya, Bidairiya, Mahas and Danagla. Some came in the wake of the Turkish army, as auxiliaries, pedlars, ship-navigators or craftsmen. Some came as political fugitives; one village on the east bank, El Tibeib, claims descent from the followers of Makk Nimr who launched a revolt against the Turks in 1822. The most significant group was the Jallaba, the name by which northern petty-traders were known. It is they, along with the effendiya - the western educated officials - who in the modern period have been foremost in challenging the dominance of tribal and religious elites. During the Mahdist uprising also there were great upheavals of population, with more northerners, mostly those who had supported the Mahdists and who fled south before the encroaching British army, settling in the Blue Nile area.

The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium witnessed a continuance and furthering of trends already apparent in the Turkish period, with the gradual monetarisation of the economy and political incorporation of tribal groups in the hinterland. On the east

1. For an illustration of this practice already in the Funj period see Spaulding, 1974, p.82.

**IRRIGATED AND MECHANISED AGRICULTURAL SCHEMES
IN GEZIRA AND BLUE NILE REGIONS.**



-  Irrigation Scheme
-  Irrigation Scheme, under Implementation
-  Mechanised Rain-fed Scheme
-  Dam or Barrage
-  Irrigation Canal

bank of the Blue Nile indirect rule was established with the delegation of authority to nomadic tribal chiefs (Shukriya, Kawahla and Rufa'a al Sharq) in the rainland areas and in the western Butana, and to local councils dominated by the local elites, such as the Abu Sin family at Rufa'a, in the riverain areas. This system of local government was inherited by the post-Independence government, and was only abolished in 1971 when 'popular councils' (majlis sha'abi) were established throughout the country which gave greater participation to other social classes, notably the merchants.

The Condominium government had no overall plans for developing the Butana or the Blue Nile rainlands. However, the government did try to improve conditions in the nomadic sector, since it provided valuable exports, especially of livestock and hides to Egypt, and because of its potential in providing a pool of seasonal labour needed in new irrigation schemes. Various improvements were carried out in the traditional pastures, with wells being sunk, hafirs excavated and veterinary services introduced. These improvements, accompanied by the more settled conditions, led to a great increase in herd sizes and in competition for pasture lands. Decades of deforestation - for building, charcoal-burning and brick-baking - contributed to the impoverishment of resources. To alleviate the competition for pasture the government established a central grazing area in the Butana in which access to permanent wells during the dry season was reserved to the Shukriya nomads. In spite of this measure one government researcher estimated that extensive overgrazing had taken place in the Butana and that there was overstocking to the extent of 50% (Lebon, 1965).

This situation was aggravated by the fact that many dry season pastures and watering places were coming under increasing pressure from the intensification and enlargement of lands under cultivation. This was particularly the case in the Gezira following the establishment of the irrigation scheme. But it was

also true of many areas further south bordering the Blue Nile where several private schemes and many riverain gardens were established. Taxation of herds provided an additional constraint on animal husbandry. From the government's point of view taxation of herds achieved many purposes. Apart from raising revenue, this taxation provided the Condominium authorities with savings in local government expenditure. For the taxes were collected by local tribal chiefs and village headmen who enjoyed considerable discretion in assessing the contributions owed by the members of their respective communities. Since considerable influence and power, and often material benefits, accrued to these representatives of local government, the authorities felt it sufficient to reward them with small stipends for their services. Taxation of animal herds also served to ensure that sufficient livestock were brought to markets for sale. This in turn encouraged both the export trade in livestock and the supply of relatively cheap meat to the growing urban population. Finally, by discriminatory taxation of particular kinds of livestock, notably goats, the authorities sought to reduce the extent of harmful overgrazing. This discrimination fell particularly heavily on small herders who valued the goat for its plentiful milk.

On the other hand the replacement of the overland caravans by mechanised transport depreciated the value of camels, though to some extent this was compensated for by the opening up of the market for camels for slaughter in Egypt. As a result of these various pressures many nomadic sections on the east bank became settled. Also sedentary groups that relied partly on animal husbandry began to seek alternative forms of income.

Partly as a result of the increase in size and number of settlements on the east bank, and partly as a result of the attempts of the traditional elites to take advantage of the opportunities for commodity production, the number of sagias and particularly pump gardens in the riverain areas grew steadily. Accord-

ing to a survey carried out in the early 1960s there were 36 gardens (17 sagias and 19 pumps) between Rufa'a and Abu Haraz on the east bank (Hunting, 1965). However, no private pump schemes were established in this area, unlike the area to the south of Abu Haraz, on the east bank between the Rahad and Dinder rivers, where pump schemes for growing cotton were established at Malakiya (unsuccessfully), Shabarga and Horga, the latter by the posthumous son of the Mahdi. But the most far-reaching transformation in land usage took place not on the east bank but to the west of the Blue Nile with the establishment of the Gezira Scheme irrigated from a main canal leading from the Sennar Dam built in 1925. The history of this scheme has been closely examined by others, and I do not wish here to comment on the differing accounts rendered, but rather to give some indication of the impact of the Gezira Scheme on the inhabitants of the east bank.¹

First it is worth noting that the first pilot scheme for the Gezira Project was at Taiba, a leading centre of the Arakiyin in the Gezira. The site where four large pumps drew water from the Blue Nile for this experimental scheme is still clearly visible just opposite Abu Haraz. Both in this and the main subsequent Scheme the Arakiyin and their followers obtained many tenancies (howasha) through their title-right to large areas of rainland in the Gezira. Gaitskell recalls the allocation of tenancies among the descendents of Ahmed El Tereifi, the uncle of

1. See Gaitskell, 1959, for an 'official' account, and Barnett, 1977, for a radical view. Originally set up as a commercial venture, with strong Lancashire textile interests and Condominion government participation, the Gezira Scheme eventually came to be wholly managed by the Sudanese Government through the Gezira Board. Plots of irrigated land were allocated as tenancies on which the farmers had to follow a strict crop rotation. The Gezira Board provided basic services, such as water, machinery and marketing services, while the tenant was responsible for providing or recruiting the necessary labour. Proceeds from cotton, the main crop, were shared between the tenant and the Gezira Board, while the tenant retained all the proceeds from other crops. In practice tenancies constituted hereditary but inalienable land-holdings. Through the original system of allocation of tenancies large holdings were avoided, though as I note below large clusters of tenancies may be held by the various members and followers of particular families. This broad outline of the Gezira Scheme is still largely applicable today, though there have been attempts at crop diversification.

Yusuf Abu Shara, in the village of Talha, seven miles southwest of Taiba:

Talha was a large village and, on the basis of 30 feddans gross per tenancy, the people were entitled by right of ownership of some 3,000 feddans to 100 tenancies... The biggest landowners in Talha are the heirs of Sheikh Ahmed El Tereifi, a local aristocracy owning some 780 feddans... An owner can fill up his entitlement by nominating his sons, relations, servants, or villagers who used to cultivate his lands, and this he does... (1959, p.100)

The nomination of relations or followers was necessitated by the limiting of landowners to holding only two tenancies in their own name. It allowed a considerable concentration of tenancies in large, landowning families, as well, of course, as helping to maintain their power and prestige among their clients and followers. While some east bank families benefited either from having title to land in the Gezira or through being nominated a tenancy, the vast majority lost access to lands they customarily used for pasture or for growing subsistence crops.

Apart from the relatively small number employed in riverain gardens, most east bank inhabitants came under strong pressure to migrate at least seasonally in order to sell their labour to meet all their needs. Domestic crafts, such as spinning and weaving, were undermined by the large-scale production of cotton as an export commodity and the import of cheap manufactured textiles. Income was needed to buy clothing and a wide range of other consumer goods available in the markets. Subsistence crops grown in the rainlands were still as ever unpredictable, and increasing pressures encouraged individuals to detach themselves from collective work parties and from traditional patterns of redistribution. Thus while labour migration may be seen in part as a development of the traditional pattern of seeking dry season employment, it must also be seen in the context of the growth of commodity production, both in the

Gezira and on the east bank, and of the process of socio-economic differentiation.

Many inhabitants of the east bank migrate with their entire family and family herds to the Gezira Scheme for the duration of the cotton-picking season (January to April). Apart from the income from this activity and from other forms of casual labour, these groups also obtain some fodder for their herds from the stubble of previous crops; they sell milk from their herds to the neighbouring villagers. From a 1973 census of cotton-pickers, about 200,000 or a third of the total picking labour came from outside the Gezira Scheme area but from within the Blue Nile Province, and a large proportion of these must have come from the east bank.¹ A sample survey carried out in the Rahad Project area on the east bank in 1967-8 revealed that 46.4% of adult males and 12.8% of adult females migrated for work during the dry season, and that 74% of these went to the Gezira Scheme and its extensions.² More recently it seems that more of the able-bodied young males have been involved in the dura harvesting in the mechanised Schemes in the Gedaref area.³ A sample of nine villages in the northern Rahad Project area (east of Abu Haraz) in 1975 showed that 361 out of a total of 1387 families were temporarily absent in the Gezira, while 485 adult men from the same total were absent working elsewhere, most of them in the mechanised Schemes, some being engaged in charcoal-burning in the southern woodlands, and a few performing casual labour in towns.⁴

1. Ali Mohamed el-Hassan (ed.): Growth, Employment and Equity. A selection of papers presented to the ILO Comprehensive Employment Strategy Mission to the Sudan, 1973-75. Khartoum, 1977, p.146.

2. Dept. of Statistics, Democratic Republic of the Sudan. Report on sample survey 1967/8 of first phase of Rahad Project. Khartoum, 1969.

3. The Mechanised Crop Production Schemes in the Gedaref area are Government inspired projects for the mechanised rain-fed cultivation of dura, which provide an outlet for indigenous capital. 1000 feddan units of land are leased to entrepreneurs who have the necessary capital and machinery for crop production.

4. Mohd. El Awad Galal El Din. The Human Factor in the Rahad Project Area: Results of Population and Socioeconomic Survey. Khartoum, 1975.



In the riverain areas, and particularly in the larger, longer established villages in the northern Rahad Project area, such as Abu Haraz, a somewhat different pattern of labour migration prevails. Many adult males are engaged in full-time employment in neighbouring Schemes and in towns, though they return at regular intervals to their families in these villages. Many are employed in the infrastructural services entailed in large-scale irrigation projects, as irrigation controllers, canal-maintainers, tractor-drivers, construction workers and mechanics. Others find work in the towns, particularly Wad Medani and Khartoum. Many of them work as casual labourers or as hawkers and pedlars, and some of these return to cultivate their rainlands in the wet season, though this is less common among the younger migrants. Others are employed in various services, as tailors and shop assistants, and a few as workers in factories. Also from the more diversified background of the riverain villages, illustrated in the following chapter, there has emerged a petty-bourgeois strata of retailers and traders and also, through educational attainment, various categories of professional workers, including teachers, medical assistants and clerical workers. The last two groups have frequently been instrumental in introducing various services, whether through entrepreneurial or cooperative initiative, in their villages of origin. Thus the east bank has witnessed local investment in pump gardens, mechanised transport, brick kilns and the use of tractors in rainland cultivation, and in various local and consumer services - schools, clinics, water supply, mills, bakeries, and retailing and butchers' services. Only some 40% of the working population in Abu Haraz district are today employed primarily in agricultural occupations.

Thus not only as a response to the impact of the Gezira Scheme and other neighbouring projects, but also as an internal process stemming from the growth of local commodity production and the expansion in local services, the east bank is today characterised by an increasing degree of social differentiation

between and within villages. Some villages, especially the larger ones in the northern Rahad Project area (e.g. Sharafa Barakat, Abu Haraz, Umm Shaneg, Abu al Hasan) take on the appearance of well-to-do tenant villages in the Gezira, with a fairly wide range of services, with a good many if not most houses built of brick, and with considerable occupational variety. Like their Gezira counterparts, these villages are internally differentiated, with, for example, some farmers hiring labour and machinery for all their tasks, and combining their agricultural enterprises with other, often more profitable ventures, such as retailing, owning transport and tractors, slaughtering livestock, etc; other farmers rely to a greater extent on their own labour, and are more likely to supplement their income from farming by selling their own labour or calling on the remittances of family migrant members. Other villages, especially the more recently settled ones, take on more the appearance of the immigrant and labourer villages in the Gezira, with a sparsity of services and most houses built of mud and straw, and the inhabitants relying in the dry season on selling their labour in generally low paid tasks.

Thus the population of the east bank today can be categorised according to three main socio-economic groups, between which of course there is some mobility and overlapping. First, the great majority who rely partly on their own subsistence activities, which have been largely monetarised, and partly on selling their labour in seasonal, low-paid migrant activities, such as cotton-picking in the Gezira. Secondly there are those who work outside the east bank for the greater part of the year, but return in some cases to cultivate during the wet season. Their migrant activities vary from various forms of wage-labour to petty-trading and other services; a not insignificant proportion may properly be called petty-bourgeois - such as shop-keepers and tailors owning their own sewing-machines. Thirdly there are those engaged in local retailing and services, and local entrepreneurs (owning transport, tractors,

brick-kilns, grain mills, etc.) Within this category may be included employees in local services, such as teachers, medical assistants, clerks, etc. Many members of the traditional elites' families have adopted these occupations, though some of them belong to the previous group, having obtained salaried employment in the towns. Finally there are those who have moved into the ranks of the national bourgeoisie, elite professions and state bureaucracy. While some of these retain some interest in their village of origin, most have become thoroughly urbanised, and are largely ignored for the purpose of this study.

The process of socio-economic differentiation is examined in more detail in the following two chapters in which my focus concentrates on two particular villages on the east bank of the Blue Nile, Abu Haraz and Kumur.

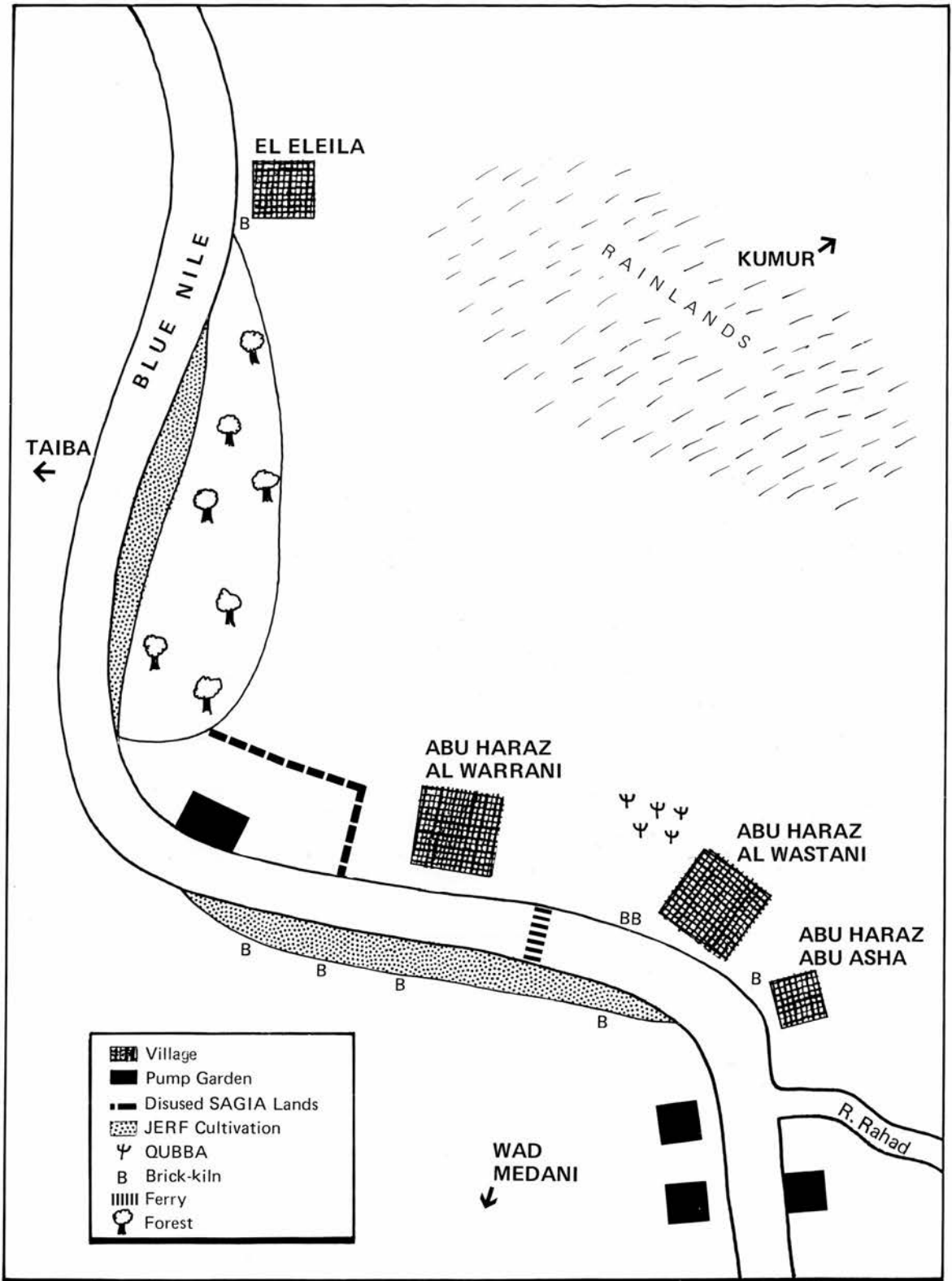
CHAPTER 3

ECONOMIC DIFFERENTIATION IN EAST BANK VILLAGES

In the last chapter I argued that socio-economic differentiation had taken place on the east bank largely as a result of the impact of neighbouring agricultural schemes utilising more intensive methods of production, and as a result of the generalisation of monetary exchanges linking specialised areas of commodity production. I maintained that the population of the east bank comprised three major socio-economic groupings, the basis of newly emergent classes in this rural area: the subsistence orientated yet semi-proletarianised bulk of the population; the proletarian, lumpen-proletarian and petty-bourgeois migrant members supporting their families in the east bank; and the small-scale capitalist entrepreneurs, local traders and government employees concentrated in some of the larger east bank villages.

In this chapter I wish to examine the process of economic differentiation at the micro-level by studying the development of two villages on the east bank. One of these, which I have already frequently referred to, is Abu Haraz, a riverain village whose history dates back several centuries. The other is Kumur, a smaller, more recent settlement, situated in the rainlands about five miles to the north-east of Abu Haraz. The former represents, if you like, the larger, more 'developed' kind of village more prevalent in the northern Rahad Project area which I suggested is analogous to the Gezira tenant village; the latter bears greater resemblance to the majority of villages on the east bank, and if a comparison is to be made with a community in the Gezira, its counterpart would be one of the labourer villages.

MAP OF ABU HARAZ AND VICINITY.



To demonstrate the different paths of development on the east bank, I would have preferred in some ways to have selected a village further inland in the rainland area or from the lesser populated southern Rahad Project area, i.e. one where the inhabitants conformed to a more homogeneous pattern of subsistence cum low-paid labouring activities. In fact Kumur is something of an intermediate form between the villages like Abu Haraz where the majority of the inhabitants are engaged in non-agricultural activities, and the smaller villages of the east bank whose members devote themselves largely to migrant agricultural labour, outside their own subsistence activities. But time and difficulties of transport precluded the possibility of initiating contact with and carrying out detailed studies in a second village completely unrelated to the one of my main period of residence. Kumur had the advantage of proximity to Abu Haraz and of various ties - both economic and kinship - with this larger village, and these factors facilitated my familiarisation with its inhabitants. These ties between the two villages also serve to show how one village, or at least certain sections of its population, tends to benefit at the expense of the other. For the owners of various services concentrated in Abu Haraz, such as mills, shops, transport and brick-kilns, benefit from their customers and clients in neighbouring villages such as Kumur. Moreover, as will be described more fully in the next chapter, individuals in Abu Haraz hire labour from neighbouring villages, particularly in rainland cultivation, but also in enterprises such as the brick-kilns on the river's edge, and so there is a transfer of value through the purchase of labour-power. Kinship ties between the two villages are activated both as a means of realising economic exchanges, such as when kin ties are called upon to recruit labour, and as a source of assistance and patronage, such as when relatives are asked to help maintain children when studying at school, or to help find employment for them afterwards.

Abu Haraz, as mentioned earlier, is an old village situated

just below the confluence of the Rahad River with the Blue Nile. In fact it comprises three separate villages stretching westwards along the main river - in order, from near the Rahad River, Abu Haraz Abu 'Asha, Abu Haraz al Wastani and Abu Haraz al Warrani. According to the Rahad Project Social Survey (Galal El Din, 1975) the population of these three villages is, respectively, 762, 1935 and 1668. The distance between the former two is very small, two hundred metres or so, while the distance between the latter two is greater, about a mile. The space between the two main villages, that is Abu Haraz al Wastani and Abu Haraz al Warrani, is occupied by a large burial area, containing hundreds of unmarked graves and sixteen domed tombs of leading Arakiyin holymen. Between this burial area and the river stand many impressive haraz trees, which provide shade for the people and animals waiting to cross the ferry or using the watering-point. While a large part of the riverain lands on this side of the river are unsuitable for cultivation, being either too steep and rocky or too sandy, to the west of Abu Haraz al Warrani lies a large cultivable area on the high terrace. Beyond this area is the forest of Abu Haraz, called locally Babalenge, which extends some three miles along the northward curve of the river as far as the village of El Eleila (See map). Between the forest and the river are jerfs, silt banks which can be cultivated as the river recedes in the early dry season. The rainland area stretches to the north and north-east of the villages of Abu Haraz, and the method of cultivation employed there will be described in the next chapter. Owing to the nature of the terrain terus cultivation commences at a distance of about three miles from the river at this point. The intervening land is not cultivated, with the exception of seasonal water-courses (khor) which intersect this area and small plots of land, known as bugur; these latter are situated on slightly more pronounced slopes which ensure plentiful runoff in the rainy season. Banks are dug, up to five metres in length, along these catchment areas, and are fenced off with thorn scrub. Water-melons and various kinds of cucumber are

grown in these small plots, and provide a good return when the rains are plentiful.

Although many other social groups have settled in the area over the last century and a half, the villages of Abu Haraz are still strongly associated with various branches of the Arakiyin. The descendants of Sheikh Dafa'Allah Masuban (Dafallab) provide many of the leading families in Abu Haraz al Wastani. Similarly the descendants of Abu 'Agla al Kashif ibn Hamad al-Nil ibn Dafa'Allah al Araki ('Agliyin) provide many of the leading families in Abu Haraz al Warrani. Abu Haraz Abu 'Asha is something of an exception. Although it is named after one of the five sons of Dafa'Allah al Araki, and contains his grave, it is inhabited mostly by Magharba; these are fair-skinned people claiming descent from auxiliaries of the Turkish forces who occupied the area in the 1830s.¹ Abu Bakr Abu 'Asha in fact died without descendants - 'Asha being the name of one of his pupils, and not his daughter as the name suggests.

The 'Agliyin are themselves divided into the descendants of Yusuf Abu Shara and those of his brother 'Abdallah Sarmoota. Many of the former live in Taiba, and especially since the establishment of the Gezira Scheme this has been a preferred place of residence to Abu Haraz for these religious families. Nevertheless several descendants of Sheikh Hamad al-Nil, who was imprisoned by the Mahdi in Omdurman, continue to live in Abu Haraz al Warrani. The ruins of the khalwa of Sheikh Hamad al-Nil, which was destroyed on the instructions of the Mahdi, still stand overlooking the river. Next to it is a large mosque built to commemorate Sheikh Hamad al-Nil, though his tomb is in Omdurman. His son, Sheikh El Eleish, who was also a renowned holyman and teacher, divided his time between Abu Haraz al Warrani and Kumur in both of which places he had

1. According to Hill (1959, p.9) they were volunteers from the Maghreb.

a khalwa and had married. It is in these two villages that I stayed for the greater part of my fieldwork, and on which my studies focused. Henceforward when I refer to Abu Haraz it is more specifically to Abu Haraz al Warrani that I am referring.

Before turning to the other groups which have settled in Abu Haraz, I wish first to deal with the transformation in the position of these religious families. For their position today is very different from the days when they used to mobilise extensive labour resources for rainland cultivation. In the last chapter I referred to the benefits which accrued to many of the Arakiyin families by virtue of their holding title to large areas of rainland in the Gezira affected by the irrigation scheme. Not only did they receive compensation for their titular rainland holdings, but also they were able to allocate tenancies within the new scheme to the numerous members of their families, and to their servants and followers. For several reasons I found it difficult to assess precisely the number of families in Abu Haraz receiving income from Gezira tenancies. For in spite of official registration which requires tenancies to be held in an individual's name, the returns from some tenancies were often divided between numerous co-heirs. Other holdings were disguised, having been allocated to nominated clients, often former slaves, and it was not clear what share of the returns the latter retained. Moreover, some women did not always receive the full share they claimed they were entitled to. For example, an Arakiyin widow in Abu Haraz inherited a half-tenancy from her husband who had two other wives in the village of Manasir in the Gezira. The half-tenancy was managed by a son of one of these other wives, and the widow in Abu Haraz complained that he sometimes withheld from her the full value of the returns from it.

The increase in importance of Taiba for many of the Arakiyin certainly reflects the economic interests of many of the religious families in their Gezira tenancies. The present khalifa or

leader of the descendants of Yusuf Abu Shara lives in Taiba where he dispenses impressive hospitality to his followers, and to visitors and supplicants seeking his favour.¹ The income which religious families derive from Gezira tenancies, combined with their orientation to new forms of employment which it has facilitated, has further reduced their declining role in traditional rainland cultivation on the east bank. For they no longer coordinate rainland cultivation on a large scale along the old lines. Those that still farm cultivate smaller areas mainly with hired labour, and they collect tithes and rents from other lands to which they have title. This shift must be seen in the broader context of the disappearance of recruitment of labour through ties of kinship and clientage and of collective work parties. The main forms of land-rent are 'ushr and dugundi. The former is a payment of a tenth of the rainland harvest; this is the proportion of a man's income which a Muslim is exhorted to give as alms (zakat). Today, when this payment is made, farmers consider it as a voluntary offering, though prescribed by Islamic teachings, rather than a tithe owed to a specific religious family. I did not ascertain the extent to which these offerings are actually made, since the harvest in question was a very poor one, and so for many farmers the problem of tithes did not arise.

Dugundi was originally a payment made in recognition of the labour expended by a previous occupier in improving the land, i.e. in clearing the land and making terus ridges (Matthew, 1921). Latterly the term has become more widely used to refer to the practice of renting land from a landowner. In the Abu Haraz rainlands the rent for land cultivated by dugundi is generally between £S1 and £S2 per gada'a.² In the case of riverain lands, i.e. jerfs, money rents have almost universally re-

1. The Arakiyin of Abu Haraz al Wastani have a separate khalifa.

2. 1 gada'a = 5 feddans. 1 feddan = 1.038 acres = 0.42 hectares

£S1 = 100 pt. (piastres). £1 sterling = 79 pt.

placed share-cropping arrangements. The jerfs between the forest and the river at Abu Haraz are owned by various families of the 'Aqliyin Arakiyin, but are rented out to non-Arakiyin farmers living in Abu Haraz. Only one jerf was share-cropped, while all the others were rented at an amount varying from 10pt to 20pt per 'ood.'¹ The religious families to whom these rents accrue place little emphasis today on this income from undeveloped riverain or rainlands. On the other hand, as we will see shortly, religious families are concerned to increase their income from lands put to more intensive use.

Members of the religious families have increasingly adopted new occupations. This has been facilitated by their high level of literacy and educational attainment, the availability of capital for commercial ventures deriving from their landed wealth, and their wide-ranging influence and connexions. Many of the Arakiyin both in Abu Haraz and in Taiba are now employed in professional or clerical positions. A smaller, but not insignificant number are engaged in commercial activities, following the example of Ishag Hamad al-Nil, the son of the Arakiyin leader imprisoned in Omdurman, who established himself as a wholesale merchant in agricultural produce in the capital. The position that these families once enjoyed within the local community has become increasingly circumscribed. Modern education, judicial and medical services have all undermined the interlocking range of services formerly provided by the religious families. There are no longer active khalwas in either Abu Haraz or Kumur, though some of the Arakiyin find work as religious teachers in Wad Medani, attaching themselves to various mosques there and receiving salaries for their services. There are, however, people in Abu Haraz that are still referred to as fekis; they provide charms and amulets and other traditional cures for clients who come to them when they are sick or have a particular problem. In addition their services are still

1. 'ood is a measurement of river frontage, of about 4 metres.

widely called upon during life-cycle ceremonies. Only two of these fekis in Abu Haraz al Warrani cultivated during the 1977 season, and their cultivation strategies differed little from those of other farmers in the village. Both hired tractors and wage-labourers. One derived cash for this purpose from the shared income from a Gezira tenancy, supplemented by rents from local jerfs; the other derived this cash mainly from the earnings of sons working in Khartoum. Other fekis who did not cultivate support themselves through the salaries or remittances of their sons, or through rents from lands used more intensively, i.e. riverain gardens, riverain lands used for brick kilns and Gezira tenancies.

Since the descendants of Sheikh Hamad al-Nil claim ownership of the lands on the high terrace west of Abu Haraz and share with the Sarmoota branch nearly all the jerfs, they have benefited from developments in these areas. However, they themselves have not generally been the initiators of these developments, and it is necessary here to trace the significance of the other non-Arakiyin groups who have settled in Abu Haraz. These other groups comprise many immigrants from the northern Sudan, but also some local tribal groups of which some were formerly nomadic.

The forbears of these groups came and settled in Abu Haraz during the latter part of the Turco-Egyptian occupation and during the period of Mahdist rule, which as noted earlier were times of considerable upheavals of population. Some smaller groups also settled in the village at the beginning of the Condominium. Many of the original settlers took wives from the Arakiyin, while later settlers married from these newly established groups and from other immigrants in neighbouring villages. Thus although in succeeding generations many close marriages have been enacted, there has been considerable intermixing of these groups; indeed, the not infrequent practice of marriage with a non-relative followed by a close matrilineal

marriage in the next generation has counteracted the statistical preference of close patrilineal marriages, and consequently diluted the strength of patrilineal descent groups. Actual families living in the village today are in many cases descended from members of different tribal groups, and their heterogeneous background is usually acknowledged by the actors with no attempt by them to formulate a descent ideology. Descent is only stressed by those groups, such as the Arakiyin, seeking to legitimate their material and symbolic patrimony.¹

The part of the village occupied by the various immigrant groups is often referred to as fariq al Dongolawi both by the occupants themselves and by the Arakiyin. This is in recognition of the fact that the earliest settlers of non-Arakiyin descent came from the Dongola area of northern Sudan, and many of the other incomers were also northerners. In fact, this fariq comprises people of diverse tribal and geographical origin, including Khandagawi, Mahas, Ja'ali, Shaigi, Bidairi, Kawahla, Khawalda, Ja'afra, Batahin and Kinana. Separated from this fariq by a wadi is the older part of the village, known to the Dongolawi as fariq al Arakiyin. This part of the village which is closest to the river is occupied in fact both by the Sarmoota and the other main branch of the 'Agliyin and by a group descended from a Jimi'ab feki who settled in the village. This feki came to Abu Haraz in order to extend his religious knowledge, and was given an Arakiyin wife by Sheikh Hamad al-Nil. Subsequently he established a khalwa in the village. His descendants gathered enough funds so that with some government help they built a mosque on the site of the khalwa. In spite of the association of the older mosque with Sheikh Hamad al-Nil, this newer mosque is today the most widely patronised in the village.

The non-Arakiyin settlers in Abu Haraz came from various back-

1. P. Bourdieu: Outline of a theory of practice. Cambridge, 1977.

grounds, became established in the village for different reasons, and subsequently followed quite varied occupations, though nearly all of them took up rainland cultivation as a major economic activity. I do not propose to give an account of all the groups that settled in the village, but rather I wish to concentrate on those groups who were largely responsible for the introduction or expansion of new economic activities. The new activities I am referring to were primarily the intensification of crop production through the operation of sagias (Persian wheels) in riverain gardens, and the trading of surplus produce - whether vegetables from riverain gardens, dura from rainland cultivation or livestock; traders in vegetables procured produce from local gardens following the installation of sagias and traded this produce in local markets, while traders in grain and livestock procured these goods both locally and from other regions and similarly traded them in both local and more distant markets. I am not arguing that the impetus for these changes had to come from exogenous sources, that only newcomers to the area could initiate the intensification of local production and exchange of commodity goods. In other east bank villages local religious elites established new gardens. For example, Sharif families of the Sammaniya order were responsible for introducing pump gardens in the vicinity of Sharafa Barakat. Religious families of the Khatmiya order in Sharif Ya'qub engaged directly in large-scale mercantile operations. Moreover I do not want to suggest that all the new settlers in Abu Haraz played an innovatory role, that they all adopted or brought with them new skills and assets. Indeed most of them took up the local customary livelihood of combining rainland with jerf cultivation, supported by a varying degree of reliance on family herds; others, as we have seen, adopted the role and life-style of the religious teachers. However it may be said that the general orientation of the traditional elites towards monopolising political offices, and through their compromise with modern education towards acquiring salaried posts left something of a vacuum which entrepreneurs and

petty-traders were able to fill in respect of the widening economic opportunities which stemmed from the conquests and changes in state formation in the nineteenth century. The movement of peoples certainly was a conducive factor in the spread of new transactions, especially those which entailed monetary exchanges.

The impetus for irrigating the high terrace on the lands to the west of Abu Haraz appears to have come from some of the northern settlers, and in particular those from the Khandaq area. During the latter part of the nineteenth century Mohammad al Khandagawi came to Abu Haraz and married an Arakiyin girl. He had two sons and several daughters. The eldest son, Dafa-'Allah, joined the Mahdist army and was killed at Tokar in 1891. The other son, Abdelrahman, engaged in rainland cultivation and local trading. The daughters were married to other northern immigrants, one to an officer in the Mahdist army, originally from the north but whose family had settled in the Wad Nabawi district of Omdurman, and another to a Ja'ali cultivator and livestock-owner. During the early Condominium the sons of Abdelrahman, assisted by their patrilateral cousins, one of whom had been appointed Sheikh el hilla (village headman), obtained permission from Sheikh Abdelbagi Hamad al-Nil to install a sagia on the lands adjoining the village. This form of irrigation entails the yoking of a pair of oxen to a horizontal wheel which drives a vertical wheel attached to which are water buckets; these buckets raise the water from the river and deposit it in a major channel. From this channel the water is then distributed to the cultivated ground through a network of minor channels which can be opened or closed as required. Up to five acres of land could thus be irrigated during the season of the river's high water; during the dry season, when the water had to be raised from a much lower level, considerably less land would have been cultivated.¹ Various

1. See J.D.Tothill (ed): Agriculture in the Sudan. London 1948.

vegetables were grown on this irrigated land, and later orange and lemon trees and date palms were planted. The most important vegetables grown were bamia (okra), khodra (Jew's mallow), tomatoes and chillies, since these could all be dried and thus used as articles of trade. Randell emphasises that many merchants in the Blue Nile region began their operations through the accumulation of a regular surplus from such riverain crops; these they then exchanged both for grain and livestock and for imported goods in the markets of Omdurman.¹ However, other vegetables were also grown in the garden, such as egg-plants, onions, marrows, cucumbers, potatoes, salads, water-melons, various bean plants and bersim (a kind of clover). These crops were mainly for consumption within the village, though petty-traders from the village visited neighbouring villages, on both sides of the river, on donkey carrying baskets of such produce. Some older men in the village recounted to me numerous anecdotes and incidents which occurred to them during such trips.

The returns from the sagia garden at Abu Haraz were divided according to customary usage between the landowner, the owner of the water-wheel, the owners of the oxen, and the providers of the necessary labour. Other settlers in the village, notably Ja'ali and Kawahla, contributed to the extension of riverain lands under cultivation. From the traces of past civilisation it would seem that over 150 acres of land to the west of the village came under irrigation. Other water-wheels were installed both on the riverside and at the side of wells (matara), and at high water shadufs were also used; these were wooden frames supporting a vertical beam with a weight at one end and a container for lifting the water at the other. Apart from providing surplus produce which could be traded, the riverain gardens also encouraged the development of local crafts - carpentry, pot-making, building and leatherwork.

1. J.R.Randell: El Gedid - a Blue Nile Gezira Village. Sudan Notes and Records, Vol. 39, 1958.

Other settlers in the village, however, turned their attention to trading in goods derived from the traditional sector of rain-land cultivation, and animal husbandry. Mohammad 'Alim was an adviser to the Mahdi, and though originally from the north of the Sudan, lived in the Wad Nabawi district of Omdurman. He came to Abu Haraz at the beginning of the Condominium. His son, Abdelrahim, who was married to the daughter of a Mahdist judge (qadi) also from Omdurman, was a trader in dura which he bought in the south near Roseires and sold in Omdurman. Realising the potential of Abu Haraz as a local market, for buying in years of plenty and for selling at times of shortage, he built a shop and store in the village. This was the first shop to open in Abu Haraz. The descendants of this family occupy a large area in the northern part of the village.

Before the mechanisation of transport during the middle and later parts of the Condominium, the carrying of bulky goods like grain was done in ships. The forbears of several families in Abu Haraz, particularly Bidairi ones, worked on boats on the Blue Nile. Abdallahi 'Abu Shillukh'¹ and Abdelghenni 'Ali, his cousin (FBS), both worked on these boats and both told me many tales of their exploits in the southern Blue Nile area and the Ingessana Mountains in their earlier days. Abdelghenni also used to cultivate dura in the southern rainland areas around Jebel Moya with another cousin (FBS), 'Awad al Karim, whose sister he had married. They used to sell this grain to merchants, and share the returns. But when 'Awad al Karim opened a shop in the southern Gezira, this family partnership broke up. Abdelghenni complained that his cousin had sold grain in his shop and not given him a fair share of the returns.

Trading in livestock was also a lucrative occupation in which both recent settlers in the area and local large herd-owning

1. Nicknames are very common. Abu Shillukh means the bearer of facial scars.

families participated. The present-day butchers in Abu Haraz are descended from Ja'ali and Ja'afra livestock-trading families. The father of Hasan Manawir, who has a shop in the village and is chairman of the village committee, traded in livestock in the west of Sudan, and during the Second World War supplied cattle to the British Army.

Thus the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first half of this century witnessed an intensification of local production and an increase in commercial and non-agricultural activities, which were partly related to the first factor - the production of local commodities for exchange. This coincided with the influx of many non-Arakiyin families into Abu Haraz. The accumulation of mercantile capital by several families in the village was accompanied by the setting up of retailing businesses in the expanding towns, particularly Wad Medani and Khartoum, and the branching out into related activities, such as tailoring. It also allowed sons to follow full-time modern education thus improving their chances of gaining salaried employment, just in the same way that the rents and other sources of income of many of the religious families allowed them to diversify their interests. The loss of labour that this entailed to rainland cultivation and other household productive activities could be made up by the hiring of labour, both from within the village and from neighbouring villages.

The development of government irrigation schemes in the Gezira and elsewhere required both skilled and unskilled labourers and clerical workers, and the patronage of the Arakiyin, in the form of contacts and references, ensured the acquisition of reasonably paid jobs if villagers wished to find work outside the village. During the latter part of the Condominium many villagers availed themselves of these opportunities. Given that an ever increasing number of consumer goods had to be purchased, and that peoples' expectations of their standards of living steadily rose, households required considerably more

cash than they could raise from selling local produce or animals from their herds if they still had them.

