

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

PERIPHERAL URBANISM AND THE SUDAN

EXPLORATIONS IN THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE WAGE
LABOUR MARKET IN GREATER KHARTOUM, 1900-1984

*being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
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by

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ABSTRACT

SALAH EL-DIN EL-SHAZALI IBRAHIM (1985), **PERIPHERAL URBANISM AND THE SUDAN. Explorations in the Political Economy of the Wage Labour Market in Greater Khartoum, 1900-1984.** Ph.D. Thesis, Hull University.

Through the adoption of a 'political economy perspective', this thesis sets out to explore the dialectical interdependencies between, on the one hand, the processes of **peripheral capitalist urbanization** and **urbanism** in the Sudan and, on the other, the structure and operation of the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum. The main focus is on three major questions. The first question concerns the **dynamics** of the process of rapid population growth, which the Sudan has experienced since flag Independence in 1956. Though the increase in the urban manual labour force is not in doubt, the thesis attempts to substantiate the view that rural-urban unskilled labour migration cannot legitimately be pointed out as the sole, or even main, dynamic of urban growth; immigration by other categories (mainly the bourgeoisie, bureaucrats, professionals, and their dependants) has contributed much more than immigration by unskilled labourers. The dynamics of urban growth are accordingly explained in terms of the implications of the **colonial-type trade economy**. These processes not only have given rise to a pattern of **urbanism** (defined as a **socio-economic way of life**) tied to that economy, but, by initiating a process of **semi-proletarianization**, also obstructed the emergence of large scale rural-urban unskilled labour migration.

The Second question concerns the implications of the basic 'activities' of peripheral urbanism (i.e. administration and import-export trade) for the **operation** of the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum since its emergence at the turn of the century. In this respect the thesis argues that the processes of peripheral urbanism not only depend on the stabilization of rural Sudanese in primary export domestic production, but also require a relatively small urban manual labour force. The major sources of demand for urban unskilled labour have been **external** to the 'basic' activities of peripheral urbanism. During the colonial period it was the construction industry which constituted the major source of wage employment for unskilled labour. As a result of rapid post-colonial urban growth, which has generated a substantial, and increasingly growing demand for personal services, tertiary activities have emerged as the single most important source of employment for unskilled labourers. Unskilled tertiary employment in contemporary Greater Khartoum has, in the main, assumed the form of 'self-employment'.

The third question concerns the origins and implications of the **seeming** structural segmentation of the urban labour market. In this respect the thesis points out how the varied 'forms' of employment of manual labour (i.e. 'permanent', 'temporary' and 'casual' wage employment together with 'self-employment'), which underlay the seeming segmentation, have almost unanimously been construed by scholars as manifestations of differential terms and conditions of employment for the different sections of the urban manual labour force. In the consideration of the origins of these differential terms of employment, scholars generally point to the significance of 'pressure' by trade unions. But the thesis attempts to substantiate the view that there are hardly any significant differences between the conditions of the different sections of the manual labour force, whether in terms of reward, job security or the so-called 'legislative protection'. By establishing the relative uniformity in the conditions of the urban manual labour force, however, the thesis does not dismiss the seeming segmentation as an 'illusion'. It only seeks to discredit the widely-held, but poorly-substantiated dualistic conceptions asserted by scholars. The thesis accordingly argues that the varied 'forms' of employment stem partly from the requirement of different capital accumulation processes, and partly from designs to create divisions within the manual labour force through a distinction between unionized and non-unionized workers. The significance of trade unions, however, does not arise from its past or present role, but from its potential threat to the processes of peripheral capitalism which are founded upon the basis of cheap labour. The seeming structural segmentation, far from being the consequences of differential terms of employment, is thus viewed as the precondition for the prevalence of generally poor terms and conditions for the wage labour throughout the economy.

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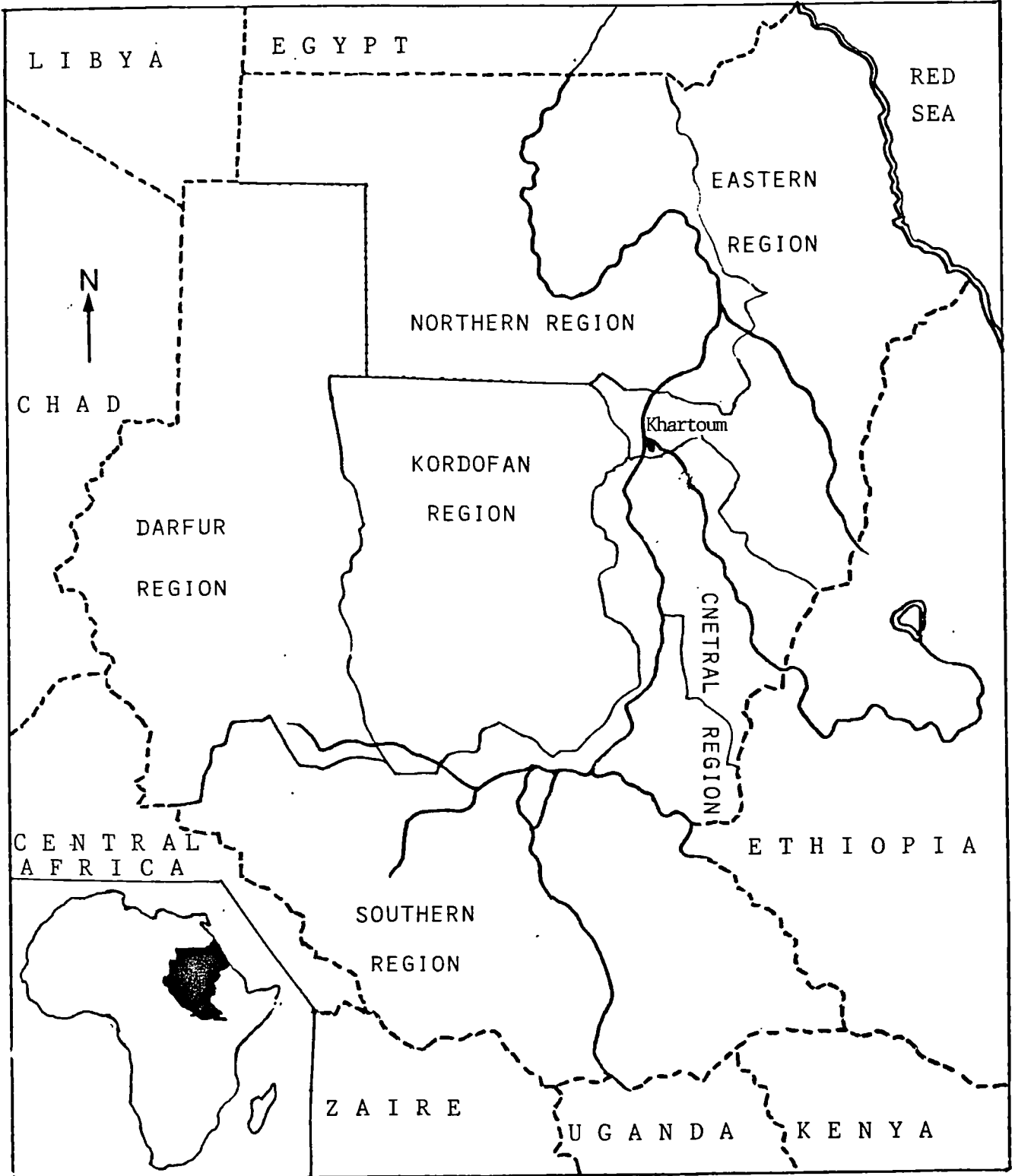
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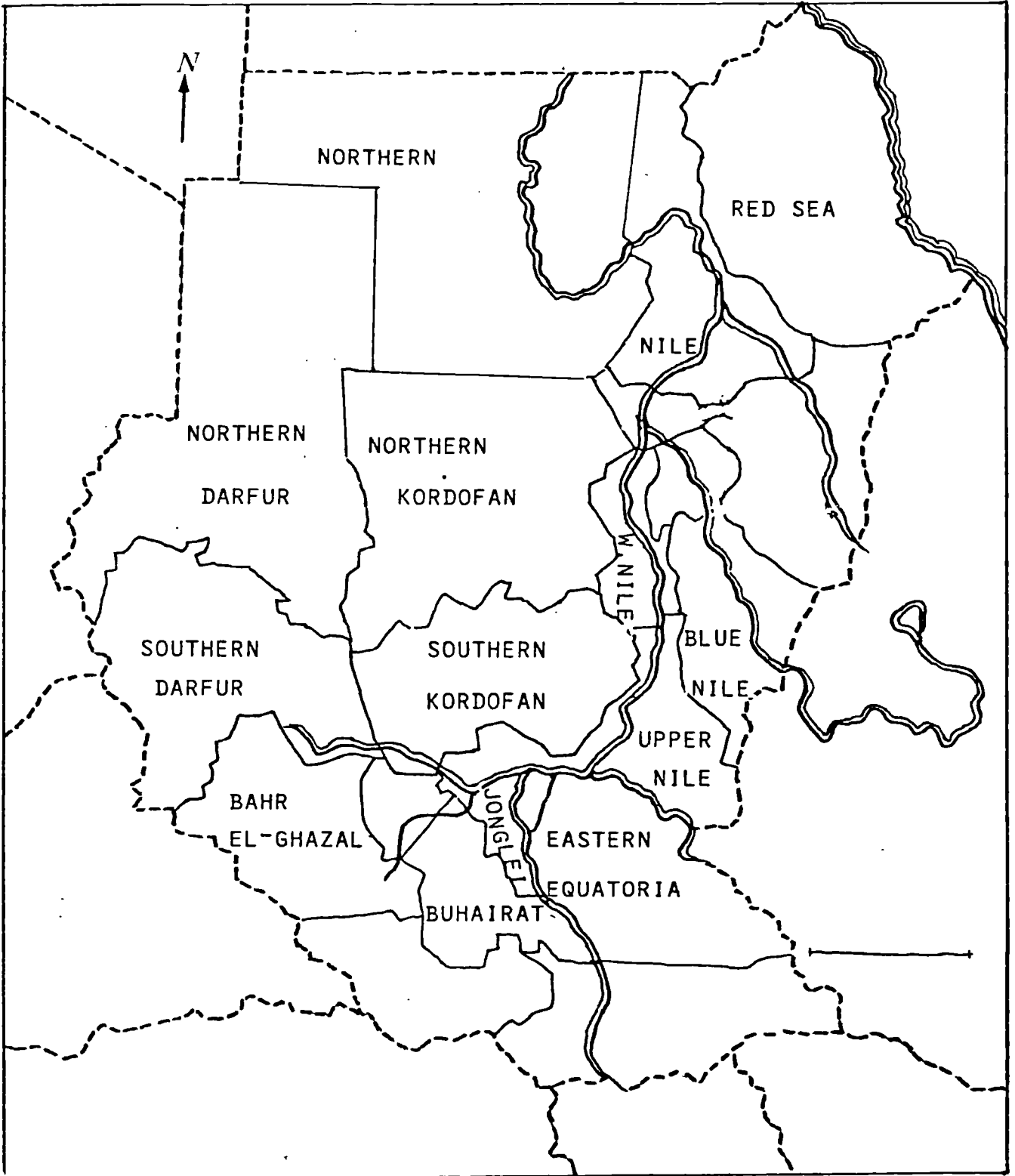
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MAP I

THE SUDAN: ITS REGIONS AND LOCATION OF KHARTOUM

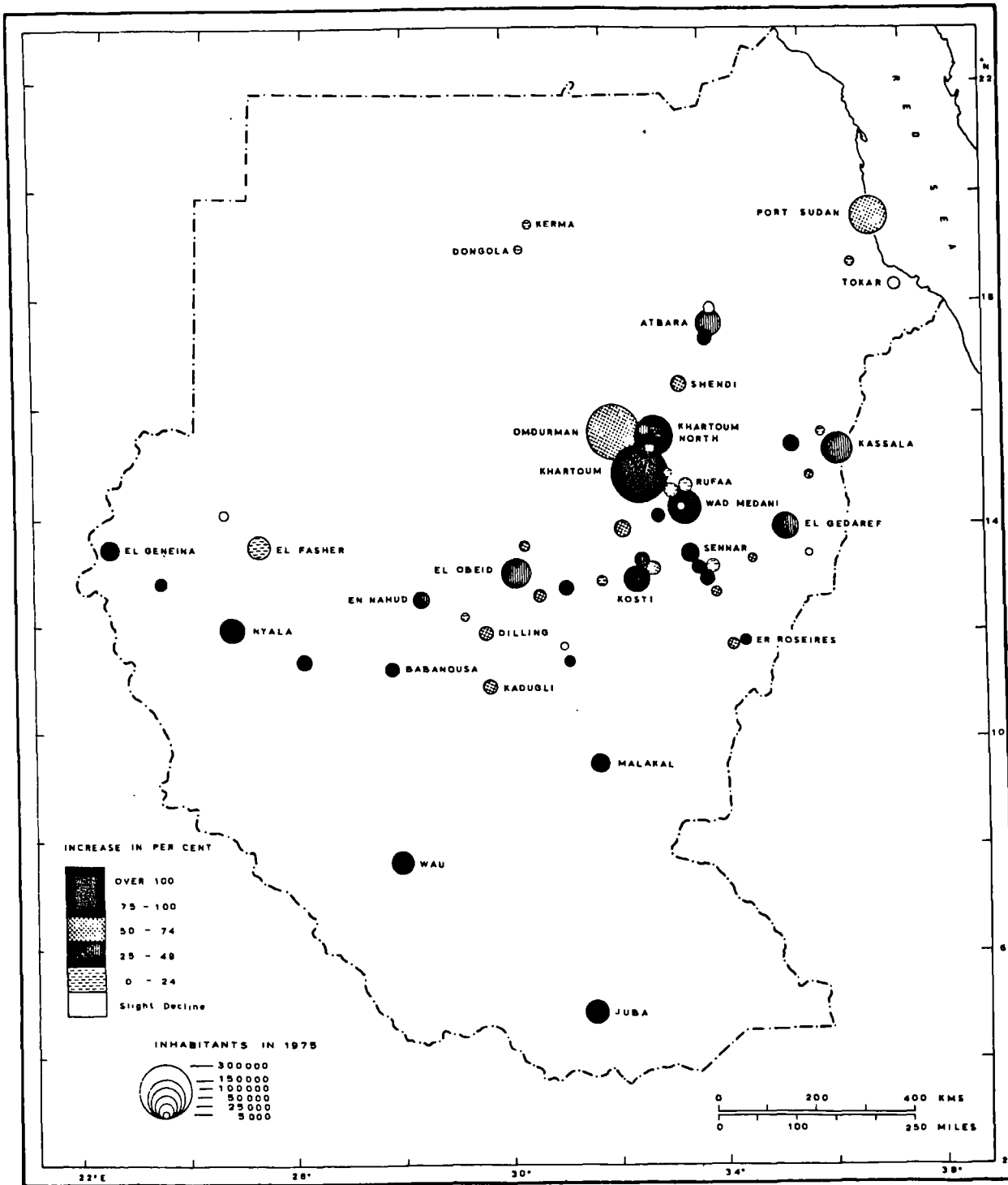


PROVINCES OF THE SUDAN



MAP III

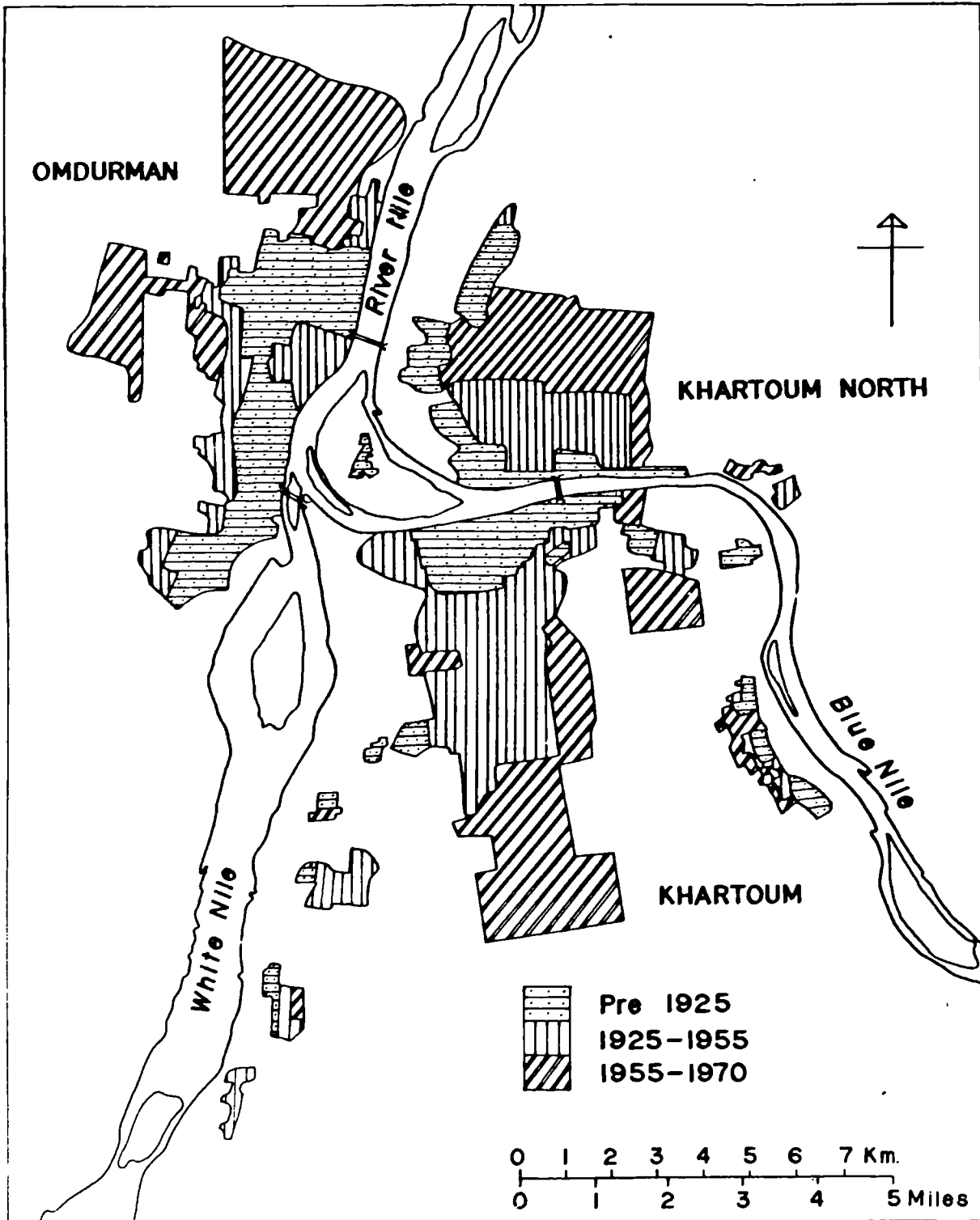
SUDAN : URBAN POPULATION CHANGE 1965 - 1975



Source: El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1976:19

MAP IV

STAGES IN THE GROWTH OF THE THREE TOWNS



Source: El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1976:41

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

[Let them reflect] how the mountains were hoisted;

how the earth was outstretched.

Therefore give warning; your mission is only to warn them.

You are not their overseer.

(Surah 88:17-23)

Since it is not for us to create a plan for the future that will hold for all time, all the more surely what we contemporaries have to do is the uncompromising critical evaluation of all that exists, uncompromising in the sense that our criticism fears neither its own results nor the conflicts with the powers that be.

K. MARX (quoted in Critique of Anthropology)

TO YASIR, SELMA AND SARRA

Without whose unsparing tolerance, unceasing encouragement, unending inspiration, it would have been impossible to engage in research or writing;

I dedicate the thesis that has caused them so much suffering, and hope their endurance has not been in vain.

EDITORIAL NOTE

For convenience, the works cited in the thesis are referred to by name of author (first name for Sudanese to avoid confusion), date of publication and page number(s). Details are given in the Bibliography.

In quoted passages the symbol () denotes original insertion, but [] is editorial insertion.

No special transliteration symbols for Arabic words have been used.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people (individuals and families) have contributed, directly or indirectly, to the completion of this thesis. Numerous informants provided insights into their conditions. Many staff and colleagues made valuable (positive and negative) comments, drew my attention to, or put at my disposal books and articles, and provided inspiration and support. Friends made life easier than it would have otherwise been. They know themselves. To mention them all is unrealistic, to mention a few is invidious, but not to acknowledge my appreciation and gratitude is ungrateful. Therefore to all those whom I cannot name in this context, I cannot praise you too highly, or thank you sufficiently.

Gratitude is due to my employer, the Development Studies and Research Centre (Khartoum University), which released me to assume the role of full-time student over the last eight years.

A generous Overseas Research Student Award from the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of Universities of the United Kingdom (1981/82-1983/84) contributed towards the finance of my study, and for which I am most indebted.

Professor Valdo Pons and Dr. Terry King supervised the work, but in return for their sympathy, encouragement and inspiration I feel lost to find a word which would express my appreciation and indebtedness.

I would also like to acknowledge the considerable support and sympathy from the Secretaries of the Sociology Department (Pat, Melani, Treasa and Valerie), the Porters of the Social Science Building (George and Bill), and the staff of the Library and Union Catering Section. In spite of her demanding responsibilities, Pat Wilkinson has contributed, both substantially and impeccably, to the typing process.

S.SH.

Hull: March 1985

PRELUDE TO THE STUDY

The reader is not only entitled to know how a study developed; he or she **must** know if the analysis is to be properly assessed (Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1983:1).

This thesis bears little relation, if at all, to the kind of work I had in mind when in 1980 I applied for registration as a Ph.D. student in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology of Hull University. At the time I was still a research student at the Institute of Social Anthropology (Bergen University) completing a thesis on the structural constraints on the development of productive forces among the Jok Gor Ingessana, an agro-pastoral group in south-eastern Sudan. In my initial application to Hull University I stated my intention to pursue further research into the constitution and functioning of domestic agricultural production in rural Sudan. But, far from pursuing that objective, on arrival in Hull I redefined my task as a study of the so-called 'urban informal sector', and in the course of my field work I progressively refined the focus of my interests. The net result is the present thesis which explores aspects of the dialectic between the political economy of peripheral capitalist urbanism in the Sudan and the structure and operation of the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum.

It may seem odd that before I came to Hull in late November, 1980, I was little interested in, and knew virtually nothing about, 'urban studies'. I had in 1977 declined an invitation to participate in a research project on urbanization and social change in the Sudan. The project was financed by the Economic and Social Research Council (Sudan)

with Professor Valdo Pons as Consultant. I thanked Professor Pons for the invitation, which also held the possibility of a scholarship from the Economic and Social Research Council to pursue post-graduate studies at the University of Hull. I explained that I had "other commitments" (but, fortunately, I did not confess that I held 'urbanology' in low esteem). Having now spent four years conducting research into aspects of Sudanese urbanization and urbanism in the very the Department of Sociology which I had earlier declined to join, I find it difficult to justify my original disinterest in 'urban studies'. Many good old friends and colleagues who knew of my research interests before I came to Hull, have at times voiced their surprise, and in some cases their disappointment. More than once I have been taxed with 'betraying' the convictions I had once forcefully expressed against 'urban studies'. A few cynics have even suggested that married life, parenthood, and family obligations in Greater Khartoum have led me into the "urban trap" into which so many "dedicated" rural researchers in underdeveloped countries are said to have fallen (cf. Chambers, 1983:7ff).

In this Prelude I attempt to describe the circumstances under which I developed my interest in the general issues of peripheral capitalist urbanism and in the structure and operation of the urban wage labour market in the Sudan in particular. I believe this background is essential to the understanding of the (rather unconventional?) focus of this thesis. In the course of the account, I will also discuss the methods of study adopted.

THE PREHISTORY OF THE STUDY

As an undergraduate student of Social Anthropology and Sociology at Khartoum University (1971/72 - 1975/76), I was most interested in all courses addressing issues of 'underdevelopment' in the so-called 'Third World', but I devoted most attention to those dealing with aspects of agro-pastoral production systems in the Sudan. I find it difficult to specify the origins of this interest. The choice of courses at undergraduate level is a product of several complex factors, and may be explained as much in terms of the contents of the courses, and the personal qualities of the lecturers, as in terms of the social background and/or the ideology and political commitments of the student. At any rate, in spite (or perhaps because?) of the fact that I was born and brought up in a major Sudanese city (El-Obeid, the capital of Kordofan Region), I was least attracted by urban questions.

My combined interest in 'rural research' and 'development studies' was later reinforced by involvement in 'rural' field research. Between 1972 and 1978 I was fortunate enough to work during the long summer vacations in several research projects in different parts of rural Sudan as a research assistant to several staff members of the Faculty of Economic and Social Studies (Khartoum University). (After my graduation in 1976 I was appointed as teaching assistant in the Development Studies and Research Centre, DSRC, of Khartoum University). During the same period I had the opportunity to conduct a 'pilot survey'

(on the New Halfa Scheme) and to work on my own on two major field studies (among the Kababish Arabs and the Jok Gor Ingessana).

My thesis at Bergen University was based on data collected in the course of my field work among the Jok Gor (1977-78). The study was part of a research project financed by the Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD) which, through the recommendation of the project directors, gave me a Fellowship (1978-1980) to pursue studies for the Magister Artium Degree at the Institute of Social Anthropology of Bergen University. With the support of Dr. Abbas Ahmed Mohamed (then Dean, Faculty of Economic and Social Studies, Khartoum University) and Dr. Sadig Rasheed (then Director, DSRC), I was released by Khartoum University to conduct the Ingessana field work and to travel to Norway to read for the Magistergrad, and I was also given a commitment of finance for my doctoral studies after the successful completion of studies at Bergen.

THE HISTORY OF THE STUDY

When I obtained my Mag. Art. Degree, the Institute of Social Anthropology of Bergen University decided to publish my thesis (Salah El-Din El-Shazali Ibrahim, 1980). This caused me to reflect on whether I could really make a "substantial further contribution" to the understanding of the domestic form of agricultural production among the Jok Gor in my planned doctoral thesis; and it occurred to me that, since all I would have to do on the Ingessana study was more research of

a similar kind, my stay in Hull might prove more beneficial to my future career as lecturer and researcher if I were to gain 'new experience' either by studying another group or by venturing into a field of study with which I was least familiar. I decided to take the latter course, and the field of 'urban studies' was the 'natural' choice. While making this decision, I was immensely helped by the relentless encouragement and inspiration of my friend and colleague Mohamed Yousif Ahmed El-Mustafa, who had by then already conducted his field work in the Sudan and returned to Hull to write his doctoral thesis on capital accumulation, 'tribalism', and local government politics in a Sudanese town (Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1983). Mohamed and I spent hours and days in Hull pursuing a discussion, first begun during our undergraduate years, on aspects of the political economy of the Sudan. Our ideas and thoughts intermingled to the extent of virtual mutual assimilation.

Having made the decision to go 'urban', I initially thought of focussing on aspects of small industry in Greater Khartoum, a thought in keeping with my earlier interests in the analysis of production systems. I accordingly approached Professors Ian Cunnison, then Head of Department, and Valdo Pons and discussed with them my change of research orientation. Professor Pons and Dr. Terry King kindly agreed to be my joint supervisors.

With the enthusiastic support of my supervisors and colleagues, I spent five months in what initially appeared to me as an obscure 'maze' of literature on urban studies. The

two weekly post-graduate workshops in the Department (the "Research Workshop" convened by Professor Pons and the "Methodology Workshop" convened by Mr. Ray Francis) were very helpful as forums for discussions, over and above those I had with my supervisors, of my initial research plans and analytical framework. In due course I was led to broaden the focus of my research to cover, in addition to small scale industry, various forms of petty trading.

By April, 1981, I felt that I had done sufficient reading on the literature on 'Third World urbanization', and especially on the controversy over the so-called 'urban informal sector', and I thought that it would at that stage prove fruitful to go to Khartoum to 'sensitise' myself to the 'real life' conditions of petty commodity producers and street traders. This seemed essential partly because of the relative scarcity of published material on petty commodity production and street trading in urban Sudan, and partly because I had lived outside the Sudan since the economic crisis first started to escalate in 1978. I consulted my supervisors, who encouraged me to go to the field to conduct a pilot survey. I accordingly left for Khartoum where I spent a period of six months from April to September 1981. My pilot survey covered rope-bed makers, car-mechanics and street traders. As in the present thesis I do not analyse the data on rope-bed makers and car-mechanics (though I make use of data on their income in Chapter Seven), it is not strictly relevant to discuss my reasons for choosing these two groups from among the multitude of petty commodity producers, but reference to the issues

concerned is made in Chapter Seven.

THE PILOT SURVEY

As soon as I launched the pilot survey in Greater Khartoum I became thoroughly disillusioned with the alleged 'convenience' of urban research. The 'inconveniences' I experienced were partly a consequence of the conflict between the requirements of research and the norms of social life to which I was expected to conform in Greater Khartoum. Being among relatives, friends, relatives of friends, and friends of relatives, I was expected to continue my normal participation in the social life in Greater Khartoum. Though I managed to a large extent to evade many of these obligations, I will certainly have to answer for this when I return to Khartoum and attempt to reactivate my former social networks.

The pilot survey itself presented no particular intrinsic 'convenience' compared to my experiences of rural research. But in contrast to the communities in the villages and camps among which I had previously conducted field work, I inevitably found that the people whose social production relations I was studying were dispersed all over the Three Towns. Movement between the three cities was therefore vital, and transport posed one of my first major practical problems. Taxis, when they could be found, were time-savers, but very expensive. While buses and box-cars were relatively cheap to use, their services were infrequent and their routes often far removed from where I wanted to go. Buses and box-cars also usually demanded muscle for regular use. To resolve this

problem, I had to share my wife's good old Beetle car to track down informants, and twice a week I had to queue all night at petrol stations to secure the weekly ration of ten gallons of petrol. Soon, however, I was amazed to find that I was not 'wasting' my time in queues for it was there I encountered, conversed with, and interviewed, many 'informal workers' ranging from hawkers and purveyors of tea and coffee to 'professional' queue-standers (queue standing is itself an occupation). At a later stage the authorities introduced a new petrol rationing system according to which cars with certain registration letters were given a week's ration in one day. The new system reduced queues drastically; but as the ration for each car was simultaneously reduced from ten to seven gallons a week it became imperative to seek petrol on the 'black market', sometimes at the petrol stations themselves and sometimes elsewhere, but always at virtually double the official price.

The research technique of immersion in the 'community' -sometimes (mistakenly?) referred to as "participant observation"- was therefore out of the question in Greater Khartoum. Whereas in rural areas I lived with my informants, participated in their activities and, sometimes, took initiatives like organising 'adult literacy programmes' to express my gratitude and appreciation, in Greater Khartoum there was no readily accessible 'community' of informants. Petty commodity producers and petty traders working on a semi-permanent basis in the same peripheral market do of course constitute a proto-community in that, at least during

the working day, they constantly interact with each other and enter into complex relations ranging from debtor-creditor relations to membership of rotating credit associations. But the people I encountered were individual informants, leading different careers, involved in different sets of production relations, and living in different parts of the conurbation.

With the progress of the pilot survey I came to recognize even more the advantages of 'immersion' as a research technique, not only because it enables researchers to acquire a deeper insight into the social life of informants, but also because the continuous presence of a researcher among informants is instrumental in gaining, to varying degrees, their confidence and trust. Throughout the field work period I lived with my in-laws in Khartoum North, and drove each morning to one of the locations where I knew that potential informants would be present. After sunset I would return home because there were no informants to interview; and only in the cases of some rope-bed makers, who lived in their workshops, and a handful of street traders, who kindly admitted me to their homes, did I manage directly to observe some aspects of their 'normal' life.

The impossibility of 'total immersion' and the consequent constraints on confidence made it difficult to use a formal questionnaire approach. None of the informants I approached with my preliminary questionnaire was willing to respond, although I always spent some time explaining my research. Suspicion was of course justified, not only because nearly all street traders were unlicensed, but also because, in addition

to harrassment by the Municipality, informants feared the unpredictable consequences of interviews with someone who might turn out to be a member of the State Security Organization. Such suspicions were particularly acute among unskilled migrants from Kordofan and Darfur Regions who were justifiably insecure because of the apparent tendency for the regime to identify "Westerners" with armed opposition in Northern Sudan. My approach accordingly had to be informal, and I had to spend hours of casual conversation and/or observation with each informant before I could reasonably ask for information on how the informant entered the activity, or on conditions of work, income, debt relations, etc. As I was born and brought up in Kordofan Region, I was almost always able to relate events, or to mention names of people and places, known to Kordofanese, and this helped to some extent in the maintenance of communication. But my accent and physical appearance inevitably identified me as a member of the Jallaba (the term used to categorize "Northerners" who had emigrated to trade in the West), and on occasions this reinforced suspicions about my motives.

After the first two months of the pilot survey I managed to resolve the confidence problem with a number of informants in different occupations, and I accordingly classified informants in each occupation into two categories. The first category consisted of 'casual' informants, whom I interviewed once or twice only, while the second comprised those 'friendly' informants with whom I retained relations throughout the period of my field work. Through interaction

with the second category, I was able to supplement interview data with partial observations. During the six-month period of the pilot survey, my 'casual' informants totalled 67 petty and/or street traders, 40 rope-bed makers, and 14 car-mechanics; and my 'friendly' informants 18 street traders, 23 rope-bed makers and 9 car-mechanics.

FROM PETTY COMMODITY PRODUCTION TO PERIPHERAL URBANISM

On September 11th, 1981, I left Khartoum for Hull, where I intended to write a progress report on the findings of the pilot survey, and to pursue discussions with my supervisors and colleagues in preparation for the "main" fieldwork. A few days after my return I heard the news of the 'Street-Cleaning Campaign', launched on Sept. 12th 1981, through which the Sudanese authorities attempted to evict 'unemployed people' from Greater Khartoum and to curb labour migration to the capital. I sought to find Sudanese daily newspapers to know more about the 'official line' on the campaign, and entered into correspondence with colleagues, friends and relatives back in Khartoum to obtain as many interpretations and insights as possible. I soon gathered that virtually all unskilled self-employed tertiary workers (street traders, car-wash and shoe-shine boys, etc.) were being rounded up and arrested, and that 'thousands' had already been evicted from Greater Khartoum. In Chapter One I present a detailed account of this campaign. It is sufficient to stress here that the news of the campaign provided a valuable 'shock' to stimulate further my interest in the analysis of the dynamics of urban

growth as well as of the structure and operation of the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum.

My initial reactions to the news were twofold: concern over the fate of the unskilled rural migrants who were arrested and anxiety over the probable implications of the campaign for my field work. On the one hand, it was obvious that the authorities were showing no sensitivity whatsoever either to the "causes" of rural-urban labour migration or to the predicament of these unskilled migrants when faced with the loss of the incomes they earned in urban areas. On the other hand, I was particularly worried about the consequences of the reaction of informants to my 'disappearance' only 24 hours before the campaign was launched. I was certain that the problem of confidence would be very difficult to handle on my later return to the field.

Three weeks following my return to Hull I presented a seminar to the Weekly Post-graduate Research Workshop. Most demoralized, I gave an account of my pilot survey as well as of the campaign and its probable implications for my main field research, and I voiced my misgivings about the government policy towards unskilled labour migrants in Khartoum. My presentation was brief and far from systematic, but in their relentless search for clarification and details my colleagues started to make comments and to ask questions that were to prove useful and provocative. The most important issues they touched on were the implications of the processes of underdevelopment for rural-urban migration; the 'hyper-urbanization' view of third world urbanization; the

apparent 'redundancy' and poverty of unskilled 'self-employed' tertiary workers; and the apparent structural segmentation of the wage labour market and the role of the so-called 'urban informal sector'. It was relatively easy for me to discuss issues relating to the political economy of the Sudan and the "causes" of rural-urban migration, but although the data I gathered during the pilot survey convinced me that these tertiary workers were no 'poorer' than wage workers in government and large scale industry, I could not respond systematically to questions regarding their 'redundancy' and 'insecurity' or to the nature and origins of the apparent segmented structure of the urban wage labour market. As I pursued discussions with my supervisors and colleagues it gradually became clearer that it was essential for me to address myself to the 'wider' questions of urban growth and the structure and operation of the Sudanese urban labour market as a whole.

I spent several months searching the literature on the urban wage labour market in the Sudan and other underdeveloped countries, only to conclude that there were in my view serious misconceptions on the implications of 'peripheral capitalism' for both rural-urban unskilled labour migration and socio-economic urban life. With the exception of a handful of recent contributions by El-Wathig Kameir (1980a; 1980b), Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din (esp. 1978) and Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa (1981), there has been virtually no analysis of Sudanese urbanization from a political economy perspective. (At that stage, Mohamed Yousif was still writing his thesis,

which remains a seminal contribution to Sudan urban studies). In the earlier literature, developed from other perspectives, rural life was characterized as 'traditional' and/or 'stagnant', and urban areas were mainly viewed as 'islands' or 'enclaves' of 'development' that were not only immune to the 'backwardness' of the wider society, but also acted as centres for the diffusion of 'development' to the rest of the country. The presence of various workers categorised as 'unemployed' and 'underemployed' was accordingly conceived as a consequence of high rates of rural-urban migration rather than of the specific constitution of urban socio-economic life to which the processes of peripheral capitalism have given rise. From my earlier rural research I was convinced that, notwithstanding the wealth of 'information' contained in Sudanese urban studies, the 'conventional wisdom' dominating analyses of Sudanese urbanization had grossly distorted the conceptualization of the processes of semi-proletarianization in the countryside, and had also mystified our understanding of the peripheral capitalist basis of the processes of urban capital accumulation, which depend first and foremost on primary export production and the colonial-type trade economy.

A close assessment of census data further reinforced my misgivings towards the conventional wisdom, for I came to see that the dynamics of accelerated urban population growth in the Sudan in the intercensal period 1955/56-1973 can only partially be explained in terms of rural-urban unskilled labour migration. This led me to be highly sceptical of the widely-held but poorly substantiated contentions in the

literature regarding the processes governing the operation of the urban wage labour market and the origins and implications of the apparent structural segmentation. I have since become convinced that it is largely futile to engage in a study of the 'micro-processes' of petty commodity production and street trading in Greater Khartoum in the absence of a clear understanding of the 'wider context' in which these processes operate. But, as such an understanding could only be achieved on the basis of the descriptive data contained in the literature, I decided to construct my interpretation on the basis of the method of polemics, or **critique**, by which I expound my argument through both the statement of my own interpretation and the exposition and refutation of what I consider ideological distortions and/or faulty assumptions expressed in the literature.

THE MAIN FIELDWORK

As a result of the Street-Cleaning Campaign, which brought to the fore the question of unskilled tertiary self-employment in the operation of the labour market, my interest in small scale industry began to subside. I accordingly decided that on my return to Khartoum to conduct further field work I would give more attention to the conditions of unskilled tertiary workers.

After the Street-Cleaning Campaign was first launched, I was able to return to Khartoum twice for a total of 9 months. As I had anticipated, most of my formerly 'friendly' informants left me in no doubt that I was no longer welcome.

When I approached one of the unlicensed vegetable-sellers, he not only refused to respond to my questions about the effects of the campaign, but actually collected his vegetables in a sack and left the market-place for the rest of the day. Though none of my informants said so openly, it was clear that they had identified me with the State Security Organization. It was therefore imperative for me to concentrate on positively establishing my identity as a researcher from Khartoum University, which is one of very few institutions in the country that cannot be easily identified with the regime. The "headed letters" I asked the Director of the DSRC to write certifying my status were of no use; and I knew that I had to find a way to take informants to Khartoum University, and to entertain them at the DSRC, in order to re-establish communication. On several occasions I deliberately offered informants lifts to the centre of Khartoum city, although I had no intention of going there. I would then inform them on the way that I had forgotten about an "urgent appointment" at my office in the University, and would drive to the Centre, where I then invited them to have tea (in accordance with Sudanese custom). By this method I was able to regain the confidence of a few of my 'friendly' informants. But this was only possible for traders at the peripheral markets of Burri (Khartoum) and Kober (Khartoum North), as Khartoum University is in the way from them to the centre of the city.

As a result of these difficulties, I decided to concentrate mainly on traders at Kober peripheral market. My in-laws live only a few hundred meters from Kober peripheral

market, and many of the women traders in the market knew before hand of my identity and of my involvement in scholarship in 'London' (For ordinary Sudanese, anywhere in Great Britain is London).

A further group of informants I could easily interview were the car-wash boys around Khartoum University; and through networks of friends I was also 'introduced' to car-wash boys in a ministry near the University. But it was not easy to interview boys operating at more distant places (e.g. those washing at central markets or in front of cinemas). More serious difficulties were encountered in my attempt to locate (let alone interview) launderers. Unlike the car-wash boys and petty traders, both of whom operate in streets or other public places, launderers perform their tasks inside houses. Given restrictions on admission of 'strangers' to houses, I could only interview launderers working at the houses of relatives in three different neighbourhoods; and through two of these casual launderers I was introduced to members of their respective "residential groups".

THESIS WRITING

By April 1983 I was satisfied that I had sufficient data for my analysis, and so returned back to Hull. At the time my intention was to analyse the 'wider' issues of proletarianization and the political economy of peripheral urbanism (including the structure and operation of the urban wage labour market) in two of the six chapters I intended to write, but the main focus was to be on the micro-processes

studied through fieldwork. Since I had already formulated a preliminary analysis of unskilled tertiary self-employment in a "progress report" submitted to my supervisors, I decided to start by writing the chapters dealing with 'macro' analyses. The first of the draft chapters I wrote developed into Chapter Two of this thesis; in it I analyse the question of proletarianization and stabilization of domestic producers in rural Sudan. Contrary to my plan, however, what I had initially envisaged as one chapter dealing with the peripheral urbanism and the structure and operation of the labour market has evolved into four chapters (Chapters Three, Four, Five and Seven). Chapter Three analyses the dynamics of population growth in Greater Khartoum between 1955/56 and 1983; Chapters Four and Five deal with the operation of the urban wage labour market in Greater Khartoum during the colonial and post-colonial periods respectively; while Chapter Seven analyses the nature, origins and implications of the apparent structural segmentation of the urban wage labour market.

It is difficult to relate all the incidents and coincidents that resulted in the evolution of a single chapter into two-thirds of the thesis. But as the process of writing was in itself a process of learning (I cannot say I knew before hand what I wanted to write), this should not be surprising. By the time I had finished these four chapters, which I consider to be central to my work, I had little option but to condense my analysis of all forms of tertiary self-employment to the scope of a single chapter. This is Chapter Six in which I analyse the findings of my field

research. The first "progress report" I wrote provided the framework of Chapter one, but for the critique of 'conventional wisdom' I drew on all the other draft chapters.

A final point to be made in this Prelude concerns the decision to give this thesis the subtitle of "*explorations in the political economy..*". The reason is that the thesis deals with, and attempts to bring into one analytical framework, a host of issues ranging from proletarianization, rural-urban labour migration and unskilled tertiary self-employment to the dynamics of urban growth, the processes governing the operation of the urban wage labour market, labour legislation, and the significance of trade unions in the generation of the apparent structural segmentation of the labour market. I am well aware that a fully comprehensive analysis of each of these issues could well require a whole thesis on its own right. It is in this sense that my analyses can only be regarded as exploratory. Indeed, it is more than a conventional remark to say that I believe the thesis presents as many or more questions than it answers. If the answers I present prove helpful, to any extent, in the understanding (and transformation) of aspects of peripheral capitalist urbanism; and if the questions I pose serve, again to any extent, to stimulate further research into any of the wide issues broached in this thesis, I shall be happy indeed.

CHAPTER ONE

THE URBAN QUESTION IN THE SUDAN:
THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

There is a general failure to recognize that the ... social forces which initiated and shaped the process of urbanization [in contemporary Africa] ... were not generated by traditional African social structures but by the development and expansion of the capitalist mode of production. In reality, the city in Africa is a clear expression of the nature of underdevelopment ... (Mariotti & Magubane, 1979:273).

In this thesis I attempt to present a **historical** (i.e. processual and structural) analysis of the political economy of the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum, the conurbation of the "Three Towns" of Khartoum, Khartoum North and Omdurman. In undertaking this task, I am not only seeking to achieve a better understanding of the course through which that labour market initially emerged, and later expanded, but also attempting to illuminate the interconnections between the structure and operation of the urban wage labour market in the Sudan and the processes of **peripheral capitalism** characterizing the Sudanese social formation as a whole. My ultimate object is to expose aspects of the peripheral capitalist foundations of **urbanism** (defined as a socio-economic way of life) in the country.

The theoretical and methodological issues involved in the argument of this thesis are several and complex. Through a critique of 'conventional wisdom' in studies of 'Third World urbanization' in general, and Sudanese urban studies in particular, I propose to consider in this chapter the most critical of these issues in order to clarify the conceptual framework adopted and the main concepts utilized. The chapter starts with a brief background to urbanization and the

so-called 'urban problem' in the Sudan with particular emphasis on the "Street-Cleaning Campaign", which first triggered my interest in the structure and operation of the urban labour market in the Sudan. On the basis of this background I shall explain the focus of the thesis and elaborate on aspects of it through a critique of the literature.

THE POST-COLONIAL URBANIZATION PROCESS

The decades since flag Independence in 1956 have witnessed the rapid acceleration of urban growth in the Sudan. On the eve of Independence, the urban population (i.e. population in areas with 5,000 or more inhabitants) amounted to 853,872, or 8.3% of the total population in the Sudan.⁽¹⁾ By 1973 it had increased to 2,605,896, or 17.4% (Salih El-Arifi, 1980:388), while the preliminary results of the Third National Population Census show that the urban population in 1983 totalled 4,153,559, or 20.2% of the total population in the country. Though this urban growth is partly a consequence of relatively high fertility rates assumed to prevail in cities (see Mohamed El-Awad Galal-El-Din, 1977b; 1980b; Mona Khalifa, 1979), the prime factor is said to be increased **rural-urban migration**. The dramatic difference in the rates of growth between rural and urban areas has been pointed out by Pons (1980a:XV):

Between the two national censuses of 1955/56 and 1973, the [Sudan's] total population is thought to have increased at a little over 2 per cent per annum, with the rural population growing at about 1.5 per cent per annum and the urban at about 7 per cent.

As in other underdeveloped countries, the pattern of

urbanization in the Sudan is characterized by uneven distribution between regions (Table 1:1), the dominance of a few major cities (Table 1:2), and the concentration of population in the capital in particular. The population of Greater Khartoum increased from 245,735 in 1955/56, to 784,294 in 1973, and to 1,343,651 in 1983. Pointing to the impact of migration upon growth rates in the conurbation between 1955/56 and 1973, the ILO Mission (ILO,1976:351) maintained that:

The urban population in Khartoum has thus increased during this period by about 215 per cent, or 6.6 per cent per annum, well above the estimated natural rate of growth of population in the city of 2.5 to 3.0 per cent. The difference between these two figures is, of course, due to the massive increase in the number of migrants arriving from other rural and urban areas.

THE 'URBAN PROBLEM'

The pattern of urbanization in the Sudan in general, and the concentration of urban population in the capital in particular, is often held to aggravate many 'urban' problems. Extreme shortages of various consumer goods and the rampant growth of 'black markets', rapid increases in house-rents and squatting, congestion in public transport and pressure on other social services are all at times attributed to the "massive drift" of rural population into the few large cities.

Furthermore, the slow, but persistent, increase in the urban manual labour force has been viewed as a salient factor in the formation of the poor and the unemployed. The increase in the number of unskilled 'self-employed' tertiary workers in particular has led policy-makers, administrators, and some

Table 1:1

Regional Distribution of Urban Population in the Sudan, 1955/56-1983

REGION	1955/56 CENSUS*		1973 CENSUS*		1983 CENSUS**		
	URBAN POPULATION	RATE (1)	URBAN POPULATION	RATE (1)	URBAN POPULATION	RATE (1)	RATE (2)
Khartoum	254,363	50.4	784,294	75.4	1,343,651	74.5	32.3
Northern	88,058	10.1	170,085	20.6	230,341	21.3	5.5
Central	143,939	7.0	517,038	19.1	825,064	20.6	19.9
Eastern	149,218	14.0	388,851	35.9	638,833	28.9	15.4
Kordofan	115,537	6.6	269,070	15.9	388,539	12.6	9.3
Darfur	53,570	4.0	188,642	11.3	316,152	10.2	7.6
Bahr el-Ghazal	17,357	1.8	120,146	9.1	181,925	8.0	4.4
Upper Nile	9,680	1.1	34,894	4.6	52,510	1.3	1.3
Equatoria	22,151	2.5	132,876	18.4	176,544	12.5	4.2
Sudan	853,873	8.3	2,605,896	17.4	4,153,559	20.2	100.0

Rate (1) is the proportion of the urban population in the total population of the region
 Rate (2) is the proportion of the region's urban population in the total population of Sudan

Source: * Salih El-Arifi, 1980:394

** Preliminary Returns of the 1983 National Population Census (Sudan Government, 1983).

Table 1:2

Total Population and Rates of Increase
1955-1973 for 'Large' Sudanese Cities

TOWN OR CITY	1955/56	1964/65	1973	% OF INCREASE 1955/56-1973
Greater Khartoum	254,363	438,890	784,294	208
Port Sudan	47,562	78,940	132,632	179
Wad Medani	47,677	63,660	106,715	124
Kassala	40,612	68,130	99,652	145
El-Obeid	52,372	62,560	90,073	72
Gedaref	17,537	45,090	66,465	279
Atbara	36,298	48,250	66,116	82
Kosti	22,688	37,860	65,404	188
Nyala	12,278	26,160	59,583	385
Juba	10,660	13,325	56,737	432
Wau	8,009	10,011	52,750	559
El-Fasher	26,161	40,540	51,932	99
Geneina	11,817	20,740	35,424	200
Malakal	9,680	12,100	34,894	260
Sennar	8,098	17,640	28,546	253
Ed Dueim	12,319	15,880	26,257	113
En Nahud	16,498	19,770	26,005	58
New Halfa	-	12,100	24,373	-
Shendi	11,031	16,470	24,161	119
El-Gezira Aba	-	16,670	22,216	-

Source: Salih El-Arifi, 1980:398

scholars to conceptualize the operation of the urban labour market in Greater Khartoum in terms virtually identical to the "hyper-urbanization" view of 'Third World urbanization' (cf. Lerner, 1967; Bairoch, 1973). They accordingly seem to contend that the rate of urbanization is 'excessive' and that insofar as the rate of growth of the urban wage labour force is higher than the rate of expansion in wage employment, a rapidly growing section of the urban manual labour force is made redundant. The manifestations of this 'redundancy', it is asserted, are not only the increase in the numbers of 'under-employed', 'self-employed' tertiary workers earning very low incomes, but also the ever-increasing problems of crime and squatting and, at least for policy-makers and the State Security Organization, of political instability (see Ja'afar M. Numeiri, 1972; El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1972a:11 et passim; Siddik I. Mukhayar, 1977).⁽²⁾ It is relevant to note here that a similar view is also held in apparent sympathy with the so-called 'redundant labour force' by some scholars. Thus Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din seems to explain the lack of wage employment by the relatively high capital-labour ratios in Sudanese manufacturing industry (cf. Chapter Five); and, in his call for the abandonment of this pattern of industrial investment, he (1978:121) has maintained that:

As is clearly observed, ... while the numbers of migrants are increasing their chances of finding employment are decreasing such that migrants face nothing but unemployment and dependency upon kinsmen and co-villagers.. Otherwise increasing numbers of migrants join the already-inflated tertiary sector, in which they undertake trivial activities, which do not contribute to the increase in production, while they

accentuate the shortages. When their incomes from these activities are low, increasing numbers of migrants resort to trickery, fraud, subterfuge, robbery and burglary, etc. (My translation).

Furthermore, although the ILO Mission to the Sudan (1976) seems - through the adoption of the 'urban informal sector' concept- to emphasize the 'profitability' and 'potential' of unskilled tertiary 'self-employment', it has nevertheless conceded that some of the activities pursued are characterized by very low productivity and that, as a result of this, 'informal workers' tend to earn incomes far below those of wage workers in government, public concerns, and large scale private enterprises. But the Mission views the low incomes earned by the so-called 'informal workers' as the consequence, not of 'redundancy', but of 'official harrassment' (or 'favouritism' of the so-called 'formal sector') and the lack of linkages between the 'informal sector' and the rest of the urban economy (mainly lack of demand from the 'formal sector'). Though the views of the ILO Mission have been subjected to severe criticism, its dualistic conception of the structure of the Sudanese urban labour market has remained virtually unchallenged (cf. Chapter Seven).

THE POLICY OF POLICING

In partial response to its concern over the 'urban problem', the Sudanese authorities decided, as many other governments have done, to try to curb unskilled labour migration to Greater Khartoum. On September 12th, 1981, it therefore launched what was initially called the

"Street-Cleaning Campaign" ostensibly to evict those migrants in the capital considered to be "unemployed" or "potential criminals". In addition to the Police Force, the People's Armed Forces, the State Security Organization and Prison Wardens were mobilized. Several raids were launched in central and peripheral markets around the Three Towns as well as in other public places, and a house-to-house search was undertaken in 3rd and 4th Class residential neighbourhoods. Official sources disclosed that in the course of the first day of the campaign around 8,000 people had been arrested and were awaiting eviction from the conurbation of Khartoum (Al-Sahafa, 13.9.1981). Two weeks later official sources were quoted in the daily newspapers as saying that around 12,000 people had been arrested; other sources in Khartoum gave almost double that figure. All routes leading to Greater Khartoum which since 1976 have been heavily guarded by the army (to check smuggling of arms into the capital by opposition groups) were closed; and all those who failed to show their identity cards, or to prove that they are 'employed' in Greater Khartoum or elsewhere, were turned back. The daily newspapers in Khartoum followed the operations closely in the first weeks and praised the campaign (which was renamed the Street-Discipline Campaign) for its achievements. On the second day of the campaign (13.9.1981), Al-Ayam described those arrested as being:

elements who have deserted the regions where their labour could be productively absorbed at Kenanah, Asalaya, New Halfa and Gezira [all of which are large-scale irrigated agricultural schemes] as well as in the rainfed regions of Kordofan and Greater

Fashir. They have come here to the capital ... to become criminals and unemployed, and to occupy themselves with illegitimate activities. They all came from the production areas to crowd in the outskirts of Khartoum like sardines in cans ... they are the cause of the increase in house-rent, of congestion in public transport, public places and restaurants ... In short, they are the cause of all the sufferings of the ordinary man in Khartoum (my translation).

The views expressed by Al-Ayam (which, like all newspapers in the country, is state-owned and reflects the official line) are not in any sense unique. Identical views were expressed by several high-ranking Government Officials. The Police Inspector-General was quoted in Sudanow (October, 1981:22) as saying that those arrested were the "elements responsible for disturbing the peace and activating the black market". Likewise Sudanow (ibid.) reported that:

Officials say that massive screening is being carried out on the detainees and that genuinely employed persons are released immediately. Those who prove to be refugees will be sent either to refugee camps or to their countries of origin. Vagrant Sudanese will be referred to their own regions. People who receive prison sentences will serve them at production centres like Rahad and Kenanah.

Although Greater Khartoum has since 1975 experienced an influx of refugees, mainly from Eritrea (cf. Chapter Three), only a few "unregistered" refugees were actually arrested in the course of the campaign. "Registered refugees" are entitled not only to residence in the capital, but also to either employment or assistance from the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Though I could not find information on the number of refugees arrested, it is not in doubt that over 90% of those arrested were Sudanese

drawn mainly from the multitude of unskilled 'self-employed' tertiary workers (vendors, hawkers, pedlars, shoeshine and carwash boys, etc.), the rest were either unlicensed petty commodity producers (e.g. shoe-makers) or casual agricultural wage labourers (employed in horticultural farms in Greater Khartoum). By being 'self-employed', these 'elements' constituted an easy target for the campaign to evict the "unemployed" who, it seems, are defined as those without 'employers'. Though at present the 'raids' are not as frequent as they were during the first two years, the campaign is nevertheless officially considered to be in force.

In relating the story of the Street-Cleaning Campaign it is relevant to note that similar attempts to curb rural-urban unskilled labour migration have taken place in many other African countries. Among these countries are Kenya (1964), Zaire (1966 and 1969), Ivory Coast (1967) and Ghana (1969); "Tanzania actually restricted travel to Dar-es-Salaam in 1964 and ordered that the unemployed be returned home" (Salah El-Shakhs, 1974:5).

THE FOCUS OF THE THESIS

Whether the Street-Cleaning Campaign was initially carried out specifically in order to evict 'unemployed migrants' and those who activate "black markets",⁽³⁾ or whether it simply aimed to get rid of, and to neutralise, an alleged politically dangerous stratum in the context of a planned further deterioration in the standard of living of poor Sudanese,⁽⁴⁾ is not for me to speculate. But it is relevant to note that,

with the exception of rapid increases in house-rent, the problems concerning supply of goods and the pressure on social services are hardly 'urban' at all, although they are often said to be; the situation in rural areas is undoubtedly worse. Likewise, there is no evidence that the increases in rent are caused by unskilled migrants, and indeed the most exorbitant increases in rent are in First and Second Class residential neighbourhoods, which are the exclusive areas of capitalists, bureaucrats and professionals. There is thus good reason to believe that, in the eviction of unskilled 'self-employed' tertiary workers from Greater Khartoum, the prime concern of the authorities has been the provision of consumer goods and services to the relatively more powerful and organized 'urban groups' (the regular armed forces, the different fractions of the bourgeoisie, civil servants, professionals, students, etc.).⁽⁵⁾ As a result of this, unskilled rural migrants were progressively projected as the **cause** of an alleged specifically 'urban' problem rather than as the hardy **victims** of a broader problem of '**underdevelopment**' in the Sudan of which the so-called 'urban problem' is only one manifestation or consequence.

Class bias (towards or against a certain class) is of course characteristic of all government policies, and the Street-Cleaning Campaign represents only one particular, **clear-cut** instance. The point in relating the story of the campaign, however, is not to pursue the question of the nature of the Sudanese state and its class basis. It is rather to raise three other major issues, which this thesis sets out to

analyse and explain.

The first issue concerns the "causes" of rural-urban unskilled labour migration which many scholars contend the authorities have overlooked, while the second relates to the role of unskilled rural migrants in the acceleration of the process of rapid urban growth in post-colonial Sudan. Notwithstanding the wealth of information in the literature on Sudanese urbanization, the dominant 'paradigms' in Sudan urban studies have not only failed to yield systematic explanations of the nature and origin of the proletarianization process underlying rural-urban migration of unskilled workers, but also mystified the dynamics of urban growth in the Sudan in which migration by unskilled workers is only one of several, at least equally important, factors. Thus the first two issues this thesis sets out to analyse are (1) the 'structural determinants' of unskilled labour migration and, (2) the dynamics of population growth in urban Sudan in general and Greater Khartoum in particular.

The third major issue concerns the dynamics underlying the proliferation of tertiary self-employment by unskilled workers as well as the extent to which the conditions of these self-employed workers differ from those of wage workers in government departments and private concerns. It is noteworthy in this regard that there is an almost exclusive tendency in the literature to view the proliferation of unskilled tertiary activities solely from the standpoint of the individual participants -i.e. as being the consequence of initiatives by unskilled workers who, in the absence of wage employment, seek

to find alternative 'income-generating' opportunities. This approach to unskilled tertiary self-employment not only tends to reduce social structures and processes to their agents (i.e. it fails to investigate the sources of the demand for unskilled tertiary services), but also overlooks the implications of the processes of peripheral capitalism characterizing the Sudanese economy for socio-economic urban life, which governs the operation of the urban wage labour market. Through a critique of the 'conventional wisdom' in Sudan urban studies in the rest of this chapter, I attempt to discuss aspects of all three issues.

(6)

THEORY AND IDEOLOGY IN SUDAN URBAN STUDIES

Though the weaknesses of the conventional wisdom in Sudan urban studies can be explained in terms of flaws in its approaches to theoretical abstraction, my contention is that these limitations are partly consequences of a specific **ideology** that, like coloured binoculars, has conditioned and simultaneously constrained the conceptualization of rural labour migration, urban population growth and socio-economic life in urban Sudan. The concept of ideology adopted in this work, I must stress, should not be taken in the so-called 'orthodox Marxist' sense as opposing 'ideology' to 'science' in a dualism that replicates the distinction between 'false' and 'true'; 'assumed' and 'real'; and 'fincional' and 'factual'. It is rather a concept which denotes what may loosely be termed a '**world view**' formulated in keeping with the interests of a certain class. Accordingly, there are as

many ideologies as there are classes in society. Thus, in asserting that the conventional wisdom in Sudan urban studies has an ideology, I am not denying possessing one myself. However, insofar as the ideology of the 'conventional wisdom' in Sudan urban studies has penetrated into research, and into the analysis of research findings, it has simultaneously placed serious constraints on the understanding of the object of inquiry.

Furthermore, the concept of ideology adopted in this work posits or assumes neither the internal cohesion, nor the stability over a period of time, of the corpus of ideas comprising an ideology. To assert the existence of a consistent ideology betrays the assumption that the perceptions of all individuals are static, or are consistently in keeping with (or against) the interests of their respective classes, all of which assumptions are problematical.

THE MYSTIFICATION OF THE DYNAMICS OF URBAN GROWTH

It is obviously impossible to present in this chapter a systematic critique of all the ways in which the ideology of the conventional wisdom, which is by and large in keeping with the class interests of the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie, has mystified the exposition of the processes of urbanization and urbanism in the Sudan. Thus, in order to illustrate (as opposed to exhaust) the ways in which ideology has penetrated into analyses, I will take as an example the way in which the conceptualization of the dynamics of urban growth has been distorted.

As maintained earlier, the process of rapid urban growth is said to be the consequence of increased rural-urban migration (even though the role of high fertility has been recognized). But though some scholars mention, in passing, the tendency of young educated men to "move into Khartoum" in search of employment and/or post-secondary education (e.g. Mohamed El-Awad Galal-El-Din, 1980a:433), and "the movement east to west of traders, investors, crop dealers, and government officials" into Nyala (Mohamed El-Hadi Abu Sin, 1980), migration has generally been construed as **wage labour migration**. As I shall demonstrate in detail in Chapter Three, however, increased migration to Greater Khartoum (or, for that matter, to all large urban centres in the Sudan) cannot legitimately be construed as being solely, or even mainly, wage labour migration. Quite a large proportion of "migrants" to the Three Towns is indeed comprised not only of "non-wage earners" (e.g. businessmen, civil-servants, professionals), but also of people who are not "earners" at all (e.g. students, house-wives, children and elderly people). The magnitude of migration by these groups, and its impact upon the process of rapid population growth in urban Sudan have generally escaped analysis in those studies investigating the dynamics of urban growth. Indeed, it is exceptional in the literature to describe members of these categories as 'migrants' at all.

I interpret the adoption of a restricted definition of 'migrant' as a consequence of a class ideology which is hostile to unskilled rural migrants. This is due to the fact

that the restricted definition is used to denote much more than a mere categorization of individuals as being "born outside, but living in, a certain place". Otherwise, the members of the other categories mentioned above, and who were born outside, but live in Greater Khàrtoum, ought to have been included in the assessment of 'migrarion' as a factor in urban growth. The concept of 'migrancy' constructed by the conventional wisdom, however, discards the **spatial** connotation of the concept and institutes in its place a **social** categorization denoting exclusion from the 'urban power structure'. In other words, the presence in urban areas of capitalists, professionals and bureaucrats (and of their dependants as well) has in effect been considered part of the "nature of the urban world" and, as such, has not been analysed. Insofar as the restricted definition raises the issue of **power relations** in urban Sudan (and, by implication, in the country at large), it simultaneously corroborates the general ideological (and material) **degradation** of manual work by the hegemonic classes in the country. Thus, on the rare occasions when "movements" by merchants, civil servants, and so on, are considered at all (e.g. Mohamed El-Hadi Abu Sin, op.cit.), such "migrations" are viewed as being conducive to the 'general welfare' of the urban area to which these powerful strata have "moved". The role of these migrations in the process of rapid urban population growth, or in the consequent 'bottle-necks' relating to the supply of consumer goods and services, however, is never questioned. Yet, unless these distorting ideological intrusions are exposed and

challenged, we will not be in a position to ask, let alone to investigate and explain, the dynamics of urban population growth. In Chapter Three I attempt to illuminate aspects of these dynamics with particular reference to Greater Khartoum.

LABOUR MIGRATION AND PROLETARIANIZATION

In confronting the ideology of the conventional wisdom on the role of labour migration in the process of urban growth it should be emphasized that rural-urban unskilled labour migration does not constitute the sole, or even the predominant form of labour migration in the Sudan. Leaving aside the seasonal movements of nomadic pastoralists, **intra-rural** labour migration is indeed more significant, not only because it concerns the overwhelming majority of rural migrants in the country (upwards of two million by one estimate), but also because without it the large scale irrigated and rainfed agricultural schemes on which the Sudanese economy is heavily dependent could hardly function. Taken together, the two forms of labour migration constitute aspects of one and the same process: labour migration in search of wage employment and/or 'income-generating opportunities'. To this extent, then, the search to ascertain the causes of rural-urban labour migration should simultaneously be an attempt to understand and explain the nature and origins of labour migration in general. With the exception of a very few studies (notably Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1978:89-134; Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1983:43 et passim), the literature on Sudanese urbanization has tended to

separate these two closely-related forms of labour migration, and to focus on the 'causes' of migration to the urban centres in particular. But even the exceptions which have used a single framework of analysis in the study of intra-rural and rural-urban migrations are not always devoid of limitations of their own (cf. below).