These developments, however, led to tensions between the land-owning religious families in Abu Haraz and members of the non-Arakiyin who sought to develop further the resources of the riverain lands. It is not exactly clear how the conflict about the lands on which the sagias were situated came about.¹ It seems that the Arakiyin landowners sought a greater share of the produce, or at least a larger money rent from the existing sagias. At the same time they took measures to install a pump to irrigate part of the land, and it seems they expected the sagia cultivators to work as paid labourers in this garden. The sagia cultivators may themselves have wished to have installed a pump; such an initiative could have been brought about, either by one or more of the partners wishing to terminate their share of the joint enterprise, or by one of the partners with capital to invest seeking to buy out the other partners. For most sagias were complex contractual arrangements, with 6 or 8 men each providing two oxen for a water-drawing shift, the owner of the wheel itself, the provider of the tools and seeds and finally the tenant labourer all having shares in the enterprise. (Hunting, 1965). Whatever may have been the case, the result was that the lands cultivated by sagia were abandoned, and Sheikh Hamad al-Nil **Abdelbagi** enclosed an area of about 60 acres and installed a diesel pump. This occurred shortly after the Second World War. Today villagers attribute the abandoning of the sagias to a dispute over who owned the lands, and also to the low prices obtained for the garden produce. In spite of the marriage of Sheikh Hamad al-Nil to the widow of Gasmallah al Khandagawi (her FBS), who was the sister of the main cultivators of the garden, the Arakiyin Sheikh was not able to mobilise sufficient labour to work

1. I received varying accounts of this dispute. Further research in local court files would probably clarify the issues at stake, and the positions adopted by the parties involved.

in the garden, and so it never realised its potential. Recently the present owner, Abdelrahman 'Abu Shenub'¹ Sheikh Hamad al-Nil tried to resuscitate the garden, but he was obliged to bring in labourers from the neighbouring village of Fedasi and offer them a 50-50 sharecropping arrangement, under which he provided the water and they the seeds and labour.

The constraints which conflicting land claims, and particularly the overriding claims of the religious families, placed on land development was again illustrated during the year of my field-work. It concerned the son of one of the village butchers who was a lorry-owner and the operator of a brick-kiln near the village of El Eleila. Since he sold many of the bricks from his existing kiln to Abu Haraz villagers for new buildings there, he decided he would try to open up a new brick-kiln on the disused sagia lands adjoining the village. He approached several of the Arakiyin families who had claims either to the jerfs or to the high terrace and offered them payments for the use of the land. He also made a formal application to the village committee, on which was represented, as Sheikh el hilla, one of the descendants of one of the original Khandagawi sagia cultivators. The outcome was that the village entrepreneur found he had to negotiate with so many different people, all claiming vested interests in the land, that he eventually gave up the plan.

The collapse of the sagia gardens encouraged further labour migration from Abu Haraz, particularly of young men. They went to work in neighbouring irrigation schemes and in the towns, and sent back remittances to their families in the village. Contacts with previous migrants from the village, and especially with the traders from the village who had established retailing businesses in the towns facilitated this process. Moreover, the relative ease of transport between these places of

1. Abu Shenub means one who has a beard.

work and Abu Haraz allowed married men also to work outside the locality and return to their families at regular intervals. As outlined in the previous chapter, in common with the rest of the east bank, the inhabitants of Abu Haraz were able to rely less and less on their traditional economic activities and were pressurised more and more to sell their labour.

These wider factors which encouraged in the first place sedentisation and in the second place the adoption of migrant wage labour were primarily the constraints placed on animal husbandry, the commoditisation of rainland cultivation of dura, and the increasing need of the population for cash. The loss of traditional pasture lands through the utilisation of large areas for intensive cultivation and depletion of remaining pastures through overgrazing and deforestation placed severe pressures on the viability of animal husbandry. As we have seen, the political hegemony of the Shukriya in the Butana, which was sustained and extended by the Condominium authorities, led to the exclusion of other tribal groups from dry season watering-points over a large area of the central Butana. Discriminatory taxation of particular kinds of livestock created a particularly heavy burden for settled communities. For example, in the late 1960s the annual tax on goats in the Rahad Project area was 80pt per head, compared with 135pt on cattle, and only 60pt on camels and 10pt on sheep.¹ This tax fell particularly heavily on the settled population in villages such as Abu Haraz, since they relied greatly on goats, and to a lesser extent on cattle, to supplement their subsistence from rainland and riverain cultivation.

The commoditisation of dura cultivation, with cheap grain brought by traders from the southern rainlands, and the growing need for cash to buy an ever increasing range of commod-

1. Abdel Razig El Basheir: Agricultural manpower and economic development in Sudan: some case studies on present and prospective patterns of labour utilisation in the Rahad Project area. M.Sc. Khartoum, 1970.

ities have already been referred to. What I wish to stress here is that the traditional economy entailed for most households a combination of economic activities, namely riverain and rainland cultivation, animal husbandry, domestic crafts and some cash labour. Some of these activities were strongly interrelated. For example, extensive cultivation encouraged growth of herds, since even where crops were a failure from the point of view of grain for human consumption, the stubble and poor quality grain provided fodder for animals; in turn these animals in providing milk, contributed a major element to the peoples' diet in times of grain shortage. Where too great a pressure existed on just one element in this combination, the traditional livelihood no longer remained viable. This happened in the case of Abu Haraz. With the collapse of the sagias, the destruction of local crafts, and the constraints placed on animal husbandry, the pressure on rainland cultivation was too strong, especially in view of the fact that collective work parties no longer operated.

From the perspective of the individual household the migration of one or more of its junior members provided a strategy by which it could maintain its own viability. The specific strategy followed by a particular household with respect to the allocation of labour of its members would depend on its status and resources and on the number of children, particularly sons. Up until the present young generation it has been common for at least one son to engage in rainland cultivation and to help manage the family herds; and often the father has facilitated the early marriage of this son. The solidarity between siblings, especially where they have followed different occupations, varies considerably. It does not necessarily follow that sibling ties have weakened as a result of this occupational differentiation. In fact often quite strong cooperative ties exist between brothers following different occupations both among families with established religious status and among those which enjoy a sizeable family patrimony. In these cases the sharing

of symbolic and material interests encourage the maintenance of close kinship ties. For example, three brothers of a respected Ja'ali family in the village have succeeded in linking their separate family enterprises to mutual advantage, and thus have all stood to benefit from the understanding they originally came to as to how best allocate their labour. The eldest brother remained in Abu Haraz, cultivated his and his brothers' rainlands, and from the nucleus of the family herd set himself up as a butcher in the village. The second brother worked for a time as an irrigation controller in the Gezira and then opened a shop in the village. The third brother has always worked outside the village, and now has his own clothing store in Khartoum. The latter two have combined to install a new electric grinding mill in the village adjoining the second brother's shop. Several marriages and engagements have been made between the offspring of the three brothers. However, this kind of cooperation does not always exist where there are overlapping property interests between siblings. For example, the sons of the introducer of the first shop to the village assert a considerable degree of independence from each other in spite of their inheriting a substantial patrimony. The eldest brother assumed responsibility for the shop which today he has made completely his own. The second brother is the caretaker of a government cement warehouse at Mafaza which is a large village near the railway to the south; though his first wife is from Abu Haraz, he spends most of his time at Mafaza where he has taken a second wife. The two other brothers are both tailors, one working in the village and the other in Khartoum, though the latter returns to cultivate in the rainy season albeit independently of his brothers. In spite of three of the brothers having married daughters of their father's brother, little cooperation exists between them. When the senior brother installed a new mill near his shop, this was entirely his own enterprise; and it only served to widen the gulf between him and his brothers.

Kinship ties may be utilised in attempts to establish new relations of dependence. For example, the shop-owner just referred to, wished in the past to open up a new shop in Wad Medani. So he acquired a shop in the central market, purchased the necessary stock and arranged with his cousin (FBS) for him to work in it in exchange for a share of the profits. This cousin had in fact wanted a loan with which to establish such a business of his own, and was not very happy with the arrangement agreed upon. So he saved up enough money to cover the costs which had been expended on setting up the shop and handed this over to the Abu Haraz shop-keeper. In another case a tailor from the village who had his own stall in one of the markets in Khartoum agreed at first for his brother-in-law to bring his own sewing-machine and work with him, since the latter was both a good tailor and also a witty character who attracted a lot of clients. But when this brother-in-law became regularly absent through heavy drinking, his affine asked him to find another place to work. He then proceeded to install a sewing-machine of his own and find a more reliable worker in the space occupied by the indulgent brother-in-law.

Kinship ties certainly provide the channels for a wide set of economic relations. For example, kinship ties can provide the framework for the linking of urban enterprises with the family farm, for assisting the transfer from rural to urban employment and, through providing job patronage, for maintaining family businesses. However, in the long run economic interests tend to predominate over kinship interests; social and economic mobility ensures that patronage is not given the scope to perpetuate the existence of large kinship groups whose members identify their interests with the interests of their respective groups. Rather kinship ties are utilised for more immediate ends - relying on a sibling to look after aging dependents so as to seek work away from home, seeking accomodation in the town, finding work and so on.

Today Abu Haraz is marked by increasing economic differentiation, which in turn, especially with the introduction of modern services,¹ is reflected in different standards of living. These changes in the mode of consumption will be examined in Chapter 5. Four out of five male householders, and an even higher proportion of the total active male population, are primarily employed in non-agricultural occupations. Incomes from salaried employment vary at least tenfold, from £S14 a month for a caretaker in one of the village schools to over £S120 a month for a School Director. Income from trading activities varies even more markedly, as one would expect, if one compares the seller of firewood or vegetables in the village with the wholesale dealer in Khartoum. Although there were no large farmers in Abu Haraz (the maximum area of rainland cultivation by any one farmer in the village was 60 acres) a marked difference is now apparent in the amount of capital invested in farming activities; no longer are variations in farming strategies attributable primarily to the respective labour resources and consumption needs of individual households (see next chapter).

The extent of permanent migration from the village is difficult to assess precisely, since kinship ties are evaluated largely in terms of actual contacts and communication. No doubt some informants omitted certain relatives when asked whether any had moved out of the village. But in general permanent migration seems to have been most common among the extremes of the social spectrum, i.e. persons of traditionally low social status, particularly some ex-slaves, and those that have attained professional status or become members of the mercantile bourgeoisie. One family has placed great emphasis on educational attainment and salaried employment; most of the Diyeb family moved to Wad Medani many years ago, and the first generation of educated members took up work in the various Ministries,

1. Abu Haraz al-Warrani has four schools, a clinic, a Cooperative Shop, three mills, twelve private shops, and a youth club. Piped water and electricity have been extended to many households. (See p.

the Municipality and the Railway. The present generation includes ten graduates or persons still engaged in higher education or further training. This is the only family associated with Abu Haraz where a significant number of female members are employed. A few individuals have entered the ranks of the bourgeoisie through steady accumulation of capital from trading activities. One is a major contractor in Khartoum, who has built offices and hotels in the capital and also owns a plastic factory there. Another is a wholesale dealer in imported textiles, who also does some contracting in Khartoum. Another, having left a senior post in the Ministry of Agriculture, has set up a company trading in agricultural goods with Saudi Arabia. Although these individuals may help to finance various village developments (the contractor built the boys' secondary school, and a wholesale merchant endowed a new clinic following a successful heart operation in London), their interests force them to take up residence in the capital. In the case of other migrants the most pressing factor which predisposes taking up new residence is marriage into a family from the new work location.

The maintenance of residential ties with the village has been encouraged by the introduction of modern services and amenities - notably the schools, clinic, water pump and piping, and most recently electricity. Most of these services have been introduced through cooperative efforts under the impetus of traders, shop-keepers and teachers. The absence of government patronage such as is enjoyed by the neighbouring village, Abu Haraz al Wastani, required the villagers of Abu Haraz al Warrani to call on their own efforts to improve the level of services and amenities within their village. Faced with the alternative of moving their families to their places of work in the towns - with the disadvantages of higher costs entailed in obtaining family accommodation, and of greater isolation for the women-folk - or of leaving their families in Abu Haraz, but seeking to improve living conditions and the range of services, these

groups have sought the latter course. In the case of many migrants the choice does not exist, since moving their families is impractical either because their work entails bachelor conditions or because their income is so low that they can only afford bachelor accommodation.

The retention of residential ties in Abu Haraz by most of the migrants has led to considerable variety in the social and economic composition of the village. The pattern that migration from the village has taken has contributed significantly to occupational diversification, and in the main to a raising of standards of living in the village. I have stressed that this is largely due to the specific conditions which facilitated the pursuit of alternative livelihoods to subsistence activities; in particular I have drawn attention to the background of petty-trading of riverain and rainland products, and in the case of many of the religious families, the benefits they derived from the intensification of agricultural production, notably in the Gezira. While these patterns of labour migration and occupational diversity are found in some of the other large villages on the east bank, they differ from the prevailing pattern of labour migration in this area - which is predominantly seasonal agricultural labour and casual work. In later chapters I will seek to demonstrate that the form of socio-economic differentiation that I have examined here has special implications for domestic organisation. This centres around the question of the sexual division of labour. For it will be noted that the women in Abu Haraz are no longer productively active. In later chapters I will examine how provision for women and the differentiation of life-styles has affected domestic and marriage patterns. But first I must examine the line of development that has occurred in the other village that I studied, Kumur.

In its physical appearance Kumur differs markedly from Abu Haraz. The broad sweep of the river, the impressive haraz trees and the white domed qubbas provide a pleasing approach

to the villages of Abu Haraz; the settlements themselves afford a varied landscape, with long, low school buildings, shops with verandas and houses of differing style, age and grandeur. On the periphery of the settlement are some isolated houses, mostly surrounded by walled enclosures; in the centre the houses press closely on each other and can only be approached through a maze of twisting paths. In these older parts of the settlement walled enclosures usually contain several houses each with its own sub-dividing inner wall and interlinking enclosures and passages. Shade is provided by the dense foliage of the nim tree (*Azadirachta indica*), which from a distance appears to give unbroken cover to the centre of the village, but which are in fact scattered between the various buildings.

Kumur on the other hand is situated inland amid the rainlands, and from a distance appears as an undifferentiated raised mass on the horizon. Approached more closely the settlement reveals a collection of unenclosed round huts made of mud and straw (gutiya); the homogeneity of these buildings and of the open space between them is offset by a few square unenclosed buildings scattered among these gutiyas, and at the centre of the village by a cluster of more substantially built houses. There are very few trees. The only public building is the water pump and tank. It is situated in isolation equidistant from the three settlements which in fact comprise Kumur. On all sides of these settlements lie the rainlands which for most of the year provide a bare dun backcloth, but which during the cultivation of the rainy season break up the monotony of the landscape.

Kumur comprises three settlements, Kumur el Batahin, Masara, and Kumur Sheikh el Eleish, although the latter two are practically contiguous. Kumur el Batahin lies to the north-east, containing about sixty households of the Batahin tribe. Most of these Batahin families still practise a nomadic way of life,

travelling with their herds far into the Butana in the wet season and crossing over into the Gezira during the dry season. To the north-west lies the settlement of the Masara, a branch of the Juhayna tribe; about half of these households rely primarily on rainland cultivation and income from casual local labour rather than on animal husbandry, but the other half, like their relatives encamped near Taif thirty miles to the south-east, migrate with their herds. More or less contiguous with this settlement on the south side stands Kumur el Eleish, named after Sheikh el Eleish ibn Hamad al-Nil. Like his father he was a renowned Arakiyin holyman. He lived part of the time in Abu Haraz and part of the time in Kumur where he married a Masara girl. He died in 1967. This is the largest of the three settlements, comprising a population of 485 and including households of Arakiyin, Masara, Ja'ali, Khawalda and Shukriya descent, though many are intermixed, as well as families of former slaves. It is to this latter settlement that I am referring, rather than to the other two predominantly nomadic settlements, when I use the name Kumur.

The name kumur is used quite frequently on the east bank to designate settlements, and has different shades of meaning; in general it can be said that the name refers to a settlement which originated as a dry season camp but to which were attached various clients who cultivated the adjacent lands in the wet season and who through time provided the nucleus of an autonomous settlement. These 'clients' comprised the former slaves of various nomadic households. But they also included nomadic families who, through lack of adequate animal or human resources, were no longer able to pursue a viable nomadic career.¹ In many cases the land occupied as the dry season camp was situated in the tribal dar, i.e. the area to which the particular tribal group enjoyed communal right of access;

1. Mohamed el-Hadi Ahmed Abu Sin: The Regional Geography of the Butana North of the Railway. M.A. Khartoum, 1970.

in these cases the occupants of the new settlement gradually asserted their own rights to use of the adjacent lands, cultivating for their own needs rather than for the groups to which they had been formerly attached; they thus became autonomous in the sense of being independent of wider tribal rights and obligations. Kumur first came to be used as a summer camp by the Masara in the 1920's or early 1930's when a well was constructed there. Politically these settlers were subject to the Arakiyin of Abu Haraz. For it was the Arakiyin, rather than a nomadic group that laid claim to large areas of rainland in the vicinity of the new settlement. Formerly the inhabitants of Kumur contributed substantially to the large work parties mobilised by the Arakiyin holymen. During the life-time of Sheikh el Eleish Kumur had no autonomous village organisation, but was administered and taxed directly from Abu Haraz. Since then it has had its own village headman; he is the son of Sheikh el Eleish. Today when the inhabitants of Kumur render labour to farmers from Abu Haraz it is for wages; moreover the plots they cultivate for their own needs have become effectively their own.

This is not to suggest that all the inhabitants of Kumur derive from inferior traditional status groups or from impoverished socio-economic groups. It is true there is a larger proportion of families of ex-slave descent there than in other villages (8% as against 4% in Abu Haraz). But in fact several individuals who have settled in the village enjoy considerable wealth; for example, it was asserted to me that one man, formerly a livestock owner, owned property in the form of lorries and shops to the value of £560,000. Many of the Masara still own considerable numbers of livestock. But in many cases there has come about a division of labour, if not a division of property, between the Masara living in Kumur and their relatives near Taif. Larger herds of goats are found in the northern settlement where the occupants allocate more labour to cultivation, while the herds of larger animals, cattle and camels, are conc-

centrated in the southern settlement where more labour is allocated to nomadism. Marriages between the two branches of Masara are very common, and in polygamous marriages it has been common, especially among the older generation, to take a wife from each of the two settlements.

The marriage of several religious men into the ranks of the nomadic and semi-nomadic Masara was of great significance in the development of the settlement, both in so far as it raised the status of the existing settlers and also since it encouraged others to settle in the village. The most important marriage was that of Sheikh el Eleish to Taiya Yusuf Namasid, the daughter of a wealthy livestock owner and cultivator of rainlands in the Gezira. This marriage had been preceded by the marriage of an important member of the Masara to the sister of Sheikh el Eleish.¹ When Sheikh el Eleish opened a khalwa in the village, many people came to study with him. Other holymen were also attracted to the village where they married and settled down. Unlike some of their counterparts in Abu Haraz these holymen did not possess qualitatively different resources from their followers; some of them had sizeable herds, and of course they were assured of plentiful labour for cultivating their rainlands. But they did not have income from jerfs, nor from riverain gardens, nor from Gezira tenancies.² Thus most of these holymen remained primarily herdsmen and cultivators, though they were held in esteem for their piety and religious knowledge. In contrast to several of the religious families in Abu Haraz, the sons of holymen living in Kumur are little differentiated from other villagers; Sheikh el Eleish himself had two sons, one of whom lives and works in Damazeen, and the

1. Most of the Masara in the south are supporters of the Hindiya tariqa, and so this marriage of one of the northern Masara with an Arakiyin girl possibly marked a shift in interests and allegiances.

2. Hajwa Abu 'Agla Hamad al-Nil, the wife and FBD of Hamad al-Nil Sheikh el Eleish inherited a tenancy in a Scheme near Sennar which in 1977 yielded £500 worth of dura. It was transported to the village in the lorry of her son-in-law, a non-relative from Taif. She also owns one of the three stores in the village.

other cultivates in the village; Mohammad al feki had two sons, both of whom cultivate in the village and keep goats; al feki Abdallahi had one son who is a goatherd; Ahmed al feki Shiekh died leaving three young boys - they have since left school and seek casual work in Kumur or in Abu Haraz al Wastani, which is where his family were from.

Given that it has become increasingly difficult to subsist from only rainland cultivation and animal husbandry, the villagers of Kumur are forced to seek supplementary income from wage labour. The relatively more favourable conditions that existed in Abu Haraz for the accumulation of small capital which could be utilised for petty trading have been absent in Kumur. During the period of the sagias Abu Haraz farmers could trade the surplus produce in local markets, and with capital they saved embark on local retailing or other commercial ventures (e.g. trading in grain or livestock). This basis for economic diversification has, of course, been absent in Kumur. In Kumur some of the owners of large herds of goats and of smaller herds of cows sell milk to neighbouring villages, such as Abu Haraz, and also in Wad Medani. However the difficulties of finding sufficient grazing in the dry season, the costs of renting jerfs for growing lubia (*dolichos lablab*) for the animals or, alternatively, the costs of feeding the animals with grain, result in small returns for these milk-sellers.

The selling of livestock is usually resorted to only when there are pressing needs for cash in order to buy subsistence items, or in order to meet extraordinary expenditure. The desire to build up rather than to deplete herd numbers constrains the use of livestock for other than mainly subsistence ends. The value placed on the maintenance of animal stock is reinforced by the contribution which milk makes to their subsistence, especially at times when the villagers' crops have given poor returns and when cash income is stretched to cover other necessary expenditure. Livestock and the milk they yield do provide

a very real security in such difficult circumstances, which are not infrequent. Only those individuals with very large herds, such as Haj Yusuf Namasid, are in a position to appraise their livestock as a resource to be converted into cash for some other enterprise (in his case the purchase of a lorry).

Labour, of course, has to be allocated for the maintenance of the herds. Collective herding is uncommon. This is partly because of the difficulties of finding adequate grazing for a large herd and because of the competition that shortage of grazing places the owners in. Also for each household maintenance of livestock plays a different part in the overall strategy concerning allocation of members' labour and the meeting of consumption needs. Thus the members of one household may maximise their labour resources by working in the Gezira in the dry season, and so will take their animals with them; another family, with less need for immediate cash, perhaps because of a good harvest, may hire a jerf and even a herdsman, and thus seek to increase the size of its herd; a third, requiring cash but short of family labour, may sell milk in Abu Haraz and so keep its herd in the locality and buy grain in order to maximise its milk output. Only two families cooperated over a long period of time in the joint herding of their goats; they were brothers-in-law, and also first cousins (FBSs), who were involved in selling milk to Abu Haraz.¹

Even though women and children are frequently employed in looking after the family herd, a considerable amount of male labour has to be allocated to animal husbandry. Male labour which can be released from these household productive activities in order to acquire cash is free to seek employment wherever it can be found. In this respect the inhabitants fo

1. By contrast in Abu Haraz where the number of livestock kept are much smaller and where they are used almost exclusively for own milk consumption, the villagers collectively hire a herdsman to take charge of all the village goats, at least during the rainy season.

Kumur are disadvantaged compared with the inhabitants of Abu Haraz; for the former do not possess the wide-ranging network of kin and contacts already working outside the locality which are enjoyed by the latter. The very real difficulties which exist even for Abu Haraz migrants in finding employment and accommodation in the towns are all the more impinging in the case of prospective migrants from Kumur.

Thus most villagers seeking employment perform local casual labour. Several work on local construction sites, such as the new agricultural institute being built near Abu Haraz, or making bricks at the brick-kiln near El Eleila. Some get jobs as labourers building houses, occasionally in Kumur, and more frequently in Abu Haraz. Others use donkeys or donkey-carts, for transporting various things - water, firewood, sand and the mixture of silt and animal dung used in building. Some work in factories in Wad Medani, such as the cotton ginnery, workshops for making sacks and the new Gezira tannery. Unlike migrants from Abu Haraz to the towns, few of them are employed in the services or retailing businesses. Those villagers who go to the Gezira with their family herds during the cotton-picking season find various occupations outside the care of their animals and the sale of milk. Some work with their women-folk picking cotton on a piece-rate basis, while others work in vegetable gardens.

Very few villagers have full-time non-manual employment outside the village. Three grandsons of Sheikh el Eleish work in the Sennar Sugar Refinery as clerks or work supervisors; the father of one is the Director of the mixed primary school in the neighbouring village of Kiran. Two grandsons of Haj Abdallah Ibbudi are primary school teachers in the Gezira. A brother of Haj Yusuf, the lorry-owner, is an accountant for the Gezira Board. There are only two or three migrants from the village who have regular employment in Khartoum; one works as a veterinary assistant, another as a shop assistant and a third as

an electrician. The latter, unable to find rented accommodation, stays in a cheap hotel. The lack of schooling facilities within the village, and the lack of adequate resources with which to support their children's education have limited the number of villagers able to aspire to salaried employment. Some of the young children in the village do in fact attend primary school in either Kiran or Abu Haraz, making the round trip of 6-8 miles on foot. Those pupils who continue their education to secondary level must either find relatives in Abu Haraz to stay with, or meet the expenses of boarding in a school dormitory.

Most households in Kumur are obliged to rely heavily on their own labour resources, including that of their women, both for domestic and subsistence activities and for the income they obtain through wage labour. Women in Kumur make an important contribution to a wide range of household activities. Much of their time is spent in procuring fuel and water, both of which by contrast in Abu Haraz have become commodities to be purchased with cash deriving from male incomes. Similarly much time is spent by women and children in care of animals. In the wet season single women (i.e. widows and divorcees) cultivate their own plots, while nearly all the women in the village assist in the tasks of weeding and harvesting; this labour is rendered not only on their family plots, but also to farmers from other villages, notably Abu Haraz. Women also perform various domestic crafts, such as rug-making and basket-work. The women themselves market these goods either in Wad Medani or at the qubbas near Abu Haraz. Also they often travel to local markets to purchase subsistence items in the temporary absences of their husbands. The women in Abu Haraz also make frequent visits to markets, but more commonly it is to buy household utensils and personal items of consumption.

In Kumur the standard of living is more uniform than it is in Abu Haraz. Dura, milk, dried bamia (waika) and dried meat

(sharmoot) are the staple diet for most households. Expenditure on fresh meat, fresh vegetables and fruits, wheat flour, pasta and rice is very rare. By contrast these food items feature significantly in many household budgets in Abu Haraz, especially those supported by salaried incomes and regular wage remittances. There are three small shops in Kumur, two owned by villagers, one of whom is a woman, and the third by a Ja'ali from the village of El Tibeib; these shops are stocked primarily with tea, coffee, sugar, soap, oil and kerosene. Housing styles and furnishings are for the most part rudimentary, although there are now some houses built of brick. There is no electricity. Water is carried by hand from the village pump, though a few families hire a village boy to bring water by donkey-cart. These conditions contrast markedly with the changes in consumption patterns and living standards in Abu Haraz which I examine more fully in Chapter 5.

The greater uniformity in living standards in Kumur compared with in Abu Haraz does not imply that a greater amount of co-operation takes place between households. As I will show in the next chapter in relation to cultivation strategies in particular, labour and services exchanged between households are mediated by money payments; collective work parties reciprocated in kind no longer occur. Closely-related nuclear families cultivate quite separately from each other. Today a more individualistic tone pervades social relationships in Kumur, just as it does in Abu Haraz.

To conclude this chapter I wish to summarise the forms of economic differentiation which exist in the two villages studied, Abu Haraz al Warrani and Kumur el Eleish. The main difference between the two villages is that in the former the majority of male adults have regular work outside the village. Most of these have semi-skilled jobs or have regular employment in various services; a substantial number have set up retailing businesses through capital they have accumulated from previous

wage-earning or petty-trading activities; a smaller number, mostly the sons of religious families or of merchants, through educational attainment, have acquired clerical or professional employment. The men that remain in the village are mostly of the older generation. Many of those with wage-earning sons engage in rainland cultivation as a small-scale capitalist enterprise, hiring labour and tractor services; others are engaged in retailing businesses or are employed in the village services; some still rely on the traditional subsistence activities of rainland and jerf cultivation and goat-herding, supplemented by low-paid casual labour. In Kumur, by contrast, the latter category is the predominate one, though women there contribute significantly to those activities. The number of salaried workers in Kumur is very small, as is those with businesses or property other than livestock, e.g. tenancies, shops or lorries. Whereas an increasing number of men in Abu Haraz are employed in non-agricultural activities, the labour force in Kumur is mainly engaged in various forms of agricultural work, whether as workers on family plots or as hired labourers or as seasonal migrants. It is hoped that the last two chapters have demonstrated how this economic differentiation has come about, both from a wider historical and regional perspective, and in terms of the specific conditions underlying the different development of the two villages.

CHAPTER 4

RAINLAND CULTIVATION STRATEGIES

In this chapter I wish to examine the differential responses to the commercialisation of rainland cultivation in the two villages that I studied. While little change has come about in patterns of land tenure and in access to the land, significant changes have occurred in recent decades both in the form of labour transactions and in the technology employed in preparing the land and in planting. Collective work parties are no longer mobilised as they were in the past to assist in turn individual cultivators. Today wage labour is the dominant form of labour transaction, although family labour plays an important part among households where the ability to hire labour is restricted. While sowing by hoe (seluka) is still practised, hiring of tractors for preparing the land and planting is now widespread. While the largest proportion of produce from rainland cultivation is for household consumption or related needs (e.g. feeding of stubble and stalks to the family herds), a large part is nevertheless sold locally. This commercialisation of production has led to capital becoming the most important factor in production. Actual strategies are examined in relation to the other activities of households both to fulfil subsistence needs and to raise cash. In particular, I examine the contribution made by women's labour, both unpaid family labour and wage labour, and the reasons for the withdrawal of this labour. In conclusion I criticise the conventional thesis that women withdraw from productive labour for fear of having to work alongside male hired stangers.

Traditionally rainland cultivation was organised according to one of three patterns which we may refer to as household,

patron-client and mercantile forms of organisation. The first, the most widespread of the three forms, was practised by the household as the basic unit of production. The amount of land cultivated by individual households would vary according to their respective needs and labour availability, in the manner described by Chayanov as being typical of peasant farming.¹ At peak periods in the cultivation cycle additional labour was mobilised in the form of collective work parties (nafir); kin and neighbours were summoned to assist the individual farmer, in weeding or harvesting for example, and the recipient of this labour would either feed the work party or provide it with native beer (merisa) during the period that it rendered its service to him or her. The second form was an elaboration of the household form and of these existing patterns of cooperation. A patron, who almost invariably was a holyman, mobilised large labour groups from his pupils and followers who worked together to cultivate very large areas, thereby producing a sufficient surplus to support the extended needs of the holyman's household. For in fulfilling his general role the holyman was expected to support individuals and fragmented households which came and attached themselves to him, as well as suppliants, guests and other visitors. The third form was where merchants employed either slaves or hired labourers to cultivate rainlands in order to produce grain for sale in markets. This practice was never so widespread on the east bank as in the Gezira before the implementation of the irrigation scheme, or as in the lands bearing heavier rainfall to the south.²

I have already referred in earlier chapters to the processes whereby the traditional forms of rainland cultivation and the social relations embedded in them underwent change: the challenge to the social dominance of the holymen posed by the activities of traders, the changing role of the holymen as their

1. See I. Shanin (ed.): *Peasants and Peasant Societies*. Harmondsworth, 1971.

2. Barnett, 1977, p.90.

educational and jurisdictional functions came to be assumed by the State, the development of new forms of property (irrigated lands) in former rainland and riverain lands, pressure on households to raise more of their income in cash and the consequent pressure on labour to migrate.

Today it is predominantly the household-based form of rainland cultivation which persists, though in a diversity of patterns all of which are substantially different from the traditional form. Collective work parties reciprocated in kind are no longer operated; exchange of labour and services between households are mediated by money, and a much wider range of cultivation strategies are available to farmers who have capital resources. Today there are no holymen in Abu Haraz or Kumur who cultivate very large areas as a result of being able to mobilise large work parties from their followers.¹ Mercantile operators of rainlands are more attracted by the conditions for investment in the Mechanised Crop Production Schemes around Gedaref; provided the entrepreneur has at least one tractor and sufficient resources to cover the costs of labour, he can obtain from the government the right to cultivate a minimum area of 1,000 feddans of rainland. Those with smaller resources can hire transport and labourers and provide the latter with food for rainland cultivation in the sparsely populated areas of the southern Gezira around Jebel Moya. Although no farmer from either Abu Haraz or Kumur cultivated more than 60 feddans, I was told that among other rainland settlements on the east bank there were farmers, using tractors, who cultivate several hundred feddans. It was these large farmers who introduced the use of tractors on the east bank for preparing the land and planting the dura seeds. In the early 1960s there were only twelve tractors in the whole of the area between Rufa'a and Sharif Ya'qub. These were owned and used by the large

1. An indication of the less 'developed' conditions in the southern Rahad area is the report of one feki cultivating 1000 gada'a through the combined labour of his followers (Galal El-Din, 1975).

rainland farmers, although they were sometimes hired out at the rate of £3-4 per gada'a (five feddans) (Hunting, 1965).

Today there are many more tractors operating on the east bank during the wet season, and they are widely used not only by large rainland farmers, but also by very small farmers. The services of six tractors were utilised by farmers interviewed from the two villages. These tractors were owned by people from neighbouring villages, five on the east bank and one in the Gezira.¹ East of Kumur the lights of at least another six tractors could be seen at night as they worked at the height of the planting season. Before describing these mechanised cultivation techniques, the reasons for their widespread adoption and the effects of their introduction, I must first describe the traditional method of cultivation by seluka.

I am concerned here with the main areas of rainland cultivation in which dura is grown by the villagers, and which are called bildat. As described in Chapter 3, other kinds of rainland are also cultivated, notably bugur in which vegetables are grown and water-courses in which okra as well as dura is grown. However, these areas of cultivation are very small compared with the lands covered by the bildats. Also I should add that sometimes okra, and also dukhn (*Pennisetum typhoideum*) or bullrush millet for animal fodder, are grown in the bildats; but the area cultivated with these other crops is tiny compared with the area planted with dura.

The main topographical feature of the bildats are the low earthen ridges (terus) which are raised to a height of up to two feet along the contour and up-slope. These ridges are made so as to increase the efficiency of rainfall by preventing normal run-off of rainwater. Further ridges are raised within the area

1. Two from El Eleila, one from Feig, Sherafa and Umm Shaneg, and one from Wad Megdhoub in the Gezira.

enclosed on three sides by the terus, so that in seasons of heavy rainfall the water is distributed more evenly over the bildat and thus prevented from collecting in one place where it might break the terus. The size of the area enclosed by the terus varies according to relief and soil composition since some bildats consist of a more sandy soil which is more permeable than the more standard clay. The size of bildats also varies as a result of land fragmentation through the course of many generations. But the minimum size for each bildat is generally about one gada'a (five feddans), though some smaller plots are cultivated by women. Ideally farmers have bildats located in three or four different places so as to take advantage of the variability of the rains. For it is quite feasible for one bildat to bear a moderate to poor harvest, while another bildat, only a mile from the first, attracts heavier rainfall and yields a good harvest. However, ploughing has tended to rationalise these scattered land-holdings; most farmers who hire tractors cultivate adjacent bildats, their own and sometimes those of migrant relatives. The best location for a bildat is where there is no other bildat up-slope from it, for thereby it catches run-off of rainwater from a large area. But most bildats are surrounded by other cultivated lands, with the terus serving as boundaries between them.

Access to cultivable land is not a significant problem for the inhabitants of Abu Haraz or Kumur. Most farmers' claims to their bildats are based on customary usufruct, the lands which they cultivate having been used by their families before them; some men cultivate lands by virtue of their wives' inheritance claims. Large areas of the rainlands are claimed by the religious families on the basis of ancient land charters granted to them by the Funj rulers. In the past non-Arakiyin settlers were allowed to cultivate part of the lands claimed by these religious families in exchange for a tithe of the produce; this is the source of the right of usufruct which most farmers enjoy. However, during the Condominium usufruct cultivators

were enabled to register these lands in their own names; registration was provided on request at a fairly nominal charge (20pt per gada'a). Farmers without customary or titular claims can gain access to a bildat by renting land from another farmer for between £S1 and £S2 per gada'a. About one in ten of the farmers interviewed in the two villages rented the lands of others in this way; this kind of tenure is known as dugundi. Since many migrants, especially from Abu Haraz, have abandoned their bildats, there is no shortage of land which can be cultivated. Uncultivated land which bears no titular claim belongs to the State, but usually no objection is made if it is cleared of scrub and cultivated so long as no standing trees are cut down. Women inherit bildats, though generally they receive between a half and a quarter of the share their brothers receive. Normally the women's shares are not claimed, but their lands are left for their brothers to cultivate. However, as already stated, if a man does not have any claim to land himself, he can cultivate the land to which his wife has a claim. Single women cultivate the lands which they have inherited from their husbands if they are widows, or from their own families if they are divorced.

Although rainland is not a scarce resource, the complexity of land claims does give rise to certain disputes. Usually these occur when one of the claimants to a piece of land wishes to alter the use to which it has been previously put. We noted an example of this in respect of riverain land in the last chapter. In the case of rainland, I witnessed a dispute which had come before the local court where a farmer had ploughed over a plot of land which a woman had already sown by seluka. In another case a religious family threatened legal action against a trader who wished to develop a battery farm in the area covered by his father's registered bildat; the religious family asserted a higher claim on the basis of an ancient land charter granted to the Arakiyin by the Funj. Nevertheless, even for the purposes of mechanised rainland cultivation, problems of

access to land are of minor consideration compared with the requirements of capital and labour.

The traditional method of cultivation entails first of all the banking up and repair of the terus and other earth ridges. Since nearly all surface vegetation and stubble from the previous season has either rotted or been eaten by herds, the soil itself requires little preparation, only a little cleaning. The dura seeds are planted following the first substantial rains in July. Pockets are made in the caked top-soil by means of the planting-stick (seluka), and the seeds are inserted in clusters at intervals of about a metre. It is estimated that two men with selukas, accompanied by two seeders - usually women or children - can sow one gada'a in a day if they work both a morning and afternoon session (dahwa and duhuriya). Depending on the nature of the rains and subsequent growth, two or more weeding sessions are required. Heavy weeding is carried out by teams of five or six hired labourers which have replaced the earlier collective work parties; if the weeding is very light family labour may of course suffice. Harvesting takes place in October and November, depending on the distribution of the rains and the rate of growth of the crops. Teams of women, again usually comprising five or six persons, remove the heads of grain leaving them in piles from where they later carry them in large baskets to the threshing-floor, which is situated in a corner of the bildat. When the whole crop has been collected at the threshing-floor, men beat the heads of grain with threshing-sticks, and separate the chaff from the seeds. The dura stalks are cut down with an axe-like instrument and collected into bundles (kolleiga). Both the grain and the dura stalks are then transported to the village, using whatever means of transport are available and merited by the size of the harvest; very small returns are transported piece-meal on donkey-back, while more substantial returns are transported by donkey-cart or by lorry. The grain is usually stored today in mud-brick store-rooms; it is rare for it to be stored in under-

ground pits (matmura) as was common in the past. The stalks also are stored away out of the reach of goats in order to provide fodder for the animals later in the dry season. Those households owning few livestock and needing immediate cash sell off these stalks to other villagers at the rate of £51-2 per 100 bundles; later in the year these bundles may be sold off individually for fodder at the rate of up to 5pt. per bundle. Planting, weeding and harvesting require the heaviest labour in-puts, and in between these tasks - at least for any one bildat - there are slacker periods. Nonetheless the crops need regular attention for their preservation from marauding livestock - the cause of many local disputes - and various pests; especially during the final ripening stage, the grain is vulnerable to attacks from flocks of storks and other smaller birds, and so a considerable amount of time needs to be devoted to scaring off these pests.¹

As already stated, the number of entrepreneurs with tractors on the east bank has increased steadily from the period of the early 1960s. Seeking to maximise their returns from their capital investment, these tractor-owners hire out their services to other farmers as well as cultivating lands on their own account. Given that yields fluctuate markedly owing to the variability of rainfall, these entrepreneurs seek to augment the returns from their own farming enterprises with the income they derive from hiring out their tractor services to other farmers. In 1977 the standard charge for ridge-ploughing was £55 per gada'a, and for disc-ploughing and drill-seeding £56 per gada'a. When a tractor is hired out continuously during the course of one day, the rental charges amount to about £100, from which a quarter must be deducted for fuel costs and the driver's wages.

The widespread adoption of mechanised cultivation through the

1. For more details of rainland cultivation, see Tothill (1948) and Randell (1958 and 1961).

hiring of tractor services can be accounted for by a combination of factors: the decreasing availability of local labour, through labour migration, schooling of children and occupational diversification; the availability of cash necessary for hiring these services, deriving from migrant remittances and savings from other occupational activities; the awareness of cultivators that ridge-ploughing in particular is conducive to better growth and higher yields; and the readiness to take advantage of a labour-saving service, the costs of which the recipients expect to reimburse through other more rewarding forms of labour or income.

In terms of relative costing, ridge-ploughing and seeding by hand or disc-ploughing and drill-seeding is about twice as expensive as hiring labourers to plant with seluka. Ridge-ploughing is more efficient than disc-ploughing, and is recognised as such by the cultivators. Apart from breaking up the caked soil more effectively, the ridging serves to concentrate the rain-water in the troughs where the seeds have been sown. With disc-ploughing on the other hand there is nothing to compensate for the loss of internal ridges which distribute water more evenly over the whole bildat, and so rain-water tends to concentrate near the main terus. Moreover, seeds sown by tractor through filters attached to the front of the disc-plough tend not to grow as well as seeds planted by hand. The main disadvantage with ridge-ploughing is that, if rain intervenes between the ploughing of the soil and before the seeding by hand has been completed, further labour or expenditure is required in planting the remaining seeds by seluka.

Compared with the subsequent tasks of weeding and harvesting, there are a greater number of factors which limit the availability of labour for planting by seluka. In the first place, although the first rains are often scattered and intermittent, and cultivators may choose to start planting at different times, the optimum period for planting is much shorter than the periods

for weeding and harvesting if the village bildats are taken as a whole. For because of differential growth rates, the timing of weeding and harvesting in each bildat varies considerably. Consequently more labour is free to circulate around different bildats for these later tasks. Moreover, a greater reserve of local labour can be called upon in weeding and harvesting, since it is in these tasks that women make their most significant contribution. By contrast, with the exception of some plots cultivated by single women, planting by seluka is predominantly a male task, though women and children assist in seeding. Furthermore, not only is planting by seluka an arduous and monotonous activity, but also it is largely associated with cultivation for subsistence and men will not readily do it for money. Most of the cases I recorded of this labour service being sought and rendered for wages were those in which the soil had become compacted through heavy rains following ridge-ploughing. Traditionally the amount of land a man cultivated reflected and accentuated his social standing, in so far as the amount depended on the social resources - family, kin, clients, slaves or followers - he was able to mobilise to labour for and with him. Today ready cash is recognised as the most important resource for effecting a successful cultivation strategy, and there is a reluctance to admit one's own deficiency of cash by hiring out one's labour to plant another man's crops. Exchange of labour services for wages in subsequent activities are not constrained by the same considerations, since it is recognised that assistance must be rendered in furthering the growth and in harvesting the crops planted.

The mechanisation of land preparation and planting obviates the difficulties and constraints referred to above. Those with sufficient capital can cultivate considerable areas of land which in the past would have required complex labour strategies. The results of the farming survey I carried out in Abu Haraz and Kumur show that farmers in Abu Haraz tend to resort more to hiring tractor services and to cultivate larger

areas than the farmers in Kumur. In Abu Haraz 44 out of 50 farmers surveyed cultivated with plough only; five cultivated some plots with plough and other plots with seluka; only one cultivated using only seluka. In Kumur 15 out of 30 cultivated with plough only; 8 cultivated with plough and seluka; 7 cultivated with seluka only. The total amount of land cultivated by the 50 Abu Haraz farmers was $158\frac{3}{4}$ gada'a, of which $147\frac{3}{4}$ were cultivated by plough and 11 by seluka. This gives an average of just over 3 gada'a (15 feddans) per farmer in Abu Haraz. The total amount of land cultivated by the 30 farmers in Kumur was $59\frac{1}{2}$ gada'a, of which $37\frac{1}{2}$ were cultivated by plough and 22 by seluka, giving an average of just under 2 gada'a (10 feddan) per farmer.¹ The greater amount of land cultivated by Abu Haraz farmers, and their greater use of tractor services can be accounted for by the fact that there is greater occupational diversity in this village, and farmers have access to larger cash resources. Although household sizes are larger in Abu Haraz than in Kumur (6.6 persons per household, compared with 5.2 persons), this does not mean that Abu Haraz farmers have more family farm labourers, thus allowing them to cultivate larger plots. What they have are more family members who are generally wage or salary earning, with whose savings they can hire machinery and labour, and in this way cultivate larger areas. Of 60 farmers in Abu Haraz 21 have some regular form of employment or income from a retailing activity in the village;² some are shop-keepers or butchers; some are vegetable-sellers, bringing vegetables from the market in Wad Medani everyday and selling them in the village early in the morning the next day; some are employed in the village's

1. In the two villages combined $108\frac{3}{4}$ gada'a were disc-ploughed and $76\frac{1}{2}$ were ridge-ploughed. The larger area disc-ploughed can probably be related to the greater availability of this service, since four out of the six tractors used had this attachment.

2. 10 farmers were not available for interviews, in some cases having left the village to work in the towns. Information on income was gathered from household surveys which had been previously carried out.

schools as caretakers and night-watchmen; some have regular employment as craftsmen and gardeners at the nearby Agricultural Institute. 39 farmers have no other regular form of income or employment; many devote time to the care of their goats, and most of these cultivate jerfs so as to provide lubia for these animals; some are inactive for the rest of the year, being old or infirm; some perform casual labour often related to building work in the village; some work casually in the towns for the rest of the year. 34 of the 60 farmers have sons with regular employment in the towns, and the remittances they send are crucial both in assisting their families with their subsistence needs and in providing cash to be used by their fathers in their farming ventures. Only 17 of the 60 farmers are without regular monied income either from their own or their sons' alternative economic activities.

By contrast in Kumur only four of the 30 farmers enjoy income from other forms of property or regular employment; two are teachers in local primary schools, one has a small shop in the village, and the fourth can rely on income from his wife's tenancy in an Irrigation Scheme near Sennar. Three of these four farmers and three others have sons in regular employment in Sennar, Wad Medani and Khartoum. Thus 23 of the 30 farmers have to rely for cash on their own and their family members' casual labour activities. Hence many of the Kumur farmers rely considerably on their own and family labour in planting. In some cases, particularly that of single women, there is a close relation between the amount of land cultivated and the needs and labour resources of the cultivator. However, in most households rainland cultivation, because of its very uncertainty, is only one resource among others for providing basic subsistence. Thus even during the wet season the labour of some family members may be allocated to tasks other than those required by the cultivation cycle.

Since the 1977 rainy season was a very poor one, many farmers

were able to rely on their own labour as sufficient in carrying out the necessary weeding and harvesting tasks. It is not necessary here to examine all the factors which affect the efficiency of rainland farming.¹ Here I am concerned with the labour recruitment strategies of those farmers with moderate to good yields who were obliged to hire labour. The majority of hired labour engaged by Abu Haraz farmers was from neighbouring villages, in particular Kumur. All the hired labour performed by women was recruited from neighbouring villages.

If a substantial amount of labour is required, the cultivator usually contacts a person from one of the neighbouring villages and uses him or her as a labour agent (wasta) to recruit the required number of other labourers. No special advantage accrues to the wasta in performing his mediatory role. This form of labour recruitment occurs with both male and female hired labour groups. It is common for the women's harvesting groups to work successively on neighbouring bildats, especially if the crops ripen about the same time. A cultivator in need of a picking group contacts a wasta working on an adjacent bildat and asks her to bring her team to his bildat when they have finished their current work. Normally there is no special relationship between cultivator and wasta. In one case a cultivator from Abu Haraz, the manager of the Cooperative shop there, engaged a cousin (FBS), who had married in Kumur, to act as wasta for a weeding group that he required; later he engaged this cousin's daughter to act as wasta for a women's picking group. In return the man in Kumur worked part of the cousin's lands for his own needs free of payment.

1. The following factors at least would have to be taken into consideration:
 - A. The amount of land cultivated and its distribution.
 - B. The location and relief of the bildats and the type of soil.
 - C. The attention paid to terus repair.
 - D. Type of seed used.
 - E. Method of land preparation and sowing.
 - F. Timing of planting.
 - G. Amount of labour applied to weeding, protection from pests, etc.

Some farmers utilised different labour strategies for different labour processes. One cultivator from Abu Haraz - the only person from that village who owned a considerable number of cattle, which were looked after during the wet season by one of his sons - cultivated $5\frac{1}{2}$ gada'a by plough. He hired local labour, mostly from Kumur, for weeding, but brought in three Bergo labourers from the west of Sudan, that he had found in Wad Medani looking for work, to harvest the crop and cut the dura stalks; he gave these labourers a daily wage and various food provisions. For threshing the grain he reverted to local hired labour. For transporting both the grain and the stalks to the village, where he stored them, he hired lorries from Abu Haraz al Wastani. For a total outlay of £S166 for labour and hiring charges, his grain returns alone were worth £S306 at the then market value; in addition he obtained 10,000 kolleiga which were of great value to his cattle herd.

Only one cultivator from Abu Haraz came to a kind of share-cropping arrangement in order to relieve himself of the problem of finding adequate labour. His partner, from the village of El Eleila, not only procured the necessary labour from his village, but also provided the use of a tractor which he owned, and a lorry which his brother owned. They cultivated 7 gada'a of fertile land near El Eleila. Working together with the labour teams they hired, and sharing all expenses, they acquired a net profit of £S375 from the 35 ardebs of grain which they harvested;¹ in addition they reaped 12,000 kolleiga.

Since in Kumur there existed a greater potential pool of labour, more labour was recruited by cultivators there from within the village. However, labour was not noticeably recruited along the lines of kinship. In fact villagers generally preferred to sell their labour to cultivators from Abu Haraz since they could obtain rather higher wages from the latter. Not infrequently

1. 1 ardeb = 20 keila = 508 kg.

cultivators in Kumur found themselves obliged to hire labourers from other villages. Those with traditional high status, such as the Arakiyin core families, were best placed to recruit substantial amounts of labour from within the village. Both the Sheikh el hilla and his brother-in-law, the recognised religious leader in the village and the Director of a nearby primary school, recruited large labour teams from the village. The former found it necessary in addition to hire two labourers from the village of Amara, providing them with food and accommodation for the best part of a month, in order to help with the weeding of the 6 gada'a which he cultivated. At harvest-time he recruited men and women from the village, though the women in his family did not participate in this work. His brother-in-law, feki Tom, who had cultivated 4 gada'a by seluka, recruited only village labour; he worked alongside the men he hired in planting and weeding, and the labour of the female members of his family, together with some of their cousins, sufficed for harvesting. Another Kumur man, who had cultivated 4 gada'a by plough, was able to carry out most of the early labour tasks himself, since the weeding was light. One of his sons was caring for the family herd of goats, and the other adult son worked in Khartoum as an electrician. At the harvest he hired a man from Tibeib village to cut the stalks, while the women members of his family recruited other women villagers to help them do the picking. For labour costs of £S36, combined with a lot of own labour, he had returns of grain worth £S180 as well as 3000 kolleiga, which were easily the best returns enjoyed by any cultivator in Kumur during this season.

Cultivators of slave descent tend to be forced to rely on kinship ties as a source of labour to a greater extent than the other villagers in Kumur. Memories of their former status are still sufficiently strong for the other villagers to be reluctant to render paid labour to these families. As a result, if they require more extensive labour, these cultivators must seek assistance either from families of similar status, from such kin as

they possess, or from other villages. An example of such strategies is provided by the family of the deceased slave, Allah-jabu. This family, comprising 31 persons in total, consisted of five separate economic units, at least as far as cultivation strategies went. These latter groups consisted of the widowed mother with her unmarried children, the two married sons' families and the two married daughters' families; a third married daughter lived in another village. Each of these groups cultivated a separate plot, even though several of them were contiguous; labour, however, was exchanged between them for wages. In particular one of the married sons, who had cultivated by seluka and had the most successful crop, hired the labour of his brothers and brothers-in-law for weeding, cutting the stalks, threshing and transporting his crop. Weeding was heavy, and so he hired two other labourers from the villages of Tibeib and Gara for six days. The harvesting of the grain was carried out by family members and other village women of slave descent.

Each family, therefore, acts as a separate productive unit. The possibility of earning wages for agricultural labour encourages the spread of monetarised labour services between closely-related families and even within the family. Just as Culwick observed in respect of Gezira tenant households, there is a marked tendency towards the independence of wage-earning sons.¹ Her remarks concerning the effect of economic conditions in the Gezira are just as applicable to the east bank:

Economic conditions within the Gezira Scheme are, of course, chiefly responsible for the tendency of the patriarchal household of the traditional subsistence economy to break down into the multiplicity of patterns found in the Gezira village... The ready availability of money-earning occupations naturally loosens ties and encourages the independence of what would formerly have been parts of one composite household. (1954, p.118)

1. G.M.Culwick: Some Problems of the Social Survey in the Sudan. Sudan Notes and Records, Vol. 35, 1954.

Barnett (1977) found no evidence of related households cooperating to run their respective tenancies as a joint enterprise in the Gezira. Likewise I found no example of closely related persons operating their rainland plots as a combined venture. At marriage, if not before, a son claims part of his father's bildats and cultivates this part separately from the bildats remaining to his father. Thus father and married sons each head separate productive units. For example, Ibrahim Tayib and his three married sons, El Imam, Tayib and Mustafa cultivated quite independently of each other; they also managed their herds quite separately - the father had several cows, and El Imam had the largest number of goats by virtue of his having expended the greatest time and labour with the family's herd in the past. Where a household possesses both rainland and livestock resources, the independence of that son on whom falls the main responsibility for maintaining the family herd may be delayed. The father may facilitate the early marriage of that son on the understanding that he will continue to undertake this responsibility, leaving the father and other sons free to concentrate on rainland farming and other income raising activities. Ibboudi Elamin facilitated in this way the marriage of his son, Kharafallah, to a cousin in Taif. However, sons are increasingly reluctant to play the role of family herdsman for an indefinite period, and they often insist that the father hire a herdsboy. For example, in Abu Haraz Mohammed Nasr, who was in his late teens, had assumed the main responsibilities with regard to his family's herd of goats for three or four years. His two elder brothers worked in Khartoum and his younger brothers were still at school in the village, but he decided that his own career prospects were not being enhanced through this lonesome activity. His father was obliged to hire a herdsboy, and Mohammed moved to Wad Medani, staying with relatives of his mother until he found work in the town.

The payment of wages to family members who share the same cooking-pot is not uncommon practice. Women and adolescent

children use these wages, as well as other income they obtain, to purchase clothing and other items of personal consumption. Payment of wages to family members tends to occur when the amount of free labour they contribute to the family farming enterprise is reduced or threatened through their offering labour for wages to other cultivators. It 'pays' the farmer to give a wage to his family members for some activities, often those which are piece-rated, in order to retain their free labour in other activities. In the case of wives, who are of course constrained from offering all their services to other men, this arrangement finds a neat balance - the women will weed and sow seeds for her husband for free, but at harvest-time, particularly if other women are hired the wife will charge the husband for her labour. In the case of adolescent sons the transformation is progressive; at first the son is an unpaid family helper; then he combines paid with unpaid labour for his father; then he hires out his labour to others, during which time he will contribute something towards the cost of living born by his family; finally he works on his own account and meets the full costs of his own subsistence (i.e. at marriage).

The calculation as to which activities ought to be rendered for free and which for payment naturally weakens ties within and between families. Similarly tensions often arises when a son is earning wages regularly, but his cost of living is being met by his family; the amount that he contributes whether in money form or unpaid assistance is often seen as too much by the son and too little by the rest of the family. With the same "pronounced streak of economic individualism" that Culwick noticed, "operating within the general social framework of the wider family responsibilities",¹ it is not surprising that quarrels and disputes often of a petty nature are frequent - such as the request for something being refused and it being taken arbitrarily in response. Tension often surrounds the smallest financial

1. G.M.Culwick: A Study of the Human Factor in the Gezira Scheme. Unpublished report, Barakat. Not dated.

transactions, and this can explode in ugly incidents. Wry humour greets the man who can further his own interest even at the expense of the old and weak. Barnett recalled how small sums of money were often the subject of disputes and provided the idiom in which social relationships were defined and broken off.¹ Many examples could be given to portray a similar state of affairs on the east bank. During the 1977 cultivation season there were several accusations of theft and fears voiced of people stealing grain. One oldish woman slept out in her bildat beside the grain she had harvested for fear of it being stolen. When I pointed out her discomfort to her nephews, they found her situation rather amusing though without wishing her any malice. The ensuing spectacle which derived from our attempts to transport her grain on a borrowed cart to the village caused even greater mirth.

Taking the two villages as a whole, an important variation in farming strategies exists concerning the participation of women. The extent of women's productive labour today is conditioned by the strategies households must adopt in order to meet their total cost of living needs. In the case of most Kumur households this entails both labour within the family farming enterprise, and wage labour rendered to other farmers. The wages paid to women workers are low; women harvesters, employed in removing the heads of grain and in transporting them in baskets, receive 20-30pt a day, which is a third of the average male wage for most other agricultural tasks. The low value placed on this female labour can be accounted for by various factors. The range of opportunities for paid work by women are limited, but the number of women in villages such as Kumur who need to engage in paid labour so as to provide sufficient income for their families is very large. Thus women provide a reserve army of labour for what are seasonal activities, and this has the effect of deflating their wages. The fact that

1. Barnett, 1977, p.99.

women do also perform unpaid agricultural labour has the same effect.

Women in Kumur certainly contributed significant amounts of labour to their families' farming enterprises. It was common to see a wife sowing, following behind her husband digging with the seluka, or a father and daughter engaged in these activities; or a mother and son, or husband and wife weeding together. Many women assumed the major productive role in the absence of the husband. For example, Mabarak, a teacher in a village in the Gezira, provided his wife sufficient money with which to cultivate $1\frac{1}{2}$ gada'a by plough; assisted by two adolescent sons, she sowed, weeded and harvested the meagre crop from this plot. In fact eight women from the village managed their own farming enterprises throughout. Three were widows, one was divorced, two had voluntarily separated themselves from their husband, an old feki living in Taif, and two had husbands working elsewhere - one a gardener in the Gezira, and the other the school-teacher just referred to. Seven of them planted one gada'a, while the divorced woman planted two gada'a, one by plough and one by seluka; three of the others, all widows, also planted by seluka. Most of these women relied on their own labour and unpaid labour from unmarried children. One had assistance from a married brother, and another from a married son, but most stressed that they had to rely on their own resources. For some of the more arduous tasks, such as threshing and cutting the stalks, several of the women hired the services of other villagers, usually non-relatives. No assistance took place between the women, even between those who were related and cultivated adjacent bildats. For example, Zaineb Yusuf (separated) and her daughter, Hajja (husband absent), planted adjacent plots by disc-plough. They hired the services of the same tractor, and when it came to paying the driver a heated argument took place between the mother and daughter as to who should pay exactly how much. In the subsequent tasks of weeding and harvesting they app-

lied their labour to their own plots quite independently of each other. Women cultivators, therefore, were not immune from the prevailing rationality which informed cultivation strategies; they applied their own labour and that of family members when it could be enlisted, and they sought cash with which to hire labourers whenever more extensive labour was needed.

The fuller participation of women in Kumur in social production gives them a more prominent role in public life; and their greater self-reliance encourages more forthright behaviour. In the home their opinions and judgments have considerable force in a wide range of affairs, and not simply domestic ones. The simple housing style, which in most households allows no physical division between male and female quarters, makes the presence of women all the more clearly felt. On the other hand, because of the very fact that women are seen to be productively active, capable of earning wages, and even capable, if necessary, of managing independent households, they have fewer claims on menfolk to provide for them. For example, if a woman wants a new tob or dress, she is normally expected to pay for it out of her own earnings. In most cases men can not afford to support women in such a way as to allow them to become dependent consumers. Only the family of the Sheikh el hilla diverged from this prevailing pattern in Kumur. The female members of this household did not work outside, even though the area of rainland the village headman cultivated was the largest in the village and it was situated closest to the village. The mother had a small shop within the family compound. The two eldest daughters were married, one living nearby with her builder husband, and the other in the Gezira with her shop-keeper husband. Two other daughters were engaged, one to her cousin (FZS) in Abu Haraz, a court clerk, and the other to a non-relative from Taif, a lorry-owner. Their approaching marriages provided them with the prospect of security, and the knowledge that their labour would not be required by their husbands in order to contribute to family

income. The considerable amount of dowry paid to them, which was five to eight times the average amount in the village, and the quantity and quality of the trousseau already given them testified to their future status. A greater part of their time, compared with other women in Kumur, was given over to food preparation in view of the obligation of their father to entertain all manner of visitors to the village. Two younger daughters were still studying at school, and stayed with relations in Abu Haraz (the family of a son of Sheikh el Eleish by another marriage). Thus different factors combined to condition the primary domestic role of the women of this household: the fact that both parents were from religious families; the fact that this household enjoyed important resources, including fertile rainlands, the wife's tenancy near Sennar and her shop in the village, and the salaried income of the eldest son working at the Sennar Sugar Refinery - and that these resources enabled the hiring of machinery and labour in the bildat; the fact that more domestic duties were entailed by virtue of Sheikh Hamad al-Nil being the village headman; and finally the fact that the status which the family already enjoyed had helped bring about the marriages of three daughters to men who could assure them of a standard of living which made unnecessary their own contribution to income-raising.

In Abu Haraz only one woman, a widow, cultivated, and one other woman, from a Kumur family, but married in Abu Haraz, assisted in the bildat which her husband cultivated. What explanation can be given for the marked difference in the contribution of women's productive labour in these two villages? Such differences of ethnic or tribal origin as exist between the inhabitants of the two villages do not warrant such a significant contrast in the participation of the womenfolk in cultivation. In fact the majority of the inhabitants belong to tribal groups common to both villages, such as the Arakiyin, Ja'ali and Khawalda. In spite of the two villages' different history of settlement, it cannot be said that all or even the majority of the

inhabitants of Kumur possess a lower traditional status than the inhabitants of Abu Haraz. The proportion of families of slave descent is somewhat higher in Kumur than in Abu Haraz, but such persons comprise only 15% of the total population of Kumur. In the past women in Abu Haraz, and not only those of slave descent, used to participate in rainland cultivation. Today, with those isolated exceptions noted, they no longer do so.

To explain such disparities it is often said that the employment of women in agriculture is congruent with work on family plots, since such labour is seen as an extension of unpaid domestic work; but that when agricultural work becomes commercialised, with the hiring of labour and the commoditisation of the product, women tend to withdraw their labour, especially if it entails their contact with male strangers or persons of a lower status. The women of certain families may be obliged to sell their labour as a result of their households' low income. But these women would not engage in this work if they could afford not to do so. This line of argument is often allied to, or even underscored, by explanations which place emphasis on the spread of values and beliefs which are held to be antithetical to women's paid work and employment outside the home. I have discussed the broader implications of the latter argument in Chapter 1. Here I wish to examine the arguments concerning the constraints placed on women's work as a result of their likely contact with stranger men and concerning their need to work in relation to women's participation rates in Kumur and Abu Haraz.

It is true that part of the labour provided by women in Kumur is applied to their family plots often at times when it is not necessary to hire additional outside labour. When they join hired labour parties whether on their own family bildats or on those of other villagers, it is generally with other women from the village. By virtue of the system of recruitment through

work party organisers (wasta) that I described, contact with unrelated male farmers and labourers is fairly minimal, even when women work for farmers from other villages, such as Abu Haraz. Not all these wastas, I should add, are older women; one was an unmarried girl in her late teens, though this case entailed the recruitment of a work party for the girl's father's cousin (FFBS). Thus the system of recruitment and the degree of sexual division of labour discourage extensive contact between women workers and unrelated men. However, in travelling to the fields and in performing certain tasks, a certain amount of contact between women and unrelated men is unavoidable. The prospect of such contact clearly does not deter women in Kumur from assisting in sowing, weeding and harvesting, nor does it shame their menfolk into discouraging such participation. If they were so inclined, the wives of farmers in Abu Haraz could work under similar conditions, that is, in the company of other women familiar to them, and with relatively little contact with stranger men. When questioned why they did not take part in cultivation as the women of Kumur did, wives of farmers in Abu Haraz generally replied that they were too occupied with their domestic chores, or that they did not know how to do the tasks involved, or simply that they were not accustomed to doing so. They made no distinction between working on the family bildat and working for others for wages.

My data on cultivation strategies in the two villages showed that farmers in Abu Haraz tended to cultivate rather larger areas, and hired tractor and labour services more extensively than farmers in Kumur. I attributed this to the larger cash resources which they derive from the remittances of migrant sons, from local retailing businesses, and from salaried positions they occupy for the rest of the year in the village services. Some farmers in Abu Haraz can clearly afford to dispense with the labour of other family members in the farming enterprise. But about a third of the farmers' households in Abu Haraz are very little differentiated in access to ready cash and in income-

raising ability from the bulk of households in Kumur. Scattered through Abu Haraz are the mud and straw homes of farmers who eke out their subsistence from rainland cultivation with small herds of goats and local casual labour. In relation to their needs there should be strong pressure on their dependents to participate in cultivation. Inversely there are households in Kumur which in terms of their income and resources can afford to dispense with the contribution which their womenfolk make to cultivation. Thus the argument that the women of Kumur and Abu Haraz only work through the pressure of need cannot, unless elaborated, account for women's participation rates in these villages.

On the other hand, it seems fairly clear that economic differentiation in Abu Haraz, with the adoption of new occupations and the attainment of higher standards of living by most of the inhabitants, has been mainly responsible for the withdrawal of both men and women from manual labour in cultivation. For it is to be noted that while most of the farmers still work on their family plots, some adopt a solely managerial role in relation to the various tasks which they have performed during the cultivation cycle. The reason for the withdrawal of female labour among those households in Abu Haraz that still rely primarily on cultivation and animal-herding lies, I would argue, in the particular development of occupational diversity within the village. Today only one household in five engages in rainland cultivation. The households that do farm are not clustered within a closely related group of families, but are distributed among many unrelated or distantly related families. As I explained in the last chapter, occupational diversification has often followed the pattern of one son remaining in the village and continuing to farm, while other sons migrate to find work elsewhere, though generally marrying in the village. The wives of migrants give up agricultural work, since they are provided for through their husbands' monied income. Consequently these women involve themselves in elaborated domestic routines, and

devote a greater amount of time to life-cycle celebrations and social visiting. The wives of farmers gradually adopt a similar life-style, partly through emulation, but more importantly through everyday pressures of sociability and the practical content of relationships with close relatives, friends and neighbours. To take just one example of these pressures: women in Abu Haraz place great value on reciprocal visiting, especially in the event of something out of the ordinary happening; relations between two women become strained, if not bitter, if one woman fails to visit another on a particular occasion, such as at giving birth. It is not difficult to imagine, therefore, that a woman should insist on fulfilling such an obligation rather than agreeing to help weed the bildat. Emulation of the more secluded life-style of mercantile families and successful migrants is probably also a significant factor. But I must leave discussion of the adoption of new consumption patterns and life-styles to the next chapter.

To summarise my arguments concerning the commercialisation of rainland cultivation and the sexual division of labour of the two villages studied: different cultivation strategies, which are themselves strongly conditioned by the degree of access to cash resources, encourage the participation of women in Kumur, but not that of women in Abu Haraz in farming activities. In Abu Haraz most farmers are able to generate more cash from other sources in order to hire tractors and to hire labour and to cultivate larger areas; consequently family labour, including that of women, is relied on to a much lesser extent. In contrast both men and women in Kumur work more intensively on their own plots and provide considerable amounts of labour to other farmers. These divergent patterns in the two villages, I argued, exert a tendency towards conformity in each village concerning the participation of women. In the case of Abu Haraz, with the withdrawal of women's labour, I suggested that this tendency was less a matter of emulation, though it is certainly involved, but more the consequence of actual connexions and

relations between domestic groups, with the wives of migrants and merchants absorbing other women into an elaborated round of domestic routines and activities.

CHAPTER 5

PATTERNS AND TRENDS IN HOUSEHOLD ORGANISATION

In this chapter I wish to examine the changes which have occurred in household organisation and in consumption patterns as a response to and in conjunction with the economic changes described in the previous chapters. At the outset I should stress that I am not proposing that there is a one-way causal relationship between the economy and forms of domestic organisation. Variations in family and domestic patterns play a part in facilitating economic differentiation. For example, size of family and sex ratio within individual households are factors which may favour differential responses to new economic conditions. Where there are opportunities for wage-earning occupations, a household with a favourable ratio of productive members can use the savings of its members as capital; or it can devote greater resources to the education of certain of its members, and thereby attain new forms of income. Age at marriage has a bearing on patterns of employment. Delayed marriages are both a response to, and also a contributive factor to a prolonged period of wage-earning by young men. (Hajnal 1965) Patterns of consumption act back on the system of production and exchange. For example the increase in household and personal consumption may impede the channeling of wealth into more productive ends; at the same time, by increasing the circulation of consumer goods, it serves to widen the scope of money, and to further the interests of merchants involved in commodity exchanges. On the other hand the decline in the redistribution of goods outside the household allows the retention of a greater share of wealth by individual households. Wolf has remarked of peasant societies that part of the fruits of labour is given over to some form of ceremonial fund which

serves to reproduce the values of that society.¹ Often the ceremonial fund is dispensed at celebrations within the domestic cycle; these occasions are marked by the distribution of goods to the wider community in exchange for the recognition that the latter gives to the domestic group concerned. Wolf argues that if, as a result of cultural changes, a smaller part of a household's resources is used for these ceremonial purposes, a greater amount of wealth may be devoted to productive ends, and this encourages the differentiation of households. I argue that an increase in expenditure on domestic cycle celebrations is compatible with new forms of socio-economic differentiation. Elaboration of domestic cycle festivities in which the wider community participates may underline and provide recognition of the differences in property and status which exist between members of the community. This I try to show is the case in Abu Haraz. Attempts to curtail expenditure on festivities have been made, not by individual households seeking to limit consumption within their respective domains, but as a result of a collective initiative by members of the community. In the case of expenditure connected with marriage celebrations, which I consider in detail in the next chapter, the concern to limit and standardise transactions has arisen from the awareness of the social consequences of increased expenditure and delayed marriages. Given the discrepancies in wealth between different households, it is not surprising that these attempts to limit expenditure on marriage payments and celebrations have been only partially successful.

Thus I would accept that changes in family and domestic organisation have important implications for wider social and economic relations. But the perspective that I am pursuing here and trying to substantiate is that certain trends and patterns in domestic institutions may be best accounted for by reference to changes in the system of productive relations. Broadly speak-

1. E.R.Wolf: Peasants. New Jersey, 1966.

ing in this chapter I am concerned with the way in which the means of obtaining goods has affected the household as a unit of consumption. For here I wish to consider the emergence of new consumption patterns, the organisation of household budgets, the allocation of social space within the home, and the significance of extraordinary expenditure relating to domestic cycle celebrations. In the following two chapters I examine the changes in matrimonial payments and the formation of new domestic groups (Chapter 6), and related changes in the institution of marriage, concerning age at marriage, divorce, remarriage and plural marriages (Chapter 7).

I wish to pay particular attention to trends and patterns of household organisation in Abu Haraz: unless otherwise stated, my remarks concern this particular village. For it is in Abu Haraz rather than Kumur that certain trends in domestic and marriage practices have been most marked. This I would largely attribute to the greater prevalence of regular wage and salary-earned incomes and to the accumulation of petty-capital by a small but significant proportion of the population in this village. The withdrawal of a large number of the inhabitants from subsistence activities, and their need to purchase consumer goods through the market provide at least the possibility for the differentiation of life-styles. Expenditure on consumer goods and durable household assets has in fact increased considerably but unevenly. Attempts to maintain and enhance differentiated status have led in general to greater material and ideological investment in marriages. By contrast in Kumur the forced reliance of the majority of the inhabitants on their family patrimonies of rainlands and herds, combined with the performance of local casual labour, has encouraged the maintenance of something more akin to traditional domestic patterns. Living standards in Kumur have altered little. Most households' domestic equipment is still of a limited and rudimentary nature. Their homes themselves are simply constructed and easily removable - which facilitates the seasonal migration of several

households to the Gezira for the cotton-picking. Women in Kumur still contribute substantial amounts of productive labour, and there has arisen no strict division of male and female space within the home. Marriage payments have remained relatively simple, and marriages are not subjected to the same kind of pressures as in Abu Haraz, where the responsibility of husbands as providers has been greatly extended in scope.

In the previous two chapters I have shown the extent to which commercial relations have penetrated local productive activities, and how this has encouraged the adoption of wage labour, salaried employment and commercial ventures both within and outside the locality. It is also necessary to point out that monetarised services have encroached on many domestic activities. The processing of several goods for consumption, and many activities entailed in everyday household maintenance have been transformed into goods and services which have to be paid for. The transformation of these domestic activities has meant in many cases the replacement of unpaid female labour by goods and services based on paid male labour. For example, grain for human consumption is no longer ground by hand either in Abu Haraz or Kumur; today it is milled. There are now three grain-mills in Abu Haraz, each privately owned; two are owned by shop-keepers in the village, and the third, the oldest, is hired out by a migrant from the village, now working as a retailer in Khartoum. Most of the inhabitants of Abu Haraz, and some neighbouring villagers from Kumur and El Eleila avail themselves of these services. Other villagers have their grain milled at local markets, held twice weekly at Hideiba and Umm Shaneg, or in Wad Medani. From these places they can also purchase grain at lower costs than in Abu Haraz. While milling charges are not very expensive - 3-5pt per keila (25.4 kg) - over a year they amount to £S3-5 for an average household.

Milling of grain has greatly reduced the drudgery of female domestic work, just as has the introduction of bore-wells. Much

less time is now spent in procuring drinking water, compared with when water had to be manually raised from deep wells or carried up from the river. However, for women in Kumur obtaining water entails a long walk to the government bore-well, which serves not only Kumur el Eleish, but also the settlements of Masara and Kumur el Batahin. A few households have water brought to their homes by donkey-cart; this service is rendered by small boys for payment. In Abu Haraz, in addition to the government bore-well, the villagers have themselves installed piping to central watering points, each serving up to twenty households. Several households have at their own expense installed further piping in order to bring water into their respective compounds. In order to meet the costs of fuel and maintenance of the diesel pump, each household contributes 25pt a month for access to a communal watering-point, or 50pt a month if piping is extended to their homes. This expenditure is met from the household budget which is almost invariably supported by male-earned incomes; formerly, of course, provision of water, as with grinding of grain, was an unpaid female activity.

Similarly a greater amount of fuel for household use is today purchased rather than gathered by women. Especially in Abu Haraz, many households use charcoal which can be purchased in the village shops. This charcoal is brought by merchants from the forested areas between the southern stretches of the Dinder and Rahad rivers where the wood is burnt. Previously most households used firewood collected by women from the nearby forest, and also part of the roots of the acacia tree (tertus) which give off a dense heat like charcoal. The women of poor families still collect both these roots and firewood from the forest. The latter they use for their own needs, but also they sell some to other households, for firewood is necessary for the open fires on which the dura bread (kisra) is baked. Some men take up wood-cutting as a casual form of employment, selling the fallen and dead timber they have collected at 50pt

a donkey load.¹

Specialization of production has brought about the disappearance of several domestic crafts and industries. Spinning and weaving of cotton, respectively female and male tasks, are no longer practised. In Abu Haraz pottery used to be made by the women, but today a wide range of metal and enamel pots and bowls are preferred. Some clay utensils are still used, such as the doqa for baking kisra and the spherical coffee pots (jebena), but these are bought in Wad Medani and not made in the village. Several other activities in which female domestic labour has been displaced could be cited. For example, changes in housing styles have made women's labour in house repair and building less prevalent. Women used to be responsible for repairing mud-block walls (jalous) and for smearing potash on interior walls as a method of white-washing.² Bricks, whether dried mud or fired, have widely replaced jalous, and whitewash and paint are more frequently used than potash for interior decoration. The labour involved in these new labour processes is invariably performed by men. This is true both of the production of these new materials and of their use.

Traditional craft activities performed by men have also been affected by the changing need and desire for such goods, and

1. The forest next to Abu Haraz is government protected, and special permission is required to cut down living trees. Two forest wardens in Abu Haraz and El Eleila are employed to prevent unauthorised felling of trees. Periodically licences are granted to merchants to clear mature trees. Nearly all these contractors are of West African origin, and they employ West African labourers. These restrictions account for why charcoal is not made locally.

2. Formerly when communities like Abu Haraz and Kumur followed a more nomadic existence, women played an even more important role in house-building, since they wove the mats or rugs of which their shelters consisted. Also the women of households possessing herds used to expend considerable labour in processing milk products, particularly clarified butter (semin). The women marketed these products and retained the proceeds. Today the marketing of milk is performed by men. In the Rahad area there are groups of Shukriya, Batahin and Rufa'ayin that still pursue a nomadic life, though many have become partly settled.

by the availability of manufactured goods in the market. In Abu Haraz one old man still makes the traditional leather footwear (markub), but most of the villagers prefer manufactured, and often imported, shoes and sandals. The manufacture of wooden bed-frames (angarib), sprung with either leather thongs or palm-fibre ropes, still provides part-time employment for some of the villagers. But metal-framed beds and chairs are found in an increasing number of households. Several other forms of traditional carpentry and craftwork have been superseded by the manufacture of various utensils and furnishings in the towns, and by the import of cheap household goods. Wooden tables and chests, farming utensils, riding gear, leather containers and water-skins are all examples of traditional craftwork which have been made largely redundant, or replaced by modern manufactured goods.

The people of Abu Haraz are dependent on the market for an increasing proportion of their consumption needs. Both for the equivalent of what they used to produce themselves, and for a wide range of new commodities the villagers have to purchase what they need. Those households not engaging in rainland cultivation or animal husbandry, but which are supported through the efforts of migrant labourers, need to purchase all their food requirements. Those households that have herds and have enjoyed a successful harvest are able to furnish themselves with the staples of their diet - dura, milk and bamia (okra), or waika, a natural species of bamia which grows wild in the bildats. Culwick has made a detailed study of dietary patterns in the Gezira area, and she records how the traditional diet has been supplemented and modified by the introduction of various new foodstuffs.¹ The most important modifications consist of the wider availability and consumption of fresh meat, vegetables, salads and fruits, wheat flour, pasta, rice

1. G.M.Culwick: Diet in the Gezira Irrigated Area. Sudan Gezira Board, Barakat, 1951.

and white bread. Poor families minimise their expenditure on these foodstuffs, and rely to a greater extent on the staples mentioned above, plus dried meat (sharmoot), and warak and rigla, two other stew relishes found locally. However, even very poor families find the means to buy tea, coffee, sugar, salt and spices, all of which are looked upon as essentials though they have little nutritional value. This is illustrated in Table I which gives the annual expenditure of six households on food and basic household necessities.