The search for causes **specific** to rural-urban migration has had serious methodological consequences as far as the object of inquiry is concerned. Thus, though scholars disagree as to whether rural-urban migration of unskilled workers is the cause of an employment problem (e.g. Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1980a:432) or a mechanism contributing towards a more equitable distribution of wealth in a country plagued by regional and other inequalities (e.g. ILO, 1976:351; Kannappan, 1977a:92), all focus on the issue of **wage differentials** between rural and urban areas as the primary reason underlying rural-urban labour migration. Though such an emphasis is expected in contributions by economists adopting the tools of conventional, synchronic economic analysis (e.g. Beshir Omer Fadlalla, 1982a:2 et passim), the role of income differentials assumes even more prominence in those contributions purporting to assess trends in migration over a period of time (McLoughlin, 1966; 1970; Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1973; 1974a; 1974b; 1978; 1979a; 1980a).

According to these latter studies, prior to the Second World War labour migration in the Sudan was mainly intra-rural and directed towards employment in the agricultural sector. At that time, it is asserted, the rewards for labour in

agriculture were higher than in urban employment, and labour shortages were consequently not uncommon in Sudanese cities in general and Greater Khartoum in particular. Since World War II, the argument continues, the shortage of labour in urban areas has turned into a large surplus to the extent that the colonial government had to refer migrants in Greater Khartoum to the agricultural regions. Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din (1974a:20) has explained the emergence of this 'labour-surplus' with reference to the "revisions and increases" in urban wages between 1948 and 1968, and maintained that:

These revisions and increases have resulted in a real and substantial difference not only in cash income but also in real income between town and country and the average income in Khartoum has become more than five times the Sudan average. It is true that income in Khartoum is distributed in such a way that migrants (especially recent migrants) receive relatively very low income. Nevertheless, their incomes are far above what they might expect to earn in the rural areas.

The flaw in postulating income differentials as the cause of rural-urban labour migration is twofold. First, though it is generally true that the annual **cash** income of unskilled urban workers is higher than the cash income from cash crops of an average small farmer, differences between their respective **real** incomes are very difficult, if not virtually impossible to quantify and corroborate. This is particularly so because a large component of the real income of small farmers and pastoralists is furnished through productive activities in the so-called "**subsistence-sphere**" of domestic production. To assign cash values to these

"subsistence-products" in order to render them comparable to the cash wage of urban workers involves the arbitrary procedure of having to decide a monetary value for products non-marketable in the countryside (although these products may have high market values in urban areas). Coupled with differences in the nature of needs as in the cost of satisfying them between rural and urban areas, the whole exercise becomes little more than star-counting. The obvious examples of housing, transport and foodstuffs which absorb a substantial part of urban wages, but involve little more than the direct labour of farmers, illustrate the difficulties involved.

The second, and methodologically even more serious, flaw is the assumption that when wage differentials obtain between rural and urban areas the consequence is a simple migration process (in this instance, "urbanization"). What such an assumption overlooks is precisely that these unskilled migrants **are not** wage labour in the sense assumed by economic theory; and their migration is not a simple process of "allocation of human resources" entailing rural-urban migration, which is conceived in terms of simple 'geographical mobility'. Bearing in mind that these unskilled migrants are drawn from the so-called 'traditional sector' in which they figure as small farmers and pastoralists or, to be more specific, as **non-wage producers**, their migration reveals itself as being more complex a social process than geographical movement. Rural-urban migration in this instance is no less than the consequence and manifestation of

proletarianization, that is to say, of the process of transforming peasants and pastoralists into wage labourers. By postulating income differentials as the cause of rural-urban labour migration, the conventional wisdom has not only failed to understand the socio-economic transformations taking place in rural Sudan, but also **stopped short** of explaining why the overwhelming majority of rural Sudanese, which continues to reside in the countryside, has not undertaken the 'geographical movement' in search for these 'high' urban wages.

Related to the process of proletarianization is the formation of wage labour markets in the Sudan. Before the turn of this century, such markets were virtually non-existent (cf. Chapter Four). Thus, following the establishment of the British colonial state in 1899, the colonial administration encountered real difficulties in its attempt to secure the necessary supply of skilled and unskilled wage labourers to undertake various construction and other tasks. The magnitude of this labour shortage has been described by Martin (1970) who visited the 'Anglo-Egyptian Sudan' twice (1907/8 and 1913) to assess the 'economic, financial and administrative evolution' of the country. Martin considered in some detail the labour situation in the various provinces, and his account on Sennar Province (*ibid.*, p. 223) illustrates the situation in the country as a whole:

The labour obtainable locally in Sennar counts for very little. Wages, however good, do not attract it, for the natives are mostly herders or cultivators, making just sufficient to supply their immediate bodily wants; anything more than this they do not

ask.

The point to be emphasized is that while wage differentials may be useful in illuminating aspects of the allocation of proletarianized labour, they cannot help to specify the conditions under which non-wage producers become proletarianized. At the turn of this century, wages, "however good", did not induce rural Sudanese to enter the labour market. The colonial state accordingly had to introduce various policies in order to stimulate the "natives" to seek wage employment, and to import labour from beyond the boundaries of the country in order to obtain the required wage labour force. Rather than create a fully proletarianized wage labour force, the colonial design was to set into motion a process of **semi-proletarianization** that would stimulate a small section of the domestic producers to engage in forms of **seasonal** wage labour migration.

From around 1925 onwards the processes of proto-proletarianization in the Sudan entered a new phase as the Gezira Scheme was established and seasonal wage labour migration started to involve more and more non-wage producers. In short, the ever-increasing migration of unskilled workers to urban areas which currently arouses concern is in essence the crystallization of that process of semi-proletarianization; and it is consequently essential to analyse and explain how this proletarianization process has been initiated, reproduced and, in recent years, emphasized. With a handful of exceptions (notably O'Brien, 1980; 1981; 1983a; 1983b; 1984a; 1984b; Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa,

1981; 1983; El-Fatih Shaa'-eldin, 1981; 1982), this proletarianization process has not captured the attention of scholars investigating the increased migration of unskilled labourers in the Sudan; the main focus has been on the supply of labour to large scale irrigated and rainfed agriculture and whether or not it is 'sufficient' (see, e.g., ILO, 1976; Nigam, 1977; Abdel Sadig Ahmed El-Bashir, 1982; Khalid Affan, 1983).

That the process of proletarianization underlies the current urbanization of unskilled manual labourers does not, of course, imply that every form of rural-urban migration is a consequence of proletarianization. As I shall argue in Chapter Three, the educational system in the Sudan is also an important factor contributing to the urbanization of sections of the rural population. In other words, while superficially rural-urban migration of various strata may seem similar insofar as members of each stratum undertake a geographical movement, the underlying dynamic of each type of movement defines its **social character** differently. The rural urban migrations of students and merchants have different underlying dynamics; and the dynamics of both differ from that of migration by proletarianized small farmers and pastoralists. The tendency to generalize about all these migrations as simple 'geographical mobility' thus conflates significantly different processes. In Chapter Two I attempt to analyse aspects of this proletarianization process, and to explain why only a relatively very small percentage of domestic producers in rural Sudan undertake rural-urban migration.

THE SPECIFICITY OF THE 'URBAN'

The conventional wisdom in Sudan urban studies has tended to emphasize the primacy of Greater Khartoum as the "most important production and consumption centre" in the Sudan (see, e.g., El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1971a; 1971b; 1972a; 1972b; 1976; 1980; Salih El-Arifi, 1971; 1972; 1980; Mahmoud Khidir Rizgallah, 1980). Such a claim is usually corroborated by 'hard data' such as that Greater Khartoum has 77 per cent of the total number of industrial establishments in the Sudan, 73 per cent of the country's entire industrial labour force, 85 per cent of all commercial companies and 80 per cent of banking activities (e.g. El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1976:87ff). Together with the assumed 'high urban wages' considered earlier, these "high levels of development" are postulated as factors contributing to labour migration to the capital. Migration to other large cities is explained along similar lines (e.g. in relation to El-Obeid, Tajel-Anbia Ali El-Dawi, 1975).

Furthermore, in their conceptualization of the "intra-urban processes" prompting wage labour migration to Greater Khartoum, scholars have generally tended to single out the post-colonial expansion of "modern" manufacturing industry as the prime factor. Some have also tended to list the "increase in opportunities for tertiary employment" as another factor (e.g. El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1972a:11; Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1978:121; El-Wathig Kameir, 1980b:46), but none has specified the nature and origin of these "tertiary

activities". A further but no less controversial factor is said to relate to the concentration of services (e.g. health-care, recreation, education) in Greater Khartoum (e.g. El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1972a; Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1980b; Salih El-Arifi, op.cit.). Though this last factor touches on the role of higher education which underlies the rural-urban migration of students (cf. Chapter Three), the way it has been formulated (that wage labourers are attracted to Greater Khartoum because of the services to which they have no access in their places of original domicile) is most unsatisfactory. Though no systematic study of access to services in Greater Khartoum has been conducted, from personal experience as well as from evidence from other urban areas in the country (cf. Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1983; Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, 1984), it could well be argued that the distribution of services is generally biased in favour of the more affluent strata in Greater Khartoum. Thus the sole "intra-urban process" which has been given weight in the literature is the emergence of manufacturing industry.

The assertion that Greater Khartoum is the most important industrial centre in the Sudan is, of course, indisputable, though over the last decade the conurbation has experienced a relative decline in its position (cf. Chapter Five). Nor would I contest the relatively significant employment opportunities generated by the emergence of manufacturing industry during the post-colonial period. But to assert that 'modern' manufacturing industry in Greater Khartoum constitutes the prime source of attraction of migrants is questionable,

precisely because industry (both 'modern' and 'traditional') is one of the smallest sectors of the 'urban economy' in Greater Khartoum (cf. Chapter Five). To insist that most investments in the Sudan are concentrated in Greater Khartoum (e.g. Salih El-Arifi, 1980:405ff; Beshir Omer Fadlalla, 1982b:24) is misleading for it overlooks the fact that the Sudan is a predominantly agricultural country, and that public and private investments are essentially oriented towards large scale irrigated and rainfed agriculture. Though I have no figures for precise comparison of total investment in agriculture and industry in the Sudan as a whole, I suggest that the value of investment in any one of the large scale irrigated agricultural schemes (Gezira, Rahad, etc.) by far exceeds the total value of industrial investment in the Sudan as a whole. It is sufficient to substantiate the rural orientation of investment to note that in a relatively small rural project like Kenanah (with an area of 80,000 feddans compared to 2.5 million feddans in Gezira), the value of investment is US\$ 613million according to official figures, but US\$ 1 billion according to unofficial estimates (see, Wohlmuth, 1983:198). Depending on which rate of exchange is taken for calculation (there are two official exchange rates and a third is found in the 'black market'), the value of investment in Kenanah is roughly six to ten times the £S 251,671,000 which represent the net working capital of all 'modern' manufacturing industrial establishments in Greater Khartoum in 1978/79 (see Tables 1-1 & 1-11 in Sudan Government, 1982: pp. 28 & 38). The position of agriculture in

the Sudan has been emphasized by the ILO Mission (1976:31) which maintains that:

Agriculture is the dominant sector in the Sudanese economy and is likely to remain so for several decades. At present, it contributes 38 per cent of GDP at factor costs, it constitutes over 95 per cent of exports, it contributes directly and indirectly over 50 per cent of government revenues, and it provides income and employment for the majority of the population.

The point I seek to stress is that the 'primacy' of Greater Khartoum cannot be viewed as originating in its position as the 'most important production centre' in the Sudan. In one sense, the Three Towns may be viewed as the most unproductive area in the country, precisely because the basic avenues of urban capital accumulation (i.e. import-export trade) are tied to the processes of primary export production which take place in rural Sudan. Nevertheless, because a substantial portion of the 'economic surpluses' created in rural agriculture ends up in the capital, the conurbation is the most important consumption area in the Sudan. The inability of scholars to recognize this apparent contradiction in the position of Greater Khartoum, and indeed of any other urban area in the Sudan, stems from the way in which the 'urban' has been conceptualized. As with the misconception of the rural-urban migration of unskilled workers discussed earlier, the inability of Sudan urban studies to go beyond formal appearances is the major factor underlying their misconception of the specificity of the 'urban'.

In defining 'urban areas', almost all scholars have

contented themselves with a spatio-demographic criterion (i.e. areas with at least 5,000 inhabitants which is the definition adopted by the 1955/56 Census in the Sudan). El-Sayed El-Bushra (1972a; 1973), however, expresses doubts about the 'validity' of size as a criterion, particularly "in cases like the Sudan" which, as agricultural countries, may contain "villages" of fairly large size with the consequence that the distinction between "large village" and "small urban area", which relates to the "functions" of urban areas, is blurred. El-Sayed (1972a:3) thus rejects the spatio-demographic criterion and advances a definition based on the functions of the locality:

It is, therefore, the functions performed by a settlement and the services rendered for the neighbouring region that determine whether a place is urban or not. In other words, the field of influence of a settlement is a true measure of its urban or rural character ... The functions performed in such central places are those of commerce, industry, administration, education, religion and recreation. It is because of the existence of these functions in towns that these centres witness the daily ebb and flow of population from the surrounding countryside.

Though both definitions of the 'urban' may be of some utility in helping us to identify characteristics that may be found wherever cities exist (i.e. the 'urban' is a place of 'population concentration' in which 'functions' are performed), neither definition attains the status of a 'theory' of urbanization or how populations come to be concentrated. The spatio-demographic definition, to do it justice, does not claim such a status as it explicitly **assumes** population concentration, and the functional definition cannot

constitute a theory of urbanization, precisely because it **reifies** towns by conflating function and origin, manifestation and cause. How could there be "functions" without concentration of population and the prior existence of 'urban areas'? Thus whether we adopt a spatio-demographic or a functional criterion or both in defining the specificity of the 'urban' in general, the end-result, methodologically speaking, is identical: towns are abstracted from their "historical and social context" and treated as "static suprahistorical entities" (cf. Mariotti and Magubane, 1979).

In their attempt to conceptualize the 'urban' scholars have thus not only failed to question the emergence of urban areas as a form of human settlement, but have also mystified the differences between past and current urbanization patterns in the Sudan. This failure is most clearly manifested in the attempts of El-Sayed El-Bushra (1971a; 1971b; 1972a) to consider aspects of Sudanese urbanization from the ancient Meriote civilization (ca. 750 B.C. -A.D. 450) up to the present. His accounts of the historical urbanization processes are pursued from an evolutionary stance according to which each "stage" (the Meriote, Christian, Funj, Turco-Egyptian colonial, British colonial, etc.) is produced, without a break, by the simple **duplication** of the "functional" elements of the preceding stage, or by the **addition** of new functions. Such an approach would imply that ancient Meroe, eighteenth-century Sennar and present-day Khartoum are all cases of a single simple form: a human settlement fulfilling functions for its hinterland. Whatever 'variations' may be

noted between these 'cities', they are all **systematically** reduced to 'quantitative differences' in the specific form of the functions assumed by cities. In recognition of such quantitative variations, El-Sayed El-Bushra (1969) has thus attempted an 'occupational classification' of Sudanese towns, which contains a good deal of '**information**' but makes no **explanatory** contribution.

CONVENTIONAL STUDIES OF 'THIRD WORLD URBANIZATION'

I would emphasize that not all contributions to Sudan urban studies are ahistorical,⁽⁷⁾ and that the tendency to treat urbanization as an independent process in history is not an affliction peculiar to conventional wisdom in Sudan urban studies, as some observers seem to suggest (cf. Hale and Hale, 1971a:4). Indeed, "the credibility of the town as a generic social entity has become extraordinarily well-established" in urban sociology, economics, geography and historiography in general (Abrams, 1978:9; see also; Castells, 1976a; 1976b; 1977); and there persists a general failure to recognize that "between the cities of ancient and medieval times and the modern metropolis or conurbation there is a connection of name and in part of function, but nothing like identity" (Williams, 1973:7, quoted by Magubane, 1979:33). The conventional wisdom in Sudan urban studies is simply a 'regionally specialised' version of two ahistorical 'paradigms' which have dominated the literature on 'Third World urbanization'.

The first of these paradigms is the '**unilineal-evolutionary**' approach, which conceptualizes the contemporary

urbanization process in underdeveloped countries as a 'reiteration' of the historical process in 19th century Europe. 'Third World urbanization' was accordingly expected to result in economic (particularly industrial) development (e.g. Hauser, 1957; Reissman, 1964). An off-shoot of this paradigm is the view of 'urbanism' as a cultural process generating a 'modern' way of life (cf. Wirth, 1938; Wilson & Wilson, 1954; Mitchell, 1959; idem. & Shaul, 1965). By the 1960s, however, the expectations of the unilineal-evolutionary perspective proved to be poorly-founded as underdeveloped countries failed to initiate and sustain industrialization processes commensurate with their rates of urbanization.

Though a group of scholars advocating 'modernization theory' have ignored the realities of urban life in underdeveloped countries and continued to propagate views reminiscent of the unilineal-evolutionary conception of urbanization, an increasingly large number of scholars have recognized the demise of the early paradigm and, in the course of post-mortems, have established the so-called '**hyper-urbanization thesis**'. Noting the 'de-coupling' of the alleged 'twin-processes' of urbanization and industrialization, this second group has come to view the contemporary urbanization process in underdeveloped countries as a 'deviation' from the "Western model" and one which is 'excessive' and contrary to the goals of economic development (Barber, 1967; Lerner, 1967; Ward, 1969; Bairoch, 1973). A corollary of this view is the conception of 'Third World cities' as '**parasitical**' (Hoselitz, 1953) and of 'urban life'

in underdeveloped countries as a 'consumer innovation' (Mabogunje, 1974).

In spite of their differences regarding the nature and implications of the process of urbanization in underdeveloped countries, these two paradigms exhibit the same tendency as the conventional wisdom in Sudan urban studies to analyse the emergence and expansion of urban areas, and to conceptualize life in cities, **in isolation** from other processes taking place within the wider (national and international) socio-historical context in which they are "embedded". The methodological implications of this tendency have been pointed out succinctly by Mariotti and Magubane (1979:270/71) and deserve quoting in full:

The widespread occurrence (both in time and place) of the urban phenomenon should not be allowed to obscure its particular manifestations. An examination of urbanization must be within definite limits. Also, the peculiarities of the circumstances in which urbanization occurs must be taken into account. Failing to do this, social scientists undertake the fruitless task of establishing universal, abstract laws of the urban process. The search for laws which may explain all cities betrays the misconception that urbanization is an independent process in history. Isolated from other social processes, the development of cities appears to be a fortuitous occurrence or a function of such factors as geographic location, population growth and dispersal, or terrain. Attempts to account for the emergence of a city in these terms become exercises in the description and correlation of traits. Trivialities assume a significance equal to necessities; cause, consequence and coincidence become confused, and underlying social processes remain hidden by the elaboration of appearances.

The basic conclusion of my earlier discussion of rural-urban migration as the consequence of proletarianization

in the case of unskilled workers, and of education and capital accumulation in the cases of students and merchants respectively, was that rural-urban migration is not a **one-dimensional** 'event' but, rather, a manifestation and consequence of **varied** processes. I accordingly argued that rural-urban migration cannot be studied or explained as a universal phenomenon except at the level of superficial appearances (geographical mobility and population concentration) and that insofar as the dynamics of urbanization are socially and historically specific, we should always be cautious not to conflate different processes resulting in population movement and concentration. But since the social processes resulting in population concentration (i.e. proletarianization, capital accumulation, education, and so on) are to be ascertained with reference to the **political economy** of concrete social formations, the product of that concentration, the 'urban', cannot be studied and explained otherwise.

Thus the proposition that "cities are the products of the society which creates them" (Pahl, 1968a:3) should not be treated as a flat truism and discarded as such; we have to explain how and why cities are produced and reproduced in society. The analytical framework which conceptualizes rural-urban migration and the rise of cities as consequences and manifestations of **praxis** ('human action') by individuals and groups bound by definite social production relations is what I term the "**method of political economy**" (see below). But the problematic which seeks to establish the social forces

that lead to the emergence and reproduction of cities as a form of human settlement should not be confused with that which assumes the emergence of cities as a social form and attempts to explain how their siting or location is determined, or how urban space is organized (cf. Saunders, 1981:219ff; Badcock, 1984:59ff).⁽⁸⁾

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF URBANIZATION

To argue that the processes of urbanization should always be studied within specific "social and historical" limits does not imply that it is impossible to make **meaningful** generalizations about the 'social specificity' of urbanization. Through the application of the 'method of political economy' in the field of 'urban studies', numerous scholars have increasingly moved towards establishing the social forces underlying urbanization processes, as well as towards the abstraction of salient features of these processes and of the social forces underlying them. But such generalizations are firmly based on analyses of overall socio-economic processes, which have particular configurations in each urbanization pattern.

The method of political economy traces the initial rise of the 'urban' back to the rise of classes in society. Thus in the Sudan, as elsewhere (cf. Adams, 1966; Marx, 1977), the separation between 'town' and 'country' was initially instituted subsequent to the emergence of class society and the development of the level of the productive forces to a

stage in which the agricultural surplus produced sufficed to maintain a **non-productive** class of rulers and their supporters (administrators, priests, army, servants, etc.). But the varied processes through which classes initially emerged, and the multifarious mechanisms by which rulers instituted, validated and reproduced their power and authority, and which underpinned the appropriation of agricultural surpluses, cannot be conceptualized in universal or general terms; they can only be grasped a posteriori to studies of the political economy of concrete societies.⁽⁹⁾ As the agricultural surpluses appropriated by the ruling classes and concentrated in urban areas were **greater** than what the ruling classes needed for their own and their armies' consumption, the accumulated 'wealth' progressively attracted people from diverse backgrounds. Some of these attracted had special skills, such as craftsmen and artisans who earned their living by rendering their talents to the disposition of rulers; others ('traders') brought 'exotic' items for exchange; and long-distance trade in 'luxury goods' provided a further avenue for the consumption of the accumulated wealth. The concentration of wealth in urban areas meant that they were the most important consumption centres in their regions; and for this reason industry and commerce sought the proximity of the urban dwellers, who possessed wealth and could afford the purchase of their goods. In short, the so-called functions of the city cannot be accorded precedence over the rise of classes, the appropriation of surplus-labour (or, as at present, of surplus-value) and the concentration of people and

wealth. This point is succinctly expressed by Portes and Walton (1977:9) who maintain that "The city did not arise to serve, but to subdue".

The **underlying dynamic** in the emergence, reproduction and/or expansion of cities which the method of political economy seeks to investigate is, therefore, the set of social production relations binding classes in society. This set of relations is, however, in a constant state of **motion** owing to its contradictory constitution and the conflicting interests of the classes it binds together; and it is this motion which continually produces change in the organization of social production and/or in the basis of **differentiation** between the producing and appropriating classes. In other words, with the transformation of the structure of social production relations in a class society, the underlying dynamic of urbanization is simultaneously transformed irrespective of whether or not the specific city as a spatial unit has expanded, collapsed or retained its former residential size and population density.

As Sawers (1984:4) points out:

Perhaps the most central proposition of the new urban political economy is that the city is merely a reflection of the larger economic and social fabric, termed the mode of production... One significant implication is that cities in different societies or at different times are very different, therefore there can be no single analysis of cities or of urbanization. ...This applies specifically to the study of cities in less developed countries, in socialist societies, or in earlier historical epochs. Political economists are careful not to project the experience of developed countries onto cities in very different circumstances.

THE CONCEPT OF DEPENDENT URBANIZATION

Two main factors underlay the progressive incorporation, over the last two decades or so, of the method of political economy in the field of 'urban studies'. The first factor, which concerns the literature on 'Western cities' (see, Pickvance, 1976; Castells, 1977; Harloe, 1977; idem. & Lebas, 1981; Pons & Francis, 1983b; Tabb & Sawers, 1984; Smith, 1984), is the urban political upheaval of the 1960s which forcefully brought to the fore issues of '**urban social movements**' and the **collective means of consumption**. The deepening of the fiscal crisis facing municipal (and metropolitan) authorities in industrialized countries has served to retain the momentum of political economic urban research. The second factor, which relates to the literature on urbanization in underdeveloped countries, is the emergence of the **world-system-dependency** perspective, which was initially developed in relation to the political economy of Latin American countries but progressively applied to other underdeveloped areas as well (see Frank, 1969; Magdoff, 1969; Emmanuel, 1972; Rodney, 1972; Wallerstein, 1974; Samir Amin, 1974b; idem., Arrighi, et. al., 1982). Under the influence of this perspective, many scholars have come to recognize that the production processes which underpin urbanization in underdeveloped countries cannot be analysed or understood in isolation from the impact of **capitalist penetration** and the imposition of '**dependency relations**' upon these countries through the institution of the international division of labour.

The growing influence of the world-system-dependency perspective coincided with increasing discontent among scholars over the conception of urbanization in underdeveloped countries presented by the unilineal-evolutionary and hyper-urbanization paradigms. The new perspective was consequently hailed by scholars as a breakthrough from the 'impasse', and since the early 1970s there has been a growing tendency to characterise the process of urbanization in underdeveloped countries as being 'dependent' and/or 'peripheral capitalist' (see McGee, 1971; 1979; Castells, 1977; Roberts, 1976; 1978; Walton, 1976; Yujnovsky, 1976; Slater, 1978; Cross, 1979; Magubane, 1979; Mariotti & Magubane, 1979; Portes & Walton, 1981; Gilbert & Gugler, 1983; Abu-Lughod, 1976; 1979; 1984; idem. & Hay, 1977; Sandbrooks, 1982; Chase-Dunn, 1984). In contrast to the earlier paradigms, there has been a consistently growing recognition that:

in one essential respect at least mid-twentieth-century Dakar and Lagos differ from mid-nineteenth-century Leeds and Manchester: the cause of their existence, the basis of their economic life, is not factory industry but commerce. They have been brought into being to meet the needs of European trade. Their main function is to drain out of Africa its ground-nuts, palm-products, coffee, cocoa, cotton, minerals; and to pump into Africa European consumer goods - cloth, kerosine, bicycles, sewing machines... (Hodgkin, 1956; quoted by Gugler & Flanagan, 1978:30).

One conspicuous corollary of the application of the method of political economy in analyses of 'Third World urbanization' has been an unfortunate situation similar to what Sorokin (1956, quoted by Pons & Francis, 1983a:2) has called "rejection by reversal". That is to say, in their attempt to

stress the relevance of the **broader** processes of 'underdevelopment' to the analysis of 'Third World cities', advocates of the 'dependent urbanization' view have shifted attention from intra-urban to inter- and extra-urban processes. As a result of this tendency, analyses of 'Third World cities' have become virtually synonymous with the scrutiny of the position of underdeveloped countries in the global capitalist system in the context of the 'disarticulation of sectors' consequent on the penetration by the capitalist mode of production. As expressed by Portes and Browning (1976a:7-8), in emphasizing the asymmetrical structure of the international capitalist system, scholars adopting a 'world-system-dependency' perspective have tended to view:

dependent urbanization in a less positive light. The cities, especially major ones, were not centers for advancement but, by and large, centers for exploitation of a subordinate periphery. The phenomenon of urban primacy was thus the reflection, vehicle, and locus of a situation of dependency. Primate cities served as geographical centers where an international structure of domination became translated into an internal structure of surplus extraction. Imbalances between city and countryside thus functioned to perpetuate, not remedy, a situation of underdevelopment.

Notwithstanding my sympathy for this view of the 'dependent' and/or 'peripheral capitalist' basis of the processes of urbanization in underdeveloped countries (see below), I believe the focus of this new paradigm on the inter- and extra-urban processes has seriously distracted attention from the analysis and understanding of specific socio-economic processes taking place within cities in underdeveloped

countries. In other words, though **urban hierarchies** in underdeveloped countries may rightly be viewed "as links in the chain of national-international dependency" (Walton, 1976:48ff), very little has been achieved by way of illuminating, with reference to concrete cities, the implications of the structures of peripheral capitalism for 'urban' socio-economic processes. It is consequently far from clear in the literature whether, and in what way, 'Third World cities' are themselves 'underdeveloped' (i.e. whether the cities are subject to the same processes operating at the national level).

THE PETTY COMMODITY PRODUCTION APPROACH

Though the lacunae in the literature on the political economy of cities in underdeveloped countries loom large, some attempts have been made to analyse certain facets of '**peripheral urbanism**'. Besides valuable analyses of the "housing question" and/or "shanty towns" in 'Third World cities' (e.g. Burgess, 1978; Dwyer, 1979), significant insights into certain aspects of peripheral urbanism have been furnished by the '**petty commodity production** approach'.

The petty commodity production (PCP) approach emerged mainly as an internal critique of the concept of "urban informal sector" as used by the ILO studies (e.g. ILO, 1972; 1976; Sethurman, 1981). Its advocates sought to refute the argument of the ILO studies by challenging the assumption of

the "unarticulated sector", and they used micro-studies in a number of 'Third World cities' in an attempt to corroborate the view that the problems of the so-called "urban informal sector", far from being consequences of inadequate linkage to the rest of the 'urban economy', are in fact explicit consequences of that linkage (or 'articulation'). The volumes edited by Bromley (1979c) and Bromley & Gerry (1979b) contain the main body of this critique.

In his Introduction to The Urban Informal Sector, Bromley (1979a) raised a number of questions as to the relevance of the dualist view embodied in the concept of the 'informal sector' and stressed that it had assumed currency in spite of its tendency to conflate people, enterprises, households and activities. He clearly demonstrates that the concept gained ground not so much because of its theoretical validity but because it is a convenient vehicle to promote "reformist" policy recommendations. These latter are thought to be directed towards a 'moderate' equitable distribution of wealth at a time when the international community has become aware of the 'radicalizing' effects of widening disparities in underdeveloped countries (cf. Moser, 1979). Thus none of the ILO Mission Reports following the Kenya Report (i.e. ILO, 1972) disputed or opposed the recommendations of the latter; disagreements were confined to further refinements of the definition and classification of the 'informal sector'. But the PCP approach turned away from this to a study of the social production relations and the linkages that exist between the so-called 'urban informal sector' and the rest of

the 'urban economy' (namely, the large scale capitalist enterprises). Gerry (1979a), for example, attempts in his study of Dakar to document how the small-scale manufacturing and repairs enterprises are in many complex and contradictory ways related to the operation of the urban economy as a whole. In particular, he draws attention to the way in which the small producers end up producing surplus-value for the large scale capitalist enterprises thereby supporting the expanded reproduction of capital.

Le Brun and Gerry (1975) provided the initial framework for the conceptualization of the relations between the capitalist mode of production and the PCP (identified as a 'pre-capitalist' form) as **contradictory** and as working simultaneously towards the **dissolution** and **conservation** of PCP. Central to this effect is the process of **differentiation** among petty producers which has two poles: (a) proletarianization and (b) the progressive transformation of small enterprises into full-fledged capitalist production units. The process of proletarianization tends to eliminate PCP which is said to be a consequence of competition between large scale enterprises and PCP for raw materials and markets. The transition from PCP to capitalist production, on the other hand, is seen in a few cases to be in accordance with the possibilities of a technical division of labour whereby an increasing degree of specialization is achieved. Such a division of labour is held to allow the head of the production unit to engage increasingly in the organization of work and the marketing of products rather than in production itself.

But this technical arrangement leads to a corresponding social division of labour: the head of the unit no longer entertains 'paternal relations' with the other producers working in his unit (said to be typical of relations in PCP); and the other producers in the unit become wage labourers producing surplus-value for their employer. Various transitional forms are conceived by Le Brun and Gerry to mediate these two poles in the differentiation process.

Gerry (1979b) applied this framework in his study of Dakar and stressed the importance of PCP which, by providing cheap products, helps maintain a low wage level. He maintains that because of this function the capitalist mode of production has an interest in conserving PCP. But as the market for the products of petty commodity producers is actually the larger, the capitalist enterprises seek access to that market and thereby compete with petty producers over raw materials and customers with the effect of eliminating PCP. Gerry (1979b:1158) accordingly maintains that while only a small number of PCP units succeed in graduating to the status of incipient capitalist enterprises,

More and more [small] enterprises are forced to underutilize the skills available to them, to use increasing amounts of low quality inputs, and to suffer grave restriction on their ability to even reproduce their current situations.

Gerry (ibid.) concludes that "large numbers of petty producers would be driven towards the miserable fringe of the urban economy, where dependence upon discarded and recycled raw materials, unskilled labour and impoverished clients is the general rule".

The case of small manufacturing in Dakar, however, seems to over-emphasize the competitive nature of relations between 'big business' and PCP. These relations are by no means confined solely to the realm of competition. Indeed, a number of contributions to the PCP approach have convincingly argued that many of the 'income-generating productive activities' have emerged in response to the specific needs of big industry and that their economic organization is related intimately to the latter. Birkbeck (1979), for example, documents how the emergence of garbage-picking in Colombia has been augmented by demand from the giant paper and cardboard factories. The apparent poverty of the garbage-picker, we are told, is not because he is 'unemployed', but because of the terms of his 'employment'. Or as Birkbeck has put it, the garbage-picker "works for the factory but is not employed in it". Bromley (1979b), on the other hand, has documented and analysed how many of the 'self-employed' street traders of Cali are in fact very little more than disguised wage workers, "out-workers" and "commission-sellers" who undertake the distribution of commodities on behalf of, and for the benefit of, large scale commercial enterprises. Bromley has accordingly argued that as these street traders do not enjoy the benefits of "permanent wage workers" they should be viewed as "casual workers".

I believe that the PCP approach has succeeded both to discredit the concept of the 'urban informal sector' and to expose critically important aspects of the conditions and roles of workers in petty commodity production and unskilled tertiary services in 'Third World cities'. But that success

notwithstanding, a conspicuous feature of the PCP contributions has been an uncritical acceptance of certain assumptions contained within the concept of the 'urban informal sector', which acceptance has served to perpetuate a distorted conception of the structure and operation of the urban wage labour market in underdeveloped countries. The most unfortunate of these unquestioned assumptions concerns the alleged implications of the distinction between "stable wage-work" and the various forms of "casual employment" (see Bromley and Gerry, 1979a:5-19). Thus, although the findings of such micro-studies have admirably corroborated the destitution of a large majority of 'casual workers', they have also subscribed to the view of the ILO studies concerning the 'privileges' of the so-called 'formal workers', who are conceived of as a 'labour aristocracy' which, through its trade unions, exerts pressure to improve its conditions - sometimes even at the expense of perpetuating the insecurity of casual workers (ibid., p. 9). As I shall explain in more detail in Chapter Seven, this last assumption not only tends to blur aspects of the conditions of wage labourers in the so-called 'formal sector', but also lends support to the dualistic ('formal/informal') conception of the structure of the urban wage labour market. But it is important to point out that these flaws are only contingent to analyses within the PCP approach; that is to say, the focus of the PCP approach has been on 'micro-processes' rather than on the wider context of the urban labour market in which these micro-processes operate. In short, the task of providing a comprehensive

'medium-range' ('city level') analysis of the structure and operation of the urban wage labour market in underdeveloped countries remains virtually unexplored. We need now to relate the 'micro' findings of PCP approach to the 'macro' (national and international) analyses of peripheral capitalism and to the processes of 'underdevelopment'. This thesis aims to contribute to the construction of such an analysis.

PERIPHERAL CAPITALIST URBANISM IN THE SUDAN

The foregoing discussion of the social specificity of the 'urban' and of 'dependent urbanization' may appear 'excessively pedantic'. But my view is that its necessity and relevance to any attempt to analyse and explain socio-economic processes in contemporary urban Sudan can hardly be over-estimated. In this section I propose to recapitulate the main implications of the foregoing discussion for the analysis in subsequent chapters.

The first significant implication is that, in order to understand the dynamics of urban growth in contemporary Sudan, I do not need to deal with the long and varied history of Sudanese cities; I shall therefore focus on the contemporary social production relations which assumed their present form following the establishment of British capitalist-colonial rule in 1899. As explained by Abdel Mohsin Mustafa (1975), the British colonial state effectively transformed the Sudan into a supplier of cheap primary products and a market for imported manufactured goods and, in the process, enforced a complete transformation of the structures and processes of the Sudanese

economy. Rather than consolidate the preceding production processes and markets, the colonial state "imposed an altogether new process, and an altogether new market to which the productive resources were to be oriented and to the service of which they were to be committed" (idem., p. 13).

The transformations imposed by the British colonial administration (1899-1955) resulted in the institution of what I term **peripheral capitalist urbanism** in the Sudan. By the phrase "peripheral capitalist urbanism", I mean to characterize the pattern of "urban life" whose primary objective is the fulfillment of the requirements of a **colonial-type trade economy**. In this respect, I fully subscribe to the view of Samir Amin (1977:147) who has noted how the concept of the "colonial-type trade" has been used by different scholars to denote different phenomena through different methods of abstraction such that:

its meaning has been reduced to a mere description: the exchange of agricultural products against manufactured goods. Yet the concept is much richer: it describes analytically the exchange of agricultural commodities provided by a peripheral society **shaped in this way**, against the products of a central capitalist industry imported or produced on the spot by European enterprise.. (emphasis added).

The "way" in which the Sudan has, under conditions of full-scale capitalist colonization, been "shaped" as an arena for **primary export production** as well as a market for imported manufactured goods will be explored in Chapter Two. In the same chapter I also attempt to highlight the origins of the processes of semi-proletarianization which underlie rural-urban unskilled labour migration. But it is important to

stress here that the institution of the colonial-type trade economy has involved, inter alia, the imposition of a pattern of 'urban life' founded on the basis of, and intended to fulfil the requirements of that economy. In other words, the primary processes underlying the pattern of socio-economic life in 20th century urban Sudan have been;

(a) **administration**, whose basic objective was, and remains, the creation and sustenance of conditions conducive to the imposition and/or reproduction of primary export production and the colonial-type trade and;

(b) **commerce** (import-export trade and related activities such as banking, transport and insurance) in which the most significant processes of urban **capital accumulation** take place.

The process of peripheral capital accumulation in urban Sudan, during both the colonial and post-colonial periods, has been admirably documented and analysed by Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa (1983) with reference to Hassaheisa Town. I fully agree with his identification of capital accumulation as the primary urban process dominating socio-economic life. However, insofar as Mohamed Yousif defined his task as the illumination of the interconnectedness between capital accumulation, 'tribalism', and local government politics in Hassaheisa, he tended to view "administration" more as a "constraint" impinging upon urban capital accumulation than as a process resulting in the urbanization of that majority of the urban population consisting of public employees and their dependents

together with students (cf. Chapter Three).

When the processes of peripheral urbanism and the dynamics of urban population growth in the Sudan are put into perspective, their observed implications for the structure and operation of the urban wage labour market become easier to understand. In Chapters Four and Five I will analyse the 'intra-urban processes' that have governed the operation of the urban wage labour market from the turn of the century to the present. In these two chapters I set out to illuminate the constraints imposed by the colonial-type trade economy upon the **labour absorption capacity** of the 'basic' activities in Greater Khartoum. I shall accordingly argue and attempt to corroborate the view that the demand for wage labour in both commerce and administration in Greater Khartoum is not only very limited, but also cannot be substantially expanded without jeopardizing primary export production, which constitutes the central pillar of the colonial-type trade economy to which the two activities are tied. As a result of these constraints, the larger part of the demand for urban manual labour during both the colonial and post-colonial periods has been external to these two basic activities. The limited measure of post-colonial capital-intensive industrialization in Greater Khartoum, which has arisen partly in response to lucrative concessions by the state, has generated an equally limited demand for workers. But owing to excessive rates of labour turn-over, manufacturing employment has continued to assert a conspicuous, but by no means major, role in the operation of the urban wage labour market. It

should be noted, however, that while the construction industry was the major source of demand for manual labour during the colonial period, during the post-colonial period it is population momentum which assumed that role through the generation of a substantial demand for a wide range of unskilled tertiary services. Unlike the labour demand in the construction industry, however, the demand generated by the population momentum is not transient. In Chapter Six I present the findings of my own field research into aspects of unskilled tertiary self-employment.

One major conclusion of the argument I seek to develop in this thesis is that, in the context of the colonial-type trade economy, the process of peripheral urban growth seems to be endowed with a **self-inflationary** character: the more the processes of commerce and administration are intensified, the larger becomes the number of people involved in them (i.e. growth among the commercial bourgeoisie, bureaucrats and professionals, and their dependants), and the greater becomes the demand for community and personal services (further urban growth through increase in the membership of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled categories performing services). Unskilled tertiary self-employment accordingly unravels itself as part and parcel of the working of an **underdeveloped** urban socio-economic way of life.

Furthermore, in my brief assessment of the PCP approach I have pointed out how the exclusive focus on aspects of 'self-employment' has tended to perpetuate misconceptions and poorly-founded assumptions concerning the origins and

implications of the seeming structural segmentation of the urban wage labour market. These limitations are also true of the literature on the structure and operation of the urban wage labour market in the Sudan. In Chapter Seven I therefore attempt a detailed account of aspects of the terms and conditions of work for wage labourers employed in the so-called 'formal sector', comparing them with those of the 'self-employed' unskilled tertiary workers analysed in Chapter Six. Contrary to all the studies which overemphasize the implications of the distinction between 'formal' ('permanent') wage workers and 'informal' ('casual', 'temporary' or 'self-employed') workers, I shall argue that the conditions of all sections of the urban manual labour force are basically uniform. In arguing this, however, I do not assert that the so-called 'informal workers' earn as 'high' incomes, or enjoy as many 'privileges', as do the 'permanent' wage workers in government departments, public concerns and large scale commercial and industrial private enterprises; but I do maintain that all sections of the urban manual labour force in general, and unskilled manual workers in particular, endure equally deplorable work conditions, and that they are all poorly remunerated. In asserting the relative uniformity of the conditions of urban manual labour, however, my aim is neither to suggest that the different forms of employment are identical, nor to discard the apparent structural segmentation of the labour market as a 'myth'; it is rather to discredit the poorly-founded conceptions of the origins and implications of that apparent structural segmentation. These origins will

accordingly be explained in terms of the implications of the different forms of employment for the distinction between **unionized** and **non-unionized** workers. Labour legislation in the Sudan denies union rights to 'temporary' and 'casual' workers and, as a result of this, union membership is exclusive to 'permanent' workers. The significance of the unionized/non-unionized distinction, however, does not stem from the present role of trade unions, but rather from the potential threat of strong unions to a system of production based on cheap labour. The conclusion I attempt to corroborate in Chapter Seven is thus that the apparent structural segmentation of the wage labour market, far from being the consequence of differential terms and conditions of employment for different sections of the manual labour force, is indeed the precondition for the maintenance of generally poor terms and conditions of employment for wage workers throughout the economy.

NOTES

1. All statistical data on the Sudan quoted in this work should be taken as 'crude approximations' rather than 'relatively precise' values. This is particularly true of the returns of the Second National Population Census of 1973. The "final results" of that census are yet to be published -although the preliminary returns of the 1983 census have already been made available to the public. Another feature of the first two censuses is that their categories are often incompatible and this makes comparisons very difficult. Siddik Nasir Osman (1977) has presented a useful account of the limitations of basic statistics in the Sudan.

2. A comprehensive statement of the official view of the consequences of accelerated urbanization is incorporated in the speech delivered on 2nd August 1972 by President Numeiri at the 17th Annual Conference of the Philosophical Society of the Sudan (The complete Arabic text has been published in, ed.

El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1972c). The main emphasis in that speech was on, on the one hand, the pressure on housing and the other services in urban centres and, on the other, the consequent reduction in the rural labour force. Though the same views continue to be held by officials, in recent years particular attention has been accorded to the issue of "public security" and "peace and order", as indicated by the official statements in the daily newspapers in September-October 1981 concerning the motives behind the "Street-Cleaning Campaign" the story of which I shall relate later in the chapter.

3. As the "Street Cleaning Campaign" was originally launched under the pretext of combating "unemployment" and "black marketing", the government was put to task by critics pointing to the fact that if there was any group to be held responsible for black-marketing, then it should be the commercial bourgeoisie. In addition to the wholesale arrests of unskilled migrants, a number of 'big merchants' (including one who is a member of the National People's Assembly) were arrested. Special courts headed by military officers were established by a Presidential Order to try merchants accused of activating black-markets. A handful of 'big merchants' were summarily tried and convicted; but a few weeks later the member of the National Assembly was released as were the other 'big names'. In effect, the 'martial courts' confined themselves to the task of trying and convicting small retailers and petty traders.

4. Shortly after the campaign was first launched, the government announced that it would no longer provide subsidies to prices of sugar, wheat flour and petrol. This 'coincidence' (?) has induced many Sudanese to speculate whether the campaign was launched precisely in order to pacify the poor strata which might stage demonstrations opposing the implementation of the measures prescribed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as a precondition for releasing loans to the ('literally') bankrupt Sudanese government.

5. Be the 'real' motive behind the campaign as it might, in its early days the campaign succeeded to some extent in easing the pressure on the supply of foodstuffs (not least because of the relatively substantial numbers of unskilled migrants arrested and/or evicted and of hesitation by 'black-marketeers' to withhold supplies at a time when house-to-house search was being undertaken). Capitulating on this (unintended?) consequence of the campaign, the government has since started to send troops down-town every time pressure on consumer-goods mounts.

6. The initial draft of this critique of Sudan urban studies was initially written as part of a paper presented at a workshop held at the Institute of Social Science, the Hague (Salah El-Din El-Shazali Ibrahim, 1984a). Insofar as my aim is to expose the limitations of the conventional wisdom in Sudan urban studies, it is beyond the purpose of the critique to provide an overall review of all the arguments presented in

the literature. For the benefit of those interested in pursuing further readings, I should mention that a number of edited volumes on Sudanese urbanization are available (Hale & Hale, 1971b; El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1972c; Pons, 1980c). Though the volume edited by Valdo Pons may prove somewhat difficult to obtain as only a limited number of 'advanced copies' are available at present, it is nevertheless particularly recommended as it contains not only a massive collection of early, but not easily accessible articles, which have been updated by the editor, but also 12 new contributions especially written for the book. An extensive and up-to-date annotated bibliography was compiled for the volume.

7. Besides the laudable contributions of Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa (1981; 1983) to which I will refer later in this and subsequent chapters, the only contributions to Sudan urban studies which have shown a degree of sensitivity to the impact of socio-economic transformations to urban life in the Sudan are those by Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed (1980) and Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed and Mustafa Abdel Rahman (1979). These two scholars are critical of the "sharp dichotomy" between rural and urban areas presented in "dualist theories and model" and which blurs the participation of the rural population in primary export production. But in their rejection of this "sharp dichotomy" the distinction between "rural" and "urban" seems to have been reduced to an element of scale or population density reminiscent of the 'rural-urban continuum' thesis. They have accordingly argued that by distinguishing between 'urban areas' and 'small urban centres' we would be in "a position to see a continuity between urban and rural sectors" (Abdel Ghaffar and Mustafa, 1979:2). The significance of their contributions, however, stems from their conception of the role of small urban centres in terms of a process that changes with the transformations in the structure of social production relations. Thus Abdel Ghaffar and Mustafa (1979:6/7) inform us that:

In comparing these [pre-colonial] centres with those taken over or created after the colonisation of the Sudan during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many differences can be seen. Small centres during colonial rule, rather than serving just as meeting places where transactions were carried out, extended their domination over the surrounding countryside..

The major structural changes that took place during the colonial period, we are told, were twofold (cf. *ibid.*). Firstly, the monetarisation of exchange and the emergence of private ownership and sale of land (which are said to have alienated manpower from this vital resource); and secondly, the abolition of slavery which created a demand for wage labour (thus giving scope for the capitalist mode of production "to assume full control in the small urban centres and most of the countryside"). Accompanying these transformations, the argument continues, were four factors

that enhanced the pattern of exploitation of the countryside. These factors were (a) the establishment of the small urban centres as "seats of authority"; (b) the provision of services (particularly education); (c) the destruction of the "indigenous system of relations of production" (except for those elements of it that could be transformed to serve the ends of further exploitation) and, (d) the growth of a migrant labour force ("The whole population in the countryside is kept as migrants on a waiting-list; the main body of the reserve army of the unemployed").

In Chapter Two I will discuss in detail aspects of the transformations that took place during the British capitalist-colonial period and so I do not need to consider here the controversial views expressed by Abdel Ghaffar and Mustafa regarding the nature and implications of the changes imposed through British colonial policy. However it is relevant to stress here that the "exploitation" of the population of the countryside by the 'dominant urban classes' is not merely a "colonial development"; they were only the mechanisms of "exploitation" (or, more precisely, of the appropriation of surplus-labour and/or surplus-value) that experienced transformations. In spite of the significance of their contribution, especially regarding the cases of the two 'small urban centres' they have documented, the tendency of Abdel Ghaffar and Mustafa to focus exclusively on aspects of the "role of small urban centres" in order to discredit the "sharp dualistic dichotomy" has precluded them from considering the specificity of the dynamics underlying the contemporary urbanization process in the Sudan.

8. In contrast to El-Sayed El-Bushra, who postulates the unchanging character of 'urbanism' in time or space, Winters (1977) puts to question the relevance and validity of theories developed in relation to Western urbanism when applied to "exotic cities". What seems to underlay Winters' argument is the assumption that in regions with cultures differing from Western culture, different 'forms' of urbanism should be expected to emerge and that these differences relate not only to function but also to urban morphology. In order to substantiate these differences, Winters recognizes the utility of "**urban archetypes**" in the process of "contextualizing" urbanism. The concept of "urban archetypes" is intended to imply a "connection between some aspects of urban form (usually morphology or function) and ethnic group, religion, politico-economic system, technology, or the like" (idem, p. 501). As it stands, thus, the concept of urban archetypes suggests that cultural traits could be regarded as "independent variables" significant in explaining the emergence of certain urban forms and that a city or cities can be identified with cities of a particular archetype. Attempts to construct archetypes include those on the Islamic or Middle Eastern city (e.g. von Gruenbaum, 1961; Benet, 1964; Lapidus, 1973) and Yoruba city (Mabogunje, 1961).

Despite Winters' recognition of urban archetypes in methodological terms, he contends that some, and perhaps most, "traditions of urbanism" cannot be directly associated with

any single archetype. But the point he makes is not that any classification (which is what archetypes are all about) is selective and arbitrary. Rather, what he seems to suggest is that 'by their nature' most urban traditions represent forms "intermediate" between two or more archetypes and in these cases the task is to identify the archetypes involved. According to Winters, the traditional Muslim cities of northern and central Sudan (from ca. 1520 to 1898) are cases in point. Thus though Islamic elements were incorporated into these cities, he contends, nowhere was the result much like a Cairo or a Fez; and apparently Sudanese urbanism "combined" Muslim and Black African urban traditions. With the aid of archetypes, Winters attempts to elucidate the precise character of medieval Muslim urbanism in the Sudan.

In his consideration of Sudanese traditional cities as "Muslim cities", Winters emphatically stresses the implications of the distinction between 'orthodox' and 'popular Islam' and points out that the "conventional archetype" in the literature was constructed 'in relation to the former while the inhabitants of the different regions of the Middle East adhere to one or the other variant of the latter. In his own words (p. 506):

The standard Muslim urban archetype, with its emphasis on the Friday prayer as the ideological basis of urban nodality and on the mosque as the central urban morphological feature, is keyed almost entirely to orthodox Islam. It does not really attempt to deal with popular elements, and in the Sudan, where orthodox Islam was not very important, this is fatal. [...] Islam in the Sudan -popular Islam- had two other contributions to make to Sudanese urbanism. First, with its emphasis on proselytizing and teaching, it was connected with the foundation and maintenance of cities as centres of religious education. Second, with its obsession with saints, and in particular on the burial places of saints, it was associated with saints' tombs, or qubab, the major monuments of Sudanese cities.

In emphasizing the role of popular Islam in the Sudan, moreover, Winters does not claim that Sudanese Islam is the only variant that involves veneration of saints. Both saints and qubab exist throughout the Muslim world and they are often given prominence in other places as in Sudan (e.g. Morocco -cf. Geertz, 1968). The difference between popular Islam in the Sudan and that of other countries is thus conceived to be of degree rather than an absolute one. To this extent, Winters contends that Sudanese traditional cities had most of the expected features of Middle Eastern cities: markets, quarters, irregular streets and mosques (though in muted form).

Having established the "connection" between Sudanese traditional cities and the urban archetype of the Islamic city, Winters suggests that the former can only partially be associated with the latter. This is particularly the case

because features such as the centering of cities on a palace, the significance of agriculture as an urban function, the predominance of a Black African technology, etc., which are observed in Sudanese towns, can only be associated with, and explained by, the presence of residual, pre-Islamic, African cultural traits characteristic of many cities in Black Africa. Owing to the lack of a Black African urban archetype parallel to the Middle Eastern Muslim archetype, Winters concludes, the "precise relationship of Sudanese urbanism with Black urbanism must remain a little hypothetical" (p. 520).

Despite its ostensible attempt to refute claims of the unchanging character of urbanism, the contribution of Winters involves a number of factual as well as conceptual errors. The most obvious of the factual errors is in his attempt to define the creation and reproduction of cities as centres of religious education, and particularly in his characterization of the status of those whom he calls 'fakys' ('holy-men'), even in the case of al-Damir town, which is mentioned as a "better example" of the educational centres. Rather being a 'clergy', the majority of fakys actually consisted of traders, as mentioned by Burckhardt (1819:258 et passim) in the particular case of Damir, and as documented by Wād Daifallah (cf. Yusuf Fadl Hassan, 1974) in the cases of many other 'saints' around Sudan then. Indeed, it was trade more than religious teaching which was the main occupation of these 'saints'. The conceptual confusion involved with the concept of 'urban archetypes', however, has more serious implications than the factual errors which could be noted and corrected.

Viewed critically, the attempt to construct urban archetypes in order to relate urban form to culture would eventually mean the construction of as many archetypes as there are human "cultures". In view of the obvious difficulty encountered in specifying the "domain" of any one single "culture", we are logically led to conclude, as Mabogunje (1964, quoted by Ginsburg, 1972:412) suggests, that 'cultural differences', even within countries, will lead to different urban forms. The end-goal of archetypes thus is a relativism parallel to the argument of the substantivists in economic anthropology who, in refuting the empty generalizations of the formalists, have ended in viewing each economy as a system that could only be explained on the basis of the 'folk-model' of the people to whom it belongs. In effect, what Winters has not admitted to be his logical conclusion is precisely that the "specific character" of Sudanese traditional urbanism is its being "Sudanese". Owing to the obvious tautological nature of such a conclusion, however, Winters seems to opt for designating the precise character of Sudanese urbanism as an "intermediate form" between two or more urban archetypes while ignoring the question of whether or not such an "intermediate" form could be construed as an "archetype" in itself. Likewise, the contributions of Winters could be characterized as an exercise in mystification not only because he does not discuss the method involved in the selection of either the urban features or the cultural traits assumed to have generated them, but also because he does not attempt the elucidation of the "specific character" of urban areas and how such a character

emerges or gets changed. But this is largely because 'urbanism' is viewed in terms of archetypes, which are static conceptual 'classes' embodying a non-historical conception of time and movement. But as Castells (1977:8) makes the point:

To explain the social process that underlies the organization of space is not simply a matter of situating the urban phenomenon in its context. A sociological problematic of urbanization must regard it as a process of organization and development and, consequently, set out from the relation between productive forces, social classes and cultural forms (including space).

9. Archaeological research in the Sudan indicates that the evidence of class society along the banks of the Nile goes back to as early as 3500 B.C., the time when the "A-Group" emerged in the region near the Second Cataract following the raids into Nubia by the third and fourth kings of the First Dynasty of ancient Egypt (cf. Reisner, 1918; 1919; Arkell, 1961). The development of the "A-Group", as that of the "C-Group" which succeeded it, was rooted in subsistence farming and animal husbandry; the social organisation of both groups is thought to have remained "tribal and autonomous until the end of the C-Group period as there are none of the signs of monarchical authority" (Adams, 1967). The emergence of large centralised states in the early stages in Nubian history seems to have been inhibited by two main factors. The first was the repetitive raids by Egyptian troops to subjugate Nubia (*ibid*). The second, and more significant factor was the existence of large sectors of nomadic pastoralists who, by harrying the sedentary population, eroded the foundations of a stable state which is essential for the initiation and sustenance of urbanization (cf. Haycock, 1971:31ff).

Following the 'dark ages' in Nubia about which little could be guessed, there emerged, from unknown origins, the Kingdom of Cush (ca. 1000 B.C.- A.D. 400) which, for nearly a century, extended its dominion to Egypt (forming the XXVth Dynasty, ca. 721-661 B.C.). Both before and after the Cushite rule of Egypt, the city of Meroe constituted the capital of the kingdom while Napata, Kawa and Faras were relatively smaller urban centres (cf. Ahmed M.A. Al-Hakem, 1972). Other scholars, however, tend to believe that Napata constituted the initial capital but after the Cushite retreated from Egypt the southern city of Meroe became the capital (hence the distinction between 'Napatan' and 'Meroitic' periods).

It is mere truism to maintain that the fertile soil along the banks of the Nile has, from the beginning, facilitated the production of agricultural surpluses to support the ruling classes. During the Cushite period, however, the level of development of productive forces was augmented by the use of iron, which "not only allowed agriculture to make great strides through the use of iron hoe, with the concomitant increase in production... but also by providing iron weapons, made it possible for centralized authority to develop" (Shinnie, 1967:168). Thus, whereas the earliest Napatan

monarchy had few luxuries, during the period when the Cushites ruled Egypt they had control of a developed kingdom, and wealth rolled in (cf. Haycock, 1971). The subsequent introduction of the sagiya, ox-driven water-wheel, in lieu of the manual shaduf to lift water vertically for irrigation had far-reaching effects in the further development of agriculture as it dissociated, for the first time, irrigation from the level of the Nile (Adams, 1967:12). The effects of the sagiya on Lower Nubian urbanization could hardly be over-estimated as the region is characterized by abnormally high river banks so that a fall in the level of flood previously meant depopulation while with the new irrigation technique the continuity of sedentary habitation was freed from the ecological constraint.

The greatest achievement of the Meroitic kingdom that is of particular significance for the consolidation of urbanization in the region was the subjugation of the nomadic groups who were not only difficult to tax, but also constituted a threat to the sedentary population. According to Haycock (1971:33), the cattle peoples of the northern Butana, particularly the very dangerous Rehareha who used to harry cultivators, were eventually obliged to yield to king Harsiotef (? 404-268 B.C.):

Once the Butana became a safe grazing ground for the Meroites, their wealth in herds could increase.. the fine temples of Musawwarat and Naq'a standing in very indefensible position in Butana wadis are evidence of the general security and prosperity which already must have prevailed in the third and second centuries B.C. near Meroe..

Though the ruling classes in this ancient kingdom seemed to ideologically consolidate and legitimize their hegemony through ritual beliefs and practices (the suprahuman character of the monarch which was enhanced by physical separation of monarch from subjects), domination was materially established through control over land which constituted the basic means of production. The basic structure of the social production relations in the Meroitic kingdom has been described by Adams (1967:22) who maintains that:

During the whole of its Dynastic phase Nubia was at least in name a single state with a divine king, state religion, priestly governing class, and all the surface trappings of Oriental despotism... Nevertheless the Napatan and Meroitic tombs give evidence of a highly stratified society, in which a relatively small ruling class must have controlled a large part of the productive resources. A necessary concomitant of such a system is of course a large slave population; something which is further attested by the numerous human sacrifices in the royal tombs.

Throughout the "ancient" period, urban areas were thinly populated as the exclusive residence of the ruling class, the king and provincial priests and their dependents, and those 'slaves' supporting them (the army, servants, craftsmen and

artisans). This was true even of Meroe, the largest urban area, in which the Royal Enclosure was "almost a complete town by itself" separated from the other part of the city which contained "the houses of the artesous and their master-craftsmen, who supplied the needs of the Royal Enclosure" (Ahmed M. Al-Hakem, 1972:38ff). No traders were in existence as the monarchs monopolized long-distance trade.

The centuries that lapsed between the downfall of Meroe in around A.D. 350 and the establishment of British colonial administration in 1899 witnessed several radical transformations in the socio-economic structures of the country. Following the Meroitic period, three smaller kingdoms emerged and this resulted in a relative proliferation of urban areas. The conversion of the three kingdoms to Christianity (ca. A.D. 540), and particularly after the infiltration of Muslim traders after the conquest of Egypt in A.D. 640, not only undermined the system of divine monarchs presiding over slave populations, but also laid the foundations for the emergence of both individual private landownership in northern riverain Sudan and the merchant class that came to inhabit the urban areas. The last of the fetters of royal monopoly, however, were only removed during the late decades of the eighteenth century as a result of a high degree of decentralization in the Funj kingdom. As a result of these developments, new organisational patterns for social production emerged in northern and central Sudan. Quasi-feudal estates were established by local rulers; holy-men-cum-traders started to acquire riverain land and to deploy slaves in incipient forms of 'commercialized agricultural production'; and a tenantry class consisting of "outsiders" (individuals or groups who migrated from their 'homeland') started to emerge (cf. Yusuf Fadl Hassan, 1973; O'Fahey and Spaulding, 1974; Spaulding, 1979a; 1979b; El-Haj Hamad M. Kheir, 1982). Many developments were concurrently taking place in western Sudan, where the Keira of Darfur and their offshoot, the Massaba'at, of Kordofan came to establish centralized kingdoms (cf. O'Fahey, 1980; idem. and Spaulding, 1974). Rulers started to maintain their power and authority through sheer military might rather than through 'divine right'; taxation rather than appropriation of the produce of slave-populations became the source of revenue for rulers; and the population density of urban areas started to increase as traders and 'own-account' craftsmen came to establish themselves in towns. Up to the 1880s, moreover, slaves constituted the largest single section of the urban population in Sudan (cf. Chapter Four).

CHAPTER TWO

STABILIZATION AND PROLETARIANIZATION IN RURAL SUDAN

The transformation of precapitalist economy into peripheral capitalist economy clearly presupposes the "monetarization", the "commercialization" of the subsistence economy. Clearly there is here no mechanism of "monetarization" that is not at the same time a mechanism of penetration by the capitalist mode of production (Samir Amin, 1974a:142).

The purpose of this chapter is to present background information on the main transformations that have taken place in the constitution and functioning of domestic agricultural production in rural Sudan from the inception of British colonial rule in 1899 to the present. This broad background is needed to put into perspective the process of proletarianization, which underlies the slow, but persistent, urbanization of domestic producers as unskilled wage labourers.

The central focus of the chapter is on aspects of the basic design, the implementation and consequences of the colonial imposition of primary export production upon the domestic form of agricultural production. I shall argue that while the colonial policy to promote primary export production has set into motion a process of qualitative differentiation among domestic production which seemingly promises the dissolution of the domestic labour process, or form of labour subjection (i.e. the 'household' as a unit of production), other colonial policies sought seriously to conserve the domestic production. Notwithstanding the achievement of flag Independence in 1956, these contradictory policies have been perpetuated up to the present, though in the early decades of

Independence the 'post-colonial' regime was interested more in the promotion of primary export production than in the conservation of the domestic form. Coupled with the **resilience** inherent in the 'subsistence sphere' of the domestic form, the end-product of these contradictory policies has been (a) a **petrification** of the domestic form of agricultural production manifested in the inability of the overwhelming majority of domestic producers to develop their forces of production and (2) the initiation of a process of semi-proletarianization whereby, in addition to participation in domestic production, domestic producers have become increasingly involved in seasonal wage labour migration.

In the first section of this chapter I attempt to highlight the conditions of domestic production in pre-colonial Sudan; and on the basis of that account I set out to assess the transformations that domestic production has experienced since the turn of the century. Though the "**conservation policies**" stemmed from, and as such were integral to, the strategy to promote primary export production in colonial Sudan, for the sake of a clear exposition of the transformations I draw a conceptual distinction between them. Accordingly I shall consider aspects of the imposition of primary export production before assessing the conservation policies. In the final section I attempt to illuminate the course in which the processes of proletarianization and rural-urban labour migration have been accelerated.

DOMESTIC PRODUCTION IN PRE-COLONIAL SUDAN

Prior to the establishment of the British colonial state, the large majority of Sudanese was engaged in basically **subsistence-oriented** agro-pastoral activities. Production was mainly geared towards the creation of **use-values** for the consumption of producers and their dependants and/or associates, though part of the produce in some regions was surrendered in tribute and/or other dues to the local ruler and/or overlord. Various forms of barter relations (as between sedentary cultivators and nomadic pastoralists) contributed to the further consolidation of subsistence production by furnishing products in demand but which could not be produced, or which were produced but their supply was not sufficient.