Barnett (1977) notes that in the Gezira most household goods are bought with cash, and he gives a list (p.176) which illustrates the fact that most household furnishings and utensils are in fact imported goods, or at least derived from imported materials and containers which are refashioned in the towns. The same is true of consumer goods on the east bank, in villages like Abu Haraz. The most common transformation in furnishings is the replacement of the multi-functional angarib by metal-framed beds and chairs, and the substitution of cupboards and hanging-rails for chests and boxes. Wealthy families possess lavish bedroom suites and suites for the diwan. Imported carpets take the place of mats in these homes. The installation of electricity in Abu Haraz in 1977 was followed by the purchase of televisions and refrigerators by several households. It has now become an established custom ('idda) for women to collect numerous sets of crockery, pans and bowls, tea services and glasses, all of which are imported goods. These objects are displayed in glass-fronted cabinets. Most of the time they are not used, but on special occasions when there are many guests they will be used to serve the latter. These collections of cooking and eating utensils are an indication of the more pronounced domestic role of women; at the same time they refer to the success of their husbands in providing for them.

Ibn Khaldoun remarked that the tailor was unknown to the nomad who tends to wrap clothing around him, rather than to

TABLE 1

HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION BUDGETS

(Annual consumption per household in Sudanese Pounds)

Head of household	1 Abdelgadir		2 Nazir		3 Nasr		4 Tom		5 Umm Kaltum		6 Batul			
No. in household	6ad	4m	3ad	2st	2ch	6ad	3ch	2ad	2m	1st	4ad	2ch	3ad	4ch
Consumption Units*	13		5			7½		3			5		5	
FOOD														
Dura	220		70			90		30			54		30	
wheat/white bread	100		20			12		6			6		6	
cooking oil	72		54			36		18			18		16	
Fresh meat	220		110			75		35			45		35	
Dried meat	24		10			8		6			6		6	
Trad. relishes	100		30			30		18			35		40	
Fresh veg. & salads	225		60			60		25			30		25	
Rice, pasta	45		10			15		5			10		10	
Spices	20		8			8		5			8		6	
Sugar	250		85			50		45			32		45	
Tea & Coffee	130		70			25		18			24		24	
Milk	220		45			30		20			20		20	
Fruit	50		30			3		2			2		2	
TOTAL	1576		602			432		236			290		265	
FUEL														
Kerosene	36		28			18		18			3		3	
Charcoal	16		36			-		16			-		7	
Wood	180		18			-		-			-		-	
Electricity	150		75			26		25			-		-	
TOTAL	382		157			44		59			3		10	

* Consumption Units: ad adult 1
 m migrant ¼
 st student absent during term ½
 ch child ½

Household Consumption Budgets (Cont'd.)

Notes on households.

1. Abdelgadir al-Nil. Shop-keeper and rainland farmer. 4 married sons merchants in Khartoum, but married in Abu Haraz. Occupy seven red-brick rooms in large compound with lavish diwan. Shop separate. Father budgets for all their households, though sons contribute additional items to respective families. Purchase items wholesale.
2. Nazir 'Alim. Shop-keeper, seller of grain, and, from 1977, operator of electric mill in village. Occupies three red-brick rooms, enclosed. Separate diwan near shop. Purchases items wholesale.
3. Nasr Gasim. Rainland and jerf farmer, and keeper of goats. Two married sons resident in Khartoum. Occupies one red-brick room with enclosure, and one mud-brick room with veranda. Purchases items from Coop. shop.
4. Tom Tireifi. Retired farmer. Two migrant sons in regular employment return intermittently to village. Two red-brick rooms, partly enclosed. Purchases from Coop. shop.
5. Umm Kaltum. Widow, rainland farmer. One son medical assistant, with salary of £S17 month, others still studying. One mud-brick room and veranda. No compound. Buys from local shop.
6. Batul 'Ali. Widow of irrigation controller in Gezira. Lives with widowed mother, and 5 children. One mud-brick room, with delapidated veranda. No compound. Buys from local shop; many items provided by sons of husband's brother, migrant workers in Khartoum, who are engaged to two of Batul's daughters.

have it cut to fit him. Certainly dress styles have become much more varied, with different kinds of clothing appropriate to the age, sex and status of the wearer, and the occasion and circumstances of its use. The jellabiya is still popular, but it is increasingly common for both sexes to wear western-style clothes. In the case of women a long drape is drawn around the body over these clothes outside the privacy of the home. Traditionally this drape (tob) was of white cotton or dyed with indigo in the case of older women. But today the trousseau of a bride in Abu Haraz comprises several tobs of differing quality, with the most expensive being of fine synthetic fibres with beautiful coloured designs. According to a man's main occupational role and social standing, he tends to wear different costumes for work and leisure activities, for formal as against informal occasions, and in private as against in public. Considerable attention is paid also to children's clothing, especially at the 'eids and other festive occasions, and when visiting. New kinds of costume have been introduced in connexion with recently accentuated ceremonies, such as weddings. In some marriages the bride wears a white wedding gown (zeffaf), while the bridegroom wears a western-style suit (as opposed to the safari suit commonly worn by government officials).

As mentioned before, most of these new forms of clothing are made from imported materials. The material is generally bought in the towns, and then made up by tailors there or in the village. In Abu Haraz there are normally five or six tailors resident in the village, where they work in the verandas of the village shops. Most tailors own their own sewing-machines and pay rent to the shop-keeper for the space they occupy. Two of the tailors own the buildings in which they work, and have on display a selection of materials and a stock of ready-made clothes. In Kumur there is no resident tailor, and when people there want clothes tailored they must travel to one of the markets.

New housing styles are another important feature of emergent consumption patterns. Brausch describes at some length the various styles of housing which have spread through the rural areas of the Gezira. He argues that the establishment of permanent villages and the greater access to water which facilitates the construction and use of bricks have encouraged these trends.¹ Buildings constructed of brick, as opposed to mud and straw, are valued for their greater durability, and for the fact that they provide larger space and are more water-proof.² In Abu Haraz most houses are built of a mixture of fired and unfired mud bricks (gishra). The rooms are rectangular-shaped with flat roofs. All the buildings in the village are single-storied. Most homes are now enclosed by compound walls. Because of shortage of space when improvements or extensions to buildings are carried out, the old building is often pulled down, and the new building erected on the site. However, where space is not a problem, it is common to find houses comprising buildings of varying age, and of different styles. By contrast in Kumur most the buildings are constructed with circular mud walls, and wood and straw conical roofs. Few of them have compound walls. New buildings are only distinguished by the fact that the straw is fawn-coloured in contrast to the dun, weather-beaten roofs of older buildings. The exceptions to this pattern are a cluster of brick buildings in the centre of the village, occupied by the descendants of Sheikh El Eleish, and a few other isolated modern buildings of migrant workers.

Households in Abu Haraz possess more rooms than those in Kumur (2 rooms per household as against 1.5 in Kumur). Enlargement of living space permits the allocation of space to

1. G. Brausch: Bashaqra Area Settlements 1963: A Case Study in Village Development in the Gezira Scheme. Khartoum 1964.

2. Brausch estimates the life-span of a mud-brick or jalous building to be about 10 years, while that of a fired-brick building to be more than 30 years.

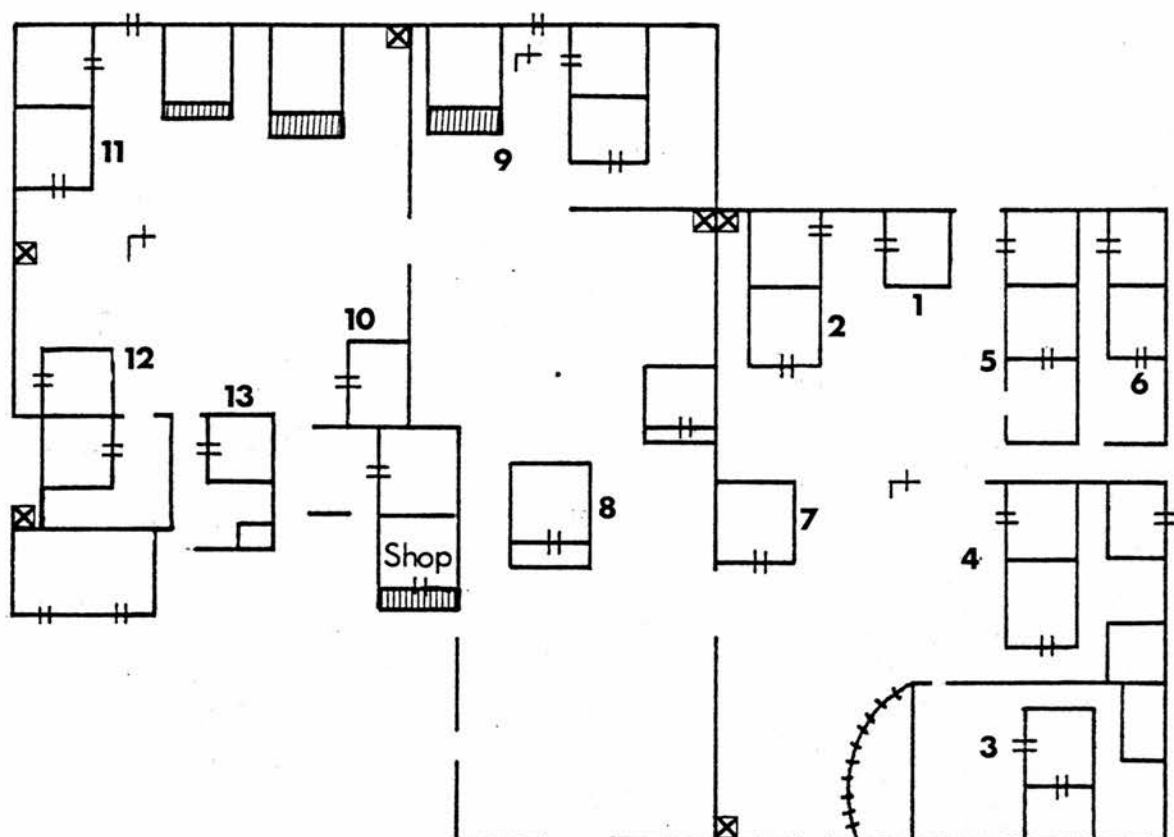
different functions, such as cooking, sleeping, entertaining and general leisure activities. It also allows a greater measure of privacy to the various members of the household as differentiated by sex, age and marital status. In a single-room household cooking, eating, entertaining, resting, sleeping and procreation are all carried out in the same room. The extension of living space, while partly related to the increased size of families, also denotes the desire to differentiate functions within the domestic domain. Households with two or more rooms generally employ one room as a guest-room (diwan). In this room male guests are entertained, and meals are served to the adult male members of the household. The diwan also generally serves as a place of leisure and rest for any male members of the household present. Removed from the distraction of small children in the family, it is often used as a sleeping room by the head of the household or his adolescent sons. The second room of a two-room household retains much of the character of the multi-functional room of a single-room household. Utilised mainly by the women and children of the household, it is where most of the domestic activities are carried on - child-care, cooking, cleaning, etc. Women guests and close relatives are entertained in this room. In one corner there is usually a hole in the ground over which the women take their smoke bath from the fragrant woods that they burn in it. This room also contains the woman's personal belongings and household and cooking equipment, if there is not a separate kitchen for the latter. However, it is common for the woman's display cabinet, containing her 'idda, to be kept in the men's guest room.

It is increasingly common for a dividing wall to be constructed separating the diwan from the inner compound containing the other living-rooms, cooking area and other space utilised by women in the course of their various domestic activities. In well-to-do households large metal gates are often erected to provide a formal entrance to the compound, and giving access to the diwan. One or more smaller entrances generally provide

access directly to the inner compound, and often link the inner compounds of related households. (See diagram). Thus this division of space within the home gives greater freedom and privacy to men and women respectively in pursuing their pleasures and interests. The construction of inner compounds also provides greater privacy for young married couples, and at the same time reflects their greater autonomy from parents and other relatives.

This division of domestic space into "public" and "private" areas, and according to "male" and "female" spheres is now fairly standard in Abu Haraz; such tendencies are, of course, widely referred to in the literature on Middle Eastern cultures. Certainly the physical separation of the male and female domains, and in particular the seclusion afforded women, both reflects and accentuates social values which emphasise the differentiation of sex roles. In this discussion I wish to allude to the particular form of separation which has taken place between male and female spheres of activity. For in the recent past the possession of a diwan was a mark of special status within the community. Only the leading religious families, the village headman, and a few of the wealthier merchants had a diwan. The menfolk of the village tended to gather at these diwans, or at other public places, notably the village shops. But in their homes there was less division of space according to male and female spheres since their rudimentary housing facilities allowed no such division to be made. In Kumur, for example, where the housing is more simple and the number of rooms per household fewer, it is common to find all the members of a household in close proximity, and a visitor witnesses all the normal domestic activities being carried on around him. In these circumstances, when male and female interests diverge, men tend to gather in a house where the womenfolk are out visiting, while the women may congregate, for instance, in the home of a woman who has recently given birth.

DIAGRAM SHOWING LAY-OUT OF RELATED HOUSEHOLDS IN FARIQ KHANDAGAWI



1. 'el Asil' Fatna Gasmallah, old widow. Lives with 16 year old granddaughter, daughter of a son of 'El Asil' living elsewhere in the village.
2. 'El Basir' Abdelrahman Dafa'Allah, tailor in Khartoum, son of 'El Asil'. Married MBD, two children.
3. Mustafa Dafa'Allah, merchant in Wad Medani, son of 'El Asil'. Married MFZD; ten children, one daughter married to NO.7 (FBS).
4. Sadiq Dafa'Allah, farmer and vegetable seller in Abu Haraz, son of 'El Asil'. Married FBD, deceased. Remarried unrelated woman from Gezira. 11 children by first marriage. 3 sons, 2 daughters, married.
5. Haj Hashmi, baker in Khartoum. Brother of No.8. Married daughter of 'El Asil' (FZD); 6 children.
6. Zaineb Ishag. Divorced. Distantly related to above. No children. Brother's son lives with her during term.
7. Haj Sadiq Dafa'Allah, in army, son of No.4. Married dt. of No.3 (FBD).
8. Ibrahim el Hashmi, sheikh el hilla. Nephew (BS) of 'El Asil'. Married FBD; 9 children, one dt married to FBS in Khartoum.
9. Shamia Elamin. Widow, FBD of 'El Asil'. 6 children, one son, one dt. married in Khartoum.
10. Hasan Manawir, shop-keeper in Abu Haraz. Related through mother to 'El Asil'. Married her sister, MBD. 5 children, 2 dts. married.
11. feki Jak Abdelgadir. Religious teacher in Wad Medani. Married sister of No.10. 8 children; 2 sons married.
12. Babiker feki Jak, merchant in Khartoum, son of No.11. Married MBD.
13. Dafa'Allah feki Jak, driver in Gezira Scheme, son of No.11. Married MBD.

The aspiration of each householder to have his own diwan is of fairly recent origin. While status considerations play a part in this development, the elaboration of housing styles incorporating a diwan must be seen in the context of the privatisation of the domestic domain as a whole. Modern productive relations encourage the growth of individualism and the assertion of new personal identities in accordance with the differing interests and worldviews of individuals. The home serves as an important medium through which personal interests are expressed. Problems of livelihood no longer reflect a communality of interest shared by all the villagers, nor even by large numbers of kin. Village problems, such as the functioning of various services provide a measure of common concern, and public debate about these is common at larger gatherings. But work and family interests are more appropriately communicated in the greater privacy of the home where the individual has greater freedom to choose his company. For the migrant workers, in particular, the diwan provides a place where they can spend a restful time with friends, attended to by their family and distracted from outside problems. In a similar manner the youth club (nadi) in Abu Haraz provides an environment where young men are free to express their interests and life-style. Removed from parental authority and household responsibilities, they are free to organise their own leisure activities.

The adoption of new housing styles entails greatly increased expenditure. A double-room brick house with compound costs about £600 to build. In order to make it habitable according to prevailing standards, additional expenditure must be made to install water and electricity, and to purchase metal-framed beds and chairs and other modern furnishings. By contrast a mud-brick house with veranda, traditionally furnished with angaribs, costs less than £100. Many inhabitants in Abu Haraz have spent the greater part of their lives in the latter kind of house. It is only through savings from many years of work, and in many cases only when supplemented by the remittances

of wage-earning sons, that they have been able to afford the modern kind of brick house. Stacks of bricks and partial constructions, such as a half-completed compound wall or a solitary room with bricked-in windows, are a common sight scattered around the village. They provide evidence of the accumulative process of saving capital, buying building materials and piece-meal building. As the productive members of a household gradually accumulate these savings, the number of members they must cater for are at the same time increasing. Moreover, as their ages advance, more sophisticated facilities are required. Daughters used to be married off in their teens, thus relieving the pressure on living and sleeping space, but today many are still studying and unmarried. (See Chapter 7 for discussion of the delayed age at marriage). Similarly young men still studying or working, and unmarried, swell the number of adults in the household for whom accommodation must be provided, albeit only for short intervals if these members are migrant workers. The desire to provide suitable conditions in the home to facilitate children's studies has also encouraged the improvement in housing standards. All these factors, combined with the prevalence of earned incomes, have contributed to the adoption of new housing styles.

The largest relative increase in expenditure within new consumption patterns has been on durable goods and assets, particularly the house and its contents.¹ It is true that food consumption has become more varied, and entertainment and consumption at some life-cycle ceremonies has become more extravagant. But the increase in costs of the latter are largely offset by the contributions which guests make on these occasions (nuqta). At the same time there have been attempts to curtail, or at least to limit expenditure on certain festivities, notably those connected with intra-village marriages and feasts held at the end of the

1. See Medani, A.I. 1971. Consumption patterns of the Gezira-Managil tenants. Sudan Notes and Records, Vol. 52, 1971.

mourning period. In the realm of personal expenditure it is noticeable that expenditure on material items, such as clothing, is held in much greater favour than expenditure on forms of immediate personal consumption which yield nothing tangible in return. Personal indulgences, such as smoking and the partaking of alcoholic drinks, are criticised on religious and moral grounds, but also because they are considered wasteful of a man's earnings. A few bachelors and young divorced men in Abu Haraz were noted for their heavy drinking; other villagers frequently contrasted the behaviour of these non-conformists with the prevailing idealised pattern of saving and expenditure on durable, albeit 'luxury' goods, and devotion to family duties.

In order to understand the implications of these new consumption patterns for domestic organisation it is necessary to distinguish between the residential and budgeting arrangements of domestic groups. Thus I will follow the distinction that Seddon makes concerning the family in northern Morocco:¹ he distinguishes between

the conjugal family, as a bio-social unit; the household, as a larger association of individuals living within one haush, or homestead; and the budget unit, as a group of individuals sharing a common fund and exchanging goods between each other without reckoning. (p.178)

The significance of the budget unit has been underlined, not only because most consumer goods are purchased through the market and distributed through the budget unit; but also because expenditure on durable consumer goods has increased, and thus differentiation of life-styles is expressed through membership of different budget units. As will be examined shortly,

1. D.Seddon: 'Aspects of kinship and family structure among the Ulad Stut of Zaio rural commune, Nador province, Morocco' in J.G.Peristiany: Mediterranean Family Structures, Cambridge, 1976.

the establishment of a conjugal fund at marriage generally entails the formation of a separate budget unit.

But while household budget units are fairly clearly demarcated, residential patterns tend to be more ramified and complex. The majority of inhabitants in Abu Haraz live in close proximity to numerous close relatives, usually the parents of either spouse and married siblings. Only a few newcomers to the village, and a few others through want of space, have established a neolocal residence on the perimeter of the village. But since compounds take different shapes, and often contain inner compounds or dividing walls, it is difficult to define precisely the boundaries between different homesteads. Some households share the same water-tap, some the same cooking area for baking kisra, some the same pit-latrines, and some the same diwan. The tendency is for the duplication of these domestic amenities by separate budget units. But, especially with the lengthy absences of migrant workers, residential ties between closely-related kin continue to remain strong.

In carrying out my household and budget survey in Abu Haraz I found that the informants themselves distinguished quite clearly between those persons contributing to a common budget and those persons living in close proximity, sometimes sharing the same compound, who contributed to separate budgets. 80% of all budget units consisted of members of a nuclear family, that is a married couple and their unmarried children. Most of the others included aging dependents, usually parents of one of the spouses; very few common budgets were shared by two still active generations, or by married siblings. I will refer to these exceptions shortly. By common budget I refer to the allocation of earnings and income to a common fund for the purchase of consumption items shared between the members of the budget unit. Not all the earnings of the members of such groups are channeled through the common budget. Migrant workers have to meet their own cost of living expenses at their

places of work, and these expenses may consume the greater part of a migrant's income. In addition many wage-earning bachelors have separate accounts at shops in the village where they purchase goods for their personal consumption, particularly cigarettes and tobacco.

Women also retain control over their own earnings and income, small though these usually are. This enables them to purchase items for their own personal use and consumption, and to have ready cash with which to entertain guests and to contribute to ritual and life-cycle festivities. Unlike the women of Kumur, women in Abu Haraz do not engage in agricultural wage labour. Most of their independent income derives from the sale of handicraft items, such as baskets and mats, from the sale of pigeons, chickens and eggs, and from services they perform for other women, such as hair-pleating. Some women also engage in petty-trading of small foodstuffs, such as sweets, biscuits, nuts and berries; these they sell at the entrance to the schools and at the qubbas. The small number of women employed in the village services fall into two categories: the educated unmarried women, mostly teachers, whose salaries supplement the income of male contributors to their respective family budgets; and the older women, mostly widows, employed as cleaners and cooks in the girls' schools, whose income substitutes for that of a male provider, and which represents the main input to their family budgets.

The aspiration of women to enjoy a measure of financial independence, and not to be completely dependent on the common household fund is expressed in the increasing popularity of rotary savings groups in the village (sandug al-ta'on). These groups comprise 15-20 women who contribute a regular sum each month to a collective fund supervised by one of the women. This fund is then allocated to each of the members in turn to dispose of as she likes. The normal contribution is about £2, and so the lump sum eventually received by each contributor

amounts to £30-£40. Many women use these savings to purchase additional sets of items for their display of household goods ('idda). However, the sum received may be used for a wide range of purposes, from purchasing a wardrobe or some jewelry to meeting the costs of performing the pilgrimage to Mecca. Half of a sample of 54 married women contributed to a sandug. Of these nearly all obtain the contributions they are required to make from husbands or sons. While this system of saving reveals an important aspect of women's social networks, it also underlines the increase in expenditure within the nuclear family and the broadening scope of provision for women within the family.¹

Thus the common fund contributed to by the members of a household does not preclude the existence of a degree of financial autonomy by its members, especially in relation to various kinds of personal expenditure. However, most forms of expenditure relating to everyday household needs are met from the common fund. Most households have an account at one of the twelve shops in the village, or more frequently today at the village cooperative shop, which supplies most consumer goods apart from dura. These accounts are settled at regular intervals, usually at the end of every month. Some transactions at the local shops are also made in cash, as are all purchases of meat and vegetables. Since many men are away working, it is the women who make most of these cash purchases; they use money allocated to them by their husbands from the common budget after the shop accounts and other expenditures have been met from it.

The contributors to the household budget are usually the head of the household and any unmarried wage-earning sons. After

1. Some men also contributed in their own right to these saving groups. I learned of this only late in my fieldwork, and did not discover the extent of this male participation. For urban savings groups see F.Rehfisch 'A Rotary Credit Association in the Three Towns' in Essays in Sudan Ethnography, ed. by I.Cunnison & W.James, London, 1972.

deduction of cost of living expenses in the case of migrants, and of a further amount for personal spending money and savings, the remainder of a man's earnings goes towards meeting his family's general living expenses. Most migrants return to the village at regular intervals, bringing with them their remittances. Even if a migrant is absent for a long period, he can normally find a fellow-villager who is returning to take a remittance to his family. On more than one occasion returning from Khartoum or Wad Medani to Abu Haraz I was asked to perform such a service. Varying pressure exists on wage-earning sons to contribute to the family budget. Depending on the number of other productive members in the household, and on the number of dependents to support, there is a greater or lesser degree of urgency for a particular son to contribute to his family budget. In families where the father has no regular employment, but combines seasonal cultivation with some other part-time activity, higher expectations fall on regularly employed sons; only through their contribution can the family hope to maintain, let alone improve their standard of living. Where the father owns substantial resources, such as a shop, or has salaried employment, the contribution of wage-earning sons tends to take a different form, such as support for the further education of siblings, rather than meeting everyday household expenses. When a family is fortunate in having several sons, pressure to contribute to the family budget may fall unevenly, with most pressure falling on those closest to home. However, if some major household expenditure is contemplated, say for the construction of a new building, the head of the household will try to call on the resources of all his family members, especially those whose support he has not had to enlist for any length of time. In many households, because of the low level of earnings of their productive members, and because of the number of dependents to support, practically all income has to be devoted to costs of subsistence. This is particularly true during the main period of expansion of the domestic group, when the father may be the sole provider and he may

have ten or more family members to support.

Numerous demands are placed on the income of the single male wage-earner. In the first place he must meet his own cost of living expenses. If, as many of the young migrants do, he works in Khartoum or one of the other towns, these expenses will include rent for accommodation in a simple bachelor house, sharing a room with three or four other young men, probably co-villagers. They will also include the cost of his meals taken in local canteens, transport costs, and personal expenditure on clothing and toiletry, etc. As we have seen, a varying amount of pressure will be exerted on him to contribute to his family's budget. In addition family members make demands for loans and gifts, for example a sister asks for a tob, or a mother for some coffee, and these demands cannot be repeatedly refused without causing resentment in the family. Furthermore, even if a man does not indulge in expensive leisure pursuits, ties of friendship and the obligations of hospitality require that he expends some of his savings on entertainment; and occasionally there are contributions to be made at weddings of friends and relations. Over and above all these claims the person seeks to save a proportion of his income, whether to further his work prospects by saving some capital, or so as to prepare for the heavy expenditure entailed in his prospective marriage.

In view of all these different demands it is not surprising that some young migrants break off effective ties with their families and contribute little or nothing to their household budgets. Sometimes this occurs in families where there are several wage-earning sons, and thus there is not such strong pressure on all of them to comply. But there are also families where the pressures on a son are too great, for example where he has to support a whole family practically single-handed, and so he decides to opt out of his obligations. Parental authority varies in its capability to enlist support from sons enjoying an independent income, especially if they work away from home as

most of them do. The objective difficulties of finding employment, the problems entailed in migrant work, and the wide range of demands on a wage-earner's income all serve to place strains on filial obligations. However, most parents in Abu Haraz acknowledged the devotion of their sons in the support they provided. Sometimes I heard the complaint from a parent that he was 'tired', implying that his sons were not doing enough to help meet family expenditure. Frequently, on the return of a migrant son to the village, the father would enumerate all the special expenditures that the family had to meet in order to enlist financial support. But only a few families had cause openly to condemn a son as 'no good'; and if there was real cause for such a judgment, they would not hesitate to pronounce it.

At marriage most sons cease to contribute to their parents' household budget, and begin to budget separately to meet the needs of their own newly formed household. As will be shown later, the age at marriage for men and women has become later. To a large extent the delayed age at marriage is associated with the elaboration of the material conditions for establishing a new conjugal unit. In the next chapter I will consider the increase in marriage payments and other expenditure entailed in contracting a marriage. But the delayed age at marriage is also related to the increase in household expenditure, and the need to enlist the financial support of unmarried sons to meet this expenditure. A prolonged period of wage-earning in an unmarried state is thus largely the response to certain characteristics of new patterns of consumption: the need to purchase all consumer goods, the greater number of dependents owing to the prevalence of schooling and the non-productive role of women, and aspirations for improved living conditions. Hence for a substantial period after their schooling ends sons are required to help support their families. If they marry, they face new responsibilities and obligations, and these necessarily detract from the assistance they render to

their parents and siblings.

Most instances of early marriages, where the husband is less than 25 years old, occur where the household still operates a family patrimony and where the family has a number of sons. In these circumstances the father may encourage and facilitate the early marriage of the first or second son so as to ensure the most productive use of the family patrimony. In these cases there is a degree of cooperation in productive tasks between father and son, though it may be expressed in the form of a division of labour, with the son taking charge of the family herd, while the father pays more attention to cultivation. Correspondingly there is likely to be a greater measure of joint budgeting, especially in the early stages of development of the son's own domestic group. Fadhil Abdelmontolub, 29, is an example of such an early marriage. He has assumed responsibility for the family herd, and like his father, cultivates rainlands. He already has seven children while an older brother and two younger ones, all working in Khartoum or pursuing further studies, are still unmarried. Similarly Ahmed Ja'afer, 23, only recently got married; he works part-time as a court clerk in Wad Medani, but also assists his father in working a garden that the latter has been given the tenancy of in the Rahad Project. He contributes £8 a month to his father's household budget. In the case of Fadhil and his father they budget jointly for staple items such as dura.

This pattern of joint budgeting between households comprising the families of two or more married members reappears again in some of the households whose members are engaged in combined trading activities. The el-Nil family, for example, is noted for its combined budgeting; many villagers upheld it as an ideal for its collective domestic arrangements. The father is a shop-keeper in the village, and his four married sons, the youngest in his early 20s, are engaged in wholesale distribution and retailing of textiles in Khartoum. Their houses

in Abu Haraz are all situated within one large encompassing compound. They share one large diwan which is often used for meetings of the village council, since the eldest son has been influential in several projects concerned with the village's development. The members of this household, who total 22 persons, budget collectively for all their everyday household needs, and this budget is supervised by the father. Apart from the fact that the members of this family cooperated closely in what amounted to a family commercial business, the lengthy absences of the married sons also made practicable the sharing of a household fund managed by the father. This last factor was also significant in some of the other joint budgeting groups. For example, Mohammad Haj 'Ali, a local carpenter, budgeted for a total of 19 persons in his household, including the family of a married son working in Libya and that of a widowed daughter. In Abu Haraz there were half a dozen married men working abroad, and a good many more unmarried men. The absence of the former entails the activation of extended household ties for budgetary arrangements. But as said before, most migrants are able to return to the village sufficiently frequently, or are able to send regular remittances, thereby maintaining the independence of their household budgets.

Evidence from the Gezira and Blue Nile regions shows that there has been a general trend towards the economic independence of the nuclear components of households, especially in regard to budgeting. Culwick records how neither the sharing of certain domestic amenities, nor patterns of kinship and marriage provide clear criteria for studying the composition of households; nevertheless she herself abides by the 1951 Sudan Census definition of a household as those people sharing a common cooking-pot.¹ However the manner in which income is obtained and budgetary arrangements tend to establish clear

1. G.M.Culwick: Some Problems of the Social Survey in the Sudan. Sudan Notes and Records, Vol. 35, 1954.

boundaries between the members of different domestic groups. This she attributes to the spread of economic individualism within the Gezira Scheme and the prevalence of wage-earning occupations:

Economic conditions within the Gezira Scheme are, of course, chiefly responsible for the tendency of the patriarchal household of the traditional subsistence economy to break down into the multiplicity of patterns found in the Gezira village... The ready availability of money-earning occupations naturally loosens ties and encourages the independence of what would formerly have been parts of one composite household. (p.118)

For budgetary purposes... the unit is now quite definitely the household, with a marked tendency to personal independence on the part of married sons within that unit.¹

Barnett (1977) too records how the consumption unit has tended to become identified with the nuclear family, which provides the basic productive unit in the operation of Gezira tenancies.²

Outside the Gezira but in the neighbouring Blue Nile region similar trends have been recorded. Writing about a village on the Blue Nile near Khartoum, Barclay suggests that there has probably been a trend towards more nuclear households following the decline in the number of families subsisting primarily from family farms.³ Already among many extended households

1. G.M.Culwick: A Study of the Human Factor in the Gezira Scheme. Barakat, not dated, p.96.

2. Henin (1969) offers a different view; he records that in the Gezira it is the custom at marriage for the son to remain living within his parents' compound and to pay visits to his bride at her home. This practice may have been more prevalent in the past, and account for the earlier age at marriage in the Gezira (See p.). But the other studies quoted suggest that the trend at marriage has been towards the establishment of a separate conjugal household, whether it is of uxori-local or virilocal residence.

3. H.B.Barclay: Buuri Al Lamaab: a Suburban Village in the Sudan, New York, 1964.

their nuclear components are relatively independent, especially in relation to household budgeting: "Extended families are often a series of closely-related nuclear families with each nuclear unit going about its separate business." (p.77) In his survey of domestic and residential patterns in Gezira villages, Brausch (1964) prefers the term 'co-residential kinship group' to 'extended household'. This usage conveys more accurately domestic patterns in which there are close residential ties between related families, but where most nuclear families organise their household budgeting separately from each other. As I showed in the last chapter, closely-related families which cultivate rainlands farm separate plots and often pursue different strategies. Thus among these families, as well as those which obtain income from other sources, the budget unit most commonly comprises members of the nuclear family.

The tendency for the budget unit to be based on the nuclear family permits the emergence of different styles of living among related households; it may also be argued that it encourages considerable social and economic mobility, since it leaves individual families free to allocate resources for their own ends. On the other hand delayed marriages enable households to pool the resources of their productive members, and thereby to advance the interests of all their members. Since a varying proportion of household expenditure is directed towards the purchase of durable consumer goods, the material assets of different households vary considerably. The reproduction of the conditions of everyday life embraces the need to preserve and enhance a particular life-style which these material assets serve to indicate. In the long term the differentiation of life-styles tends to override kinship ties and other social bonds. Where close kin occupy similar economic positions their life-styles are more likely to accord with each other. In these cases close ties may be maintained and intermarriages frequently arranged between the families concerned. But in Abu Haraz there are many instances of close kin having become economically differentiated. Some-

times this is due largely to demographic factors, such as a favourable ratio of wage-earners to dependents; sometimes it is due to a division of labour between close kin, with one brother managing the family patrimony while others pursue different kinds of employment; sometimes it is due to the fluctuating fortunes of small enterprises and businesses. Through whatever circumstances this diversification of interests has come about, kinship ties tend to become subordinated to the separate interests of individuals concerned with maintaining the life-style of their respective families.

The growth of individualism and of the privatisation of the home is nevertheless tempered by norms of sociability which encourage the sharing of others' company. Women who are supported in all their needs by their husbands fill their leisure time with an elaborate round of visiting and entertaining visitors to their own homes. Women also assist each other, or at least share each others' company, in a wide range of domestic duties. This is particularly so among adjoining households where the menfolk are temporarily absent. For example each married woman normally cooks her own stew (mulah), but preparations for this, as well as the baking of kisra are likely to be carried out in the company of other women. Similarly with many other domestic chores, such as washing clothes, collecting firewood, or weaving baskets, women tend to carry out their various activities in the company of others. At these gatherings domestic work and leisure activities are frequently mixed; for example, hair pleating and hennaing are normally carried out in the presence of other women who are occupied with childcare or cooking or some other domestic activity, and at the same time that a vigorous conversation is being held about some event in the village or some affair of topical interest. Borrowing of various small items commonly takes place; one woman asks for a lighted charcoal, and another for the loan of a bowl. During special celebrations these forms of cooperation are activated on a much wider scale. At festivities

women bring their own cooking utensils and help to prepare the food, which may amount to feeding a hundred or more people at a simaiya or karama, and several times that number for a large wedding reception.¹

On the other hand many families today do lead a more secluded existence than they were used to in the past. Relations between neighbours are not always open and friendly. The construction of compound walls impeding rights of way leads to numerous acrimonious disputes between neighbours. Some neighbours are held to be troublesome since they are continually asking for things, and fail to return things they have borrowed. Such behaviour conflicts with the general expectation that households should be as self-reliant as possible. On the other hand the withholding of small reasonable services from neighbours or kin leads to suspicions a family is trying to make savings for its own self-interested gain at the expense of sociable relations with others.

Meal-groups express some of the ambivalence arising from adherence to norms of sociability and hospitality on the one hand, and from more individualistic patterns of consumption on the other. It is common for a man to eat alone, or perhaps accompanied by one or two of his young sons. The female members of the family eat separately with the other children. In Kumur this separation of the sexes at meals is less marked; I came across several families there where husband and wife ate together. The only time I ate with women in Abu Haraz was with a religious family which comprised a young widow, several related bachelors and clients of the family, and some girls from Kumur, also related, who were studying in Abu Haraz. On some occasions, when a group of kin and neighbours are gathered

1. Simaiya is the name-giving ceremony held a week after the birth of a child. Karama is a thanks offering held on diverse occasions to acknowledge good fortune, e.g. following recovery after an illness, on return from the pilgrimage, on passing an examination, etc.

at a particular man's house, the former give instructions for their respective meals to be brought to where they are all assembled. The food is then brought on covered trays from the various homes, and shared between those present. Where a diwan is effectively shared by several related families, this pattern may become a regular practice. But if several of the male adults are absent, the others are more likely to eat in their own homes. If casual visitors are present when a meal is served, the host will press them to stay and partake of the meal. The visitors then either excuse themselves and leave the company, or make a gesture of participation. Invited guests and visitors who have come for a special purpose are urged to satisfy themselves fully, and are given the best food the family can offer. If their menfolk are absent, women are more likely to eat together. Otherwise the women of each family eat separately, attending the needs of their menfolk.

Evidence that the size of meal-groups has probably declined is provided by the size of meal-groups celebrating the end of the day's fast during Ramadan in 1977. It is the custom to break the fast and to perform the sunset prayer (mughrib) in the company of others. Since a large group is considered desirable, considerable interest was shown by villagers in the size of certain groups. Of fourteen breakfast groups that I joined the largest had eight adult men partaking, while the average was four or five per group. In contrast in Kumur all the men in the village joined one of two very large groups. In the past large groups were probably more prevalent in Abu Haraz too.

Of course at the festivities connected with domestic and life-cycle celebrations large numbers of people eat together. At most of these occasions the domestic group concerned prepares sufficient food for all those participating. At funerals the responsibility for providing the food is more widely shared. Households prepare their meals as normal, but then the food is brought to where the mourners are gathered and the food

shared among those present. The household which has suffered the bereavement prepares additional food for the mourners coming from afar, and also serves tea to all those who attend. These costs are met by the contributions which the mourners make to the family of the bereaved. However, the festivities held in connection with naming parties (simaiyas), male circumcisions (tuhur), weddings ('aris) and general thank-offerings (karamas) appear to contradict the thesis that consumption has been directed inwards, rather than being channeled by redistributive processes; that more consumption is confined within the narrow boundary of the nuclear family, rather than being distributed among a wider range of kin and neighbours. Moreover, these festivities have little to do with the accumulation of durable goods, which I claimed was a characteristic of new consumption patterns. Also there is the problem that these celebrations tend to be more elaborate and lavish in Abu Haraz than in Kumur. Why should this be the case if differentiation of interests and life-styles has progressed further in the former village compared with the latter.