The collapse of Sennar's **regulated economy** and royal trade monopolies during the eighteenth century that associated (or stimulated?) political decentralization in the Funj Kingdom (1504-1820) resulted in the consolidation of an independent class of private traders (cf. O'Fahey & Spaulding, 1974; Spaulding, 1979b). This emergent merchant class sought to procure various strategic and luxury items available in the country (e.g. gum arabic, ostrich-feathers and eggs, hides and senna-leaves) through the initiation of barter relations with the rural farmers and herders in the various parts of what have come to be northern, central and western Sudan. In exchange for these items, the traders furnished the natives with 'luxury' goods such as glass beads, antimony, nutmegs and razors (cf. Burckhardt, 1819:289ff). Local level trade in grain and animals under normal conditions, however, was almost

an impossibility for traders, precisely because cultivators and herders were in close proximity to each other and could exchange directly as they had done so for centuries. Traders therefore entered the rural grain and livestock markets only when there was crop failure in a region as in the case of Shendi reported by Burckhardt (*idem.*, p.272) when peasants brought bundles of ostrich-feathers to exchange for dura (sorghum vulgare). Under normal conditions, peasants would provide their surplus grain to exchange for luxury items and the traders would resell the grain so procured (together with the produce of their own farms) to the urban population and/or nomads from other regions as the case of Beja nomads coming to al-Damir (*ibid.*).

Although barter relations between traders and rural cultivators and herders initially emerged in the northern and central riverain regions as well as Kordofan and Darfur, the opening of the White Nile during the Turco-Egyptian period (1821-1885) facilitated the penetration of traders into parts of Southern Sudan where trade in ivory (and, later, slaves) promised lucrative profits (Hill, 1959; 1970; Gray, 1961). At the time when barter relations were being established in the South, damour cloth, together with foreign currencies such as the Spanish Dollar, were being adopted in northern and central riverain Sudan as a measure of value and unit of account if not as a medium of exchange as well. Nevertheless, in the country as a whole rural production systems were oriented towards the creation of use-values; the only exception to be noted were those estates owned by rulers and the

holy-men-cum-entrepreneurs in which slaves, followers of holy-men and/or tenant-subjects were settled to undertake agricultural production. In these estates the direct producers worked for subsistence as their strategy, but the surplus extracted by the overlords was directed for exchange and, ultimately, for investment in agriculture in the riverain regions (through purchase of slaves) or for purchase of animals in the rainland regions.⁽¹⁾

A significant consequence of the establishment of the Turco-Egyptian colonial government in the Sudan was the obstruction of the development of the local merchant class. In its early years, the Turco-Egyptian colonial administration exercised monopoly virtually over all merchandise, and severe punishment was meted out to any trader caught with contraband (Hill, 1970:95). When these monopolies were effectively abolished towards 1840-41, however, the main trading activities came under the control of an expatriate merchant community (Greeks, French, Austrian, British as well as Egyptian Copts) which was instrumental in enticing the European Powers to put pressure on the Egyptian Viceroy, Mohamed Ali Pasha, to abolish the monopolies. But although that colonial administration imposed a system of taxation that approximated confiscation (Holt, 1961:43), forced peasants in Kordofan to collect gum for which they were almost unrewarded (Pallme, 1844:28ff), and compelled villagers in the Southern Funj Region to work in the gold plants before realizing their unprofitability (Santi and Hill, 1980:52ff), the Turco-Egyptian colonial administration did not **interfere** to

any significant extent with the production processes in the country by promoting changes into either their logic or their structures of social production relations. The only exception to this categorical generalization was the attempt to force peasants in parts of the northern region to grow indigo in addition to their subsistence crops. Owing to the unprofitability of indigo manufacture that measure was soon abandoned (Hill, 1970:67).

The atrocities that characterised the early years of Turco-Egyptian colonial rule, and the progressive alienation of various Sudanese strata through six decades, resulted in a widespread discontent among Sudanese that culminated in the outbreak of the Mahdist Revolution in 1881. The various groups that united to create the Mahdist State (1885-1898), however, were soon to engage in internecine conflicts following the death of the Mahdi in 1885; and the Khalifa's external wars further weakened the regime. Before the major defeat of the Mahdist Ansar at Karari which paved the way for the establishment of the 'Anglo-Egyptian' Sudan, the country experienced a period of fatal instability. Whole regions were depopulated through either massacre and emigration (as in the case of the Ja'aliyyin of Shendi region) or recruitment to the Khalifa's army in Omdurman (as in the case of the Baggara of Western Sudan). The concomitant deterioration and abandonment of agricultural production resulted in the famous Sannat Sitta ('the sixth year') famine of 1897 (1306 A.H.). But though the battle of Karari was the decisive step in the establishment of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, the pacification of all

Sudanese groups was achieved three decades later as small-scale Mahdist and other (e.g. Nuba, Nuer, and Ingessana) resistance continued for a relatively long period after the annexation of Ali Dinar's Dar Fur Sultanate in 1916.

THE IMPOSITION OF PRIMARY EXPORT PRODUCTION IN COLONIAL SUDAN

One of the first tasks undertaken by the British colonial administration in the regions brought under control was the creation of conditions conducive to agricultural production in order to achieve the colonial strategy of promoting primary export production. A detailed assessment of British policy and its particular configurations in the different regions, however, is not only beyond my purpose, but also difficult to present here (not least because of my own incompetence for such a formidable task). I propose simply to illustrate the situation in the various regions through a few carefully selected cases, which will then be related to the general policy. Before dealing with the imposition of primary export production, we need to take note of the measures undertaken by the colonial government in relation to the land tenure system in the country.

THE COLONIAL SYSTEM OF LAND TENURE

Prior to the establishment of British colonial administration in the Sudan, two main forms of landownership prevailed.⁽²⁾ In the relatively densely-populated riverain regions of northern and central Sudan, individual private landownership was taking root through the centuries although

the land so owned was confined mainly to the immediate vicinity of settlements. During the Funj period in particular, individual private landownership was consolidated through the wathiga system by which monarchs granted land, as a gift, to local rulers and holy-men (O'Fahey and Spaulding, op.cit; Spaulding, 1979a; 1979b). The wathiga ("charter") institution not only constituted a recognition of individual private landownership by the central government (as opposed to the former system in which only monarchs held title to land but subjects were granted usufruct rights), but also resulted in the creation of a class of landlords owning vast tracts and extracting dues and/or agricultural surpluses from their tenants and/or slaves. But though the first transaction concerning land in the northern riverain region took place as early as A.D. 830 (Yusuf Fadl Hassan, 1973:38), it was only during the 18th century that land started to become a commodity with a "price on its head" and could be exchanged through "sale, mortgage, marriage and inheritance" (Spaulding, 1979b). (3)

The Funj land charters were not confined to riverain land, and some of them concerned rainland in the fertile Gezira of central Sudan. An institution similar to the Funj wathiga also prevailed in the Keira kingdom of Dar Fur (O'Fahey & Spaulding, op.cit.; O'Fahey, 1980). The hakura ("concession" or "monopoly") of the Keira, however, differed from the Funj land charters as it sometimes specified the period of concession during which the hakura-holders could appropriate for themselves all the taxes and dues of the area granted, but

this restriction was not applied to all hakura-holders, particularly those from the royal family or 'caste'. In the rainlands in general, the abundance of land, coupled with the largely nomadic-pastoral activities of the inhabitants, did not prompt the emergence of individual landownership among the subjects, and various forms of communal ownership vested in a 'tribe', or one of its sections, were recognised by nomadic pastoralists.⁽⁴⁾ Among the rainland sedentary cultivators, moreover, land use was legitimized through membership in a village community. In the various parts of Southern Sudan, the inhabitants held land in common as 'tribe' or group and an individual had no rights except as a member of such 'tribe' or group, irrespective of whether the land was riverain or rainland (cf. Bolton, 1948).

The Turco-Egyptian colonial government followed a course similar to that of the Funj monarchs, and granted estates to local notables in order to win their support. The Turco-Egyptian administration, however, expropriated land from the Ja'aliyin around Shendi and settled on it some of the loyal Shaigiyya following the murder of Ismail Pasha (the Viceroy's son) towards the end of 1822. During the brief Mahdist rule (1885-1898) no changes were introduced into the basic structure of the land tenure system though the ownership of vast territories was transferred from disloyal to loyal groups; but this was soon to be reversed by the British colonial administration (Mohamed Hashim Awad, 1971:219).

As soon as the 'reconquest' of northern and central Sudan was completed, the British colonial administration paid

particular attention to the system of land tenure, and issued its first **Titles to Land Ordinance** in 1899. By this law the colonial administration announced that all land in riverain Sudan which was continuously cultivated in the preceding five years was to be considered the private property of cultivators. The newly established colonial administration also recognized the rights of wathiga-holders but restricted their total share in the crop produced by tenants to one-fifth. This recognition was withdrawn in 1906, and systematic attempts to dispossess landlords, but without recourse to violent expropriation, were made as the colonial government started to settle and register titles to land. According to Bolton (1948:188):

The general policy adopted in the course of land settlement of riverain land and the Gezira was to recognise claims based on continuous cultivation but not to recognise claims based only on ancient grants or on the cultivation by a claimant's ancestors of land subsequently abandoned.

In accordance with the registration policy, thus, the class of wathiga-holders was deprived of vast tracts that were not under crop. In those areas where tenants were settled, moreover, the colonial government sought to make arrangements whereby tenants could buy land from their overlords. The establishment of the Gezira Scheme further weakened the position of wathiga-holders as the government absorbed a large number of estates in the scheme and the owners were offered, in addition to preference in tenancy allotments, an annual rent of 10 P.T. per feddan (ca. 1.038 acres). The **Gezira Land Ordinance** of 1927 provided for the purchase of all land

required for permanent works or for seed and research farms on payment of compensation not exceeding £E 1 a feddan.

Through denial of titles to uncultivated land, arrangements for purchase of land by tenants, and rent and purchase of land in the Gezira Scheme, the colonial government managed within a relatively short period to dissolve substantially, but not completely, large-scale landownership. Not all wathiga-holders, however, were dispossessed, and it was government policy in the Singa District, for example, to allow overlords to continue extracting dues from tenants. Likewise, the craft of political expediency resulted in massive areas being granted to 'notables' (particularly the three most distinguished 'sectarian' leaders: Abdel Rahman Al-Mahdi of the Ansar, Ali El-Mirghani of the Khatmiyya, and Yusuf Al-Hindi) in order to bind them with 'economic fetters' to the colonial administration (Hassan A. Ibrahim, 1980; Taisier Mohamed Ahmed Ali, 1982:138 et passim). Nevertheless, the British administration sought seriously to 'protect' tenants from excessive dues - a measure that is in keeping with the conservation policy which I shall explain in more detail later.

Furthermore, in the rainlands of central, eastern and western Sudan, as in the riverain and rain lands of Southern Sudan, individual private landownership was not recognized by the colonial government, and no land settlement or registration was undertaken. As with the uncultivated land of riverain northern and central Sudan, these 'unsettled' areas were categorically classified as government-owned divided into

two classes: (a) Government land subject to no right, and (b) Government land subject to rights vested in a community such as tribe, section, village, or, at least in the case of the Nuba Hills of Western Sudan, in individuals (Bolton, op.cit.). This classification has remained intact right to the present.

In general terms, the class of government land subject to no right is confined mainly to the northern and central riverain regions and includes the deltas of Tokar and Gash in eastern Sudan. It is out of this class that successive governments during both the colonial and post-colonial periods allotted land to native and expatriate entrepreneurs for agricultural investment. The class of Government land subject to rights, on the other hand, is mainly the abundant rainland where usufruct rights of nomadic pastoralists and sedentary cultivators were recognized and includes all land in Southern Sudan.

In their analyses of the colonial land tenure system, many scholars have tended to view the system under British administration as a "restoration" of the 'original system' that prevailed in the country prior to Funj, Turco-Egyptian and Mahdist "interference" (e.g. Mohamed Hashim Awad, 1971; Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, 1978:42). Their emphasis seems to be on the ability of the British colonial government to liquidate partially the class of big landlords. What should be stressed here is that such a view of the colonial system of land tenure has grossly overlooked the essential nature and implications of the system imposed. The denial of titles to uncultivated riverain land did not affect the wathiga-holders only; and the

policy of the colonial administration not to recognize individual landownership in Southern Sudan and the rainlands in general, with its concomitant dissolution of the class of hakura-holders created by the Keira kings, resulted, on the one hand, in regional disparities concerning the possession of resources to be converted into capital and, on the other, in the vulnerability of the inhabitants of the rainlands as the government could withdraw the usufruct rights; this has indeed been taking place since the inception of mechanised rainfed farming. Let us elaborate these aspects of the consequences of land settlement and registration to conceptualize the precise nature of the system imposed and its short- and long-term implications.

As maintained earlier, through denial of titles to uncultivated riverain and Gezira lands, the British colonial government managed to dispossess wathiga-holders of vast tracts. But although the government recognized, as private possession, land which had been continuously cultivated by small farmers, the conditions that prevailed in the riverain regions in the decades preceding land settlement and registration resulted in the deprivation of many small farmers from possessing land. Thus all of those who were forced to emigrate during the last years of Mahdist rule to escape massacres (such as the Ja'aliyyin around Shendi and Metamma), as well as those who emigrated earlier in thousands to escape the taxation system of the Turco-Egyptian colonial administration, automatically became dispossessed as they had not been present in their homes to cultivate continuously, and

for five years at least, prior to the establishment of British colonial rule in order to be eligible for possession. A class of **landless** Sudanese was thereby created. Unfortunately, no statistics, or rough estimates, on the riverain Sudanese who became landless at the inception of British rule are available. That their number was relatively 'substantial', however, is beyond doubt. As I shall explain in Chapter Four, it was for the mobilization of sections of these landless persons as unskilled urban workers that the colonial government established its Labour Bureau. The majority of the landless, however, was stabilized under the domestic form of agricultural production in the northern region (cf. below).

The creation of a landless class in the riverain region was not the only consequence of land settlement and registration; the long-term consequences have proved more serious, precisely because the colonial land tenure system has in effect meant the continuous reproduction and growth of the class of the landless. In this respect we have to bear in mind that at the time of registration the level of development of the productive forces permitted the cultivation of only relatively small areas by the members of any one household; and it was these areas under crop that were registered as private property. As the land so registered is nearest to the Nile and, consequently, the most affected by hadam (river-washing), which continuously decreases the size of this land, natural population growth has resulted in a severe scarcity of private land and the northern province in particular became a very hostile region to later generations

of small farmers and/or their descendants.

The recognition of the short- and long-term effects of the colonial land tenure system imposed in the riverain regions provides further corroboration of the limitation of the 'conventional wisdom'. Thus, in their conceptualization of the 'push factors' underlying emigration from the Northern Region scholars point to 'scarcity of land' as the prime factor, but very few seem to recognize that this 'scarcity' is not a **natural** characteristic of the region. It refers to land privately-owned by small farmers and not the **total area** of arable land in the Region, the larger part of which is "government land subject to no right" but allotted for government and private investment. As access to government land presupposes the acquisition of sufficiently large capital to install pumps in the land allotted, which is beyond what ordinary landless strata could afford, the result of government allotments has been an acute unequal distribution of land (though not jural ownership) in the Northern Region. As pointed out by Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa (1981), through the introduction of water-pumps during this century the size of arable land in the Northern Region was increased out of all proportion to population growth, but very few benefited from this increase. No precise figures are available to compare privately-owned land with government land in riverain Sudan as a whole. In the particular case of Dongola District, by 1977 the proportion of milk (free-hold) land in some villages amounted to only 13.8% of the total area under crop (El-Haj Bilal Omer, 1979:74).

Leaving aside the land privately-owned and the large tracts of government land allocated to public and private schemes, a recent report by the Northern Regional Ministry of Agriculture (1981) has refuted all claims of land shortage in the Northern Region. The report claims that while around 300,000 feddans are being brought under cultivation, there are 230,000 feddans that can be brought under crop "without recourse to major investments". The report adds that, besides these two categories of land, there are 'marginal' areas estimated at about 165,000 feddans which, in addition to the watercourses that are distant from the Nile but with agricultural potential (ca. 300,000 feddans), can be brought under cultivation with major investments. In other words, in addition to the inequitable distribution of land in the Northern Region, there are still over 900,000 feddans that can be brought under crop. A basic assumption in the interpretation of the "natural and/or ecological causes" stimulating migration from the Northern Region thus withers away.

Furthermore, although the categorical classification of rainland in western, eastern and southern Sudan as 'government owned' did not result in the creation of a landless group as in northern and central Sudan, the implications for the 'natives' are nevertheless severe. The government thus could (and did) withdraw the usufruct rights in order to introduce large-scale mechanized rainfed and irrigated schemes. The progressive 'marginalization' of nomadic pastoralists (cf. Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed, 1973) has thus been legitimized by the ..

system of land tenure imposed by the British colonial administration and which has been left intact by the successive national governments. Over and above the relative security of free-holders in riverain regions, the institutionalization of private landownership also provided free-holders with an asset that could be converted into capital which the inhabitants of the rainlands lacked. Until recently the 'local bourgeoisie' seems to have been drawn almost exclusively from among the population of the riverain regions.

MONETARIZATION THROUGH TAXATION

As the British colonial administration established its control over the country, it became evident that the measures introduced into the system of land tenure were not intended to 'restore' the kind of production that had formerly obtained in the Sudan. Thus as the different groups were pacified, one of the first measures to be introduced was a new tax to be paid in cash. In the riverain regions of northern and central Sudan which were the first to be brought under effective control, taxes on land, houses, date trees, animals and boats were imposed. In most other regions, particularly the Nuba Mountains, Southern Funj and Southern Sudan, various forms of collective tribute were initially imposed, but as the government consolidated its control a poll-tax (capitation) levied on adult males by virtue of their sheer existence was imposed. Towards the 1930s the poll-tax was replaced by taxes on possessions in some regions (e.g. the Ingessana Hills

District), while in others it remained intact until it was abolished by a national government well after Independence in 1956.

Generally speaking, the taxation system introduced by the British colonial administration cannot be viewed as excessive or comparable to taxation under the Turco-Egyptian colonial government. Indeed a system of 'light taxation' was envisaged as one of the basic 'pillars' of colonial policy.⁽⁵⁾ Irrespective of whether or not it was wilful policy (and I believe it was), the new taxation system proved decisive in the transformation and future development (or, rather, 'underdevelopment') of small-scale agricultural production in rural Sudan. Rather than being simply a method for channelling surpluses or revenue to the colonial state, in virtually all parts of the rural Sudan the cash tax resulted in a demand that could not be satisfied in the context of subsistence-oriented production or through the traditional barter-relations that formerly existed in the country. In order to obtain cash to pay taxes in those non-monetized regions, a series of transformations took place in the hitherto subsistence-oriented production systems. These transformations concerned the monetarization process, the imposition of primary export production, commercialization and the creation of conditions conducive to the dominance of merchant-capital in the country. Coupled with the colonial policy to establish markets for foreign, mainly British, manufactured goods with the concomitant subjection of local industries and handicrafts to competitive exclusion or wilful

destruction, these transformations have come to undermine the the capacity of domestic agricultural production to satisfy the needs of domestic producers. This has been the case as these transformations have resulted in the incorporation of the subsistence production systems into the capitalist world system, but in such a way that small farmers and pastoralists were to participate in the world-system more as **producers** than as **consumers** (cf. below).

A first and general level in the assessment of the impact of taxation to be paid in cash concerns the question of monetarization. At this level it is important to stress the social character of the modern money form (as opposed to the techno-functional definitions of the economist). Money thus is not viewed as being simply "what money does" (i.e. means of payment, unit of account, measure of value, medium of exchange, store of wealth, etc.). Insofar as the modern money form represents a materialized expression of value, and as value (use and exchange value simultaneously), or value in general, is an **attribute** of human labour (i.e. the value of a commodity is derived from the abstract labour embodied in it), the modern money form can only be meaningfully conceptualized in its essence as the "materialization of human labour in the abstract" or as the "specific material (externalised, objectified) expression of abstract labour (Banaji, 1976a; also see Salah El-Din El-Shazali Ibrahim, 1980:157ff). The fetishistic character of the modern money form thus stems from its role in concealing the essence of value in abstract human labour, while simultaneously presenting value in precisely a

perverted manner as its own 'property'. In other words, the modern money form is a representation of the social character of private labour, or the social relations of commodity producers.

The point in discussing the social character of the modern money form is that the process of monetarizing non-pecuniary systems not only implies that the producers have become able to 'exchange' through the medium of money, but, more significantly, it simultaneously transforms the subsistence-oriented systems into petty-commodity production systems and subjects them to the law of value which the use of the modern money form entails -i.e. it introduces a new set of social production relations associated with, but veiled by, the use of money.

THE IMPOSITION OF PRIMARY EXPORT PRODUCTION

In conceptualizing the transformation of non-pecuniary to monetized systems in colonial Sudan, it is crucially important to note the **colonial situation** which brought about, perforce, that transformation. The design of the colonial administration was not simply to monetarise taxes or the exchange of commodities because the use of money is more 'civilized' or 'convenient'. On the contrary, the British colonial administration not only sought the destruction of the traditional barter-relations that formerly supplemented subsistence production, but also deliberately sought to transform the non-pecuniary, subsistence-oriented production systems into ones that produce for export. In other words, the

imposition of the cash tax forced the subsistence producers in all parts of colonial Sudan to resort to cash cropping, sale of animals and, to a lesser extent, wage employment, in order to obtain cash to pay taxes (and, simultaneously, to avoid the punitive patrols that maintained 'law and order'). Hence despite the drastic fall in the prices of gum arabic from 60 to 35 piastres per kantar (ca. 100 lbs), there was a steady rise in gum exports from Sudan (El-Fatih Shaa'el Din Khalafalla, 1982:9; Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, 1984:34ff). Gum tapping was, and still is, undertaken almost exclusively by domestic producers around the Central Savannah belt in general, and Kordofan region in western Sudan in particular. Northern riverain Sudan also experienced an intensification of trading activities after 1899 as the local producers started to surrender part of their products, particularly food crops, to the merchants who undertook exportation, especially to Egypt where there was a growing demand (El-Haj Bilal Omer, 1979:166). Other crops, such as sesame and groundnuts, together with livestock, were also exported in greater amounts from the Sudan as the British colonial government established its control over the country (cf. Adel Amin Beshai, 1976).

In emphasizing the increase in the volume of crops exported from the country, it should not be assumed that the intensification of cash-cropping in colonial Sudan was a 'quantitative' (albeit monetized) increase for exchange patterns that formerly obtained in the Sudan. Far from that being the case, the increased involvement of small farmers in primary export production was not only a qualitative break,

but also one that led to a structural malformation in the logic and pattern of small scale agricultural production in the country. Whereas gum tapping formerly constituted a refuge for subsistence farmers in cases of crop failure, and the collected gum was exchanged for dura, under British colonialism farmers had to tap gum even when enough dura was harvested. Likewise, while other agricultural produce was formerly bartered only when surpluses were obtained, with the imposition of taxes to be paid in cash a marketable product had to be surrendered irrespective of supply. In short, cash cropping has become an integral part of the productive activities of the small farmers in rural Sudan. It is relevant to stress in this respect that the contentions in the literature that the productive activities of small farmers in rural Sudan are 'traditional' overlook the point that although certain elements of the 'traditional' patterns have been retained in the contemporary production systems (i.e. the domestic form continues to be the main labour process and the domestic producers still cultivate food crops for immediate consumption), a whole transformation has taken place in these production systems whether conceived from the standpoint of their underlying logic (subsistence and self-sufficiency as opposed to primary export production) or that of the sets of social relations of production involved (see below).

THE 'UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT' THESIS

In considering the issue of the imposition of primary export production, it is relevant to note that many scholars have tended to assert that, in its penetration into the Sudanese social formation, capital has concentrated its 'exploitation' in specific regions of the country (especially in the "triangle" of Khartoum-Gezira-Kassala Provinces), and that it is because of this concentration that a pattern of 'uneven development' between the various regions, but particularly between North and South, has developed (e.g., Garang, 1973:85; ILO, 1976:XX et passim; El-Wathig Kameir, 1980b:61ff; Abdel Rahman Abakar Ibrahim, 1984; idem. & Pool, 1980). This contention is, I believe, very controversial. In asserting this I do not of course wish to overlook certain differences between the "triangle" (or at least two of its three provinces) and the rest of the country - differences not least among which is the fact that Khartoum and Gezira Provinces have in many respects been favoured in the allocation of social services (education, health-care, recreation, etc.). I wish rather to emphasize the point that the colonial policy to impose primary export production in the Sudan was carried out in all regions without exception, and that all primary export production in the Sudan is dependent, directly or indirectly, on the domestic form of agricultural production. As far as the 'direct dependence' on the domestic form is concerned, there is one basic 'contextual' difference between the 'triangle' and the rest of the country which must be noted. While in the 'triangle' primary export domestic

production is largely undertaken by 'tenants' settled in large-scale irrigated schemes in the establishment of which relatively substantial investments have been made (the Gezira, New Halfa, Rahad and the numerous but smaller pump-schemes), in the rest of the country primary export production is undertaken by the seemingly 'independent' small farmers. As I shall explain later in the chapter, the tenants (with or without family labour) failed to meet all the labour requirements of the irrigated schemes, and this necessitated resort to wage labour; but likewise in small scale agriculture resort to wage labour is observed. In these cases of resort to wage labour in order to supplement domestic labour, as well as in the case of mechanised rainfed schemes in which there is an exclusive reliance on seasonal wage labourers, the importance of the domestic form of production cannot be overlooked. The system of seasonal wage labour migration prevailing in the Sudan presupposes the existence of the domestic form of production, which maintains the seasonal migrants during the rest of the year (see below).

The point to be stressed, then, is that in all regions brought under colonial control, taxes to be paid in cash were levied and this resulted in the emergence of primary export production as an integral aspect of domestic agricultural production in rural Sudan. Though the type of agricultural produce converted to cash crop was initially decided by merchants from among the products of each region for which there was demand elsewhere, the colonial administration started actively to impose cotton as a cash crop in most

regions amenable to its rainfed or irrigated cultivation, but without jeopardizing the production of food crops that maintained the producers and their dependants. The establishment of the Gezira Scheme as the world's largest plantation under one administration has been amply discussed (cf. Gaitskell, 1959; Barnett, 1975; 1977; Collins, 1976; O'Neill, 1978; Founou-Tchuigoua, 1978; Mohamed Mirghani Abdel Salaam, 1979; O'Brien, 1980; 1981; 1984a; Sorbo, 1980; Taisier M. Ahmed Ali, 1982), but the imposition of cotton during the colonial period was by no means confined to the Gezira Scheme and the smaller, public and private, pump-schemes in which tenants were settled. The 'introduction' of rain cotton in the Nuba Mountains is one ('extreme'?) case of imposition upon a community of 'traditional' small farmers. In view of poorly-founded contentions asserting that the "British colonial policy did succeed in relegating the [Nuba] region to being one of the least developed areas in the country.. [as it] kept the Nuba almost as they were centuries ago" (Ibrahim Kursany, 1983:36), there can hardly be a better example to refute the allegation of 'uneven development'.

Though the Nuba groups as a whole were not brought under effective colonial control until the 1930s, by 1912 many Nuba were already paying collective tribute in cash (cf. Roden, 1969). The imposition of the tax, and the subsequent search for cash, resulted in lowland cash-cropping although the Nuba preferred to live on the tops and slopes of hills. The compulsory substitution of poll-tax for communal tribute in the early 1920s instigated fierce resistance by the Nuba to

the colonial government, and many Nuba groups sought refuge in the hills. The colonial administration thus had to send punitive patrols repeatedly, not only to enforce the collection of the poll-tax, but also to force the Nuba out of their fortified positions and to resettle them in the lowlands. Though it does not specifically mention the cause of resistance, a letter by Newbold⁽⁶⁾ indicates the magnitude of that resistance in the case of one Nuba group, the Tira, who:

...clashed with the government forces in 1921 and twice in 1922, after which, they were compelled to move down from their hill tops to the plain. They were drifting back within a few years and further action had to be taken in 1925, 1929, and 1930 (Henderson, 1952:47) .

In the process of the pacification and resettlement of the Nuba, the colonial government went to great trouble as it attempted to allocate to the Nuba arable land that was occupied by other groups. The colonial Governor of Kordofan wrote in 1934 that:

When I came [to Kordofan Province] I found most of the land [in the Nuba Hills] taken up by Arabs, Fellata and merchants. Nuba had 14%. I have got them up to 40% in West and 30% in East [Hills] now (Henderson, 1952:67).

Once pacified and resettled in the plains, the Nuba were persistently pushed to grow cotton (which was first introduced by the Turco-Egyptian colonial government, but to be cultivated by 'Arabs' and the West African 'Fellata' in small plots for the local textile industry). In his 1935 draft report on 'Development in the Nuba Mountains', the colonial Governor of Kordofan Province (cf. Henderson, 1952:492ff) stated explicitly the objectives of his plans; and the

following extracts provide an insight into aspects of their nature;

Firstly, we want to increase cotton production by improved strains and by bringing in non-cotton growing communities. Improved strains need research. The bringing in of new communities, especially Nuba, is being attacked, after some delay, and the production graph shows that they are overtaking the non-Nuba by degrees. I do not think it is generally realized how little Nuba Mountains cotton was, until recently, grown by Nuba, who are, potentially, better cultivators than Arabs or Fellata.

Secondly, we must not put all our eggs in one basket (even though the American cotton grown here seems a very good basket) ... Nuba cotton has a good name and sells well, but food crops and other crops must be grown in needful ratio.

Apart from grain we **must** find out more about sesame and groundnut, e.g., where they are mostly grown, whether they are good quality for export, and their relation to other crops.

Thirdly, Any plan, therefore, we have must be comprehensive, i.e. it must include communications, water-supply, transport, all kinds of products exportable in quantity (I do not think with a limited staff we should waste time and energy on trivialities like bees-wax and native curios), livestock, and agricultural research (original emphasis)

The same process was repeated in 'remote' parts of Southern Sudan. Thus as the British troops pacified the different groups in Equatoria Province of Southern Sudan, a poll-tax was levied, and the natives consequently sought to earn sufficient cash through the sale of dura and, in some cases, chillies. Dura, being a food crop, gained popularity among the small farmers as it could easily be integrated in their 'subsistence' activities. In 1926, however, the colonial administration decided to 'introduce' cotton throughout the whole of Moru and Maridi districts of Equatoria, but the

natives showed no inclination towards its cultivation. It was only through direct compulsion and resort to a 'communal' (conscript) labour system that cotton was cultivated. Despite recourse to force, the colonial administration considered cotton as a crop through which cash was earned by the natives to pay their taxes. When the colonial government decided to increase cotton production in Equatoria by "bringing in the non-cotton growing" Azande farmers, the latter had to be resettled (cf. Wyld, 1949) and this, again, led to punitive campaigns. Reining (1966:31) has considered the circumstances under which the Zande 'Scheme' was established:

At the start of the Scheme cotton cultivation was interpreted by the administration to be a form of public service. In order to introduce the crop effectively into the subsistence agriculture, compulsion was considered necessary for a few years. Persons who failed to sow the cash crop or cultivate it properly were punished by being required to do some public service, usually a month's labour on the roads or other public works.

The necessity for compulsion in order to 'introduce' cotton effectively, it should be emphasized, was not dictated by the 'laziness' of the natives, or their ignorance concerning the 'value' of cash. Indeed when the Zande Scheme was established in the late 1940s almost all sedentary cultivators in Southern Sudan were already involved in some form of cash-cropping in order to pay taxes, if not to buy manufactured goods as well (see below). The necessity for compulsion was a consequence of the contradiction between, on the one hand, the desire of the colonial administration to increase its cotton exports and, on the other, the

'opportunity cost' for the natives in growing cotton rather than dura. In view of the comparative advantage of dura cultivation, which became popular among the Southern farmers, the deliberate policy to transform the production systems in the South into ones that produce raw material for export to industrialized countries becomes very clear. Table (2:1), which is compiled from data provided by Catford (1953), gives the **comparative exchange value** of cotton and dura respectively **in relation to** the poll-tax in the Maridi subdistrict over a number of years, taking 1928 values as 100.

Table 2:1

The Comparative Exchange Values of Cotton and Dura
in Relation to Poll-Tax in Maridi District
(1928=100)

YEAR	COTTON	DURA
1928	100	100
1929	135	75
1931	25	N.A
1940	22	N.A
1944	17	N.A
1948	28	114
1949	34	123
1950	44	113

The unwillingness of the natives of Equatoria to grow cotton is thus not difficult to explain. Not only dura constituted a food crop which could be consumed by the domestic producers themselves in case of difficulties in marketing, but it also fetched a **higher** exchange value compared to cotton, the prices of which had continuously been decreasing in the years that preceded the establishment of the Zande Scheme in the late 1940s. The effective 'introduction' of cotton thus necessitated not only 'compulsion' and

conscription for public work but also differential rates of taxation whereby, as Catford (*op.cit.*, p.158) explains;

non-cotton growers were required to sell, through authorized dealers, a larger quantity of grain than those who had grown a cotton plot of a satisfactory size and standard. The price paid by the buyers to the growers, and the subsequent retail price, were both carefully controlled.

In considering the imposition of cotton upon domestic production systems it is important to note that, besides being one of the main sources of cotton in the world market, colonial Sudan also figured as one of the world's main producers of gum arabic, sesame and groundnuts (cf. Adel Amin Beshai, 1976; Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, 1984). Until very recently, all three crops were almost exclusively furnished by the so-called 'traditional' domestic producers in different regions around rural Sudan.

THE DOMINANCE OF MERCHANT CAPITAL

A corollary of the British colonial policy to impose primary export peasant production has been the initiation and consolidation of new patterns of interaction between the 'traditional' domestic producers and traders. As maintained earlier, barter relations between natives and merchants obtained prior to British colonization; and the natives used to exchange their agricultural surpluses and/or the luxury items found in their regions (ivory, ostrich-feathers, etc.) for items imported by traders through long distance trade. Although these barter relations enabled traders to realize lucrative profits, the exchanges were sporadic and dependent

on the availability of agricultural surpluses or the prevalence of abnormal conditions such as crop failure in which cases farmers and pastoralists would resort to, for example, gum-tapping and ostrich hunting. The implications of these barter relations for the subsistence production was a positive contribution to the viability of subsistence production. With the imposition of cash taxes, and the resultant emergence of cash-cropping and sale of animals as integral parts of production systems in rural Sudan, the interaction between merchants and domestic producers in rural Sudan assumed dimensions that had formerly been lacking. Thus, in order to obtain cash, domestic producers had to sell part of their produce or animals to the traders. The latter knew of the predicament of the domestic producers and their desperate need for cash, and responded by offering the 'lowest prices' in order to realize the 'highest profit margins' possible. The role of the small trading centres in the 'exploitation' of small producers through, inter alia, the payment of depressed prices for produce and animals is relatively well-documented (e.g. Abdel Ghaffar and Mustafa, 1979; El-Haj Bilal Omer, 1979; Salah El-Din El-Shazali Ibrahim, 1980; O'Brien, 1980; Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1983).

The policy of the British colonial administration to force the small producers to interact with merchants did not cease with the imposition of cash-cropping. Through different measures in the various regions,⁽⁷⁾ the colonial administration sought to consolidate the position of traders. The "main work" of the colonial District Commissioner was thus

described in 1927 by Mr. Robertson,⁽⁸⁾ then D.C. himself, as being to "try to open up the country"; to realize that objective he "travelled hundreds of miles every year, climbed hills to see hill villages, making roads, opening markets, keeping the peace.." (cf. Salah El-Din El-Shazali Ibrahim, 1980:161). The colonial administration not only opened markets in which merchants could undertake their activities, but also sought to broaden the scope of trading activities by creating demand among the natives for imported, mainly British, manufactured goods through the deliberate severance of the traditional barter relations among the different local communities, the undermining of home crafts and local industry, and the introduction of new commodities for which there had formerly been no demand.

The issue of the restriction on barter relations in products furnished by merchants in the particular case of the Southern Funj region, which is yet another 'remote' and 'least developed' area, has been mentioned by Mr Dick,⁽⁹⁾ a colonial administrator, who wrote in his diary that:

Obviously bona-fide purchases of grain in small quantities for the particular Berta's own consumption would be allowed. Berta would be allowed to buy or barter dried fish from the Burun since merchants do not deal in these and the Berta are the Burun's only market... A sop to the merchants will be strict control of Berta pedlars who have taken away a certain amount of trade in the past, and action against any arab found trading.

It is interesting to note here that Mr Dick actually attempted to separate the places where the Burun conducted selling from those in which they made purchases. This was an

attempt to rule out possibilities of having barter-relations between the merchants and the Burun. Hence Mr Dick concluded that "the object .. is to force the Burun to understand cash, and to make them travel to fetch any goods they want".

The dependence of domestic producers on goods supplied by traders was enhanced further through the policy to subject the various local industries to competitive elimination by 'dumping markets' with imported manufactured goods to be sold, at least initially, at relatively cheap prices. Imported goods such as household utensils thus penetrated into all parts of the country, including Southern Sudan, at the expense of the home crafts. As described by Reining (1966:83) with reference to the Zande District in which "bush-shops" were established, "the locally produced wooden and pottery food bowls had been replaced almost entirely by enamelware; vessels made of calabashes had been replaced by glass bottles; and gourd cups by enamel, tin and aluminium cups". In the case of industries which withstood competition from imports, the colonial administration sought their destruction through the use of force. The long established textile (damour) industry which survived competition due to the durability, and low price, of the cloth is a good case in point. The story of the destruction of this industry is told, in rather muted and apologetic terms, by Bacon (1948:337ff) who maintains that

The home crafts of ginning and spinning and of weaving local cloth (damour) of useful quality was in old days thinly but widely spread throughout the Arab Sudan. Naturally [sic] it dwindled with the advent of cheap cotton piece-goods from England and Japan, and for a time it was suppressed by law to avoid the carrying over from year to year of

seed which might be infected with diseases and pests, notably the pink-bollworm. The industry is now [1948] encouraged on the understanding that spinners buy ready ginned lint that is made cheaply available for the purpose of eliminating home ginning with its attendant dangers. For this purpose the coarser cottons are preferred as being easier to spin.

In view of the colonial policy to impose cotton cultivation upon "non-cotton-growing communities" discussed earlier, the contention that the ban on cotton cultivation among the communities that had formerly depended on the local industry on grounds of "infected seed" clearly points to the ideological blinkers worn by colonial administrators. The 'improved seeds' which the Nuba and Azande were forced to cultivate, needless to say, could have averted the alleged "dangers". Owing to the resistance by the Sudanese in the regions in which the ban was enforced,⁽¹⁰⁾ the colonial administration sought to break the independence of the local textile industry through the provision of ready ginned lint. But though the latter was initially supplied at low prices, its spinning required a longer time and this resulted in an increase in damour prices. The competitiveness of the local damour industry with regard to its price was thus destroyed, but owing to its durability some of the better-off sections of the population continued to purchase it.

A further measure undertaken by the colonial administration to prompt the small producers to interact with merchants was the introduction of new commodities for which there was no demand. Coffee, tea, flash-lights, etc. were thus brought to the attention of domestic producers all over the

country, and this created a new source for the 'desire to obtain cash'. The direct intervention of the colonial government in the introduction of manufactured goods in regions where private traders failed, or were unwilling, to do so has been described by Reining (1966:152ff) with reference to the Azande in Southern Sudan.

The colonial administration wanted to create a demand for cash among the Azande to ensure their participation in cotton growing. The administration was aware that the Azande's demand for cash was limited not only because taxation could be met through dura cultivation, but also because the "upwards of 200 bush-shops" in the Zande District were generally poorly stocked with consumer goods. The "bush-traders" were interested more in buying the produce of the natives than in selling imported goods as the prices of the latter were rigidly controlled by the colonial government. As a result of this, the administration established a "Trading Division" within the Equatoria Project Board, which was established to promote, among other things, the Zande Scheme, in order to introduce imported goods which the Azande might desire to purchase (thereby creating a demand for cash which could be satisfied through cotton cultivation in the Scheme).

Though the severance of barter relations, the destruction of local industries and the aggressive marketing of imported goods undoubtedly benefited traders in rural Sudan as they were enabled to increase their profits through the consequent intensification of trading activities, the basic design of British colonial policy seems to have been geared towards a

completely different goal. The intention behind the consolidation of the position of merchants seems to have been the creation of demand for cash and, ultimately, the stimulation of further intensification of primary export domestic production which, besides serving to meet the needs of foreign (mainly British) industry, would increase government revenue through taxation of produce and/or exports. In spite of the apparent concern of the colonial government to consolidate the position of merchants, the interventionist government policies relating to strict price control, stock monitoring and rationing, and favouritism to the foreign export-import firms operating in the Sudan effectively subordinated, and constrained capital accumulation by the local Sudanese traders who were interacting with the domestic producers (cf. Mohamed Yousif A. El-mustafa, 1983; Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, 1984). The pattern of interaction between the traders and small producers which the colonial government initiated has developed a logic and directions of its own; and in the context of 'post-colonial' developments it has resulted in unfettered monopoly and monopsony situations. Black markets for consumer goods, and 'depressed prices' (or 'concealed wages') for domestic producers, together with the various forms of debt-relations that developed between traders and domestic producers, are all aspects of the present pattern of interaction (see below).

PRIMARY EXPORT PRODUCTION AND PERIPHERAL CAPITALISM

In emphasizing aspects of British colonial policy to initiate and sustain interaction between traders and domestic producers, it is not my intention to subscribe to the nebulous notions of 'dependency' (cf. Cockroft, et al., 1972; Frank, 1969) and 'unequal exchange' (cf. Emmanuel, 1972; Magdoff, 1969), both of which over-emphasize the 'external' factors at the expense of 'internal' processes in the conceptualization of the origin of contemporary peripheral social formations; furthermore, they purport to analyse the implications of the institution of the **international division of labour** in terms of exchange relations. As I have argued elsewhere (Salah El-Din Shazali Ibrahim, 1980:162), if the term "exchange" is to be adopted, a more relevant concept for the analysis of the interaction between merchants and domestic producers in colonial Sudan is one of 'forced exchange' and not 'unequal exchange'. The material bases of 'underdevelopment' (or, to be more specific, of peripheral capitalism) are consequences of the interaction between external factors (i.e. colonial policy) and internal processes and concern the constitution of production processes in the colonies (or the re-orientation of these processes towards primary export production), the class structure that emerged as a result of that re-orientation, and the social production relations that bind together the different classes.

British colonialism in the Sudan, as elsewhere, had its roots and raison d'etre in the inherent expansionist tendency of the capitalist mode of production taking hold in Britain,

and the search by the British bourgeoisie to combat the falling rate of profit in British industry. British colonialism in the Sudan was **capitalist-colonialism**, and its underlying dynamic should not be conflated with other, pre-capitalist, forms of colonisation in the Sudan (e.g. the Turco-Egyptian colonial period). Capitalist-colonialism was the method by which Great Britain, and the industrial-capitalist countries of Western Europe in general, could temporarily resolve the contradictory constitution of the capitalist mode of production insofar as the colonies fulfilled a two-fold function of (a) ensuring a supply of cheap primary products (raw material and foodstuffs) which would reduce the cost of production in industrial countries and, (b) constituting new markets in which the manufactured goods could be sold thereby increasing the profit (surplus value) which could be fed back to enhance further industrial development.

In discussing the dynamic of capitalist-colonisation the point is to stress that in the imposition of primary export production in colonial Sudan the basic objective was to procure raw materials and foodstuffs at production costs lower than those prevailing in the industrial countries for similar products (cf. Samir Amin, 1974b:13ff). But whereas in the industrial countries, where 'wage labour' constituted the dominant form of labour subjection or 'labour process', increased profits (or lower costs) could be effected through the extraction of **relative** rather than **absolute** surplus value,⁽¹¹⁾ in the Sudan (as in many other colonies) cheap

labour for primary export production was obtained through the preservation of certain elements of the domestic form of agricultural production. That is to say, through its 'subsistence sphere' the domestic form of agricultural production provided a form of labour which was virtually self-reproducing and for this the lowest possible 'prices' could be paid for primary products without jeopardizing the continuity of production. In other words, 'prices' of cash crops were not calculated with reference to the requirements of the physical reproduction of labour, but were instead treated as an additional 'incentive' which (coupled with the new taxation system backed by punitive campaigns) would 'induce' domestic producers to expand in their cash-cropping. Reining (1966:204ff) provides an interesting account of how 'prices' paid to the Azande were fixed, and though no comparable data from other parts of the country are available, his account serves to illustrate the point sufficiently:

Dr. Tothill⁽¹²⁾ had warned in his original proposals that prices to the cotton cultivators must be as high as possible ... He had advised a higher price for cotton than had been paid before: a minimum of 40 to 50 piastres for 100 pounds based on the 1938 price at Liverpool, about sixpence a pound of cotton lint. A minimum of 40 piastres was originally agreed upon as a desirable level, but this figure became the average price, not the minimum, in the first year of the Scheme. The world price for cotton lint had risen during the war and continued to rise fabulously afterwards ... If Dr. Tothill's figures are used as an index, the minimum price paid to the Azande in 1952 should have been about 380 piastres for 100 pounds of seed cotton, since the lint was sold for 49 pence a pound [at Liverpool] .. But in that year the average price to the Azande was 113 piastres, with a minimum of 50 piastres for 100 pounds of the

lowest grade.

The domestic form of agricultural production thus provided the cheapest labour for primary export production not only among the so-called 'traditional' farmers, but also in those large scale 'modern' schemes. The colonial administration indeed did not establish, or lease land to capitalists to invest in large scale irrigated agriculture except where relatively substantial amounts of capital were required to meet the cost of canalisation, irrigation pumps, etc., which were beyond the capacity of the small producers to provide. Otherwise, Sudanese farmers were maintained as 'peasants' working in the context of the domestic form of agricultural production.

THE PETRIFICATION OF THE DOMESTIC FORM

The point in the foregoing account is to stress the colonial design to achieve primary export domestic production in such a way that a substantial portion of the consumption requirements of domestic producers would be procured through the application of labour in the so-called 'subsistence sphere' of agricultural domestic production. In other words, though the British colonial administration has, perforce, incorporated domestic producers in rural Sudan into the international capitalist market, that incorporation was intended to be partial. Domestic producers were incorporated more as producers than as consumers. The proceeds from cash-cropping thus were (and still are)⁽¹³⁾ so low that they covered only partially the costs of reproduction of domestic

labour. The cost of housing (construction and maintenance of huts, etc.), the basic food crop and vegetables, the provision of water and fire-wood, and the rest of the activities covered under the category of "household tasks", are all furnished through the direct labour of domestic producers. The proceeds from cash cropping, sale of animals and the multifarious forms of petty commodity production undertaken by small producers hardly sufficed to cover the cost of clothing, taxes and supplementary consumer goods such as sugar, tea and coffee, cooking-oil, soap, etc.

The pattern of the incorporation of domestic producers into the world market not only resulted in the severance of the 'critical interplay' between the capacity of domestic producers to produce and their capacity to consume, but also led to a virtual petrification of productive forces in primary export domestic production. To understand aspects of this petrification, however, we have to take into account the interdependencies between the level of the development of the productive forces and the level of accumulation by domestic producers. On the one hand, the tools and techniques employed in cash cropping in colonial Sudan were the same 'primitive', labour-intensive, tools and techniques of pre-colonial times. With that low level of development of the productive forces the opportunities for horizontal expansion (and, ultimately, accumulation) were very limited. On the other hand, the proceeds from primary export production were so low to the extent that not only did they not allow scope for accumulation of resources to be deployed in the development of productive

forces (through adoption of more efficient techniques as well as through engagement of wage labour), but also hardly sufficed to meet immediate consumption requirements. It was only a small minority of 'strategically positioned' domestic producers who, in benefiting from the the **differentiation process**, managed to develop their productive forces (see below). For the overwhelming majority of domestic producers, not only was such a development of the productive forces difficult to realize, but also the satisfaction of immediate consumption requirements was to become increasingly difficult to achieve without supplementing their proceeds from cash-cropping with wage employment for others.

Some scholars assert that the processes of monetarization and commercialization **promise** to dissolve the domestic form of production through the differentiation process thereby set into motion (e.g. Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, 1984). But this assertion overlooks the point that, by virtue of its 'subsistence sphere', the domestic form of agricultural production seems to be endowed with a characteristic resilience, which obstructs the thorough proletarianization of those producers who find themselves unable to satisfy all their needs through application of labour in domestic production. The outcome of the interplay between these two contradictory tendencies (i.e. differentiation and resilience) has been a process of **semi-proletarianization**, that is to say, of 'casual' and/or 'seasonal' resort to wage employment. Throughout the British colonial period, it was basic government policy to maintain conditions conducive to the

sustenance of the 'structurally malformed' domestic production as shown by its reluctance to expropriate land under crop and its avoidance of the emergence of a substantial class of landless Sudanese through various stabilization measures. These conservation measures are to some extent also true of government policy in present-day Sudan. Before considering the differentiation process, I will attempt to present a brief assessment of these "stabilization policies" through which the colonial government managed to constrain the process of proletarianization in colonial Sudan.

THE COLONIAL STABILIZATION POLICY

Generally speaking, British colonial policy in the Sudan has often been described as being in a category of its own when compared to British policy elsewhere in Africa where the 'colonial situation' has in many regions resulted in the formation of substantial strata of wage labourers and the emergence of 'White-settler-colonies'. Many scholars (e.g. Mohamed Hashim Awad, 1971) seem to explain the alleged 'unorthodoxy' of colonial policy in the Sudan with reference to the desire to avoid any measures that could be instrumental in enticing mass revolution as had taken place during the Turco-Egyptian colonial era, while others (Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, 1978; El-Wathig Kameir, 1980b) have additionally invoked a 'climatic factor' whereby they seem to argue that the hot climate of the Sudan is hostile to European settlement. Other interpretations (Mekki Abbas, 1951; Gaitskell, 1959) attempt to explain that 'unorthodoxy' in

terms of the 'personal qualities' of Lord Cromer and Earl Kitchener who had "insiders knowledge" of the status of Europeans in Egypt so that in his Memorandum to the Foreign Office concerning the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty on the status of colonial Sudan, Lord Cromer intended to deprive the Europeans coming to the Sudan of the privileges ('capitulations') they had enjoyed in Egypt.⁽¹⁴⁾ A further 'factor' can be sought in the fact that the Sudan was one of a very few colonies in which the 'flag' did not follow 'trade'. Given the 'competition' between colonial administrators and the trading companies in India as well as Africa, and the powers assumed by the trading companies to the extent of effectively administering colonies, the 'sensitivity' of the personnel of Sudan Political Service could have some influence on colonial policy.

Although the different interpretations current in the literature pose 'factors' that must have influenced, to varying degrees, colonial policy in the Sudan, none touches on the basic **differentia** that sets Sudan (rather than colonial policy) apart from other British colonies in Africa. Resistance by 'natives' to colonial domination was thus hardly unique to the Mahdists. In the Sudan, as elsewhere, all forms of native resistance were ruthlessly pacified; there could be no more an antagonizing measure than the 'Anglo-Egyptian' invasion itself, precisely because the number of 'natives' killed in the course of a single day at the battle of Karari (upwards of 20 thousands by one estimate) virtually matches the total number massacred throughout the Turco-Egyptian

colonial period. Likewise, while the affiliation of the administration of colonial Sudan to the Foreign Office⁽¹⁵⁾ must have had some influence upon the conception and implementation of policies insofar as the colonial policy-makers had what could be viewed as a 'global perspective', the fact that the greatest potential resource in the Sudan is its vast agricultural land must have been the decisive element in the determination of colonial policy concerning the exploitation of the natural resources of the country. Unlike the Copperbelt and the other British colonies in Central and Southern Africa, the Sudan had comparatively trivial mineral resources, and no mining industry of any appreciable size developed; as such there was no need to create a substantial fully-proletarianized wage labour force. When a relatively substantial demand for cheap seasonal agricultural labour emerged after the establishment of the Gezira Scheme in the 1920s, however, the colonial administration spared no effort in inducing systems of seasonal wage labour migration, but in such a way as not to jeopardize the domestic form of production in the so-called 'traditional sector'; this was precisely because the precondition for the procurement of cheap seasonal agricultural labour was, as it is now, the sustenance of the 'subsistence sphere' of domestic production. As viable domestic agricultural production presupposes the existence of stable communities (i.e. being tied to the land as opposed to being fully-proletarianized), the colonial stabilization policies could be viewed as fully in keeping with the overall

design of British imperial policy to exploit to the maximum the natural resources of the colonies.

ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF WAGE LABOUR

At a first and more general level, the evidence of stabilization policies may be substantiated with reference to the course adopted by the colonial administration in securing the labour force required to undertake manual tasks in the context of a virtual lack of wage labourers. Labour demand was initially largely confined to urban areas, and, in the main, concerned tasks in government departments, building and other infra-structural projects as well as commerce. In spite of the urgency of that demand, the colonial administration subordinated the needs of the urban wage labour market to the policy to promote primary export domestic production. Thus not only were no proletarianization measures undertaken, but also only a section of the landless class created through land registration in riverain regions were mobilized, while quite a number of the landless were stabilized as tenants in government schemes (see below). When the numbers of northern migrants, ex-slaves and prisoners proved insufficient to meet all the demand for urban labour, the administration resorted to the importation of labour from beyond the borders of the country. In Chapter Four I shall account in detail for the initial emergence and expansion of the urban labour market in colonial Khartoum; I will confine my discussion here to the situation in rural Sudan.

The initial tasks in rural Sudan generated by the

inception of British colonial rule concerned the construction and maintenance of roads, rest-houses for colonial administrators, court houses and, at least in the 'favoured regions', schools and dispensaries. In the undertaking of these tasks, however, virtually no unskilled wage labour was required as the colonial government resorted to forms of **conscript labour** whereby village headmen were required to provide as many able-bodied men as was deemed sufficient for the undertaking of the task in question. It is noteworthy that in many parts of central and western Sudan the policy to conscript labour fitted with prevalent notions among the sedentary cultivators concerning work for a dahawa (half day) for the village headman on his farm (cf. Spaulding, 1979a). Conscript labour not only reduced the costs of construction tasks for the colonial administration, but also required no form of migration by villagers as the tasks were performed either wholly inside, or in the immediate vicinity of, their respective villages. As all such tasks were usually undertaken during the dry season when no agricultural operations of any significant magnitude are carried out, there is no evidence that the days annually required in conscript labour disrupted domestic agricultural production.

Though the colonial policy to resort to conscript labour has been considered in a number of recent contributions (O'Brien, 1980; 1983a; El-Fatih Shaa'eldin, 1981; 1982), the significance of the conscript labour system in colonial Sudan has not been systematically studied. But though in many parts of northern, central and western Sudan there is no evidence of

a heavy resort to conscript labour, in Southern Sudan it seems to have been the main source of unskilled workers as far as can be seen from the official ("confidential") reports. In a letter from the Commissioner of Equatoria Province to the colonial Civil Secretary (No. E.P/37.B.1; dated 9.1.46), for example, the conscript labour requirements were detailed in the following manner:

During the peak period of the current district and P.W.D. [Public Works Department] building programme it is estimated that in Juba Town alone 1,450 conscript labourers will be required. This figure, together with labour required for P.W.D. road camps throughout the district will give a total of approximately 2,000 or 11% of the nominal roll of district tax-payers. This does not take into account the labour required to clean and maintain certain district roads, rest houses and court houses. From conversation on trek it is apparent that in some cases young men are having to do three separate months of conscript labour in Juba every year, and sometimes more.

As noted by El-Fatih Shaa'eldin (1982:12), the British colonial administration continued to conscript villagers to work even after it (voluntarily) ratified the 1930 Forced Labour Convention. In its last decade, however, the colonial administration decided to rename 'conscript labour' as 'tribal labour'. In a "Strictly Confidential" letter to the Governor of Equatoria (CS/SCR/37.C.1/1; dated 28 Jan. 1946), the colonial Civil Secretary drew the attention of the Governor to the point that

In paragraph 1643 (b) of your December 1945 Diary the phrase "conscript labour" is used. Conscript labour by recent instructions can only now be employed with permission of the Labour Board and I presume that you mean by this phrase the recruitment of tribesmen for

work of a communal and social nature for the benefit of the community as a whole.

Would you please see that the words "conscript labour" are not used in those diaries which are non-confidential and which are handed to the press.

IMPORTATION OF UNSKILLED LABOUR

As the tasks to be undertaken in rural Sudan (except perhaps in the South) were often of such a magnitude that resort to conscript labour for their undertaking would effectively disrupt domestic agricultural production; and as there was a demand by private employers for agricultural labour which could not be met through conscripted labour, resort to wage labour was imperative. The method by which the colonial government solved its labour supply problem was observed by Martin (1970:219) who in the early decades of colonial rule wrote that;

For all large undertakings such as the construction work on the new Blue Nile dam at Sennar, it has been found necessary to seek beyond the borders of the Sudan for the required unskilled labour, and this has been partially found in the case referred to by applying to the gaols in Egypt. In December 1913, 1,080 convicts from the Tura and Abu Zibil penitentiaries [in Egypt] were brought to the Sudan for employment upon the Gezira irrigation works at Sennar.

McLoughlin (1966) has documented further the evidence of colonial policy to import unskilled labourers into Kassala Province and described how in 1907 about 400 Abyssinians settled in Kassala in response to the expressed demand from the Public Works Department for labourers. From that year onwards, Abyssinians (in unspecified, but seemingly substantial numbers relative to demand) developed a system of

annual migratory cycle where they used to come during the dry season (after harvesting their food crops) to work in the Sudan for three or so months.

The definitive solution to the colonial problem of labour shortage was, however, effected through the policy to encourage West African 'Fellata' (Hausa, Bornu, etc.) to come and settle in the Sudan not only as wage labourers, but also as primary export domestic producers (cf. Isam Hassoun, 1952; Balamoan, 1976; Duffield, 1980; 1981; 1983). At present, descendants of West African immigrants are estimated to be around 10 per cent of the population of Northern Sudan. According to Duffield (1983:45) West African

settlement in Sudan only became significant in terms of numbers with the colonial conquest of Nigeria and Sudan at the turn of the century, and was primarily characterised as a settlement of rural peasant cultivators and agricultural labourers drawn largely from the poorest sections of the Hausa peasantry. A large number of Hausa, however, also formed their their own quarters in the towns of northern Sudan, the majority in occupations which could all be subsumed under the heading of unskilled manual labour.

RE-PEASANTIZATION OF THE LANDLESS

At the time when the British colonial administration was heavily engaged in the importation of labour to meet its demand for unskilled labourers, concurrent attempts were being made to rehabilitate in primary export production the returned emigrants in riverain regions who had lost their claim to land as a result of the land settlement and registration policy.

As maintained earlier, a number of landless 'northerners'

entered the labour market as unskilled wage labourers in Greater Khartoum (cf. Chapter Four; also see, El-Wathig Kameir, 1980b:41ff), and the Gash-Tokar agricultural region (cf. McLoughlin, 1966:116). However there were also others who accepted to stay in their homeland as share-croppers (cf. El-Haj Bilal Omer, op. cit.), while quite a substantial number were absorbed as tenant-farmers in the numerous schemes established by the colonial government in its "land subject to no rights". In the specific case of Dongola, the Suleim basin was opened in 1909 with an area of 24,000 feddans, while the first scheme in Shendi District at Zeidab⁽¹⁶⁾ was opened in 1905 and later, under the Sudan Plantation Syndicate, was extended to cover an area of 15,233 feddans. As described by Bolton (1948:194), in the government-controlled

pump-schemes in the Northern Province land is leased to tenants on a yearly lease. The tenant pays a water rate and a nominal rent of 1 m/m a fedddan. He takes the whole crop except in the case of cotton which is shared equally by Government and tenant.

The increase in agricultural production in the Northern Province following the establishment of government (and later, private) schemes not only made possible the absorption of a substantial number of returned emigrants, but also apparently resulted in an acute shortage of labour during the early 1920s. Less than three decades following the enactment of the colonial land settlement and registration policy in riverain Sudan, however, the long term effects of the colonial land tenure started to be severely felt by the new generation of Northerners. The land owned privately by the small farmers could not support all their male children; and the latter had

to seek alternatives to secure a living. The colonial educational policy which undoubtedly favoured, at least initially, Northerners who were the chosen group to assume positions of skilled workers and low ranking government officials, helped to solve partly the problem of labour surplus by its stimulation of emigration. But with the promotion of education in the other regions the colonial government started to plan and carry out policies by which that emigration could be curbed. Thus following his visit to the Northern Province in 1938, the colonial Deputy Civil Secretary wrote in his report to the Civil Secretary (Henderson, 1952:104ff) that:

The emigration fever for Shaigiya (soldiers, police, officials, merchants) and Danagla (merchants and servants) is strong and we probably could not recall the myriad truants now outside, but we could at least (by re-cultivation of basins) keep the strong youth from emigration, especially when elementary education in non-riverain provinces causes keener competition outside.

The Deputy Civil Secretary of 1938, Sir Douglas Newbold, K.B.E., became Civil Secretary in the following year (MacMichael, n.d., p. 31); and in his six years in office he was instrumental in promoting elementary education in most regions around the country (cf. Perham, 1952). But though the 'emigration fever' of Northerners continued, increasing areas of "government land subject to no rights" were brought under crop as the colonial government started to dispose of land on lease to those 'natives' capable of developing it. As explained by El-Haj Bilal (op. cit., p. 76), although government land "was theoretically accessible to all", access

in practice depended on the investor's social, and even more importantly, financial position as the decisive criteria for land allotment. Nevertheless, as tenants were settled in these schemes, the allocation to private investors did realize the colonial design of rehabilitating the landless, not only in the Northern Region but throughout northern and central riverain Sudan where landownership was institutionalized. As described by Omer M. Osman (1958:40):

The gross area under (private) pump schemes in the whole country increased from 38,000 acres in 1925 to 180,000 in 1944, and by 1956 the number of pump-schemes had exceeded 1,500 irrigating 625,000 acres. The expansion in the Blue Nile Province has moved at a more rapid pace..

In discussing the policy of government to rehabilitate landless Sudanese, I must stress that in a few cases the government did dispossess holders who were cultivating land. I have already mentioned the case of the Nuba and how the land allocated to them was actually seized from 'Arabs' and 'Fellata'. Whether or not the two groups were compensated through allotment in other areas is difficult to specify. However, what is certain is that whenever 'compensation' was possible, the administration seems to have been unequivocally keen to grant it. The Nubians who lost their land in 1905 as a result of the elevation of the Aswan Dam were thus brought under the so-called 'Alternative Livelihood Schemes' (cf. Bolton, 1948:193); as were the White Nile Arabs, who lost a large part of their agricultural land with the construction of Gebel Awlia Dam in the vicinity of Khartoum (cf. Abbas Ahmed Mohamed, 1980). One extreme case in which the colonial

administration kept its promise for compensation concerns the conflict between the Hadendowa of the Red Sea Hills and the Kassala Cotton Company over the allotment of tenancies in the Gash Scheme (cf. Henderson, 1952:38 et passim; Hassan Mohamed Salih, 1976:161-187).

The policy of the government not to recognise free-holding in the Tokar and Gash Deltas, which were categorised as "government-owned land subject to no right", was explained earlier. But as pointed out by Hassan Mohamed Salih (1976:161):

The Gash flood used to water a strip of land of a width varying from half a mile up to three miles. The Hadendowa used to clear and utilize some parts of this naturally flooded area for cultivation of durra... In addition, a native system of channels (shaiyotat; sing. shaiyote) had been developed to lead water to irrigate more areas beyond the natural flood limits. The term shaiyote was applied both to the channel itself and to the plot irrigated by it... Traditionally the irrigated area was divided among different lineages of the Hadendowa, each with its own shaiyote. The cultivation of the shaiyote was organized and supervised by the sheikh of the lineage who co-ordinated the labour for clearing the channel every year.

Though the Hadandowa were denied private landownership, the names of all shaiyote-holders were registered by the administration and when the Kassala Cotton Company was given the concession in the Gash delta to establish an irrigation scheme in 1923 preference in tenancy allotments was accorded to registered shaiyote-holders. As it turned out, the Hadendowa who took over tenancies were interested in grain rather than cotton cultivation and for this reason the Company wished to exclude them and to allocate tenancies to

'Northerners' and West Africans settled in the region. The ensuing conflict of interest, in which the colonial District Commissioner supported the Hadendowa, was so intense that the whole issue had to be referred to the central administration at Khartoum. Failing to strike a compromise, the central government relinquished the concession and transferred it to the Sudan Plantations Syndicate of the Gezira Scheme. Though some Hadendowa later agreed to sub-let their tenancies to the settlers, many others continued with the scheme. But though the colonial administration did allow the Hadendowa to cultivate the dura they were interested in, the colonial design of promoting primary export production in the Gash Delta was actually further entrenched. "Thus every tenant was entitled to have two feddans of dura for each ten feddans of cotton" (Hassan Mohamed Salih, op. cit., p. 176).

Leaving aside the intentions of Newbold to "humanize administration" (cf. Perham, 1952), the political expediency in the apparent identification with 'peasants', but without jeopardizing the colonial design to promote primary export domestic production, has articulately been expressed by Newbold himself (Henderson, 1952:73) in a letter to Mr. Frank Cottrell dated 16 Feb. 1935 in which he has referred to the case of the Kassala Cotton Company and maintained that:

This country is based on the peasant, not on the financier. "It was only when he felt himself **in alliance** with the peasant", said Tolstoy of some Russian D.C., "that he began to direct him"... Was the Kassala Cotton Company in alliance with the Hadendowa? No, and it crashed in spite of Liverpool and Khartoum. Might is not always Right and I know that Righeousness will win if it has a few allies, but as you say we must know what

we're after. I **think** I do, and so do you.
Well, let's yell it from the house-tops
(original emphasis).

PROTECTION OF SMALL-HOLDERS

The British colonial administration not only sought the rehabilitation of the landless, but also the protection and conservation of small-holdings in the face of attempts by speculators to expropriate land in those regions where individual landownership was recognised. As described by Mohamed Hashim Awad (1971:222):

At first speculators confined their interest to the riverain land of the Northern Province, which is adjacent to Egypt. There, Greek and Syrian immigrants began to practise some of the familiar techniques by which poor landowners are expropriated. They might have succeeded in achieving their goal had not the local administrator acted swiftly enough to prevent land from changing hands..

In order to check speculation and the dispossession of small-holders, the colonial administration enacted a series of laws regulating the transfer of titles. As early as 1905, the consent of Government to sale of land was required; and although the **Native Disposition of Lands Restriction Ordinance** of 1922 facilitated transfer of titles among natives "of the same locality", the ban on acquisition by "outsiders" (expatriates as well as Sudanese from other regions) was left intact throughout the colonial period.

The protection provided to domestic producers also concerned the strict monitoring of the interaction between the small producers and the merchants. In this regard the colonial administration enacted a series of ordinances of which the

most significant were the **Regulation of Prices Ordinance** issued in 1914 (and amended in 1919, 1920 and 1922) and the **Stocks Declaration Proclamation** of 1919 (cf. Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1983:157 et passim). In accordance with the former, the colonial administrators at local levels were authorized to fix the "maximum prices of any one or more of the foodstuffs or articles of prime necessity" in their districts, while the **Stocks Declaration Proclamation** was intended to monitor the supply situation and, ultimately, to check artificial shortages and/or the developing of 'black marketing' by traders. Further protection was provided by the enactment of **The Gezira Land Ordinance** of 1927, which prohibited seizure of crops grown by tenants in settlement of debts unless there was the written consent of government to the initial transaction. This protection was later extended to other regions by the enactment of Article (6) of the **Civil Justice Ordinance** of 1946 which stipulated the prohibition of shail (pre-harvest mortgage).

In emphasizing the colonial policy to protect small-holders, I must stress that these measures were intended to prevent speculation and dispossession of small-holders more than to "exclude" capitalists from investment in agriculture. As I explained earlier, all interested capitalists (local as well as foreign) were allotted schemes in "government land subject to no rights".

DIFFERENTIATION

In the foregoing discussion of aspects of the design, implementation and consequences of the policies affecting domestic agricultural production in colonial Sudan I have deliberately focused my discussion more on 'domestic production' than on 'domestic producers'. The main reason behind this is my wish to provide a clear statement of the nature of the transformations that have taken place within the so-called 'traditional sector'. Had the focus been on the domestic producers, I would have found it very difficult to present that account, precisely because the 'domestic producers' are not a homogeneous mass. All along I have assumed a significant aspect of the transformation from subsistence to primary export domestic production, viz., the process of differentiation. As I shall demonstrate in this section, this omission does not flaw my conceptualization of the transformations that have taken place within the domestic form of agricultural production as a form of labour subjection.

The processes of capitalist differentiation that result in the formation of a rural bourgeoisie and a rural proletariat in agrarian communities have generated considerable controversy, not least because of misplaced abstractions (cf. Mustafa Babiker, 1984b). Prominent among these is the tendency to conceptualize the 'rural population' (particularly in peripheral social formations) as being, by and large, 'basically' homogeneous. As such researchers set out to

investigate the "causes" and "factors" that have set into motion 'differentiation processes'. Postulates such as hard work, achievement, exceptional soil fertility, etc., are accordingly treated as key concepts to explain the fact that some sectors of the rural population are observed to be 'better-of' than others (cf., e.g., Roseberry, 1976). Without denying in any sense the roles of 'hard work', advantageous 'political' connections, etc., in effecting 'differences' between individuals and/or groups, we have to be cautious not to conflate two related, but significantly different, types of 'differences' (or, to be more specific, processes) which the concept of 'differentiation' denotes. These two processes are **quantitative** and **qualitative differentiation** respectively (cf. O'Brien with Salah El-Din, 1979:170ff).

Quantitative differentiation relates to the resources at the disposal of individuals, and the differences thus obtained between individuals can be measured through the collection of quantitative (statistical) information on the "possessions" of individuals. To this extent, quantitative differentiation can, at least as a conceptual possibility, produce as many 'classes' (or categories in classifying people in terms of resources) as there are individuals to be compared.

The second, and sociologically more significant form of differentiation is qualitative differentiation which can be conceptualized through an analogy with zero-sum-games; all that one individual (or 'class' of individuals) has acquired, another has lost. That is to say, qualitative differentiation is **relational**, and as the relational concept of 'father'

incorporates in its definition those of 'mother' and 'daughter' and/or 'son', it is likewise with qualitative differentiation: the 'leader' denotes the presence of the 'led'; the 'employer' the 'employee', and so on.

The link between quantitative and qualitative differentiation under capitalism is that wealth (or quantitative differentiation) can be taken over to underpin, as cause and effect, qualitative differentiation. Wealth becomes 'capital', which produces further 'wealth' (surplus-value). The concept of capital is also relational (it incorporates in its definition the concept of "capital-producing", surplus-value-generating labour); and capital is itself a social relation (binding together the capitalist and labourer) or, to say the same thing, it is distinct from wealth or quantitative differentiation though it presupposes and generates wealth.

The point in highlighting aspects of quantitative and qualitative differentiation is that in pre-colonial Sudan the aggregate of domestic producers (as distinct from other strata comprising rulers, traders and holy-men, etc.) were qualitatively undifferentiated, although in terms of resources significant quantitative differences could have obtained among them. Factors such as hard work, size of the productive membership of domestic units (i.e. producer-consumer ratio), etc., accounted for such quantitative differentiation. But to effect the transition from quantitative to qualitative differentiation in the context of subsistence production in pre-colonial Sudan entailed the deposition of a ruler (or the

formation of a 'new community') for a peasant to become a ruler; or to have access to 'sacred knowledge' to become a holy-man. The positions of qualitative differentiation then available (particularly those of rulers and holymen), however, had to be very limited in number to be qualitatively as such. Even when such banal constraints did not hold, as in the case of traders, the domestic producers were severely constrained by the overall logic and orientation of subsistence production. In other words, although, conceptually speaking, peasants could convert whatever 'wealth' they had into mercantile capital, the viability of such a conversion was made very difficult by the subsistence orientation of production processes; as all the basic subsistence requirements were either produced directly by those who needed them, or procured through local level barter (as in the complementarity of cultivators and nomadic pastoralists), opportunities for traders to involve themselves in the distribution of "lowly subsistence goods" were very limited and almost exclusively confined to periods of crop failure in a region. The only form of trade that was viable enough in pre-colonial Sudan was long distance trade in luxury items oriented, mainly though not exclusively, towards the needs of those (rulers and holymen) who commanded a purchasing power through their appropriation of agricultural surpluses. Long distance trade, however, required an amount of wealth to be converted into merchant-capital which only a few, 'very rich', 'peasants' could afford to mobilize. As a result of this, the majority of riverain peasants who became (hardy) petty traders

during the Funj and Turco-Egyptian colonial periods were forced to do so more by virtue of their impoverishment than by their accumulation of wealth (cf. Burckhardt, 1819; Pallme, 1844; O'Fahey and Spaulding, 1974). In asserting this, it is not my wish to contend that in pre-colonial Sudan 'well-off' peasants had no alternative but to continue as 'peasants' until they accumulated sufficient resources to enter into long distance trading in 'luxury' goods. I wish rather to point out that entry into long distance trade was not readily accessible to all 'well-off' peasants. 'Moderately' well-off peasants, however, had two main alternatives to enhance their wealth. In riverain regions, wealth was mostly mobilized to purchase slaves, who were then deployed in the expansion of agricultural production, whereas in the rainlands agricultural surpluses were mostly converted into livestock (cf. Spaulding, 1979a).

With the imposition of monetarization and commercialization at the turn of this century, the fetters imposed upon qualitative differentiation were simultaneously undermined. Basic to this process was the emergence of a need for cash to pay taxation. To meet this need, domestic producers had only two alternatives: either to surrender some of their products (cash-cropping and sale of animals) or to seek wage employment (sale of labour-power).

The commoditization of labour opened a world of opportunity to those 'peasants' who possessed enough resources to engage wage labourers. In other words, like the already qualitatively differentiated strata ('tribal chiefs',

merchants, etc.), 'rich peasants' benefited from the predicament of those domestic producers who had no surpluses to surrender in exchange for cash and who were consequently driven to seek wage employment. In short, it was the incorporation of domestic producers into the world market which has set into motion the process of qualitative differentiation whereby some (few) peasants were enabled to engage wage labourers and, largely via trade, to effect the transition to become capitalists, while others (now indeed the majority) were being slowly, but persistently, forced to seek wage employment.

The process of qualitative differentiation was likewise instigated among nomadic pastoralists by the imposition of the cash tax. But downward differentiation for nomads is not confined to semi-proletarianization (seasonal wage labour migration), as it may also lead to sedentarization. This is particularly true of those small herding units which could not afford to release a member to seek wage employment and which as a result had to sell an animal to obtain cash. Animals in pastoral production systems, it should be stressed, represent both the basic means and the primary product of production; as such the compulsory sale of animals is of the **same order** as dispossessing cultivators of their land. Obviously it is in those small herding units in which the number of animals is at a minimum for the viability of nomadic pastoralism that loss of a few animals results in sedentarization (cf. Haaland, 1969; 1972). The sedentarization at the turn of the century of sections of the pastoral Kenana Arabs is a good case in point

(see Gruenbaum, 1978; O'Brien, 1980; 1984b). Upon sedentarization, these ex-nomads have come to experience the same differentiation process to which cultivators in general are subjected.

The differentiation process among cultivators and pastoralists is still unfolding. However, insofar as the primary processes of capital accumulation in the Sudan have, from their inception, been dependent on domestic agricultural production; and insofar as the colonial administration has carried out policies to preserve the volatile resilience of domestic production, the realization of the full potentialities of the differentiation process was severely constrained during the colonial period. The upward differentiation of the few strategically positioned domestic producers which enables them to become capitalist of course continues to be unfettered. But the downward differentiation has assumed the form of semi-proletarianization, which is the consequence partly of the 'subsistence sphere' and partly of constraints inherent in the operation of wage labour markets in the country which limit the opportunities available for thoroughly proletarianized domestic producers. In Chapters Four and Five I will assess in detail aspects of the constraints inherent in the operation of the urban wage labour market; and in the rest of this chapter I will attempt to illuminate aspects of the semi-proletarianization process and the course in which it has recently been intensified.

THE FORMATION OF THE SUDANESE WAGE LABOUR FORCE

As I have already argued, the main concern of the colonial administration during its first decades was the stabilization of domestic agricultural producers in the context of their incorporation into the international capitalist system. To avoid the disruption of primary export domestic production in the so-called 'traditional sector', the colonial administration resorted to the importation of unskilled labour, particularly from West Africa, to redress the shortage in the massive building and other projects necessitated by the establishment of the new administration. Notwithstanding the stabilization policies, the formation of a local wage labour force started with the establishment of British colonial rule.

The first sections of the Sudanese population to be fully proletarianized were the 'landless' from the riverain regions and the former (and run-away) slaves. The institutionalization of private landownership in the riverain regions continued to exacerbate the problem of the 'surplus population' and, as a result of this, large sections of the new generations of northerners were forced to migrate to the other parts of the country in search of alternative means to secure their livelihood. The colonial policy to promote education in the North contributed to the emergence of northerners as the core of the semi-skilled labour force, while quite a number of 'highly educated' northerners managed to establish themselves in clerical, administrative as well as professional positions.

The proletarianization of domestic producers likewise started with the establishment of colonial rule. Up to around

1925, however, the participation of domestic producers in the wage labour market was partial, sporadic and a function of factors such as the need to pay taxes, crop failure, etc (cf. O'Brien, 1980; 1983 a; 1984a; 1984b; 1984c). This limited involvement was underlain not only by the colonial stabilization policy and the resistance of domestic producers to the loss of their autonomy, but also by the lack of significant opportunities for wage employment in the country. The larger part of the labour demand in the first decade of colonial rule thus originated in urban construction, particularly in those cities which, like Khartoum, were completely destroyed in the course of events towards the end of the 19th century (cf. Chapter Four). With the 'drift' of former (and run-away) slaves to the cities, some 'big farmers' started to engage impoverished domestic producers as wage labourers (cf. McLoughlin, 1966). But with the establishment of the Gezira Scheme in 1925 the colonial administration started to take measures in order to widen the scope of involvement of the rural domestic producers in the wage labour market, albeit in such a way that the stability of domestic production in the so-called 'traditional sector' would not be undermined.

I have explained how the labour process in the large scale irrigated schemes was based on tenant-farmers. As initially envisaged, tenants were expected to work within the framework of the domestic form of production and (together with their families) provide the necessary labour for primary export production. As it turned out, large sections of the

tenant-farmers failed to meet all the labour requirements, especially during the cotton-picking season. The presence of the West African Fellata served to redress a large part of the labour shortage in the Gezira Scheme (cf. Duffield, 1980; 1981; 1983; O'Brien, 1980; Barnett; 1983). Still, during the cotton-picking season each year there was an urgent need for more labour and Sudanese domestic producers had to be recruited.

In accordance with the stabilization policies, the colonial administration sought to induce a pattern of seasonal wage labour migration rather than to set into motion processes of wholesale dislocation of domestic production in the so-called traditional sector. The measures undertaken to induce migration were thus confined to widening the need for cash. But, as noted by O'Brien (1980; 1983a; 1984b), the responses of domestic producers to this need varied from community to community as well as from one domestic unit to another within the same community. These variations stemmed from differences in their respective value-systems as well as in their internal division of labour and the mechanisms for the maintenance of patriarchal authority, etc. (cf. *idem.*).

In communities where a high value was placed on autonomy, and no stigma associated with hard work, the main response has been further expansion in cash-cropping, "through extending and intensifying the working day, and the working season" (O'Brien, 1984b:138). In such communities, involvement in wage labour migration was, and to a large extent continues to be, sporadic and largely a function of crop failure or of

occasional demand for large sums of money (to finance marriages, etc.). The exception in these communities are units with unfavourable consumer-producer ratios and which do not have sufficient resources to deploy wage labour for expansion in cash-cropping. In other communities, especially those of former pastoralists, increased involvement in seasonal wage labour migration has been the response.

Variations between communities are likewise observed in relation to the pattern and destination of migration. As O'Brien (1983 a:27) says;

Whether the migration for seasonal labour ..was in family groups or by individual adult men depended to a great extent on the traditional division of labour in each group, and secondarily on the location of their homes ... Groups which practised a strict seclusion of women .. generally kept women and children at home and sent only adult men out in search of wage labour, usually in sorghum and sesame harvesting, unless cotton picking was available much closer at hand.

Noting the different responses to the stimulation of cash needs, the colonial administration started to provide 'incentives' to stimulate semi-proletarianization rather than intensification of cash-cropping. To attract the White Nile Arab pastoralists, for example, tenants were allowed to grow fodder, which the herds of pastoralists would consume in lieu of part of the wages for cotton picking. The colonial administration for a brief period instructed 'tribal chiefs' (Sheikhs, Omdas, Nazirs) in districts abutting the Scheme to direct their tribesmen to migrate in what virtually constituted a form of forced labour; but very few villagers complied with the system (Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din,

1978:91ff). By 1943, the time of rural tax collection in areas of potential labour supply was shifted from the end of the dry season (May-June) to the beginning of the cotton-picking season (January-February) "in order to ensure that peasants and pastoralists were relieved from their cash at the most opportune time", and consumer goods in short supply were made available in the Gezira to attract migrants (O'Brien, 1983a:19). An elaborate system of labour recruitment, known as the Cotton-Picking Campaign, was also adopted, and hundreds of thousands of pounds were spent in 'propaganda' to attract small farmers as well as in 'incentives' to those who undertake recruitment in the areas of labour supply (Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1978:96ff). Many 'supervision committees' were thus formed in order to tour villages in the immediate vicinity of the Gezira and as far as Kordofan Province. In the course of these tours villagers were given 'loans' to entice them to travel to the Gezira Scheme. Railway fares to the Gezira (particularly for those coming from Western Sudan) were not only reduced during the picking season, but, in times of severe shortage, were abolished altogether as the Railway Department was often instructed by the colonial administration to provide free (one way) travel warrants to prospective cotton-pickers in the relatively distant regions (cf. *ibid.*; O'Brien, 1983a).

Though the Gezira Scheme was the largest source of demand for seasonal unskilled labour migrants in colonial Sudan, it must be stressed that the stimulation of seasonal labour migration was neither confined to northern and central Sudan

nor oriented to attract migrants to the Gezira Scheme alone. Through the offering of **appropriate incentives** the colonial administration also succeeded in stimulating seasonal labour migration in virtually all parts of the country, including the South. The colonial Governor of Equatoria Province thus reported to the Civil Secretary (EP/37.B.1., dated 30.4.1946) that:

An experiment is shortly to be tried in Jur River District of selling fines cattle to labourers as well as Chiefs, Police Elders, etc. It is hoped that this will lead to a gradual demand for work as it did in Western Nuer where labour is plentiful and all voluntary.

Despite resort to such policies, relatively few Sudanese peasants and pastoralists were attracted to the wage labour market. The colonial problem of labour shortage (particularly during the cotton-picking season in Gezira) was never definitively solved; and on occasions of extreme shortage the colonial government had to conscript school children and troops to obtain the required labour force (cf. Omer M. Ali, 1974:30ff.). Indeed it was not until the achievement of flag Independence that seasonal labour migration by Sudanese peasants and pastoralists started to accelerate.

PROLETARIANIZATION IN POST-COLONIAL SUDAN

In considering the main post-colonial developments within the domestic form of agricultural production, it should be emphasized that the emergence of a 'national' administration has not undermined the processes of the colonial-type trade economy. Expansion in primary export production is still

viewed as 'development'. But whereas during the colonial period an integral aspect of the imposition of primary export production was the conservation of the domestic form in the so-called 'traditional' sector, during the first two decades of the post-colonial period conservation policies were almost totally abandoned. As a result of this, the continuity of domestic production has become dependent almost exclusively on the willingness and/or ability of domestic production units to maintain their 'autonomy'. This reproduction has for large sectors of domestic producers proved very difficult to achieve without regular resort to seasonal labour migration.

The processes that resulted in the acceleration of semi-proletarianization in post-colonial Sudan are several and complex, and can only be outlined here. Though some of these processes are 'nationwide' and apply to all domestic producers in the country, others are specific either to particular regions or to particular groups.

Major among the 'nationwide' processes has been the relaxation of the constraints which the colonial administration imposed upon traders in their interaction with domestic producers. The widespread incidence of shail and other forms of debt-relations at exorbitant interest rates (which sometimes exceed 200%); and the emergence of 'black markets' in rural areas in particular (whereby goods normally in short supply in cities can easily be obtained, albeit at double 'official prices', in villages) are well-documented in micro-studies from all parts of the country (cf. Mohamed Hashim Awad, 1966; Apaya, 1971; Barnett, 1977; El-Haj Bilal

Omer, 1979; Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed, 1980; idem. and Mustafa Abdel Rahman, 1979; O'Brien, 1977; 1980; Salah El-Din El-Shazali Ibrahim, 1980; Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1983; Mustafa Babiker, 1984a). The unfettered monopoly and monopsony status enjoyed by traders led to, on the one hand, a sharp decline in proceeds from cash crops accruing to the domestic producers and, on the other, a steady increase in prices of goods furnished by merchants. Over and above the role of unchecked 'exploitation' by merchant-capital, there are also varied processes particular to specific communities which have contributed to the dislocation of domestic production. The rapid post-colonial expansion in large scale irrigated schemes (Managil Extension, New Halfa, Rahad, etc.) as well as in mechanized rainfed farming (Gedarif region in eastern Sudan, Agadi-Grabeen and Dali Mazmoum complexes in south-eastern Sudan, Renk area in the South, and Habila in the Nuba Mountains, etc.), for example, was achieved primarily through marginalization of nomadic pastoralists (cf. Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed, 1973; O'Brien, 1980), and marginally through dislocation of sedentary cultivators (cf. Khalid Affan, 1978; Ibrahim Kursany, 1983). The ensuing competition over pasturelands has in many regions adversely affected small herders, who consequently are increasingly driven towards both sedentarization and more regular involvement in seasonal labour migration.

'Capitalist' agriculture is not confined to the large scale mechanized schemes, and in the Continental Qoz zone (stabilized sand dunes) another process of dislocation is

taking place. In this zone the availability of permanent water supplies, which vary greatly from one place to another, is the most crucial factor influencing population settlement and movement (cf. Mustafa Babiker, 1984a:8). In pre-colonial times the population of this zone consisted largely of nomadic pastoralists, but the British colonial administration encouraged the settlement of sections of the nomadic population by drilling bore holes. In Kordofan Province, for example, former nomads were settled in Um Ruwaba district (cf. O'Brien, 1980) and En Nihud district (cf. Mustafa Babiker, 1984a). It is worth noting that, in the absence of permanent water supplies, sedentary cultivation is made possible by the hallowing of tebeldi (Acacia) trees, which are then used to store water during the rainy season, and the cultivation of water melons, the juice of which is used instead of water when the stored water supply is exhausted. With population growth in the region and drought, the 'water question' has become more serious than ever before. Every summer the villagers in thirsty areas experience severe hardship in securing water. As a result of this, whole villages had to be abandoned during the season; and those villagers who decide to stay have to depend on traders, who have come to realize lucrative profits through transport of water to the villages. In the context of this seasonal hardship, the population tended to be attracted to sites where new bore holes are dug. During the post-colonial period, however, drilling has consistently favoured the 'tribal chiefs', in whose de facto "own land" bore holes are usually dug (Mustafa Babiker, personal

communication). As domestic producers in thirsty areas move into the sites of newly-dug bore holes, they find there is no 'unclaimed' arable land to cultivate, and for this they are forced into land rental, share-cropping arrangements as well as wage employment (which often involves migration). Concurrently, the depopulation of thirsty villages and the consequent abandonment of their 'fertile land have provided the 'resourceful' strata (merchants, administrators, etc.) with opportunities for groundnuts farming. This is made possible through the financial ability of these strata to transport water into the abandoned sites and to deploy Southern (Dinka) unskilled migrants either as wage labourers or as share-croppers (ibid.). A similar process of dislocation has likewise been experienced in Um Ruwaba District of Northern Kordofan where the growing generations are continually being driven out as wage labour migrants as commercial farming by merchants and 'tribal' chiefs' has taken over all available unoccupied fertile land in the vicinity of villages (cf. Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1978; O'Brien, 1980).

Proletarianization processes are by no means peculiar to the so-called 'traditional sector'; and the communities of tenants in the 'modern' irrigated schemes are known to be breeding grounds for generations of migrants. In view of the fact that the large scale irrigated schemes constitute the major source of demand for unskilled labour in the Sudan because of the failure of tenants to meet all the labour requirements, it might appear paradoxical to observe proletarianization processes among tenant communities. But as

Barnett (1977; 1983) has noted, tenants are not only a highly differentiated group, but also one which experiences a severe crisis of social reproduction (cf. O'Brien, 1984a). Unlike the rainlands where, depending on availability of water, the new generations may be stabilized in domestic agricultural production, in the irrigated schemes the tenancies not only are limited in number, but also cannot be divided (in inheritance) below a certain limit (half tenancy). Possibilities for 'fragmentation' among the poorer sections of the tenantry were virtually totally exhausted in the late 1940s. In such a context, the deployment of the labour of all family members by a tenant with two or more sons would maintain the household for only a brief period in the early stages of its developmental cycle. As the sons grow up, they find it imperative either to stay in their respective units and receive a labourers' wage (which means a decline in their living standards) or to seek alternative employment. In other words, in case all the sons of a tenant are to be mobilized, there will be no tenancies for them when they grow up and establish their own families, while the income from a single tenancy would not suffice to meet all the requirements of an extended family.

The crisis of social reproduction in tenant communities is not merely a post-colonial development. It was indeed recognized during the colonial period, and the colonial government sought to overcome it through the promotion of educational services in the Gezira whereby the descendants of tenants were to become 'more competitive' in their search for

alternative careers. In spite of a dramatic post-colonial expansion in educational services in the Sudan in general and the Gezira in particular (cf. Chapter Three), there is still a severe competition over enrolment into higher education; and only a small percentage of the descendants of tenants are able to lead careers in professional and administrative positions. The majority, who end up as 'drop-outs', are consequently driven into the wage labour market as semi-skilled and unskilled workers. In the particular case of Nueila village in the Gezira Scheme, for example, Barnett (1983:369) has found out that of a 442 male population aged 16 years or more around "22.6 per cent ... had at some time left the village in search of work". It is important to note that, by virtue of the strength of their union, the Gezira tenants are generally better placed than their counterparts in the other irrigated schemes (especially those smaller pump-schemes in the private sector -cf. Taisier M. Ahmed Ali, 1983). Nevertheless in the context of the exorbitant increase in the costs of production and a dramatic decline in productivity since 1973/74 (cf. Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1979:72 et passim), and of the differentiation process taking place within the Gezira tenantry, many needy tenants have become thoroughly proletarianized (cf. O'Brien, 1984a; Barnett, 1983).

The intensification of the processes of semi-proletarianization in the decades since flag Independence coincided with a rapid expansion in large scale (irrigated and rainfed) agricultural schemes which generated substantial opportunities for seasonal agro-labour (cf. Mohamed El-Awad

Galal El-Din, 1978; O'Brien, 1980; 1983a; 1983b; Taisier M.A. Ali, 1982; 1984; Shepherd, 1983). It was indeed because of this expansion that during the first two decades of flag Independence the government was concerned more over the shortage of agro-labour than over the consequences of the destabilization of the so-called 'traditional' domestic producers.

As the dislocation of domestic production has become more pronounced during the 1970s; and as in the context of the amounting economic crisis the Sudanese government has started to take note of the steady deterioration in primary export production in the so-called 'traditional sector', new measures started to be taken. From 1975 onwards, the Sudan has come to experience a revitalization of 'stabilization policies' implemented through both national and international initiatives in the form of 'developmental schemes'. Of the attempts to 'develop' traditional agriculture are those in the Nuba Mountains (by the German government, GTZ), Geissan in Southern Funj (USAID), the so-called "Western Savannah Development Project" (IBRD, ODM, USAID), and the Ingessana Hills District Development Project (locally financed?). The main goal of these 'developmental schemes' is to promote an expansion in areas under crop through the provision of (free) tractor services for the ploughing operations. In all schemes, however, the service is offered almost exclusively to a small number of incipient capitalists ('entrepreneurial peasants'), who command sufficient resources to deploy wage labourers. Rather than rehabilitate domestic production, these 'develop-

mental schemes' seem to enhance further the process of differentiation and to provide more wage employment opportunities for domestic producers inside their own villages.

The most serious attempt to rehabilitate small farmers is probably the one launched by the Agricultural Bank of Sudan (with the backing of the World Bank) in Northern Kordofan Province (see Abdel Magid Khogali M. Ahmed, 1984:55-62). This has been an attempt to eliminate shail in which exorbitant rates of interest are borne by small farmers. According to Abdel Magid (ibid.), the experimental phase started in 1977 in the Um Ruwaba District (extended to El-Obeid District in 1980) whereby the Bank would advance loans to the small farmers at very low interest rates (initially 7 to 9 per cent, but later increased to 12 per cent per annum). But The Bank does not deal directly with individual peasants. It requires that 'agricultural cooperatives' be formed in each village, and loans are given to the cooperative which, in the presence of Bank officials, is to distribute the cash among the individual members. The loan is given on the understanding that the villagers would cultivate cash crops and would hand over their crops to the Bank which undertakes its marketing. The prices the crops fetch are claimed to be much higher than what village traders normally give to villagers. But the way this scheme is carried out, and its implications for small farmers need to be studied and analysed systematically.

In noting the recent attention accorded to the rehabilitation of the so-called 'traditional farmers', it

should be stressed, the government is not jeopardizing in any way productivity in the large scale schemes. But this is not solely because in no way could these 'developmental schemes' decelerate semi-proletarianization. Indeed, even if these schemes did manage to decelerate seasonal wage labour migration by rural Sudanese, the supply of labour to the large scale schemes will not be affected. This should be so due to the steady influx of refugees into the Sudan, especially from Eritrea, which is to some extent a product of the recent legislation stipulating relatively favourable provisions for refugees (e.g. allotment of land to be cultivated). Refugees are settled almost exclusively in areas abutting large scale (irrigated and rainfed) agricultural schemes (cf. UNHCR/ILO, 1983).

INTRA-RURAL WAGE LABOUR MIGRATION

As maintained earlier, at the turn of the century the larger part of the opportunities for wage employment were found in urban areas, and rural-urban wage labour migration was the main form of wage labour migration in the country. With the establishment of 'modern' pump-schemes, and especially since 1925 when the Gezira Scheme started operation, the demand for agro-labour increased dramatically, and migration by semi-proletarianized domestic producers has become more intra-rural than rural-urban. The post-colonial expansion in large scale agricultural schemes (both irrigated and rainfed), boosted further the demand for agro-labour. Though no data or rough estimates are available, it is

nevertheless quite safe to assert that well over 80 per cent of the demand for unskilled wage labour in the Sudan originates in rural agriculture. O'Brien (1983a:16) has noted the difficulties in estimating the numbers of seasonal migrants in the Sudan, and contended that "between 1.5 and 2 million seasonal labourers, mostly peasants and pastoralists for the rest of the year, work in weeding or harvesting operations in state and private plantations annually". It is worth noting that during the cotton-picking season of 1973/74 the Gezira Scheme alone employed around 542,000 seasonal labourers (cf. Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1979a:105). One may well assert that during the agricultural season there are sufficient employment opportunities in rural areas to absorb all domestic producers looking for employment.

The terms and conditions of employment as well as the composition of the labour force vary between irrigated and rainfed schemes. In rainfed agriculture the main operations are harvesting and threshing of sorghum and sesame. These operations are very demanding, and for this reason the labour force involved consists almost exclusively of young able-bodied male migrants. In the irrigated schemes, which constitute the largest source of demand for seasonal unskilled migrants, the bulk of the demand relates to cotton picking, which is a relatively undemanding operation in which children over the age of ten as well as old people can attain the same productivity levels as able-bodied male and female adults. Unlike the rainfed schemes, then, the workforce in irrigated agriculture consists of family groups. But as noted by O'Brien

(1983a:27)

Whether the migration for seasonal labour ..was in family groups or by individual adult men depended to a great extent on the traditional division of labour in each group, and secondarily on the location of their homes ... Groups which practised a strict seclusion of women .. generally kept women and children at home and sent only adult men out in search of wage labour, usually in sorghum and sesame harvesting, unless cotton picking was available much closer at hand.

Until the mid-1970s, variations between the rainfed and irrigated schemes were observed in relation to the wages paid to labourers; and wages in the rainfed schemes were said to be up to 50 per cent higher than in the irrigated schemes (ibid.; Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1978:104ff). Nevertheless, because all family members over the age of ten could participate in cotton picking in the irrigated schemes, the net returns for the domestic units migrating to the irrigated schemes were usually higher than what accrued to units which sent out only its adult male members to the rainfed farms. With the deepening of the economic crisis during the 1970s, however, able-bodied men from groups that used to participate in cotton picking started to migrate to the rainfed schemes so that only women, children and old people continued to migrate to the irrigated schemes (cf. Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1978). The result of this has been a steady increase in wages for cotton-pickers and a general tendency for wage rates to equalise between the two segments of the agricultural wage labour market (cf. O'Brien, 1983a; 1984b).

The differences that obtained in wage rates between irrigated and rainfed schemes were not solely a reflection of

the differential composition of the workforce. They were equally the consequence of the method by which wage rates are determined in the Gezira Scheme -a method which not only kept wages for cotton-pickers at the lowest possible level, but also helped maintain low and stable wage rates for unskilled labour throughout the national economy as I shall explain in the course of my analysis of the urban wage labour market. As noted by Nigam (1977:156),

The responsibility for the payment of wages to the picking labour is that of the tenants though they get an advance for this purpose from the Gezira Board which is later charged to the "Joint Expenses" Account. The payment is made both in kind and cash -the tenants provide some sort of shelter, and some food. The practice in this respect varies from tenant to tenant and there is no check whatsoever as to how much is paid or not paid to the pickers by the individual tenants.

It is indeed exceptional for tenants to channel through all the advances provided by the Gezira Board as in the negotiations with labourers each tenant seeks to retain at least a portion of these advances for him/herself (cf. Barnett, 1977; O'Brien, 1984a). This is particularly true of that majority of tenants who are needy and in debt to village merchants. For these tenants, the advances are, at least in part, badly needed to meet current consumption requirements. This decentralization of wage determination has served to maintain exceptionally stable, albeit depressed, wage rates for picking labourers between 1945 and 1975. According to Nigam (1977:156),

It is understood from the Gezira Board that wage rates have not increased much during the last decade, and over the last 20 years

have increased by about 3% a year which does not even cover the rise in prices.

That the seasonal cotton pickers continued to accept such low wages is of course underlain by the fact that they are not a thoroughly proletarianized wage labour force. They are semi-proletarianized domestic producers; and a large part of their consumption requirements is satisfied within the 'subsistence-sphere' of the domestic form of agricultural production. Not all unskilled labourers in the Gezira, however, are seasonal migrants; and quite a number (mainly of West African extraction) constitute a thoroughly proletarianized workforce settled in "labour camps" within the Scheme area. But even in the case of these 'local' labourers, wages are not a precise description of what they earn as many needy and/or elderly tenants usually enter into share-cropping arrangements with labourers. Through these arrangements, share-croppers, who are otherwise fully proletarianized wage labourers, manage (together with their dependents) to cultivate subsistence or cash crops. In other words, through these arrangements fully proletarianized labourers have been brought back into the orbit of domestic agricultural production. According to Barnett (1983:335), sharecropping arrangements constitute no new development in the Gezira, but their incidence has increased considerably in recent years to the extent that in a 1982 survey it was found that "almost 100 per cent of labour camp households were found to have sharecropping arrangements with tenants".

RURAL-URBAN WAGE LABOUR MIGRATION

The focus on the operation of the agricultural wage labour market and/or intra-rural wage labour migration is deliberate; but it is not solely because the rest of the thesis focuses on the urban wage labour market. It is also because the number of semi-proletarianized domestic producers undertaking rural-urban migration is very small compared to the numbers of intra-rural migrants. I should hasten to add here that I am referring specifically to the semi-proletarianized domestic producers rather than the fully-proletarianized 'landless' strata from riverain regions (the new generations of 'Northerners' as well as the descendants of tenant-farmers). But even when these thoroughly proletarianized elements are taken into consideration, rural-urban unskilled labour migration nevertheless remains small compared to intra-rural wage labour migration.

The low rate of rural-urban migration among semi-proletarianized domestic producers should not be construed as the simple consequence of "lack of sufficient opportunities" in the towns. Returned migrants of course provide some 'information' and 'clues' as to what could be expected in urban areas; but it is a mistake to assume that the domestic producers in rural Sudan are well informed about the opportunities available in urban areas or that they do not recognize the uncertainties involved.

The point to be stressed is that the semi-proletarianized domestic producers show high **selectivity** as to the destination of their migration; and the decision concerning whether or not

to migrate to an urban area is not made solely on the basis of 'information'. Prospective migrants with different socio-economic characteristics indeed show varied responses to the same piece of information. Thus in her analysis of the "causes" that led to the migration of squatters in Khartoum North, Fahima Zahir (1972:234 et passim) has noted how "two brothers confronted by the same situation may take different decisions as to whether to stay in the rural areas or move to the big town". Insofar as the **determinants** of migrant selectivity in the Sudan are yet to be systematically documented and analysed, the discussion to follow can only be tentative, and is heavily influenced by, or based on, partial observations derived from my research among three particular groups: the Kababish Arabs (nomadic pastoralists in Kordofan Region), the Zabarma (West African sedentary cultivators living along the banks of River Rahad in Kassala Province) and the Jok Gor 'Ingessana' of south-eastern Sudan (agro-pastoralists in the Blue Nile Province). To a lesser extent, moreover, I have made use of information obtained in interviews with unskilled self-employed tertiary workers in Greater Khartoum (cf. Chapter Six).

Available evidence, fragmented as it may be, suggests that, over and above the presence of contacts (kinsmen or fellow-villagers) in a town whereby prior arrangements to receive prospective migrants are made, the dynamics of migrant selectivity rest with the interplay of two main sets of variables relating to (a) the characteristics of migrants and (b) the timing and duration of expected migration. The first

set of variables concerns the personal and social characteristics of the prospective migrant which include age, level of education, marital status and/or number of dependents, type of original occupation (farming or herding), the region in which he/she lives, etc. The second set of variables pertains to the season during which migration is to be undertaken, the objective behind migration (or amount of money wished to be earned) and the length of the period intended to be spent away, etc.

Generally speaking, there are two critical distinctions in the assessment of migrant selectivity. The first is between young and old, and the second is between farmer and pastoralist. Old farmers (i.e. 30 years and over) are usually married and have dependents for whom they have to provide, whereas young unmarried men from the poorer domestic production units in farming communities often tend to participate only partially in the productive activities of their respective units. During the agricultural season, both old and young farmers migrate to the schemes, but the former are likely to spend only brief periods (up to four weeks) in migration because they need to attend to their own farms, while the latter usually work for relatively longer periods and often spend the whole season as agro-labour. In this respect it is important to note that although needy farmers migrate to the schemes where there is a guaranteed demand for their labour power, the wages received do not suffice to cover all the consumption requirements of a household. Consequently, cultivation of food crops is indispensable for

semi-proletarianized farmers with dependents. However, a few young farmers, typically 'drop-outs' from the educational system, show a tendency to refrain altogether from participation in agriculture and to lead their way into urban wage and/or self-employment. Like the dispossessed riverain Northerners, these 'drop-outs' tend to stay in urban areas for as long as possible and, by virtue of their education, they are often able to find 'permanent' wage employment.

For herders, on the other hand, the agricultural (i.e. rainy) season is the period when least labour is required in units as pastureland is rich and watering of animals is at its easiest. Units with 'labour surplus' often release some of their adult males to migrate to the schemes. Though during the dry season activities become very demanding to herding units, migration to the irrigated schemes by the whole unit is common among pastoralists with relatively small herds in areas abutting schemes. This is so because of the availability in the schemes of both fodder and water for the herds. In cases of serious losses of herds, impoverished pastoralists have three alternatives: wage herding, sedentarization as farmer or wage labour migration. The first is to work for others as a paid herder receiving wages in both cash and kind (animals); through the animals paid, a wage herder starts rebuilding his own herd. This option is typically followed by young unmarried (and sometimes married) men who have no dependents to provide for. Married pastoralists with many dependents may tend to settle as cultivators, and the few animals remaining from their herds may be attended by close relatives. The third

option is to engage in long term migration with the (often unattainable) hope of accumulating sufficient savings to build up another herd. Though during summer such migrants usually work in towns, during the agricultural season they tend to migrate to the agricultural schemes. The low, but secure, wages in the agricultural wage labour market thus attract not only the semi-proletarianized producers residing in the countryside, but also quite a large section of the young unskilled migrants living in the towns.

It is often mistakenly assumed that the dry season is a slack season for domestic producers in the rainlands and for this wage labour migration tends to be accelerated during summer. This, I believe, is a poorly founded assertion. This is so because, for pastoralists, it is the season when labour is most needed because the watering of herds becomes a very tedious and demanding activity and because the poor pastures necessitate the dispersion of animals over a wide area in grazing. Likewise farmers undertake several tasks during the dry season, and in addition to clearance of fields in preparation for the coming agricultural season, they also have to carry out construction and/or maintenance of houses, repairing of furniture and, in thirsty areas in both clayey and Qoz areas, help in fetching drinking water (through digging of wells, fetching of water from distant places, etc.). For rainland farmers who also have access to small plots of land along the banks of rivers (jirruf), summer is the season for horticulture. Because of these activities, hardy producers faced by a demand for cash usually stay in

their villages and engage in 'income-generating activities' such as rope-making, charcoal making, wood cutting, etc. and, additionally, resort to shail from traders. The exception is when travelling to towns does not involve long distances. Young unmarried farmers, however, are more likely to undertake long distance travel to towns in order to accumulate savings to finance marriages, but in such cases migration is likely to extend to more than six months. But in cases of long term migration it is quite common for young migrants to re-enter the agricultural wage labour market during the rainy season.

In spite of the steady decline in the wages paid to agricultural labourers, the overwhelming majority of the semi-proletarianized domestic producers continues to migrate to the agricultural schemes. Even during summer (between March and June), when the demand for agricultural labour is at its lowest, only a small percentage of domestic producers in need of cash may decide to migrate to towns in search of 'income-generating opportunities'. The majority of needy domestic producers would indeed borrow money or take goods on credit rather than migrate to towns. Notwithstanding the intensification of the processes of proletarianisation during the post-colonial period, the number of unskilled rural migrants living in urban areas has remained small. But, in noting this I am not solely stressing the point made by Gilbert and Gugler (1983:58) that "The stream that appears formidable at the urban end constitutes only a small proportion of the rural population". As I shall argue in the next chapter, the unskilled labour force in urban Sudan in

general, and Greater Khartoum in particular, represents only a small percentage even of the urban population.

NOTES

1. The distinction between sedentary cultivators and nomadic pastoralists has often been over-emphasized to the extent of viewing the two as bearing 'distinct' cultures, forms of political organisation, etc. But though at present it is generally true that there exist some 'administrative' distinctions, the separation between the two is a relatively recent development that started under Turco-Egyptian colonial rule. Thus it is important to stress that up to the early decades of the 19th century, nomadic and sedentary populations in a region often consisted of one and the same 'group' or 'tribe'. But insofar as pastoralism during the Funj period constituted the single most important vehicle for accumulation of wealth in rainland Sudan, the distinction between pastoral nomads and sedentary cultivators was basically underpinned by disparities in resources. However not only nomadic pastoralists possessed more wealth, but it was also from among the affluent nomads that the rulers (of both the nomadic and the sedentary populations in a region) emerged. The process by which nomadic pastoralists in the Sudan have been relegated to the status of a 'relic' from the past has articulately been pointed out by Spaulding (1979a). Halaand (1969; 1972), moreover, has considered the role of 'nomadization' as an economic career among the sedentary populations in Darfur and pointed out how even in present-day Sudan the processes of nomadization and sedentarization are underlain by processes of differentiation. Thus while affluent farmers investing in livestock may find it imperative to pursue nomadization, impoverished pastoralists are pushed towards sedentarization as farmers.

2. Mohamed Hashim Awad (1971) has presented an interesting account of the "evolution of landownership in the Sudan" since the ancient Meroitic kingdom (1000 B.C - A.D. 400). But although his account of the ancient land tenure system is very informative, his analysis of the measures undertaken by the British colonial administration has grossly mystified aspects of British colonial policy which effectively laid the foundations of 'peripheral capitalism' in the Sudan as I shall soon explain.

3. Up to the Muslim conquest of Egypt in A.D. 640, the Christian monarchs of Makuria and Alawa of present-day northern riverain Sudan enjoyed what seemed to be exclusive ownership of land within their domains. As Muslim traders started to infiltrate into the Christian kingdoms of Sudan, some began to buy land from Nubians (most probably, not perhaps exclusively, the king's representatives). According to Yusuf Fadl Hassan (1973:38):

This development angered the Nubian king who saw in it a latent danger. He claimed that "his subjects and his slaves" who cultivated those lands as serfs, had unlawfully sold his domains to the Arabs. The matter was raised with al-Mamun [the Caliph, 813-833] on his visit to Egypt in 216/831 and he referred it for settlement to the governors and notables of Aswan. The Arab owners incited the Nubians to reject the king's claim and to deny that they were his slaves. The sale of land was confirmed and the dispute was closed.

Mohamed Hashim Awad (1971) contends that this verdict encouraged more Nubians to sell land to the Muslim traders and had thus laid the foundations of individual private landownership in riverain Sudan. Though this assertion can not be rejected altogether, land transactions could have been possible only in the extreme north of Nubia where the Christian monarchs could not maintain effective control owing to the presence of the Muslim troops in Aswan. Indeed, this was the case in the initial transaction disputed which took place in the north of Bajrash, near Aswan (cf. Yusuf Fadl Hassan, *op. cit.*). El-Haj Hamad M. Kheir (1982:162) notes that by the time of al-Mas'udi's visit in about A.D. 943, "the landed property of the Muslims was located only in the land adjacent to Aswan". In the other parts of Nubia, Muslim settlers not only faced the opposition of monarchs in conducting land transactions, but also they did not need to buy land at all in order to have access to wealth and power. As Mohamed Hashim himself notes (p. 215), the adherence of the Nubians to the matrilineal system of succession enabled the new settlers to usurp political and economic power from the Nubian royalty by marrying the daughters and sisters of the Nubian nobles.

4. In using the term 'tribe' I refer to what Talal Asad (1972) defined as a 'structure of inequality' in the composition of groups. In this respect Abdel Ghaffar (1979) has provided a useful conceptualization of the processes by which 'tribes' emerged in rainland Sudan as agglomerations of small kin-groups from diverse origins affiliated to other such small groups which managed to establish themselves as 'power-centres' through control of some strategic resource (water sources, pastureland, etc.). These small kin-groups, however, were in a state of constant mobility within and across regions affiliating or dissociating themselves from the power-centres, which were themselves changing. With the incorporation of rainland Sudan into the Funj kingdom of Sennar (1504-1820), the position of the power-centres was further consolidated as they came to constitute the nucleus of 'tribes', which served as administrative units. According to Spaulding (1979a), a 'tribe' in the Funj period constituted a "group of people to whom the Sultan, directly or through subordinates, according to customary law, delegates the right to exploit the agricultural resources of a specific area of land". The head of the "power-centre" in each tribe was thus

endowed with authority over both nomadic pastoralists and sedentary cultivators who lived within his dar (homeland). Despite the stabilization of what had formerly constituted a fluid group organisation, the Funj monarchs did play the different "power-centres" within a tribe against each other to serve the purposes of the monarch. But although titles to dars were endowed to, or withdrawn from, a power centre, the composition of the 'tribes' themselves showed relative stability. When the Turco-Egyptian colonial administration was established, a new system of administration was set up. The colonial administrators assumed direct control over sedentary populations, and the former 'power centres' were left to administer their 'tribes' (which came to be defined as consisting of 'nomads' only). With the success of the Mahdist Revolution (1885-1898), virtually all power centres lost their powers over nomads. Thus though a few of these 'ruling castes' rose to prominence as leaders in the Mahdist Ansar Army, others (e.g. Sheikh Salih of the Kababish, Madibbou of the Rizaigat and Abu Sin of the Shukria) attempted to oppose the Khalifa and were ruthlessly pacified. When the British colonial administration (1898-1955) attempted to introduce Native Administration (the Sudanese version of 'Indirect Rule'), enormous difficulties were encountered in finding "tribal institutions", of a political nature, to foster, and there were no sufficiently strong figures to act as tribal Nazirs, or paramount chiefs (cf. Ja'faar M.A. Bakheit, 1974:28). This difficulty, it should be stressed, was not encountered only among the so-called "stateless or acephalous societies" (Nuer, etc.), but in all except one of the provinces of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (cf. *ibid.*).

5. In his memorandum to the Marquess of Salisbury (the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in Her Britannic Majesty's Government, 1898), Lord Cromer has made the point that it was a matter of much importance to settle the future political status of the Sudan in order to deal with the Europeans intending to settle there rather than with the native Sudanese. According to Cromer (cf. Mekki Abbas, 1951:161), "The purely native requirements are, in fact, very simple":

A light system of taxation, some very simple forms for the administration of civil and criminal justice, and the appointment of a few carefully selected officials with a somewhat wide discretionary power to deal with local details, are all that for the time being necessary

The policy envisaged by Lord Cromer later assumed the status of "first principles" for the personnel of Sudan Political Service. Thus in a letter by Newbold (cf. Henderson, 1952:53) in which he referred to the problem of the unemployed in Omdurman in 1927, it has been maintained that:

There is no specific remedy; but in all problems which defy solution, you cannot fail if you get back to first principles, cheap grain, low taxes, picked staff with selective

promotion, no clogging ordinances against private enterprise or land purchase, no flourishing of power or wealth by the ruling Britishers, rather an unobtrusive rule based on **explained** [in situ] decisions in the office and incorruptible private lives out of office..

6. According to MacMichael (n.d., p. 31):
 Newbold, Sir Douglas, K.B.E.; born 13 August, 1894. Educated at Uppingham and Oriel College, Oxford (Scholar).
 Service: Kordofan, 1920-23; Deputy Assistant Civil Secretary (Administration), 1924-25; Red Sea, 1926-28; Nomad (Beja) Administration, 1929; Kassala (Deputy Governor, Beja), 1930-32; Governor, Kordofan, 1933-38; Deputy Civil Secretary, 1938-39; Civil Secretary, 1939-45. Died at Khartoum, 23 March, 1945.
 Publications: Various articles in Geographical Journal, Antiquity, Sudan Notes and Records, etc.
 Order of the Nile, 4th Class, 1929. O.B.E., 1933, Order of the Nile, 3rd Class, 1935. C.B.E., 1938. K.B.E., 1944.

7. In his analysis of British colonial administration among the Nuer (1900-1930), Digernes (1978) has pointed out how the "solitary British administrator on the ground was by and large his own policy maker and that his administrative behaviour and practice was primarily and essentially a response to the environment in which he found himself". But though this is generally true in the sense that different contexts had to be approached differently, it is by no means valid to assert that the varied 'measures' undertaken by local level administrators did not conform to overall colonial policy. For an informative exposition of local level measures in Western Sudan, particularly in Dar Fur, see Abdel Rahman Abbakar Ibrahim (1984).

8. According to MacMichael (op. cit., p. 39):
 Robertson, Sir James, K.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., K.B.E.; born 27 October, 1899. Educated at Merchiston and Balliol College, Oxford; Class II, Litterae Humaniores...
 Service: Blue Nile, 1923-25; White Nile, 1926-31; Fung, 1931-34; Kordofan, 1934-36; White Nile, 1936-39 (Sub-Governor, White Nile Sub-Prov., 1937); Deputy Governor, Blue Nile, 1939-40; Assistant Civil Secretary, 1941-42; Deputy Civil Secretary, 1942-45; Civil Secretary; 1945-53. Retired, 1953.
 Appointed Hon. Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, 1953; Chairman British Guiana Constitutional Commission, 1953-54; Director,

Uganda Coy Ltd., 1954-55; Governor-General of the Federation of Nigeria, 1955- [to 1960]. M.B.E., 1931. Order of the Nile, 4th Class, 1934. K.B.E., 1948; K.C.M.G., 1953; G.C.V.O., 1956.

Quotation is from a letter which Sir James wrote from Soda (in the Ingessana District) deposited at Sudan Archives, Oriental Library, Durham University (Box 532/1/1-7).

9. Dick, John Henry; born 1908. Educated at Charterhouse and Trinity College, Oxford. Service: Khartoum, 1931; Berber, 1931-34; Fung, 1934-35; Palace, 1935-36; Upper Nile, 1936-40; Civil Secretary's Office, 1940; Northern, 1940-44; Equatoria, 1944-45; Blue Nile, 1945-49; Kassala, 1949-55. Retired, 1955 (cf. MacMichael, *op. cit.*, p. 61). Quotation is from a two-page extract from his diary bearing the title "TRADE" deposited at Sudan Archives, Oriental Library, Durham University (Box 400/1).

10. In the course of a field research in villages along Rahad River in 1976, I learned in an interview with one old man in the village of El-Obeid (not the capital of Kordofan) that around 1930 the British imposed a ban on cotton cultivation by the villagers in the area. The cotton was cultivated to supply the local textile industry on which the inhabitants depended for their clothing. All exchanges were in the form of barter. Upon imposition of the ban, which was accompanied by 'expeditions' to observe that no cotton was cultivated inside household enclosures, the villagers had to rely on manufactured cloth provided by the local merchants. The imported cloth provided was more expensive, but less durable, than the local cloth. At the time I had the wrong impression that the ban was specific to areas abutting the Gezira Scheme. As pointed out by Hassan Abdel Aziz Ahmed (1975:93), the ban, which was stipulated by the Sudan Cotton Ordinance of 1921, was in fact nation-wide. Hassan has also pointed out that, in addition to its durability and ease of spinning, the local cotton was "drought-resistant".

11. Put simply, the extraction of absolute surplus value is characteristic of labour-intensive production processes where further capital accumulation is made possible through the intensification of production with the same level of development of productive forces (i.e. through a lengthening of both the working day and the working season). The extraction of relative surplus value, on the other hand, is a characteristic of capital intensive production systems in which further accumulation is made possible through the progressive revolutionisation of the productive forces (i.e. through adoption of higher productivity techniques and technology). For a further discussion of the distinction between the two forms of extraction of surplus value see Mandel (1976) and O'Brien with Salah El-Din (1979).

12. Dr. J.D. Tothill was the Director of Agriculture in Uganda, where he was involved in the 'introduction' of cotton as a

cash crop. He was appointed by the colonial government in the Sudan (1939) as Director of Agriculture and Forests. One of his tasks in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan was to survey the possibilities of agricultural 'development' in Southern Sudan, and he made an extensive tour of Equatoria Province, the Southernmost part of the country, following which he submitted his proposals (cf. Reining, op. cit., pp. 141ff).

13. Abdel Magid Khogali M. Ahmed (1984:19) has compared the prices paid to the domestic producers in rural Kordofan with the export prices at Port Sudan and maintained that:

it is clear that the market margin between prices at Port Sudan and the average prices at El-Obeid auction market is about 100%, in spite of the fact that no processing is carried out to gum arabic and it is exported raw. [...] the implicit taxation rate ranges between 30%-35% of the export price parity at El-Obeid.

14. The Memorandum sent by Lord Cromer to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs together with the text of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement of 1899 can be consulted in Mekki Abbas (1951:57ff). One of the main features of the Agreement is the denunciation of the system of capitulations through ten of its twelve articles.

15. The administration of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, headed by the Governor-General, was undertaken by Sudan Political Service (SPS), a body of highly-educated British administrators recruited from among the best graduates of British Universities, especially of Oxford University (cf. MacMichael, op. cit.). MacMichael (p. 1) has quoted Lord Cromer, who was instrumental in the initial formation of SPS, that in order to "carry out successfully an Imperial policy", it was necessary to obtain a cadre of "active young men, endowed with good health, high character and fair abilities ... not the mediocre by-products of the race, but the flower of those who turned out from our schools and colleges". The allegiance of administrators was to the Governor-General, and this helped create an identification with, and commitment towards, the Sudan and Sudanese (even though both were distorted insofar as the 'colonial situation' was taken for granted). The connection between the Governor-General and the British Government (or Foreign Office) was initially through the British Consul-General in Cairo.

16. The Zeidab Scheme started in 1905 as a concession to the American capitalist, Leigh Hunt, who originally proposed to provide the necessary labour through encouragement of the immigration of Afro-Americans. Around two hundred Black Americans came to the Sudan, but as some of them died, the others demanded to be taken back to the United States. For more details on the Zeidab, on whose tenancy model the Gezira Scheme was later established, see Hassan A/Aziz Ahmed (op. cit.).

CHAPTER THREE

THE DYNAMICS OF GROWTH IN GREATER KHARTOUM

It is to ground-nuts that ... [Kaolack] owes its whole existence; its entire cosmopolitan population -of middlemen and brokers, dealers in cloth, lorry-drivers, garage proprietors, hotel keepers, marabouts, jobbers of all descriptions, officials, bank clerks, domestic servants, labourers and dockers: a town so concentrated upon ground-nuts that it forgets to think about itself, or even for the present to become a real town at all (Richard-Molard, 1954, cited by Gugler & Flanagan, 1978:30).

The aim of this chapter is to present an account of the process of population growth in post-colonial Greater Khartoum. In doing so, however, my objective is not solely to pursue further the critique of Sudan urban studies presented in the Chapter One, but also to provide background information on the dynamics of population growth in the context of the processes of peripheral capitalist urbanism which, as I shall demonstrate in Chapters Four and Five, is indispensable to any attempt to understand the operation of the urban labour market in the country. Though the main focus of the chapter will be on aspects of population in Greater Khartoum, comparative data on three other 'large' Sudanese cities, Port Sudan, Wad Medani and El-Obeid, will be considered to corroborate the wider relevance of the analysis presented. (1)

The central point which the present chapter sets out to show is that the post-colonial process of rapid population growth in Greater Khartoum - and indeed in all 'large' Sudanese cities- cannot be legitimately construed as a consequence of an increase in the urban wage labour force. In asserting this it is of course not my wish to deny aspects of the post-colonial increase in the urban manual labour force in

the conurbation; but I shall argue that far greater growth has taken place among the 'non-wage earners' (businessmen, civil servants and professionals, etc.), and also among categories that are not considered as "earners" at all (i.e. house-wives, children, students, etc.). Thus when "increased migration" is accepted as the single most important factor behind population growth, it should be recognized that these other groups have contributed greater numbers than wage labour migrants.

As the returns of the National Censuses do not give the social characteristics of migrants in Greater Khartoum, the attempt to determine the exact magnitude of migration by different categories posits a formidable task. In examining the census data on the growth of the '**economically non-active population**' to shed light on migration by 'non-earners', for example, it is difficult to avoid the risk of mystification as a large proportion of these 'non-earners' may indeed be 'Khartoumites' rather than migrants. In order to minimise errors deriving from aggregation of Census data, I will attempt, whenever possible, to refer to other evidence on categories of migrants. As the full detailed returns of the 1983 Census are not yet made available, I deal mainly with aspects of growth in the intercensal period 1955/56-1973.

Before considering the magnitude of the increase in the different categories of the population in Greater Khartoum, I should briefly point out the conspicuous lack of reference in the literature to the role of the progressive extension of the municipal boundaries of the Three Towns in boosting the population total for the conurbation, although the

'redefinition' of 'rural inhabitants' as 'urban dwellers' as a result of the extension of urban boundaries has been mentioned, in passing, by two scholars dealing with population growth in other Sudanese towns (Mohamed El-Hadi Abu-Sin, 1980; Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1981; 1983). But the extension of the conurbation's boundaries has not only 'redefined' large numbers of 'rural dwellers' (as in the cases of the 'original inhabitants' of Halfaya, Kadaru, Shajara, Kalakla, etc.), but has also 'swallowed' at least two 'towns': Shambat (in Khartoum North) and Burri (in Khartoum); the returns of the First Population Census of 1955/56 listed Shambat and Burri as 'towns' in their own right with total populations of 6,665 and 2,023 respectively. The preliminary results of the 1983 Census give the population of Shambat as 48,536 and that of Burri as 41,051. Both 'towns', however, have for long been incorporated into the boundaries of the Three Towns; and their respective populations naturally contributed to the rise of the total for the conurbation. It is worth noting here that though the massive growth of these two former towns between 1955/56 and 1983 was partly a consequence of natural growth among the 'original inhabitants', each 'town' also received substantial numbers of migrants. Insofar as the Census data do not take into account the effects of the extension of boundaries, the treatment of the 'original settlers' and their descendants in the analysis of intercensal population growth poses a serious difficulty. This should be so because these 'original inhabitants' may be treated either as 'migrants', thereby inflating the rate of immigration, or as 'Khartoumites',

thereby exaggerating the rates of natural growth in the intercensal period. Recognition of this difficulty constitutes a call for more research into the rates of fertility and migration in Khartoum, but my present concern is simply to highlight some of the problems encountered in my own work.

THE INCREASE IN NON-EARNERS

In discussing the increase in the 'non-earning' population of Greater Khartoum, it is necessary to note at the outset the limitations of official statistics on female participation in the labour force. Women working at home, preparing traditional bread (kisra) or sewing clothes, etc., are not normally enumerated as 'workers'. But the lack of alternative data leaves me no option but to use official statistics; the figures on female participation I present below should therefore be treated with caution.

The evidence on migration of non-earners may be approached through an assessment of the returns of the two Censuses of 1955/56 and 1973 on the rate of participation in the labour force in Greater Khartoum (cf. Table 3:1). Out of a total population in the Three Towns of 245,735 in 1955/56, only 85,777 (or 34.9%) were listed as 'gainfully employed'. By 1973, however, the total population had increased to 784,294 and the 'economically active population' to only 251,532 (or 32.07%). In other words, despite the enormous intercensal increase in the total population of Greater Khartoum, the rate of participation in the labour force had actually declined.

Data on the other large cities likewise show evidence of declining rates of participation. In El-Obeid the rate fell from 35% in 1955/56 to 27% in 1973 (cf. Table 3:2), while in Port Sudan and Wad Medani the relevant percentages are 41% and 32% for 1955/56, and 35% and 28% for 1973 respectively (Tables 3:3 and 3:4).

The population increase since 1973 has been equally dramatic. The preliminary returns of the Third National Population Census indicate that by 1983 the 'day population' of Greater Khartoum was in excess of 2.7 million while by night the total dropped to around 1.34 million; but we shall have to wait for the detailed results of the 1983 Census to know whether the rate of participation in the labour force has declined even further. In this respect I should also stress that between 1973 and 1983 Greater Khartoum witnessed the influx of very large numbers of refugees, especially Eritrians; and in the assessment of population growth in the intercensal period 1973-1983 this influx should be taken into account otherwise the rate of rural-urban migration would be inflated. In 1973 the entire expatriate community in Greater Khartoum amounted to 24,850 people, and of these only 2,440 were listed as "Ethiopians" (cf. Table 3:5). By January, 1979, however, the number of **registered** refugees in Khartoum was 40,000 (cf. Table 3:6). Though no precise figures are available on the number of refugees arriving at Greater Khartoum since 1979, in view of the escalation of the war in Eritrea and of the exodus prompted by drought it is almost beyond doubt that the influx in recent years has been even

Table 3:1

Total Population, Intercensal Growth, and Labour Force Participation in Greater Khartoum, 1955/56-1983 (by sex)

CENSUS	TOTAL POPULATION		INTERCENSAL INCREASE (BY SEX)			Masculinity Ratio	ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPUL.			PARTICIPATION RATE (BY SEX)		
	Both Sexes No. %	Male No. %	Both Sexes No. %	Male No. %	Female No. %		Both Sexes No. %	Male No. %	Female No. %	Both %	M %	F %
55/56	245,735 100	135,328 55	- -	- -	- -	122	85,777 100	79,388 92.6	6,389 7.4	34.9	53.7	5.8
1973	784,294 100	437,261 56	538,559 219.2	301,933 223.1	236,626 214.3	126	251,532 100	232,540 92.4	18,992 7.6	32.1	53.2	5.5
1983	1343,651 100	742,978 55	559,357 71.3	305,717 69.9	253,640 73.1	124	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

Source : Compiled From census data 1955/56 & 1973 (Sudan Government, 1961; 1977)

Table 3:2

Total Population, Intercensal Growth, and Labour Force Participation in El-Obeid, 1955/56-1973

CENSUS	TOTAL POPULATION				INTERCENSAL INCREASE				Masculinity Ratio	ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPUL.				PARTICIPATION RATE (BY SEX)								
	Both Sexes		Male		Both Sexes		Male			Female		Both Sexes		Male	Female							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Sexes							
55/56	53,932	100	28,798	53	25,134	47	-	-	-	-	-	-	115	19,144	100	17,310	90	1,834	10	35	60.1	7.2
1973	90,073	100	45,940	51	44,133	49	36,141	67	17,142	59	18,999	75	104	24,384	100	21,839	90	2,545	10	27	47.5	5.8

Source: Compiled from census data 1955/56 & 1973 (Sudan Government, 1961; 1977)

Table 3:3

Total Population, Intercensal Growth, and Labour Force Participation in Port Sudan, 1955/56-1973

CENSUS	TOTAL POPULATION			INTERCENSAL INCREASE			MASCULINITY RATE	ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPUL.			PARTICIPATION RATE (BY SEX)		
	Both Sexes No. %	Male No. %	Female No. %	Both Sexes No. %	Male No. %	Female No. %		Both Sexes No. %	Male No. %	Female No. %	Both	M	F
55/56	50,313	30,756	19,557	-	-	-	157	20,823	19,440	1,383	41	63.2	7.1
1973	132,632	74,471	58,161	82,319	43,715	38,604	128	46,406	42,379	4,027	35	56.9	6.9

Source: Compiled from census data 1955/56 & 1973 (Sudan Government, 1961; 1977)

Table 3:4

Total Population, Intercensal Growth, and Labour Force Participation in Wad Medani, 1955/56-1973

CENSUS	TOTAL POPULATION						INTERCENSAL INCREASE						MASCULINITY RATIO	ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPUL.						PARTICIPATION RATE (BY SEX)		
	Both Sexes		Male		Female		Both Sexes		Male		Female			Both Sexes		Male		Female		Both	Male	Female
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%				
55/56	50,171	100	26,735	53	23,436	47	-	-	-	-	-	-	114	15,945	100	14,572	91	1,373	9	32	54.5	5.8
1973	106,715	100	57,526	54	49,189	46	56,544	113	30,791	115	25,753	109	116	29,701	100	28,111	95	1,590	5	28	48.9	3.2

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 Source: Compiled from census data 1955/56 & 1973 (Sudan Government, 1961; 1977)

Table 3:5

Population By Nationality For Selected Towns (Both Sexes)

NATIONALITY	G. KHARTOUM	KASSALA	GEDAREF	EL-OBEID	PORT SUDAN	WAD MEDANI	KOSTI
Sudanese	759,219	92,575	59,121	88,886	129,444	98,549	60,946
Foreigners:	24,850	7,069	7,341	1,166	3,432	8,036	4,321
Egypt	6,976	93	71	146	315	227	198
Chad	4,522	5	161	58	211	170	59
C.A. Republic	123	3	2	-	11	-	2
Zaire	142	1	-	1	3	5	3
Uganda	17	2	3	-	-	-	-
Kenya	5	-	-	-	-	2	-
Ethiopia	2,440	3,456	1,995	28	302	115	28
Nigeria	5,627	2,286	4,682	860	1,566	7,235	3,903
Other African	917	407	135	12	36	44	60
G. Syria & Iraq	195	-	6	5	10	4	2
Saudi Arabian	57	26	5	-	80	-	-
Yemen	1,240	551	201	6	305	97	24
India	628	123	54	-	456	77	24
Pakistan	90	2	-	-	-	-	-
Other Asian	372	94	11	1	40	6	-
Greece	415	4	10	17	21	14	9
Other Europ.	993	14	-	30	75	40	9
Other Nation.	91	2	5	2	1	-	-
Not Stated	225	6	2	21	1	130	137
TOTAL	784,294	99,650	66,464	90,073	132,877	106,715	65,404

Source: Preliminary Returns of the 1973 Population Census

Table 3:6

Refugees in Selected Sudanese Towns, Jan. 1979

URBAN CENTRE	NO. OF REFUGEES	% OF TOTAL
Port Sudan and Tokar	55,000	24.4
Kassala	40,000	17.8
N. Halfa, Girba, Aroma, Basunda, Doka, Hawata & Mafaza	60,000	26.7
Hassaheisa, Sinnar, Kostti and Wad Medani	30,000	13.3
Greater Khartoum	40,000	17.8

Source: Commissioner of Refugees, Khartoum, as quoted by Amin Ali Omara, 1982:182.

greater.