It is true, of course, that these occasions concern the sharing and transmission of common values and beliefs, and that the meal, taken if not prepared communally, underlines the social significance of the occasion. However, these occasions also serve to underline the differential status both of the host family and of the participants. Although there is a general format for the conducting of such occasions, the quantity and quality of the food served, the number of persons entertained, and the range of facilities provided for the guests give each occasion a different character, and this reflects the particular social standing of the host family. The resources which different families can afford to devote to these occasions vary greatly. Some naming parties and circumcisions are celebrated in the company of a relatively small number of close relatives, while others bring large sectors of the village population together.

The status of the participants is underlined by the respective contributions they make to defray the costs of the occasion (nuqta). Contributions are invariably given at weddings and funerals, and sometimes at other life-cycle ceremonies, but not, of course, at karamas. At weddings contributions are made by guests on the evening of the main reception and party when food is served to the guests and the bride-groom is hennaed. Each contribution is recorded in writing by a close friend of the bride-groom, and the total sum received is made public on the same evening. At funerals contributions are collected throughout the first three days of mourning as the various mourners arrive to offer their condolences. These contributions are added up on the fourth day, and the various costs incurred during this period are deducted from it. The balance, as with the rest of the deceased's property, is then divided among his or her family. Smaller contributions are sometimes also made at naming parties and male circumcisions. Women make separate contributions to the bride, though again these are much smaller than what men give to the bridegroom.

The general ethos underlying these contributions is that they should be reciprocated on similar occasions. The record of what the various guests contributed at a wedding is retained by the recipient so that it can be referred to when reciprocating at a subsequent wedding of one of the donors. Similar amounts tend to be given as have been received, though a wealthy person tends to reciprocate with somewhat more than he received. Thus the continuing process of making contributions at these special occasions, the variations in the amount given and in what is reciprocated, serve to define relationships between persons of differing status. Although there is a net flow of contributions from persons of higher economic status to those of lower economic status, this flow does not change the ordering of status, but serves precisely to define differential status. Thus while contributions at special ceremonies serve to defray expenses and demonstrate a cooperative spirit, they also draw

attention to the different standing of donors and recipients. Given that socio-economic differentiation is more marked in Abu Haraz than Kumur, this helps to explain why such celebrations are more pronounced in the former village.

Though not constituting a system of redistribution of wealth, the festivities held in connection with domestic and life-cycle events do nevertheless entail the allocation of resources for immediate consumption rather than purchase of durable consumer goods. In fact some attempts have been made to limit and standardise the occasions in which immediate consumption on a large scale is such a distinctive feature. These attempts have taken the form of the discouragement of sacrifices, since the purchase of sheep for slaughter forms a major component in the expenditure of such festivities. For example, the end of the mourning period is no longer celebrated with the slaughter of a sheep. The attempts to limit marriage expenditure and to restrain wedding festivities through the institution of the kora will be examined in the next chapter. Barclay (1964) records similar collective limitations on festivities in Buuri al Lamaab, and claims that such agreements are a common practice in many Gezira and riverain villages. To the extent that such attempts have been successful, they permit the retention of a larger share of household income and its allocation to other forms of expenditure, notably the purchase of durable consumer goods.

The most important of the ceremonies I have been referring to is the celebration of marriage. On this occasion ceremonial elaboration, festive consumption and heavy expenditure on consumer goods of a more durable nature converge. In establishing a new domestic unit, marriage arrangements reveal tendencies already operating within and influencing domestic organisation. The trends in consumption patterns and in household organisation that I have described in this chapter are nowhere more clearly expressed than in the very formation of new domestic

groups at marriage. The dependence of women and the increased concern for developing the comforts of the home find expression in the elaboration of the material conditions of marriage. It is to the changing conditions of marriage that I turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

CHANGES IN MARRIAGE PAYMENTS

In this chapter I wish to examine the changes in the conditions necessary for getting married, trends in marriage payments, and the components of these exchanges. In the last chapter I showed how changes in consumption patterns have been characterised by increased expenditure on durable goods and assets. I also argued that with the shift in occupational patterns, from reliance on traditional patrimonies to activities providing income from regular employment or commerce, household budgeting arrangements have tended to become centred on the nuclear family. In conjunction with these trends there has been a tendency towards the differentiation of life-styles as expressed by the different standards of living achieved by separate budgeting groups. The general orientation of these life-styles has been towards the privatisation of the domestic domain. The widespread adoption of a more explicitly domestic and dependent role for women I suggested should be seen in the context of the restructuring of domestic arrangements contingent on the replacement of many unpaid domestic and subsistence activities by purchased goods and services. These changes in domestic organisation and in the relations between the sexes are highlighted by the transactions entailed in establishing a marriage.

I am primarily concerned in this chapter with marriages in which both spouses are marrying for the first time. I will attempt to show in the next chapter that there has been a decline in the proportion of subsequent marriages, whether polygamous and serial marriages of men or remarriages of women. This tendency I will argue is largely due to the same

conditions which induce the intensification of marriage payments as at first marriages. Moreover the ideological investment in first marriages militates against the contemplation of other marriages. A serial or polygamous marriage contracted by a man to a woman not previously married generally entails the same expenditure as a first marriage. In some polygamous marriages, the bride's family demand a larger endowment for their daughter by virtue of the fact that her prospective husband is already married. Only when a woman is marrying for the second time, following divorce or widowhood, are the marriage costs considerably less than for a first marriage. But a woman who remarries is rarely a man's first wife; that is, usually she marries a widower or a man already married.

First marriage for both spouses comprise the majority of marriages contracted today. This means I am mainly interested in the manner in which new domestic groups emerge, and this entails consideration of various factors affecting the domestic cycle. I have already referred to the delay in marriages of most wage-earning sons, and I will give further evidence of this trend in the next chapter. I noted that exceptions to this pattern generally concerned families possessing substantial patrimonies which the father sought to exploit in the most effective manner by retaining the labour of one of his sons; to this end he facilitates the early marriage of one of them. In other cases early marriages took place where the adult members of a family had shared interests in the operation of a family business. Common to both situations is a shared interest in family property. Under conditions where a father has numerous livestock and rainlands which require extensive labour and attention, and at the same time where there exist wage-earning opportunities which might attract his sons, the marrying of the latter gives the father greater leverage in deploying his family's labour resources. In addition the alliances which these marriages establish or reinforce with other individuals may further the interests of the family patrimony. These conditions were, of

course, more prevalent in the past. Today, in Abu Haraz in particular the picture is reversed; achieved property plays the crucial role in most family incomes, and the traditional patrimony has become something of a residual category. Early marriages threaten to channel earned incomes into the new domestic groups that are formed, and away from the existing family members.

Where father and son are both primarily involved in operating the family patrimony, the domestic cycle tends to have certain distinctive features. Marriages are contracted at a relatively early age - at the age of about 20 or just over for the man - but the domestic group established at marriage is neither autonomous nor economically viable. The domestic group achieves its viability through a gradual process as it builds up its own human and patrimonial resources. This gradual process is generally marked by a shift from uxorilocal to virilocal residence. In its formative period the new domestic group is for many purposes an extension of an existing household. In particular close ties exist between mother and daughter, with the former continuing to supervise the latter in her domestic duties after her marriage. The term of address sometimes used by small children to their maternal grandmother (haboba) is an indication of these close ties; small children call their maternal grandmother 'mother' (ummi) while addressing their actual mother by her personal name. The traditional authority of grandmothers (habobat) is proverbial, though several writers have indicated that it is waning. Barclay relates this decline largely to the increase in nuclear family organisation (p.77). Barclay also records that there used to be strict codes of deference and avoidance between in-laws, but that at the time of his writing they were far less strictly observed in the village where he stayed.¹ I found that avoidance customs were confined

1. According to Barclay, the most pronounced avoidance relationship was between mother-in-law and son-in-law: the extent of avoidance depended on whether a prior kinship tie existed between the two persons.

solely to the marriage celebrations. They may, however, have been more elaborate in the past, particularly under the conditions I have outlined above.

The greater prevalence of money-earned incomes has changed the course of the domestic cycle. As we have seen, there are various pressures on a wage-earning son to marry at a later age. One son's marriage is often delayed at least until another sibling is able to contribute substantially to the household budget. We also saw that when a wage-earning son does get married he is more likely to head a domestic group which budgets independently for its own consumer needs. Moreover, since the wage-earner is likely to have met the bulk of his marriage expenditure himself, the father cannot use this leverage to influence the running of his married son's household affairs. The establishment at marriage of an autonomous and viable domestic group is supported by various other trends. For example, it is increasingly common for the newly-married couple to go on a honeymoon; this is an indication of the separation of the couple from their respective families of origin, as well as of the enhancement of conjugal ties. Moreover, the immediate establishment of a virilocal, or even neolocal residence is becoming increasingly prevalent; this setting up of a more permanent home, as opposed to the transitory occupation of a confined space in the bride's family's home, is again indicative of the greater degree of autonomy achieved at the outset of marriage. Long engagements are now very common. This period allows the prospective husband to accumulate the savings and goods necessary for his marriage. As a test of the viability of the marriage the period of engagement has taken on much of the character of the early stage of marriage in marriages following the traditional developmental cycle. With the former the conditions for establishing the viability of the new domestic group have to be entirely fulfilled before the marriage; with the latter many of the conditions are established after the marriage, following the birth of children and the gradual accumulation of

productive and household property.

Among those social groups which have neither substantial family patrimonies nor a regular flow of income from wage-earning or commercial activities a different set of factors act on the developmental cycle of domestic groups. I refer in particular to those families in Kumur who do not have significant numbers of animals and who supplement their cultivation of rainland crops with seasonal casual labour. In these families the income that sons and daughters contribute to the household budget must be weighed against what they consume from it. Given frequent and lengthy periods of inactivity unmarried sons and daughters are seen as threatening to consume more than they contribute to family income. With marriage the parental responsibility for basic provision is transferred to the son or son-in-law. Hence marriages are generally encouraged and welcomed. Marriage expenditure is restricted to a small marriage payment and the provision of the basic necessities required for establishing a new domestic group. This is also true of marriages among families which rely on traditional patrimonies. In their case the patrimony acts both as a surety and as the source from which the new domestic group will gradually accumulate its own property. With the exception of one or two families who have salaried members, the majority of marriages in Kumur are carried out for total costs of less than £5100. This sum includes the dowry payment (mahr) which is used for the construction of a simple mud and straw room for the couple, and for providing basic furnishings and household equipment; it also covers the costs of new clothes bought for both bride and bridegroom, and the costs of the wedding feast. By contrast most marriages in Abu Haraz entail expenditure of several hundred pounds. It is with the changing nature of marriage payments and with the more varied composition of marriage goods as exhibited by marriages in Abu Haraz that I am mainly concerned in this chapter.

In Abu Haraz, as we have seen, new pressures operate on the domestic cycle: the increase in number of dependents to support, aspirations for improved standards of living and the ability to fulfil these aspirations through accumulating savings from monied incomes all serve to delay the emergence of new domestic groups; on the other hand, when they do become established at marriage, they are more viable and autonomous than formerly. For from the outset, because of the greater expenditure invested in them, they possess what Goody calls a conjugal fund. Later I will examine the composition of this conjugal fund by examining the nature of the marriage payments, the composition of the goods exchanged at marriage, and the chief beneficiaries of these goods. But first it is necessary to consider a custom operating in Abu Haraz which seeks to limit marriage expenditure. For, as in other villages in the Gezira and on the east bank, collective agreements have been made to impose an upper limit on marriage payments exchanged within the village and to standardise marriage celebrations. Marriages subject to these controls are known as kora marriages.¹ However, the actual application of this custom varies considerably in the different places where it is observed. Sometimes it entails merely the fixing of a ceiling on dowry payments. Sometimes - usually under the direction of a local notable - it provides a framework for facilitating and standardising a large number of marriages on a particular occasion. The former is the more common form the kora takes, and is essentially what has been practised in Abu Haraz. However, it may help to place in context this particular application of the kora, if I relate some of the wider applications of the custom.

The most frequently quoted historical precedent for the kora is the Mahdi's legislation concerning marriages.² In 1882 he im-

1. The word kora means 'a ball' and thus implies regularity of pattern. But in my inquiries I have been unable to discover more precisely why the custom has assumed this name.

2. P.M.Holt: *The Mahdist State in the Sudan*, Oxford, 1966, p.115. This author recounts the social legislation of the Mahdi, and relates it to the specific conditions of the time.

posed limitations on the expenditure on wedding feasts, and designated one day in the Muslim calendar - the 27th day of Rajab - as a time particularly favourable for weddings. Following this he stipulated that the dowry paid by the bridegroom should amount to no more than £E2 (Egyptian) for a virgin bride and £E1 for a woman who had been previously married. These and other edicts concerning the status of women must be seen in the context of the disruption of traditional marriage patterns brought about by the Turkish occupation and the widespread monetarisation of transactions; and also in the context of the insecurity and loss of life created by the Mahdist uprising itself.

Unlike other of the Mahdi's social legislation which sought to root out traditional non-sharia' practices and to impose more orthodox Islamic observances, there is no explicit koranic precedent for the regulation of marriage ceremonies and payments. On the other hand the Prophet Mohammad's revelations concerning marriage, particularly the permission to marry up to four wives, were very much a response to the unsettled conditions of the time, and to the prevalence of widows and orphans and the increased dependence of women in the urban situation. Of the fourteen wives that the Prophet himself took, only one, 'Aisha, was not either a widow or a divorced woman.' Similarly the Mahdi was faced with the problem of the maintenance of women who had been deserted or taken captive or who had been widowed during the uprising. But there were also other factors which posed problems for the formation and stability of marriages. General insecurity and price inflation during the Turkish period were not conducive to stable domestic life and the formation of marriages. In a contemporary account of the period explicit reference is made to the effect of social conditions on marriage payments; the passage refers to the tour of the Turkish Governor-General in 1839 to the Blue Nile region, and

1. Nawal el Saadawi: The Hidden Face of Eve. London, 1980, p.146.

in particular to the vicinity of Wad Medani:

As the Pasha was passing through a village he was surprised that no children came out to see him and asked the shaykh of that place why. The shaykh said that the womenfolk of the village were extremely greedy and refused to marry unless they were paid much money, so much that few of them ever found husbands. The Pasha intends to issue an order under which any man will be able to marry a woman merely by paying a dowry of one roll of cloth, a blue shawl and 20 piastres in cash. (Hill, 1970, p.187)

No account is given as to the effectiveness of any subsequent action. Likewise it is not known to what extent the Mahdi's regulations were observed. However, Trimmingham (1949), referring to the continuing force of Mahdism both as a political force and as a reformist movement, notes that

Attempts have been made to revive other of the Mahdi's regulations, such as the £E.2 dowry campaign (called al-Kōra), but with little success outside the colonies (sic).¹ The annual 'day of weddings' (27 Rajab), instituted by the Mahdi in 1882, has for many years been kept up by his son. (p.162)

Turning to more contemporary accounts, Barclay gives an account of the regulation of marriages in the village that he studied in the early 1960s:

Bridewealth varies in Buuri al Lamaab from as low as five pounds to as high as one hundred pounds. The low figure occurs in kuura marriages in which a number of men agree to marry their daughters at a stated time and for a mutually-agreed upon bridewealth. Marriages of this type occur among the very poor and among others when there appears to be a surplus of unmarried girls. The fact that it is a joint affair involving a number

1. Trimmingham here refers to the settlements of West African immigrants in the Sudan. Several of their early settlements were on the higher reaches of the Blue Nile; latterly many of these immigrants were encouraged to settle in the Gezira so as to provide a seasonal labour force for the Irrigation Scheme.

of families legitimizes what individually would constitute a shameful act, namely giving one's daughter in marriage for an insignificant mahr. The last kuura in Buuri al Lamaab occurred in 1957 when five servants of Sharif 'Abd ar Rahmaan were married.¹ Usually kuura marriages occur on the twenty-seventh of the month of Rajab, a day especially lucky for weddings, and are celebrated with a common feast of fatta in the compound of the mosque. (p.246)

An instance of kora marriages being regularly arranged by a local notable comes from the village of Shabarga on the east bank of the Blue Nile, fifteen miles south east of Wad Medani. The initiative in arranging these marriages came from Yusuf Jamil, the leader of an important Mahdist family in Shabarga, one of the first graduates of Gordon College (later to become the University of Khartoum) and subsequently a high-ranking government official. From the 1930s till the 1950s he encouraged the marriage of eligible young men and women in the village with as little expenditure as possible; during this period the dowry was never more than five pounds and usually considerably less. First he would find out who were all the eligible partners in the village, and which of them wanted to marry who. At the festival of the al 'eid al kabir he would summon all the men concerned and their fathers, and address them stressing the unity of the village and the common ties of kinship. He would then allocate the young men to their fathers-in-law, saying to the latter "He is your son". The young man would be asked to give from his pocket a pound or similar sum as dowry. A blessing would be made, and dates thrown, and so the agreement was made. Up to forty or fifty couples were married on such occasions. Following this the bridegroom would build a simple house and provide some basic furnishings. The wedding celebration itself would be very simple with just a few chosen guests. Three or four days after the wedding the bride-

1. This religious leader was the son and successor of Sharif Yusuf al Hindi, the founder of the Hindiya tariqa. This offshoot of the Sammaniya tariqa has many followers in the Gezira and on the east bank of the Blue Nile.

groom was free to build a more substantial house and to give as many presents as he wished to his bride. In this way men with larger incomes or greater wealth than that enjoyed by the majority of the villagers were not prevented from adopting a style of living in keeping with their social standing. Nevertheless many of the educated men and salaried employees in Shabarga were extremely reluctant to get married in the kora since they considered the custom to be inappropriate to their social position.¹

To my knowledge none of the Arakiyin leading families or any other notable family in Abu Haraz has ever tried to coordinate marriages in the manner just described. In Abu Haraz the custom of the marriage kora has taken the form of a mutually-agreed ceiling on dowries exchanged within the village. Before 1975 the maximum sum allowed was £S25, and when the custom was reintroduced in 1977 the figure was raised to £S100. Information I gathered from other villages both in the Gezira and on the east bank which had such agreements yielded figures between these two amounts; in the Gezira, Nuweila £S60, Manasir £S30, and on the east bank, Sharafa Barakat £S90, Sharafa Foq £S50, Shabarga £S30 and Gara £S30. Barclay gives corroborative evidence that such agreements are reasonably widespread in the rural areas of the Gezira and Blue Nile regions:

The practice of mutual agreements within villages to limit and more or less to equalize expenses incurred in festivities connected with the rites of passage is not uncommon in this part of the Sudan. In several villages there are agreements which place a ceiling on the amount of the mahr. An attempt of this nature was once made in Buuri al Lamaab, but no agreement could be reached and the matter was dropped. (p.264)

1. I am indebted to Mr. Osman Eid, Edinburgh University, for this information relating to the kora practice in Shabarga.

Goode (1970) gives evidence of similar practices in other parts of the 'Arab World'. And no doubt comparative material from other regions could be presented to show that in many rural societies characterised by social homogeneity prestations at marriage as at other festivities are customarily fixed or, at least, they vary little; furthermore that when social homogeneity is threatened by individuals with newly acquired wealth making larger marriage payments, attempts are often made to standardise if not equalise these expenditures.

The material I have related concerning kora marriages in the Sudan suggests that they constitute a collective response to various forces of change, and in particular to economic and social differentiation which is reflected in the emergence of different life-styles; these life-styles tend to be embodied in differential patterns of domestic consumption which are themselves highlighted by differential marriage payments and celebrations. During the discussions over the reintroduction of the kora in Abu Haraz in 1977 villagers pointed out to me that while people shared the same aspirations about marriage the ability of different individuals to meet these expectations varied; they said that the effect of this was that while some people in the village could afford to get married and incur heavy expenditure, for most people it entailed gathering savings over many years before they could get married; as a consequence the age at marriage was getting later, and there was a growing pool of eligible girls in the village. This situation was regarded as undesirable both for the girls themselves and for their families who had both to support them and to ensure their modest behaviour. It was generally accepted that individuals' differential earning power was part of a reality that had to be come to terms with; but the proponents of the kora argued that the basic conditions for marriage should be made easier while leaving individuals free to incur as much additional expenditure as they wished and as they were capable of during the course of the marriage itself. Moreover by proposing the curtailment

of expenditure incurred in the wedding celebrations and festivities, they suggested that there would be a general saving of resources. I will return shortly to discuss how these proposals were viewed by the women and young men of the village, the agreement that finally emerged, and its effect on ensuing marriages. First I wish to examine how the kora which was practised until 1975 affected marriages in the village.

As stated previously the old kora limited the amount of mahr to £S25. The kora was only applicable in marriages where both partners were from Abu Haraz al Wastani; if either partner, even if a close relation, were from another village, the restriction was not binding. Most kora marriages were celebrated at the time of the al 'eid al kabir festival, although this was not stipulatory. One week after the wedding the bridegroom was free to make any other payments he wished to the bride and to incur additional expenditure in respect of house preparation, furnishings and other household items. It should be pointed out that the main purpose of the mahr is to provide the bride with adequate goods and utensils for establishing the basis of a home. Traditionally these goods comprised at least two angaribs or a double bed, mattresses, mats, washing and cooking pans, wooden chest (sahara), smaller wooden boxes for storing spices (huqq), and an assortment of bowls, cups and glasses. The home itself used by the bridal couple is in practice excluded from these considerations. A room is usually provided by the parents of either the bride or the bridegroom, normally the former; or if a room is not available one will be built for the use of the new couple. If the bride's parents provide it, it will almost invariably become in time the effective property of the bride. If the bridegroom's family provide it, even if it has been built with the savings of the bridegroom, this is considered to be a separate contribution to the marriage from the mahr, and is not subject to the kora restriction. However the kora penalised the transference of all other goods whether in money or kind above the limited amount, i.e. £S25. I was told

that if goods exceeding this value were exchanged before or during the first week of the marriage, they were impounded by the village elders and sold off in a public auction and the proceeds given to village funds (for the improvement of various services, such as the schools, the clinic, etc.) I was unable to discover any case where this penalty had been actually implemented. In the case of goods in kind the sanctions were probably loosely applied, especially if the goods were not openly exchanged or displayed during the course of the wedding. In the case of the payment of mahr, as will be explained more fully later, this used to be a public recorded event, and it was thus impossible to evade disclosure of the sum agreed upon if the kora limit had in fact been exceeded. Of 122 marriages enacted between 1960 and 1975 100 consisted of a mahr of £S30 or less. In only two of the other 22 marriages - most of which were with non-villagers - did the mahr surpass £S50. Some of the intra-village marriages which appeared to exceed the kora restriction were accounted for by the informants including additional payments made a week after the wedding. Thus it would seem that one of the objectives of the kora - to limit formal marriage payments - was achieved in the village during this period.

However, by the early 1970s it was becoming increasingly clear that the restriction of mahr to £S25 was incompatible with the provision of even the most basic requirements for a newly married couple. The consensus for maintaining the kora at that level began to break down, and from my data on marriage payments it would seem that several marriages ignored the kora regulations. By about 1975 the kora had been challenged sufficient times for the village elders to decide to let it lapse. In the following two years mahr payments increased steadily, with payments reaching £S100 on at least two occasions.

During the month of Ramadan in 1977 the idea of reintroducing the kora was raised following the initiative of various members

of the village committee. A village meeting was called, and at this it was agreed to reintroduce the kora at the sum of £S100. All other payments beside the mahr itself were included in the restriction; thus if golat al-kheir or fatha al khashm¹ was paid, this amount would be added to the mahr and the total should not exceed £S100. However, as before, additional presents and payments, could be made one week after the wedding. It was also agreed as desirable that wedding festivities should be kept as simple as possible, and it was proposed that only tea and biscuits should be offered to guests. It was reaffirmed that the al 'eid al kabir was the best time for kora marriages to be celebrated; since families sacrifice sheep in any case at this festivity, lavish entertainment of guests could be dispensed with. Also it was considered that by encouraging a number of marriages to be held at the same time this would help reduce the expenditure incurred in the festivities. Apart from helping to facilitate already planned marriages, the proponents of the kora hoped to encourage other marriages. It was expected that the intervening period of some two months before the al 'eid al kabir would be sufficient time for making the necessary arrangements for any new marriages; the more intensive social interaction associated with Ramadan, with the gathering of neighbours for the evening prayers and meal and frequent visiting during the night, and the celebration of the al 'eid al saghir, the festival which concludes the month of fasting, meant that plenty of opportunities existed for the preliminary contacts crucial to the planning of marriages. The choice of the al 'eid al kabir as a suitable time for conducting marriages was also influenced by the fact that it is at such festivals that the village fills up with the many migrant workers. For not all the villagers could be sure of being able to attend a marriage if arranged outside one of the main festival holidays.

1. The initial payment, usually £S20 or £S30, which seeks to secure the consent of the bride's party, particularly her mother and female relations.

Discussing the kora proposals with the villagers I found least enthusiasm for them among the women and young men. The latter tended to interpret the regulations as a potential infringement on their freedom of choice of a marriage partner. Some of them stressed that newly married couples would be initially more dependent on their parents' households, and savings might be channeled away from building up the couple's own assets in order to maintain these larger households. Very few young men supported the view more frequently expressed by older men that a young man should gradually accumulate goods and assets for his household as he earned and saved during the course of his marriage, rather than prior to it. Young men argued that once married their new responsibilities to their in-laws would eat up their earnings leaving nothing with which to purchase the items they considered a household should be equipped with. Some young men suggested that even £S100 was an inadequate sum with which to equip a household with the basic furnishings and household items. Others, especially those with higher earning power, stated in principle that there should be no restrictions on the amount of expenditure a man chose to incur at marriage; they implied that to marry in the kora was an indication of low status, since the declared objective of the kora was to assist those on whom marriage expenditure placed a heavy burden. Thus in general married men were in favour of the kora system, while unmarried men and youths were at best unenthusiastic and at worst opposed to the idea.

The women I spoke to, while not openly criticising the new arrangements, were also generally unenthusiastic. Some protested that they would not marry their daughters in the kora, but would seek a wealthy suitor, whether a relative or a non-relative, from outside the village. One woman suggested she would agree to a mahr of £S50 for her daughter if an additional sum of £S100 were paid over in the event of the marriage being dissolved; this latter sum, known as sadag, is usually

a purely nominal sum and an insignificant feature of the marriage contract in Abu Haraz, unlike in some urban marriages. As with the young men, the women implied that the kora regulations would limit their influence concerning the choice of marriage partners for their daughters. For women can influence the outcome of a marriage suit by their demands for a higher or lower mahr and for the provision of various ancillary goods and good-will payments, such as the golat al-kheir, and through their concern that certain residential conditions be met. By regulating these payments and gifts in kind, the kora threatens to curtail women's negotiating power and hence their ability either to encourage or to discourage a particular suitor. In addition to this, the kora reduces or removes altogether some of the payments of which they are the main beneficiaries. Apart from the golat al-kheir, there are many other payments and gifts which can be exacted from the bridegroom by the female relatives and friends of the bride in the course of the wedding celebrations. Mothers and daughters then generally welcomed high marriage payments and lavish celebrations. Most of those women to whom the kora did appeal had several daughters, some advancing in years and not yet engaged to be married; in so far as the kora was seen as an effective inducement to young men to marry thereby reducing the pool of eligible girls, it can be understood that some families with unmarried female dependents welcomed it.

However, ensuing events suggest that the kora does not provide young men with sufficient inducements to marry, for it failed to realise a large increase in marriages. Eleven marriages were contracted at the al 'eid al kabir, but only three of them were between village partners and thus subject to the kora restriction. Moreover two of these were between close relatives and had been planned long before the discussions of restoring the kora. The third marriage concerned a migrant absent for long periods from the village; his parents and siblings were resident in the village, and it is possible that the kora encour-

aged him to marry; he married a non-relative from the village. Of the other marriages three were between close relatives, with the bride residing in another village - Hilaliya, Kumur and Gara, all on the east bank - and these also had been planned long in advance. Two marriages were contracted between girls from Abu Haraz and men, working and residing elsewhere (Ros-eires and Wad Medani), but whose families originated from Abu Haraz; one of these marriages derived from a long-standing engagement. The three remaining marriages were with unrelated persons from outside Abu Haraz. In the first, a girl from the village married a local government officer from the Gezira; the second, a migrant from the village, who was a trader in Umm Ruwarba in Kordofan, married a girl from Wad Medani; the third, the middle-aged manager of the Cooperative shop in the village contracted a polygamous third marriage with a girl from Abu Haraz al Warrani.

Only four more marriages took place in the remaining five months of my fieldwork, and three of these were celebrated very quietly, two of them being polygamous marriages, and the third having been elicited by a pre-nuptial pregnancy. One of the polygamous marriages was contracted by a village shopkeeper; he married the daughter of a widow, who was a neighbour. The other one was contracted by a migrant in his early 30s who worked as a trader in Khartoum; already married to a non-relative in Abu Haraz, he married as his second wife a cousin (FBD) living in Fedasi in the Gezira. The 'forced' marriage occurred between a villager who worked as a builder and a young divorced woman who, with her parents and sisters, had moved to Abu Haraz some years previously. The fourth marriage was between a girl from the village and a non-relative from Wad Medani. In none of these cases could it be said that the kora properly applied. None of them entailed first marriages where both partners were from the village.

The implications of the kora regulations may now be assessed.

TABLE 2

WEDDING EXPENDITURE, 1977-8 (in Sudanese Pounds)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bridegroom & bride	Mirghenni	Hussein	Haj Sadiq	Hasan -	Mamoon -	Sa'id -	Kharafallah
	- Hadiyya	- Ihlam	- Najat	Haiyat	Leila	- Bedriya	- Fatna
	AH Kummur	Both AH	Both AH	Both AH	AH Kummur	Atara Taif K	K Taif
1st or 2nd marriage	1st	1st	1st	Hasan's 2nd	1st	Sa'id's 2nd	1st
<u>Kora</u>	-	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	-
Relationship of spouses	MBD	Not related	FBD	Not rel'd	Not rel'd	Not rel'd	FFZDD
Golat al-Kheir	40	20	-	20	30	30	-
Mahr	150	100	80	80	130	250	40
Bride's trousseau	400	250	180	170	220	350	60
Furnishings	240	350	160	150	150	120	-
Food gifts	150	40	70	35	120	130	-
Invitation cards	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wedding feast	200	-	-	140	140	-	35
Wedding party	-	50	80	-	65	55	5
Photographs	35	-	20	-	25	-	-
Honeymoon	200	-	-	-	-	150	-
Contributions received	390	160	125	-	140	-	42
Length of engagement	3 yrs	-	18 months	-	1 year	1 year	3 months

Wedding Expenditure, 1977-8 (Cont'd.)

Further details of marriages:

1. Mirghenni Sheikh Abu 'Agla (Abu Haraz) and Hadiyya Sheikh Hamad al-Nil (Kumur). Both grandchildren of Sheikh el Eleish Sheikh Hamad al-Nil. Mirghenni made savings from his salary as a local court clerk over many years. Marriage celebrations also took place over a long period: the marriage contract and the bridegroom's invitation party were held in Nov. 1977, and the final wedding party was not held until May 1978. This delay was partly due to the marriage of Hadiyya's sister (No.6) in Oct. 1977. In turn the protracted arrangements for Hadiyya's wedding delayed the marriage of Mirghenni's brother, Hamad al-Nil, to a cousin in Taiba (FZD). Although Mirghenni eventually planned to build a new house on the perimeter of Abu Haraz, a room was built for the couple by the bride's family in Kumur during the winter of 1977-8.

2. Hussein Sa'id and Ihlam Sadiq Dafa'Allah, both from Abu Haraz. This marriage took place before the reintroduction of the kora. The son of a village butcher, and the owner of a lorry and of a brick-kiln near El Eleila, Hussein built a large new house next to his father's; this house comprised two rooms, enclosure and large diwan. Ihlam, the daughter of a rainland farmer and vegetable seller, was still studying at primary school; both she and her grandmother wished to delay the marriage until she was older, but the bridegroom was insistent, and the marriage went ahead.

3. Haj Sadiq Dafa'Allah and Najat Mustafa Dafa'Allah. Patri-lateral parallel cousins, living in adjacent households in Abu Haraz. A single room was built near their two families by Haj, who served in the army and had saved for the marriage during his service with the Arab peace-keeping force in the Lebanon.

4. Hasan Sa'id and Haiyat Bashir, both from Abu Haraz. A half-brother of Hussein Sa'id (No. 2), and a shop-keeper and butcher, and owner of a lorry-bus, Hasan was already married with 8 children, the eldest of whom were of marriageable age. He had performed the pilgrimage with his first wife some years previously. This second marriage was to the daughter of a widow who lived next to him - though, an unrelated family. Hasan built a single room in the vicinity of the two families.

5. Mamoon Tom and Leila Osman. Mamoon worked in the Sennar Sugar Factory. He was the son of Zaineb el Eleish and feki

Wedding Expenditure, 1977-8 (Cont'd.)

Tom, the director of the primary school in the neighbouring village of Kiran, and the man held to have the greatest religious authority in Kumur. He married an unrelated girl from Atara, a village between Abu Haraz and Wad Medani on the west bank; she was the daughter of a reputedly pious friend of his father's.

6. Sa'id Mohammad (Taif) and Bedriya Sheikh Hamad al-Nil (Kumur). Sa'id was the son of a wealthy livestock-owner, and himself a lorry-owner; he already had a wife and children in Taif. His social position and existing marital status is reflected in the large dowry he gave for the daughter of the sheikh el hilla in Kumur.

7. Kharafallah Ibbudi (Kumur) and Fatna Elamin (Taif). Kharafallah looked after his father's herd of goats, and the marriage was largely facilitated by his father. For example, Ibbudi went to Wad Medani and bought a pair of shoes and the material for two jellabiyas for his son. The total marriage expenditure was very limited compared with the majority of marriages in Abu Haraz. Entertainment at the celebrations held first in Kumur, then in Taif, was provided by women singing and playing the deluka and men performing their traditional dance (aridh) - leaping in the air, gesticulating with camel-sticks and stamping their feet on the ground. This contrasts with the performance of modern popular songs and dancing at marriages in Abu Haraz. The bridal home was a simple gutiya which had been erected by the bride's family in Taif.

In the first place it appears that the kora regulations have not had the effect of encouraging more marriages to take place. The age at marriage for men and women has steadily increased. The large number of eligible girls in Abu Haraz in 1977 was not simply the result of the paucity of marriages in the previous two years during which time the kora had lapsed; it was the result of an accumulative trend over many years which the old kora had failed significantly to arrest. If the kora had been successful in facilitating more marriages one would expect to find a higher proportion of marriages in which both partners were from the village. But this is not the case. As the marriages celebrated in 1977 show, the proportion of intra-village marriages is rather low (only four out of fifteen, and one of these was a polygamous marriage). On the other hand there is no firm evidence to suggest that kora restrictions encouraged a larger number of extra-village marriages to take place in order to evade those restrictions. A considerable number of extra-village marriages are with close relatives; rather than attempting to evade kora regulations, many of these marriages are directed outside the village largely through incidental factors - particularly the absence of suitably aged relatives in the village - as well as the positive factor, of wishing to strengthen a particular kinship relationship.

The question then arises, if there have not been sustained attempts to evade the restrictions of the kora, does it mean that the kora has been successful in limiting marriage expenditure in those marriages which have come about? I would argue this has not been the case. The kora has merely limited the increase in certain formal marriage payments, notably the mahr, but it has not really checked the total expenditure associated with setting up a new household. As stated before, the mahr is supposed to cover the costs of providing the new couple's basic domestic requirements. Given the aspirations of most couples in Abu Haraz, the mahr, even if increased substantially, is inadequate to cover all the necessary expenditure.

What has tended to occur is for various transactions of goods to take place outside the payment of the mahr. We have already noted the golat al-kheir, the preliminary payment often exacted from the prospective bridegroom by the bride's mother in return for her good-will. To the bride herself the groom must provide a shabka malabis or shanta, comprising clothing, shoes, perfumes, cosmetics and personal toiletries and accessories. This may cost the bridegroom anything between £S150 and £S400. This wardrobe usually comprises a specific number of each kind of garment, for example tobs, good dresses, working dresses, etc; usually the number is three or four of each type, but in rich marriages many more are expected. A watch and a gold ring are normally included in these presents. In addition the bridegroom is expected to provide at least metal hanging rails and a clothes-stand, if not a clothes wardrobe. (The clothes themselves are handed over in one or more suitcases, hence the name shanta, meaning a case.) Additional furnishings, such as beds, chairs and table are primarily the bridegroom's responsibility. The main contribution of the bride's family is in providing sets of household utensils, various kinds of mats and some traditional foodstuffs. This is known as the dolab bita' 'eid or simply moi'a. The sets of bowls, plates, cups and glasses become the centre-pieces of the wife's display cabinet ('idda). However, the bridegroom may assist in contributing initially to his wife's 'idda. Moreover he is commonly expected to provide several sacks of basic food items, such as wheat flour, sugar, tea and coffee, as well as large cans of cooking oil and kerosene, and boxes of soap. Apart from these he must provide dates, biscuits and sweets as presents for the girls who assist and entertain the bride (hagg al banat).

Where a marriage is subject to the kora regulations these transactions are made under cover of a long engagement, or, in the case of some of the goods, by withholding them until a week after the wedding. Quite apart from the costs of construction of new buildings for the married couple, the expenditure in-

curred by the bridegroom in contributing clothing, furnishings and foodstuffs for the endowment of the bride and of their newly formed household may amount to ten times the formal payment embodied in the mahr. (See table of respective expenditures of selected households). The standardisation of mahr payments therefore conceals the differential expenditure on the other items I have just considered. Certainly where no regulation occurs the differences in expenditure are all the more apparent.

Although the major part of the increase in expenditure falls upon the bridegroom, it may be at least partly matched by increased expenditure by the bride's family; this may take the form of increased expenditure on the wedding celebrations, or of endowment of the bride with gold jewelry. In urban elite marriages the father of the bride sometimes gives the bridegroom a car filled with presents as his contribution to the endowment of the conjugal couple (shayal). In these marriages the bride's family may construct and furnish a sumptuous bedroom with a double-bed and fitted cupboards for the use of the bridal couple. The costs of this suite are in effect transferred to the bridegroom, since the bride's family demand a mahr which is equivalent to the amount expended by them on these preparations. In Abu Haraz the mahr rarely covers the cost of building and furnishing a new room for the bride and her husband; these expenses are usually born by the latter outwith of the mahr payment.

In most non-kora marriages there is considerable ceremonial elaboration, with festivities frequently lasting several days. Separate parties are held at the homes of the bride and bridegroom during which they are hennaed by their respective families; meanwhile the guests assemble, make their contributions and take part in the festivities. On the evening of the final day the bridegroom and his entourage arrive, inevitably late, at the bride's village, and the main festivities take place at

her home (saira). When the bridal couple are from the same village, as in kora marriages, these movements are, of course, much more simplified, and the parties tend to converge, especially if the couple are related. At the main celebration, awnings, lights and chairs are hired, and entertainment is provided by a hired group playing modern (Sudanese) popular songs. Dancing takes a variety of forms, traditional at first with the sexes somewhat set apart, but freer, more exuberant and more mixed as the night progresses. At the women's parties held on previous evenings music is provided by the women themselves, playing the deluka¹ and singing.