Furthermore, in the assessment of the declining rates of participation between 1955/56 and 1973 it should be clear that I am not suggesting that this was wholly due to immigration. But unless we assume that a large majority of Khartoumites are 'economically non-active', quite a significant proportion of the growth in the 'non-earning' population can only be explained as a result of immigration, especially by children and females. But though it is generally recognised that around "45 per cent of the population" of Greater Khartoum is comprised of people "in the age-group 17 years and under" (El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1979:301), very little attention has been paid in the literature to the role of migration by children in urban population growth. Likewise has been the case with female migration. In one of the few works touching on female and child migration (Mahmoud Khidir Rizgalla, 1980), the analysis refers to the Sudan as a whole, and the conclusion of this study is that;

..migration is most common among males aged 20-24 years, followed by males aged 25-29, 30-34, and 35-39. Women in all these age groups migrate much less. But whereas the level of migration falls markedly with age among men, the level does not vary a great deal among various adult female age categories. If anything, the level of migration of older females is higher than that of younger adult women. Not surprisingly, the very lowest levels of migration are among children (ibid, p.421).

Child migration is of course tied to migration by parents and/or adults; but as we do not have information about the social characteristics of 'migrant households' it is very difficult to explain the dynamics of child migration

precisely. As it is my contention, which I shall corroborate below, that the majority of the conurbation's 'economically active' adult population (which includes large numbers of migrants) consists of businessmen, bureaucrats and professionals rather than of wage workers, it is not far-fetched to relate child migration to migration by the relatively more affluent strata. But the increase in the 'economically non-active' population is not solely a consequence of growth of the child population, and I would draw attention to migration by females and post-secondary students in particular. Needless to stress, I do not treat these two 'forms' as mutually exclusive (i.e. "students" represent both sexes).

THE INCREASE IN THE FEMALE POPULATION

It is unfortunate that no statistics, or even rough estimates, are available on the increase of female migration. A major reason for this is that all studies on migration to Greater Khartoum have focused almost exclusively on male unskilled wage-labour migrants, most of whom are either unmarried or unaccompanied by their wives upon arrival. The result of this has been a gross under-estimation of the role of female immigration in the process of urban population growth. Thus it is typical to find in the literature to find assertions contending that:

Male migration into the Three Towns has been more effective than that of females, as large numbers of young men of employable age usually leave their villages to seek work in nearby towns.. In the Sudan,.. traditional social patterns seem to impose restrictions

on female migration. In a traditional Muslim community the place of women is at home, but whether the spread of female education will alter the situation or not has still to be seen... (El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1979:300).

The assertion concerning the "deep rooted religious restrictions" on female migration is very controversial, precisely because it assumes the prevalence all over the country of the culture and/or religious beliefs of the so-called 'Arabs' of northern and central Sudan. As far as I can gather, no attempt has been made to study the pattern of female migration among other groups (e.g. Southerners). From casual observation, however, I know that many young (western) Nuba women working in urban areas are sometimes members of unaccompanied 'female gangs'. Even in the case of muslim communities, moreover, it is also observed that many Baggarra young girls migrate, on their own, from villages and/or camps in search of work as house-maids in nearby towns (especially in El-Obeid).

Though Mohamed El-Awad Galal-El-Din (1978:124ff) tends to subscribe to the dominant view concerning the constraints on female migration in the Sudan, he nevertheless provides some evidence of increased female migration. Thus elsewhere he notes (1980a:438ff) that the "sex differential" in Greater Khartoum has decreased in recent years; but he stops short of fully accounting for the magnitude of female immigration which has resulted in this decrease. Such explanation as he gives, moreover, seems to reduce female migration to a consequence of wage labour migration. In this respect he points to the policy

of allocating plots of land in Third Class Areas to migrants and considers this to have been "a positive encouragement for migrants to bring their families to the city.." (ibid.). This analysis, however, fails to consider the implications of migration by businessmen, bureaucrats and professionals, for the increase in female immigration. This omission may be highly significant, not only because these 'established migrants' are resourceful enough to have their wives and/or dependants with them even when they are not allocated plots, but also because they are commonly allocated even larger plots in First and Second Class neighbourhoods, and are, in addition, provided loans to build houses on these plots. Though very little is known about the social characteristics of female immigrants, it does therefore seem highly doubtful whether female migration can be accounted for solely as consequence of wage-labour migration.

In spite of the lack of data on the dynamics of female immigration, the growth of the female population in Greater Khartoum is substantiated by the returns of the Three National Censuses. Table (3:1) clearly corroborates two very important points. The first point concerns not only the relative stability of the sex ratio in the period 1955/56 to 1983, but also how, since 1973, the rate of increase in the urban female population has **exceeded** the rate of increase in the urban male population. Between 1955/56 and 1973, the total population of Greater Khartoum increased by 219.2%, while the male and female populations increased by 223.1% and 214.2% respectively. Between 1973 and 1983, however, the female

population increased by 73.1% while the male population increased by only 69.9% (giving a total increase of 71.3%). Unless we assume that natural growth in Greater Khartoum between 1955/56 and 1983 was primarily of females, the only explanation is that immigration by females has at least been **proportionally** equal to that by males.

Though data for 1983 on the sex distribution of the population in El-Obeid, Port Sudan and Wad Medani are not available, the returns of the first two censuses suffice to make the point (See Tables 3:2, 3:3 and 3:4). Of these three cities, it is only Wad Medani which showed a slightly higher rate of increase among males than among females between 1955/56 and 1973; the male population increased by 115%, while the female population by 109%. In El-Obeid and Port Sudan, on the other hand, female populations had higher rates of increase. In El-Obeid females increased by 75% and males by only 67%, while in Port Sudan the rate of increase among females was a dramatic 197% whereas among men the rate was 142% only.

The second point concerns the contribution of the increase in the female population to the growth of the economically non-active population between 1955/56 and 1973. In 1955/56, the total female population in the conurbation was 110,407 and of these only 6,389 females, or 5.78%, were reported as 'gainfully employed'. By 1973, the total female population in the Three Towns reached 381,655, but only 18,992 females, or 4.98%, were listed as 'economically active'. The rate of female participation in the urban labour force likewise

declined in the other three large Sudanese cities. In El-Obeid it fell from 7.2% to 5.8%, while in Port Sudan and Wad Medani the rate fell from 7.1% to 6.9% and from 5.8% to 3.2% respectively. It is interesting to note that, with the exception of Wad Medani, the **proportion** of females in the labour force in the cities considered has actually increased. In other words, the decline in the rate of participation among males was greater than among females. But in view of the increase in the student population in the large Sudanese cities to which I now turn this should not be surprising.

GROWTH IN THE STUDENT POPULATION

Generally speaking, the literature on Sudanese urbanization has tended to under-emphasize the impact of the expansion in secondary and post-secondary education upon the process of rapid urban population growth in post-colonial Sudan in general and Greater Khartoum in particular. The contributions by Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din (particularly 1978; 1980a), however, stand as exceptions. In this respect, Mohamed El-Awad (1980a:440) maintains that

Although migrants to Greater Khartoum are distinctly better educated than the people living outside the conurbation, they are far less educated than those born in the Khartoum area. The position of the university-educated population is, however, different as many migrants come to the capital specifically to attend university, while the capital clearly offers the widest range and largest number of openings for professional men and women.

Again, however, Mohamed El-Awad overlooks how substantial this "university-educated" migrant population is. This is

curious because elsewhere (1978:124ff) he notes how wage-labour migration has resulted in an "imbalance in the sex ratios in Greater Khartoum". He quotes the returns of the Second Census of 1973 to show how this imbalance is especially marked in the age-groups 15-19, 20-24, 25-30 and 30-34 for which the masculinity ratios in 1973 were 129, 155, 160 and 164 respectively. Following this line of argument, Mohamed El-Awad goes on to discuss the "adverse implications" for the countryside consequent on the loss of its able-bodied youth who migrate to Greater Khartoum in search of employment.

That there is an imbalance in the sex ratio for the age-group 15-34 in Greater Khartoum is of course not in doubt. To assert that this imbalance can be accounted for primarily by wage-labour immigration, however, is questionable. My conviction is that a very substantial section of the immigrant male population in the age-group 15-35 is actually comprised either of students or of recent graduates employed in government departments and private concerns.

The dramatic increase in the number of students between 1955/56 and 1973 is indeed particularly relevant in explaining aspects of the decline in the rate of male participation in the labour force in Greater Khartoum. As shown in Table (3:1), the rate of male participation dropped from 58.7% in 1955/56 to 53.18% in 1973, while the proportion of males in the labour force fell from 92.6% to 92.4%. Owing to lack of data on immigration by pre-university students, however, in the rest of this section I will confine the discussion to immigration by post-secondary students as a factor in the conurbation's

rapid population growth.

Firstly, it is worth noting that, although during the decades since flag Independence the Sudan has experienced a dramatic increase in educational services at all levels, the rate of expansion in post-secondary education has been even more impressive. In 1955 there was only one university college in the country in addition to a handful of non-university, post-secondary, institutes. At present, however, there are five universities (and more are planned) and one university college while "no less than 15 [more institutes] were added in the immediate post independence period" (Mohamed Omer Beshir, 1977:32). In the five year period between 1969/70 and 1973/74 alone, the number of students registered in post-secondary education increased from 11,437 to 19,901 (cf. Table 3:7). By 1981/82, the number amounted to no less than 32,784 (cf. Table 3:8). It is also worth noting that, until the early 1970s, post-secondary educational institutions in the Sudan were exclusively confined to Greater Khartoum. Notwithstanding the establishment of Juba and Gezira Universities outside the conurbation, Greater Khartoum still accommodates over 31,000 post-secondary students, who comprise over 94% of all students in higher education in the country (cf. Table 3:8). Indeed, it is this heavy concentration which has rendered the university student population such a formidable political force in the country.

Though I could not find exact figures on the proportion of migrant-students in the conurbation's universities and other post-secondary institutions, from my own experience, and for

Table 3:7 Students Registered in University and Higher Education in Sudan, 1969 - 1973

I N S T I T U T I O N	1969/70	1970/71	1971/72	1972/73	1973/74
University of Khartoum	4,043	4,641	5,189	5,856	6,411
Cairo University - Khartoum Branch	5,098	6,848	8,127	7,828	9,482
Islamic University	549	535	538	503	609
Higher Teachers' Training Institute	405	444	493	509	511
Khartoum Technical Institute	654	754	234	150	139
Higher Institute of Survey	-	-	73	71	103
H.I. for Technical Teachers	-	-	48	78	115
H.I for Commerce	172	153	169	188	228
H.I for Physical Training	34	54	117	150	102
Khartoum School for Fine Arts	130	160	107	157	115
Ahfad University College	29	62	92	111	143
H.I. for Textile Technicians	-	-	20	53	64
Secretariat School	30	45	64q	81	67
I. for Laboratory Technicians	-	-	26	17	39
Shambat Agricultural Institute	130	196	276	352	?
High Nursing College	69	78	63	65	71
I. for Engineering Technicians	-	-	53	114	105
Public Health College	77	44	57	34	40
Institute for Survey Technicians	-	-	29	43	57
Inst. for X-ray & Radiology Technicians	-	-	-	56	66
Forestry College	-	13	-	18	29
Inst. of Drama and Music	17	42	100	114	126
Total	11,437	15,072	15,911	16,624	19,901

Source, Admission Office, University of Khartoum, as quoted in, M.O. Beshir, 1977:35

Table 3:8

Numbers of Students registered in Higher Education Institutes in the Sudan, 1978/79-1981/82

INSTITUTION	1978/79		1979/80		1980/81		1981/82	
	TOTAL	FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE
Khartoum University	7,920	1,313	7,920	1,555	8,111	1,697	8,002	1,897
Omdurman Islamic Univ.	1,472	378	1,585	450	1,661	455	1,700	500
Juba University	308	26	409	39	547	60	650	115
Gezira University	202	28	366	58	571	103	797	135
Cairo Univ. (Khartoum)	13,593	3,801	13,919	4,135	14,810	4,712	18,271	5,539
Institute of Technology	1,767	230	1,705	229	1,892	247	1,755	263
Specialised Institutes and colleges	1,049	411	1,228	435	1,405	610	1,609	610
TOTAL	26,311	6,187	27,132	6,901	28,997	7,810	32,784	9,059

Source: Department of Statistics, National Council for Higher Education

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social and economic reasons which I cannot consider here, it can be safely estimated that at least 80 per cent of the 31,337 post-secondary students in Greater Khartoum were born outside Khartoum. In an unpublished survey of first year students entering Khartoum University in 1977/78, John Tait found that 40% were from the Gezira Province alone (cf. O'Brien, 1984a:225).

Notwithstanding the relatively significant increase of female students in higher education in recent years, the **masculinity ratio** for post-secondary students in Greater Khartoum by 1982 was still 256 (cf. Table 3:8). In view of this, it seems erroneous to ascribe the lower overall masculinity ratio of 155 for the population in the age-group 20-24 years in 1973 to wage labour migration, especially as the Second National Census quoted by Mohamed El-Awad (1977a:31) shows that this age-group constituted 10.25% of Greater Khartoum's total population of 784,294 in 1973. The number of post-secondary students in Greater Khartoum for that year was 19,901 (cf. Table 3:7), or approximately 25% of the 80,390 men and women comprising the population in that age-group. Moreover, it should be stressed that the presence of these migrant-students does not cease with their graduation. As I shall soon explain, the large majority of graduates is actually employed in the capital.

GROWTH AMONG THE 'NON-WAGE' EARNERS

From the foregoing discussion it should be clear that wage-labour migration cannot be considered the prime factor underlying population growth in the conurbation. The 'prime factor' is, on the contrary, the growth of elements that do not participate at all in the urban labour force. In the rest of this section I attempt to substantiate the contention that even when it comes to growth in the "economically active population", the wage-labour force cannot be held solely, or even mainly, responsible. In particular, I draw attention to the increase in the numbers of professionals, bureaucrats and members of the different fractions of the capitalist class.

GROWTH AMONG THE SALARIAT

It is common knowledge in the Sudan that, starting with the process of Sudanization of top government posts in the late 1940s/early 1950s, there has been a rapid increase in government employment. Of special relevance to the present discussion, however, is the growth in public 'classified employees', which category does not cover skilled and unskilled manual workers who are regarded as 'unclassified government employees'. Table (3:9) gives an overview of the increase in the number of 'classified staff' over a number of years covering both the colonial and immediate post-colonial periods. Between 1946 and 1956, total 'classified employment' increased from 7,660 to 12,127. Though those recruited into the civil service during the colonial period were not exclusively Sudanese, it is almost certain that the entire

Table 3:9

The Number of Government Classified Staff in Sudan, 1901—1963/64

Year	No. of Classified Staff	Year	Classified Staff
1901	935	1956	12,127
1920	3,960	1957/58	16,964
1930	5,410	1958/59	18,389
1939	5,918	1959/60	19,103
1940	6,076	1960/61	19,622
1946	7,660	1961/62	21,398
1953	9,218	1962/63	22,870
1954	10,049	1963/64	25,042
1955	9,915		

Source: compiled from Tables (5) and (12) quoted in, Mohamed Omer Beshir, 1977.

Table 3:10

The Nationality of Government Classified Staff in Sudan, 1920—1956

Nationality	1920	1930	1953	1954	1955	1956	1958
Sudanese	1,520	2,760	7,860	9,774	9,007	11,621	13,810
British	550	1,030	1,168	1,111	732	259	182
Egyptian	1,630	1,320	145	108	124	120	163
Others	260	320	45	56	52	227	218
Total	3,960	5,430	9,218	10,049	9,915	12,127	14,373

Source: Ahmed Ibrahim Abu-Sin, 1968:79, as quoted in, Mohamed O. Beshir, 1977:21.

increase during the last decade of colonial rule was Sudanese. The increase in the numbers of Sudanese in 'classified employment' between 1953 and 1956 (cf. Table 3:10) clearly bears witness to this. Following flag Independence, moreover, virtually no expatriates were taken into the civil service.

The increase in the number of 'classified staff' since 1963/64 has been more dramatic than in the earlier period of Sudanization. In the five year period from 1963 to 1968 alone, the number of 'classified staff' was increased by more than one third, from 25,042 to 39,769 (cf. Abdel Rahman E. Ali Taha, 1976:124; also see; Aguda, 1972:335). In 1968, moreover, an Unemployment Relief Fund was especially created to provide salaries for the increasing numbers of secondary school-leavers and university graduates who were taken on as 'temporary' employees in government. According to Mohamed Omer Beshir (1977:48), these school-leavers and graduates had to be employed on a 'temporary' basis through the Fund because they were considered unqualified "to fill vacancies existing on a permanent basis". When the Fund was effectively abolished in 1974, however, more than 19,000 people employed through it had to be absorbed into 'permanent' positions in the various government departments (cf. Mohamed El-Murtada Mustafa & Khalid Affan, 1977:206). The recruitment of school-leavers and graduates of course continued after 1974; but owing to stringent budgetary considerations in the last few years a limited problem of 'educated unemployment' started to emerge in Greater Khartoum (although this is now being offset by opportunities in regional governments in the Sudan as well as

by emigration to the oil-rich Arab countries).

The point in considering aspects of the increase in the number of 'classified staff' is that the bulk of 'classified employees' are not only found in the large urban areas in the country, but also particularly concentrated in the conurbation of Khartoum. According to Salih El-Arifi (1971:133), the returns of the First National Population Census indicate that in 1955/56 the eight largest Sudanese cities jointly had;

69.4 per cent of the professional non-technical group composed of high-school teachers, senior civil-service men and university professors. The Khartoum Complex alone had roughly 55 per cent of the total of this group. The professional-technical group, which includes doctors and engineers, was represented by 73.2 per cent in the eight centres and by about 58 per cent in the Khartoum Complex alone. The same was the case with the senior clerical group, which showed a heavier concentration than the junior clericals...Many senior clerical personnel were concentrated in the Khartoum complex, which possessed 42 per cent of the total; the major centres together had 64.9 per cent of the total.

'Classified employees' have always constituted a significant sector of the 'economically active' population in all 'large' cities in the country. As shown in Table (3:11), even prior to post-colonial expansion, 'classified employees' (i.e. administrators, professionals, clerks) and personnel of the protective services accounted for no less than 19% of the economically active population of Khartoum in 1955/56. In spite of the rigid centralization which undoubtedly boosted the proportion of the 'classified staff' and personnel of the protective services in the 'gainfully employed' population of Greater Khartoum, the proportion in the other large Sudanese

Table 3:11

The Distribution of the Gainfully Employed Population in Greater Khartoum by Occupation (Both Sexes), 1955/56

Occupational Group	Number	%
1. Shop Owners	7397	9
2. Owners of Large Industrial Undertakings	263	-
3. Workshop Owners	73	-
4. Animal Owners	22	-
5. Professional & Semi-Professional	6168	7
6. Managerial (Industry & Commerce)	570	1
7. Senior and Junior Clerks	6687	8
8. Protective Services	3758	4
9. Skilled Personal Services	9661	11
10. Semi-skilled & Unskilled P. Services	4455	5
11. Metal Industries Craftsmen	4399	5
12. Woodworking Craftsmen	3570	4
13. Building & Kindred Craftsmen	3666	4
14. Textile Craftsmen	3577	4
15. Light Industries Craftsmen	3619	4
16. Other Craftsmen	2171	4
17. Machinery Operatives in Transport	5502	3
18. Other Machinery Operatives	849	1
19. Labourers except Farm Labourers	9824	11
20. Farm and Forestry Workers	807	1
21. Unknown & Unproductive Occupations	7180	8
TOTAL	85775	100

Source: Compiled from Tables (9.11) and (9.13) of Town Planners Supplement, vol. 1, 1955/56 Census (cf. Sudan Government, 1961).

cities showed no stark variation in 1955/56. In El-Obeid the two categories constituted 14% of the 'gainfully employed' population (Table 3:12), while in Port Sudan and Wad Medani they constituted 13% and 14% respectively (cf. Tables 3:13 and 3:14).

Furthermore, it is my strong impression that the proportion of 'classified employees' in the economically active population in present-day Khartoum is at least equal to, if not greater than, what it was in 1955/56. I could not, however, find any recent figures to corroborate this contention. Nevertheless data for 1973 that include neither public 'manufacturing' employees nor military personnel suggest that public employment in Greater Khartoum accounted for 60,000 (or approximately 24%) of the 251,532 economically active population (cf. ILO, 1976:365). Given that in Khartoum there are only a few ministries, government departments and non-industrial public corporations that employ more wage-earners than salariats (e.g. the Ministry of Construction and Public Works, the Mechanical Transport Department, the Stores and Ordnance Department, the Water and Electricity Corporations and Sudan Railways), it seems no over-estimate to maintain that at least two-thirds of public employees in Greater Khartoum are 'classified staff'. This estimate, it is worth noting, is very modest in view of the pattern of concentration of 'classified employment' in Greater Khartoum and of the fact that in the sole reference to the proportion of 'classified staff' in total government employment in the Sudan as a whole (in 1962), the salariats were roughly half

Table 3:12

The Distribution of the Gainfully Employed Population in EL-Obeid by Occupation (Both Sexes), 1955/56

Occupational Group	Number	%
1. Shop Owners	1912	10
2. Owners of Large Industrial Undertakings	25	-
3. Workshop Owners	4	-
4. Animal Owners	26	-
5. Professional & Semi-Professional	706	4
6. Managerial (Industry & Commerce)	42	-
7. Senior and Junior Clerks	839	4
8. Protective Services	1116	6
9. Skilled Personal Services	2592	13
10. Semi-skilled & Unskilled P. Services	1500	8
11. Metal Industries Craftsmen	613	3
12. Woodworking Craftsmen	400	2
13. Building & Kindred Craftsmen	556	3
14. Textile Craftsmen	554	3
15. Light Industries Craftsmen	1051	5
16. Other Craftsmen	325	2
17. Machinery Operatives in Transport	1331	7
18. Other Machinery Operatives	77	-
19. Labourers except Farm Labourers	1755	9
20. Farm and Forestry Workers	23	-
21. Farmer	2790	15
22. Shepherds	334	2
23. Unknown & Unproductive Occupations	573	3
TOTAL	19144	100

Source: Compiled from Tables (9.11) and (9.13) of Town Planners Supplement, vol. 1, 1955/56 Census (cf. Sudan Government, 1961).

Table 3:13

The Distribution of the Gainfully Employed Population in Port Sudan by Occupation (Both Sexes), 1955/56

Occupational Group	Number	%
1. Shop Owners	1360	6
2. Owners of Large Industrial Undertakings	63	-
3. Animal Owners	26	-
4. Professional & Semi-Professional	874	4
5. Managerial (Industry & Commerce)	124	1
6. Senior and Junior Clerks	1595	8
7. Protective Services	698	3
8. Skilled Personal Services	2485	12
9. Semi-skilled & Unskilled P. Services	1638	8
10. Metal Industries Craftsmen	409	2
11. Woodworking Craftsmen	547	3
12. Building & Kindred Craftsmen	650	3
13. Textile Craftsmen	429	2
14. Light Industries Craftsmen	525	2
15. Other Craftsmen	207	1
16. Machinery Operatives in Transport	1433	7
17. Other Machinery Operatives	514	2
18. Labourers except Farm Labourers	6241	30
19. Farm and Forestry Workers	21	-
20. Farmers	478	2
21. Shepherds	66	-
22. Fishermen & Hunters	111	-
23. Unknown & Unproductive Occupations	337	2
TOTAL	20823	100

Source: Compiled from Tables (9.11) and (9.13) of Town Planners Supplement, vol. 1, 1955/56 Census (cf. Sudan Government, 1961).

Table 3:14

The Distribution of the Gainfully Employed Population in Wad Medani by Occupation (Both Sexes), 1955/56

Occupational Group	Number	%
1. Shop Owners	1838	11
2. Owners of Large Industrial Undertakings	6	-
3. Animal Owners	6	-
4. Professional & Semi-Professional	788	5
5. Managerial (Industry & Commerce)	105	1
6. Senior and Junior Clerks	935	6
7. Protective Services	547	3
8. Skilled Personal Services	2048	13
9. Semi-skilled & Unskilled P. Services	863	5
10. Metal Industries Craftsmen	545	3
11. Woodworking Craftsmen	721	4
12. Building & Kindred Craftsmen	702	4
13. Textile Craftsmen	740	5
14. Light Industries Craftsmen	1171	7
15. Other Craftsmen	598	4
16. Machinery Operatives in Transport	804	5
17. Other Machinery Operatives	881	2
18. Labourers except Farm Labourers	2174	14
19. Farm and Forestry Workers	136	1
20. Farmers	708	4
21. Shepherds	72	-
22. Fishermen & Hunters	7	-
23. Unknown & Unproductive Occupations	50	-
TOTAL	15945	100

Source: Compiled from Tables (9.11) and (9.13) of Town Planners Supplement, vol. 1, 1955/56 Census (cf. Sudan Government, 1961).

the total public employees in the Sudan (cf. Table 3:15). Since 1962, however, the increase in 'classified employment' has been far greater than in 'unclassified employment', and while 'classified employees' tend to concentrate in Greater Khartoum and other large urban areas, 'unclassified' workers constitute a majority in rural, and small urban, areas. It is worth noting in this respect that El-Sayed El-Bushra (1976:82) claims that (in 1973?) Greater Khartoum accounted for 50% of physicians in the country.

Furthermore, despite the regionalization policy adopted in recent years by the government, there is little reason to assume that the pattern of concentration of 'classified staff' in Greater Khartoum has changed. It is relevant to note that through the regionalization policy the tasks of many of the central ministries in Khartoum were drastically reduced to the extent that the "bulk of the staff in Khartoum could be transferred to the regions" to meet their considerable new staffing requirements (Moharir, 1984; also see Beshir Omer Fadlallah, 1984). All regional governments in the country, however, are said to be acutely under-staffed at present. In this respect Moharir (1984) notes that

as the experience of implementing regional government in Sudan so far shows, [transferring staff from Khartoum].. is not an easy task, partly due to the built-in resistance of the civil servants used to the facilities of the capital.

Given my contention concerning the preponderance of 'migrant-students' in post-secondary education, a large section of the 'classified employees' in Greater Khartoum may indeed be comprised of migrants.

Furthermore, though a majority of technical and non-technical professionals is employed by government, quite a number of them are also found as employees or self-employed persons in the private sector. Employment in insurance companies and banks, for example, is almost exclusively of non-wage earners. The exact number of all the salariat groups in Greater Khartoum in 1973 is difficult to estimate, but probably constituted over 25% of the total economically active population (cf. Table 3:16).

Before turning to assess aspects of the growth of the capitalist class, I should at least give weight by assertion (because corroboration is difficult) to the significance of military employment in Greater Khartoum. Though I do not have any recent figures or estimates on this form of public employment (which is not included in the statistics quoted above), it is common knowledge that it is indeed 'substantial'. All that can be advanced in this connection is a mere speculation, but it seems probable that over a third of the 65,000 strong People's Armed Forces are actually stationed (with their families) in Greater Khartoum. But even a very conservative estimate of 10,000 'employees' in the military for 1973 would boost the ratio of 'non-wage employees' to 40% of the economically active population of Greater Khartoum. It is worth noting here that this percentage does not cover employees in the Police Force, the Prisons Department and the State Security Organization.

Table 3:15

Categories & Scales of Government Employees (%), 1962

CATEGORY/SCALE	% OF TOTAL
Manual employees:	
Group I (unskilled)	24.1
Group II (semi-skilled)	13.2
Group III (semi-skilled)	10.5
Group IV (skilled)	5.7
Group V (skilled)	1.8
Group VI (skilled)	0.3
Group VII (supervisory)	0.3
Clerical employees	
Junior, Class 1	3.2
2	0.1
3	0.0
4	0.2
5	4.1
Senior, Class 6	0.0
7	0.8
8	0.2
9	0.8
10	0.0
Semi-professional and technical staff	
Scales group 1 (1)	2.7
2 (4)	3.1
3 (1)	5.5
4 (1)	3.0
5 (3)	1.6
6 (5)	1.7
7 (1)	5.5
8 (6)	0.4
9 (1)	3.1
10 (6)	0.4
11 (3)	0.8
Administrative and professional staff	
Scales group 1 (1)	1.8
2 (6)	0.2
3 (5)	2.3
4 (3)	0.4
5 (1)	0.8
6 (3)	0.7
7 (3)	0.1
8 (1)	0.2
9 (2)	0.3
10 (3)	0.1
11 (3)	0.0

Source: ILO, 1962:35-6, as quoted by Abdel Rahman E. A. Taha, 1976:132-3.

IMMIGRATION BY THE BOURGEOISIE

It is beyond the purpose of this section to consider the question of the origin, development or role of the Sudanese bourgeoisie (cf. Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, 1984; Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1983; El-Haj Bilal Omèr, 1979). It suffices to make the point that subsequent to the undermining of the status of virtual monopoly which a few foreign, mainly British, companies and individual capitalists used to enjoy during the colonial period, the Sudanese bourgeoisie has increased rapidly (cf. Mohamed Hashim Awad, 1966?; Taj el-Anbia A. El-Dawi, 1972; Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1983; Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, 1984).

The growth of the 'dependent' local bourgeoisie during the last decade or so has been accelerated out of all proportion to its growth in former decades. The processes underlying this rapid growth are several and complex, and can only be outlined in a very general manner here. Most significant of these processes is the expansion in large scale mechanized rainfed farming. This was particularly after the impetus given to mechanised farming during the 1970s by the sharp rise in the price of oil-seeds and the increase in demand for sorghum in neighbouring countries. This expansion contributed to a significant increase in the ranks of the 'big merchants' and the agricultural bourgeoisie (who, it is worth noting, are also largely merchants). The shortages in imported consumer goods consequent on the problems of the balance of payments in the Sudan has also augmented the growth of the commercial bourgeoisie by opening opportunities for black-marketing.

Another factor is the inflow of capital from outside Sudan. This is partly a consequence of the emigration of Sudanese to the Gulf, and of the return of some with sufficient capital to allow them to enter the ranks of the bourgeoisie. With the adoption of an 'open door policy' in 1973, and especially since 1977, however, the Sudan has also experienced an inflow of foreign capital, especially from Arab countries, which seems to have been the prime factor behind the emergence of the 'new rich' in the country. Speculation on the role of the Faisal Islamic Bank in the promotion of capital accumulation among members of the Muslim Brotherhood is a case in point. Last but not least, there is the "factor of corruption", through which an increasing number of state functionaries have managed to accumulate capital (cf. El-Wathig Kameir and Ibrahim Kursany, 1984; Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, 1984). Unfortunately, however, no precise statistics, or even rough estimates, are available on the size of the capitalist class in the Sudan as a whole.

As in the case of professionals and bureaucrats, the bourgeoisie is concentrated in the large urban areas in general and Greater Khartoum in particular. And the 'big merchants' and industrialists are almost exclusively concentrated in Greater Khartoum. In 1967, for example, over 80% of the large commercial establishments, around 73% of the 'modern' industrial establishments, and approximately 80% of all banking activities were concentrated in Greater Khartoum (cf. Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1978:120; El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1980:275).

The concentration of capitalists in Greater Khartoum is not a 'coincidence' and most of the 'big' businessmen in the Sudan are not 'Khartoumites' by birth. Far from this being the case, their concentration is largely a result of the persistent migration of individual capitalists (and the transfer of capital) into Greater Khartoum from all over the country (cf. Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, *op.cit.* pp. 118ff). Migration from Western Sudan, where the number of merchants engaged in export trade in oil-seeds and gum arabic has increased dramatically during the last decade or so, is particularly significant in understanding the current increase in the number of 'big merchants' in the conurbation. Though the amenities of Khartoum may partly account for the immigration of capitalists (especially the agricultural bourgeoisie), the main factors underlying the concentration are directly related to the requirements of the process of capital accumulation.

The large majority of capitalists in Greater Khartoum consists of merchants (importers, exporters, wholesalers and retailers). For the importers and exporters, whose activities are directly tied to foreign trade, proximity to the various government departments concerned with licensing, custom clearance, etc., is imperative. Owing to the exclusive concentration of the administration of foreign trade in Khartoum, the presence in the conurbation of virtually all importers and exporters is hardly surprising. For these importers and exporters, as well as for the wholesalers who do not deal directly with the international trading centres,

Greater Khartoum is the best point of redistribution (and collection). The strategic location of Greater Khartoum as the "nodal point of all national routes.. and.. the most accessible urban area in the country by river, rail, road and air" (El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1980:270) is of course crucial in this respect. For the presence of retailers, the status of the conurbation as the largest consumption centre hardly needs emphasis. No wonder, therefore, that "shop-owners" have always constituted a significant segment of the 'economically active population' in Greater Khartoum.

As early as 1955/56, "shop-owners" in the Three Towns numbered 7,397, or approximately 9 per cent of the 85,777 'gainfully employed' population (cf. Table 3:11). By 1973, no less than 24,482 were listed by the Census as "employers" and/or "own-account workers" in the 'sector' comprising wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels (cf. Table 3:16). Assuming that there were 1,482 restaurant and hotel owners in Khartoum (the number of hotels is definitely less than ninety), wholesalers and retailers would still account for 23,000, or over 9 per cent, of the economically active population in 1973. The proportion of businessmen in the 'economically active' population in other major towns is often even greater. In 1955/56, they constituted 9.9% in El-Obeid, 6.5% in Port Sudan, and 11.5% in Wad Medani (cf. Tables 3:12, 3:13 and 3:14 respectively). By 1973, moreover, their proportion either remained the same or increased; in El-Obeid they accounted for 11.3% (Table 3:17), while in Port Sudan and Wad Medani the relevant percentages are 9.6% and 11.5%

Table 3:16

The Economically Active Population in Greater Khartoum and its Sectoral Distribution and Employment Status, 1973 (Both Sexes)

SECTOR	TOTAL	EMPLOYER	OWN-ACCOUNT WORKER	EMPLOYEE	UNPAID FAMILY WORKER	OTHER UNPAID WORKER	UNEMPLOYED
Agriculture, Hunting Fishing & Forestry	13,463	371	5,395	7,333	146	5	212
Mining & Quarrying	187	4	16	163	-	1	3
Manufacturing	43,545	736	1,011	32,210	140	61	187
Electricity, Water & Gas	5,791	8	59	5,696	3	2	23
Construction	15,555	308	3,712	11,446	15	2	72
Wholesale & Retail Trade, Restaurants & Hotels	39,410	2,834	21,648	14,416	361	23	128
Transport, Storage & Communications	25,008	220	4,065	20,473	23	9	218
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, etc.	2,967	40	158	2,755	1	-	14
Community, Social & Personal Services	89,645	692	7,297	80,828	131	206	491
Others	15,962	129	1,711	4,071	19	8	10,024
TOTAL	251,532	5,342	54,272	179,391	838	317	11,372

Source (Compiled from) 1973 National Population Census (Sudan Government, 1977)

Table 3:17

The Economically Active Population in El-Obeid and its Sectoral Distribution and Employment Status, 1973 (Both Sexes)

SECTOR	TOTAL	EMPLOYER	OWN-ACCOUNT WORKER	EMPLOYEE	UNPAID FAMILY WORKER	UNPAID OTHER WORKER	UNEMPLOYED
Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry & Fishing	3,497	124	2,523	687	139	5	19
Mining & Quarrying	29	6	5	18	-	-	-
Manufacturing	2,138	101	1,130	875	15	14	3
Electricity, Gas & Water	838	3	45	788	-	2	-
Construction	1,367	15	376	970	1	2	3
Wholesale & Retail Trade, Restaurants & Hotels	3,703	191	2,557	879	67	4	5
Transport, Storage and Communications	2,173	22	648	1,493	2	1	7
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, etc.	124	2	8	113	1	-	-
Community, Social and Personal Services	9,260	92	1,193	7,876	27	46	26
Others	1,255	22	158	357	1	4	713
TOTAL	24,384	578	8,643	14,056	253	78	776

Source: 1973 National Population Census (Sudan Government, 1977)

Table 3:18

The Economically Active Population in Port Sudan and its
Sectoral Distribution and Employment Status, 1973 (Both Sexes)

SECTOR	TOTAL	EMPLOYER	OWN-ACCOUNT WORKER	EMPLOYEE	UNPAID FAMILY WORKER	UNPAID OTHER WORKER	UNEMPLOYED
Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry & Fishing	2,520	107	1,298	1,053	28	5	29
Mining & Quarrying	519	-	2	514	-	-	3
Manufacturing	4,339	135	1,886	2,276	16	13	13
Electricity, Gas & Water	468	-	13	453	-	-	2
Construction	1,765	28	352	1,376	-	-	9
Wholesale & Retail Trade, Restaurants & Hotels	9,169	422	4,060	4,563	78	5	41
Transport, Storage and Communications	13,640	41	931	12,575	9	1	83
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, etc.	328	-	11	317	-	-	-
Community, Social and Personal Services	11,736	63	1,488	9,963	20	71	131
Others	1,922	5	167	490	2	3	1,255
TOTAL	46,406	801	10,208	33,580	153	98	1,566

Source: 1973 National Population Census (Sudan Government, 1976)

Table 3:19

The Economically Active Population in Wad Medani and its Sectoral Distribution and Employment Status, 1973 (Both Sexes)

SECTOR	TOTAL	EMPLOYER	OWN-ACCOUNT WORKER	EMPLOYEE	UNPAID FAMILY WORKER	UNPAID OTHER WORKER	UNEMPLOYED
Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry & Fishing	4,043	259	875	2,863	30	1	15
Mining & Quarrying	7	2	1	4	-	-	-
Manufacturing	3,041	101	1,419	1,481	13	16	11
Electricity, Gas & Water	3,224	2	25	3,184	-	-	13
Construction	2,214	40	570	1,590	3	-	11
Wholesale & Retail Trade, Restaurants & Hotels	4,604	329	3,096	1,090	82	4	3
Transport, Storage and Communications	2,370	25	721	1,608	5	-	11
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, etc.	118	2	4	112	-	-	-
Community, Social and Personal Services	7,943	110	1,173	6,561	34	38	27
Others	2,137	5	200	440	15	3	1,474
TOTAL	29,701	875	8,084	18,933	182	62	1,565

Source: 1973 National Population Census (Sudan Government, 1976)

respectively (Tables 3:18 and 3:19). The proportion of migrants among the wholesale and retail traders in each of these cities, however, is difficult to estimate.

Until the detailed returns of the 1983 Census are made available, it will be scarcely possible to assess accurately the increase in the commercial bourgeoisie since 1973. It is worth noting, however, that in 1973 the 'open door policy' was still in its infancy, and the current dramatic growth of the capitalist class was just starting. The records of the Tax office in Greater Khartoum, however, are of some help in estimating the present number of the 'big merchants'. According to the Tax records for 1983, at least 4,908 licensed merchants paid their Business Profit Tax (which is not applicable to small shop-owners who pay a fixed annual fee for licence). Given the skills of the commercial bourgeoisie in delaying, as well as in evading altogether, payment of the Business Profit Tax (cf. Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1983:147ff), it may safely be estimated that there are at least 6,000 'big merchants' in Greater Khartoum. Corroboration of this estimate can be found in the register of the Khartoum Chamber of Commerce which indicates that the number of members had reached 4,000 by the beginning of 1984. Very few, if any, retailers join the Chamber whose members are almost exclusively importers, exporters and/or wholesalers.

A further, but relatively smaller, fraction of capitalists in Greater Khartoum consists of industrialists. According to the register of the Employers' Union, the membership, which is exclusive to big industrialists, had reached 400 by the

beginning of 1984. In this respect, the concentration of industrialists in Greater Khartoum is not solely a consequence of the fact that the Conurbation represents both the best redistribution centre and the largest single market for their products. For those "luxury products" in which the Sudan was, until recently, said to be "self-sufficient", i.e. refrigerators, air-coolers and car-batteries (Africa Contemporary Record, 1979/80), Greater Khartoum is virtually the sole market. It hardly needs emphasis that the market for these products is found almost exclusively among the Khartoum-based commercial bourgeoisie, professionals and bureaucrats, whose incomes, though not directly comparable, are much higher than are those of the 'ordinary Sudanese' in other parts of the country.

As the case with the professionals and bureaucrats, the exact size of the capitalist class in Greater Khartoum is difficult to determine precisely. Though interpreting Table (3:16) with the assumption that all "employers" are capitalists of some sort might be helpful, the category "own account worker" complicates matters as many of these may be petty commodity producers in the so-called 'urban informal sector', and the figures should therefore be approached with caution. Recognizing this difficulty, I would consider as "capitalists" only those "own-account workers" in the two 'sectors' comprising "Wholesale and Retail Trade" and "Finance, Insurance, etc.". This would give us a conservative estimate of 27,148 "businessmen", or approximately 11% of the conurbation's 'economically active' population in 1973.

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing discussion I have attempted to corroborate the contention that the increase in wage labour migration cannot be conceived as the prime factor behind the process of population growth in post-colonial Khartoum. To establish this I considered the available evidence on the increase of three main groups: (1) the 'non-earners', among whom women and post-secondary students were given special consideration; (2) the 'classified' government employees, and (3) the capitalists.

The increase in the number of 'non-earners' was shown to be the most significant factor in the population growth of post-colonial Khartoum. Thus, while between 1955/56 and 1973 the economically active population increased from 85,777 to 251,532, the number of 'non-earners' increased during the same period from 159,958 to 532,762. Female and child immigration and post-secondary education were identified as the three main factors underlying the growth in the 'non-earners'. Lack of information on the nature of female and child immigration, however, places constraints on our understanding of the factors which have stimulated its acceleration in recent years.

The returns of the First and Second Population Censuses do not show the proportion of wage labourers in the urban labour force in Greater Khartoum and it is therefore difficult to determine the precise magnitude of the increase in the wage labour force. Through a discussion of the expansion in

government 'classified employment' and the growth in the capitalist class, however, I have attempted to show the significance of salarieds and businessmen in the composition of the urban labour force. In 1955/56, these two categories accounted for over 30% of the labour force in Greater Khartoum. Though the returns of the 1973 Census are more difficult to interpret these two groups (including military personnel) probably accounted for over 50% the total economically active population. In this respect, however, it should be noted that the other 50% does not consist only of wage labourers, but includes 'self-employed' petty commodity producers and traders, some of whom may be characterised as incipient capitalists employing wage labourers in the so-called 'urban informal sector'. Total wage employment in Greater Khartoum in 1973 probably accounted for less than 40% of the 179,391 persons whom the Census returns list as "employees" (cf. Table 3:16). That the wage labour force in the conurbation accounted for less than 30% of the urban labour force, however, is hardly surprising. As I shall demonstrate in the next two chapters on the operation of the labour market in Greater Khartoum, this is indeed a basic feature of the pattern of peripheral capitalist urbanism, whose functioning is tied to the colonial-type trade economy, and whose activities demand only a relatively small urban manual labour force.

NOTES

1. The initial draft of this chapter provided the framework for a section in a paper presented to the Sudan Research Workshop, 3-5 July 1984 at the ISS, The Hague (Salah El-Din El-Shazali Ibrahim, 1984a).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE OPERATION OF THE LABOUR MARKET IN COLONIAL KHARTOUM

... the cities in question have grown on the basis of the fact that they administer and tax the primary exports produced by their hinterland economies. Indeed they often began life to perform this role, and this clearly grows in scope as the quantity of such exports is increased (Bienefeld, 1979:40).

With the notable exception of the preliminary contributions of Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din (notably 1980a:425-32) and El-Wathig Kameir (1980b:41-48), the question of the emergence and expansion of the urban wage labour market in the Sudan has generally escaped attention. But it is worth noting that the pioneering contribution by McLoughlin (1970) adopts what can be called a 'historical approach' in the study of the conditions of the labour market in the Three Towns (1900-1950). The currently popular (pre-war/ post-war) periodization of the development of the urban labour market has indeed initially been formulated in that contribution. Unfortunately insofar as McLoughlin has focused solely on the question of the balance between supply and demand and wage rates in the labour market as described in colonial official reports, his 'historical' approach actually differs very little from the synchronic approaches found in the literature. They all overlook the implications of the processes of "underdevelopment" in the Sudan for the operation of the urban wage labour market.

The periodization suggested by McLoughlin, and which was subsequently adopted by Mohamed El-Awad (1973; 1974a; 1978; 1979 a; 1980a) and El-Wathig Kameir (1980b), conceptualizes the development of the urban labour market in the Sudan in terms

of the destination of rural wage labour migration in the country. Accordingly, it is argued that prior to the Second World War wage labour migration in the Sudan was mainly intra-rural directed towards agricultural employment, in which remuneration was higher than in urban areas. In consequence, labour shortages were not uncommon in Sudanese cities in general and Greater Khartoum in particular. Since the end of the war, it is asserted, the shortage in urban labour has changed into a large surplus to the extent that the colonial government had to refer migrants in Greater Khartoum to the agricultural regions and/or their places of original domicile. Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din (1974a:20) explains the emergence of this 'labour surplus' with reference to the "revisions and increases" in urban wages in the period between 1948 and 1968.

In Chapter One I discussed the flaw in postulating income differentials as the cause of rural to urban wage labour migration, and I do not intend to repeat here aspects of the conceptual confusion regarding the process of proto-proletarianization underlying that form of migration. What is important to note in relation to that periodization is that it distracted the attention of both Mohamed El-Awad and El-Wathig from pursuing the analysis of the "intra-urban" processes of peripheral urbanism which govern the operation of the urban wage labour market, although the basic elements for the construction of such an analysis have tacitly been touched on in the course of their accounts. The central objective of this chapter is to redress, at least in part, aspects of this lacuna.

THE LABOUR MARKET IN 19TH CENTURY SUDAN

In considering the question of the emergence of an urban wage labour market in the Sudan, it is worth noting that there is some evidence concerning the existence of a small market for skilled wage labour in 19th century urban Sudan. The skilled workers involved were almost exclusively expatriates (mainly Egyptians) brought to the country by the Turco-Egyptian colonial administration (cf. Stevenson, 1966). The smallness of the wage labour market and its confinement to skilled labour was mainly due to the role played by **slave labour** in 19th century urban Sudan.

In almost all Sudanese towns during the 19th century, slaves figured as a sizable section of the urban population; and the preponderance of slave labour in the undertaking of unskilled, mainly domestic, tasks effectively precluded dispossessed 'free Sudanese' from entering the urban wage labour market. In the particular case of Khartoum the slave-population constituted over half the total population in the city well after the slave trade (as opposed to slavery) had officially been banned by the Turco-Egyptian colonial administration. Lieut. Col. Stewart, who accompanied General Gordon in the 'evacuation' mission, gave a figure of 50 to 55 thousands for the total population of Khartoum in 1883, and of these around two-thirds were said to be "slaves" - an estimate corroborated by Powers who reported in the Times that the number of "registered slaves" in Khartoum in the same year was 27,000 (cf. *ibid.*, p. 17). By the time the British colonial

state was established, however, virtually no form of urban labour was available. The expatriate skilled workers seem to have left the Sudan prior to the establishment of the Mahdist State. Though the conditions of the urban slave population during the Mahdist era are far from clear, many of them seem to have been (liberated and) recruited into the Khalifa's army, from which large numbers apparently escaped to Egypt. According to Mohamed Omer Beshir (1974:56ff), it was largely these deserters who formed the six Sudanese battalions which, together with 12 Egyptian battalions, invaded the Sudan in 1898. For the undertaking of manual tasks in colonial Sudan, thus, an urban wage labour force had to be created and this, in turn, led to the emergence of full-fledged urban wage labour markets. The demand for manual labour at the inception of British colonial rule was enormous. Since the larger part of this demand related to the undertaking of the process of urban reconstruction, however, a brief account of the conditions of urban areas at the turn of the century is in order.

THE ERA OF URBAN DESTRUCTION

When the British colonial administration was established in 1899, the majority of urban centres in the Sudan were in ruins and virtually depopulated. With the exception of the drastic depopulation of Omdurman in 1898, however, the conditions of Sudanese urban areas at the turn of the century cannot be ascribed to the British invasion. They were, rather, the cumulative outcome of the turmoil which characterized the

larger part of the period from 1821, when the Turco-Egyptian troops invaded the kingdoms of the Sudan, to 1898, when the 'Anglo-Egyptian' troops 'reconquered' the Sudan.

The first incidents of urban destruction took place at the inception of Turco-Egyptian colonial rule. With the collapse of the Funj Kingdom (cf. O'Fahey & Spaulding, 1974), Sennar, the capital, was simply evacuated and left to decay as the colonial administration moved its capital, first to Wad Medani and, eventually, to Khartoum. El-Obeid town, which was the capital of Al-Musabba'at chieftaincy, was destroyed in the course of the invasion in 1822 (cf. Born, 1980:153). Instigated by the murder of Ismail Pasha at Shendi in 1822, moreover, the punitive campaigns of the Dafterdar in 1823 reduced to ruins the once flourishing urban centres of Al-Metamma, Shendi, and Al-Damir (cf. Hill, 1970:5ff). But Born (op.cit.) points out that the impact of the Turco-Egyptian colonial period upon the process of urbanization in the Sudan was not wholly, or even largely, negative. Many of the towns and cities of present-day Sudan (Khartoum and Wad Medani to mention two of the most important) had originally emerged during that period when numerous administrative and military stations were established to run the country. The practice of the Turco-Egyptian administration to keep a large following of irregular troops (composed mainly of Magharba from North Africa), and the tendency of the colonial administrators to retain the services of large numbers of slaves, seem to have boosted the urban population.

The Turco-Egyptian colonial administration did not last

for long; and by 1881 the Mahdi was already active recruiting supporters for his revolution against the 'Turks'. The initial successes of the Mahdists in the West, which culminated in the fall of El-Obeid and Bara in 1883, resulted in the destruction of virtually all government buildings in the two towns as well as their partial depopulation. With the establishment of the Mahdist State, El-Obeid was to deteriorate further. In this respect Born (op.cit.) has quoted Gleichen (1905:177) that;

..the Khalifa (had) laid practically the whole of Kordofan waste at various times, ... when the province was re-occupied in December, 1899, all the large towns and most of the villages had ceased to exist.. At El-Obeid there was not a single soul, and nothing was left of the old city but a portion of the Mudiria [the provincial headquarters] buildings..

With the fall of Khartoum in January 1885, the capital of the Turco-Egyptian administration was virtually completely abandoned as the Mahdi decided to stay with his troops at Omdurman, across the White Nile from Khartoum. The Mahdi died shortly after the fall of Khartoum, and a year later his Khalifa ordered the demolition of all buildings in the deserted city to provide material for the construction of Omdurman (cf. El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1976:33ff).

Furthermore, though the northern Sudanese towns were not affected by the events during the initial stages of the Mahdist Revolution, the establishment of the Mahdist State nevertheless resulted in their decline. In this respect we have to take into consideration the consequences of the disruption in both administration and commerce. The tendency of the Khalifa to have the army concentrated at Omdurman

resulted in a drastic reduction in the population of all towns that had formerly been stations for troops and their following. Likewise the disruption of long distance trade resulted in a further depopulation of those towns in which a sizable section of the inhabitants had formerly been dependent on commerce for their livelihood. Many of the expatriate merchants who dominated trade during the Turco-Egyptian colonial era had actually escaped from the country prior to the fall of Khartoum; and those who remained behind were reduced to "begging prisoners" at Omdurman (cf. Rehfish, 1967). The final days of the Mahdist State also witnessed the destruction of Shendi and Al-Metamma, which were harried by Mahmoud Wad Ahmed and his Ansar patrols.

At the time of the 'reconquest', therefore, Omdurman was the one and only urban centre of any significance. Within a period of less than two decades, the Mahdi's capital developed from a small fort of 240 persons in 1884 into a large city whose population could safely be estimated at around 150,000 (cf. El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1976:34). Some historians believe that at its highest the population of Omdurman approximated 400,000 (cf. Fadwa Abdel Rahman A. Taha, 1978). Subsequent to the heavy losses incurred by the 50,000 strong Ansar army at the battle of Karari (north of Omdurman), however, even Omdurman experienced a drastic reduction in the size of its population. Conservative estimates of the losses of the Ansar give a figure of over 11,000 for the dead, and over 16,000 for the wounded. The remnants of the defeated Ansar, led by the Khalifa, started their 'holy emigration', which resulted in a

further depopulation of the city. Those who remained behind in Omdurman after the battle of Karari were either women, children and severely wounded Ansar, or elements that had opposed the Mahdists (e.g. prisoners). I could not, however, find any figures for the population of Omdurman subsequent to Karari but prior to the entry into the city by the Anglo-Egyptian troops. Figures for 1905 show a total of 39,916 inhabitants comprising 9,807 men, 15,395 women, and 14,714 children (Governor-General, 1906:644; McLoughlin, 1970:108). These figures, it is important to stress, relate to a time when the British colonial administration was firmly established in the northern and central regions of Sudan. Beside colonial administrators and troops, they probably included the wage labour migrants, whom the colonial government had induced to come to the Three Towns (see below).

THE SOURCE OF LABOUR DEMAND

In addition to the labour needs of the various departments of the British colonial administration, the process of urban reconstruction required a further and much larger demand for labour. In cases like Khartoum and El-Obeid, the whole city had to be rebuilt from scratch. A relatively smaller demand originated in commerce which, following the reconquest, was being consolidated (cf. El-Haj Bilal Omer, 1979; Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1983). Owing to the virtual non-existence of a wage labour force at the inception of British colonial rule, the decision of the newly established

colonial administration not to use slave-labour effectively meant that the Sudan was virtually devoid of any form of manual labour that could readily undertake manual tasks in urban areas. The abolition of slavery in urban areas indeed resulted in a specific demand for unskilled wage labour for the undertaking of the domestic services formerly carried out by slaves.

The initial response of the colonial administration to the question of labour was "strongly against the importation of foreign labour on a large scale until every effort has been made locally to adjust supply and demand" (Consul-General, 1905:15). It was only for skilled tasks that the colonial government initially relied on imported (Egyptian, Greek and Levantine) skilled labourers, some of whom were soldiers (*idem.*, 1902:17 *et passim*). A Labour Bureau was accordingly established in 1905 to register all landless and unemployed persons, especially in the riverain districts where private landownership had been instituted, and to "mobilise them to meet the pressing labour demands of government and private contractors" (McLoughlin, 1970:108-9). The 'pressing nature' of this demand, and the concern of the colonial government not to destabilize domestic agricultural production in the course of meeting it, were pointed out in 1907 by the colonial Governor-General of the 'Anglo-Egyptian' Sudan (1907:16) who reported to London that;

In the present stage of development of Soudan the building and other construction works are bound to be considerable, and demand an amount of labour which is hard to supply without prejudice to the agricultural expansion of the country, which is of such

paramount importance to develop.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE WAGE LABOUR MARKET IN KHARTOUM

The scale of the building and other infra-structural construction tasks was particularly large in the case of Khartoum, where by 1900 the rebuilding started and over 5,000 wage labourers were said to be directly employed by the building industry (El-Wathig Kameir, 1980b:41). By 1902 the "majority of the working population" in Khartoum Province was reported to be "engaged in building, quarrying and brick-making" (Consul-General, 1902:22). In this respect it is worth noting that the reconstruction process was not confined to the building of government offices and houses. Government offices and houses were indeed largely completed by 1902 (El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1976:35), while the construction boom actually continued up to around 1910. In addition to the building of houses for the "natives" and business elements, the building boom concerned major infra-structural projects such as the building of the Military Hospital (completed in 1904), the construction of the electricity station and the extension of electricity supply (supply commenced in 1907), the building of a new market-place and the construction of roads in the centre of Khartoum (completed by 1908 and 1912 respectively), the building of the river wall in Khartoum (completed in 1905), and the construction of the Blue Nile Bridge (completed in 1910).

The first unskilled wage labourers in Khartoum were ex-slaves, dispossessed Northern Sudanese and West Africans

(cf. McLoughlin, 1970:106). Up to 1908, however, the supply of labour was far below the demand, and ex-slaves seem to have constituted the most significant section of the unskilled wage labour force in the Three Towns. Reporting on the operation of the labour market in the capital in 1908, the Governor-General (1908:70) maintained that;

The demand for labourers necessitated by the inception of the public works and buildings essential to the establishment of a system of civilised Government attracted, from the agricultural districts, a large number of slaves, to whom the advent of the new Government had given freedom. The urgent nature of this demand, coupled with the impetus given to private enterprise by the ensuing land boom, set up competition and wages rose immediately to a rate that the native agriculturalist could not afford to pay.

Though the policy of mobilizing local labour did succeed in inducing increasing numbers of ex-slaves and landless northerners to migrate to Greater Khartoum, the problem of labour shortage continued. El-Wathig Kameir (1980b:42) explains part of this shortage with reference to the fact that "the majority of Northern Sudanese migrants were circulating, rather than permanent, labourers". Not all workers, however, were 'seasonal migrants', and ex-slaves in particular seem to have settled permanently in Greater Khartoum. But even these 'permanent settlers' were apparently willing to work only for as long as their immediate needs could be met. According to the Governor General (1909:71);

It is often not sufficiently realised that Sudanese, even in Khartoum, the most expensive town in the Sudan, can live on nine or ten piastres a month or even less when dura is cheap. The result is that a man needs only work for three or four days in a

month to make his living, and he is generally spared even this minimum by the generosity of the regular labourer. There are however a certain number of these regular labourers..[but when their] numbers are not sufficient, Government Departments and private employers of labour compete with each other and the price of labour is raised. This does not, for the reason above stated, attract the mass of idlers living in the houses, but only has the result of taking the regular labourer from one employer to another.

The enactment of the Vagabonds Ordinance was undoubtedly intended to draw this "idle" ex-slave population into the labour market (Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1983:39ff). As soon as they came out in search of 'permanent employment', however, the ex-slaves seem to have been encouraged by the colonial regime to withdraw from the wage labour force in order to join the army or, in the case of young descendants of former slaves, to go to schools. The corroboration of this last contention has been offered by Martin (1970) who makes several interesting, but often brief, references to the way in which the colonial regime has 'favoured' the ex-slave population. His account concerning the preponderance of ex-slave students in enrolment to the Cadet School in Khartoum, to which only the graduates of Gordon Memorial College were eligible, is particularly illuminating.

The point of immediate concern is that the urgent nature of the demand for labour in the building industry in Khartoum seems to have had detrimental effects on the ability of the various government departments to recruit new workers, or even to maintain in employment those who had already been recruited. This was apparently a consequence of the

differences in the system of remuneration between the two sectors. Unlike the system of fixed monthly wages adopted in the various government departments, remuneration in the construction industry was based on piece-rates. As it turned out, workers generally preferred the latter not only because they could determine the pace and intensity of their work, but also because whenever they had earned 'enough' they could cease working altogether for sometime. In 1906 the colonial administrators became anxious as the

Regularly paid servants, such as gardeners, conservancy men, etc. etc., were all leaving permanent employment to take on piece-work, for which they can get Pt. 5 to Pt. 6 per diem. The result is disastrous in the extreme to Government services with fixed working budgets and no margins for extra expenditure. I cannot, therefore, too strongly urge the postponing of such government buildings etc., as are not urgently required to a more opportune moment, as the result is not only reflected in much higher contracts, but in the higher wage bills of every labour-employing service (Governor-General, 1906:645; quoted by McLoughlin, op.cit.).

The relatively high remuneration levels in the building industry also affected the supply of domestic labour required to meet the demand of colonial administrators and expatriate business elements. The scarcity of "good laundry-men" seems to have been particularly acute (ibid.). Rather than being solely a problem of supply of unskilled labour, however, the shortage in domestic servants was also a consequence of the tendency of employers to retain only the services of men with "good character" and from known background (to reach them in cases of theft from employers). The recruitment of domestic servants was exclusively through the Labour Bureau, which kept a

register with the names of those who passed the screening requirement. According to Martin (1970:219ff), the "Bureau officials put themselves to very considerable trouble in making their inquiries.. [about] the very heterogeneous and often questionable individuals who offer themselves for registration upon the lists kept".

ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF LABOUR

The initial attempts of the colonial administration to entice dispossessed peasants and ex-slaves to come to Greater Khartoum proved no solution to the labour shortage problem. In the context of the policy to conserve the domestic form of agricultural production in rural Sudan, the adoption of the classical method of dispossessing farmers in order to drive them into the wage labour market was out of consideration. Alternative sources of unskilled labour supply had to be secured. The alternatives found were (a) prison labour and (b) imported labour.

PRISON LABOUR

The utilization of prison labour was part of colonial policy from the inception of the British colonial state in the Sudan. As early as 1902, it was reported that "prisoners make their own clothing, and also a good deal in the way of carpentering, chain-making, etc. (Consul-General, 1902:22). Owing to the inability of government departments to recruit wage workers because of competition from the building industry prison labour was heavily deployed. The extensive use of

prison labour in the first decade of colonial rule seems to have aroused the concern of private entrepreneurs, who saw in it a threat to the process of private capital accumulation. Evidence of this concern was mentioned by Mr. Coutts, the colonial Asst. Civil Secretary, Prison and Police Section (cf. Governor-General, 1906:451-52), who in 1906 maintained that;

I do not think I can be said to interfere with private enterprise, but the work is entirely confined to, firstly, the provision of gaol requirements, and secondly, the manufacture or repair of articles required by Government Departments, and of articles such as are used by officers or Government officials in carrying out their official duties.. Our industries at Khartoum include: Tailoring, Carpentry, Tinsmith's shops, Laundry, Brick-making, Brush [straw mats] and rope-making, Rope sole for shoes and all leather work (saddlers and shoe-makers) is now undertaken by this shop.

Through the training of young prisoners under the instruction of Egyptian soldiers a very small class of Sudanese artisans was created, but the number of young prisoners was very small (ibid).

The problem of supply of labour to government departments did not continue for long. As the colonial government started to encourage imported labour to settle in Greater Khartoum from 1908 onwards (cf. below), and as the land boom started slowly to subside, manual workers in Greater Khartoum seem to have turned increasingly to the more secure 'permanent' employment in the public sector. There is indeed absolutely no reference in official colonial reports to any difficulties in securing the labour requirements for government services. As a result of this, the extensive utilization of prison labour to meet the requirements of government departments was

drastically reduced; and most of the articles formerly furnished by prison workshops started to be produced by wage-labourers in the Stores and Ordnance Department, which was established in Khartoum North.

Though prison labour was gradually excluded in the undertaking of skilled tasks (except for handicrafts and wood-work, which continue up to the present), the deployment by the colonial government of prison labour in unskilled tasks was hardly decreased. In almost all tenders concerning the construction of public buildings in urban areas throughout the colonial period, for example, the terms were such that the private contractor should provide the building material and the necessary skilled labour, while the colonial Prisons Department would provide the pool of unskilled labourers. As I shall explain later, as late as 1949 prison labour was heavily deployed to undertake the demolition of houses in the old Deims ("native lodging areas") of Khartoum.

The significance of prison labour, and its impact upon the urban wage labour market in colonial Sudan, has been described in muted terms by the Governor of Kordofan Province (Henderson, 1952:54) who maintained in 1933 that;

Yes, R. is a keen gardener and uses hosts of prisoners. I send him about 50 every three months. But, although prison labour is uneconomic and notoriously inefficient, it is quite legitimate to use it on public works, e.g. gardens, forests, etc. True it cuts out some unemployed, but government is very hard up and must do all the economies it can. Probably much of this work could not be done at all (I know this is so in El-Obeid) if prisoners were not used. Moreover, what are they to do otherwise?

As I shall explain in more detail later, the statement of

the Governor of Kordofan not only corroborates the use of labour at a time when there was no shortage in wage labour, but also posits the evidence of the continued use of prison labour in the period of the depression of the 1930s, when there was mass unemployment in many urban areas in the country.