Several old marriage customs and rituals have been reincorporated during these festivities. For example the ceremony of the cutting of the rahat is sometimes held. The rahat is a leather thonged skirt worn long ago as the sole garment by girls before marriage. Today at this ceremony the bride wears it over her dress, and the bridegroom is required to break it in return for a payment to the bride and her female relatives. Similarly at the bridal dance, which the bride performs for her husband, the bride is supposed to faint, and the husband must catch her before she falls to the ground; if he fails he must again give payments to the women present. Barclay (1964) records that at the bridal dances he witnessed the latter custom was never included, and concludes that it is probably rarely practised today. That may well have been true at the time of his writing, but clearly it has made a revival, especially at large weddings. The incorporation of such customs reflects in general the tendency to elaborate ceremonial in order to underline the importance of the marriage union being celebrated, and in particular the establishment of a conjugal fund.²

1. A kind of kettle-drum.

2. There are several articles on wedding ceremonies in the riverain Sudan, which provide a wealth of details on the rituals and customs involved. See Crowfoot, 1922; Zenkovsky, 1945 & 1949; Abdulla El Tayib, 1955 & 1956. It is not my objective to explore the meaning or symbolism of all these customs, as this would prove too much of a digression from my main theme.

Modern elaborations include the coiffure of the bride and the visit of the bride and bridegroom to a studio to be photographed in their formal attire. The wearing of a white wedding dress (zeffaf) by the bride, and a western-style suit by the bridegroom is also now common at big weddings; seated together under a light-studded canopy and dressed in this attire, they observe the surrounding festivities while guests approach and congratulate them. Finally, of course, there is the increasingly common practice of having a honeymoon, usually in one of the large hotels in the main towns, but sometimes abroad.

In respect of the wedding celebrations I must mention again the contributions made by the guests to the couple getting married (nuqta).¹ It is customary at all marriages for the male and female guests to give financial contributions, respectively, to the bridegroom and to the bride. The amount of the contribution depends both on the nature of the marriage, particularly the extent of the festivities, and the status of both the donors and recipients. If the wedding is a very large one, with invitation cards sent out to the guests, and a wide range of festivities and entertainment offered to the guests, the contributions are likely to be much larger than, say, at a kora marriage where no meal is served to the guests and the festivities are effectively shared with other marriages taking place at the same time; for the same reason contributions at a first marriage are much greater than those at a second marriage, since the celebrations at the latter are generally far less extensive. The size of the contributions also depends on the status of the donors: older and wealthier persons naturally give more than others. The contributions to the bridegroom are publicly received during one of the evening's festivities, generally on the night that the bridegroom is hennaed; they are recorded in a book by the bridegroom's 'best man' (wazir), and the total disclosed at the end of the evening. The list can then

1. See Chapter 5, pp. 149-50

be used for reference by the bridegroom when the time comes for him to reciprocate at the weddings of fellow villagers. Fifty piastres was a fairly standard amount for male adults to give at marriages in Abu Haraz in 1977, though more was given if it was a close relative, and sometimes less if there were weak ties between the persons concerned. Women gave much smaller amounts to the bride. The bridegroom may of course also receive presents, sometimes of substantial value, from close relatives and friends. One of the brothers of my chief assistant gave him two metal-framed beds at his wedding, and a friend of the village brick-kiln owner gave the latter a Seiko watch at his wedding.

These contributions and presents certainly help to reimburse some of the costs incurred by the bridegroom, particularly with respect to the wedding celebrations themselves. But, of course, they have to be reciprocated at festivities subsequently celebrated by the donors, and it is expected that the contribution be at least matched if not surpassed. While spreading the costs of individual marriages, this system of contributions probably serves to increase absolute expenditure. Assured that part of his costs are going to be offset by the prospective contributions, the bridegroom is encouraged to increase his outlay on marriage goods and other expenses. The competitive element in this system of contributions also tends to inflate the payments made by all sides.

Connected with the increase in marriage expenditure and the transaction of marriage goods before marriage so as to evade the kora restrictions, has been the tendency for long engagements to become increasingly prevalent in Abu Haraz. Many engagements are characterised by preparations and transactions for the endowment of the prospective couple which it was hoped the kora would encourage to take place after the marriage. For example, in several current engagements the fiance is involved in constructing a house of two or more rooms either on a new

site or near his own family. This constitutes a new trend. To finance the building of a whole new house before the wedding was unheard of in the past. As described before, the traditional pattern of immediate post-marital residence was and still is predominantly uxorilocal. If the couple getting married are related, especially if first cousins, significant changes in residence may not be entailed for either spouse. However, the removal of the bride from her family of origin by an unrelated husband is an indication that if the bridegroom is able to shoulder the costs of providing a new home, and has in fact already done so, then the bride's family are prepared to accept this de facto situation. A long engagement is adequate preparation for this more abrupt move, which witnesses the change in the bride's status from being a dependent in her own family to becoming mistress of an independent household.

As I have said, engagements often provide a cover for the exchange of marriage goods outwith the mahr. The most notable of these transactions is the presentation of clothes and other personal items to the bride (shanta). Frequently the shanta is handed over well in advance of the marriage. For example, Yusuf Ismail, who had been working in Saudi Arabia, gave a shanta to his fiancée, his FBD, during her final year of primary school. He was ready to marry her, but the girl, who was supported by her widowed mother, wished to complete three years of secondary schooling if she passed her primary exams, which she did. Although the wedding has been delayed at least three years, the girl, Nagat, wears the clothes that she received in the shanta. In some cases the giving of the shanta may form part of a strategy to win a girl's favour with a view to marriage. The return of the shanta may thus indicate the refusal of the girl or her family to accept the suit. For example, Mustafa al-Rayyah, the son of a relatively poor religious family, wished to marry the vivacious daughter of one of the village butchers. Following the provisional approval of the marriage, he saved up and purchased the contents of a

shanta which he gave to the girl. Without any reason being given, the shanta was returned and the marriage plans were called off.

Most long-standing engagements are between close relatives. Only in a few cases is the engagement celebrated by a special ceremony (khatuba), although this is more common in urban marriages. Many engagements derive from a man's predisposition to marry a particular cousin; through the passage of time, and especially once the transaction of marriage goods has begun, this predisposition develops into a definite intention. Varying degrees of parental pressure act on the man's choice and on the response of the fiancée. But though many engagements derive from what is considered a suitable match by parents and relatives, combined with the man's liking for a particular cousin, other engagements ensue from an initiative taken by the man himself. For example, Yusuf 'Omer's engagement to Zaineb Abu 'Agla stemmed from a childhood fancy; while still at school he declared his intention that he would marry her. Some six years later when Zaineb had finished her schooling, the marriage took place between them. Not infrequently engagements are broken off. This generally occurs with engagements which have a rather nominal status, if the man decides he wishes to marry someone else, or if a favourably regarded suitor wishes to marry the girl. For example, Mirghenni Abu 'Agla had been thwarted in marrying the girl of his first choice; he then decided to marry a cousin living in Kumur, even although she was already engaged to another cousin from Sennar. The latter was prepared to break off his engagement, and he is now engaged to another cousin in Sennar. Some engagements may drag on rather desultorily, especially if one or other of the partners is not fully committed to the proposed marriage. For example, Ibrahim Ismail had been engaged for a long time to the step-daughter of his father's brother; for whatever reason is not clear, but he showed no signs of wishing to culminate this long engagement. Normally, however, the length of the

engagement is due to the need of the prospective husband to save sufficient resources and to make the necessary preparations for the marriage. The engagement is often prolonged by requests by the fiancée, either on her own behalf or that of her family, for payments to meet various extraordinary expenditure. The average length of engagements would appear to be about four or five years. I recorded over twenty current engagements in Abu Haraz. But since many engagements are tacit agreements and are not widely disclosed, there are probably the same number again which I failed to record. This amounts to three or four times the number of first marriages annually contracted. Half the marriages at the al 'eid al kabir derived from long engagements.

An interesting development concerning the marriage contract has occurred concerning the manner of payment of the mahr. Traditionally the payment of the mahr is made publicly at the same time as the marriage contract ('agid); this formalisation of the marriage is referred to colloquially as the sofah. Normally this occasion takes place at the home of the bride early in the evening, and a local feki is invited to officiate the proceedings. The celebration is usually marked by the sacrifice of a sheep, which the bridegroom provides. The payment of the mahr is made by a representative of the bridegroom to the guardian of the bride. The former is usually a close relative or friend of the bridegroom, and the latter the father, or next of kin, of the bride. These two representatives make formal statements of their agreement to contract the marriage for the sum of money declared. The money, formerly in large silver coins, today in bank-notes, is then counted out for all to see and witness, and handed over. The feki who has been invited to officiate the proceedings recites a few verses from the Koran, and finally leads all those present in saying the fatha.¹ I witnessed this cere-

1. The fatha is the opening verse (sura) of the Koran. It forms an essential part of Muslim worship, and no contract or transaction is considered complete unless it is recited. Other notable occasions when it occurs are on greeting a recently bereaved person, and after the mediation of a dispute and the reconciliation of the parties concerned.

mony only once at the marriage of Mirghenni Abu 'Agla to Hadiyya Hamad al-Nil in Kumur; it was officiated by the couple's uncle, feki al-Rayyah Sheikh el Eleish (the bridegroom's MB, and the bride's FB). But I was informed that all marriages in Kumur involved a public payment of the mahr. On the occasion of Hadiyya's sister's marriage to a non-relative from Taif the bride's family expected feki Tom, a paternal relative, to conduct the sofah. He declined to do this, however, because the bride's family had pulled down the old disused khalwa of Sheikh el Eleish in order to make space for the construction of a bedroom for the engaged couple.

In contrast, at most marriages in Abu Haraz the holding of the marriage contract and the payment of the mahr are performed on separate occasions and follow a different procedure. Payment of the mahr is carried out by the women of the two families concerned at the home of the bride. No ceremony as such is performed, though usually this transaction coincides with the display of the gifts to the bride, notably the contents of the shanta. These gifts are examined and admired by the various female relatives and guests who are present at the time.

On the other hand the marriage contract itself is performed at the office of the local mazum, the official registrar of marriages and divorces. This entails a journey to the neighbouring village of Abu Haraz al-Wastani, since the mazum is attached to the local Popular Council (Majlis Sha'abi). The registering of the marriage contract is carried out in the presence of a limited number of people, usually the representatives of the bride and bridegroom and a few other close relatives and friends. The amount of mahr agreed to is recorded, and in addition another sum is agreed to which is to be handed over to the bride in the event of the marriage being dissolved; this additional sum is known as sadag. Usually the sadag is a purely nominal amount, but it is not uncommon in urban marriages for the amount specified to be quite substantial. Although

women in Abu Haraz are aware that in some marriages sadag as well as mahr is asked for, they are generally content if the former is a nominal amount. Barclay (1964) notes that this is also the case in Buuri and that the sadag "usually amounts to only a few pounds" (p.247).

I should make clear that according to the Koran there is no distinction between mahr and sadag, the latter in fact being the term used throughout; the deferment of part of the marriage payment is seen as an elaboration of custom and, strictly speaking, not upheld by the Koran. But the division of marriage payments, with part paid with the agreeing of the contract and part withheld until the dissolution of the marriage, is widely recorded throughout the Middle East (Levy 1969, Goode 1970). However, the significance of the delayed transmission of dowry seems to have been widely overlooked, and often misconstrued. Frequently it is interpreted as a means of evading part or all of the dowry being given to the bride, or as a means of reducing the value of marriage payments and hence the amount of expenditure incurred by the bridegroom.

This explanation is certainly not applicable in those marriages in Sudan where more than a nominal amount of sadag is included in the marriage contract. In these cases the sadag is seen as an additional endowment of the bride in the event of the dissolution of the marriage; it serves both to discourage the divorce of the wife by her husband, and, in the event of her divorce or widowhood, to provide her with some independent means of support at least in the initial period following the termination of the marriage. The inclusion of sadag in the marriage contract also serves to indicate the status of the married couple, as measured by the husband's economic position; for it is only meaningful to include sadag if the husband has sufficient resources to constitute the necessary payment to his widow if he dies. This view is supported by the evidence that Goode gives in his examination of marriage patterns in the

Middle East; he claims that the practice of delayed transmission of dowry is most common in "middle- and upper-class circles" (p.92). This supports Goody's general thesis that the endowment of property on the bride and the discouragement of divorce is most likely among higher status groups in socially stratified societies (1976). These arguments I will develop further in the concluding chapter.

To return to the question of the inclusion of sadag, albeit only as a nominal sum, in the marriage contract in Abu Haraz: the origins of this delayed payment are not clear. In part it may emanate from the office of mazum, which was introduced in the Condominium and bears Egyptian influences. In Egypt sadag is often an amount equivalent to the mahr (Barclay, 247). It may also emanate from more indigenous riverain customs. Barclay says that small plots of land were sometimes given as sadag in the past, but that this practice was uncommon at the time of his researches (p.34). Al-Shahi, writing about marriage payments in Nuri in the northern Sudan, also reveals that part of the dowry, which used to be paid in kind (land, palm-trees), was often withheld in the past.¹ This would perhaps suggest that where land was the most important resource, and where access to it was unequal, its endowment on women served to differentiate families of different status. However, there is no evidence that land, whether riverain or rainland, was ever endowed on women in Abu Haraz through marriage transactions. Today, since the marriage payments I have been considering are all monetarised, different questions are raised. If socio-economic differentiation has occurred, why have sadag payments remained purely nominal? The nominal nature of the sadag in Abu Haraz, I would argue, reflects the influence of two factors: one, that kinship ties are still ideally considered to be strong enough to provide support for widows and divorced

1. A.S. Al-Shahi: An Anthropological Study of a Sudanese Shaigiya Village. D.Phil, Oxford, 1971.

women; and second, that given the prevalence of wage and salary-earned incomes, most families do not have the resources to pledge the payment of sadag.

I should add here, in parenthesis, that the failure to endow women with property, whether through inheritance or marriage payments, among some nominally Muslim tribal groups is a different question which does not concern me here. Tillion (1966), Goody (1973) and Peters (1978)¹ have paid attention to this problem, and are in general agreement that the implementation of Muslim property prescriptions by tribal groups subsisting on relatively fixed patrimonies is incompatible with the corporate basis of such groups and the forms of social cohesion and solidarity that they express. In some such groups the evasion of transference of property to women at marriage may take the form of declaring a delayed marriage payment which is rarely ever fulfilled. These cases should be clearly distinguished from those marriages among particular social classes where deferred marriage portions provide an additional source of endowment for the bride.

The fact that in Abu Haraz the payment of the mahr has become separated from the marriage contract, and that the handing over of the mahr has become more of a private female event rather than a male public occasion is perhaps indicative of the other changes in marriage transactions that I have noted. In particular it is perhaps indicative of the fact that women have become the main recipients of marriage goods. I have argued that one of the main functions of these marriage payments is to endow the couple with the various requirements entailed in establishing a new domestic group. A varying proportion of any marriage expenditure goes on the purchase of domestic goods and equipment, and this is generally associated

1. E.L.Peters: 'The State of Women in Four Middle East Communities' in Women in the Muslim World, ed. by L. Beck and N. Keddie, Cambridge, Mass., 1978.

with the domestic role of the wife. However, the increase in marriage expenditure, as characterised by trends in Abu Haraz, has been marked not only by the purchase of a much wider range of general household goods, but also of goods pertaining exclusively to the woman's domain. The elaboration of gifts in the shanta in particular is to be noted. The diversification of the woman's 'idda is another indication of the wife's enhanced domestic position. Moreover, since the woman's role has become a more strictly domestic one, and the husband is often working away from home, all the general expenditure on the improvement of the home and the introduction of modern amenities is of more direct benefit to women than to men. Also, generally speaking, the home and all its contents becomes in time the effective property of the wife. Thus it is only appropriate that women should handle the mahr.

I would argue that the increase in marriage payments has been most widely supported by women, and that pressure for higher payments most persistently comes from them, usually through mothers on behalf of their daughters. The indifference of women in Abu Haraz to the introduction of the kora is evidence of this, as are also the many empirical cases I could recount where new or higher demands on the bridegroom emanated from the mother of the bride, though no doubt with the approval of the latter. Barclay (p.243) suggests that the delayed age at marriage for women is probably the result of their fathers' demanding too large a dowry. If the responsibility for this tendency is to be attached to certain individuals' motivations and influence, then it is almost certainly mothers rather than fathers to whom this comment is applicable. Since Barclay does not anywhere examine, in an otherwise comprehensive treatment of marriage procedures and ceremonies, the uses to which the mahr is put, nor the composition of other marriage goods nor their main beneficiaries, it is not surprising that he underestimates the strength of women's influence on marriage payments. It is certainly true that the father generally accords with the pressures

exerted by the mother, and equally that the bridegroom also accedes to the demands placed upon him. For it is in the men's interests, or at least it enhances their status and prestige, if their women are well provided for, and that their homes are as lavishly furnished and equipped as possible. This is the point that Goody is making when he associates systems of social differentiation with the endowment of women as indices of men's relative status.

In Kumur, although there is no kora, marriage expenditure is generally much lower than in Abu Haraz. Payments of mahr in Kumur have been similar to the amounts of mahr in the kora in Abu Haraz, i.e. less than £530. However, other expenditures incurred at marriage are markedly smaller. Expenditure on building, furnishings, household goods, clothing and presents for the bride, and on the wedding celebrations is much less than in Abu Haraz. The payment of mahr is made in public at the time of the marriage contract, since the transaction signifies the emergence of a new domestic unit and not primarily the endowment of the bride. As will be shown in the next chapter women in Kumur appear more prone to taking the initiative to dissolve their marriage than the women of Abu Haraz. This I will argue is because less value, whether material or ideological, is invested in their marriage; and this in turn reflects the different economic conditions which prevail in Kumur.

CHAPTER 7

TRENDS IN MARRIAGE STABILITY

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the trends that have occurred concerning the duration and stability of marriages among the population of Abu Haraz and Kumur. By marriage stability I refer to the likelihood and frequency of marriages being terminated through divorce, desertion or separation. I consider a marriage to have been terminated through separation in any of the following circumstances: where a migrant or absent husband ceases to provide support for his wife and children; where a man has undertaken a polygamous marriage, is living with his second wife, and neglects to send assistance to his first wife; finally a separation may be voluntarily initiated by a wife, almost invariably an older co-wife, so that she may go and live near her married children. I am also interested to examine marriage duration, which is related to the degree of marriage stability, and also to other factors, namely, the age at marriage of the respective spouses, the frequency of widowhood, and the frequency of serial and polygamous marriages. For in general I wish to study changes in the fluidity of marriages, by which I mean the relative ease with which marriage bonds are formed, dissolved and reformed within the individual's life-span.

The concept of marriage 'stability' is inevitably a value-laden term, and therefore I must make clear how I am using the term. I do not wish to imply that marriage stability necessarily involves a conflict-free relationship between the spouses, nor that it denotes a conjugal relationship with the western associations of the term 'conjugal'. Nor am I primarily concerned to convey the values which the actors themselves

attribute ideally to marriage. Regardless of the actual extent of marriage stability, actors have no doubt at different times expressed the desirability of the durability of marriage ties. This is not to say that there have been no changes in the expectations concerning marriage. For example there has been a widespread change in attitudes towards polygamous marriages, with far fewer people today emphasising the virtues of such marriages and more people pointing to monogamous marriage as being the ideal form of conjugality. But I am not primarily interested in the changes in attitudes towards marriage and sexual relationships. As I made clear above, I seek to detect trends in the frequency of marriages; in particular I wish to examine what effect the intensification of marriage payments has had on marriage formation.

The arguments that I present in this chapter are based on my findings concerning marital status in Abu Haraz and Kumur, supplemented by more detailed case-studies from these and neighbouring villages. I have sought to substantiate these findings by reference to the results of social surveys carried out among much larger population samples. In particular I refer to the economic and social survey of the Rahad Project area, which contains the above-mentioned villages and which was carried out in 1975-6, just two years before my own field-work.¹ I also make reference to social surveys carried out at earlier periods in the neighbouring Gezira area. However, I must mention certain problems concerning the collection and interpretation of data on marital status. With my own data collection I found no problem in recording current marital status of persons interviewed. But I did encompass problems when I tried to elicit all the marriages contracted by past generations, and to a lesser extent previous short-lived marriages contracted by living persons. Informants tend to overlook past

1. Mohd. El Awad Galal El Din: *The Human Factor in the Rahad Project Area: Results of Population and Socioeconomic Survey*. Khartoum, 1975.

marriages if they have no bearing on present kinship configurations. As a result, I suspect that I have substantially under-recorded serial and plural marriages of past generations. The most frequent under-reporting of marriages probably concerned those marriages of men and women with spouses from other villages, and also marriages which failed to yield offspring or whose male children died before marrying. A few of these unreported marriages came to my knowledge through other incidental sources of information. An additional problem concerning the recording of past marriages may have derived from the issue I was investigating. If divorces, separations, remarriages and plural marriages are in fact less common today, there may have been a tendency among my informants in describing past marriages to ignore practices which they considered conflicted with modern trends. Thus they may have played down the greater fluidity of marriages in the past. Those to whom I put the question directly, whether more marriages were enacted in the past, generally replied in the affirmative. This leaves out of consideration the greater prevalence in the past of non-contractual unions, i.e. concubinage.

The information provided by the Rahad Social Survey, while generally reliable, has certain limitations in relation to the questions I am examining in this chapter. The tables on current marital status do not give any indication as to the frequency of divorce and widowhood, or of subsequent remarriages. Where the frequency of remarriages is high, many women who have been divorced or widowed will appear among the category of currently married women. Only where the frequency of remarriages is very low, will the proportion of currently divorced and widowed women give some indication of the actual frequency of divorce and widowhood.

I should at this stage give a general account of the basic demographic features of the area studied. In the Rahad Project area as a whole there is a slight preponderance of males to

females: for the total population of 72,243 the sex ratio is 105.6. The sex ratio for Abu Haraz al Warrani is 109.3, and for Kumur 94.5. In the Project area as a whole there is a slight preponderance of males in all age-groups, except for the 20-24 age group, where there is in some areas a marked preponderance of females. This possibly indicates a high rate of migration of single men in this age-group. The Rahad Project report suggests that part of this surplus may be accounted for by polygamous and other marriages in which wives are brought in from other areas. My findings on marriage patterns in Abu Haraz and Kumur suggest that this is not a plausible explanation, as there is no indication that more women are brought into the area through marriage than the number of women who leave the area through marriage. Anyhow this problem does not arise in the case of Abu Haraz al Warrani, since, in spite of a heavy pattern of male migration, there is a marked preponderance of males, not females, in the 20-24 age group. This imbalance I can only attribute to natural variation. In Kumur, although there is an overall preponderance of females, there is no marked imbalance in any particular age-group. (See Table 3).

The age structure of the population throughout the Rahad Project area follows a consistent pattern. Children under 15 comprise more than 50% of the total population; this is also true both of Abu Haraz district and of the two specific villages which I studied. In larger villages, such as Abu Haraz, where there tend to be better amenities and services (bore-wells, clinics, etc.), there is a larger proportion of older people. The crude birth rate is high, varying from 38 to 50 births per 1000 population in a sample of villages from the Project area. Fertility is shown to be high from the fact that the average number of children still living born to women over 45 is over four. In Abu Haraz the population appears to be expanding at an even faster rate since the average number of children among completed families is over six. The increase in family sizes

TABLE 3

Population of Abu Haraz and Kumur by sex and age-group
(from Rahad Project Social Survey)

	ABU HARAZ		KUMUR	
	Females	Males	Females	Males
0-1	18	14	8	6
1-4	89	94	28	30
5-9	134	142	43	31
10-14	127	140	35	38
15-19	110	121	38	31
20-24	37	78	17	16
25-29	55	52	16	16
30-34	40	37	11	19
35-39	45	41	13	12
40-44	32	31	13	6
45-49	30	32	11	8
50-54	38	38	7	13
55-59	26	44	6	2
60+	16	7	6	5
Total	797	871	252	233
	1168		485	

seems to be mainly the effect of higher standards of living. The largest families, those with between eight and twelve children, are almost invariably supported by men with regular employment. Also greater marriage stability - which I will argue has come about in Abu Haraz - may be conducive to larger family sizes, though this must be offset against the later age at marriage for women, which would tend to reduce fertility rates.

Mortality rates are also high. Throughout the Rahad Project area deaths vary from 16 to 20 per 1000 population. Infant mortality rates average 70 per 1000 births, although in some of the least developed areas the number is as high as 200 per 1000 births; there is also a high frequency of miscarriages, with one in ten married women recorded as having suffered at least one miscarriage.

These factors influence marriage duration, since high mortality rates increase the likelihood of a marriage being terminated through the early death of one or other partner. The number of marriages terminated through mortalities is further increased if there is a large difference in age between spouses. Remarriages are frequently characterised by an even larger differential age at marriage. Divorced or widowed men usually remarry a woman younger than their first wife. Widows have often been married by religious men, often of advancing years, with the consequence that only a short period may elapse before they become widowed again. Polygamous marriages are usually marked by an increasing differential age at marriage between the respective spouses. Thus as has been frequently noted, a large differential age at marriage which tends to produce many widows is often found correlated with polygamy, with the surplus of single women being absorbed in plural marriages. (Goody, 1976). In the villages that I studied the difference in age between spouses was often at least ten years, and sometimes appreciably more.

The age at marriage for both men and women appears to have become later in both Abu Haraz al Warrani and Kumur, though more markedly in the former village. The median age at first marriage in Abu Haraz is 24.6 for men and 16.1 for women, and in Kumur 22.9 for men and 15.3 for women. In both villages marriages in recent years suggest a substantially later age. The average age of men and women marrying in 1977-8 in Abu Haraz was 28 and 18 respectively. This trend is supported by the data on marital status provided by the Rahad Project Social Survey.

In Abu Haraz only a small number of women under 20 and men under 30 are recorded as being married. The figures for Kumur are similar with few women under 20 being married, though there are relatively more men aged between 20 and 29 recorded as being married. In the different parts of the Rahad Project area there is considerable variation in the proportion of unmarried women and ever-married women, and to a lesser extent in similar categories of the male population. In the more recently settled communities and in the areas comprising small villages whose occupants still rely heavily on traditional patrimonies the proportion of unmarried women tends to be lower. In the larger villages, especially in the more developed northern areas where there is greater diversity of occupation the proportion tends to be much higher. For example in one area (Sharif Ya'qub), where 82% of the male population are described as farmers and shepherds, 21 % of the female population over 12 years of age are recorded as unmarried. In Abu Haraz district, where only 42.8% of the male population are engaged primarily in farming or animal husbandry, 32% of the female population over 12 are unmarried. In Abu Haraz al Warrani 40% of the female population over 12 are unmarried; in Kumur the figure is 31.1%. A larger proportion of unmarried females indicates a later age at marriage, though it may also be partly accounted for by greater population increase.

TABLE 4

Marital Status - Abu Haraz and Kumur

(from Rahad Project Social Survey)

I ABU HARAZ AL WARRANI

Men aged 16 and above

	Never Married	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Total
16-19	107	-	-	-	107
20-29	116	13	1	-	130
30+	10	212	3	5	230
Total	233	225	4	5	467

Women aged 12 and above

	Never Married	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Total
12-19	171	7	-	-	178
20-29	28	57	4	3	92
30+	-	175	8	45	228
Total	199	239	12	48	498

TABLE 4 (Cont'd)

II KUMUR EL ELEISH

Men aged 16 and above

	Never Married	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Total
16-19	22	2	-	-	24
20-29	23	8	1	-	32
30+	1	64	-	-	65
Total	46	74	1	-	121

Women aged 12 and above

	Never Married	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Total
12-19	32	12	-	-	44
20-29	10	19	4	-	33
30+	1	50	2	8	61
Total	43	81	6	8	138

My findings which suggest that the age at marriage has become later appear to conflict with the findings of Henin who made a study of marriage patterns and trends based on a series of demographic surveys conducted in 1961-2 in different parts of the Sudan;¹ the groups he covered in his samples included settled communities in the Gezira and nomadic groups in the Blue Nile region, both of which belonged to the same set of tribal groups. His study shows that the settled populations have lower ages at marriage, lower marriage instability, and lower incidence of polygamy as compared with the nomadic populations. Henin supports his argument that settlement of formerly nomadic groups is conducive to lower age at marriage, by comparing the age at marriage of different age cohorts among the Gezira population. This comparison reveals that the older cohorts who married before the implementation of the Gezira Scheme had a higher age at marriage than the younger cohorts. Men and women under 50 have tended to marry at about 21 and 15 respectively, while men and women over 50 tended to marry at about 25 and 17 respectively (p.251-3). Unfortunately more recent data on marriage patterns among the Gezira population are not available, and so it is not possible to say whether this low age at marriage has been maintained during the last two decades. Henin refers to the low costs of marriage in the Gezira at the time of his writing. He suggests that the fluctuations in Gezira farmers' incomes "are not great enough to affect contemplated marriages" and that "£5 is sufficient to cover marriage expenses in the Gezira". (p.254). I would suspect that, since standards of living have risen and the costs of establishing a new household have increased greatly, and in many cases in greater proportion than the increase in income, there are today greater economic constraints on marriage, and this has probably led to a higher age at marriage. This is only a hypothesis, and the situation can only be truly

1. R.A.Henin: 'Marriage Patterns and Trends in the Nomadic and Settled Populations of the Sudan' in Africa, Vol.39, 1969.

assessed through the analysis of fresh data on Gezira marriage patterns.

The low age at marriage in the Gezira may be accounted for by the relatively assured income that farmers derive from their tenancies, and by the fact that being heritable the tenancy acts like a patrimony. The income and security engendered by the tenancies encourages farmers to facilitate the early marriages of their children. This is not so as to retain family labour on the tenancy, but so as to ensure that the income of wage-earning sons is diverted back to the family through kinship channels. Thus the possession of tenancies may serve to encourage a more traditional pattern of domestic developmental cycle, just as the possession of traditional patrimonies does. Henin indicates that after marriage the spouses remain living with their respective families, with the husband visiting his wife at varying intervals. While this may have been the prevailing pattern in the past, the evidence provided by Culwick (1954 and n.d.), Brausch (1964) and other writers suggest that these residential arrangements, together with the collective budgeting that they imply, have undergone significant changes. (See p.143). These changes are related to the emergence of new forms of property, particularly mercantile capital, and to the greater prevalence of salaried incomes. Under these conditions, I argue, marriage expenditure tends to become more elaborate and the age at marriage tends to become later. It is to be noted that Barclay records a tendency to later marriages in Buuri, where reliance on farming has steadily declined and employment in market services and wage labour in the capital have become prominent (p.243).

Informants in Abu Haraz and Kumur themselves referred to a number of factors which were conducive to later marriages. The increased costs of marriages were usually referred to as being the main cause. They also mentioned the extension of schooling and the requirements for job training as significant factors

delaying marriages. Most boys in Abu Haraz complete at least three years of secondary schooling, and an increasing number continue with further education or training. The education of girls is also regarded favourably in the village, as is shown by the existence of two girls' schools both established through self-help ventures. Most girls are involved in schooling at least until the age of 16, and if they go on to higher secondary schools in Wad Medani or Rufa'a until the age of 18 or 19. In some instances girls are withdrawn from their schooling in order to be married, although it is more common today for pressure to be exerted to defer the marriage. The greater availability of educational services for both boys and girls does seem generally to concur with later marriages. Some men expressed the view that it was better to marry a slightly older girl in the interests of compatibility and marriage stability. They suggested that the character of a girl in her late teens is more clearly formed, and that she is likely to be less capricious and more responsible than a younger girl. At least one divorced man mentioned the young age of his wife as the main reason of their incompatibility.

We may now turn to the question of the frequency of divorce and examine whether there has been any trend concerning the number of divorces among the population studied. The Rahad Project Social Survey shows that in Abu Haraz district 2.5% of women over 12 are currently divorced, and less than 1% of men over 16. But as mentioned before, these figures do not reveal the prevalence of divorce since variations in the frequency of remarriages are not indicated. Thus these figures may conceal the fact that in some areas and among particular social groups divorces may be more frequent, but they are combined with a high rate of remarriage. Turning to my own data from Abu Haraz and Kumur, I found no significant variation in comparing the frequency of divorces among different generations. I have already suggested that I probably failed to record several divorces of past generations because of the difficulty in eliciting

this information. Moreover my overall sample was probably not sufficiently large to indicate accurately trends where they do exist. My survey covered 247 men, who had contracted a total of 290 marriages; 22 of these marriages ended in divorce. It also covered 322 women who had contracted 343 marriages, with 23 of these being terminated by divorce. (See Table 5).

However, the correlation of divorce cases in Abu Haraz and Kumur with the occupation of the men involved has more positive implications. From the two villages I recorded a total of 31 divorces involving living persons. Fourteen of these cases involved partners from the same village; eight involved men from these villages who had married elsewhere; and nine involved women from these villages who had married men from elsewhere. Twenty-three of these divorces occurred in Abu Haraz, and eight in Kumur; this gives a higher frequency of divorces in Kumur in relation to its much smaller population than Abu Haraz. On the other hand the numbers involved are very small. Seventeen, or more than half, of the men involved in these divorces are engaged primarily in farming activities; of the others, five are traders, six are migrant workers and three are professional employees. Three of the farmers are from the Gezira, while the remainder are all rainland farmers on the east bank; seven of the latter are from Abu Haraz, four from Kumur and three from other villages on the east bank (El Eleila, Masara and Umm Shaneg). Some of these farmers keep small herds, and one or two kept much larger herds in the past; some of them have sons who have regular earned incomes, but none of them have other substantial economic interests which might provide an alternative to their farming activities. The fact that these farmers contracted more than half of the total divorces recorded, while farming is practised as a major occupation by less than a quarter of the married male population, suggests that divorces may have been more frequent in the past when a much larger proportion of the population was engaged in agricultural production.

TABLE 5

Marriages contracted by men and women in
Abu Haraz and Kumur

	MEN	WOMEN
Current Marital Status:		
Married:	236	251
(218 = 1 wife; 17 = 2 wives; 1 = 3 wives)		
Divorced:	7	15
Widowed:	4	56
 Total (ever-married)	 247	 322
 Total no. of marriages	 290	 343
Extant marriages	255	251
Terminated marriages	35	92
(terminated by divorce	18	26
terminated by death of spouse	17	66)

Three of the divorce cases involving traders concerned marriages which had been contracted in places where the men were temporarily based while carrying out their trading activities (Damazeen, Roseires and Umm Rawarba). These trading centres border on large areas which are still largely subsistence orientated, and they differ markedly in their social composition from towns like Wad Medani and Khartoum where the majority of merchants and sug traders from Abu Haraz are concentrated today. In the past more migrants from Abu Haraz in particular were engaged in petty-trading activities in these frontier zones. Their transitory periods of residence in these places were probably conducive to marriages of a less durable nature. I suspect that marriages of this kind were under-reported by my informants. I will discuss shortly some of the divorces initiated by men in the two 'modern' occupational categories, the migrant workers and professional employees. Here I wish to stress that the number of divorces initiated by migrant workers in particular is very small in relation to the proportion of the adult male population that they comprise. All these indications, therefore, suggest that there has probably been a decline in the frequency of divorce.

The argument I am trying to substantiate from admittedly inconclusive statistical evidence is strengthened if the reasons for divorce are considered, and who it is that initiates them. Several of the divorces in Kumur have been initiated, or at least provoked by the women concerned. One girl refused to consummate her marriage to a patrilineal cousin, and the mahr of £530 was returned. Another woman was divorced by a close relative from Nuweila in the Gezira, but she insisted to me that she had brought it about; other villagers confirmed this account and remarked that she was strong (gowi), a term usually reserved for men. Following several years of separation, during which she assumed responsibility for bringing up her two daughters, though assisted by her own family, a reconciliation was brought about between her and her former husband. Having

learnt that she was prepared to renew their marriage, her husband brought some gifts of clothing and remarried her at a simple ceremony officiated by a feki. Another woman in Kumur had been described to me as having been deserted by her husband who was from the west of Sudan, but in fact it was not as simple as that. The husband had wanted to return to the west of Sudan, taking his wife and six children with him, but his wife had refused to go, and so he had left on his own. While she may have had good reasons for wanting to stay in her village of origin, her forceful attitude contributed to her separation from her husband. Two other women also lived separately from their husband; though not asking for a divorce, two co-wives decided on their own initiative to leave their aging husband, who lived in another village on the east bank (Taif), and to return to Kumur, their village of origin. Since their husband had a third wife in Taif, and since most of their own children were now married and living in Kumur, this voluntary separation was agreeable to all parties concerned. In two divorce cases in Kumur I could not ascertain which party had intiated the dissolution of the marriage, while in two other cases it was the initiative of the husband. In one of these cases it was because the wife was infertile; in the other case, where a school director in Taiba divorced a warm-hearted but uneducated girl from Kumur, no explanation was given to me. In the neighbouring village of Masara I learnt of a marriage which the girl was trying to get terminated though the young husband was reluctant to divorce her. These cases were reported to me quite freely by both male and female informants, and without undue embarrassment. Indeed in Kumur love suits were often related to me in a light-hearted, jovial manner. On one occasion a very aimiable, but rather gawky character recounted to me and others how he had wanted to marry a beautiful girl from the village but his suit had been rejected and she had since become engaged to a cousin living in the Gezira.

The fact that women in Kumur sometimes take the initiative in

terminating a marriage can be correlated with their more productive role compared with that of women in Abu Haraz. They contribute significantly to rainland cultivation and several other subsistence activities. In the event of their marriage being dissolved, they can generally maintain the viability of their household, either with support from their adolescent children or with assistance from members of their family of origin. The withdrawal of support from a husband does not threaten completely to undermine the woman's position in these circumstances. If they are young these women have the prospect of remarrying, and even if this prospect is not realised, the contribution they can make to their family's productive activities assures them of a positive role if they are temporarily reintegrated into their parental family. This does not mean that single women do not face many hardships in meeting their subsistence needs, but clearly these difficulties are not so great as to prevent at least some women from taking the initiative in terminating their marriage if it is unsatisfactory.

In Abu Haraz the situation is very different. Women there no longer contribute significantly to productive activities, and they have become much more economically dependent on men. A woman's life career is increasingly dependent on the stability of her marriage, and on the ability of her husband to provide both for her and her children, at least until the maturity of her sons who should then be able to provide for her if necessary. In Abu Haraz the whole subject of divorce was more difficult to raise, and when actual divorce occurred they were seen as representing a much greater crisis and misfortune than would appear to be the case in Kumur. (Two divorces occurred in Abu Haraz during my period of fieldwork, but none in Kumur). Given their economic dependence, any action taken by a woman which is likely to provoke a divorce is strongly disapproved of, and considered extremely foolhardy. I learnt, and then only inadvertently, of only one case in Abu Haraz where a girl wanted a divorce and succeeded eventually in bringing

it about. I had her recorded as never-married in my household survey, until one day a male informant spoke to me in some detail of her difficult marriage; this account I later corroborated with other informants. The girl had been engaged and married against her will by her step-father to a man from the neighbouring village of El Eleila. She refused to consummate the marriage, and repeatedly ran back home. After some six months her step-father died, and her mother exerted influence on the girl's husband to divorce her, which he finally did. My original informant suggested that the husband was not required to divorce her, and could have enforced her submission, but agreed out of kindness to meet the girl's wishes. The girl subsequently became engaged to her step-father's brother's son, but this engagement has become a protracted one; possibly the long delay is related to the girl's previous unfortunate experience and her cousin's ambivalent feelings about it.

Various cases that I became familiar with suggest that women in Abu Haraz feel generally constrained from appealing for a divorce even in marriages which are severely strained. One tragic case, in particular, illustrates this. A young woman was married to a first cousin (FBD), who worked as an irrigation controller (ghafir) in the Gezira Scheme. He had a rather disturbing eye-disorder, and altogether a rather strange mannerism. The marriage was clearly not a very compatible one. It seems that the wife did not press for a divorce, nor would her husband have readily conceded one even if she had. The girl's family were poor; her father was dead and her three brothers were all employed in the village as casual labourers; in addition two of them cultivated rainlands and jerfs, and kept small herds of goats. The circumstances of her family may have been a factor why the girl did not make more explicit demands on her husband, either to fulfil certain conditions or else to divorce her. In any case shortly after giving birth to a baby boy, the young wife became very poorly, and this in turn led to the weakening of the condition of the baby. Her husband

denied that she was really ill, and refused to take her to hospital for an examination. As a result her condition worsened, and a zar was arranged to try and diagnose what ailed her.¹ Despite a ceremony which lasted two days the local zar sheikha from Abu Haraz Abu 'Asha was unable to discover what she needed. Normally at these ceremonies the spirit which is possessing the afflicted person expresses certain demands which have to be fulfilled before it resumes a more latent, non-malignant presence within the person's body. On this occasion no spirit expressed itself through the patient in spite of the sheikha's wide repertoire of songs and drum rhythms known to appeal to different spirits. As the girl's condition continued to deteriorate with her skin taking on a grey pallor, her brothers took her to the hospital in Wad Medani. But the doctors there were also unable to diagnose exactly what was wrong with her. Angry that his wife's brothers had interfered in her condition without his approval, the husband sought an injunction from the local court preventing his wife's brothers from taking any action on behalf of their sister contrary to his wishes. At the court hearing the girl's brothers appealed to the court that the husband should be required to provide adequate treatment and medicines for both his wife and the baby. Since the members of the court had made themselves familiar with the case, they asked the husband if it was not best that he should divorce his wife since it was clear that she was not happy. The husband replied that he would not divorce her. Following this the court sought to ascertain from the medical report what treatment the husband should be required to provide for his wife. Since the medical report had been inconclusive and had prescribed no medicines, the court could only insist that the husband supply the mother and baby with powdered milk. The brothers were exhorted not to take action on

1. Zar is a ritual practice to propitiate foreign spirits which possess people and to cure certain kinds of sickness. The sheikha is the woman who leads the ceremony.

behalf of their sister without consulting and gaining the consent of the husband. Finally all of those involved were reminded of the behaviour expected of them as close kinsmen, and were asked to bury any differences that they still harboured. I am not aware that any further action was taken by any of those concerned in order to diagnose the reasons for the girl's morbid state. Some four weeks later she died. While this is clearly a very complex case it seems reasonable to draw at least one conclusion from it: that if the bonds of marriage had not constrained the girl so severely a different outcome might have ensued. As the question of zar practices and beliefs has been examined by other researchers, and since it was not the main object of my investigations, I do not wish here to examine this aspect of the case I have just recorded.¹ The point I wish to make here is that this particular case seems to support my argument that the economic dependence of women is an important factor conducive to the 'stability' of marriages; certainly it may constrain the woman from eliciting a divorce even where the marriage is severely strained. Usually stability of marriage is discussed in Middle Eastern ethnographies in the context of marriage patterns, and in particular in relation to the prevalence of marriages with close relatives. I will turn to this discussion shortly.

To return to my argument: not only does the economic dependence of women constrain their resorting to divorce, but I would also suggest that the perceptions of women's dependent status serves also to discourage men from too readily terminating marriages which they find unsatisfactory. The problems that divorce entails, particularly when the woman is so dependent, encourage the emergence of the belief that divorce is a generally undesirable solution to marital problems. More emphasis is placed on marital adaptation and on corrective measures such that the spouses learn to fulfil their respective obligat-

1. See P.M.Constantinides: *Sickness and the Spirits - a study of the zar spirit possession cult in the Northern Sudan*. Ph.D. London School of Economics, 1972.

ions; divorce is seen as the final resort, which should only be embarked upon with the utmost reluctance. In Abu Haraz much greater play is placed on the koranic requirement that, in order to make a divorce binding, the husband must repeat three times the phrase "I divorce you". Usually the phrase is repeated on the same occasion, and the divorce takes full effect from that time. In two instances that I knew of the husband had repeated the phrase only once, thus serving as a warning of final separation. During the subsequent period of estrangement relatives and friends attempted to bring about an improvement in the relations between the couple concerned. I found no instance of this happening in Kumur.

I found that discussion of divorce in Abu Haraz was much less open than in Kumur. However, in the two divorces which came about during my fieldwork there were severe recriminations, with criticisms being levelled at either or both spouses for having let the situation come to such a pass. Since, as I have suggested, it is more likely today that it is the man who initiates the divorce, this criticism is likely to be directed at the husband; this tends to be regardless of whether the critics are male or female. For example, 'Ali Salah came under considerable censure for divorcing his wife, especially since she was pregnant with their fifth child at the time. Signs of strain became evident during the rainy season of 1977 when he failed to cultivate, and chose instead to work as a hair-cutter in the village. However, while most other people in the village were busy cultivating, he was inactive for long periods of time. Failing to raise any significant income, he divorced his wife and decided to try and find work to support himself in Khartoum. As one of his brothers was a tailor, he took up hawking women's dresses in one of the Khartoum markets where his brother worked. Meanwhile his family got what support they could mainly from the woman's brother, a medical assistant in Wad Medani. Eventually some relations found 'Ali a job as a caretaker in Khartoum, and with this stable though meagre salary

he was able to make some savings. Just before I left he sent £57 to his wife who by this time had had her baby. It was generally hoped that 'Ali would regain his confidence, and that he would remarry his wife, or at least that he would be able to support his family regularly with remittances. In the case of 'Ali his unsettled frame of mind was considered as an extenuating circumstance for his failure to support adequately his family. In the case of able-bodied men who divorce their wives and then fail to support them, less qualified criticism is likely to be levelled at them. For example, Hadiyya Abdallah married a cousin (MBS) from Wad Medani, who divorced her shortly after the birth of her first child. Though he was in full-time employment he paid her no alimony (nafaga). Hadiyya's family spared no criticism of her husband, and eventually they obtained alimony following a long court procedure. Although Hadiyya's family was supported by the salary of her father, the local forest warden, as well as contributions from a brother working as a plumber in the nearby Agricultural Institute, they considered the former husband should have met his obligation in providing alimony, thereby relieving some of the pressure on the family's limited resources.

In the last chapter we noted that sadag is only a nominal sum, and, therefore, not an effective deterrence to divorce. Payment of alimony on the other hand probably does deter readily-taken divorces, at least by salaried employees. For in practice alimony can only be effectively enforced by the courts if the husband has a fixed salary from which the court can, if necessary, deduct the required amount. Even where the prospect of paying alimony does not serve to prevent a divorce, it certainly reduces the likelihood of the early remarriage of the two separated partners. For example, Tom Tireifi divorced his non-related wife on the grounds of non-compatibility. He worked as a technical assistant at the Soba Hospital near Khartoum, and earned a salary of £545 a month. On divorcing his wife he agreed to give her £520 a month for the support of their

four children. This substantial deduction from his income effectively prevents him from remarrying for a considerable length of time. In the wife's case, assuming that she continues to receive this alimony, a major consideration is removed concerning her need to remarry. Women in Abu Haraz have shown their readiness to avail themselves of the sharia' courts in order to obtain their alimony if it is not voluntarily handed over to them. The case of Hadiyya illustrates this. The women of Kumur have yet to show such readiness. For example, Haram Mohammad al feki was divorced by a distant cousin, a primary school director enjoying a large salary. But she only received occasional payments from him for the support of her one daughter; these payments were usually made during the intermittent occasions which brought him to Kumur; on one occasion, at a funeral in the village, he gave his ex-wife £510. If Haram considered these payments inadequate, especially in view of her former husband's large income, she never complained of this, at least not openly. Instead she helped her separated mother cultivate in the rainy season, and worked in the Gezira during the cotton-picking season.

Several marriages in Abu Haraz are clearly strained, and if such constraints as I have discussed did not exist, they would most likely end in a clear-cut divorce. However, the partners involved wish to avoid or delay such an outcome; the wives know they would be deprived of the main bread-winner; the men would effectively be deprived of a home-base, and would have to save up for the expenditure of a new marriage; the various relatives concerned know that greater obligations will fall on them if the marriage is finally dissolved. In these conditions, where marriages are strained different outcomes are possible. In one marriage the husband resorted to a bachelor life-style in Khartoum where he worked as a tailor. Apart from token remittances he ignored his wife and two children and I never saw him in Abu Haraz. It was rumoured that he had taken up heavy drinking. This behavioural pattern was also

adopted by at least two divorced men. For they rejected the sacrifices entailed in paying alimony and saving up for a new marriage; instead they adopted a life-style of immediate gratification, including indulgences normally regarded as wasteful. This manner of avoiding the pressures and obligations of marriage was also adopted by a few renegade bachelors. In another case, the husband, another tailor in Khartoum, worked all the more assiduously in order to save up sufficient money so as to contract another marriage. These last few marriages that I have mentioned were between first cousins. So it is relevant here to turn to the discussion as to whether close marriages are more or less stable than other marriages.

Some writers suggest that there are strong family pressures to preserve close marriages; this follows from the functionalist assumption that close marriages, and particularly FBD marriages, serve to strengthen the solidarity of lineage members and to preserve property within the lineage; others have suggested that since close marriages tend to be arranged matches, reflecting more the interests of the wider kinship group and less the personal disposition of the individual partners, such marriages are often strained and thus liable to end in divorce. From Sudanese ethnography, for example, Cunnison shows that among the Baggara Arabs first marriages, which comprise a high proportion of close marriages, frequently end in divorce and in the subsequent remarriage of both partners to more distant or non-related persons.¹ However, it should be pointed out that all Baggara marriages are marked by a high level of instability. On the other hand, Barclay (1964) shows from his data on marriages in Buuri that there is no correlation between FBD marriages and a high frequency of divorces among such marriages; in fact his data show that divorces are relatively more frequent among marriages between non-relatives (p.125).

1. I.Cunnison: *The Baggara Arabs: Power and Lineage in a Sudanese Nomad Tribe*. Oxford, 1966. See Chapter 6.

The comparison of such material shows the weakness of attempting to draw conclusions about marriage stability if marriage patterns are isolated from other social and economic factors. My own data are similar to Barclay's, though showing a more marked tendency towards divorces in marriages between non-relatives. In Buuri 52% of all marriages were between non-relatives, and 67% of all divorces occurred within this category. In Abu Haraz and Kumur 32% of all marriages were between non-relatives, and 59% of all divorces occurred within this category. Most of the marriages between non-relatives that ended in divorce were not between fellow villagers, but between partners from different villages (13 out of 19). I have already mentioned factors which discourage divorces between fellow villagers, particularly related persons living in close proximity. Barclay mentions that in some instances the wife, if she is divorced, may move out of the house she has been occupying, at least to a different part of the compound. But I found no cases of this happening in Abu Haraz. Since the husband is not supposed to have any contact with his divorced wife, he faces considerable restrictions on his freedom of movement and space, if their respective families live in immediate proximity and if the divorced couple's home is situated in the same compound as these. Remarriage of either or both partners relieves this problem, but as I will argue now, the likelihood of remarriage, particularly for women, appears to have declined.

In general it can be postulated that the conditions affecting the contracting of a first marriage influence strongly the likelihood of subsequent marriages. That is, if first marriages are relatively easily facilitated, there is equally little difficulty in arranging a remarriage if the first one is somehow terminated. Obversely, if considerable time and expenditure is re-

quired in getting married, the probability of subsequent remarriages is much reduced. The tendency in Kumur and particularly Abu Haraz is towards the latter pattern.

We have already considered the question of men's remarriage after divorce, in the cases of several migrants with regular employment. There is no evidence to suggest that among the older generation divorce placed any serious constraint on the husband's prospects of remarrying. In most cases there would have been strong pressures on the man to remarry, since a wife was an essential component of the traditional productive unit. Traditionally there were no forms of payment to the ex-wife, such as are today provided through alimony. Women were themselves more productive and thus more self-reliant, requirements for subsistence and for raising children were much simpler, and in any case most women would be expected to remarry. The main responsibility of the ex-husband to his children was in meeting extraordinary expenditure incurred at particular events in their life-cycle, notably circumcision and marriage. For example, Yusuf Hamad, from Abu Haraz al Wastani, who had done little else to support his two sons from his divorced wife in Abu Haraz al Warrani, provided them with a very lavish party on the occasion of their circumcision. Moreover, the older generation were not constrained from remarrying by heavy marriage costs. Today both of these factors, financial support for the ex-wife and her children, and the increased costs of marriage serve at least to delay the remarriage of a man following divorce. In some cases, as we have noticed, the divorced man may revert permanently to a single status and seek his sexual gratification in extra-marital affairs.

Widowers are more likely to remarry, especially if they are left with young children requiring care. In these cases the new wife is brought to live at the widower's home, and she assumes the role of the deceased wife. In one case in Abu Haraz the wife of a feki died and he then married her sister; however,

this does not appear to have been a common practice. In a few cases the widower's children are brought up by close relatives, as they would have been if both parents had died. For example, Hon, the mother of four children and the wife of Bashir, a migrant worker, died giving birth to a fifth child. Her family was of slave origin and was still strongly attached to the household of Sheikh Abu 'Agla, who assumed overall responsibility for them. Following his wife's death Bashir came occasionally to Abu Haraz to visit his children. It was rumoured that he remarried in Khartoum, but he kept this household quite separate from that of his children in Abu Haraz.

Some old men who outlive their wives do not remarry, especially if they have adult children living nearby with whom they can eat. On the other hand sometimes widowers form companionate relationships with widows, merging to form a single household from two fragmented groups. In neither Abu Haraz nor Kumor was there any middle-aged or elderly men who had never married. Nor for that matter were there any spinsters in either village, though there were an increasing number of women in their late twenties still unmarried.

The present day chances for remarriage by women are not great. 322 women from the two villages studied have been involved in 343 marriages; 251 of these marriages were still extant. 66 marriages ended in widowhood, and 26 in divorce. However, there are currently 51 widows and 20 divorced women, which shows that only a small proportion of terminated marriages have been followed by the remarriage of the woman concerned. Given the disparate age at marriage between men and women, there are always likely to be more widows than widowers. There has been little change in the situation of widows whose children are already adult; it is unusual for these widows to remarry. Normally they attach themselves to the household of one of their married children. If, as is common, they have a number of married children, their position is all the

easier. What was more prevalent in the past, and appears to have become less common is the remarriage of widows still of child-bearing age. My data reveals that women of the older generation almost invariably remarried if their first marriages were terminated at an early age. Informants told me that it was the custom for the brother of the deceased husband to marry the widow, if she was of child-bearing age. I recorded only one instance of this happening, and this involved a woman now in her late 50s. This woman, though resident in Abu Haraz, was originally from Gara, a small village east of Kumur. She had married a non-relative from Gara, and had borne him three children, two sons and a girl. When her husband died, she married his brother, by whom she had a daughter. This daughter (who takes the name of this brother as her father) and her two half-brothers have all married in Abu Haraz; the other daughter, by the original marriage, has married a cousin (FZS) in Gara. The practice of widow inheritance may have been more common in the past. Culwick (n.d.) mentions a case in the Gezira where a woman, who had received a tenancy from her deceased husband, married his brother, also the holder of a tenancy. Admittedly this was the only case where this had happened among 22 women tenants, of whom 13 were widows. Brausch (1964) mentions that dual households comprised a number of "inherited widows" as well as polygamous marriages. He does not specify in how many cases of widowhood the woman is remarried in this way; he merely says that in some cases the widow is formally married, whereas in others the brother of the deceased husband takes responsibility for the widow and her children without actually marrying her. These cases of widow inheritance in the Gezira afford further evidence that traditional marriage practices have been maintained further there owing to the system of tenancies than in areas where families no longer rely primarily on traditional patrimonial resources. It did not seem that the woman in Abu Haraz had inherited any significant patrimony, whether of livestock or valued rainland. One of her sons is a painter, and

the other a caretaker in the girls' school in Abu Haraz.

The extent to which widows were 'inherited' by the deceased husband's brother in the past is largely open to speculation. Possibly it never amounted to more than a recourse of action which the widow could avail herself of if she wanted. At least if the koranic injunction was followed, the widow could not be remarried against her will. But it seems clear that whatever was the force of this 'normative' pattern in the past it has become far less significant today. This view is supported by the fact that Brausch notes that in some cases the brother of the deceased husband assumes responsibility for the widow, rather than marrying her; and no doubt this responsibility varies in extent. When I spoke to widows and I raised the question of remarriage, very few expressed either the desire or the likelihood that they would remarry. The same responses occurred when they replied to a questionnaire which was addressed to them by a female assistant of mine from Abu Haraz. Nor even did widows tend to make any special reference to the brother of the deceased husband; if they received any tangible support from this source, then they generally failed to acknowledge that this was the case. When asked directly if they had had the opportunity of marrying the deceased husband's brother, the reply was invariably negative; they generally pointed out that the brothers of the deceased husband were already married and had children, thus implying that they had sufficient responsibilities of their own. In some cases one at least of the brothers was not married, but this did not alter the general view that the widow did not expect to marry into her former husband's family. In the cases where widows had been married to cousins, the question of this form of remarriage was not taken very seriously: for if he is already a close kinsman, the brother of the deceased husband has in any case a strong obligation to support the widow.

Widows, and to a lesser extent divorced women, also stressed

that if they had children, especially sons, they should not think of remarrying. This statement bears the implication that the children, on growing to maturity, will support the single mother. But I would suggest that it also has the implication that, though her marriage has been terminated by the death of her husband, it still has a binding force on her. This, I would argue, is because it is marriage that endows the woman with all, or nearly all that she has, from the house that she lives in to the clothes she wears. The binding nature of marriage ties, persisting after the death of the husband, appears to be particularly marked in cases where women are non-productive, and where achieved property counts for more than inherited property. These conditions are present in Abu Haraz.

There are 71 single adult women, that is widows and divorced women, in Abu Haraz and Kumur. 25 of these are still of child-bearing age, and half of these have been single for five years or more. Only three widows, all in Kumur, and three divorced women in this age group (under 45) have remarried. While the sample is small, it does seem to indicate a low frequency of remarriage.

There must, of course, be reservations about comparing data from different surveys, since there may be differences in the social composition of the sample collected, and also there may be differences in the way the information has been collected. But, with these reservations in mind, I wish to compare my findings on the number of marriages contracted by women in Abu Haraz and Kumur with similar data from the Gezira. Culwick (n.d.) records 240 ever-married women having contracted a total of 298 marriages (124 per 100 women). Henin's survey, a decade later in the early 1960s records 1052 women contracting a total of 1205 marriages (115 per 100 women). My figures show that 322 ever-married women contracted a total of 343 marriages (107 marriages per 100 women). It is tempting to suggest from these figures, given the different periods when

they were conducted, that they represent a steady decline in the number of marriages contracted by women, and thus an increase in marriage stability. I have already suggested, however, both in relation to age at marriage and remarriage of widows, that marriage patterns in the Gezira may differ somewhat from areas where the significance of the inherited patrimony is sharply declining, as it is in Abu Haraz. However the two sets of figures from the Gezira do suggest a drop in the number of marriages by women. If this is so, I would associate this trend with the same factors as I have discussed here - the increased costs of marriage, fewer divorces, less frequent remarriage of both widows and divorcees, and the factor I come to now - the decline in polygamous marriages.

The frequency of remarriage of women must be seen in conjunction with the prevalence of polygamous marriages, since polygamous marriages often draw from the pool of divorced and widowed women. (Henin, p.248). There are several indications that the frequency of polygamous marriages has declined among both the population of Abu Haraz and Kumur. Table 7 contrasts the number of marriages contracted by men over 50 with the number of marriages contracted by the deceased men of the preceding generation. I have not distinguished between serial and polygamous marriages, since it was difficult to do so especially for the deceased generation. Religious families were excluded from the samples, as I will show shortly that there is even more convincing evidence that the number of polygamous marriages contracted by their members has declined significantly. The main occupation of those included in the samples was rainland farming; some of the men in Abu Haraz also worked in the riverain gardens (sagia) when they were still operative, while most of the men in Kumur combined rainland farming with animal husbandry. Although the samples are small, they do suggest a decline in the number of marriages contracted by men in the course of their life-cycle; a significant proportion of these marriages would have been polygamous marriages.

TABLE 6

Number of marriages contracted by men and women in Gezira and Blue Nile Provinces, as recorded in various social surveys

	MEN (per 100 ever- married men)	WOMEN (per 100 ever- married women)
I Gezira Culwick, early 1950s	not available	124
II Gezira Henin, 1961-2	138	115
III Buuri, Blue Nile Barclay, 1959-60	138	not available
IV Abu Haraz & Kumur 1978	117	107
Baggara Arabs (nomads) Henin, 1961-2	200	128

As befitted their important role in society, the households of holymen were much larger in the past than they are today. Their households included a varying number of followers who lived permanently with their religious teachers, as well as pupils who were housed and fed for the duration of their studies. In some cases they also included slaves who assisted with the domestic duties and helped in the tasks of cultivation. The families of these holymen were also large, since they often had more than one wife. Sometimes these women were widows or divorced women whom, by marrying, the holyman extended a measure of security to. By marrying from different villages and different tribal groups, these holymen created wide-ranging ties, which served to attract supporters from diverse groups. Today, since the role of the religious families is much more delimited, their household organisation and marriage patterns have changed accordingly. Most of the religious families have dispersed the slaves who were retained in their households. Those holymen who still derive a major part of their livelihood from the special services they provide no longer attract new retainers and supporters who attach themselves to their households. Those non-relatives attached to their households are invariably the second or third generation of clients who were once drawn to these religious families. Today only two holymen in Abu Haraz have more than one wife: feki Yusuf el Eleish has two wives, one in Abu Haraz, and one in Kiran, a village north-east of Kumur; feki Idris also has one wife in Abu Haraz, and one in Umm Tartara, a village on the eastern boundary of the rainlands some fifteen miles away. The Imam of the mosque also has two wives, one from each of the two main quarters of Abu Haraz al Warrani, viz. fariq al Arakiyin and fariq al Dongolawi. But all the other religious teachers and descendents of religious families are monogamously married. This contrasts with the earlier generation of holymen. Sheikh el Eleish had two wives, one in Abu Haraz, and one in Kumur. Sheikh Hamad al-Nil Abdelbagi had four wives and a total of twenty-seven children in Abu Haraz and Taiba. Feki Ahmed had

TABLE 7

Number of marriages contracted by men over 50 and by preceding, deceased generation in Abu Haraz and Kumur

ABU HARAZ

	Sample	No. of marriages	No. of marriages per 100 men
Men over 50	25	32	128
Preceding generation	24	36	150

KUMUR

	Sample	No. of marriages	No. of marriages per 100 men
Men over 50	16	24	150
Preceding generation	12	21	175

Notes

1. Religious families were excluded from the above samples. The main occupation of most of those included in these samples was rainland farming combined with animal herding.

2. The Kumur sample includes some relatives and forebears living in the adjacent settlement of Masara and in Taif.

three wives, one in Abu Haraz, and two in Manasir in the Gezira. Ahmed al feki Sheikh had four wives, one in each of the two villages of Abu Haraz, one in Kumur and one in Roseires. The recently deceased khalifa of the Arakiyin in Abu Haraz al Wastani married at different times nine wives.

We may now consider the other people who are polygamously married at the present time. It will be noted that they tend to be from the same groups among whom divorces feature more prominently, i.e. farmers and traders operating in the locality or in the frontier zones. Taking Abu Haraz first, there are two farmers who have farming interests both on the east bank and in the Gezira. Hasan Mabarak has a tenancy in Nuweila, and he also has a large herd of goats which he takes to the east bank in the rainy season. His first wife is from Nuweila, but he recently married the divorced daughter of Haj Mahgoub in Abu Haraz. The latter, a rainland farmer, has a second wife in Medina al Arab in the Gezira. Another farmer has contracted a total of four marriages during the course of his life-time; two of these marriages are still extant, one in Abu Haraz, and one in Gara near the rainlands which he cultivates. Another farmer, who used to keep livestock in the past, has also had four wives of whom two still live with him in Abu Haraz. This was the only case where two co-wives lived in close proximity to each other, though it may be noted that only one of the women has borne children. We have already noted certain traders operating in Roseires and Damazeen who have taken additional wives in these places. Only two men employed in modern services have contracted polygamous marriages, and both their lives have been marked by frequent changes of residence in the course of their work. Ma'ruf Tireifi claimed to have married women from Khartoum, Dongola, Rufa'a and Tambool during his active career as a painter before being blinded in an industrial accident. Mohammed Yusuf, a driver, married at different times women from Khartoum, Port Sudan, Singa, Shendi and Abu Haraz, though all but the latter two are now divorced. Both

these men are now advancing in years, and are no longer employed.

By contrast, none of the growing number of migrants working in the towns or employed elsewhere by government ministries are polygamously married, apart from one young merchant in Khartoum. This man had been married to a girl in Abu Haraz for about six years when he unexpectedly announced that he was to marry a cousin (FBD) from a nearby village in the Gezira. This engagement was greeted with considerable surprise, since his first marriage was considered a successful one and the new bride was rumoured not to be very pretty. Just before my departure, a tailor in Khartoum, whose existing marriage to his MBD was clearly strained, announced he was going to marry another girl from Abu Haraz. Two shop-keepers residing in Abu Haraz married second wives during my stay. One of them attracted considerable criticism because he had daughters of an eligible age whose welfare, it was argued, he should have secured by seeking to arrange their marriage rather than his own. Moreover, he went ahead with his own second marriage at a time of bereavement involving the bride's family. Some criticism was also made of another man who was polygamously married. This concerned a man who had married a woman in Abu Haraz and who then went to study in London, and subsequently set up a business there. During the four years of his marriage he had spent less than two months with his wife. During this time he had married a second wife, who was a more educated girl from Khartoum. Though he supported his first wife, and on one occasion took her to London, this marriage was widely recognised, at least by women, as being unsatisfactory for the woman concerned.

If we now turn to Kumur, we may note that there is only one holyman living in the village today, feki Tom, and he has only one wife, Zaineb Sheikh el Eleish. There are four men who are polygamously married, and they have all married into the

village. One of them is a Ja'ali from Tibeib, who set up a shop in Kumur. One is a trader from the neighbouring village of Kiran, and another is a farmer from the Gezira. The fourth a truck-owner from Taif, contracted the most recent marriage. He married the daughter of the sheikh el hilla, Hamad al-Nil Sheikh el Eleish. There is a fifth, if we include the old feki living in Taif whose two wives from Kumur have voluntarily separated from him. None of the men born in Kumur have contracted polygamous marriages, though most of those whose first marriages have been terminated have remarried. This contrasts with a much higher rate of polygamous marriages in previous generations. For example, five of the eight widows' former husbands had more than one wife; two of them had two wives, two had three wives and one had four wives. I also recorded a high proportion of polygamous marriages among the other deceased forebears of the present families. First and second marriages were commonly contracted with girls from Kumur or the adjacent settlement of Masara on the one hand, and from Taif on the other. Other marriages, however, were contracted in such places as Taiba, Nuweila and Atara in the Gezira, and Abu Haraz.

The decline in polygamous marriages in Kumur may be seen in the context of the decreasing reliance on traditional patrimonies, particularly herds. As I explained in Chapter 3, the traditional livelihood of farmers depended on the most effective use being made of labour and animal resources. This often expressed itself in a division of labour between closely-related families specialising in long-distance herding (Taif) or cultivation and local herding of goats (Kumur). Ties were maintained between the two groups through intermarriages and frequent polygamous marriages which facilitated the most effective use of both resources. These ties have been weakened by the kind of pressures outlined in the first chapters, and the ensuing cash orientation of individual households.

The greater diversity of economic interests in Abu Haraz is reflected in the contracting of more polygamous marriages there than in Kumur, though the frequency of such marriages is probably much less than what it used to be. As I have noted, polygamous marriages are rarely contracted by migrant workers, who form the largest occupational category. They are mostly carried out by farmers who have interests in the Gezira as well as on the east bank, and by local shop-keepers or traders operating in frontier zones. Changes in occupational patterns, therefore, appear to be associated with the trend towards monogamous marriages. The greater durability of first marriages affects the frequency of polygamous marriages in two ways. First, the binding nature of these marriages discourages the formation of other marriages by the husband; and second, the smaller number of widows and divorced women reduces the pool of women from which many polygamous marriages are drawn.

In general, the findings concerning marriage patterns that I have recounted in this chapter accord with those of Henin (1969). The arguments I have put forward, supported by statistical evidence wherever possible, suggest trends towards lower rates of marriage instability, remarriage and polygamy. The main point of difference in our findings concerns age at marriage. I suggested that there may be a lower age at marriage in the Gezira owing to the income deriving from tenancies. But I also suggested that there may well have been an up-turn in the age at marriage since the time of Henin's study, as a result of the increased costs of marriage, the spread of educational facilities, and the increasing importance of non-tenancy incomes.

Henin attributes these trends in marriage patterns to the conditions brought about by settlement, and to improvements in per capita income. He argues that settlement makes it possible "for the laws of Islam to be adhered to" (p.255), while, in contrast, nomadic life entails greater freedom between the sexes,

and consequently a more fluid pattern of marriage formation. I would wish to elaborate this position by stressing the importance of provision for women under conditions of socio-economic differentiation where a large number of women are withdrawn from subsistence activities. The concern to provide for women has been expressed in the intensification of marriage payments and the establishment of a conjugal fund, rather than in any change in the system of inheritance of property. Adherence to the precepts of Islam legitimates and enhances the provision for women in these terms; by emphasising the respective duties of the spouses, it also serves to reinforce the binding nature of marriage ties. And, as I have tried to show in this chapter, the material and ideological investment in marriages has been reflected in the various trends in marriage stability that I have discussed here.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

In this conclusion I wish first to summarise my research findings concerning various marriage trends in the Blue Nile rainlands, notably the changes in the composition, orientation and timing of marriage payments, and in the degree of fluidity of marriages. I will then try to specify among which social groups these trends are most pronounced. By considering marriages as strategies pursued by individuals in maintaining and advancing their material and symbolic interests, I will seek to give account of some of the variations in the trends and patterns I have been describing. In the second part I will return to the theme of my introductory chapter and investigate the grounds for positing a causal relationship between the level of productive activity, the sexual division of labour, and economic differentiation and the domestic patterns I have been concerned with. In this discussion, while not wishing to retract from the central importance I have attributed to material factors in these changes, I wish to consider here the part played by 'cultural' or 'ideological' factors in these processes.

First - to summarise my research findings. In Abu Haraz in particular there has been a tendency towards the elaboration and increase in size of marriage payments. This has occurred in spite of attempts to maintain a degree of homogeneity concerning marriage payments and wedding ceremonies. The attempts to impose limitations on marriage expenditure incurred in intra-village marriages were, I suggested, themselves indicative of the underlying tendency towards differential expenditure at marriage. Moreover the kora arrangement provided loopholes for differential expenditure to continue and to develop by

allowing additional payments to occur one week after the wedding, and by largely ignoring other gifts in kind so long as they were not publicly exchanged or displayed during the wedding. The amount of mahr has increased both in kora marriages - from £25 to £100 - and in non-kora marriages generally by a larger amount. Greater expenditure is incurred in providing a home for the newly married couple, and this is more likely to be met by the bridegroom than was the case in the past. Other payments include the provision of new items of furniture and household equipment, the provision of a variety of food-stuffs, and extensive gifts to the bride, comprising a wardrobe of clothes, perfumes and numerous other personal effects. Related to the more varied composition of goods transacted at marriage, changes have also occurred in the orientation of these goods. While certainly a large proportion of the payments are for the purpose of providing for, furnishing and equipping the newly married couple's home, a substantial share is for endowing the bride. This endowment consists primarily of the clothes and other items given to her by the bridegroom, but it is supplemented in wealthy marriages by gifts of gold jewelry from her own family. Moreover, I argued that since generally the home and its contents become effectively the property of the wife in the event of the marriage being dissolved, the expenditure entailed at marriage in establishing a new home may in a sense be seen as contributing to the endowment of the bride.

In non-kora marriages there has been considerable ceremonial elaboration, with lavish festivities lasting several days in some cases. This includes the incorporation and elaboration of old marriage customs, such as the bridal dance and the cutting of the rahat, as well as the introduction of new customs, such as the modern coiffure of the bride, the photographing of the couple in their formal attire, and innovations in music, popular songs and dancing. Finally there is the introduction of the honeymoon, which is becoming increasingly common. Contributions made by guests, the occasion of which forms part of these

ceremonial procedures, serve to offset part of the expenditure incurred at these festivities and events. The system of reciprocal contributions also underlines, I argued, the differential status of participants in their capacity both as contributors and beneficiaries. In so far as kora marriages discourage expenditure on such lavish entertainment and festivities, they permit the allocation of financial resources to the main payments concerning the establishing of the new home and the endowment of the bride considered above.

Changes were also noted in the timing of marriage payments in relation to the formation of new domestic groups within the developmental cycle. Formerly, when traditional patrimonies were the basic productive resource, new domestic groups emerged as a gradual process, establishing their viability and independence as they came to fulfil various productive, reproductive and social conditions; marriage itself did not establish the viability of the emergent household, but rather constituted only a preliminary condition or formative stage within that process. With the spread of new occupational patterns entailing wage labour and provision of market services, accumulation of savings tends to take place prior to marriage and indeed as a crucial condition of marriage. Correlated with this is the tendency towards the delayed age at marriage. At the same time that marriages tend to be delayed, new households formed at marriage tend to budget separately for their consumption needs. Long engagements during which savings are accumulated so as to prepare for the increased costs of marriage have thus tended to replace earlier marriages often facilitated by resources from the family patrimony, followed by a varying length of time during which the spouses remained effectively members of their respective parental families.

The increased expenditure at marriage supports the existence of a conjugal fund established at marriage. The conjugal fund may comprise productive property in the form of rainlands

transmitted to the son from the family patrimony. But more commonly today the conjugal fund consists of the fruits of achieved property, namely the home and its contents together with the gifts bestowed on the bride. These goods and assets are added to during the course of the marriage, as that proportion of money income over and above immediate consumption needs is converted into durable consumer goods and directed towards the enlargement of the home and the improvement of its facilities. An example of this channeling of family income to the conjugal fund is provided by the women's savings groups which appropriate a small part of the husband's or son's income in order to augment the woman's collection of enamel bowls, china and glass ('idda), or to provide other items for the home.

The increased significance of the conjugal fund for women and particularly the endowment of the bride is alluded to, I suggested, in the change in the manner in which the marriage payment is handed over. Formerly a male public transaction occurring at the time of the marriage contract, today in Abu Haraz it is a relatively informal event performed and witnessed by women; usually it coincides with the inspection of the bride's trousseau by the female guests. Several aspects of the elaboration of wedding ceremonial point to the newly placed emphasis on the conjugal aspect of the union. Examples of such innovations are the photographs of the couple, their sitting together at the wedding festivities while the guests come and congratulate them, and, of course, the honeymoon.

The greater emphasis, both material and ideological, placed on marriage, and particularly its conjugal aspect as opposed to the link it provides between two groups of kin, has been conducive to marriage becoming a less soluble tie. I have attempted to show that the frequency of divorces, remarriages and plural marriages has declined. I argued that the evidence for such trends would be stronger had it not been for the difficulty of recording terminated marriages in the past, especially

those which resulted in no offspring and those contracted with persons outside the locality. Both Abu Haraz and Kumur revealed similar trends, though it appeared that women in Kumur were more inclined to initiate separations than women in Abu Haraz. I suggested this disparity was attributable to the more productive role of women in Kumur, where, if need be, women are able to support themselves, albeit with difficulty. In Abu Haraz divorced and widowed women tend to be reincorporated within their families of origin or rely on wage-earning sons, depending on their age at the termination of their marriages. A substantial proportion of women still of child-bearing age had not remarried five years after the termination of their marriages. Only one widow was recorded as having remarried the brother of her deceased husband, though in the past this practice was probably more widespread. In Kumur the remarriage of divorced women and young widows seemed to be relatively more common. In Abu Haraz the economic dependence of women, the prospect of paying alimony in the case of regular wage-earners and the heavy expenditure entailed in remarrying combined to deter either spouse from readily seeking a divorce even in marriages which showed signs of tension. Several men who had divorced their wives reverted to a bachelor life-style, and seemed uninclined to remarry. Some farmers, traders and local shop-keepers still contract polygamous marriages. But plural marriages are very uncommon among the migrants, whether they are workers, professional employees or merchants in the large towns.

No strong correlation was established between stability of marriage and closeness of marriages, i.e. marriages between cousins or other close relatives. Marriages between non-related fellow villagers tend to be as stable as marriages between closely related partners. It is true that marriages with non-villagers, whether male or female, tend to be slightly less stable. Moreover, since more marriages were contracted by past generations, it is likely that a large proportion of those addi-

ional marriages were between non-related persons and from different villages. The relatively fewer marriages contracted by living members to non-villagers is a factor that must be taken into consideration, but it is not a determinant of the greater stability of marriages. Rather the fact that fewer marriages are contracted today suggests that the range of strategies for social reproduction has become more delimited.

This leads me to the question of marriage choices and the role of marriage and kinship strategies in the system of social reproduction. Following Bourdieu's reanalysis of Middle East kinship patterns, I would argue that the continuing frequency of close marriages does not imply that the villagers are intent on following a prescriptive rule or normative practice.¹ Rather I would seek to interpret such choices in the context of the practical concerns which individuals have to utilize existing social relations in furthering their material and symbolic interests. Thus I would interpret the fact that the proportion of close marriages has been maintained, if it has not increased, in the light of the changes which delimit the range of kin and non-kin with whom individuals retain real connexions.

Given the shift in occupational patterns extensive personal ties with distant kin or members of other villages are not sought on the same scale as formerly. Wider contacts are no longer required in order to gain access to lands or pastures or in order to facilitate labour recruitment strategies. For migrants these considerations have no relevance. In the case of rainland farmers, the most important requirement for labour recruitment is the availability of cash; the problem of finding labourers is clearly secondary. The number of farmers in Abu Haraz who keep animals is now very small; they generally herd them in the vicinity of the village, except in the rainy season when

1. P. Bourdieu: *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge, 1977. See Chapter 1, Case Study: parallel cousin marriage.

the larger herd-owners hire non-related herdsmen. This is unlike the situation in Kumur where a number of families maintain links with both close and distant relatives living in Taif so that labour and animal resources may be most effectively combined. Though even here we found the range of cooperative ties narrowing with each family tending to rely on its own resources. Marriage strategies thus vary according to the range of personal contacts and social connexions which have a practical use. An example of marriage strategies fluctuating according to these criteria is provided by the original northern settlers in Abu Haraz. In the first generation most marriages took the form of alliances with members of the Arakiyin or with other northern settlers in neighbouring villages. For in this period these settlers needed to gain access to land for cultivation and pasture, and generally to obtain a foothold in the area. In the next generation, while some members pursued similar alliances, a large number contracted first cousin marriages since this was the time when many of them were busily engaged in developing the first sagias - a task which required intensive cooperation.