The extensive deployment of prison labour in the first decade of colonial rule could not, however, provide all the additional labour required, especially in private enterprise. To meet the requirements of the private sector in Greater Khartoum importation of labour was imperative.

IMPORTED LABOUR

It was maintained earlier that the colonial government had to import skilled labourers, especially from Egypt, owing to the virtual lack of skilled labourers in the country. Though by 1908 the colonial government started to train young Sudanese, expatriate artisans and skilled workers continued to constitute a majority of the skilled labour force up to the 1940s. A major factor contributing to this effect is that in the mid-1920s the Sudan witnessed a "heavy immigration" from Asia Minor by skilled workers, Greeks and Armenians in particular (McLoughlin, 1970:113). As late as 1935 the composition of the wage labour force in large scale construction projects showed the dominance of expatriates in the ranks of skilled and semi-skilled labourers. In the particular case of Gebel Aulia Dam in the vicinity of Khartoum, where an average of 8,500 persons were employed,

statistics for May 1935 show that "there were 4,431 Egyptians (many of these were skilled and semi-skilled, and trained in earthwork), 552 Sudanese artisans and clerks, and 4,572 Sudanese labourers (*idem*, p. 115). The dominance of skilled immigrant workers was likewise noticeable in Sudan Railways, which up to the present constitutes a pocket for a large number of the descendants of the first immigrants.

The importation of skilled labour meant large wage differentials between skilled and unskilled labour during the colonial period (cf. Sa'ad El-Din Fawzi, 1955). Not all imported labour, however, was given high wages; and the importation of unskilled labour had no such implication. On the contrary, imported unskilled wage labour not only served the policy to conserve domestic agricultural production, but also helped reduce the wage rates for unskilled labour in general. This was particularly the case because imported unskilled workers, especially the West Africans, were willing to work despite the move by the colonial administration to depress the "wage rates to their lowest possible level" (Duffield, 1983:49).

In Chapter Two I considered aspects of the colonial policy to encourage and facilitate Nigerian immigration to the Sudan. What is of interest is that prior to 1907 the number of West African ('Fellata') immigrants was relatively small to affect the operation of the urban wage labour market in Greater Khartoum. According to the Governor General (1908:71);

There is ... an increase in the number of Fellatas.. who are settling temporarily in Omdurman. These make good labourers and are willing to work for reasonable wages, but

their numbers do not at present affect the supply of labour throughout the country.

From 1908 onwards West African immigration increased considerably, and the 'Fellatas' started to emerge as a **solid core** of the unskilled labour force in urban Sudan. The number of West Africans who arrived in Greater Khartoum during the last seven months of 1908 alone was in excess of 5,000 (cf. McLoughlin, 1970:110). Insofar as West Africans are known to migrate as families, this last figure might have included some children who were too young to participate in the labour force (West African women as well as children over six are known to participate). Nevertheless, it could be safely estimated that at least 3,500 of these 5,000 immigrants were 'economically active'. In view of the fact that the wage labour force in the whole of Khartoum Province in 1905 was estimated at around 3,500 workers (cf. Governor General, 1905:95), while in the early part of 1908 the urban wage labour force in the entire Sudan was said to be less than 6,000 (Governor General, 1908:70), the role of West African immigrants in solving the problem of the labour supply in Greater Khartoum cannot be over-estimated. Despite his failure to accord full recognition to the impact of West African immigration, McLoughlin (1970:110) has nevertheless posited the evidence of a substantial drop in daily wages. In his summary of official reports for 1908 McLoughlin started his assessment of 1908 by maintaining that;

Wages fell slightly in the Three Towns during 1908, at least in the "Winter Period" (when little cultivation goes on); wages averaged Pt. 4 for men and Pt. 3 for women
...

Noting the arrival of the West African immigrants during the later months of the year, McLoughlin concluded his summary of the conditions of the labour market in 1908 by quoting the Governor-General (1908:557) that;

Piece work is the most profitable and the most popular, a man being usually able to earn 9 to 10 piastres per diem while, as the cost of living to him is under 1 piastre per diem, it enables him after a week's work to spend three in leisure.

What McLoughlin does not seem to notice is that in "falling slightly" during the winter months, wages actually dropped by more than 50% by the end of the first year of large scale immigration by West Africans. The labour markets in other towns were likewise affected by the arrival of West African immigrants. The role of immigrants in solving the shortage in unskilled labour for the undertaking of tasks relating to the gum trade in urban Kordofan is a good case in point.

In Chapter Two I pointed out how the imposition of cash taxes resulted in increased gum tapping by small farmers and pastoralists around the central Savannah region of the Sudan. Though the volume of gum exported was steadily increasing year after year during the first decade of the century, the gum trade experienced an unprecedented boom with the operationalization in 1912 of rail transport to El-Obeid, the capital of Kordofan Province. This was particularly so as a larger volume of gum than had formerly been possible could be transported easily. In consequence, gum exports "jumped in a single year by almost 40%, from 14,000 tons in 1911 to 19,000 tons in 1912" (Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, 1984:35). Kordofan

Province has always been the major gum-producing region in the Sudan, and its capital, El-Obeid, is the largest gum market in the whole world, a status the city started to gain at the turn of the century and which was never challenged since 1912 (and despite the relative decline of El-Obeid as the commercial centre of Western Sudan subsequent to the extension of the railway to Nyala in Darfur in the early 1960s).

Up to 1911, the gum markets in western Sudan used to experience considerable difficulties in securing the unskilled labour required for the cleaning, sorting, and packing in sacks of the gum as well as for portage. This was so because the local supply of labour was drawn almost exclusively from the local small farming and pastoral communities. Farmers and pastoralists used to take up wage employment during the dry season in order to meet their cash demands (initially to discharge taxes), and to return back to their fields and/or herds during the wet season. Because of this seasonal involvement in wage employment, shortages in the supply of unskilled urban labour in western Sudan were not uncommon. During the wet season of 1910, for example, the urban labour supply in Kordofan was reported "to be almost nil"; and labourers had to be sent from Greater Khartoum to redress the situation (McLoughlin, 1970:112). From 1912 onwards, however, increasing numbers of West African immigrants were encouraged to settle in the railway towns of Kordofan, and to meet the bulk of the province's requirements for unskilled urban labour (see Duffield, 1980; 1983).

Though West African immigrants provided the bulk of

imported unskilled labour in colonial urban Sudan, importation was not entirely confined to them. In the case of Port Sudan, where stevedoring has always been a source of substantial demand for unskilled labour, for example, Egyptian and Yemenese workers seem to have had a virtual monopoly over the unskilled tasks at the docks up to 1931 (cf. Martin, 1970:220; Lewis, 1980:547).

Thus within the span of only one decade of capitalist-colonial rule the Sudan started to experience the emergence and expansion of what could be described as an urban wage labour market. The involvement of "local labour" in the newly established market, however, was initially marginal. As will be discussed in the next section, the grounds upon which the urban wage labour market was founded were very volatile, and by the time an increasing number of Sudanese started to look for wage employment, the newly created urban wage labour force was to find itself largely redundant.

THE SATURATION OF THE URBAN LABOUR MARKET

The heavy importation of unskilled labour not only helped meet the demand for urban labour in colonial Sudan in such a way as to avoid the disruption of domestic agricultural production, but also served to saturate the urban wage-labour market, especially in Greater Khartoum. The 'labour surplus' situation in Greater Khartoum enabled employers in 1913 to bring daily wages down to an average of Pt. 3.5 to Pt 4. As from 1914 onwards official colonial reports ceased to refer to wage rates for female labourers, it may also be assumed that

the abundance of unskilled labour resulted in the progressive exclusion of women from the wage labour market. It was not until after Independence when a relatively rapid expansion in manufacturing industry took place that women seem to have re-entered the wage labour market (cf. Chapter Five). By 1915, the British colonial administration had not only abandoned its initial policy to mobilize "local labour", but also issued instructions to "government inspectors to try to induce run-away slaves to return to their 'employers' [i.e. masters]" (Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1980a:426). Likewise, from 1912 onwards official reports were hinting at the status of Khartoum as an important source of unskilled workers, and labourers were regularly sent from there to other regions in the country, including agricultural districts in the Northern and Kassala Provinces, in order to redress labour shortages and/or help bring down the average daily wage of unskilled workers (cf. McLoughlin, 1970:110ff). In the context of the decline in the demand for manual construction wage labour in Greater Khartoum, an increasing number of unskilled workers seem to have joined the army of the domestic servants, who probably constituted the largest category of unskilled wage-workers in Greater Khartoum during the second decade of colonial rule. A majority of the domestic servants was comprised of Nubians, who were one of the first Northern Sudanese groups to be affected by the scarcity of 'privately-owned' land following the imposition of the colonial land tenure system (cf. Chapter Two).

By the end of the first decade of colonial rule, many of

the migrant workers turned to self-employment in petty commodity production, petty trade, and personal services. Some of these workers were allocated sites and/or stalls in the new central market in Khartoum. According to the Governor-General (1910:456);

A totally new place has been made, and the market divided up into first, second, and third-class plots according to situation. Separate buildings for the meat, fish and vegetable markets will be erected by Government and the stalls leased at a monthly rental.. Certain areas have been reserved for future developments and special places marked out for blacksmiths, washer-men, anagerib-makers, etc. Special blocks or parts of blocks are allotted for various trades (such as carpenters, leather-workers, tailors, etc.) of the smaller merchants in the third-class quarter.

The redundancies in the construction industry seem to have resulted in an appreciable increase in the numbers of 'self-employed' workers, especially in the services sector. As a result of this, and probably in order to check the potential severe competition among these 'self-employed' workers, the colonial authorities started to issue special licences to "carters and lorrymen", "porters and messengers", "shoeblocks" and "donkey boys" as well as the women brewing merissa and busah (cf. Martin, 1970:533). Unlike the annually renewable licences given to craftsmen and petty traders, who pay Trader's Tax, however, the special licences for the former categories were to be renewed monthly after the payment of a fee varying with the type of activity. The monthly fees ranged from a low of Pt. 2 for "shoeblocks" to a high Pt 130 for merissa-sellers, who seem to have been doing very well. The

others all paid Pt. 10 monthly (ibid).

Despite the attempts of the colonial administration to evict redundant workers from Khartoum, migration into the conurbation continued. But it was not until 1919, when the construction of Gebel Aulia and Makwar dams started, that Greater Khartoum actually needed a flow of unskilled labourers from other parts of the country (as well as from Egypt).

By the time work at Gebel Aulia started, the processes of monetarization and commercialization had already been firmly entrenched in most parts of the Sudan. Thus whereas cash was initially required to discharge taxes, in the context of the destruction of local industry and the imposition of markets for imported goods the cash demands of the domestic producers were steadily growing to meet consumption requirements.

Domestic producers could of course obtain additional cash through the intensification of cash-cropping. Given the labour-intensive techniques of agricultural production, and the necessity of producing food crops, however, the opportunities for expansion in cash-cropping were very limited. As a result of this, increasing numbers of Sudanese (over and above those from the northern riverain regions, which were the initial sources of migrant labour) started to look for wage employment, especially during the dry season. Owing to the virtual lack of agricultural wage employment in Western and Central Sudan (the Gezira Scheme was established in 1925), and the saturation of the urban labour markets in the west (the role of West African labour), the inception of work at Gebel Aulia attracted many migrants.

Owing to lack of funds, work at Gebel Aulia had to be stopped in 1921, and most of the migrants who had been attracted by the prospects of employment at the Dam found themselves unemployed. As a result of this, the supply of labour in Greater Khartoum continued to exceed the demand throughout the 1920s. The inception of infra-structural work at the Gezira Scheme (construction of Sennar Dam, canalisation, building of offices and houses for administrators and field inspectors, etc.) seem to have mitigated the effects of the slump in Khartoum, and with start of cotton production the Gezira was to become the most important centre for seasonal wage employment. But the conditions of the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum were soon to worsen under the effects of the depression of the 1930s which hit the Sudan by lowering cotton prices. In this respect McLoughlin (op.cit.) has quoted the Annual Report of Khartoum Province (Sudan Government, 1931:121) that;

The commercial element in the Three Towns, natives and foreign, suffered severely as the result of general economic depression, and trade was stagnant. Many artisans and labourers were thrown out of employment and a certain amount of relief work had to be provided for the poorer classes of labourers. Every possible effort was made not only to prevent outsiders drifting into the Three Towns in search of work, but to send unemployed persons back to their villages of origin.

Between 1930 and 1934 redundancies among wage labourers as well as clerks continued. According to McLoughlin (1970:115), the ample supply of wage labourers in Greater Khartoum in 1931/32 brought wages down to Pt. 3, and gave the colonial administration the "opportunity .. to revise the rates of pay

for servants engaged through the servants registry and to put them on a more reasonable basis". In 1933, moreover, Sir Douglas Newbold (Henderson, 1952:53) asserted that in Greater Khartoum there were some 7,000 "unemployed servants" on the register of Khartoum's District Commissioner; "several hundred unemployed effendia [clerks]"; a "host of detribalised artisans ..out of jobs"; in addition to "the small but difficult group of axed native officers". Elderly craftsmen in Greater Khartoum confirmed in interviews that during the 1930s many unemployed workers were willing to join the self-employed craftsmen as unpaid hands (or apprentices?) in return for maintenance.

The deterioration in employment opportunities and/or remuneration in Greater Khartoum and the other urban areas in the 1930s stimulated a further drift by workers from towns to the agricultural districts, especially the Gezira Scheme. According to Mohamed El-Awad Galal-El-Din (1980a:428), "many urban residents - as well as migrants from rural areas - were earning higher wages picking cotton in Gezira than they could command in towns..".

A VOLATILE REGENERATION

Following four years of unemployment and general hardship for unskilled migrants in the Three Towns, the resumption of work at Gebel Aulia, which absorbed between 7,000 and 10,000 workers, heralded a regeneration of the wage labour market. By June 1934 the conditions in the labour market apparently improved to the extent that the colonial administrators in

Khartoum were of the opinion that the problem of unemployment was virtually completely solved.

The outbreak of the Second War resulted in a considerable expansion in opportunities for wage employment, and substantial numbers of workers were consequently attracted to Khartoum. Apart from the Sudan Defence Force into which thousands of Sudanese were recruited for service in North and East Africa, public employment of wage workers in Greater Khartoum increased dramatically. The colonial Stores and Ordnance Department in Khartoum North, for example, reported to the Civil Secretary in June 1945 that its employment in that year was some 1,200 per cent above the pre-war figure (File CS/SCR/37.C.1).

The wartime disruption of sea-borne trade also resulted in the generation of a demand for labour in 'modern' manufacturing industry. In this respect Fatima Babiker Mahmoud (1984:53) maintains that;

Under wartime conditions, the British colonial authorities found it necessary to establish industries in order to supply goods which could no longer be imported. Thus in 1942 the War Supply Department was forced to set up a Local Industries Investigation Committee to advise on the industries that should be established in the country to utilise local materials and to relieve the country of the need to rely on imports during the war. As a result of this, a number of enterprises, such as oil mills, soap factories, confectionaries, syrup and squash, spinning and weaving plants were started.

Owing to its position as the largest single market in the country, Greater Khartoum came to accommodate most of these industrial establishments, which further boosted the wartime

demand for labour.

Furthermore, the outbreak of the Second War coincided with the introduction of commercial lorries in the Sudan. In addition to the wartime demand for labour in the public sector and manufacturing industry urban areas started to witness the initial emergence of a steadily growing demand for labour in the transport sector. Yet despite the substantial increase in the demand the labour supply in the Three Towns throughout the war years continued to be sufficiently ample, and wages were maintained at fairly low and stable levels compared to remuneration in agriculture (cf. Mcloughlin, *op.cit.*).

The relative abundance of wage labour in Greater Khartoum during the war years was apparently a consequence of increased wage labour migration. However it is worth noting in this respect that the wartime conditions were themselves factors underlying the intensification of the proletarianization process. This was particularly so because of the disruption of foreign trade which adversely affected the level of earnings from cash cropping.

THE DISASTER OF PEACE-TIME

It is perhaps one of the ironies of the labour market in Greater Khartoum that the labour force could benefit more from war than from peace, as the wartime regeneration of the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum proved to be short-lived. As soon as the Second War ended, public employment in the Three Towns was drastically cut down. Likewise the resumption of foreign trade resulted in redundancies in the

newly-established manufacturing industries, which collapsed owing to their "inability to compete on an equal footing with imports" (Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, *op.cit.*).

Furthermore, the demobilization of the Sudan Defence Force served to accentuate the problem of urban unemployment. According to McLoughlin (1970:116), the colonial administrators were of the opinion that "Many men were unsettled as a result of having seen military service in more distant places, and headed to the city when they found their farm too small a world for them". An abnormal Nile flood in 1946 further complicated the situation as it induced an exodus from the devastated districts, especially from the Northern Province, to the Three Towns (*ibid.*).

In order to avert the consequences of mass unemployment at a time when the anti-colonial movement was reaching its peak while the trade unions were waging an effective struggle to improve the conditions of workers, the colonial administrators started to devise schemes to evict unemployed workers from Khartoum. One way of doing this was through referral to villages of origin. This method was particularly preferred by the Director of the Stores and Ordnance Department who, in reporting to the Civil Secretary the discharge of 115 artisans and ancillary workers in June 1946, maintained that;

For the future I would forecast, over any rate the next six months, an average monthly reduction of 80- 100 men. Once they are discharged, it seems that there will be little chance of offering them re-employment at any time. In this connection I have recently put up a scheme to Financial Secretary which aims to get men, who are discharged in such circumstances back to their place of domicile...

Another method of evicting redundant government workers was transference of workers to other regions where more workers were needed. In December 1945, for example, the Forests Department "hired nearly 1,000..[men] for work in the Gedaref area" (Sudan Government, 1945:143; McLoughlin, 1970:116). Both methods of getting rid of "labour surpluses", however, were not confined to discharged soldiers and redundant government workers. They were, rather, part of a wider system of rigid control over the urban wage labour market devised by the colonial Civil Secretary in 1943 in search of an efficient method to "decide allotments of labour to competing demands" (File CS/SCR/37.C.1) that aimed, inter alia, to meet part of the labour requirements of the Gezira Scheme (cf. Chapter Two).⁽²⁾

The years 1945-1949 witnessed the re-emergence of urban unemployment as well as the decline in wage rates for casual unskilled workers in Greater Khartoum. Thus, while wartime daily wages were 12 piastres or more for unskilled labourers; and despite the post-war inflation that resulted in a decline in real wages (cf. Chapter Seven), the Commissioner of Khartoum reported in June 1946 that "As a result of demobilisation of Sudan Defence Force soldiers, unskilled labour was available at 7 to 10 PT. per day" (File CS/SCR/37.C.1). As with the unemployment situation in the 1930s, however, post-war mass unemployment in Greater Khartoum did not persist for long, and by 1949 the building industry was to give rise to yet another massive, and short-lived, demand for manual labour in Greater Khartoum.

THE DAWN OF INDEPENDENCE

According to Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din (1980a:429), between 1949 and 1954 Greater Khartoum experienced "an unprecedented building boom ..[as] a major effort was made to build new deims to replace the old deims in which squalid slum conditions had developed" (also see Sa'ad El-Din Fawzi, 1954). The building operations required such a large workforce that by 1949 the colonial administrators were content that the "continued building activity ensured that none but the work-shy needed to find himself unemployed" (Governor-General, 1949:165/6).

The scale of the demolition and building operations was massive. By 1954 some 5,855 houses including shops were demolished (see Arthur, 1954), and around 8,000 new houses were built (see Sa'ad El-Din Fawzi, 1954). The enormous demand for unskilled wage workers stimulated by the building boom not only solved the problem of mass unemployment, but also apparently resulted in a shortage of unskilled wage labourers in Greater Khartoum. Given the reports concerning the elimination of unemployment, the evidence of the shortage can be found in the fact that "in the first two years the demolition of houses was carried out by jail gangs" rather than by unskilled wage labourers (Arthur, 1954). But this shortage was soon redressed as the building boom continued to attract many rural migrants, especially Southerners and Nuba. By 1951 the number of migrants seems to have increased to the

extent that the colonial authorities started to 'complain' about the drift into Greater Khartoum by people who were "under the impression that the streets [were] paved with gold" (Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1980 a:430).

With the completion of the building operations in the new deims in 1954, a larger than ever before construction labour force in Greater Khartoum found itself redundant. As things stood at the time, there was virtually no chance whatsoever of absorbing even a small sector of them in wage employment. Even the opportunity to join the ranks of the self-employed craftsmen and petty traders was apparently difficult. This seems to have been the case as the numbers of petty commodity producers had increased to the extent that by the early 1950s the colonial government could no longer tolerate their presence in the central market in Khartoum. By 1953 a new market place, Sug Al-Sajana, was opened in Khartoum South, and all the craftsmen and petty traders were transferred to it. Unlike the case with the previous 'labour-surplus situations', the unemployed construction workers were not evicted from Khartoum. Though no official reports that could help explain this new shift in colonial labour policy are available, any such explanation would necessarily touch on the process of rapid 'political' change, which the Sudan was then undergoing. The era of 'formal' capitalist colonization was approaching its close; the process of 'Sudanizing' top government positions was well under way; and the transitional 'national' administration, which was set up in 1953, was being consolidated in preparation for the smooth transfer of power

from colonial to national rule. Though these changes hardly affected the peripheral capitalist basis of Sudanese urbanism which persists right to the present, they were nevertheless to influence the wage labour market in urban Sudan in general and Greater Khartoum in particular (cf. Chapter Five). In the rest of this chapter, I intend to recapitulate the implications of peripheral urbanism for the operation of the wage labour market in colonial Khartoum.

PERIPHERAL URBANISM AND THE WAGE LABOUR MARKET

At the beginning of the present chapter I explained how the Second War has been viewed as the 'watershed' between the alleged two 'epochs' of the history of the urban labour market in the Sudan. In view of the foregoing account of the wage labour market in colonial Khartoum, however, this view has proved to be poorly founded, though the steady increase in the urban wage labour force is beyond doubt. In this section I attempt to outline the factors behind my dissatisfaction with the pre-war/post-war periodization, and to highlight, in retrospect, the interconnectedness of the processes governing the urban wage labour market in colonial Khartoum with the structures of peripheral capitalism in the Sudan.

The first point to emphasize concerns the periodization suggested in the literature. In this respect it is important to stress the fact that, throughout the colonial period, the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum was characterized by oscillation between labour-shortage and labour-surplus situations. At the inception of British colonial rule, there

was an enormous demand for labour while a wage labour force was virtually non-existent in the country. The colonial government accordingly made considerable efforts to mobilize "local labour", and to import labour from beyond the boundaries of Sudan, in order to solve the shortage in urban labour. By 1910 the problem of shortage in the labour supply to government departments and commercial enterprises in Greater Khartoum was solved once and for all. By 1912, moreover, a labour-surplus situation evidently appeared in Greater Khartoum; and throughout the second decade of colonial rule the conurbation figured as an important reservoir of labour to be sent to the other parts of the country. In 1920 another substantial demand for labour appeared in the Three Towns, and large numbers of rural Sudanese were consequently attracted to the capital. A year later the demand shrunk, unemployment surfaced and a labour-surplus situation re-emerged once more. But up to the outbreak of the Second World War the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum could not absorb all those seeking employment; and agro-employment in the Gezira Scheme appeared to be the only alternative for wage-labourers. The wartime increase in government and private employment not only helped ease the situation, but also provided employment for more migrants arriving in Greater Khartoum. As soon as the war ended, public employment was reduced and the recently-established manufacturing sector collapsed. The result was yet another labour-surplus situation in the immediate post-war years. In short, from the inception of British colonial rule up to 1954 there were frequent changes

in Greater Khartoum from 'labour shortage' and/or 'full-employment' to 'labour-surplus' and/or 'mass unemployment' situations, and vice versa. To this extent, and provided that the assertion in the literature concerning the "change" from a pre-war shortage into a post-war labour surplus is corroborated, (and, in view of rampant unemployment in Greater Khartoum in the years immediately preceding the war, corroboration seems impossible), the "change" from a "pre-war shortage" to a "post-war surplus" should be viewed as only one instance in the series of changes that took place during the colonial period.

The recurrence of the 'feast or famine' type of employment situation in colonial Khartoum leads directly to my second point, which relates to the question of both the **externality** and **volatility** of the larger part of the demand for wage labour in colonial Khartoum. In this respect, however, it should be stressed that the oscillation in the wage labour market described above **was not** a manifestation of the cycles of full-employment/mass unemployment inherent in the functioning of the capitalist mode of production. These latter cycles are consequences of periodic crises of **over-production**, which necessitate redundancies until new or renewed avenues for capital accumulation and, by extension, investment and employment, are found. In virtually all periods of substantial demand for wage labour in colonial Khartoum, as in periods of large scale redundancies, the changes in the demand for labour were totally external to the basic avenue of capital accumulation in colonial Khartoum, viz., import-export trade.

This point is of such paramount significance to our understanding of the peripheral capitalist nature of Sudanese urbanism that it should carefully be recapitulated.

In defining the concept of peripheral capitalist urbanism I have maintained that the basic activities underlying the rise of cities in colonial Sudan were commerce and administration, both of which were founded upon the basis of primary export production and the colonial-type trade economy (cf. Chapter One). In the context of the progressive intensification of primary export production (and the consequent increase in commercial traffic), and the further consolidation of the British colonial administration, the relatively small demand for labour in commerce and administration was not only fairly stable, but also steadily growing. By the time the colonial era came to its close, thus, the government was the largest employer in urban Sudan (a status which has never been challenged). Though a section of government workers was employed in services departments (sanitary services, gardening, etc.), the majority was employed in activities directly connected with the servicing of the colonial-type trade economy. The approximately 46,000 government railwaymen comprised the single largest group of government workers. It is indeed no surprise that the struggle for the establishment and recognition of trade unions in colonial Sudan was initiated and led by these railwaymen (cf. Chapter Seven).

At the inception of British colonial rule there was of course a shortage of labour in both government departments and

commerce; but within a few years that problem was solved and no difficulties were thereafter encountered in securing the required labour force, which virtually experienced no redundancies. The only exceptions to this generalization are (a) the period of the depression in the 1930s during which commercial employment was apparently affected, and (b) during the Second War when foreign trade was disrupted, but public employment was temporarily increased owing to external, "Imperial", considerations.

With the exception of the war years, it was massive building and other infra-structural construction projects that constituted the main, and by far the largest, source of demand for labour in colonial Khartoum. Likewise, the larger part of the redundancies resulting in the labour-surplus situations originated in the construction sector. Once the role of construction employment in the operation of the wage labour market in colonial Khartoum is recognized, and its implications are investigated, a basic contradiction in the formation of the urban wage labour market would readily be understood. Basic to our understanding of this contradiction is the recognition of the status of the construction sector in the 'urban economy'.

The building industry is not only an 'auxiliary' sector that, in all places and at all times, is intended to service and support other, more 'basic', activities (commerce and administration in the case of Sudanese urbanism), but also one which is characterized by frequent, and often considerable, fluctuations in production schedules. Owing to the particular

experiences of 19th century urban Sudan, however, what ought to be an auxiliary sector at the inception of British colonial rule turned out to be the source of the greater part of the demand for urban unskilled labour to the extent of undermining the flow of labour to the activities it was expected to support (the competition with government departments over recruitment of wage labourers). In the initial process of urban reconstruction in colonial Khartoum, as in the construction of Gebel Aulia Dam and the building of the new deims, however, the construction operations were **transient**. Each time the operations were completed, massive unemployment was to follow, and the colonial regime was to start devising ways for the eviction of unemployed construction workers, whom it had originally helped bring to Greater Khartoum through, inter alia, the manipulation of the monthly labour returns reported by province governors and heads of departments throughout the country.

The contradiction in the initial emergence and later expansion of the wage labour market in colonial Khartoum is that while a wage labour force had to be created in order to meet the demand originating in the construction sector, the larger section of that labour force was intended to be temporary, and to live in the city only for as long as the construction operations would last. This was evidently the case as the colonial regime expected and, whenever necessary, forced redundant construction workers to leave Greater Khartoum. In other words, the process underlying the recurrence of labour surplus situations in colonial Khartoum,

far from being the consequence of structured periodic crises of over-production and accumulation, was, rather, the outcome of the contradiction between, on the one hand, the realities of the creation of an urban construction wage labour force and, on the other, the transience of the larger part of the demand resulting in the creation of that labour force.

The transience of construction employment in colonial Khartoum touches on the particular configuration in colonial Khartoum of two basic features of peripheral capitalism characterizing the structures and processes of the Sudanese economy at large. These features are (a) the disarticulation of sectors in the economy and (b) the treatment of wages as "costs" to be kept at the lowest possible level which effectively results in the severance of the 'critical link' between the capacity of producers to produce and their capacity to consume (cf. Chapter Two). A brief discussion of the role of construction employment in colonial Khartoum would illucidate some of the ways in which these two features were reproduced at the level of the 'urban economy'.

Generally speaking, the question of disarticulation of sectors in colonial Khartoum can be approached by pointing out the lack of 'linkages' between levels of employment in the different avenues of capital accumulation in the urban economy. The "linkages" referred to here are such as those observed in central capitalist economies, in which the construction sector could be, and on occasions was, deliberately used to generate employment, to raise the level of demand (purchasing-power) in the internal market and,

consequently, to stimulate growth in the economy as a whole, especially in manufacturing industry. This, clearly, is the ABC of Keynesian economics, and the basis of the call to increase public spending (via the construction sector in particular) during periods of recession, when unemployment becomes rampant, the purchasing power in the internal market decreases, and the crisis of over production and capital accumulation seems otherwise insoluble. One of the preconditions for the success of this approach in solving the problems of unemployment and capital accumulation in central capitalist economies, however, is the presence of a **critical link** between the capacity to consume and the capacity to produce, or what economists denote by the "multiplier effect" concept. That is to say, wages in central capitalist economies figure as a crucial source of demand in the internal market. As a result of this, the expansion in construction employment with its addition to the total wage bill would induce an increase in the demand for goods in the internal market. The latter increase would in its turn generate an increase in manufacturing investment and employment, and boost further employment in commerce. All of these increases would feed back by stimulating further construction employment through the increase in demand for housing, and so on and so forth. But this kind of "multiplier effect" in central capitalist economies is effective only in the short-run (given the presence of a competitive labour-intensive manufacturing industry and/or relatively high import duties). This is particularly so because as long as the orientation of the

production process is towards the realization of surplus-value and capital accumulation, the crises of over-production are inevitably to follow.

The point in the foregoing discussion is to stress the point that this kind of "multiplier effect" has been severely constrained in all peripheral capitalist economies (cf. Samir Amin, 1974a). This is so because wages are treated solely as "costs" to be kept at as low a level as possible in order to sustain the profitability of the colonial-type trade economy. In all periods of substantial construction employment in colonial Khartoum there were virtually no implications for employment in those sectors of the urban economy in which the most significant processes of capital accumulation took place. There were, however, some significant implications for petty commodity production as I shall soon explain.

The avenues of capital accumulation in colonial Khartoum, as maintained earlier, were largely directly linked to the colonial-type trade economy, viz., import-export trade, banking, insurance and transport in addition to real estate and the construction industry. Throughout both the colonial and neo-colonial periods, however, it has been the import-export trade which constituted the primary vehicle for capital accumulation in urban Sudan (cf. Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, 1984:33-38 et passim; Mohamed Y. A. El-Mustafa, 1983:140ff). The rise and fall in construction employment had virtually no implications for either export or import trade.

The argument concerning export trade is a simple one. Insofar as it deals in primary products (cotton, gum,

oil-seeds, livestock, etc.) produced in the countryside, and oriented towards external markets, the export trade has always been the most disarticulated of sectors, and remains most 'insensitive' to what takes place in the other sectors of the urban economy. In no way, therefore, could the increase, or decrease, in the size of construction employment in colonial Khartoum have had implications for employment in export trade. In asserting this, it is not my wish to deny that export trade might have some detrimental implications for the internal market. The increased exportation of meat, grain, and fruits in recent years, and the consequent rise in the local prices of these products, is a good case in point.

Unlike export trade, import trade is 'sensitive' to fluctuations in the level of the internal purchasing-power. In other words, the increase, or decrease, in the size of construction employment in colonial Khartoum of necessity affected the level of demand for imported goods in the city. We should be careful, however, not to exaggerate the magnitude of these effects as far as employment in import trade is concerned. Though the precise effects of the increase in construction employment are yet to be investigated and established, it is my strong impression that the effect of fluctuations in construction employment on the level of employment in import trade in colonial Khartoum could only be minor. At best, the effect concerned the generation of a few opportunities in retailing in those neighbourhoods where retail shops had previously been lacking, and in which 'migrant' construction workers came to live. The assumption

here is that in those neighbourhoods where retail shops had already been in business, shopkeepers would manage to cope with the increase in demand without expanding existing employment. At the higher levels of import trade, however, no increase in employment could have obtained, precisely because Greater Khartoum was the seat for almost all importers, and the majority of wholesalers, in colonial Sudan. In other words, as the Three Towns were the main centre from which virtually all imports were distributed all over the country, the increase in demand for imported goods induced by the expansion in construction employment could constitute no significant increase to the total volume of imports already handled in the city. It is worth noting here that though import trade was a 'little sensitive' to fluctuations in the internal purchasing-power, and as such was in a sense 'more articulated' than export trade, import trade was nevertheless the most accentuated manifestation of the disarticulation of sectors in colonial Khartoum. This feature of import trade may be better appreciated in view of the fact that an increase in internal demand tended to boost the colonial-type trade economy, and to further the dependency of the Sudan upon manufactured imports, instead of inducing the emergence of a local 'modern' manufacturing industry, which remained virtually non-existent throughout the colonial period, except for the brief wartime years.

In contrast to the situation in those sectors in which the most significant capital accumulation processes were taking place, petty commodity production seem to have benefited a lot

from the increase in the numbers of wage earners. Though I have no figures to back this assertion, in view of the difficulties in promoting productivity in petty commodity production there are good reasons to believe that an appreciable expansion in the level of its employment did take place. These difficulties, it is worth noting, stemmed not only from the inability of the majority of petty producers to initiate viable capital accumulation processes to buy better tools and equipment, but also from the fact that even when sufficient capital could be found, the introduction of capital-intensive technology would increase the costs of production to a level beyond what the wage-earners could normally afford (not to speak of competition on the part of imported manufactured goods). The colonial official reports on arrangements for craftsmen and petty traders indeed indirectly corroborate the steady increase in the number of petty commodity producers and traders. Thus whereas the colonial administration initially planned to accommodate these craftsmen and traders in the central market of Khartoum, within three decades it found it necessary to establish a new market at the periphery of Khartoum and to transfer all craftsmen, and some petty traders, to it (some of the petty traders who deal in vegetables and fruits, etc. are still operating in Khartoum Central Market). In addition to these 'established' producers and traders there were also others whose activities depended on wage earners. The women preparing and/or selling cheap food, local beer (merissa) and spirits (araki), are a good case in point. To this extent, then, we

may well conceive of a "multiplier effect" in the interrelations between wages and these so-called 'informal' activities.

The contention that the growth in the wage labour force in colonial Khartoum has resulted in an expansion in 'informal employment' should not, however, be taken to mean that the whole of the so-called 'urban informal sector' is entirely, or even largely, oriented towards wage-earners. As I shall explain in more detail in Chapter Six, a very significant proportion of the demand for the products and services of these self-employed workers originates with elements other than wage-earners (i.e. administrators, professionals, businessmen, etc.).

NOTES

1. The initial draft of this chapter provided the framework for a paper presented at a conference on State, Capital and Transformation in the Sudan, held at the School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia (Norwich), 16-19 July 1984 (Salah El-Din El-Shazali Ibrahim, 1984b).

2. In April 1943 a circular from the colonial Civil Secretary (37.C.1 dated 4.4.1943) informed Province Governors and Heads of Departments that the Civil Secretary "had been appointed as the competent authority to decide allotments of labour to competing demands ... [and] entrusted with the task of obtaining information about demands for labour and correlating them".

As from May 1944, detailed "Labour Monthly Returns" from each province started to reach the Civil Secretary, who in his turn recirculated the information to all other provinces. In addition to the pre-existing arrangements between province and departmental labour authorities, the new system provided the colonial administration with a mechanism to transfer 'labour-surplus' from one province to another, and especially to the Gezira Scheme. File (CS/37.C.1-1) at the Archives of the Labour Department contains the correspondence between the CS and Province Governors. The way the system operated may be grasped from the first case in which the Monthly Labour Returns were manipulated.

On 1st June, 1943, Mr. F.D. Corfield, District Commissioner, Central District, Kordofan Province, sent to the Civil Secretary, through Governor Kordofan, the Monthly for May (CD/37.D.1). Quoting statistics on the situation in El-Obeid, Mr. Corfield maintained that there "are approximately 300 Western Labourers available and surplus to normal requirements". On June 11, 1943, the correspondence reached Khartoum. On 3rd June, 1943, the Assistant Governor, Blue Nile Province, wrote in his Monthly Labour Returns (BNP/37.A.2) that "unskilled labour should be directed to the Gezira area to meet the planting requirements next month. Next month there cannot be too many". On receiving the latter on , the Assistant Civil Secretary wrote to the Civil Secretary "Do you think we might ask Gov. Kordofan to push the 300 men at [El-Obeid] .. to the Gezira?" (dated 12.6.43). The Civil Secretary (in Red Pencil) wrote "yes" (dated 15.6.43). On 16th June a letter (CS/37.C.1-1) to Governor Kordofan was sent in which the Civil Secretary maintained "There is likely to be considerable labour shortage in the Gezira at the beginning of July for both planting requirements and Irrigation Department excavation work.

If the 300 surplus men mentioned by you are still

available perhaps you could persuade them to go to the Gezira.

Will you please arrange direct with Governor Medani if anything can be done".

CHAPTER FIVE

THE OPERATION OF THE LABOUR MARKET IN POST-COLONIAL KHARTOUM

The political status of the nation seems to have had little influence beyond affecting the rate and form of surplus extraction. Under foreign rule most administration was concentrated in the colonial capital; after independence new forces occupied the same positions and maintained control of the primate centres (Gilbert and Gugler, 1983:41).

This chapter continues the analysis of the operation of the wage labour market in Khartoum begun in the previous chapter, and sets out to assess the main developments in the intra-urban processes during the post-colonial period. Its central objective is to develop the view that, notwithstanding the achievement of flag Independence, the operation of the labour market in Greater Khartoum is still governed by the processes of peripheral capitalist urbanism, which remain virtually the same as those of the colonial period. As explained in Chapter Two, successive national governments not only left intact the basic orientation of the Sudanese economy towards primary export production, but also contributed a great deal to the further entrenchment of the colonial-type trade economy in the Sudanese social formation.

In emphasizing the **continuity** of the colonial-type trade economy, I do not of course deny several significant developments, within the parameters of the peripheral capitalist pattern of Sudanese urbanism, in the operation of the urban labour market. The post-colonial increase in the size of the manual labour force consequent on continuing proletarianization is probably the most obvious manifestation of change. Not once during the post-colonial period was there

a shortage of unskilled urban labour. Changes are likewise observed in the sources of wage employment; whereas the building industry has in recent decades lost its position as the leading source of employment for unskilled urban workers, manufacturing employment has grown out of all proportion to its size during the colonial period. Notwithstanding these 'quantitative' changes, however, the processes of peripheral capitalism continue to underlie Sudanese urbanism. Commerce and administration are still the 'basic' urban activities; the main spheres of urban capital accumulation remain tied to the colonial-type trade economy (cf. Mohamed Y.A. El-Mustafa, 1983; Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, 1984); and, in spite of the relative post-colonial expansion in manufacturing industry, disarticulation of sectors is still a prominent feature of the economy.

With the perpetuation of the processes of peripheral capitalist urbanism, the constraints that impinge upon the labour-absorptive capacity of the main avenues of urban capital accumulation have simultaneously been carried over into the post-colonial period. As a result, increasing numbers of manual workers in Greater Khartoum have found it imperative to resort to various forms of self-employment in petty commodity production, petty trade and the personal unskilled services. In 1973, for example, some 50,000 to 60,000 jobs, or 25 to 30 per cent of total employment in Greater Khartoum, were in the so-called 'urban informal sector', or outside government and the main spheres of urban capital accumulation (ILO, 1976:388).

Closely related to the continuing increase in the number of self-employed workers are the conditions of the urban manual labour force following the abandonment of colonial practices of monitoring, and intervening in the operation of the wage labour market. Unlike the British colonial administration, successive national governments did not, before September 1981, attempt to evict apparently 'redundant' workers from the conurbation. Though wage labour migration is above all else the consequence of proletarianization (cf. Chapter One), the **relaxed** attitude of the post-colonial state has undoubtedly been a factor in the increase of the urban manual labour force.

In considering the proliferation of self-employment among manual workers, I shall examine aspects of the way in which it is related to population growth in Greater Khartoum. I shall argue that, by providing these employment opportunities, the process of population growth is increasingly asserting itself as the major source of demand for unskilled labour and, as a result of this, is progressively assuming the crucial role which the construction industry played in the operation of the wage labour market during the colonial period. In contrast, however, the demand generated by the population momentum is not transient; and it is this persistence of demand which has drawn so much attention to the manifestations of the hitherto overlooked, but as yet largely misconceived peripheral capitalist foundations of the processes governing the operation of the urban wage labour market.

Owing to the lack of comprehensive official or other

reports, it is difficult to describe precisely the operation of the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum since flag Independence in 1956. In my attempt to reconstruct the main post-colonial developments I have found it illuminating to adopt a three-phase periodization; and my account is pursued in terms of these phases. But before outlining these phases I should stress that I do not imply any significant discontinuity in the operation of the labour market. The three phases exhibit similarities in many of their basic features, of which the abundance of wage labour in general, and unskilled labour in particular, is the most significant. My intention is, rather, to concentrate on the specific feature(s) that acquired special prominence during each phase, although evidence of its (their) presence can be found in all three. These phases are:

(1) The immediate post-colonial phase, from 1956 to around 1963. This phase may be characterized as one of general improvements in the conditions of the wage labour market as numerous employment opportunities were created, especially in 'modern' manufacturing industry. Despite all allegations concerning the post-colonial 'drift' of migrant wage labourers, there was no significant wage labour migration to Greater Khartoum during this phase.

(2) The second phase covers the period from around 1964 to 1969. During this phase there was a significant increase in the number of migrants, but

the expansion in wage employment was apparently approaching its limits. Industrial investment was declining, but the effects of population growth were starting to crystallize in the form of other employment opportunities, especially in intra-city transport, food industries and personal services.

(3) The third phase stretches from 1969 to the present. During this period employment in 'modern' industry virtually stagnated, but the population momentum provided numerous opportunities. Owing to a steady deterioration in the living standards of all sections of the urban manual labour force, this phase also witnessed the emergence and acceleration of large scale wage-labour emigration to the oil-rich Arab countries. Though skilled labour is apparently becoming scarce, the relative intensification of the proletarianization process taking place in the context of exorbitant rates of inflation and, coupled with drought, has guaranteed an ample supply of unskilled workers.

THE POST-COLONIAL PERIOD (1956-1963)

As a result of wholesale redundancies in the construction industry following the completion of the New Deims in 1954, and of the decision of the colonial administration not to evict unemployed construction workers, it seems likely that, on the eve of Independence, Greater Khartoum was witnessing yet another 'labour-surplus situation' (cf. Chapter Four). But

the magnitude of this surplus is difficult to estimate. In view of the unprecedented boom which the Gezira Scheme experienced during the Korean War in the early 1950s, it is probable that this labour-surplus situation prevailed during the summer months only. My assumption here is that the increase in wages for cotton-pickers in the Gezira Scheme attracted some unskilled workers. Whatever the situation on the eve of Independence may have been, in my attempt to collate the scanty available information, I have developed a strong impression that between 1956 and 1963 Greater Khartoum witnessed virtually no unemployment among manual labourers.

The improvements in the conditions of the labour market during the immediate post-colonial years were not solely a consequence of a regeneration in the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum. An equally important factor was the initiation of a construction boom in the provinces which temporarily helped limit wage labour migration into the conurbation, and also, apparently, attracted quite a number of skilled and semi-skilled construction workers living in the capital.

THE POST-COLONIAL DIVERSION

As I have maintained earlier, in their search to 'develop' the country, successive national governments made considerable efforts to promote a dramatic expansion in primary export agricultural production, especially through the establishment of large-scale irrigated schemes. Though this orientation is still present in current government plans (the Rahad Scheme is

the salient example), the larger part of the expansion in irrigated agriculture actually took place during the first eight years after Independence. In addition to the numerous, relatively small pump-schemes (see, e.g., Omer Osman, 1958; Taisier M. A. Ali, 1982), this early period also witnessed the establishment of the Managil Extension in the Gezira Province and the New Halfa Scheme in Kassala Province. Likewise numerous major infrastructural projects were implemented between 1958 and 1964. The most important among these projects were the building of the Khashm el-Girba and ErRosairess Dams, the extension of rail transport to Darfur (Nyala Line) and Bahr El-Ghazal Provinces (Wau Line), and the construction of the Khartoum-Medani highway.

The concurrent demand for wage labourers generated by these early 'developmental schemes' was enormous. In the case of the New Halfa Scheme alone, for example, the tasks to be undertaken were the construction of Khashm el-Girba Dam, canalization in the scheme, and the building of two new towns (New Halfa and Khashm el-Girba), in addition to 24 villages intended to accommodate the Nubians to be transferred from Northern Sudan. In each of these villages, between 250 and 300 houses, a primary school and other public places were built (Sorbo, 1977:5).

The construction boom provided opportunities for large numbers of skilled and unskilled workers, and many unskilled workers were apparently able to qualify as skilled and semi-skilled workers. For the redundant construction workers in Greater Khartoum, this massive demand changed their

situation overnight. For the proto-proletarianized small farmers and pastoralists, on the other hand, the prospect of assured construction employment during the dry season acted as a magnet. As a result of this, not only was wage labour migration to Greater Khartoum apparently drastically slowed, but the flow of seasonal unskilled migrants to the Gezira and other agricultural districts was severely disrupted. The shortage of seasonal migrants in Gezira reached its climax in 1963, when the first military junta had to bring in troops and pupils to help redress the situation during the cotton-picking season (See Omer Mohamed Ali, 1974:30).

THE POST-COLONIAL REGENERATION IN KHARTOUM

At the very time that the provincial construction boom was under way, the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum experienced a regeneration of its own. Part of this expansion, of course, took place in the sphere of import-export trade, into which the first national government actively encouraged the entry of Sudanese businessmen (Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1983:191). In 1959, for example, the government decided to reserve 30% of all import quotas for "first-time importers", while in 1960 the Sudanese Commercial Bank was established to finance the "national" merchants, who used to complain about the bias of the foreign-owned commercial banks (see Mohamed Hashim Awad, 1966:42). As virtually all importers were stationed at Khartoum, it is beyond doubt that the immediate post-colonial years witnessed a relative expansion in commercial employment.

New employment opportunities were likewise opened during this early period in the sphere of intra-conurbation transport services. These opportunities, it is worth noting, were not solely the result of pressure caused by population growth. A more important factor was the replacement of the capital-intensive tram service, which dominated the internal transport network in the Three Towns during the colonial period, by buses and taxis. However the increase in wage employment in the import-export trade and the internal transport sectors was apparently far smaller than what it was in the public sector and in 'modern' manufacturing industry.

PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

In Chapter Three I explained how the achievement of flag Independence boosted further the growth in public employment, which received its initial impetus in the Sudanization process. New ministries and government departments were established, while the already existing departments were expanded. Though the main increase in public employment was in the ranks of 'classified staff', many manual workers were also recruited as skilled workers, machinery operators, drivers, guards, messengers and general labourers. Likewise, the establishment of post-secondary institutions (which all have student-hostels) gave opportunities for a limited number of workers to be recruited as guards, cooks, room-attendants and gardeners.

A further increase in public employment was generated through the transformation of the Sudan Defence Force into a

full-fledged army whereby a large number of unskilled (but literate) workers were recruited. Starting with the rise of the first military junta in 1958, moreover, there has been an increasing tendency for military personnel to be concentrated in Greater Khartoum in particular. By 1980 the People's Armed Forces are said to have given employment to over 65,000 persons, of whom at least 50,000 were recruited from among manual workers, farmers and pastoralists. Unfortunately, I could not find any figures or estimates on the numbers of workers recruited into 'unclassified' public employment during the immediate post-colonial years.

THE EXPANSION IN MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT

It is not my purpose here to consider in detail aspects of the emergence of manufacturing industry in the Sudan, or the role assumed by the post-colonial state in its expansion through both the provision of concessions to prospective industrialists (cf. Mohamed Hashim Awad, 1966; 1970; Ali Ahmed Suliman, 1973; Naseem, 1977; Awad Abdel Mageed, 1981; Fateh-el-Rahman Abdallah El-Sheikh, 1981) and direct public investment (cf. Sadig Rasheed, 1974; 1977; Sayed M. Nemeiri, 1977). One point does need emphasizing and this is that throughout the colonial period manufacturing industry was virtually non-existent. At Independence the total number of 'modern' industrial establishments in the entire country was said to be around 40 (cf. Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, 1984:59), and of these the most important were cotton-ginning plants intended to service the colonial-type trade economy (cf. Omer

M. Osman & Ali Ahmed Suliman, 1969; Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1983). But as the fetters of formal capitalist colonization were broken, the first national government promulgated The Approved Enterprises (Concessions) Act of 1956, which gave an impetus to industrial investment. According to El-Sayed El-Bushra (1980:271), the 1956 act was intended to

encourage investment in the industrial sector both from home and abroad by offering protection, and in many cases subsidies, to the newly created industries. The government promised manufacturers considerable reductions in taxation and import duties on imported materials, machinery, and spare parts, together with reduced rates in transport, and power, and the provision of land for industrial development at nominal prices. The authorities gave assurances to foreign investors that they would be able to transfer profits and capital and that a fair compensation would be paid in case of nationalization of enterprises, and expatriates were assured that they would be allowed to transfer savings.

Though the concessions which the Act provided were obviously considerable, the local capitalists found them far less lucrative than the potential rewards from foreign trade and irrigated agriculture. In the first three years after Independence the Act attracted only a handful of investments that were largely foreign-owned; and it was not until 1959, when cotton prices declined considerably, that a few local capitalists started to invest in industry (El-Wathig Kameir, 1980b:51ff). By the end of the first decade of Independence, however, virtually all of the private industrial establishments in the country were under the control of Sudanese capitalists, although in some establishments a

proportion of the capital continued to be foreign-owned. The control by the so-called leading Sudanese industrialist, Kuwaiti-backed Khalil Osman, is a good case in point.

The rate of private industrial investment in the first three years after Independence was apparently far short of the expectations of the military junta who assumed power in 1958. The junta accordingly launched their plans with provisions to establish six factories and a tannery with an investment amounting to LS 30 million. According to Sadig Rasheed (1977:84), the reasons for the state venture were explained partly in terms of "the large size of investment" (as with sugar production), and partly with reference to "the lack of interest and hesitation" on the part of the private sector.

Through increased private and public industrial investment, the first decade of flag Independence witnessed the emergence of around 185 new 'modern' industrial establishments (El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1980:271). As a result of this, the share of industry in the GDP increased from "a mere 1%" on the eve of Independence (Sadig Rasheed, 1977:83) to over 7% in 1965/66 (Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, 1984:59). Similarly, industrial employment increased from 12,257 in 1955/56 to 21,960 in 1965/66 (ibid.). The larger part of the growth in the share of industry in GDP and employment originated in 'modern' manufacturing industry.

My reason for assessing aspects of the growth of 'modern' industry is that most of the factories established during the first decade of Independence are located in Greater Khartoum. According to Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din (1978:122), between

1956 and 1965 Greater Khartoum witnessed an industrial investment of around 31.7 million Sudanese pounds which provided employment for 12,185 persons. Though the period 1960-1964 witnessed the initiation of relatively substantial public industrial investments outside Greater Khartoum (Sadig Rasheed, op.cit.), the pattern of concentration of industry in the conurbation was only slightly affected. By 1967, for example, Greater Khartoum accounted for over 73 per cent of all manufacturing industry in the country, and about 75 per cent of the entire Sudanese modern industrial workforce (El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1980:275).

THE ABUNDANCE OF LABOUR

In spite of the emergence of a substantial demand for wage labour both inside and outside Greater Khartoum during the immediate post-colonial years, the supply of unskilled wage labour in the capital was ample. As a result of this, neither the first national, parliamentary democratic government (1956-1958), nor the first military junta (1958-1964), found it necessary to intervene in the operation of the urban wage labour market by inducing migration into Greater Khartoum and/or increasing wage rates. Quite a significant section of the skilled labour force in the newly-established factories, however, consisted of expatriates, who were apparently sent by the manufacturers to "train" local workers (Ali Ahmed Suliman, 1974:97ff).

The relative abundance of unskilled wage labour seems to have resulted in a lack of interest on the part of industrial

employers in the development of a 'durable' relationship with their unskilled wage workers. With the exception of the personnel of the Protective Services (the Police and the Army) and the relatively scarce skilled workers and machinery operators, the wage workers recruited into both government and industry during the first decade of Independence seem to have been engaged largely on a 'temporary' and 'casual' (as opposed to 'permanent') basis. According to Kannappan (1977a:98),

The criteria for entry into permanent employment in the modern sector include various rules of thumb., prior experience, and of course various kinds of certificates concerning formal preparation. Many of the well-established and prestigious employers insist on elementary education for new recruitment to permanent payroll even for the lowest category manual jobs. They defend the practice on the ground that literate workers adapted better to modern employment, literacy helped workers to read elementary instructions, improved their chances of being upgraded, etc.

On the eve of flag Independence the rate of literacy in the Sudan was less than 10 per cent, and virtually all schools were concentrated in urban areas (ILO, 1976:123). In spite of considerable expansion in education since 1956, the rate of literacy in present-day Sudan hardly exceeds 25%. The majority of unskilled labourers in government and industry, especially the rural-born among them, therefore find it virtually impossible to graduate to the status of 'permanent' employees.

THE BEGINNING OF THE 'DRIFT' (1964-1969)

As the post-colonial provincial construction boom subsided by 1963/64, the skilled and semi-skilled construction workers found themselves redundant and, as a result of this, began to

return back to the large urban areas in general, and Greater Khartoum in particular. Likewise increasing numbers of proto-proletarianized small farmers and pastoralists started to migrate to the Three Towns and other large cities, especially during the dry season when no agricultural employment is available. It is important to note that the extension of rail transport to Western and Southern Sudan made the trip to Greater Khartoum relatively easy. Increased migration to Greater Khartoum by "Westerners" in particular, however, was said to be partly the consequence of party politics. In this connection Fahima Zahir (1972:228) has pointed out that councillors and planners in the capital were of the opinion that

the drifting and concentration of tribal groups from the Western Provinces in the outskirts of the Three Towns has been politically motivated by the Umma Political Party and the affiliated religious sect, the Ansar, which had only recently used its followers to exert pressure in times of political crises and political unrest.

MODERN INDUSTRY

By the time of the influx of wage-labour migrants, the rate of expansion in manufacturing employment was declining rapidly. Though I could not find precise figures on the new wage-employment opportunities generated by 'modern' manufacturing industry between 1964 and 1969, it seems unlikely that they totalled more than 5,000 as only a few, relatively small factories were opened between 1965 and 1969. One of the largest of these factories, the Modern Match Factory (opened January, 1965), initially employed only 160

workers and office employees (the workforce was later increased with the installation of a second factory that started production in 1971, and total employment reached 365 by 1977, see El-Wathig Kameir, 1980b:125ff).

Some critics might contest my assessment of the declining rate of industrial investment in the capital by emphasizing the growing number of "local" industrial capitalists in Greater Khartoum during the 1960s. I do not deny the relative increase in the number of "local" industrialists, but I would stress that most of them did not actually initiate new industries; for the most part they took over establishments that had formerly been owned by foreign capital. The 'Sudanization' of the two largest industrial employers in Khartoum North, the American (now Sudan) Textile Factory and the Japanese (now Khartoum) Textile Factory demonstrates that the entry of "local" capital into industry does not necessarily result either in the emergence of new industries or in increased industrial employment.

The tendency of local industrialists to take over already established concerns does not mean that no new industrial investments were initiated since 1965; but none of these new investments was in large scale industrial establishments, which apparently have ceased to emerge in Greater Khartoum since 1963. Thus virtually all the large industrial establishments (i.e. those with 500+ workers) in present-day Khartoum were actually opened during the immediate post-colonial period (1956-1963). The Sudan Textile Factory, which alone employs over 6,000 persons, Khartoum Textile

Factory, BATA Shoe Factory, Haggag Tobacco Factory, the Glass Factory and the Blue Nile Brewery (which was recently closed in keeping with the Islamicization process), to name the most important, were all established during that early period. Probably over 60% of the labour force in 'modern' manufacturing industry in present-day Khartoum is employed in industries established before 1965.

The decline in expansion of industrial employment during the later part of the 1960s was not solely the result of the decline in the rate of industrial investments. The relatively high capital intensity and the general under-utilization of capacity in 'modern' industry in the Sudan are also important factors constraining expansion of employment within existing industrial establishments.

CAPITAL INTENSITY

In their explanation of the inability of 'modern' manufacturing industry to absorb the growing urban manual labour force in Greater Khartoum, many scholars have singled out the tendency of industrialists to employ capital-intensive technology as the prime factor. Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din (1980a:432), for example, has noted that;

an investment of less than eight million pounds in the manufacturing industries in the period 1956-60 led to the employment of 4,093 persons, while an investment of nearly 24 millions in the period 1960-64 absorbed only 8,092. In other words, while the amount invested increased by three times or more, the number of new jobs created increased by less than double.

Naseem (1977:71ff), on the other hand, has noted how in

the three year period 1968-1971 the average capital-labour ratio in the manufacturing sector increased by about 40%, from £S 1,603 to £S 2,295. He has further pointed out that this increase was not solely the consequence of the emergence of new, more capital-intensive industries, but also of the adoption of more capital-intensive techniques within existing establishments, and added that:

This assertion is well illustrated by the metal products industry group where the number of employees in 1971 fell to 3,303 (from 3,601 in 1968-69) but the value added rose from £S 1.430 million to £S 3.303 million [misprint?] thus raising the value added per employee by over 50 per cent (ibid).

On the basis of these figures, Naseem (ibid.) is tempted to assert that the capital-labour ratio in Sudanese industry is several times what it is in similar industries in both Pakistan and the United States (but the figures he quotes for these two countries are for 1962/3 and 1955 respectively). A similar conclusion has also been advanced by Ali Abdel Gadir Ali (1977) who, in his assessment of the elasticity of substitution, has attempted to compare the Sudanese case with findings on the Philippines, Argentina and Nigeria (but also with figures relating to an earlier period). Ali Abdel Gadir claims that, with the exception of the textile industry, all industries in the Sudan have an elasticity of substitution greater than unity, which suggests a relatively high capital intensity. Likewise Medani Mohamed Ahmed (1983:103) points out that "capital-labour ratios have risen by 91.6%, 73.27%, 19.4% and 102% for the chemical, textile, food and metal industries respectively during the period 1970-1973".

Comparisons of capital-labour ratios in different countries in different years, or for the same country over a number of years, can of course be very misleading because normally no account is taken of the effects of inflation. But, notwithstanding the generally low wages of workers in the Sudan (cf. Chapter Seven), there is nevertheless good reason to believe that the concessions provided by the government to prospective industrialists have virtually "made the price of capital cheaper" than of labour (Ali Abdel Gadir Ali, 1977:132). According to Medani M. Mohamed Ahmed (op.cit., p. 106) the concessions providing;

accelerated depreciation allowances, liberal loss carry-overs, custom exemptions, .. are all geared to motivate and encourage capital intensity rather than labour intensity. The [exemptions from Business Profit Tax].. are [also] biased and non-neutral between labour and capital factors of production.

El-Wathig Kameir's study of the (private) Modern Match Factory (1980b:125ff) has perhaps documented the classic example of the adoption of more capital-intensive technology in an existing industrial establishment in the Sudan. El-Wathig has noted that wages in this factory were "appreciably" lower than in public sector factories. Nevertheless, when the Modern Match Factory installed a second plant that started production in 1971, the new "plant was highly capital intensive and most of the production process was automated. The total work force in this [new plant] ... was 40 workers who produced as much as 141 workers had done in the old factory" (idem., p. 126).

The consequences of the high capital-labour ratios in Sudanese industry are not confined to the constraints imposed upon labour absorption capacity. An equally detrimental, but often overlooked, aspect of high capital intensity is that its relatively small labour force tends to be composed of three categories. The first two categories, which constitute a small percentage of the labour force, consist of (a) high-level manpower (engineers, management, accounting personnel, and so on) and (b) semi-skilled wage labourers. The third, and by far the largest, category consists of unskilled wage earners. This point has been succinctly stated by Arrighi (1970:228/9):

Capital-intensive techniques will not only require less labor for each level of output, but they will also require a different composition of the labor force than labor-intensive techniques, as they make possible the division of complex operations, which would need skilled labor, into simple operations that can be performed by semiskilled labor.

As I shall demonstrate later in this chapter, such a pattern of heavy reliance on semi-skilled and unskilled workers has had serious implications for the stabilization of the 'modern' industrial labour force in the Sudan. In other words, because of the low levels of skill required in capital-intensive industry, employers have consistently been reluctant to provide appropriate incentives (especially in the form of wages, cf. Chapter Seven) to stabilize their wage labour force, and it is this reluctance which underlies the phenomenon of '**replenishment recruitment**' into factories (cf. below).

CAPACITY UNDERUTILIZATION

In addition to its high capital-intensity, Sudanese industry is also characterized by relatively high rates of capacity underutilization, which constrains further the potential of employment generation in existing industries. According to Ghosh (1983:60), a "survey carried out by a World Bank team in 1981 estimated that over two-thirds of the factories surveyed operated at below 50% capacity". Many scholars have considered aspects of this underutilization, which is more often than not conceived as a consequence of "technical factors". Problems of transport, skilled manpower, foreign exchange, etc., have accordingly been emphasized (see Naseem, op.cit.). Though there undoubtedly are many "technical problems" besetting Sudanese industry, underutilization of capacity seems to be underlain by much more than these technical factors. The contributions of Mohamed Hashim Awad (1966; 1970) and Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa (1983) have convincingly substantiated the relevance of the peculiar **"mercantilist character"** of industrial investment in the Sudan for the understanding of capacity underutilization.

Mohamed Hashim Awad (1966:35ff) has for long emphasized the role of protection afforded by the industrial concessions acts in encouraging the emergence of a pattern of industrial monopoly in the Sudan. The provisions stipulating restrictions on imports, for example, have eliminated competition in the local market and consequently enabled industrialists to increase prices and to lower the quality of products. Mohamed Hashim contends that this monopolistic tendency is true even

in the presence of several factories producing the same commodity (e.g. the soap industry), precisely because industrialists tend to divide the national market among themselves rather than compete with each other.

Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa (1983:272ff), on the other hand, has pointed out that, through their ability to establish monopolies, Sudanese industrialists have in effect tended to generate profits through the control of the market rather than through a progressive revolutionizing of production. In keeping with this tendency, he argues, many industrialists have wilfully opted to operate their industries below maximum capacity, precisely because such underutilization

perpetuates the shortage of goods and allows the owners to behave as merchants -i.e. to ensure a high rate of commodity turn-over, and in turn to keep to a minimum (or even to eliminate) costs of storage, distribution and advertisement. It also leads, of course, to the rise of prices in the black market (idem., p.278).

Despite the limited expansion in industrial employment between 1965 and 1969, however, the high rates of turn-over among factory workers provided opportunities for some of the migrants 'drifting' into Greater Khartoum (see below).

THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

One at least equally important source of attraction for migrants towards the mid-1960s was the construction boom which Greater Khartoum experienced after 1961/62, when plots of residential land in all Three Towns were allocated to citizens at nominal prices. Probably over 70% of all extensions that emerged in Greater Khartoum between 1955 and 1970 (see Map 4)

were actually built during the 1960s. The most important of these extensions were;

(a) Khartoum: the New (First Class) Extension, Khartoum Two Extension (2nd Class), and the Third Class Extension (Imtidad Al-Talta);

(b) Omdurman: Al-Mahadiya (3rd Class) and Um-Badda (3rd Class).

(c) Khartoum North: El-Safia (First Class), Al-Mazad (2nd Class), Kober (3rd Class), and Al-Sha'biyya (3rd Class)

As expected, the influx of redundant construction workers into Greater Khartoum resulted in a drop in the daily wages of both skilled and unskilled labourers (Omer Mohamed Ali, 1974:59ff).

Though the construction boom in Greater Khartoum briefly subsided by 1966, further allotments of plots kept up the momentum of employment in the construction industry right up to the present. As a result of these later allocations, the Third Class 'town' of Al-Sahafa has emerged in Khartoum, while Um-Badda and Al-Thawra in Omdurman have expanded considerably. However the most conspicuous feature in the continuing construction boom in present-day Khartoum is the proliferation of First Class extensions. Al-Riyad (pop. 10,053 in 1983) and Taif 'towns' in Khartoum, Kober extension and Al-Mughtaribeen ("Emigrants") Neighbourhood in Khartoum North, and El-Neil 'town' in Omdurman, are the most important of these First Class Extensions.

In 1973 construction "employees", who consist almost

exclusively of wage earners, accounted for 11,446 persons, or over 6 per cent of the total number of "employees" in Greater Khartoum. Despite its relative significance in the wage labour market, the construction industry has ceased to be the primary source of wage employment for migrants. Given its seasonality (work virtually comes to a halt during the rainy season) and the heavy resort to casual employment in the industry, the construction workforce shows a relatively high degree of circular migration (cf. El-Wathig Kameir, 1980a; 1980b).

THE SPHERES OF EXPANSION

The growth in import-export trade and related activities continued throughout the 1960s (cf. Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, 1984:38ff), and this created employment for a relatively small section of the manual labour force in Greater Khartoum (mainly as porters and transporters of goods). The bulk of new employment opportunities in the period 1965-1969 was apparently generated in those sectors which were rapidly expanding as a result of population growth: intra-conurbation transport, restaurants, petty commodity production and petty trade.

Furthermore, the appreciable increase in the numbers of the bourgeoisie and 'classified staff' in Greater Khartoum (cf. Chapter Three) enabled a section of unskilled migrants to secure employment as domestic servants, while a further segment of migrants found openings in unskilled personal services: especially as shoe-shine and car-wash boys.

The magnitude of the influx of wage labour migrants to the

capital between 1964 and 1969 is difficult to estimate, not least because of the relatively high degree of circulation of migrants (see Fahima Zahir, 1972:233ff). But throughout this period there was a mushrooming of squatter settlements, especially near industrial areas where factory workers built the first shack huts to reduce accommodation and transport costs (idem; Mohamed El-Hassan Abdel Hafeez & Salah M. El-Mowag, 1972; Bedri Omer Elias & Hassan Yassin Bedawi, 1972). Virtually all unskilled wage migrants to arrive in the Three Towns between 1956 and 1969 lived in these 'cardboard villages'. Official estimates of the population in squatter areas in the Three Towns in 1969 give a total population of around 30,000, but all researchers believe that the actual figure was higher.

In spite of the relatively substantial numbers of squatters, there is no evidence of widespread unemployment, as surveys among resettled squatters corroborate. The social survey carried out by the Department of Social Affairs in 1972 (Mohamed El-Hassan Abdel Hafeez & Salah M. El-Mowag, 1972:210), for example, found that "of the employable persons" in a sample of 4,430 migrants "under 10% were without jobs and most of those employed work as domestic servants and guards". It is relevant to note here that squatters did not appear to complain about their employment conditions. This would seem to have been because, while the problem of 'educated unemployment' was apparently reaching crisis limits during the late 1960s (cf. Chapter Three), the main concern of squatters was evidently over the extension of services, for the

attainment of which they showed a high degree of organizational skills (see Fahima Zahir, *op.cit.*). Although some squatters were apparently self-employed, the large majority consisted of wage workers. A survey of over 20,000 ex-squatters, who were resettled in El-Hag Yousif village in the vicinity of Khartoum North, thus found out that;

the majority of them work in governmental, semi-governmental and private enterprises. About 30% work in the Khartoum North Spinning Factory. A few others work as traders in the area... (Bedri Omer Elias and Hassan Yassin Bedawi, 1972:218).

THE LIMITS OF INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION (1969-1984)

In the previous section I have maintained that by the time the 'drift' of wage migrants into Greater Khartoum started to accelerate, the rate of expansion in 'modern' industrial employment was apparently slowly approaching its limit. According to the returns of the Second Population Census, by 1973 there were 32,210 "manufacturing employees" in Greater Khartoum, and "total manufacturing employment" was 43,545 (cf. Table 3:16). These figures, however, cover employment in both 'modern' and 'informal' manufacturing industry, and for this reason should be viewed with caution. On the basis of its 1973/74 Household Survey in Greater Khartoum, the ILO Mission (1976:379) gives a conservative estimate of around 5,000 for 'informal manufacturing' wage employment (total 'informal manufacturing employment' was said to be 8,800). These estimates suggest that total 'modern' industrial employment in Greater Khartoum in 1973/74 accounted for no more than 34,745 persons, and of these only 27,210 persons were said to be

"employees". In other words, in 1973 the proportion of employees in 'modern' manufacturing industry constituted less than 11% of the total number of "employees" in the conurbation. It is worth noting that not all employees in 'modern' industry were wage workers (i.e. they included management, professionals, clerical employees, and so on).

Very little is known about expansion in manufacturing employment since 1973/74. A recent official report contended that by 1978/79 "total manufacturing employment" in Greater Khartoum had reached 46,785 (Sudan Government, 1982), but it is impossible to state whether the approximately 5,000 new employment opportunities created between 1973 and 1979 were in 'modern' industry or in petty commodity production (so-called 'informal manufacturing and repair'). Though the latter is known to be under-enumerated, it is beyond doubt that it has expanded dramatically over the last decade. Unlike the so-called 'informal tertiary activities', which do not require special skills (cf. Chapter Six), entry to petty commodity production usually involves periods of apprenticeship of varying duration. A few industries, such as tailoring, do not normally require more than one year of apprenticeship; but car-mechanics and carpenters need an apprenticeship period as long as four to five years. It is worth noting that the expansion in petty commodity production has partly been achieved at the expense of the so-called 'formal sector', as many skilled and semi-skilled workers have withdrawn from wage employment in public and private large scale industry to self-employment (cf. Ghosh, 1983).

What is of interest is that though the expansion in 'modern' manufacturing employment, which Greater Khartoum experienced between 1956 and 1963, may rightly be characterized as one of the most important developments in the history of the operation of the urban wage labour market, a full-fledged industrialization process has not materialized. Likewise, while official statistics tend to emphasize the position of Khartoum as the most important industrial centre in the country, it should be stressed that the form of industrialization experienced in the conurbation since 1971 is a virtual mockery of the process.

THE DECLINE OF KHARTOUM AS A CENTRE FOR MODERN INDUSTRY

In considering the decline of Greater Khartoum as a centre that attracts industrial investment it is worth noting that between 1969 and 1973 the private sector hardly initiated any new industrial investments anywhere in the Sudan. This was mainly a reaction to the 1969 coup staged by the self-professed "socialist" Free Officers led by Numeiri. The wholesale nationalization and confiscation measures undertaken by the regime in 1970 deepened further the fears of capitalists. Though since July 1971 the regime evidently started to retreat from its initial "socialist" programme (cf. Chapter Seven), and progressively allied itself to the local bourgeoisie as well as to international finance capital and/or multinational corporations (Wohlmuth, 1983; Kok, 1983), it was not until 1973 that private investors (both local and foreign) started to reinvest in 'modern' industry side by side with the

public sector.

The expansion in 'modern' industry in the Sudan since 1973 is apparently more dramatic than the expansion during the immediate post-colonial years. But probably over 90% of these recent investments are located outside Greater Khartoum. The Economic Survey 1979/80 (Sudan Government, 1980: 176ff), for example, lists under "Prime Developmental Projects" some 14 public industrial concerns employing around 25,790 persons; but none of these concerns is located in Greater Khartoum (cf. Table 5:1). The public concerns established between 1976 and 1981 include neither the public factories established by the first military junta in the 1960s, nor the recent "mixed" industrial investments (largely joint ventures between the public sector and foreign capital), such as the giant Kenanah Sugar Scheme (which alone is said to have given employment to around 15,000 persons, see Wohlmuth, 1983:197) and the Red Sea Tannery. The public sector industrial investments in Greater Khartoum since 1973 seem to be confined to two plants. Oesterdiekhoff (1983:183) mentions, in the course of his discussion of public industry in the Sudan, a new spinning plant employing 670 workers to be located in Khartoum North, while the publicly-owned White Nile Tannery in Khartoum started production in 1974 (Sudan Government, 1980:37). Nevertheless the point remains valid that public industrial investment is essentially oriented towards the provinces. Likewise private industrialists started to invest in the other urban areas (notably Port Sudan, El-Obeid and Nyala). Of the few 'modern' industrial concerns established by the private

Table 5:1

Location, Initial Investment and Level of Employment of New Public Factories

PROJECT	PROVINCE OF LACTION	INVESTMENT (£S)	EMPLOYMENT
Sennar East Sugar Factory	Blue Nile	27,700,000	5,200
Haggar Asalayia Sugar Factory	White Nile	29,500,000	5,390
Malout Sugar Factory	Upper Nile	-	6,000
Friendship Spinning & Weaving	Gezira	4,000,000	1,500
Abu Nei'ama Sacks Factory	Blue Nile	6,500,000	1,400
Port Sudan Spinning Factory	Red Sea	14,000,000	1,200
Hag Abdallah Spinning Factory	Gezira	20,000,000	1,800
Gaddo Spinning & Weaving	Nile	25,700,000	1,500
Nyala Weaving Factory	South Darfur	3,500,000	300
Shendi Weaving Factory	Nile	3,500,000	300
Kadugli Weaving Factory	South Kordofan	3,500,000	300
Kosti Weaving Factory	White Nile	3,500,000	300
Mongalla Weaving Factory	Bahr el-Ghazal	3,500,000	300
El-Dueim Weaving Factory	White Nile	3,500,000	300

Source: (Compiled from) Sudan Government, 1980:176-179

sector in Greater Khartoum during the last decade or so, Saeed Food Factory (which employs 500 unskilled workers) is the largest.

Notwithstanding the official rhetoric concerning the extension of "development" into the provinces, it should be stressed that the public and "mixed" investments are exclusively directed towards agro-based industries, especially textile and sugar production, that are at least partly export-oriented. Likewise private investors found it more feasible to install oil-mills in production areas (El-Obeid, Nyala and Nihud) or at Port Sudan. The location of agro-industries in areas of raw material production obviously cuts out the relatively high costs of transporting raw material. This, it is worth noting, is not a new development in agro-industry in the Sudan. The first large scale industrial concerns, established under colonial rule, were the ginning factories located in the Gezira, while the sugar factories opened during the post-colonial period (the first of which was established in 1962/63 at Geneid) have always been located near their sugar plantations.

Furthermore, even in the case of those consumer-oriented industries which are not agro-based, Greater Khartoum apparently no longer possesses the locational advantages that attracted industrial investments during the immediate post-colonial years. Before 1959, transport facilities in the country were far poorer than at present, while Greater Khartoum itself was the sole significant market for consumer goods. Since 1960, however, not only have transport facilities

improved, but also the process of rapid urban growth has resulted in the creation of relatively significant markets for consumer products in the other urban centres. These developments warranted the establishment of industrial concerns in the provinces to capture the rising demand. As a result of this, oil-mills, soap factories, mineral-water and ice plants are proliferating outside Greater Khartoum. It is interesting to note that the existing factories in Greater Khartoum (though largely operating below maximum capacity) produce greater quantities than what the conurbation's population demands.

Despite the dramatic expansion in 'modern' industry in the provinces, official statistics continue to exaggerate the primacy of Greater Khartoum as an industrial centre. A recent official report (Sudan Government, 1982:4) accordingly pointed out that by 1978/79 the conurbation of Khartoum accounted for 58% of all large-scale industrial establishments (with 25+ workers), and 30% of small establishments (with less than 25 workers). These numbered 198 and 1,858 respectively. But these statistics can be very misleading because, in being based on the absolute number of establishments, they tend to mystify aspects of the size of the labour force, contribution to value added and production, and so on. Thus it must be stressed that, though the public industrial concerns located in the provinces are relatively few in number, they are far larger than the private industrial establishments concentrated in Greater Khartoum. Unfortunately, all I could find in this respect is a reference to the situation in 1970/71 which

claims that:

While manufacturing establishments in the public sector account for only about 27% of the total number of establishments, they contribute more than 51% of total production, 53% of total value added, 51% of total employment, and 50% of total wages. Capital invested in public industries accounts for 59% of the total capital investment in manufacturing industry (Sayed Nemeiri, 1977:89).

These percentages, however, not only do not reflect the recent dramatic expansion in public industrial investment, but also distort the actual magnitude of public industry during that relatively early period. This is mainly due to the temporary inflation of the share of the public sector in manufacturing industry between 1970 and 1973 consequent on the nationalization and confiscation of a majority of the large scale private industrial concerns in Greater Khartoum (which have since been largely re-privatized). But though it is difficult to determine with precision the position of Greater Khartoum in the context of the recent change of industrial location in the Sudan, it is nevertheless the case that the magnitude of employment in the above-mentioned 14 public factories established between 1975 and 1980 alone is equal to over 55% of total manufacturing employment in Greater Khartoum in 1979. When we take into account employment in the earlier public and private factories outside Greater Khartoum, as well as the recent "mixed" and private investments, the share of the conurbation in the national 'modern' industrial labour force may be as low as 20%.

THE MOCKERY OF MODERN INDUSTRY

As previously maintained, in drawing attention to the change in the location of industry, I do not deny the fact that some industrial investments were initiated in Greater Khartoum since 1971. That the Three Towns still account for the majority of industrial establishments in the country is usually taken as the indicator of continued industrial investment, albeit in small scale establishments. With a handful of exceptions (notably El-Roubi's Car Batteries Factory and the German Normandi plant assembling television sets), however, virtually all of these recent industrial establishments are concerned with food processing, and over 90% of them are by no means 'factory-like'.

The results of the latest (1978/79) Industrial Survey of Khartoum Province (Sudan Government, 1982) are illuminating in this respect. Of a total of 2,056 industrial establishments enumerated by this survey, no less than 1,172 establishments, or around 57% of all establishments, consisted of food processing industries (oil-mills, sweet factories, flour-mills and bakeries) employing 15,242 workers, or 32.6% of the conurbation's total manufacturing labour force. Flour-mills and bakeries alone numbered 1,089 establishments, or approximately 53% of the conurbation's total industrial establishments, and provided employment for only 5,819 persons, or just over 12% of the conurbation's industrial labour force in 1978/79. By virtue of the proliferation of bakeries and flour-mills between 1971 and 1978, food processing industries figured as the leading branch of

manufacturing industry in Greater Khartoum in 1979 (in 1971 they were second to the textile industry). Obviously the impetus for the continuing expansion in food processing industries in general, and flour-mills and bakeries in particular, rests exclusively on the momentum of population growth in the conurbation. It is worth noting that there are restrictions on inter-provincial transportation of flour and bread; and each province is allocated its flour quotas directly by the rationing authorities.

REPLENISHMENT RECRUITMENT IN 'MODERN' INDUSTRY

Despite the virtual stagnation of modern industry in Greater Khartoum since 1971, manufacturing employment has nevertheless continued to play a relatively significant part in the operation of the labour market by virtue of the pattern of 'replenishment recruiting' into factories. The excessively high turn-over rates among the industrial workforce are the main factor behind the phenomenon of replacement recruitment. Some recent contributions (e.g. Ghosh, 1983; Mohamed El-Murtada Mustafa, 1983) attempt to attribute the high turn-over to the recent emergence and acceleration of emigration to Arab countries (cf. below). But the instability of the industrial workforce seems to be a phenomenon that accompanied 'modern' manufacturing industry from its inception. The practice of industrialists engaging unskilled labourers on a 'temporary' and 'casual' basis is as responsible as "emigration" (which is only a manifestation of destabilization) for the turn-over of the workforce.

The first systematic study touching on the question of labour turn-over and absenteeism among industrial workers in the Sudan was undertaken by Ali Ahmed Suliman (1971; 1974), who considered the effects of labour turn-over and absenteeism on the cost of production in two textile factories in Khartoum North in 1967/68. Though Ali Suliman does not name the two factories, it is common knowledge that the Sudan Textile Factory and Khartoum Textile Factory are not only the two factories which dominate the textile industry in Greater Khartoum right to the present, but also the largest industrial employers in the conurbation which together employed around 9,000 persons, or approximately 20% of the entire industrial labour force in 1973.

Ali Suliman (1974:105/6) has convincingly refuted the allegation concerning the costs of labour turn-over (which at most do not exceed 6%) in increasing the retail prices of locally produced cloth (which are higher than those of imported manufactures), but his conclusion that "the textile labour force in Greater Khartoum is more stable than its counterparts in Egypt and India" (the rates quoted for the latter two countries are for the 1940s and 1960-1963 respectively) has in effect tended to mystify the magnitude of turn-over. Though Ali Suliman has not referred to the absolute numbers of workers in these two factories during the period under study, the rates of turn-over he has quoted (1974:102ff) suffice to corroborate my contention about the significance of replenishment recruitment even prior to the emergence of wage labour emigration.

The average monthly turn-over rates for the two factories for 1967 and 1968 are, respectively; (a) 3.65% and 2.8% for unskilled labourers; (b) 3.3% and 14.5% for the semi-skilled workers and; (c) 1.8% and 2.6% for the skilled workers. (The high turn-over rate for semi-skilled workers in 1968 is said to be a consequence of internal transference within one plant). Of particular interest are the rates of turn-over for unskilled labourers. When calculated for the whole year they show that the turn-over rates among unskilled workers in the two years were 43.8% and 33.6% respectively. In other words, during the two-year period under study the rate of turn-over among unskilled workers exceeded 75%. Even with a very conservative estimate of 5,000 unskilled workers in the two factories, replenishment recruitment ought to have provided opportunities for around 3,750 unskilled job-seekers in 1967/68. The rates of labour turn-over in the smaller establishments are believed to be higher (cf. Ali A. Suliman, 1974:106).

The turn-over rates quoted above are not the outcome of seasonal fluctuations in the supply of labour. As Ghosh (1983:98) has pointed out, employers did not

appear to face any seasonal variations in difficulty of hiring labour. Rather, this turnover seems to be a form of "urban nomadism" with workers going from employer to employer within the urban area. The other main labour market with which this turnover interacts is the international one - it could be possible to link some of the turnover with labour emigration.

The acceleration of emigration in recent years has undoubtedly boosted further the turn-over rates among factory

workers. In a survey carried out in 1982 Ghosh (*ibid.*, p. 162) has thus found that in the Sudan Textile Factory alone "1,000 workers leave every month", while in the Saeed Food Factory "80 per cent of the unskilled workforce of 500 leave within 3 months". But large as the turn-over rates quoted above are, it is my conviction that they do not cover the entire unskilled industrial labour force, as many unskilled workers are known to be engaged on a 'casual' (day to day) basis. In his study of the Modern Match Factory (which, like the Sudan Textile Factory, is owned by the Gulf International Corporation) El-Wathig Kameir (1980b:159) points out that workers who are employed "on a casual basis are paid per day ... they are not officially registered in the Personnel Department..". The number of casual workers in these factories is difficult to estimate; but the widespread resort to 'casual' and 'temporary' employment in the so-called 'formal sector', especially in manufacturing industry, is beyond doubt (cf. Chapter Seven). Therefore in spite of the relative decline of industrial investment in Greater Khartoum since 1969, manufacturing industry has continued to provide ('transient'?) employment for relatively large numbers of 'drifting' unskilled migrants as a result of the pattern of replenishment recruitment. But very little is known about the unskilled workers withdrawing from factories and workshops. From partial observations they seem to go in three directions: (a) to continue living in Greater Khartoum, but to change to self-employment in the so-called 'urban informal sector' or wage employment in another establishment, (b) to emigrate to

the higher paying Arab countries or, (c) to take the journey back to rural areas, either to their villages of original domicile or in search of wage employment in agriculture. The proportion of workers going to each destination is unknown.

THE POPULATION MOMENTUM

The effects of population increase in present-day Greater Khartoum are not confined to expansion in 'bread manufacture'. Besides giving rise to the illusion of continuing manufacturing investment, the population momentum also progressively generates increased demand in all spheres of social and personal consumption, especially in the spheres of housing, transport, restaurants, electricity and water, and, of course, imported manufactured goods. Employment levels in all these spheres have undoubtedly increased dramatically since 1973; but we have to wait until the full detailed returns of the 1983 Census are made available to determine the precise magnitude of the increase. From fragmented evidence, the increase seems considerable. I have already pointed to the continuing construction boom underlain by increased demand for housing in Greater Khartoum. It is worth noting in this respect that instead of the former policy of periodic allocations of residential plots (every five to six years), since 1975 there has been continuous allocation. Nevertheless, the "housing question" in Greater Khartoum seems to be worse than ever; and the steady increases in house-rents have ensured the continuity of real estate as a sphere of capital accumulation which is not paralleled elsewhere except in

mechanized rainfed farming and import-export trade. A major consequence of this continuing building boom has been the sustenance of increased construction employment.

The population momentum has also generated a dramatic expansion in tertiary activities (trade and social and personal services). In Chapter Three I noted the recent rapid growth of the commercial bourgeoisie in Greater Khartoum, but some of this growth is caused by the increased demand for consumer commodities in the conurbation. One manifestation of this increase has been the steady proliferation of 'modern grocers', which sell a wide range of imported consumer goods (mainly canned food) to residents in First and Second Class neighbourhoods. The increase in the demand arising from growth among the poorer sections of the urban population, on the other hand, has contributed to the mushrooming of 'popular markets' in the outskirts of Khartoum as well as to the proliferation of street and/or petty trading. But as I shall explain in more detail in Chapter Six, the services of the latter are not oriented exclusively to the demands of the poorer classes, but also of the better-off strata.

Furthermore, the population momentum has given rise to a substantial demand for a wide range of social and personal services, which have provided employment for thousands of people ranging from high-level professionals (physicians, engineers, lawyers, and so on) to semi- and unskilled tertiary workers. Ghosh (1983:164) points out, for example, that "the State Electricity Board in Khartoum alone employs over 14,000 people". If this is correct and, given the extension of

electricity supply to numerous new residential neighbourhoods, it seems likely, it would, in effect, mean that employment in the Central Electricity Corporation in Greater Khartoum has increased by over 300% during the last decade. In 1973 total employment in the 'sector' comprising "Electricity, Gas and Water" accounted for 5,791 persons (cf. Table 3:16).

The increase in employment levels in the intra-conurbation transport services seems to be even higher. According to the ILO Mission (1976:379), in 1973/74 there were 3,853 taxis, 1,333 box-cars (pick-ups used as 'mini-buses') and 1,043 buses. During the peak of the annual Vehicle Licensing Test (equivalent to M.O.T Test) in January 1983, the Traffic Superintendent of Khartoum claimed in a television interview that Greater Khartoum had 12,000 taxis and 6,000 buses (the number of pick-ups, which has increased considerably since 1974, was not mentioned). Excluding employment in pick-ups, and working with a low estimate of one person per taxi, and two (i.e. driver and ticket conductor) per bus, the intra-conurbation transport service seems to have generated well over 17,000 new employment opportunities since 1974. In numerous cases taxis and buses are driven by more than one driver on a shift basis. In view of the fact that in 1973 total employment in the 'sector' comprising "Transport, Storage and Communications" was 25,008 (cf. Table 3:16), employment in the internal transport service alone is likely to have more than quadrupled in the decade 1973-83. Equally dramatic increases are believed to have taken place in unskilled personal services -i.e. shoe-shining, car-washing,

laundry-work, and so on (cf. Chapter Six).

A conspicuous feature of the operation of the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum in the years since 1969 has been the appreciable increase in farming employment. Rather than a 'ruralization' of the urban population, this expansion in agricultural employment is largely the consequence of an increased demand for vegetables, fruits, dairy products, poultry and fish in the conurbation. The contribution of Karar Abbadi and Mohamed Mirghani A/Salam (1976) on aspects of production and marketing of fruits and vegetables in Khartoum Province is illuminating in this respect.

Agriculture as such is of course no new activity in Greater Khartoum, especially in the former 'rural' areas incorporated into the municipal boundaries of the Three Towns. In these former villages, small free-holders cultivate, and supply the urban population with, a wide range of vegetables (e.g. tomatoes, potatoes, purslane, jews mallow and onions). Karar and Mohamed contend that since the Second World War larger 'gardens' producing fruits (oranges, grape-fruits, lemons) as well as vegetables and fodder started to emerge on both government and privately-owned land. In 1974, the total irrigable areas "amounted to about 51,350 feddans, 23,610 feddans being freehold and 27,740 feddans being Government land" (idem., p.5), and it can be safely maintained that government land is allotted almost exclusively to capitalists able to install pumps. Insofar as irrigation depends on pumps, it may also be argued that most of the "schemes" established on government land are a phenomenon of the last two decades or

so. This is accounted for in rather muted terms by Karar and Mohamed (idem, p.6) who maintain that:

It is interesting to note that [out of a total of 1,135 pumps reported in the survey] 10.5% ..were bought before 1960 and 45.1% bought between 1960-1970; only 355 pumps [i.e. 31.3%] being bought after 1970 [i.e. between 1971 and 1974].

With the growth of the urban population during the last decade, the increase in the private farms, especially ones that are well-irrigated, has apparently been considerable, and growing numbers of investors are turning to dairying, fish culture and poultry production. The magnitude of wage employment in these farms is difficult to estimate; but I learned that members of certain groups from Darfur and Kordofan Regions have developed a pattern of annual wage labour migration to these farms on which they work on a casual basis. When the "Street-Cleansing Campaign" was first staged in 1981, I was told by reliable informants that "several hundred" of casual agricultural labourers were rounded up by troops at Shambat, which is one of several agricultural zones in Greater Khartoum, and in course of his fieldwork among domestic producers in Dar Hamar in Northern Kordofan Province, Mustafa Babiker Ahmed was informed that many Hamar migrate to Greater Khartoum each summer specifically to work as casual agro-labour (personal communication).

EMIGRATION

Due to relatively high rates of inflation that have not been accompanied by commensurate pay increases (cf. Chapter Seven), the Sudan has experienced the emergence and

acceleration of large scale emigration to the higher paying Arab countries. At present emigration is directed to oil-exporting countries (especially Saudi Arabia, Libya and the United Arab Emirates) as well as to the Yemen Arab Republic, which faces manpower shortages due to emigration by its nationals. Though at its inception in the early 1970s mass emigration was largely confined to the highly-educated and/or skilled sections of the Sudanese labour force, since 1977 the rate of semi- and unskilled labour emigration has increased considerably (Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1979b). In his survey of Sudanese emigrants in Saudi Arabia, where around 60 per cent of emigrant Sudanese are said to be working, Abdalla Al-Sharief Al-Ghoul (1982:4) thus found that there was:

a change in the occupational structure of emigrants as during the last decade the [Sudanese] government allowed large numbers of unskilled labourers to leave the country. Thus while in the early years most of the emigrants were in professional and technical occupations, ..the rate of emigration by ordinary workers and clerical employees is rising (My translation).

Ali Abdalla Ali (1980), on the other hand, has noted "the massive flow of Sudanese migrants into the YAR especially after mid-1978" (p.3) and pointed out that the "disturbing feature is that 63% of the total sample [of 250 emigrants] are farmers and workers" (p.12).

The magnitude of emigration is difficult to estimate. Official statistics for 1981 show that the number of Sudanese working abroad totalled 330,260, but it is common knowledge that only a small proportion of Sudanese emigrate through the official channels (i.e. official secondment and/or contracts

through the Labour Department) on the basis of which these statistics are compiled (cf. Ghosh, 1983:76). In a sample of 500 emigrants in Saudi Arabia, Abdalla Al-Ghoul (op.cit., p.5) encountered only around 32% who had come through official channels (secondment or after resigning jobs in the Sudan), while 67.7 had come through unofficial or illegal channels, i.e. 24.3% as pilgrims who eventually settled; and around 37% through private contracts, having left Sudan during their annual leaves (ibid., p.5). Likewise in his survey of 250 Sudanese emigrants in the Yemen Arab Republic Ali Abdalla Ali (op.cit., p. 24) found that

only 13 (or 5%) reported that their jobs were secured through the labour office in Sudan; 10 (4%) by official secondment and the rest through private contracts (18%), visiting a relative in YAR (45%) and by other means (28%)..

Recognizing that under-reporting is common in official statistics, Ghosh (op.cit., p.76) estimates the number of Sudanese working abroad as ranging between 1.1 and 1.6 million. It can safely be concluded that they are certainly not fewer than 750,000. It is likewise beyond doubt that at least 60% of these emigrants were originally agro-pastoralists and/or wage workers in the Sudan. In a country in which the entire 'economically active population' in 1977/78 was estimated at about 5,148,000 (Mohamed El-Murtada Mustafa, 1983:280), the effects of such emigration in depleting the country of its labour force, especially the professional and technical elements, hardly needs emphasis. Though I am least anxious about the continuity of the present patterns of primary export domestic production, it should also be pointed

out that the increase in emigration by farmers and pastoralists would promise the demise of primary export production, which is the main pillar of capital accumulation in the Sudan (though the recent resettlement of refugees in agricultural regions as agro-labour undoubtedly helps redress the situation in the large-scale irrigated and rainfed agricultural schemes).

As far as the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum is concerned, emigration, massive as it may be, has hardly affected the supply of unskilled labourers, whose numbers have increased considerably since 1973. The number of 'self-employed' unskilled workers arrested in the course of the Street-Cleaning Campaign clearly corroborates this assertion. Many of the rural Sudanese 'drifting' to Greater Khartoum, however, seem to be 'transient' and stay in the capital only as long as is necessary to arrange for emigration or, in the numerous cases where this proves difficult, until their resources (including 'patience') are exhausted before returning to the countryside. But the abundance of unskilled labour is not solely the consequence of the relative intensification of proletarianization processes in rural Sudan. There has also been a massive influx of refugees since 1975; and official sources contend that by 1980 the number of refugees in the conurbation of Khartoum was 40,000 (cf. Chapter Three). Though the supply of unskilled labour apparently exceeds the demand for wage labourers, emigration seems to have boosted further the rates of turn-over in both the public and the private sectors.

The most significant consequence of emigration in the operation of the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum is said to be the accentuation of the problem of high rates of turn-over among skilled workers. According to Ghosh, some factories reported a rate of turn-over of 50% per annum among skilled workers, and he claims that only the "high paying" subsidiaries of multinationals, or "those companies who require the type of skilled labour which is not in demand in the oil-exporting countries", have been able to induce the stabilization of their skilled workforce (idem., p.97). In spite of this assertion, Ghosh himself points to the relative abundance of skilled labourers in industry by describing the "growing practice" of local industrialists to

employ double the number of skilled workers required to run certain crucial machines or perform other important tasks that directly affect the level of production (idem., p. 87).

The public sector is hardest hit by the shortage of skilled labour, but this is not solely the result of skilled-labour emigration. It is also the consequence of the progressive tendency for skilled workers to withdraw from government employment and to establish themselves as "own-account" petty commodity producers. The emigration of "own-account" skilled workers, especially of mechanics, carpenters, plumbers and drivers, has provided substantial opportunities for the lowly-paid government skilled workers. The presence of some skilled Eritrian refugees has to some extent mitigated the effects of skilled labour emigration, and in certain occupations, such as truck-driving and

brick-laying, Eritrian refugees are increasingly becoming a majority of the workforce (Ghosh, op. cit.). But refugees are recruited mainly in the private sector; and because they usually accept low wages, they are often preferred to 'local labour' by private employers. It is exceptional, however, to find refugees working in the public sector, despite the government's statements on the right of "registered refugees" to work. It seems that the combined effect of the low wages for skilled workers and of the insistence of government departments on employing "nationals" accentuates the problem of skilled labour shortage in government employment.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have attempted to trace the main post-colonial developments in the operation of the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum, showing that the immediate post-colonial years (1956-1963) experienced relative improvements in the conditions of the urban wage labour market compared to the last two years of colonial rule. I have suggested that these improvements were consequences of the emergence of a substantial demand for wage labourers both inside and outside Greater Khartoum. The dramatic expansion in urban wage employment, especially in government and consumer-oriented manufacturing industry, absorbed large numbers of manual workers in the conurbation, while the provincial construction boom helped slow the rate of rural-urban migration. By the time rural-urban wage labour migration started to accelerate towards the mid-1960s, the

expansion in wage employment in 'modern' manufacturing employment in Greater Khartoum was apparently reaching its limits. Since 1971, Greater Khartoum started to lose its status as the most significant centre for industrial investment in the country; and it is only food-processing industries, especially flour-mills and bakeries, which continue to flourish as a result of the increased demand for bread. Nevertheless, the excessively high turn-over rates among factory workers, and the resultant pattern of replenishment recruitment, have served to retain the relative importance of manufacturing employment in the wage labour market.

The virtual stagnation of manufacturing industry has had no serious implications for the rapidly growing unskilled labour force in Greater Khartoum which has found several alternative sources of employment. A limited set of alternative opportunities was generated within the public sector: in community services, poor though they are, in the People's Armed Forces, and in other regular services. But the larger part of employment opportunities for manual workers in present-day Greater Khartoum developed as a result of population growth, and especially of increases in the bourgeoisie and 'classified staff'. The population momentum has led to a dramatic expansion in all spheres of social and personal consumption, and this has given scope for the employment of large numbers of skilled and unskilled manual workers. I considered aspects of the increase in the demand for consumer-goods, housing, electricity and intra-conurbation

transport services, and pointed out how this steadily increasing demand has generated relatively substantial employment opportunities.

Not all the opportunities generated by the population momentum, however, were in wage employment; and many unskilled labourers established themselves as 'self-employed' tertiary workers (e.g. shoe-shine and car-wash boys, laundry-workers, porters, petty traders). But this view of the nature and origin of the dramatic expansion in the various forms of unskilled tertiary self-employment contrasts sharply with the conventional conception - in the Sudan as in other underdeveloped countries - which insists that the only form of 'productive' employment is wage employment and that 'self-employment' is mainly a manifestation of under-employment, misemployment and/or disguised unemployment. The conventional conception implies a perverted view of the causal relation between various forms of unskilled tertiary self-employment and population growth: instead of viewing expansion in tertiary activities as arising out of the demand for services consequent upon population growth - particularly among the bourgeoisie, bureaucrats and professionals (including the military) - the conventional view takes the prime factor in urban population growth as unskilled wage labour migration by people who, because of the lack of wage employment opportunities, have to "invent" activities to earn their living. To paraphrase Birkbeck (1979:161), scholars and policy-makers have been more interested in the fact that 'self-employed' unskilled workers are not wage workers than in

looking at why they are 'self-employed', and how their activities can only be performed on the basis of various forms of self-employment; what they "have failed to do is to stop and look at the reality of the situation" (ibid.).

Of central interest is the fact that the proliferation of unskilled tertiary self-employment (as opposed to unskilled tertiary wage employment) is the consequence of several complex factors; some relate to the fact that the 'viability' of some unskilled tertiary activities, car-washing and shoe-shining in particular, depends on their being both highly labour-intensive and cheap. These features tend to discourage involvement by prospective large-scale investors, who would wish to organize any activity on the basis of a wage labour process. However, in certain unskilled tertiary activities there are possibilities for the institution of wage labour as the form of labour subjection. Laundry-work, which is undertaken by both "own-account" workers as well as by laundries engaging workers on the basis of piece-rates, is a good case in point (cf. Chapter Six). In the case of petty and/or street trading, on the other hand, the proliferation of various forms of 'self-employment' has been fully in keeping with the interests of the commercial bourgeoisie, who find in petty trading an efficient means for distributing stocks, which are often wholly advanced on credit and/or 'out-working' arrangements. Thus 'self-employment' may often turn out to be little more than a concealed form of wage employment.

Furthermore, the conventional wisdom which emphasizes the distinction between wage- and 'self-employment' also fails to

note that on close assessment there is no good evidence of significant differences between the two forms of employment, especially for unskilled manual workers. But little systematic work has been done comparing the conditions of 'self-employed' workers and wage labourers in the public and private sectors. This is unfortunate in view of the known high rates of turn-over among wage workers and of the constant circulation of workers between wage- and 'self-employment'. It seems that the views of scholars and policy-makers on the operation of the urban wage labour market in the Sudan - as probably elsewhere in underdeveloped countries- are based more on assumptions and assertions than on detailed assessment of the terms and conditions of employment for the different sections of the urban manual labour force. As a contribution to redressing the balance for the Sudan, I attempt in Chapter Six to assess aspects of the conditions of unskilled tertiary 'self-employed' workers in Greater Khartoum. On the basis of that assessment, I shall in Chapter Seven turn to aspects of the conditions of wage workers and, in the process, compare them with those of 'self-employed' tertiary workers. These chapters will corroborate my contention concerning the lack of significant differences between wage- and 'self-employment' for manual workers in general, and unskilled labourers in particular.

CHAPTER SIX

ASPECTS OF TERTIARY SELF-EMPLOYMENT IN GREATER KHARTOUM

Causes of widespread unemployment and under-employment in the Third World are now well known. During the 1960s, capital-intensive development strategies in both agriculture and industry failed to generate sufficient employment opportunity for all those entering the labor force. As a result, millions have come to survive by crowding into relatively unproductive, low-paid service jobs... they swell the ranks of growing armies of unemployed or marginally 'self-employed' who stay alive by inventing jobs in the interstices of the economy (Chaney, 1979:204).

In this chapter I present and analyse the findings of my research into aspects of unskilled tertiary 'self-employment' in post-colonial Greater Khartoum. Though I seek to highlight the varied roles assumed by unskilled 'self-employed' tertiary workers in the context of the processes of peripheral urbanism, my main objective is to provide an overview of the conditions of self-employed tertiary workers. Particular attention will accordingly be paid to aspects such as previous occupation(s), migration history, factors facilitating, or inhibiting, entry to unskilled tertiary self-employment, work conditions, level of income and frequency of employment. As the data analysed in this chapter were obtained through informal unstructured interviews supplemented by partial observations, I cannot present quantitative analyses or comparisons of the conditions of different unskilled tertiary workers. The chapter attempts to compensate for this by the extensive use cases intended to illuminate variations.

The chapter starts with an overview of unskilled tertiary activities in Greater Khartoum. Following the overview are two main sections in which I consider the conditions of workers in unskilled personal services (car-wash boys and

laundry-workers) and street/petty traders respectively. In the final section I discuss the main points reached and their implications for analyses of the urban wage labour market in the Sudan.

AN OVERVIEW OF UNSKILLED TERTIARY ACTIVITIES

In Chapter One I pointed out how policy-makers, administrators and some scholars tend to view the increase in the numbers of unskilled 'self-employed' tertiary workers in post-colonial Greater Khartoum as a symptom of a 'hyper-urbanization' situation in which tertiary self-employment is said to conceal forms of disguised unemployment, underemployment and misemployment. This view is often corroborated by reference to the observation that virtually all recent unskilled migrants who fail to find wage employment appear to seek 'refuge' in some form of tertiary self-employment.

In apparent contrast to the official line, the ILO Mission to the Sudan is critical of those who view the activities (or is it enterprises?) comprising the so-called 'urban informal sector' as a homogeneous entity, which is either wholly productive or wholly unproductive. The Mission (1976:375/6) accordingly asserts that

Our understanding of the informal sector would be enhanced if we viewed it as a heterogeneous, multi-dimensional or multi-layered phenomenon, with each layer possessing different attributes and, therefore, playing divergent economic roles. Thus, it may be possible to discover the existence of productive and profitable informal activities, side by side with stagnant and unproductive pursuits...

In keeping with its view, the Mission (ibid., pp. 376ff) presents a four-category typology of 'informal sector activities' in Greater Khartoum based on place of work, licence and capital requirements, degree of skill and experience needed to run the business together with future prospects (defined in terms of the aspirations of the people in each category). At one extreme, we are told, there is category (1), where the enterprise is well-established and has a fixed place of operation. A licence is required but not easily obtainable and the capital requirements are relatively high. The business needs a high degree of experience and is usually prosperous and the owner's ambition is to remain in it, and expand it, if his means allow. At the other extreme, Category (4) is composed of hawkers, vendors, shoe-shine and car-wash boys and the multitude of other individuals doing all sorts of jobs characterized by long working hours, low productivity and low income. Very little or no capital is required for entry into this category. The Mission further contends that the majority of people in this bottom category are waiting to obtain jobs in the 'formal sector' (as casual labourers), while a few make it in the informal sector and graduate into a higher status category. Between these extremes there lie two other categories: Category (2) consists of those who are "established but just managing", and Category (3) of those who are "struggling to survive". Though individuals in this last category would like to make progress in their informal sector careers, the Mission asserts that "they do not always succeed [and that this] results in a relatively more

frequent job movement to and from the informal sector" (*idem.*, p.376).

The Mission (1976:381ff) gives a "casual estimate" of 42,000 to 47,000 for the labour force in the 'informal services and commerce sector' in Greater Khartoum in 1973/74. This estimate suggests that employment in 'informal services and commerce' in 1973 accounted for around 18 per cent of total employment. However, we have to take into account that this estimate does not consist wholly of the so-called 'redundant workforce', but in addition includes licensed and relatively "well-established" enterprises run by licensed retailers, laundry-shop owners, etc. By excluding the "upper categories" (One and Two) we may obtain a more realistic approximation to the number of self-employed unskilled tertiary workers, consisting overwhelmingly of street traders. The number falling in Category (4) in 1973/74 was estimated by the Mission as between 7,000 and 12,500, while Category (3) workers in Khartoum city alone were estimated at around 1,000 (3,500 workers in the conurbation as a whole if we follow the Mission's extrapolation), which gives a grand total ranging from a low of 10,500 to a high of 16,000 persons in 1973/74. But this total seems to be an underestimate as it was based on estimates of workers in central and peripheral markets and therefore did not cover tertiary workers operating in residential areas (laundry-workers, cleaners, etc.). Though it is virtually impossible to estimate the number of self-employed tertiary workers in present-day Khartoum, there can be no doubt that it constitutes a relatively significant

percentage (around 25%?) of the urban unskilled labour force.

In its policy prescriptions the ILO Mission (*idem.*, pp. 387/8) accords particular attention to the problems of category (3) and (4) tertiary workers. Recognizing the crucial role played by pedlars and vendors in the provision of goods and services to "the mass of low-income consumers in both urban and rural areas", it accordingly recommends that

the authorities recognise the present non-licensed activities in Category II and III as legitimate and useful economic activities: they should lift restrictions on the granting of licences, levying only nominal fees. The problem of having too many operators should be left to market forces to sort out. With regard to IV activities, we doubt the wisdom of requiring licences, at least in those cases where such activities do not present exceptional health or security hazards. If they do, we do not of course recommend the relaxation of standards (*idem.*, p.388).

In spite of its sympathy, and of the irreconcilability of its recommendations with the 'official line', the ILO Mission nevertheless subscribes to the 'hyper-urbanization view' concerning the relative destitution of what it characterizes as Category (3) and (4) workers compared to the conditions of workers in the so-called 'formal sector'. But it is important to note that the Mission actually explains this destitution not in terms of the 'redundancy' of the 'low grade informal workers', but as a consequence of official harrassment and the lack of 'linkages' with the so-called 'formal sector' (cf. Chapter One). Likewise, by noting the "frequent movement" of Category (3) and (4) workers between the so-called formal and informal sectors, the Mission implicitly emphasizes the role of tertiary self-employment as a refuge for the 'reserve

industrial army'.

Notwithstanding the differences between the 'hyper-urbanization view' and the 'informal sector concept', both approaches are flawed by a number of misconceptions regarding tertiary self-employment among unskilled manual workers in Greater Khartoum. I believe the basic flaw stems from the tendency to focus exclusively on whether unskilled tertiary activities should be discouraged (through official harassment and/or eviction of workers) or encouraged (through the extension of credit to informal enterprise, abandonment of official 'favouritism' to the formal sector, etc.). In taking this view I do not of course denounce the **policy-orientation** of these contributions; I simply wish to stress that, in the haste to formulate prescriptions, advocates of both approaches have failed to scrutinize two main points essential to the understanding of unskilled tertiary self-employment.

The first point concerns the explanation of the **dynamics** of the proliferation of tertiary activities. In this regard it is unfortunate that scholars have based their explanation almost exclusively on the predicament of individual participants seeking to earn a living, to the virtual disregard of the **structural determinants**, i.e. the demand for such services as have given scope for the emergence of tertiary self-employment. In order to redress this bias, my analysis seeks to relate the proliferation of unskilled tertiary self-employment to population growth. I shall explain that unskilled tertiary workers fulfil two main functions.

Firstly, through the provision of unskilled personal services (e.g. laundering, car-washing, shoe-shining, and petty trade), they contribute to the reproduction of the 'general welfare and comfort' of the affluent urban classes (the capitalists, bureaucrats and professionals together with their dependants). Secondly, through the provision of cheap commodities and services as well as through the extension of credit to wage workers, they contribute to the maintenance of a generally low wage level in the 'urban economy'. The view I wish to develop is that the demand underlying the recent proliferation of unskilled tertiary activities rests more with the affluent classes than with the wage earners, and that just as the growth of the capitalists, bureaucrats and professionals can be traced to the processes of peripheral urbanism, so can the proliferation of tertiary employment.

The second point relates to the valuable contribution of the "petty commodity production approach" discussed in Chapter One and thus to the issue of the linkages, or the "articulation", between the various forms of 'self-employment' and the wider 'urban economy' in general and 'big business' in particular. Though the ILO Mission (op.cit., p.386) recognizes the crucial role played by the "small one-man .. commercial establishment" in the distribution of goods in urban and rural areas around Sudan, it places its emphasis exclusively on the "low-income consumers" receiving the services and goods. As a result, it tends to mystify aspects of the role of petty/street traders in furthering commercial capital accumulation. Special reference will accordingly be made to

the many and complex relations binding petty traders to wholesalers. But I shall first consider aspects of the conditions of workers pursuing unskilled personal services.

UNSKILLED PERSONAL SERVICES

One significant consequence of the post-colonial growth of Greater Khartoum has been the generation of a progressive increase in demand for a wide range of skilled and unskilled services, which continue to provide employment for thousands of people ranging from high-level manpower (physicians, lawyers, engineers, etc.) to unskilled personal and domestic workers (house-servants, nannies, car-wash and shoe-shine boys, prostitutes, etc.). But, although certain personal services, such as hair-dressing, are utilized by members of all classes, the members of the different classes are rarely served by the same personnel and/or establishments. Such 'segregation' is true even in health services. Thus, while the poor have no alternative but to attend the free out-patient clinics at state hospitals (where the service is very poor), the more affluent see the same consultants in private evening surgeries, where much better care and attention are provided. It may be noted, in passing, that the fee charged by consultants for a 10-15 minute appointment - £S 20 to £S 30- is virtually the equivalent of the standard minimum monthly wage for manual workers. In the particular case of hair-dressing, the type of service, and the way it is given, vary with both the sex and class of the client. Affluent men frequent 'good-class' licensed saloons in which only one or

two persons are served at a time, while such poor as can afford any service - and many cannot- would go either to a barber working under the shade of a tree or, at best, to relatively crowded popular saloons (typically in a peripheral market).

Except for a few services, however, the demand by members of different classes diverges dramatically. The poor normally seek a limited range of services provided by popular 'restaurants' (often kiosks with customers eating on straw-mats), fortune-tellers, native-doctors and prostitutes (cf. Fahima Zahir, 1972:237). The more affluent, on the other hand, demand a wide range of services: domestic services, car-washing, shoe-shining, portering, prostitution, etc., which provide 'income-generating' opportunities for relatively large numbers of unskilled and semi-skilled tertiary workers.

The recent proliferation of self-employed workers in the unskilled personal services is more a response to the demands of the affluent than of the poor. For example, car-washing, shoe-shining, queue-standing, and laundry-work are almost exclusively performed for the bourgeoisie and 'classified staff'. Moreover, unlike the services provided by fortune-tellers and native-doctors, who are held in high esteem, virtually all unskilled personal services rendered to the affluent classes are stigmatized as 'menial' and 'slave-like' by many Sudanese groups. And, because of this 'cultural' degradation, many migrants from certain parts of the country shun these activities.⁽¹⁾ But in spite of this stigmatization, the supply of workers to undertake these

activities is ample. Though many unskilled personal workers are highly mobile and take up any activity (car-washing, house-cleaning, queue-standing, etc.) on a 'casual' basis in a strategy for 'survival by any means' and/or whenever an opportunity arises, there is a 'hard core' of workers in each service which is relatively stabilized. To illustrate the dynamics of the proliferation of such tertiary activities, and the conditions of self-employed tertiary workers, I consider the cases of car-wash boys and launderers.

CAR-WASH BOYS

To appreciate the conspicuous increase in the numbers of car-wash boys in Greater Khartoum, it is relevant to note that due to sand-storms, dust and mud, cars 'need' to be washed at least twice every week (for the relatively well-off, even daily). The capital-intensive washing services attached to fuel-stations charge £S 5.00, while the self-employed car-wash boys ask for a maximum of £S 1.00 on the 'spot market' (in which clients are 'casual', as for example in public parking places).⁽²⁾ Except on the occasion of normal lubrication servicing, car owners usually resort to the cheaper service provided by the boys. With the large increase in the number of cars, therefore, the opportunities for car-wash boys have developed very markedly.

In Chapter Five I drew attention to the increase in the numbers of buses and taxis over the last decade; but the increase in **private passenger cars** during the same period was even more dramatic. According to Ghosh (1983:156/7), the total

(commercial and non-commercial) vehicle fleet in the entire Sudan in 1973 numbered 68,000, but by 1979 it had increased to 127,000; and "60 per cent of the increase was accounted for by passenger cars, mostly registered in the Khartoum area..". In January 1983, the number of licensed private passenger cars in Greater Khartoum was 65,000, which is approximately equal to the total vehicle fleet in the entire country a decade earlier. From casual observation, it seems conservative to estimate that between 1969 and 1983 the number of private cars in Greater Khartoum increased by 500%. The opportunities for car-washing have thus increased by the same proportion.

On first impression, entry to car-washing seems to be constrained solely by its cultural stigmatization. The only 'assets' required are a brushing broom, a bar of industrial soap, a bucket or open gallon (and access to water), and two or three pieces of cloth. These items cost less than two Sudanese pounds, so that car-washing is one of several alternatives open to apparently 'desperate' people. But the car-wash 'world' in Greater Khartoum is not entirely a 'jungle' in which boys compete with each other; as viewed by its 'core' labour force, it is a highly organized activity in which 'connections' with low-ranking employees (e.g. Municipality guards, gate-keepers at government departments and other large public and private concerns) are central to its operation in certain zones. Quite a number of car-wash boys, especially the relatively young boys who have engaged in the activity for some years and who intend to continue with it, tend to work in 'gangs'. Some of these 'gangs' constitute

'partnerships', while others are merely 'alliances'. From partial observation it is clear that working in a 'partnership' or an 'alliance' of three to four boys provides each boy with a measure of security against 'aggressive competition' on the part of others in the 'spot market'. But whereas 'alliances' are formed by otherwise independent car-wash boys, 'partnerships' enable the 'partners' to increase efficiency through a 'technical' division of labour (one boy washing tyres and plastic mats, another cleaning the car body, a third drying, etc.). Though most car-washers are young men under 20 years old, I have encountered a few over 30 years old who had engaged in the same work for relatively long periods of up to 15 years in some cases. None of these adults, however, was part of a 'partnership' or an 'alliance'. The following cases illustrate some of the variations in car-wash 'careers'.

CASE (1)

Jim'a was born in Wau city (Southern Sudan) around 18 years ago. His mother died in Wau when he was one year old; and as his father was working in a shoe-factory in Khartoum North, he, together with his brother and sister, continued to live in Wau with a younger sister of the deceased mother. The father used to spend his annual holiday in Wau and he also sent them money each month. When 12 years ago his brother and sister first joined his father, who remarried, Jim'a stayed with his aunt at Wau, where he learnt to read and write at a khalwa (Koranic school), but six years ago he came to Khartoum to join his father and siblings.

When Jim'a came to Khartoum, his father wanted him to become an apprentice at a carpenter's workshop in Khartoum North, and Jim'a spent over a year in apprenticeship earning 25 piasters and one meal daily. One day Jim'a quarrelled with a senior carpenter at the workshop, who insisted that the apprentice be sacked. A few days later Jim'a found

work with a welder in return for a daily breakfast and £S 2.00 each Thursday. He worked for the welder for two years, but was one day found drunk by his father, who ordered him to find another place to live. The owner of the workshop was at the time looking for someone to guard his car at nights due to numerous car-thefts in the area, and Jim'a began sleeping in the car parked outside the house. Through 'living' in the car, Jim'a came to be known to many people in the neighbourhood. But shortly after that Jim'a decided to look for another job. "Welding", he said, "makes the eyes red, and does not allow one to work". He was offered a job at a bakery in the same area, and ceased working with the welder, though he continued to sleep in the latter's car. His employment at the bakery, however, did not last for long, and after two months he was sacked with three other workers ("because there was no need for them in the bakery"). For some weeks he failed to find another job but, through his "established contacts" in the neighbourhood, he found several 'income-generating opportunities'.

Initially Jim'a worked as a house-servant, for a monthly wage of £S 25, for one of his 'friends'. But the job was not to his liking and he started to work as casual labourer in the neighbourhood. Whenever one of his 'friends' (men and women resident in five blocks of the neighbourhood) needed car-washing, laundering, house-cleaning or litter disposal at a nearby dump, Jim'a was usually the first to be approached. Over the past two years, casual labouring around the neighbourhood thus became his main occupation, except for two months during which he was re-employed at the bakery. Jim'a obtains all his meals free, and he has a monthly income of £S 35 from washing the cars of seven regular clients. His additional income from car-washing for 'casual clients' and other activities varies considerably from day to day, but his average daily income over the ten days when I followed his activities closely was £S 1.70 ranging from a low of 85 piastres to a high of £S 3.00.

CASE (2)

Hamad is 18 years old. He was born in a village in Darfur, where he completed his primary education five years ago. Hamad's father, a small farmer, has 2 wives, 8 sons and 5 daughters. Hamad is the third brother. His older brothers completed high school education. One works as a vegetable seller in a peripheral market in Khartoum North; but wanted to

emigrate but failed and was at the time of interview hoping to be appointed as a receptionist at a hotel in Khartoum. The other brother is a student at a post-secondary institution in Khartoum. Hamad's younger brothers attend schools: two are secondary school students (both at Nyala, one at the Technical School and the other attending evening classes at an academic school), and three are at primary schools. Two of the sisters are married, and the other three are under school age.

After completing his primary education, Hamad passed his examinations and was accepted in a junior secondary school at a town far away from his village. Though it is a boarding school, Hamad was accepted as an 'external student' and therefore he had to look for private accommodation. As he did not have relatives in that town to live with, and as his father could not afford to pay for his accommodation and maintenance, the outcome was that he had to give up his education. He subsequently lived in Nyala for one year working as a messenger in a wholesale shop for a monthly wage of £S 6.00, but was not satisfied. When his eldest brother completed secondary education three years ago and moved to Khartoum in search of work, Hamad decided to accompany him. Initially both brothers worked as vegetable-sellers, but Hamad wanted to follow a technical career. Two years after his arrival in Khartoum, a relative of his father (a bus-driver) introduced him to the owner of a workshop for car repairs, and Hamad has since become an apprentice. He is expected to complete three years in apprenticeship before qualifying as a mechanic, but after that he expects to earn at least £S 45 weekly. As an apprentice he earns only 75 piastres daily plus breakfast.

Hamad's needs in Khartoum are few; free accommodation is offered by his uncle, and the related bus-driver gives him a free lift each morning and evening. But as he and his elder brother have to send money every month to their father and brothers, to whose education the two are dedicated, Hamad seeks work in the evenings and on Fridays as a car-wash boy in the central market in Khartoum North. His average weekly income from car-washing is around £S 10. Jointly, the two brothers send £S 20-30 pounds monthly to their family, and they also give £S 5.00 to their brother pursuing higher education in Khartoum. Like other 'casual' car-wash boys in central markets, Hamad complained about official harrassment. From casual observation, however, harrassment by Police and Municipality seems to be mainly, if not exclusively, directed to 'casual' car-wash boys rather than to the 'more-established', 'full-time' car-washers.

CASE (3)

Hassan (19 years), Musa (18 years), Haroun (16 years) and Abakar (15 years) were all born in a village in Darfur where they completed their primary education. Hassan and Abakar are full siblings; Musa and Abakar are sons of their father's brother and father's sister respectively. All four failed to obtain the necessary requirements for enrolment to junior secondary schools. One after the other they came to Greater Khartoum, where they live in the house of one of their uncles who works as a guard in a ministry. The first to arrive in Khartoum was Hassan, who, with the help of his uncle, found work in the refreshment kiosk attached to the ministry where the uncle works. His main job was to bring back glasses from the offices to the kiosk, to wash them, and to take them back to the offices on order. In addition to a daily meal, Hassan received 35 piasters per working day (i.e. 175 piasters per week). But as daily transport cost him 20 piastres, he was discontented with his work. As he became known to officials in the ministry, he decided to give up work at the kiosk to wash the cars of his 'contacts': He would simply come to the car park outside the ministry each morning and ask officials whether they wanted their cars washed. When Haroun and Musa arrived three years ago, Hassan persuaded them to join him as 'partners', and instead of confining their operations to that ministry, the 'gang' extended its activities to two additional neighbouring government departments. In this expansion they were helped by guards who were friends of their uncle. When Abakar arrived just over a year ago, the operations of the 'gang' had developed to the extent that he was easily incorporated as a 'partner'; and they have established a fairly precise division of labour. Abakar and Haroun wash the tyres and plastic mats, Musa dusts carpets and seats and washes the car body, while Hassan dries the car body and cleans wind-screens.

CASE (4)

Adam (20 years), Mohamed (17 years) and Abbas (16 years) are members of a 'gang' operating in the central market of Khartoum. Though unrelated, all three were born in neighbouring villages in the Southern Funj (south-eastern Sudan), where the youngest attended, but did not complete, primary education. The other two attended khalwa only. Adam

was the first of the three to come to Greater Khartoum, where he has lived for nearly six years, though he goes back to his village at least once a year to see his relatives. Adam was brought to Khartoum by a trader who has a shop in Adam's village but whose family live at Omdurman. By agreement with Adam's parents, the trader wanted the boy to work as a servant in his Omdurman house. An agreed monthly wage of £S 10 was to be given to the parents in the village; but Adam was also to receive "pocket money" (£S 3 per month in addition to ten piastres daily) plus free accommodation, maintenance, and (used) clothing. Hassan worked for the trader for around two years, but felt that he had been "enslaved" for little money. He wanted to give up work as a servant, but was not sure whether he could survive in Greater Khartoum. Nor did he want to go back to live permanently in the village after 'experiencing life' in the capital.

During his stay at the trader's house, Adam used to go each evening to the cinema, and in this way made friends with a number of young men, among whom Awad (Nuba) was an 'established' car-washer at Omdurman central market. Adam told Awad of his 'enslavement', and the latter encouraged him to leave the trader to work as a car-washer. Adam did leave the trader's family, and for six months the two friends worked together, but the proceeds were not shared equally. Adam received only a quarter of the net proceeds, "because most of the cars [they] washed belonged to Awad's regular clients", but Adam also had free accommodation as he lived with Awad, who had a small room in a shared house. Though still friends, Awad and Adam terminated their 'partnership', and for seven or eight months Adam was employed as a car-wash boy at the lubrication section attached to a petrol station. In addition to two meals a day, his weekly wage was £S 5 of which he saved one pound. He also often received tips from clients, and the station became his residence as he was allowed to sleep in the office (there was a guard at the station). After a series of quarrels over shares in tips with another car-wash boy in the same station, the manager sacked both. By then it was over a year since Adam had last seen his relatives, so he bought some gifts and travelled back to his village where he stayed for two months. During the course of this visit, Mohamed told Adam that he wished to run away from work in the fields and go to Khartoum. Being 'old friends', Adam informed Mohamed of the day he planned to return and promised not to tell any one about the plan.

On arrival at Khartoum, the two friends had no place to go to, and for several weeks they slept outside the Grand Mosque, where there is a beggar colony. But when they started to work together

washing cars in the central market, they met a young man (a mechanic) from their district who arranged for them to live in a shared house at Haj Yousif (Khartoum North). It was in this house, in which they still live, that the two friends met Abbas over nine months ago. Abbas had come to Khartoum with one of his cousins (a bus ticket conductor) who lived in the house, but had no work and was taken as 'partner' by the two friends.

'Self-employment' in car-washing in Greater Khartoum is progressively becoming a form of 'concealed' wage employment, albeit one in which the 'core' of the workforce is not only highly rewarded but also certainly more stable than the unskilled labour force in the conurbation's 'modern' manufacturing industry. But this is not due to a shortage of car-washers because of their cultural stigmatization; it is rather due to the fact that car-wash boys rarely depend solely on the fluctuating and insecure incomes earned on the competitive 'spot market'. To eliminate insecurity, 'full-time' car-wash boys usually enter into 'contracts' with a core of clients in particular areas (part of a central market, Khartoum University, a certain ministry or government department, etc.) whereby daily cleaning is undertaken for £S 5.00 to £S 10.00 per car per month. In interviews with 20 car-wash boys, organized into six 'gangs', I gathered that the average number of 'secured' cars per boy is 9, and the average 'secured' monthly income around £S 70. The level of earnings by car-wash boys not affiliated to 'gangs' is generally lower, though in two out of the eleven cases I encountered the average income was higher than that of 'gang' boys. Five 'independent' car-washers reported monthly 'secured' incomes varying between £S 50 and £S 60, but two (both over 25 years

old) reported 'secured' incomes of £S 75 and £S 82 respectively. One of the latter has 10 'contracted' cars to wash, the other has 12. While these figures cannot be claimed as strictly representative, they are interesting in the light of the latest revision of the wage structure in the Sudan (Nov. 1983), according to which the Standard Minimum Wage was raised to £S 35.80 only (cf. Chapter Seven). Likewise, it is interesting to note that at the time when petty traders and other 'self-employed' unskilled workers were being 'swept away' by the Street-Cleaning Campaign, a majority of 'committed' car-washers were helped by their regular clients to obtain Identity Cards by providing 'headed letters' certifying that the boys were either messengers or general labourers in this or that government department.

The incomes of 'full-time' car-washers quoted above do not represent total earnings. After cleaning their 'contracted' cars, the boys normally compete on the insecure 'spot market', where they often earn more than needed for their daily expenses. Though it is difficult to determine precisely a 'casual' car-washer's average daily income on the 'spot market', it is rarely less than £S 1.00.

As my observations among car-washing 'partnerships' were constrained by lack of their confidence, I could not acquire much insight into the **intra-gang relations**. Nevertheless, I developed the impression that these relations are far from symmetrical with 'defenders' of a 'gang' perhaps appropriating the labour of the 'defended'. This kind of information is much needed to determine whether car-washing gangs represent arenas

for a process of differentiation whereby older boys invoke kinship and regional ties for the recruitment of gang members, ostensibly as 'partners', but in effect as piece-workers. A further aspect that remains to be illuminated concerns the payments which I suspect these gangs make to Municipality guards, police, gate-guards at government departments, and so on, in return for the permission to operate in and/or enter into the zones where clients park their cars.

LAUNDRY-WORK

Self-employment for laundry-workers remunerated on a piece-rate basis has proliferated in recent years at the cost of a decline in employment opportunities for domestic servants. This is mainly the consequence of the relatively substantial reduction in the real incomes of white-collar workers, professionals and administrators (cf. Chapter Seven) who formerly could afford house-servants, but who, with a dramatic increase in wages demanded by the servants, are now unable and/or unwilling to engage domestic servants on a monthly basis. In 1975, the average wage for a domestic servant was around £S 12. By 1983 the most inexperienced domestic servants were paid **no less** than £S 40 a month for the first three (probational) months, after which they would insist on a wage increase, and an experienced house-servant demanded up to £S 100. Furthermore, the cost of a house-servant is not confined to his/her wages, but includes two meals (three meals if he/she is 'resident') at a time when food prices in Greater Khartoum are increasing at exorbitant

rates. Resort to the service of 'casual' labourers, who come once or twice every week to do all the laundering, house-cleaning, etc., has therefore become a feasible proposition insofar as it cuts up to 50% of the costs of a monthly-paid servant.

The service of 'casual' launderers is even cheaper than that provided by the licensed laundry-shops found in residential neighbourhoods. But Unlike the laundry-shops, which accept any number of pieces, 'casual' launderers rarely accept less than two dozen pieces. In some cases they do accept smaller quantities, but they also either get an additional assignment such as cleaning the house, or seek to wash for two or three neighbouring houses. As clothes are dried under the sun, it takes up to two hours between washing and ironing. On average, 'casual' laundry-workers charge around £S 1.20 per dozen.

In interviews with 12 'full-time' laundry workers, 11 of whom formerly worked as domestic servants and one being a recent migrant, I gathered that they themselves find it more rewarding to work on a piece-rate basis. Besides having the two meals in the house(s) where they undertake the day's work, each usually earns around £S 130.00 a month (usually working six days a week). Like the car-wash boys, launderers tend to have regular clients, but though no 'discounts' are offered, they often undertake the service on credit for 'trusted' clients, and settle accounts monthly. The case of Robin is typical of 'full-time' laundry-workers.

CASE (5)

Robin, who is around 25 years old, was born in Southern Sudan. He came to Khartoum four years ago, but before that he had migrated for three years to the rainfed agricultural schemes in Renk and Southern Funj. Robin did not like migration to the schemes; in addition to the hard work in the schemes, the scheme operators used to make excuses in order not to pay all the wages due to workers. One of Robin's kinsmen, James, who had lived in Khartoum for many years, told him on one of his visits home about opportunities in Khartoum, and the two, with four others from a neighbouring village, left home together. All six joined a group of kinsmen and fellow-villagers living in a shared house in Kober (Khartoum North), and four days after their arrival Robin found work a house-servant in the same (3rd class) neighbourhood. On arrival, Robin was neither fluent in Arabic nor very good with ironing clothes, and because of this he was paid only £S 17 month. The family he worked for were "good people", and after six months his monthly wage was increased to £S 25. But Robin left Khartoum after eight months to see his relatives. He spent one and a half months at home, and on his return to Khartoum found that the family he had worked for had employed another of his kinsmen. The family wanted to re-employ Robin, but the latter refused to have his relative sacked. Instead, he found work in a house in Kober First Class extension for £S 35 per month, but maintained contact with the family he first worked for, as he often came to see his relative during the day.