Abbas provides illustrative material of a similar trend in marriage strategies among the White Nile Arabs.¹ He analyses the transformation in these peoples lives, from a predominantly pastoral livelihood which entailed the utilization of connexions between wide-ranging groups of patrilineal kin, to a sedentary life based on commodity production in which these former wide ties no longer had any value. Marriage choices had become narrower in range, and, reflecting this, the proportion of marriages to first cousins as opposed to more distant relatives, had increased.

In the case of migrants from Abu Haraz, they rely to a vary-

1. Ahmed Mohammad Abbas: Political leadership among two arabic-speaking Sudanese tribes - the Hassaniya and Hussaynat. Ph.D. London School of Economics, 1972.

ing extent on practical connexions with close kin and fellow migrants from the village. In the problems of finding accommodation and employment help is often sought from close kin; at least this is so in Khartoum where a large number of the migrants from Abu Haraz are employed in related services. For example, it is not uncommon to find that a shop-owner, his shop-assistants and a tailor working in the entrance to the shop are all related, and that two or more of them share the same rented accommodation. Migrants working outside the towns, such as those employed in the Gezira Scheme, may not share the same kind of close contact with kin or fellow villagers. But on the other hand the isolated nature of much of their work, such as irrigation control, does not encourage intensive social involvement with other workers. In general, the work and leisure activities of migrants do not lead to personal relationships with non-kin or non-villagers, which have a practical value. Since in these cases the range of practical kin and other social contacts is narrow, marriage choices become more delimited, and consequently marriages between close kin and fellow villagers are frequently arranged.

These close marriages do not necessarily imply that the preservation of property is the dominant factor in bringing about these matches. In terms of heritable property of value there may be little at stake to preserve, as is the case with many migrant families. Rather, the persistence of close marriages denotes the importance of actual kinship connexions, similarities of life-style and outlook, familiarity and sometimes friendship, and the experience of mutual assistance in everyday problems. Even where economic differentiation has taken place between close kin, a weaker family may manage to effect an alliance with a stronger related family through an advantage deriving from a sexual imbalance in the latter family, or through the strong ties which exist between the women of the two families. In everyday relationships little distinction is made between patrilineal and matrilineal relatives, many of whom in any

case overlap. Only in those families which have a material and symbolic patrimony to preserve, such as in the case of the Arakiyin core families, may we speak properly of a patrilineal ideology. Most marriages with close relatives, and particularly with the patrilateral parallel cousin, are not the realisation of a normative preference, but the result of the mobilisation of actual kinship ties which have some practical value; the fact that such marriages conform to the official representation of marriage practices confers social approval and prestige on a marriage strategy, which otherwise often amounts to the safest, weakest resort.¹ Bourdieu calls FBD marriage the poor man's prestige marriage, when it involves making virtue of necessity (p.46). Many of the close marriages, and particularly FBD marriages in Abu Haraz and, to a lesser extent, Kumur, are little more than a forced choice, but which the actors pass off as a positive choice. For since the range of kin and non-kin with whom they have real connexions has become narrowed, the 'right' to marry a cousin involves more often a duty to marry a girl for whom no alternative husband can be found.

Several examples of FBD marriages being a forced choice are provided by the marriages of daughters of widows to their FBS,s. Since these male cousins have in any case the obligation to help support these widows' families by virtue of their close kinship, by providing for them through marriage they are in effect meeting two sets of obligations at the same time; however, since it is a FBD marriage, the ordinary circumstances behind the marriage are deflected by virtue of its acceptable, 'official' presentation. For example, Batul 'Ali, a widow, was originally from another village on the east bank, but no longer maintained strong connexions with her own relatives. When her husband in Abu Haraz, an irrigation controller in the Gezira, died, she was left with four daughters and a son to supp-

1. For Bourdieu's discussion of 'official' kinship as opposed to 'practical' kinship, and of 'ordinary' and 'extra-ordinary' marriages, see op.cit., pp. 33-58.

ort. The children of one of the deceased husband's brothers were already married, but two sons of another brother became engaged to marry two of Batul's daughters. As migrant workers in Khartoum, they sent remittances both to assist their father, a rainland farmer and vegetable seller, and the widow's family. Quite possibly the arranging of such marriages has taken the place of the marriage of widows to the deceased husband's brother.

I wish now to depict certain characteristics of marriage patterns of particular social groups among the population studied in the light of the previous discussion. Of course, the social groups I refer to are not static; considerable mobility takes place between them. But they do provide some indication of the variation in marriage patterns. First, let us take the religious core families. Today most of these are involved in transforming their reliance on traditional patrimonies into modern forms of business and employment. A small number, however, are still religious teachers, dispensing services in the traditional manner to their supplicants and followers. These practising fekis frequently contract polygamous marriages, though not as many as in the past; often they marry unrelated commoners, and even persons of slave descent. Their life-style is generally a fairly ascetic one, and so their homes are traditionally furnished, and their consumption patterns modest. By contrast those members of the religious core families who are engaged in secular occupations tend to contract close marriages which are monogamous. Owing to the frequency of polygamous marriages in preceding generations, and the large number of offspring ensuing from them, there is generally a wide range of close kin who are eligible as marriage partners. Their weddings are important occasions marked by extensive celebrations and festivities. They frequently involve cousins living in different villages (e.g. Abu Haraz, Taiba, Kumur), and so they are not subject to the kora restrictions. Age at marriage tends to be late, since, in spite of their families' resources, there are many

demands on their income; moreover, since each wedding is such a big affair, they require a lot of preparation. Many of the close marriages between members of religious families constitute positive strategies aimed at preserving the material and symbolic patrimony of the families concerned. However, the extent to which these marriage choices are voluntary or forced varies; in some cases, even among these relatively privileged families, a close marriage represents a safe, if not weak choice, which nonetheless confers prestige on the parties concerned since it masks behind the 'official' representation of kinship. For example, a family with several daughters, for whom other husbands cannot easily be found, may welcome their marriage into a closely related family, even though the latter is relatively impoverished. These 'ordinary' marriages can be counterposed to the 'extraordinary' marriages which some religious families arrange with unrelated families which have high economic or political standing.

Turning to the class of merchants, we have already noted variations in marriage patterns between those traders who operate in the villages of the east bank and in the frontier market towns, and those whose operations are based in the large towns of Wad Medani and Khartoum. Several of the former are polygamously married, while I recorded no instance of merchants from Abu Haraz operating in Wad Medani or Khartoum being polygamously married. Marriages in this social group tend to be between families, which are unrelated, but of similar economic standing, and often from the same village - that is, if we exclude those polygamous marriages which are most frequently contracted with non-related persons from other villages or towns. Consequently many of the leading mercantile families, originally from Abu Haraz but now living in Khartoum, are interrelated through marriage. These marriages, like those of the religious families, tend to be lavish affairs. Of the various social groups that I discuss here, it is this group that exhibits the most rigid separation of male and female domains.

The majority of marriages of migrant workers belong to the class of 'ordinary' marriages, that is marriages effected within the range of kinship and neighbourhood ties through which everyday practical relationships are carried on. The range of kin with whom practical ties are maintained varies, depending on migration and occupational patterns, residential patterns and existing kinship configurations. In view of the lengthy absences of the menfolk, practical kinship ties are in large part maintained by women. The majority of these marriages are with fellow villagers, whether kin or non-kin, and thus subject to the kora. Thus although some marriages, for example those between close kin living in different villages, are outwith the kora, the kora can be seen as providing an institutional framework for the arrangement of most 'ordinary' marriages. On the other hand, there has been a tendency, in spite of the kora agreement, towards the increase in marriage expenditure and the elaboration of wedding ceremonial even among such 'ordinary' marriages. This tendency I have related to the growth of socio-economic differentiation, and the desire to express differential life-styles through the establishment of a conjugal fund. Among these marriages there are those, namely patrilateral parallel cousin marriages, which, being positively and officially marked,¹ confer distinction on this class of marriage. However, many of these reflect a safe resort, and should be distinguished from those close cousin marriages, such as among the religious families, which are based on a positive choice relating to the maintenance and enhancement of a particular material and symbolic patrimony. As Bourdieu notes (p.53), women play an important part in helping to arrange these 'ordinary' marriages. This is especially so in the case of marriages of migrant workers' families. For, though in some cases migrants have extensive contacts with other migrants from the village at their place of work, it is the women who more effectively maintain connexions with a wide range of kin and non-kin, through their

1. Bourdieu, op.cit., p.56.

everyday contacts and regular patterns of visiting. Against the relatively mundane background of ties which connect different families in their everyday activities, young men and women are able to exert increasing influence in directing marriage choices along lines of personal preference. This latter tendency may be a contributive factor to the greater degree of stability of marriage which I argued has expressed itself in the marriages of migrant workers in particular.

By contrast rainland farmers tend to contract marriages which entail less expenditure, take place earlier, and are relatively less stable; they are also more likely to contract polygamous marriages. When effective links are maintained with close kin who are migrants, marriages may be sought with these families. But more commonly marriages are made with the families of other rainland farmers, whether kin or non-kin. Although strong cooperative links no longer exist between separate farming families, marriage ties can nonetheless be useful for the exchange of relevant information concerning their farming activities. These marriage ties between farming families serve to reproduce their particular life-styles with their associated consumption patterns, and these tend to be more conservative than in those households where the main bread-winner is a migrant. Similarly casual labourers tend to marry within their own social stratum. Casual labourers in Abu Haraz tend to work within the confines of the village, and thus they have a fairly limited range of eligible partners; those in Kumur work in other villages and in the Gezira, and so tend to have a more extensive range of contacts. As with persons of slave descent, casual workers who have no family patrimony tend to marry late. Moreover, of the social groups mentioned they are the most likely to marry a woman who has been previously married.

The above discussion does not purport to give a summarised account of the system of kinship and marriage as practised by different social groups among the population that I studied. To

do so would require discussion of a large body of literature on Middle Eastern kinship and presentation of data and arguments from my own researches which would alter the scope and the objectives of this thesis. Rather I am suggesting that variations in marriage strategies, just as with the trends and variations in the other aspects of marriage that I have been more properly concerned with, can be best understood if the system of marriages is seen as an element in the system of social reproduction: individuals seek to preserve and enhance their relative social position, and hence strategies vary according to the different practical concerns they have, and the range of practical relationships and connexions that they possess. Marriages tend to match like with like, although the system of marriage payments allows new social positions to be negotiated. At the same time these payments provide a medium through which sex roles are defined, and, as we have seen, this generally implies a more dependent domestic role for women.

In spite of the variations in marriage patterns noted above, the trends which have been most pronounced have been the increase and elaboration of marriage expenditure, the elaboration of wedding ceremonies and festivities, and the formation of more enduring monogamous marriages. I do not claim that these trends in marriage patterns are applicable to all rural areas in northern Sudan which have undergone agricultural intensification and witnessed new forms of socio-economic differentiation. On the other hand certain phenomena, such as the increase in marriage expenditure, do appear to have a wide applicability.¹ Nor would I argue that my arguments are necessarily applicable to rural groups who have moved permanently to the towns, which some of the migrants from Abu Haraz have done. Urban residence opens up the possibility of new social networks, which may have important consequences for marriage patterns and the position of women. In the towns there are

1. See the article on the costs of marriage in Sudanow, May 1979.

more occupations open to women, and a greater range of domestic and sexual services may be carried on outside marital and familial relations.

* * * * *

In this final section I wish to return to the question of positing a causal relationship between the economic changes that have occurred on the east bank and the various marriage trends that I have discussed. In particular I wish to discuss here the cultural aspects of these processes. In general I have argued that two main factors have been crucial to changes in marriage and domestic patterns: first, new forms of socio-economic differentiation associated with the intensification of production and the withdrawal of a sector of the population from subsistence activities; second, variations in the contribution of women to agricultural activities, with many women adopting a relatively confined domestic role. These two factors I see as being interrelated. For the productive activities of women on the east bank do not constitute a separate economic sphere, as Barth has argued plausibly is the case with the Fur in Western Sudan.¹ Rather women on the east bank have traditionally contributed to a range of household productive activities, the combination of which served to establish household viability; thus variations in women's contribution are related to the mode of transformation of these household productive activities.

I have associated with these two main factors the increase in marriage payments, particularly in goods given to the bride, the elaboration of wedding ceremonies, the delayed age at marriage, and the tendency towards more durable monogamous marriages. These particular features are what Goody associates with the establishment of a conjugal fund and the endowment of the bride; he sees these in turn as characterising systems of diverging devolution: where property is passed down from pc

1. F. Barth: 'Economic Spheres in Darfur' in Themes in Economic Anthropology, A.S.A. Monograph 6, ed. R. Firth. London, 1967.

ging devolution, where property is passed down from parents to the offspring of both sexes, though not necessarily in the same proportion. I maintained that since a weak form of diverging devolution has long been practised by the population studied, the system of inheritance or devolution of property does not seem to be decisive in conditioning the marriage trends referred to above. Moreover, I argued that most forms of dowry, in this case the 'indirect dowry' provided by the bridegroom, are more concerned with expressing differential social position as embodied in a particular life-style, than with preserving differences in property as such. For the marriage goods I have described as being bestowed on women are of a different kind from the forms of property which feature most prominently in inherited wealth. Generally the former are goods for personal or household use, though they may also include luxury goods which serve, among other things, as a store of wealth. But marriage goods rarely comprise productive forms of wealth. Sharma (1980) makes a similar point in her recent study of women and property in north-west India.¹ She emphasises the difference between marriage goods, which are moveable and non-wealth generating, and inheritances comprising land, which are immovable and wealth generating. While acknowledging the general value of Goody's approach, she too criticises him for making too close an association between dowry wealth and inherited wealth (p.48). In the context of her own field data she does not consider it useful to regard dowry as a form of inheritance. Sharma's objective - a more explicitly feminist one than my own - is to show that though the women she studied are endowed with certain kinds of property, the women are not able to generate wealth from them; this unequal allocation of different kinds of property to men and women provides one of the means by which women's dependence and subordination to men is maintained. For myself, I would stress the point that has been explored very sensitively by Jeffery (1979), that those

1. Ursula Sharma: *Women, Work and Property in north-west India*. London, 1980.

women who are provided for, but who do not enjoy the same control over property, or indeed conduct over their own lives as men do, find themselves in an ambivalent position.¹ For while on the one hand they may value the security of their position relative to other women, on the other hand they may find their lack of independent means of livelihood and their dependence on men a severe hindrance to their own freedoms.

My own data suggests that the intensification of marriage payments is due in part to the emergence of new forms of property, particularly achieved earnings and mercantile capital. Thus I would interpret the trends in marriage patterns that I have discussed as having occurred relatively independently of the system of inheritance of property. However, I would agree with Goody that what is involved in these trends is the expression of differential social position and the embodiment of particular styles of living in the course of socio-economic differentiation.

At various points in my thesis I have stressed that though the main direction of change flows from the transformation of the system of production to the system of reproduction, I do not consider the causal relationship to be one-directional. For example, I have suggested that the increased costs of marriage and the delayed age at marriage encourage in many instances the adoption of migrant labour and the accumulation of savings from these earnings; acceptance of the need to make savings for marriage expenditure may also encourage the accumulation of capital for entrepreneurial activities, given that other favourable conditions are present. The value placed on the family and on its particular ordering is, of course, subject to ideological factors. For the transformation of social relations such as I have described on the east bank do not confront and envelop individuals as passive agents. Individuals attempt to make intelligible their experience of their material and cultural enviro-

1. Patricia Jeffery: *Frogs in a Well*. London, 1979.

onment using their existing knowledge as a conceptual framework, and rendering new ideas to themselves in the manner which their biographical background predisposes them to follow. It is to the formation of Islamic 'values' in particular, and their relation to marriage and domestic practices, that I now wish to turn.

Many informants, when pressed to explain a particular marriage practice, stated that they were Muslims and that they behaved so in accordance with Islam. According to the subject being raised, they would reply that the particular practice was prescribed by their religious teachings, or was considered appropriate behaviour for a good Muslim, or simply that it was allowed by their religion. At the same time 'common sense' explanations would frequently be given as to why the behaviour in question was a good thing. Although I encountered many different personal philosophies, I was aware of no one among the inhabitants of the two villages that I stayed with who claimed he or she was not a Muslim. Personal devotions and extent of religious knowledge, of course, varied considerably. Most men, and a good many women perform the stipulatory prayers regularly. Men would perform the prayers wherever they happened to be at the designated time, women almost invariably at home. Ramadan, the month of fasting, was universally observed by all those on whom it was incumbent. Twelve women from Abu Haraz and six from Kumur had performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, as had also a much larger number of men, particularly from Abu Haraz. In spite of the reputation of Abu Haraz as a religious centre, extensive religious knowledge among adults is limited mainly to some of the religious families. Since religious education is taught in the schools, younger people are generally better versed than their parents. In contrast, many but by no means all of the active members of the Gadiriya tariqa and other Sufi orders are drawn from the older, illiterate inhabitants. Similarly it is older rather than younger women who

tend to express most devotion to the cult of holymen, visiting their tombs in their quest for a particular favour or blessing, and seeking cures and charms from living fekis. Many school-educated girls regarded these customary beliefs as illusory and ineffectual, if not actually unorthodox and harmful.

To say then that the people in question hold Muslim beliefs has little explanatory value for understanding particular domestic practices, given the varied content and texture of these beliefs among different individuals. Alongside their religious beliefs, most individuals also hold a range of secular views concerning different aspects of social relations and of proper behaviour; these range from political views to ideas concerning education and leisure activities. The specific role which Islamic beliefs occupy within any individual's worldview depends on a wide range of factors: the religious disposition of the individual's family and of his practical kin and other social contacts; the individual's relationship to those religious families which materially influence his family's position; the individual's own biographical disposition and range of experience gained through travel and work; the manner in which Islamic beliefs are propagated, through local religious families and the local community, and through the schools, the media and not least the political parties - since nearly all Northern Sudanese political leaders incorporate Islam within their varying nationalist ideologies; and finally the dissemination of other beliefs through peer-groups and work-mates. All these factors mean that the views and behaviour of one person can be very different from that of another. This is nowhere more evident than in relation to marriage and domestic practices.

It can, of course, be argued that the main trends in marriage patterns that I have discussed are fully compatible with adherence to Islam, and indeed that the turning away from certain customary beliefs and practices and the adoption of a more strict, 'orthodox' rendering of Islam encourage these very

trends. Numerous passages from the Koran can be elicited to underline the importance of provision for women, especially the obligation to endow women at marriage, and the importance of marriage ties and of the various obligations of the spouses; divorce and polygamy, though allowed, are subject to various conditions, which, if they are observed, do not encourage the ready dissolution of marriage ties nor the formation of new ones.¹ However, this does not explain why there should be this shift in values, nor how it has come about - other than saying it is the voluntaristic expression of the people concerned.

As I have stated earlier, it tends to be merchants operating in the large towns, employees and migrant workers who emphasise most strongly the respective roles of the spouses, as provider and dependent, and who in practice afford women the most clearly pronounced domestic role. Marriage durability and stability is also most marked among these groups. Historically it has been these same groups who have been foremost in challenging the dominant position of tribal and religious elites, or at least who have come into being as a result of the breakdown in the ties which these elites have wielded. The values that the former groups espouse conflict at many points with those of the traditional elites. They stress the freedom of the individual, unconstrained by traditional forms or arbitrary acts of authority, yet abiding by certain general strictures provided by Islam; conversely the traditional elites stress close ties of personal dependence, and interpret Islam according to their particularist interests, though in the case of the religious elites they provide forms of devotion which have strong popular appeal.

I am not putting forward a simple opposition in values between two different groups of interests. Clearly the content of beliefs and attitudes influencing marriage patterns is far more complex

1. See, for example, the following verses in the Koran: II,226-237; IV,4-25; V,5.

than that. For example, the attempts to reintroduce the kora reveal a complexity and diversity of thought about the formation of marriages. Although these attempts stemmed largely from an awareness of the implications of prevailing marriage trends, and expressed a concern to restore at least an appearance of social homogeneity, there was also widespread recognition among its proponents of several of the new marriage practices, such as the increased payments and gifts to the bride. I have referred in Chapter 6 to the varying response given to the proposals by different groups in the village. The initiators of the proposals to restore the kora were drawn from different backgrounds - the main spokesmen were a shopkeeper, a school-teacher, a carpenter and the village headman, all resident in the village. In some cases relatively transient views concerning marriage are formed through the influence of peer-groups. An example of this is provided by the sympathisers of the Republican Brothers (Ikhwan Jamhuriyin), a movement which draws most of its support from secondary school students.¹ Seeking in general to make Islam relevant to contemporary conditions, its supporters hold that marriage payments should only be nominal, and they argue for a radical readjustment of the relations between the sexes. Although there were some school-attenders in Abu Haraz who sympathised with this movement, the views of the slightly older age-groups, who generally held that there should be no restrictions on marriage expenditure suggested that the former liberal views have not generally taken a permanent or prevailing hold.

Thus, although there is plenty of evidence for new attitudes and values concerning marriage and the relations between the sexes, it is difficult to specify what influence these ideas have on actual marriage patterns. Moreover, it needs to be established in the first place why there should be this intensified interest in the family. Familial values are reproduced in part

1. Not to be confused with the Muslim Brothers, Ikhwan Muslimiyyin. The founder of the Jamhuriyin was Mahmoud Mohammad Taha, a Sudanese who retired to Egypt to write.

through the very socialisation process which the family itself provides, and in part they are reproduced and reinforced by the social authority which the wider community, represented in different forms, bestows upon the family. But also the very conditions of production and exchange in a predominantly monetarised economy tend to underline the distinctive quality of familial relationships, and to inscribe an autonomous privatised character to the domestic domain. In spite of the fact that the needs of the home and family are increasingly served by market transactions, familial relations stand for something qualitatively different from other social and economic relations. Sexual and emotional relations, child-rearing, and care of old and sick, however coloured by these wider relations, cannot be reduced to them. For this reason familial relations may well be endowed with heightened values in contrast to the more utilitarian and self-interested values entailed in a market economy. The home becomes something of a haven, a refuge set apart from the hardships and problems of the outside world; it also becomes the place where the individual can express himself through the consumption of goods. I have shown how the division of space within the home, which is more elaborate in the new building styles that I have described, allows the particular needs of different family members to find expression: the diwan where the bread-winner can relax and entertain his friends, the women's room where the womenfolk can carry on their duties of child-care and domestic work, as well as their own range of leisure activities, and so on. Thus the home provides a means of communication, whereby men and women 'freely' express themselves, by which I mean not just their social position, but also their personal biographical make-up.

I have argued that the greater privatisation of women's activities, with greater stress being placed on their domesticity, must be seen in the context of the greater privatisation of the home as a whole. At the same time the objective conditions governing opportunities for female employment encourage the main-

tenance and even retrenchment of a separate sphere of women's activities. Given that their own success is largely bound up with an enduring and successful marriage career and with raising children to adulthood, women's world-view is largely inscribed within the traditional domain of marriage and kinship. Not surprisingly most women in Abu Haraz concern themselves with matters relating to reproduction, child-care, sex, beauty, health and adornment: these concerns are communicated through rounds of visits and through life-cycle ceremonies and ritual. Their traditional and conservative outlook, though challenged by some younger educated women, is reflected, for example, in the perpetuation of harmful customary practices such as female circumcision.¹

The opportunities for female employment are largely restricted to the domestic and subsistence domain, seasonal agricultural labour, and some branches of the modern services sector. A few young women in Abu Haraz, for instance, work as teachers in this and other villages. But given the priority of male training in the modern sector, girls who have been educated find few chances for further training or employment. Before 1971 the Sudanese Women's Union, in conjunction with the Communist Party and other progressive organisations, campaigned consistently for the greater involvement of women in the labour force. However, with the dismantling of the Women's Union and the suppression of the Communist Party in 1971, attempts to implement a planned economy, and with it the possibilities for advancing the economic position of women, were forestalled. The restoration of a mixed economy, and the continuing difficulties of employment have provided little incentive for large numbers of women to seek employment. It is not surprising, therefore, that dowries have increased in size and the extent of provision for women within marriage has widened, since these provide a

1. Pharonic circumcision, i.e. infibulation, was practised on all girls in Abu Haraz and Kumur. The operation was performed by the two mid-wives from Abu Haraz, both of whom had close links with leading religious families.

measure of security to women; restricted in their opportunities, women negotiate their best possible position through marriage. Given the very real difficulties of entering the labour force, women's recourse to a relatively more protected role within marriage is at least understandable.

This is not to imply that most women, say in Abu Haraz, are eager to find employment, nor that since their aspirations are frustrated, they consciously seek to manipulate their marital position in order to obtain security for themselves. For the very fact that they are provided for in most of their needs, and that they are preoccupied with an elaborate round of domestic activities, prevents them from contemplating employment as an attractive or gainful prospect; 'manipulation' of their marriage prospects is in most cases the only practical resort open to them, other than stepping completely outside all familiar patterns of conduct. It is not as though they are generally bored with their predominantly domestic existence; rather their time and attention is filled with the concerns I have outlined above, concerns which are given meaning by the rituals in which the women participate at life-cycle crises and celebrations. Most women have sufficient independent income from sale of craft items, poultry and petty-trading to engage in these ritual and leisure activities. Women's social networks exert an influence on women to conform to similar domestic routines and leisure activities. This explains why there are families whose income and resources barely cover their most basic needs, and yet their womenfolk do not perform agricultural labour even on their family plots.

But from a broader perspective we return to the hypothesis with which I started this thesis: that the withdrawal of some women from agricultural production, at the same time as other women are drawn into new forms of agricultural wage labour, is to be related to the transformation of the system of production; in particular, it is associated with the intensification

of production, with new methods of production and of labour mobilisation, and to the accompanying conditions of social hierarchisation. For on the one hand some families find that they must eke out their subsistence activities with casual wage labour performed by male and female members alike. On the other hand other families which possess larger cash resources are able to hire machinery and labour in their farming enterprises. Among the latter, and also among families supported by non-agricultural occupations, the women tend to adopt a predominantly domestic role. Among these latter groups the importance of provision for women is highlighted by the increase in marriage payments, and especially in goods bestowed upon the bride; moreover, this material and ideological investment in marriage is conducive to the formation of more durable monogamous marriages. In short, I claim to have shown that various features which have been noted by Goody to be characteristic of dowry systems have become more pronounced among the population that I studied, and that this is congruent with the particular transformation of their system of production. Thus I would conclude by saying that variations in Muslim marriage payments provide fertile ground for establishing broad associations between different productive and reproductive systems; I hope that the demonstration that I have provided in this thesis makes a contribution in this direction.

GLOSSARY

'agid	marriage contract
angarib	wooden framed bed
arak	spirit distilled from dates or millet
ardeb	measure of grain, 20 <u>keila</u> on east bank
'aris	wedding
'azuma	wedding reception
bamia	okra
bersim	kind of fodder for animals
bildat	rainland plot
bugur	rainland terrace
dahwa	morning work session
dar	tribal territory
deluka	kettle-drum
diwan	guest-room
dolab bita' 'eid	goods brought by bride at marriage
doqa	baking griddle
dugundi	renting of land
duhuriya	afternoon work session
dukhn	bullrush millet
dura	sorghum millet
effendiya	western educated official
al 'eid al kabir	festival celebrating Abraham's sacrifice of a sheep
al 'eid al saghir	festival ending Ramadan
farash	mourning
fariq	village quarter
fatha	prayer, opening verses of Koran
fatha al khashm	initial marriage payment
fatta	dish of lamb, rice and bread with broth
feddan	approximately one acre
feki	holymen, religious teacher

gada'a	rainland area comprising about five feddan
ghafir	caretaker; in Gezira, irrigation controller
gishra	building combining fired and unfired bricks
golat al kheir	initial marriage payment
gowi	strong, strong-willed
gutiya	mud and straw home
haboba	grandmother
hafir	excavated water-pool
hagg al banat	gifts to girls attending the bride
haraz	species of acacia
hosh	household compound
howasha	tenancy in irrigated scheme
'idda	woman's collection of crockery
jallaba	Northern Sudanese petty-trader
jalous	mud-brick building
jebena	coffee pot
jerf	slopes of river cultivated as level recedes
karama	thanks offering
keila	measure of grain, 25.4 kg.
khalifa	leader of Sufi order
khalwa	Koranic school
khatuba	engagement
khodra	Jew's mallow
khor	water-course
kisra	<u>dura</u> bread
kolleiga	bundle of <u>dura</u> stalks
kora	village agreement to limit marriage expenditure
kumur	settlement in rainlands
lubia	bean-plant used primarily as animal fodder
mahr	marriage payment

majlis sha'abi	local peoples' assembly
makk	ruler in Funj era
markub	traditional leather footwear
matara	water-wheel at side of well
matmura	grain-pit
mazum	official registrar of marriages and divorces
merisa	beer made from <u>dura</u>
mughrib	sunset (prayers)
mulah	traditional stew
mushra'	watering-point for animals
nadi	club
nafir	collective work party
nishug	migration to winter pastures in the Butana
nuqta	contributions of guests to life-cycle ceremony
'ood	unit of river frontage, about four metres
qadi	judge
qubba	holymans' tomb
rahat	leather thonged skirt
rigla	stew relish
sadag	marriage payment, dowry
sadaga	celebration marking end of mourning period
sagia	water-wheel
sahara	chest containing woman's belongings
saira	celebrations marking arrival of bridegroom's entourage at bride's home
sandug al-ta'on	rotary savings group
seluka	planting-stick
semin	clarified butter
shabka malabis, or	bride's trousseau provided by
shanta	bridegroom
sharmoot	dried meat

shayal	gifts to bridegroom from bride's father
sharia'	Islamic law
sheikh	tribal or religious leader
sheikha	woman organiser of <u>zar</u> ritual
sheikh el hilla	village headman
shemla	traditional rug
simaiya	naming ceremony
sofah	marriage contract (colloquial)
tabliya	simple stall in market
tambak	tobacco used for chewing
tariqa	Sufi order
tertus	roots of acacia used as fuel
terus	ridge enclosing <u>bildat</u> , and holding back rain-water
tob	woman's covering
tuhur	circumcision
'ushr	tithe of rainland produce
waika	wild species of okra
wasta	recruiter of labour group
wazir	bridegroom's best man
zakat	alms
zar	possession by spirits
zariba	enclosure for animals
zeffaf	bride's wedding gown

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Published books, articles and reports

- Ahmad, Abd-al
Ghaffar M. "Tribal Elite: A Base for Social Stratification in Modern Sudan", in 'Sudan Journal of Economic and Social Studies, Vol.2 No.1, Summer 1977; Khartoum U.P.
- Ahmad, Abd-al
Ghaffar M. Sheikhs and Followers: Political Struggle in the Rufa'a al-Hoi Nazirate in the Sudan; Khartoum U.P., 1974.
- Ahmed, Abdel
Ghaffar M. (ed.) Some Aspects of Pastoral Nomadism in the Sudan; Khartoum U.P., 1976.
- Abu Selim, M.I.(ed.) Some Land Certificates from the Funj (in arabic); Occasional Papers No.2, Sudan Research Unit, Khartoum, 1967.
- Amin, Samir Unequal Development; Harvester Press, Hassock, Sussex, 1976.
- Balfour-Paul, H.G. "Early Cultures on the Northern Blue Nile"; Sudan Notes and Records, Vol. 33, 1952.
- Barbour, K.M. The Republic of Sudan; University of London Press, London, 1961.
- Barclay, Harold B. Buuri Al Lamaab: A Suburban Village in the Sudan; Cornell U.P., New York, 1964.
- Barnett, T. The Gezira Scheme: An Illusion of Development; Frank Cass, London, 1977.
- Barth, F. "Economic Spheres in Darfur"; in Themes in Economic Anthropology, A.S.A.Monograph 6, ed. R. Firth; Tavistock, London, 1967.
- Boserup, E. Woman's Role in Economic Development; Allen & Unwin, London, 1970.

- Bourdieu, P. "Marriage Strategies as Strategies of Social Reproduction"; in Family and Society, ed. Forster, R. & Ranum, O.; John Hopkins Univ., Baltimore & London, 1976.
- Bourdieu, P. Outline of a theory of Practice; trans. Nice, R. Cambridge U.P., 1977.
- Brausch, G. Bashagra Area Settlements 1963: A Case Study in Village Development in the Gezira Scheme; Univ. of Khartoum, 1964
- Comaroff, J.L.(ed.) The Meaning of Marriage Payments; Academic Press, London, 1980.
- Coquery-Vidrovitch, C. "Research on an African Mode of Production"; in Relations of Production, ed. D. Seddon, Marxist Approaches in Economic Anthropology; Frank Cass, London, 1978.
- Crowfoot, J.W. "Wedding Customs in the Northern Sudan"; Sudan Notes & Records, Vol. 5, 1922.
- Culwick, G.M. "Social Change in the Gezira"; Cultivations 5, 1955.
- Culwick, G.M. Diet in the Gezira Irrigated Area; Sudan Gezira Board, Barakat, 1951.
- Culwick, G.M. "Some Problems of the Social Survey in the Sudan"; Sudan Notes & Records, Vol. 35, 1954.
- Cunnison, I. The Baggara Arabs: Power and Lineage in a Sudanese Nomad Tribe; Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966.
- Dept. of Statistics, Democratic Republic of the Sudan Report on sample survey 1967/8 of first phase of Rahad Project; Khartoum, 1969.
- Gaitskell, A. Gezira - a story of development in the Sudan; Faber & Faber, London, 1959.

- Galal el Din, Mohd.
el Awad . The Human Factor in the Rahad Project Area: Results of Population and Socio-economic Survey; Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources, Democratic Republic of the Sudan, Khartoum, 1975.
- Goode, W.J. World Revolution and Family Patterns; Free Press, New York, 1970.
- Goody, J. Technology, Tradition and the State in Africa; International African Institute, Publications, London, 1971.
- Goody, J. Production and Reproduction: A Comparative Study of the Domestic Domain; Cambridge U.P., 1976.
- Goody, J. &
Tambiah, S.J. Bridewealth and Dowry; Cambridge U.P., 1973.
- Hajnal, J. "European Marriage Patterns in Perspective", in D.V.Glass & D.E.C. Eversley (eds.): Population in History, London, 1965.
- Hasan, Yusuf Fadl "External Islamic influences and the progress of Islamisation in the Eastern Sudan between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries"; in Sudan in Africa (Sudan Research Unit), ed. Y.F.Hasan, Khartoum U.P., 1971.
- Hasan, Yusuf Fadl The Arabs and the Sudan; Khartoum U.P., 1973.
- El-Hassan, Ali
Mohamed (ed.) Growth Employment and Equity: A Selection of papers presented to the I.L.O. Comprehensive Employment Strategy Mission to the Sudan, 1974-75; Khartoum U.P., 1977.
- Henin, R.A. "Marriage Patterns and Trends in the Nomadic and Settled Populations of the Sudan"; Africa, Vol. 39, 1969.

- Hill, L.G. "Hababin Village Economy"; in Sudan Notes & Records, Vol. 49, 1968.
- Hill, R. On the frontiers of Islam: Two Manuscripts Concerning the Sudan under Turco-Egyptian Rule, 1822-1845; Oxford U.P., 1970.
- Hill, R. Egypt in the Sudan, 1820-1881; Oxford U.P., London, 1959.
- Holt, P.M. The Mahdist State in the Sudan; Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1958.
- Holt, P.M. A Modern History of the Sudan; Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1977.
- Hunting Technical Services & MacDonald & Partners Roseires Pre-Investment Survey. Report No. 2 Rahad Project; Ministry of Finance & Economics. Khartoum, July, 1965.
- Issawi, Charles (ed.) The Economic History of the Middle East, 1800-1914; Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1966.
- Jeffery, P. Frogs in a Well; Zed Press, London, 1979.
- Lebon, J.H.G. Land Use in Sudan; Geographical Publications Ltd., Bude, 1965.
- Levy, Reuben The Social Structure of Islam; Cambridge U.P., 1957.
- MacMichael, H.A. A History of the Arabs in the Sudan; Frank Cass, London, 1967 (2 vols).
- Matthew, J.G. "Land Customs and Tenure in Singa District"; in Sudan Notes & Records, Vol. 4, 1921.
- Medani, A.I. "Consumption patterns of the Gezira-Managil tenants"; in Sudan Notes & Records, Vol. 52, 1971.
- O'Fahey, R.S. & Spaulding, J.L. Kingdoms of the Sudan; (Studies in African History Series), Methuen, London, 1974.

- Peters, Emrys L. "The Status of Women in Four Middle East Communities"; in Women in the Muslim World, ed. Beck, L. and Keddie, N, Harvard U.P., Cambridge, Mass. & London, 1978.
- Randell, John R. "El Gedid - a Blue Nile Gezira Village"; in Sudan Notes & Records, Vol. 39, 1958.
- Randell, J.R. Land Use on the arid margin of the clays in Blue Nile and Kassala provinces; Proceedings of 9th Conference of Philosophical Society of Sudan, Khartoum, 1961.
- Rehfishch, F. "A Rotating Credit Association in the Three Towns"; in Essays on Sudan Ethnography, ed. by I. Cunnison and W. James, Hurst, London, 1972.
- El Saadawi, Nawal The Hidden Face of Eve; Zed Press, London, 1980.
- Seddon, D. "Aspects of Kinship and family structure among the Ulad Stut of Zaio rural commune, Nador province, Morocco"; in J.G.Peristiany: Mediterranean Family Structures, Cambridge U.P., 1976.
- Seddon, David Relations of Production: Marxist Approaches to Economic Anthropology; Frank Cass, London, 1978.
- Shanin, T. (ed.) Peasants and Peasant Societies; Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1971.
- Sharma, Ursula Women, Work and Property in north-west India; Tavistock, London, 1980.
- Spaulding, J. "Farmers, herdsmen and the state in rainland Sinner"; Journal of African History, 20,3,1979.
- El Tayib, Abdulla "Changing Customs of the Riverain Sudan"; Sudan Notes & Records, Vol.36, 1955, Vol.37, 1956.

- Tillion, Germaine Le Harem et les Cousins; Seuil, Paris, 1966.
- Tothill, J.D. Agriculture in the Sudan; Oxford U.P., London, 1948.
- Trimingham, J.S. Islam in the Sudan; Oxford U.P., London, 1949.
- Wolf, Eric R. Peasants; Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1966.
- Zenkovsky, Sophie "Customs of the Women in Omdurman"; Sudan Notes & Records, Vol. 26, 1945, & Vol. 30, 1949.

II. Unpublished papers and theses:

- Abbas, A. Mohd. Political leadership among two arabic-speaking Sudanese tribes - the Hassaniya and Hussaynat. Ph.D., London (L.S.E.), 1972.
- Abdel Razig El Basheir Agricultural manpower and economic development in Sudan: some case studies on present and prospective patterns of labour utilization in the Rahad project area. M.Sc., Khartoum, 1970.
- Badri, Yusuf A survey of Islamic learning in the Funj state 910-1236 A.H. (1505-1820 A.D.). B.Litt., Oxford, 1970.
- Constantinides, P.M. Sickness and the spirits - a study of the zaar spirit possession cult in the Northern Sudan. Ph.D., London (L.S.E.) 1972.
- Culwick, G.M. A study of the human factor in the Gezira Scheme. Unpublished report, Barakat, undated.
- Mohamed el-Hadi Ahmed Abu Sin The regional geography of the Butana North of the railway. M.A., Khartoum, 1970.

al-Shahi, A.S.

An Anthropological Study of a
Sudanese Shaigiya Village. D.Phil.,
Oxford, 1971.

Zahir al Sadaty, F.

Aspects of the interaction of Islamic and
customary family law in selected
African and other societies. M.Phil.,
London, 1967.