The second house Robin worked at was very big, and sweeping the floor each morning and afternoon was not easy. Also there were ten people in the house and thus many clothes to wash. Though his wage was increased to £S 45, the work was too much for him. So when kinsmen from home visited him, he often asked them to help him with the washing. He wanted to leave the family, but they then raised his wage to £S 50, and agreed to take on a young boy to help him; so he stayed and brought one of his nephews (around 14 years old) to take the second job for a monthly wage of £S 12.

Six months after Robin's return, the relative who was employed by the first family left for the South on a visit. The family asked Robin to bring them another servant, but all his kinsmen were either working or back home. Robin agreed to sweep the floor of the house and to launder the family's clothes every Sunday (when not working for his other employer). While washing clothes on the following Sunday, Robin was also asked by a female neighbour to the family whether he could come and launder for

them as well. Though he agreed to wash the clothes that evening, he told the woman he could not iron them until the following evening; the woman agreed. From then on, he started to receive calls for evening work as well. Working during both day and evening was very difficult, and he soon found he had to choose between being a house-servant or a 'full-time' casual launderer. Realising that he could earn more by becoming a casual launderer for a number of regular clients, he decided to stop working as a house-servant. But each time he went on a visit to the South, would on his return have difficulty in finding regular clients. This forced him twice to being a house-servant for brief periods until he established other regular clients. At present, he launders regularly for four houses.

Not all launderers, however, work on a full-time basis; and in addition to Jim'a (Case 1 above) I encountered five (Dinka) engaged in laundering as a secondary occupation. All five, who had previously worked for periods of up to three years as house-servants, were working as 'temporary' unskilled labourers at a factory in Khartoum North. They joined the factory, through help from a "cousin" who works as an accountant there, about two months before my interviews with them. Before then they had been on a visit to the South, but on their return could not find employment as house-servants for nearly two weeks. After joining the factory, all five were offered work as house-servants, but they turned the offers down.

At the factory all five are required to work on different shifts during the week, but they prefer working on night shifts (10 p.m. to 6 a.m) in particular as it enables them to take on laundry work during the day (from 9 a.m to 5 p.m). On average, they find three days each week to work as launderers, but they also sometimes undertake laundry-work in the afternoon and evening (3 p.m to 6 p.m.), especially when

no over-time work at the factory is available. Their monthly income from laundry-work averages around £S 60 each while their monthly wage is £S 29 plus a daily meal, but they also earn over-time pay reaching up to £S 12 pounds a month. Three out of the five insisted that they considered laundry-work as their "main" occupation and that if they they had to choose between the two occupations, laundering would be their first preference. The reason given for working at the factory is the insecurity of being a 'full-time' launderer when they know that there are already four 'full-time' launderers in the neighbourhood where they live. They also told me that working as casual launderers in neighbourhoods other than their own is not easy because the residents there do not know them. The network of their residential group is confined to the two (1st and 3rd Class) neighbourhoods of Kober.

STREET AND PETTY TRADING

It is usually very easy for any one to start as a petty trader. In some cases, virtually no capital is required. Scavenging empty bottles, jars and tins, may in cases of absolute destitution furnish a prospective petty trader with 'stocks' for sale. A bucket full of ice-cold water and a glass - at a total cost of less than £S 2.00- suffice to start a 'mid-day business' in a central market and other crowded public places (e.g. central bus-stations, hospitals, and the Nationality & Immigration Department), especially during the hot dry summer months. For other 'lines' of petty trade, the starting capital may be as low as £S 2 to 3. As petty trade is

not stigmatized in the same way as unskilled personal services, it tends to attract a host of people.

QUANTITATIVE DIFFERENTIATION

The ease of entry to petty trade should not, however, be allowed to blur the high degree of 'quantitative differentiation (cf. Chapter Two) among petty traders. Thus, while the starting capital of a small vegetable, onion or fruit seller in a peripheral market may be as only £S 4 to £S 5, the stocks are usually of the lowest grade and the 'source of supply' typically a 'more established' petty trader in the same market, whose own stocks may well be over £S 200. Some onion sellers, whose stocks are not as perishable as vegetables and fruits and who can therefore buy and store in bulk, may keep stocks of up to 15 sacks of onions worth over £S 1,000.

Quantitative differentiation among petty traders handling manufactured (mainly imported) goods is even greater. In this respect a distinction must be drawn between sellers of cigarettes and sellers of other manufactured goods (nail clippers, combs, tooth-brushes, popular perfumes, mirrors, flash lights, slippers, sandals and shoes, ready-made clothes, etc). Cigarette selling may be started with stocks as low as a packet of 10 or 20 cigarettes, though it is more usual to start with a stock of 200. An established cigarette seller, however, operates with stocks of over a thousand cigarettes and keeps more than one brand. The stocks are either carried around in a portable tray or displayed in a fixed stall

situated in front of a shop or restaurant. Cigarette sellers operating with a fixed stall usually also sell tumbak, or snuff.

The starting capital for the lowest grade seller of other manufactured goods may be as low as £S 4 or 5. The range of stocks kept, however, varies considerably. The lowest grade vendor, pedlar or hawker may operate with stocks comprising a dozen each of nail clippers, combs and safety pins, or a pair of shoes and/or sandals. A more 'affluent' low-grade pedlar may carry stocks comprising a dozen home-sewn gowns or one or two china, pottery or glass tea and/or dinner sets.

A majority of these low-grade traders are young boys under 18 years old. Established petty traders of manufactured goods, usually over 25 years old, keep stocks of at least £S 200 though the value of the goods may in some cases be worth as much as £S 1,000. Such traders usually have some form of 'fixed assets', ranging from a cheap portable tray or a fixed stall (worth around £S 30) to the easily guarded mobile wheel-stall (£S 120) or a donkey (£S 60?) with the stocks kept in sacks. A fairly recent introduction is the horse-cart for which overhead costs may be over £S 300. The goods carried on carts are mainly household utensils (tumblers, tea pots, cutlery, trays, tea and dinner sets, etc.). The circulating capital of traders operating with horse-carts may reach £S 2000, but as credit is normally extended to regular clients, the value of stocks on the cart would usually be under £S 1,000.

The 'ideal' transition from petty trade to retail proper

is effected through the establishment of a corner-shop in a residential neighbourhood, but due to the limited number of such shops the majority of petty traders seek to graduate through operation from a licensed booth in one of the 'popular markets' in Greater Khartoum. The number of petty traders who may find opportunities for sufficient accumulation to graduate to the ranks of the commercial bourgeoisie is of course extremely limited, but the exceptional success of a few former petty traders, who are multi-millionaire businessmen at present, seems to inspire a majority of petty traders.

THE COMPOSITION OF STREET TRADERS

The relative ease of entry to street/petty trading often attracts people on a 'casual' or 'temporary' basis. Besides the 'hard core' of petty traders who are relatively committed to their career (see below), at least three other categories of street trader can be distinguished. The first, and perhaps smallest category consists of recent migrants whose original objectives in coming to the capital did not include working there. These usually came to arrange for emigration to the oil-rich Arab countries, to attend a relative who fell ill, etc., but after a relatively prolonged stay in the conurbation their resources were exhausted and, consequently, they began to look for means of maintaining themselves. Emigrant workers returning to the Sudan on visits are also sometimes encountered as vendors. These have often brought with them relatively large quantities of such things as shoes and watches to sell 'wholesale', but because retailers offered

them depressed prices, they decided to deal directly with the consumers. Though the involvement of this group of casual traders is normally transient, a few may find a long term career in petty trade in Greater Khartoum. The way Mustafa came to establish himself as onion-seller illustrates this.

CASE (6)

Mustafa is around 60 years old. He was born in Um Ruwaba district (Kordofan Province) where he attended khalwa and later tended the village-based herd of goats and sheep belonging to his family. When he completed learning the whole Quraan at the age of 15, he participated in rainfed farming with his father. From the proceeds of cash crops over "several years", he bought a camel with which he used to carry the produce from farm to home and, also, to transport the crops of other farmers. In 1947 he joined a village trader in a partnership, and a year later he established his own retail shop in the village. In the same year he married, and now has 7 sons and 6 daughters. Two of his sons (one a bus-driver aged 22 and the other a vegetable-seller aged 20) are with him in Khartoum, while his eldest son is a lorry driver in the Southern Funj. A fourth son, who completed high secondary education, works in a government department at El-Obeid, while four daughters and three sons (one of whom is married) are in the home village (2 of the daughters are married and live with their husbands in Um Ruwaba town).

In 1960 Mustafa moved to Um Ruwaba town, where he opened a street-corner shop, but after two years he incurred considerable losses. The losses were partly the result of his credit policy as many creditors defaulted, and partly because of the relatively high cost of maintaining his family back in the village and financing the education of his children. In 1963 he closed the corner-shop and went to Darfur to bring stocks of local marakeeb (sing. markoub; shoes made of cattle hide) which he did for about three years. Trade in marakeeb was not very profitable, however, and he decided to change. He moved to the Southern Funj, where his eldest son is a lorry driver, and started to sell dried fish to agricultural labourers at the al-Mazmoum rainfed schemes, and to buy wild okra (weika) and transport it to Kosti. He continued in this dried fish and okra trade for nearly 12 years.

When Mustafa first moved to Um Ruwaba, he kept

returning to his village during the rainy season to cultivate his farm. As he had many 'mouths' to feed, the size of his family constituted a drain on his capital, and cultivating food crops was a cushion against complete impoverishment. In 1978 he had to leave the Southern Funj for Khartoum because one of his sons (who is now in El-Obeid) was ill in hospital. On arrival in Khartoum he had £S 250, but in one month he spent £S 95 on medicine for his son and another £S 40 for his own maintenance. His two sons working in Khartoum gave him £S 30, but as he knew he had to stay for at least another month, and also had to send money back to his family, he started to worry about running out of funds. So he decided to work; and through the network of his son who is a vegetable-seller he started to trade in onions in Khartoum. His initial investment was £S 15, and each day he realized a net profit of around £S 2. But one day the Municipality guards raided the market, and he had to abandon his stocks to escape arrest. On his return the stocks were gone. His sons advised him to look for a site to rent, and they found one at the peripheral market near the house where the father lived with his two sons. Mustafa pays 20 piastres rent per day for the one sq. meter site, and another 5 piastres for the Municipality guard. As the house was so near to the site, Mustafa started to buy larger and larger stocks. A failure in the onion harvest in 1978 helped him to realize 400% profit from stocks originally valued at £S 150. This was a considerable boost for business, and he has since decided to stay with his two sons in Khartoum, though his sick son was discharged from hospital and, after convalescence, was able to secure employment through help from their local MP. Mustafa has become an 'established' onion-seller, and managed to attract many regular clients. Though he does extend credit to a few trusted customers, he is careful not to re-live the experience of his shop at Um Ruwaba. He has also gained the respect of other petty traders, and is in charge of the rotating credit association in the market (cf. below). He now buys stocks of ten to fifteen sacks of onions, and while his daily turn-over averages around £S 50, his net daily profit (after expenses for meals) is around £S 8. He no longer cultivates his village farm, which is attended by one of his unmarried sons, but he returns on brief visits to the village at least twice each year. He also sends money to his family monthly.

The second category of street trader consists of elements oscillating between wage- and self-employment. Many casual unskilled construction and other (e.g. manufacturing) workers

take on petty trading when they fall ill or when they are sacked upon completion of a contract, etc. Cigarette selling at Kober (peripheral) Market in Khartoum North, for example, is particularly popular with casual construction workers out of employment. Though there were constant changes in the personnel of cigarette sellers in the different peripheral markets during the periods of my fieldwork, their number at Kober market in particular ranged between 2 and 4 during the day and 6 and 9 during the evening. Virtually all these sellers had previously been employed at, and continue to reside in the building sites not far from the market. The case of Malwal illustrates this pattern of casual involvement.

CASE (7)

Malwal was born in Tonj in Southern Sudan. He first came to Khartoum with a group of young men from his district four years ago. As many of his kinsmen and fellow-villagers in Greater Khartoum were employed as casual construction workers, Malwal was helped in securing employment at building sites in Haj Yousif. Each year he returns home, and returned from his last visit six months ago, when he found work at building sites in Haj Yousif with a daily wage of £S 2. Four months after his return, Malwal fell ill and was unable to continue as a construction labourer. He invested £S 30 from his savings and bought 400 cigarettes (Benson & Hedges Special Filter, the most popular in urban Sudan). He sells each cigarette for 8 piastres (realizing a profit of £S 1.00 per packet of 200). His average daily profit is £S 1.00, but sometimes more. Malwal contends that if it were not for cigarette-selling, he would have run out of money and would have had to return to the South. At present, however, he not only finds money to meet daily expenses, but also manages to stay in Khartoum where there are better medical services. He told me that as soon as he recovers he will again seek employment as a casual construction labourer.

The minimum daily profit registered by two of these casual

cigarette sellers over a period of two weeks was 50 piastres for one day, but four reported a high of £S 2.50 for two successive days. From partial observation, the level of daily profit for each seller seems to depend on three factors: (a) availability of stocks, which wholesalers and retailers often decline to provide in attempts to create artificial shortages, (b) the number of sellers in the market and, (c) whether stocks are sold in packets of ten or per cigarette, the latter method enabling the realization of double the margins procured through the former. In spite of the fluctuations in income and insecurity involved in procuring supplies, the casual sellers claimed that if it were not for cigarette selling they would have to "eat" their savings during spells of unemployment and would have been forced to think of returning to the South.

The third category of casual traders consists of 'part-time' traders, or people with other 'main' occupations in Greater Khartoum. These are usually the 'more established' permanent manual and white-collar government workers who venture into petty trading as a secondary occupation during their spare time in the evenings and/or during their annual leave. This involvement is particularly conspicuous around Muslim feast days, when the urban population make the bulk of their annual purchases of clothes, shoes, etc. It is worth noting here that such a seasonal involvement of government employees in petty trade is usually a case of commission-selling of stocks on behalf of a (related?) wholesaler and/or retailer who provides stocks 'on credit'. But it should be stressed that the involvement of government

employees in secondary occupations is not confined to petty trading. Skilled workers, for example, are known to engage in 'moon-lighting', sometimes even during official hours, while manual and clerical government employees owning cars usually seek to get a licence to convert their cars into taxis.

THE CORE OF PETTY TRADERS

A prominent feature of the composition of petty traders in Greater Khartoum as well as other Sudanese cities is the dominance of one or two main 'ethnic' and/or regional groups in a certain line of petty trade. Cigarette traders carrying trays around Greater Khartoum, for example, are drawn almost exclusively from a certain 'tribe' from western Sudan. Trade in other manufactured goods is dominated by, though by no means exclusive to members of a group drawn from certain districts in the Gezira Province. Though the vegetable and fruit trade shows a relatively higher degree of ethnic and regional diversity than other lines of trade, it nevertheless appears to be particularly attractive to people from Shendi District and rural Khartoum (East and West of the Nile Districts).

As explained by Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa (1983:176ff) in Hassaheissa, the concentration of petty traders with a common ethnic and/or regional background in a certain line of trade has nothing to do with either the innate characteristics of the commodity being traded or the subjective inclinations of the members of the group. In the case of the petty traders from rural Khartoum and Shendi encountered in vegetable and

fruit trade, for example, the 'secret' of concentration is that they are drawn from nearby districts in which these products are grown. Established links with producers, who are often kinsmen, are what tend to generate concentration. For the 'Western' boys distributing cigarettes, on the other hand, concentration is dictated by considerations of security and mutual trust. Though all Western boys I encountered refused to be interviewed, it is clear that the cigarettes they handled were largely smuggled into the country. Legally imported cigarettes bear a special label. Reliable 'Western' sources have informed me that most of these boys are in fact only 'commission sellers', who usually receive stocks on credit from a supplier who buys in cartons of 10,000 cigarettes each. For all categories of petty trader, particularly those dealing in manufactured goods, ethnic and regional specialization bears directly on the progress of business in at least four ways:

Firstly, members of the same ethnic and/or regional background have much more in common than with other urban dwellers, and they consequently tend to form residential groups. Residence is normally in shared (and crowded) houses (up to five persons per room), which cuts the cost of accommodation. Likewise, by sharing the cost of meals at restaurants, members of the group manage to spend less in maintenance than what would otherwise be needed.

Secondly, by associating with a group of three or more in the process of trading, the individual trader is

offered a measure of security against violence on the part of customers and thieves. While engaged in haggling, moreover, an unlicensed trader among associates would not be distracted by the necessity of watching out for the raids launched by the authorities as his associates would raise the alarm on the slightest sign of threat.

Thirdly, a large group, or a number of smaller ones, may start a rotating credit association, whereby each member contributes a monthly (or daily/weekly) sum to be given to one of the members. The pooled money may be used in several ways. It can augment capital, settle outstanding debts, or, as in the case of traders with dependents outside Khartoum, simply sent back home.

Fourthly, by associating with a group a new member is usually introduced to wholesalers, who may then allow him 'preferential treatment'. In dealing with wholesalers, moreover, members of a group manage to place larger orders, which often entitle them to wholesale prices (as opposed to retail prices charged for smaller orders).

The 'core' of the workforce in each line of petty trade largely consists of members of these dominant ethnic and/or regional groups. By "core" I simply mean those who have stayed in petty trade for a period of at least six months and who want to continue in it. 'Casual' petty traders normally tend to stay for shorter periods and would either leave Khartoum or manage to find wage employment, especially in the form of

'replenishment recruitment' in 'modern' manufacturing industry (cf. Chapter Five).

Furthermore, while a few members of the core in each line of trade are relatively 'well-established' and aspire to become retailers, a majority are 'hardy' pedlars and hawkers striving either to save a couple of hundred pounds to graduate to a higher category, or simply to maintain the status quo (i.e. to earn just enough in order not to consume capital). But the distinction between 'established' and 'hardy' petty traders should not be exaggerated. Both categories lead virtually identical life-styles characterized by frugality and deprivation. In accordance with kinship and regional affiliations, azaba (single-men) residence groups are normally formed by traders drawn from all grades. (Many of the older and relatively more established traders are married, but virtually all their wives and children live back home). Azaba groups also share maintenance expenses, although due to exorbitant increases of food prices members of a group now find it cheaper to eat at popular restaurants than to cook their own meals (as was the case with "bachelors bands" during an earlier period, cf. Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1983:189).

The minimum 'viable' capital to induce continuity in petty trade varies with the type of commodity handled. In this respect, all petty traders tend to deal in commodities that are cheap and with a relatively high turn-over. The small capital deployed by all categories of petty traders is of course the major factor behind this tendency. Milk,

vegetables, fruits, cigarettes and a few 'mass consumption' manufactured goods are consequently the most popular commodities. Established fruit and vegetable sellers generally demand lower capital than traders of manufactured goods, while cigarette sellers commonly require the least. Variations in the size of 'viable capital' are related to turn-over, perishability of goods and, for the unlicensed majority, security.

Significant variations in turn-over are observed between different commodities as well as for the same commodity in different locations. Foodstuffs and cigarettes have the highest levels of turn-over. For both commodities, moreover, potential demand is generally greater at central than at peripheral and popular markets. In the absence of adequate cold-storing facilities, vegetables and fruits are easily perishable and because of this traders tend to keep their stocks down to what they think can be sold in a day or two. Onions differ from vegetables in that some types of onion can be stored for up to six months so that onion-sellers generally seek to deploy part of their capital in buying and storing to take advantage of the seasonal variations in both supplies and prices. For sellers of cigarettes and other manufactured goods perishability is not a consideration, and keeping a relatively large stock is generally held to be advantageous for the business.

In the case of cigarette sellers, a large stock not only means cutting both transport and time costs to be incurred in the procurement of new supplies when a relatively smaller

stock is sold out, but also ensures continuity in business in the context of the frequent shortages in supplies in the market. Cigarette-sellers are often organized in networks distributing smuggled stocks, and only a few 'independent sellers' find access to such stocks. When no supplies can be obtained from wholesalers and retailers, alternative sources are frequently sought through 'contacts' at Khartoum International Airport (mainly porters and customs guards) who buy duty free cigarettes from, or through, passengers.

For traders of other imported items, stocks are preferred not only in relatively large quantities to last over a week, but also of a wide range. Petty traders pointed out three factors for this preference. Firstly, it saves the time and transport costs which would otherwise be incurred in re-stocking. Secondly, it sometimes entitles petty traders to wholesale prices; hence a number of traders usually join together in buying stocks. Thirdly, it ensures a level of sales much higher than would be possible through keeping a limited range of stocks.

For all categories of 'established' unlicensed petty traders operating in public places, the element of security against raids constitutes the decisive factor in terms of how much of their capital is deployed in any single day. Unlicensed vegetable sellers generally operate with a maximum limit of £S 20, while those with permits keep stocks of up to £S 100. Onion-sellers with permits may retain daily stocks of over ten sacks, while unlicensed onion-sellers depend on the former for supplies and buy stocks of £S 5-10 at a time.

Cigarette-sellers with stalls keep stocks of £S 300 or more, but pedlars carrying trays rarely operate with more than £S 100 worth of stocks, while the lowest-grade cigarette-vendors operate with a maximum of £S 30. Pedlars of manufactured goods carry stocks of around £S 40 maximum, but wheel-stall traders require much more than that. The minimum stocks for the latter are worth around £S 250, but in numerous cases the value of stocks may reach up to £S 1,000. Though wheel-stall operators are apparently the most vulnerable, they seem to cope quite well with their insecurity through payment of bribes (see below). The more stocks a wheel-stall trader keeps, the more he seems assured against raids. None of the wheel-stall traders, however, wanted to 'incriminate' other people. A closer view into the backgrounds of 'core' of petty traders and how they manage their business may be obtained from the following cases.

CASE (8)

Talha, who was born in a Gezira village, is 17 years old. He completed his six-year primary education three years ago, and joined his father, who is a tenant in the Gezira Scheme, in the half-tenancy the family cultivates. He does not like work in the tenancy because the rewards are small. Ten months ago he decided to invest the £S 30 he had saved from the de facto wage paid to him by his father in petty trading at Khartoum, where his older brother, a wheel-stall trader, lives with a group of young men from the district. He started by trade of lady's gowns and children underwear sewn by house-wives. His brother introduced him to three women sewing clothes. The women obtain cheap cloth for the gowns from retailers, but for children's underwear they use refuse from textile factories sold by dealers for around £S 1.00 per 5 Kg. Talha initially invested £S 8.25 pounds by buying 4 gowns for £S 7 and 20 items of underwear for £S 1.25. He carried the clothes, and together with three young

pedlars from his district, started peddling at the inter-city bus station where he worked all morning and most of the afternoon. As the traffic started to subside by 3 o'clock, Talha and the other boys walked to Khartoum Civil Hospital. It took Talha nearly four days to sell all his stocks for £S 16, but as his daily expenses were around £S 1.50 for meals and rent (he paid a monthly rent of £S 6), his net profit in the four days was less than £S 2.00. For this reason he decided to change to manufactured goods, and obtained discounted stocks from his brother. Since then Talha has been peddling such goods as nail clippers, key rings, combs and tooth-brushes. He usually keeps stocks worth £S 20-30 and his average net daily profit (deducting food and accommodation expenses) is in the range of 50 piastres to £S 1. Talha has savings amounting to £S 80 pounds, which are kept by one wholesaler in the Arabic Market, and he hopes to graduate to wheel-stall trading in the near future.

I met Talha several times at al-Sough al-Shaa'bi as well as at his residence. One evening he gave me the following account of his day:

"I woke up around five o'clock as it was my turn to make morning tea. The whole group of 15 living in the house share the expenses of tea, sugar, dehydrated milk and charcoal. By six I was at al-Sough al-Shaa'bi, which is not far from the house. Between 8 and 12 o'clock the inter-city traffic is at its highest, and I make most sales during that period. I sold goods for £S 6.50 this morning. At mid-day I and four other pedlars joined my brother to have our mid-day meal. Each day one of us buys the meal, and today it was Saddig's turn; he is my second cousin. My brother wanted to go to central Khartoum to see a relative about a driving licence my brother wants to get, and for this reason he asked me to attend his wheel-stall. He took a pick-up to central Khartoum and returned around two hours later. In the meantime I sold £S 4 worth of goods from my brother's stocks, and £S 2 worth from my own. At three o'clock I took a bus to the Civil Hospital, but until seven I sold goods for £S 1.00 only. On other days I have usually sold more. With the three boys we had our evening meal at a popular restaurant near the Hospital, and I took the bus back home around 8 o'clock. My sales today totalled £S 9.50, and I made £S 2.50 pounds in gross profits. Today's net profits (£S 1.50) are average, but occasionally I net £S 5.00. This week is 'average' because it is the last week of the month. Next week people will receive their pay, and they will surely buy more. Two days ago I had the lowest gross profits during the last

seven days, only 25 piastres. But yesterday my net profits were 130 piastres."

CASE (9)

Ahmed was born around 35 years ago in a Gezira village, where he completed his primary education. Ahmed is married, and his wife and four children live with his father in the village. His eldest child, a son, is 12 years old; and two of the children attend primary schools at the village.

Upon the completion of his primary education, Ahmed joined his father in work at the tenancy. At the age of 19, Ahmed abandoned the tenancy and started to sell vegetables in a town not far from the village. Two years later he married, but did not have a child for three years. At the age of 27 he learned to drive an old tractor which his father bought, and up to the present he drives the tractor and ploughs rainfed farms for cash during July and August each year.

After the birth of his second child, Ahmed knew he had to earn more money than he earned from the vegetable trade and his share in the tractor fees. For this he thought of migration. A group of co-villagers were living at Nyala town in Darfur, and some of them told him about the good trading opportunities there. So eight years ago he travelled to Nyala and joined his fellow-villagers. Less than two months after arrival at Nyala, however, Ahmed realized that he was incurring losses. He had left home with £S 150 but, after nearly two months in trade in manufactured goods, he ended up with £S 100 only, although he had not sent any money to his wife during that period. Ahmed subsequently decided to travel to Khartoum, where his older brother and many other relatives work as petty traders. After a brief visit to his family at the village, Ahmed came to Khartoum for the first time just over seven years ago.

Upon arrival in Khartoum, Ahmed had only £S 70 left from his capital. With the help of his brother and the relatives he came to live with, Ahmed established a small stall and started trading manufactured goods at al-Sough al-Shaa'bi. His initial stocks were valued at around 40 pounds. After four years Ahmed managed to accumulate £S 350 in savings, and so he was able to buy a wheel-stall, which at the time cost only £S 60 (cost in 1981 was £S 120). As there were many wheel-stall traders at al-Sough al-Shaa'bi, Ahmed and his brother decided to move to a peripheral market in Khartoum North, where they are still operating. The two brothers now live with another group from their district in the

same neighbourhood in which the peripheral market is located. Ahmed's business has expanded rapidly since he acquired the wheel-stall, and his stocks are currently valued at around £S 700. He and his brother operate in the open space at the peripheral market on a permanent basis, and for this they have managed to cultivate good relations with many residents. Though Ahmed keeps a wide range of goods, a large part of his stocks consists of items demanded by women (popular perfumes, nail polish, purses and purse-mirrors, underwear, etc.). A few regular female customers often take goods on credit, but Ahmed rarely extends credit beyond a limit of £S 3 to 4 to any one customer, and the maximum total credit he offers is around £S 50-75. Most of the credit transactions are conducted during the two slack periods of the month (between the 8th and 13th, and the 22nd and 29th), when cash sales may fall to £S 5-10 a day. For roughly one week after workers receive their fortnightly wages, however, sales shoot up to £S 40-50, of which gross profits are around £S 10. On average, Ahmed nets around £S 50 each month (after deducting his expenses and the money he sends back to his family).

Every three months or so Ahmed goes back to the village for one or two weeks to see his family, but he sends them money more frequently through relatives and friends. During these visits, as well as during the two months he spends working with the tractor, Ahmed enters into arrangements with a relative or fellow-villager to take charge of the wheel-stall. More often than not the latter is a young 'hardy' pedlar, and in return for looking after the business is given a percentage (20-30 per cent) in gross profits. As the wheel-stall continues to be based at the same peripheral market, Ahmed's brother monitors closely the progress of business, receives revenues each day and takes charge of re-stocking.

Ahmed does not keep records of his daily sales and expenses, but every two weeks or so he makes an inventory of stocks and calculates his net profits. Except when a highly demanded item is sold out from all four wheel-stall traders at the market and immediate re-stocking becomes necessary, Ahmed re-stocks twice a month only. In addition to his brother and the other two wheel-stall traders, Ahmed is joined by five other traders (2 wheel-stall traders and 3 peddlers) in buying stocks from a wholesaler in Khartoum. Ahmed keeps all his revenues with him, but when he nets £S 100 or more over and above stocks of £S 800, he deposits £S 100 in his savings account at a bank in Khartoum North. Ahmed hopes to accumulate enough savings to establish a shop in one of the popular markets, but he does not think he will be able to do so in the next two

years.

Furthermore, Ahmed asserted that all his stocks were bought for cash, and that he always preferred not to buy goods on credit from wholesalers. He added that the reason for this preference is that petty traders taking goods on credit are often charged the same retail price as the final consumer buying from retailers, and this affects competitiveness vis-a-vis retail shops. But for the sake of stocking a wide range of items many starting wheel-stall traders do find it necessary to take goods on credit.

DISINCENTIVES IN PETTY TRADE

In spite of the ease of entry to petty trading, then, not all those who enter the activity do, or even intend to continue with it. My very rough estimate is that around 50 per cent of those encountered in petty trading are operating with very low capital (under a hundred pounds) and that the majority do not intend to stay in it. As I explained earlier, for a significant number of participants petty trade is viewed as a transient activity to be pursued until another more secure and/or rewarding form of employment is found, or until the necessary documents and visas for emigration are obtained. For those who have another job but take on petty trading as a secondary activity, it is considered as an alternative to emigration, or a means to supplement meagre incomes in the context of a decline in real wages.

Besides the vital requirement of belonging to the 'right' group, there are other disincentives contributing to the desire of low-grade petty traders to seek alternative sources of income. These disincentives stem partly from the insecurity of turnover and severe competition from other petty traders, and partly from the more fatal insecurity associated with the

fact that petty-trading without a licence is prohibited by the Municipality. To protect licensed traders, the Municipal authorities, often in conjunction with the Police, organize 'raids' against unlicensed petty traders. According to the Municipality regulations, any one caught trading illegally should stand trial in court and be fined. For a first arrest, the fine is £S 10; and for the second arrest the fine is £S 10 and the goods will also be confiscated, while the trader stands the possibility of imprisonment.

These laws render the bottom grades of petty traders very vulnerable in the event of a campaign against them. A ten-pound fine may practically mean the loss of a substantial portion of the capital they own. The upper-grade traders, in contrast, not only can bear the fine for a first arrest, but can also reconcile and 'neutralize' those intending to arrest them for a second time. They often prefer to pay the Municipality guards a fine equal to, and sometimes higher than, the ten pounds paid to the court. (The maximum monthly salary a guard receives is £S 50). By this means they manage to escape the threat of having their goods confiscated and avoid imprisonment as well. Even for the upper grades (i.e. those with stalls, wheel-stalls, etc.), however, bribes may not achieve the desired effect each time, especially when campaigns headed by high-ranking officers are launched. Since the 'Street Discipline Campaign' was first launched in September 1981, the raids have become much more frequent and not only have Police officers started to participate regularly, but also officers from the State Security

Organization, the Prison Department and Armed Forces. Instead of the former ten-pound fine for first arrest or even the arbitrary confiscation of goods, with the launching of the Street-Cleaning Campaign not only are all stocks of unlicensed petty traders confiscated, but traders are also arrested, may stand trial and, if they are found to be 'migrants', may eventually be referred to their original places of domicile.

Many of the established petty traders seem to have advance warning about the timing of raids. On two occasions in 1982 I was present when raids were launched in a peripheral market. None of the five 'most established' unlicensed petty traders operating with wheel-stalls, and whom I already knew, was present in the market when the troops came and cordoned it. I believe it was more than a coincidence that these five traders, who live in the same house, absented themselves by chance each time a raid was launched. I could not, however, establish the source, or the cost of their information. In the campaigns I observed in that market, six of the smallest traders of manufactured goods were caught and stocks of around £S 400 were confiscated, and 15 managed to escape by running into nearby houses or to shops whose owners they knew.

In cases of confiscation of goods, traders from the established 'groups' do not normally face difficulties in re-stocking as they are helped by members of their groups. An amount of money equivalent to the loss is sometimes collected in small donations from relatives and fellow-villagers in all Three Towns; and in some cases the donation may be in the form of goods. Whether traders from other groups are also helped by

their relatives (by finding employment for the impoverished traders in the occupation in which the group 'specializes'?) is unknown.

SECURITY AND LICENCES

Not all unlicensed petty traders are threatened by the raids. There are at least two categories of unlicensed petty trader who seem to be more secure than others: traders operating in their own residential neighbourhoods and traders who operate with horse-carts. Those in the first group, which consists exclusively of female traders, sell a limited range of goods demanded by women, mainly the traditional sari-like tob. None of the nine women traders I encountered depended on the local market in Greater Khartoum for supplies. The traditional source of supply used to be Shendi District, where an old-established local textile industry is based. Virtually all women traders with a long record of service are originally from that district. In recent years, however, emigration to the Arabian Peninsula has opened new sources of supply, as many emigrants started to bring with them, or send with others, suit-cases full of clothes, particularly the British and Swiss manufactured tobs like those found in the local markets. Though some of the contents are distributed among members of the family and close relatives, most of the tobs are actually intended for sale, a task undertaken by the wife, mother or sister of the emigrant. It is worth noting here that sending goods is regarded by emigrants as a better alternative to remitting cash to support their dependents.

The price of a tob charged by women traders (depending on type, this may be between £S 60 and £S 150) is usually slightly higher than the price at the local market; but since payment is usually in monthly instalments (normally over a six month period), buyers welcome the deal. The fact that both seller and buyer are usually residents of the same neighbourhood and/or in close interaction with one another ensures a high degree of security against default. Since all their transactions are conducted inside houses, these women traders stand almost no risk of being caught.

Operators with horse-carts, on the other hand, are exclusively men who were originally licensed as horse-cart drivers and as such considered part of the 'transport sector'. Unlike the women traders, these operators do not confine their activities to any one residential neighbourhood. They are actually the most mobile of petty traders, but, owing to restrictions on horse-carts crossing bridges, their activities are confined to only one of the Three Towns. Though these operators insist on cash transactions with casual customers, they usually have a core of regular clients to whom they extend credit. According to two operators, the rate of default is around 10 per cent, and because of this they ask for prices that are up to 10-15 per cent higher than in the market. Despite their mobility, these traders are very rarely stopped or questioned by the authorities. When they are, I was informed, they can always claim that they are delivering goods belonging to a licensed corner-shop retailer, and they often carry with them invoices from wholesalers bearing names of

licensed retailers. Such 'protection' by wholesalers is not, however, extended to the young boys carrying tea and dinner sets.

Furthermore, though not all petty traders are unlicensed, the requirements for a 'permanent' licence or 'temporary' permit disqualify some 90 per cent or more of the petty traders in Greater Khartoum, particularly on the grounds that each should have a 'permanent place' of business. As the requirements differ for vegetables/fruit sellers and traders of manufactured goods, I shall first deal with the former.

VEGETABLE- AND FRUIT-SELLERS

For vegetable and/or fruit sellers, the minimum requirement for legal trading is a one square meter plot in a verandah at a peripheral market and a certificate from the Municipal Health Officer. Upon access to these requirements, a temporary permit may be given by the Municipality and in return traders have to pay five piastres each day. However the number of such sites is extremely limited. Though the number of vegetable traders at peripheral markets varies considerably from day to day, in observations in two markets the number working without permits was roughly double that of traders with permits (the latter numbered 29 in one market and 15 at the other). A few of the petty traders with permits are the original allottees, but a majority are either close relatives or tenants paying rent. The case of Mustafa (Case 6 above) gives an overview of the conditions of tenants, and the cases of Fatima, Ballah and Abdel Rahman give further insight into

some aspects of the conditions of the other categories of vegetable-sellers.

CASE (10)

Fatima is around 55 years old. She was born in the same "native lodging area" in the neighbourhood where she now lives and works as a vegetable-seller. She was divorced over 30 years ago, but continued to live with her three children (two sons and a daughter) in a house owned by her former husband. The latter, who in addition to working in his farm by the Nile had a small shop, used to give Fatima and the children money each Friday. The father of the children died four years after divorce, and the children inherited the house and 25 Egyptian Pounds ("which were real money then"). Fatima decided to save £E 20 by buying gold ornaments, and kept £E 5.00 to meet the family consumption requirements. After several months living off the inheritance, she thought it would be better if she started trading in the neighbourhood. Not long before Independence, she sold one £E 1.00 worth of gold, and invested 25 piastres in vegetables and fruits. "Goods at that time were very cheap, and people used to buy vegetables and fruit for a whole family for one piastre, and small families even bought for half a piastre [i.e. 5 m/ms coin, which was recently withdrawn]".

Though Fatima did not accumulate profits, she earned enough to maintain her three children and to send the two sons to primary schools. Upon completing primary education, the older son joined the workshop of a neighbour as an apprentice and later became a car-mechanic. He is now married and lives with his wife and three children (2 daughters and a son) in a house originally allotted to Fatima at Haj Yousif Extension (Khartoum North). The younger son was apprenticed to a builder, and is now an "own-account" skilled builder living with his wife and five children (3 daughters and 2 sons) with his mother. The daughter, who did not attend school, is married and lives in an independent house with her husband (who works as carpenter and owns a workshop) and six children (4 sons and 2 daughters).

During the period of the first military government (1958-64), the "native lodging area" in which Fatima lives was incorporated into the city plan as a site for a new 3rd Class extension. But Fatima and many other residents refused to abandon their homes; and up to the present the authorities have still not settled the dispute over the small plots below the 300 sq. meter minimum required for registration. Due

to the uncertain outcome of the dispute, the "native-lodgers" have declined to rebuild their homes with expensive materials, and for this reason the houses in the 'native lodging colony' remain rather conspicuous amidst the brick-houses of the 3rd Class extension (not to mention the mushrooming two-storey villas in the same neighbourhood).

With the allocation of plots in the new extension, a peripheral market was also established in the neighbourhood, and a small verandah for 5 vegetable and fruit sellers was built. Fatima and 23 other male and female petty traders were not allotted plots in the new market, but they continued to trade in the open space behind the new market. Two of the five licensed vegetable sellers complained about the activities of the unlicensed traders and took them to court. The court ordered the unlicensed traders to cease operating at the peripheral market, and 18 of them were fined 50 piastres each (Fatima was not fined). One of the unlicensed traders, Awad (still in the market), did not want to give in after the trial and asked the other traders to bring along their dependants to march to the office of the Military Governor of Khartoum. The traders, who were accompanied by over 200 children, submitted a written appeal to the Governor requesting licences that would enable them to maintain their dependants. On receiving their appeal the Governor phoned the Municipality officials and instructed them to give temporary permits to all 24 unlicensed traders. The site was surveyed and 1 sq. meter plots were allotted to each of the traders, who were requested to obtain the annually renewable Health Certificate and to pay five piastres each morning to the Municipality. On these 'temporary sites' the traders constructed makeshift shelters, which were blown down several times by winds. With the consent of the Municipality, the traders were then allowed to construct, through **self-help**, a permanent verandah with corrugated iron. Each trader paid £S 25 for the purpose. Several of the original allottees, however, ceased to trade either because they were too old to work or because they ran short of capital.

Fatima usually keeps stocks, of around £S 30-40 pounds, bought from the central market, but she does not have to go every morning as with seven other traders she devised a shift arrangement whereby two of them fetch stocks for all eight. She prefers to buy stocks for cash, because this enables her to buy from the dealer who sells cheapest. As all vegetable traders in the market commonly run short of money to pay cash for stocks; and as dealers would either refuse to extend credit or charge high prices, the traders formed a number of rotating credit associations in the market.

These associations are not confined to

vegetable-sellers, but include other petty traders (fruit-sellers, wheel-stall traders and the women selling kisra). But as the formation of rotating credit associations presuppose trust among members, only traders with a long standing in the market are usually accepted. Fatima is involved in two associations and in each she has one full share (some members have more than one share, others have half shares). The first association consists of 20 shares of 50 piastres each day, and the contributions are kept by another woman trader who every fifth day gives £S 50 to one member (or two members in cases of half shares). The second association, in which contributions are distributed daily, has 22 shares of £S 2 daily. Though in both associations there is agreement about the rotation, in cases of urgent need a member may ask the trustee and, subject to the consent of the share-holder(s) in whose turn the request is made, the contributions are then given to him/her.

Fatima contends that these associations spare all members the need to take supplies on credit from dealers but, in addition to augmenting capital, the contributions are also partly used to meet current consumption requirements (e.g. clothing for family) and many traders with dependants outside Khartoum send the collective contributions to their home areas. Fatima rarely fails to pay her contributions, as her daily profits are normally in the range of £S 6.00 to £S 8.00 during the first and third week each month. During the second and fourth weeks, however, turn-over slows down, and the average daily net profits fall to £S 2.00 to 4.00 pounds.

Case (11)

Ballah was born in a village along the Blue Nile not far from Khartoum North. He is 32 years old, married and has five children (the eldest, a daughter, is 11 years old, and four of his children attend schools). Ballah lives with his father's sister in Khartoum North, but his family lives in the village, where he visits them twice or three times every week.

Ballah completed his primary education but, as he failed his final examinations, he joined his elder brother who had a retail shop in the village. He worked with his brother for 4 years after which he came to Khartoum to trade in ready-made clothes sewn by his aunt and her daughter. After seven months, and with the help of two of his brothers, Ballah bought a wheel-stall and started to trade in manufactured goods at the Arabic market in Khartoum. In 1969 a friend (from the Northern Province)

established a kiosk at one government department on the outskirts of Khartoum and, being short of capital, proposed a partnership with Ballah. The latter, in consultation with his brothers, agreed and for this he sold his stocks and assets. At the kiosk the partners served tea, coffee and food to the employees. The partnership lasted for 4 years and it was during this period that Ballah married one of his female relatives. Though working in Khartoum, Ballah lived at the village and commuted each day to his kiosk. In 1975 he decided to establish a restaurant of his own in a peripheral market in Khartoum North. In the first six months Ballah incurred large losses (£S 600) and had to close the restaurant in which he employed 6 workers. Again with the help of his brothers, he started wholesale trade in vegetables, and began to bring to clients in Khartoum North vegetables grown by his fellow-villagers. Such trade, however, is considered illegal as the Municipality regulations stipulate that all vegetables brought to Greater Khartoum should pass through the Central Vegetable and Fruit Market at Soba (a suburb of Khartoum) to be auctioned (ostensibly to 'protect' producers from 'exploitation', but actually to enable the Municipality to tax produce).

In 1976 the authorities intercepted, and confiscated, a consignment being transported from the village to Khartoum by a commercial lorry; and Ballah had to start again almost from scratch.

Ballah's father's sister, who is widowed and has one married daughter living with her, lives in Khartoum North and owns a small place in a self-help built verandah in a peripheral market adjacent to where she lives. As his aunt wanted to retire and was thinking of renting the site, Ballah decided to settle at Khartoum North as vegetable-seller. He gets his supplies from the market of Khartoum North to which he goes once or twice a week (as part of a rotation among sellers to cut transport costs). The daily purchases which he makes average £S 25 to £S 30 in tomatoes, and between £S 15 and £S 25 for other vegetables (purslane, black-tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, okra, etc., depending on the season). When tomatoes are out of season, Ballah diverts his trade into fruits. He pays no rent to his aunt, but each day he takes home vegetables and meat (he eats all his meals at home). Each morning he pays 5 piastres to the Municipality.

CASE (12)

Bedri is 22 years old, married and has one daughter (under one year). He was born in a village near Um Ruwaba, where he went for two years to a primary school. At the age of 11 he started to attend 8 cows his family owned, but two or three years later he was relieved from the task by his younger brother. Thereafter Bedri joined his father in cultivating their farm, but during summer he used to help his brother in watering the animals.

Bedri first came to the capital six years ago; and through a fellow-villager he worked as a casual unskilled worker at a factory in Khartoum North. His daily wage was 85 piastres and every Thursday he received his wages for 6 days, but he also often worked over-time for which he was given 9 piastres per hour. He worked at the factory for three months after which he was fired. By then he had saved £S 25 as his expenses were very limited (he lived with his mother's brother not far from the industrial area). After leaving the factory, Bedri borrowed £S 10 from a fellow-villager, who had a corner-shop at Omdurman, and entered into a partnership with his father's brother's son. The two cousins started by selling fruits (oranges, grapefruit, mangoes and guava) in Khartoum. After three months their net profits amounted to £S 80. As the agricultural season was approaching, the partners decided to return to their village, where they intended to cultivate a farm jointly. The main crops cultivated were dura and sesame, but a small part of their farm was cultivated for ground-nuts. After harvest, net profits for each partner were around £S 200. For three more years, during which Bedri married, the partnership continued; and the partners started to retain activities at both ends simultaneously, i.e. during the agricultural season one of the partners would leave Khartoum with sufficient money to finance cultivation through wage labour. The fourth harvest was a failure; and a dispute between the cousins resulted in the termination of the partnership. Upon separation Bedri's share was £S 90, of which he invested £S 40 in the establishment of a vegetable stall at U'shrra neighbourhood in Khartoum.

After four or five months of trading at U'shrra, the Municipality raided the place and stocks worth over £S 30 were confiscated from Bedri. His relatives in Khartoum donated £S 20 to compensate for his loss; but, as the agricultural season was approaching, Bedri returned to his village. His relatives in Khartoum were displeased by Bedri's return, as they took it that he had lost interest in trading and that he was simply returning to his wife to enjoy himself. Bedri hopes that he never again

need to turn to his relatives for help.

After a poor harvest, Bedri returned to Khartoum, where he now works as a vegetable seller at a peripheral market at Omdurman. He lives with a group of young men from his district, and pays £S 8 in rent each month. His stocks are in the range of £S 20 to £S 30, depending on the season and on the week of the month. His daily profits vary from a low of £S 2 to £S 3 to a high of £S 6 to £S 8. As he sells in the open, he is on constant alert against raids by the Municipality. He maintains that he could not survive another confiscation because, in addition to the need for cash to finance his farm, he has to provide for his wife and newly-born daughter. He is now looking for a site covered by a permit because he thinks it is the only way to expand his business. He is also contemplating emigration, but has so far failed to secure a contract.

LICENCES FOR OTHER TRADERS

Whereas purveyors of tea, coffee and soft drinks require Health Certificates in addition to a booth to obtain licences, traders of manufactured goods and sellers of newspapers only require a booth. Cigarette sellers may either obtain a booth, or enter into an arrangement with a licensed trader to place a stall in front of the shop, in which case the stall will be covered under the shop's licence.

For the overwhelming majority of traders, to secure even the minimum requirement of a legal permanent place is most difficult. Booths in Greater Khartoum are allocated by the Municipality in central, peripheral and popular markets, as well as at certain other strategic sites (e.g. near hospitals). However, as part of 'the Khartoum Beautification Plan', in recent years the authorities have not only refused applications for new licences in central markets, but also transferred already-licensed booths to the popular markets on the outskirts of Greater Khartoum. As a result of this policy,

the number of sites in peripheral and popular markets to be allotted to new applicants (i.e. petty traders other than those being transferred from central markets) has been drastically reduced. A further factor compounding the difficulties of unlicensed petty traders seeking sites at peripheral markets is that the Municipality seems to undertake allocation in such a way that unlicensed petty traders are granted only a small percentage of the sites marked for 'petty traders'. This is a consequence of a system of allocation ostensibly devised to help 'disadvantaged' families and/or individuals (widowed and divorced women with small children, handicapped men, etc.). The allocation of sites in the Popular Market (al-Sug al-Shaa'bi) in Khartoum South is a case in point.

Al-Sough al-Shaa'bi was initially planned in the early 1970s when the Municipality started to implement plans to establish a new inter-city bus station away from Khartoum central market. The site provided a suitable place to transfer licensed booths from both Khartoum central market and al-Sajana peripheral market. The number of sites in the new market was greater than the number of booths transferred, and for this reason many of the unlicensed wheel-stall traders evicted from Central Khartoum applied for booths. A number of craftsmen and a few petty traders managed to obtain sites (not least through corrupt means such as bribes and mobilizing the support of influential relatives), but the overwhelming majority of applications from wheel-stall traders were turned down. Knowing that there were still sufficient sites to be

allocated, wheel-stall traders organized themselves into a union in 1977/78 and approached the Municipality expressing their willingness to pay taxes and their wish to be given sites in the newly established market. The authorities promised to consider the petition, but eventually the new sites were almost exclusively granted to people who were not previously involved in petty trade. Though the Municipal authorities claim that these allottees are "needy", which is undoubtedly true of some of them, quite a number of sites were allotted to relatives and friends of officials. But it is very rare for such allottees to start business themselves and most booths are eventually put up for lease.

Furthermore, the Municipality has put pressure on allottees to build brick-shops on the sites, instead of the former practice of constructing booths with cheaper materials such as wood and corrugated iron. Thus, even if sites were to be granted to unlicensed petty traders, the cost of building a brick-shop would require over 80% of wheel-stall traders' capital. A number of relatively well-off unlicensed traders are of course able to afford rented booths or shops in peripheral markets, but the demand for such booths and shops does not originate solely with unlicensed wheel-stall traders. In addition to retailers and wholesalers 'drifting' to Greater Khartoum from other urban and rural areas (cf. Chapter Three) and to craftsmen looking for licensed places to avert official harrassment, there are also the returned emigrants seeking to invest their savings in trade and, last but not least, former government functionaries, who have opted for early retirement

to invest their 'parallel salaries' (bribes, embezzled funds, etc.) and to exploit to the limit their connections in the bureaucratic apparatus (rationing authority, public corporations, licensing departments, state commercial banks, etc.).

But this discussion of the difficulties encountered by wheel-stall traders in obtaining 'fixed places' and licences is not intended to convey the impression that all unlicensed traders are seeking licences. Pedlars, for example, do not need fixed places (otherwise they would not be peddling). The rule of their game is to be at the right place at the right time. A normal scene in Greater Khartoum is the clustering of pedlars and hawkers at hospital-gates during visiting hours, in front of cinemas in evenings, near stadiums when matches are played, or even at wedding parties well after mid-night. By so doing, these petty traders bring before potential customers a wide range of goods. The purchase of some of these goods may be in the mind of potential customers (tooth brushes, tooth paste, nail clippers, key rings, popular perfumes, footwear) in which case the pedlars provide a convenient services saving to the customers both time and transport costs. But there are also commodities which would not otherwise be bought because the demand for them is transient and more often than not generated only at that time at that place. Examples of these goods are chewing-gum, cigarettes, soft drinks, tea, roasted ground-nuts, boiled chick-peas, and roasted water-melon seeds. A few pedlars are fruit-sellers, who carry 'Class A' stocks to sell to

government officials and businessmen at their places of work, which saves the latter the burden of driving to the heavily-crowded central markets.

Under current regulations, pedlars will never be eligible for licences or permits. With their meagre resources, however, they cannot afford the 'luxury' of waiting for customers to come to them. Their capital may be as low as £5 10, and they hope to earn at least one pound in net profits each day to continue in business. Consequently, a pedlar has to cope with a compound insecurity, which stems partly from the threat of having stocks confiscated, and partly from probabilities of low, or no, turn-over. Confiscation may impoverish pedlars completely, while slow turn-over may force them to starve even more. But nevertheless they seem to survive both dilemmas. Against confiscation they are on constant alert; and well-fed sprinters would hardly achieve better results in escaping from Municipality guards and Police. The cushion against low turn-over is aggressive marketing, passionate haggling, and continual walking to more places.

RELATIONS WITH WHOLESALERS

While petty traders and wholesalers show marked differences in their respective perceptions of the purpose and implications of the interaction between them, the perceptions of the multitude of petty traders are by no means homogeneous. This is particularly so because the implications of the interaction for petty traders are highly varied. While some petty traders find in close identification with wholesalers a

mechanism enhancing the expansion of their small businesses, others conceive of the interaction in negative terms as they are either denied access to stocks or caught in a 'debt trap' in which they are charged retail prices for their stocks (which undermines their competitiveness against licensed retail shops).

From the standpoint of wholesalers, on the other hand, the varied relations with petty traders are unanimously conceived as important mechanisms enhancing commercial capital accumulation. In other words, petty traders provide wholesalers with an efficient and cheap system for the distribution of goods. Though the proportion of the goods so distributed in the total stocks of wholesalers calls for close empirical investigation, there can be little doubt that wholesalers realize higher profit margins from the relatively small, but more frequent transactions with petty traders than from the larger deals concluded with retailers. This is particularly so because, owing to their relatively high overhead costs, licensed retailers are usually reluctant to pay more than wholesale prices; and in order to check the manipulation of the pricing system by wholesalers, they have in virtually all Sudanese cities formed their own unions, which are entitled to receive quotas, at official prices, directly from government (cf. Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1983:210ff).

Petty traders, who are largely unlicensed, are severely constrained in their attempt to organize themselves (as in the case of wheel-stall traders seeking grants of sites in popular

markets mentioned earlier) and have no alternative but to depend on wholesalers for their stocks. As their overhead costs are usually very small (a wheel-stall or horse-cart at most), petty traders are also more likely to accept paying any price below retail price to wholesalers. Thus through transactions with petty traders the wholesalers are in a position not only to realize their "wholesale profit margins", but also to appropriate a large portion of the profits supposed to accrue to retailers and petty traders buying stocks from them. It is worth noting here that while for most commodities the government fixes a certain price for the different levels of the trading hierarchy (i.e. importer to wholesaler, wholesaler to retailer, and retailer to final consumer) whereby 'maximum' profit margins are stipulated for wholesalers and retailers respectively (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 208-14), the "marketing expenses and margins" in the Sudan are known to comprise the greater proportion (between 55 to 60 per cent) of the retail price (cf. Ahmed Hamza Khalifa, 1977:123 *et passim*). Thus, notwithstanding variations in the terms of arrangement made between wholesalers and petty traders, the latter almost invariably figure as low-paid 'out-workers' for the former.

For our present purposes, four main sets of relations between wholesalers and petty traders may be discerned. These are:

- (1) **Simple exchange relations**, in which all transactions are conducted for cash;
- (2) **Debt relations**, in which goods are taken from

wholesalers on credit;

(3) **Commission-selling relations**, in which goods are advanced by wholesalers to petty traders for distribution in return for a commission;

(4) **Dependent-selling relations**, in which goods are advanced by wholesalers, but neither wages nor commission are paid to petty traders.

In formulating this typology I do not of course imply that these sets of relations are mutually exclusive. Though petty traders were generally reluctant to disclose information, from previous experience of trading networks in urban Sudan, and from close association with wholesalers in the past, I know that petty traders more often than not combine, to varying degrees, 'simple exchange relations' with 'debt relations'. Likewise the distinction between 'commission-selling' and 'dependent-selling' is not altogether clear cut as I base it on the method of remuneration for petty traders; in 'commission-selling' the reward is paid by wholesalers, while in 'dependent-selling' petty traders are expected to realize 'profits' from consumers. But commission-sellers also commonly realize profits over and above what they receive in commission from wholesalers. These two sets of relations may also be conceived as 'variants' of debt relations. In spite of these limitations, the typology may be used to help us to conceptualize in clearer terms the varied strategies adopted by petty traders in their interactions with wholesalers.

Simple exchange relations may appear self-evident and require no discussion. But it is important to note that,

though all transactions are conducted in cash, petty traders often need to establish close identification with a wholesaler in order to have access to stocks. This is particularly true of stocks which are illegally imported (e.g. smuggled cigarettes) or which, though legally acquired, are in short supply and consequently sold at 'black market' prices (e.g. bread, candles, matches, and cigarettes). For all types of goods, moreover, 'discounts' are given for large orders, and for this reason simple exchange interaction with wholesalers is usually conducted by a group rather than by individual petty traders.

Though petty traders generally prefer to conduct transactions in cash, the advantages of keeping stocks of a wide range of goods often force them to supplement their cash transactions with the acquisition of goods on credit. This is particularly true of new wheel-stall traders who have spent part of their accumulated savings to acquire wheel-stalls. Unlike simple exchange relations, however, debt relations are almost exclusively initiated between wholesalers and individual petty traders. But as wholesalers extend credit solely to members of groups known to them, through the provision of stocks on credit they tend to attract the continued custom not only of the specific petty trader to whom 'facilities' are offered, but also of the whole group of which he is member. All 47 'established' wheel-stall traders I interviewed denied taking goods on credit from merchants, but they all pointed out that "many other wheel-stall traders do take goods on credit".

While in the cases of simple exchange and debt relations the initiative is normally taken by petty traders, in the case of commission-selling it is usually the wholesalers who ask petty traders to sell goods on their behalf. The stocks involved are normally either sub-standard (incomplete sets, soiled and/or damaged clothes, etc.) or standard goods out of fashion or for which the turn-over is low at a time when storage space is needed for other stocks. In either case, relatively generous terms are given by wholesalers; the agreed price is usually well below the retail price, and often so low that commission-sellers manage to realize profits, over and above their commission, by selling the goods for a higher price. Likewise up to 30% of gross revenue may be given to petty traders undertaking distribution. Commission-selling is in many respects the most favourable set of relations that petty traders can establish with wholesalers. This is particularly so because petty traders do not need any capital to receive stocks, and though they have to find customers for the goods, they do not face the same dilemma as traders taking goods on credit. In other words, in the event of slow turn-over, stocks may be returned to wholesalers. Commission-sellers are consequently recipients of "preferential treatment", and for this reason they tend to be drawn from among the oldest clients of wholesalers, if not from among those who are also their kinsmen. The case of Taha highlights the magnitude of profits realized through commission-selling by a few strategically placed individuals.

CASE (13)

Taha, who is 42 years old, is married and has five children all of whom attend primary or junior secondary schools. He was born in the Northern Province, and completed primary (then 'sub-grade') education there. Three years after leaving school, he came to Khartoum to work in the shop of one of his relatives (who was then a retailer). He stayed with his relative for nine years, but, following a dispute between the two over Taha's heavy drinking, Taha left the shop and sought to establish himself as a petty trader. His savings at the time amounted to £S 12.

Taha's links with wholesalers and retailers in the market were very beneficial to his business, which initially consisted of a fixed stall at the Arabic Market in central Khartoum; but his drinking problem was a serious drain, and on several occasions he lost his entire capital and accumulated debts as well. Each time, however, he managed to recover through facilities from relatives. After his marriage 15 years ago, Taha gave up his stall and started to establish himself as broker and/or commission-seller. Though the stocks he handles are normally small, his activities involve selling goods to retailers and petty traders as well as to final consumers, and for this reason he does not stick to any one line of commodities. He deals in, among other items, empty sacks and cans, footwear and manufactured goods, petrol, charcoal and fish. But he prefers to deal in stocks which wholesalers or manufacturers want to clear. He maintains that such stocks are usually sold at discounted prices, but in cases where he has to pay relatively high prices he prefers to enter into commission-selling arrangements.

One of Taha's 'big hits' in recent months took place three weeks prior to my interview with him; he bought 162 dozen slightly sub-standard male underwears from a factory at Omdurman for £S 1.50 a dozen, and in three days he sold them to petty traders for £S 1.90 piastres a dozen, thus realizing a (26.7%) profit amounting to nearly £S 65. But he explained that the turn-over of goods was exceptionally high because petty traders were stocking in preparation for the approaching Bairum Feast, at which time Sudanese make the bulk of their annual purchases.

At the time of the interview, which took place during the morning four days before the Feast, Taha was selling footwear for a commission at a stall in front of a shop in Omdurman. The particular shop owner was not related to Taha, but the two have a relatively long-established trading relation. Taha was initially contracted 15 days before the Feast,

and was given a stock of 300 pairs to sell at a stall covered by the shop's licence. The total price was £S 2,700 (i.e. 9 pounds per pair) and a commission of 5 per cent was agreed upon. The prevalent market price was £S 11.50 a pair, and Taha initially asked for £S 11 from customers and, through haggling, a price between £S 9 and £S 10 was usually reached. In the first week, Taha sold 215 pairs for a total of £S 2,037 instead of the £S 1,935 agreed upon (thus realizing £S 102 in 'windfall profits'). He returned the 75 pairs left and was given £S 105 in commission in settlement of the first contract, but another agreement involving 500 pairs for a total price of £S 4,500 was simultaneously concluded. At the time of the interview, Taha had completed only one day with the second assignment, but he had already managed to sell 87 pairs for £S 819 pounds (a windfall profit of £S 36 in addition to £S 39 in commission). He was hoping to sell at least 300 pairs during the two days before the Feast, but I could not interview him at a later stage. He was very busy at the stall on the eve of the Feast, and I was unable to meet him later because he left Khartoum on a relatively long visit to his family back home.

Taha confided that the profits realized during the two Muslim feasts are exceptional because the demand for goods was at its highest. Because of relatively assured turn-over, moreover, commission-sellers normally accept a low percentage commission during the festive seasons. In other seasons the stocks involved are usually smaller, but due to slow turn-over the percentage paid in commission is normally higher. Taha does not keep records of his different activities, but he claims normally to net around £S 250 (after deducting maintenance expenses), of which he sends £S 70 £S 100 to his wife and children who live in a small town in the North. He visits his family at least three times a year. In Omdurman he lives at a house of a related wholesaler, but depends on restaurants for his meals.

Another form of commission-selling is found in the distribution of newspapers and magazines by newsagents who run licensed book-booths (kiosk-cum-bookshop). Up to the early 1970s, these agents used to sub-contract, also on a commission basis, young boys for the distribution of parts of their quotas. Since 1970 when confiscation measures reduced the number of national daily newspapers to two only, the

distribution of newspapers has been the responsibility of a public agency. This centralization seems to have resulted in a decline in the rate of commission given to newsagents, and since then newsagents have largely ceased to engage boys. I did not encounter a single boy distributing newspapers during the various periods of my fieldwork.

But new forms of commission-selling have been generated in other fields. One recent, but conspicuous, form concerns transactions in currency rather than in stocks of goods. A number of wholesalers (who also assume the role of importers) and owners of exchange bureaux have started to provide large sums in local currency to petty traders. The latter usually cluster in front of banks and exchange bureaux to buy foreign currency from emigrant workers on visits. Commission at the rate of 2% is given to these commission-sellers (or buyers?). As such currency transactions are proscribed by law, the commission-sellers were very reluctant to be interviewed. The little information I obtained was through casual conversation while concluding a deal with one of them.

The final set of relations concerns dependent-selling, which combines features of debt and commission-selling. Like commission-selling, it involves no capital input from petty traders, and the goods belong to the wholesaler and can be returned to him. But no commission is received by dependent-sellers who, like petty traders taking on goods on credit, are expected to realize 'profits' from sales. Perhaps the only unique feature of dependent-selling is that it often involves the provision of certain assets. Many wheel-stall

traders told me that wholesalers provide some petty traders with both stocks and wheel-stalls, though I was not able to locate any of these 'dependent' wheel-stall traders. But 5 cigarette-sellers volunteered information about arrangements with wholesalers, who provided both stalls covered by licences of shops or restaurants and stocks of cigarettes. The case of Azrag typifies such arrangements, and the only notable difference is that Azrag is offered free residence at the wholesaler's house.

CASE (14)

Azrag is 23 years old. He was born in the Nuba Mountains, and at the age of 17 came to Khartoum to work as a house-servant. He worked, and lived, for around two years at a wholesaler's house for £S 12 a month. Besides performing various tasks around the house, Azrag daily carried breakfast and dinner to the wholesaler's shop, which was not very far from the house. During these visits to the shop, Azrag befriended a cigarette-seller, also a Nuba, running a fixed stall in front of the shop. Hearing of the 'high income' the latter earned, Azrag was encouraged to invest some of his savings, which were kept with the wholesaler, in cigarette-selling. He informed the wholesaler about his wish to start trading in the evening (after finishing his work at the house). The wholesaler encouraged Azrag, and the latter started to sell cigarettes under a lamp post at the periphery of the (peripheral) market in which the wholesaler was based. Azrag kept two brands of cigarettes, and his stocks were 100 cigarettes of each. He made small profits (20-30 piastres a day), but as he retained his job as house-servant he was contented. Six or seven months after starting his small business, a dispute arose between the wholesaler and a boy running a cigarette-stall situated at a restaurant owned by the wholesaler. Azrag was called to take charge of the stall and to bring one of his relatives to work as house-servant. In spite of his 'promotion', he has continued to live at the wholesaler's house.

The stall which Azrag has taken over consists of a glass-sided cabinet for cigarettes and a tin-chest for tumbak. Stocks of cigarettes (worth around £S 300) are advanced by the wholesaler, while the

tumbak (worth around £S 15) belongs to Azrag. Though entitled to eating three meals with the chefs and waiters at the restaurant, he is not considered a wage worker. The wholesaler provides the cigarettes at retail prices (i.e. 75 piastres per packet of 10), and Azrag is expected to make 'profit' from his snuff sales and by charging a 'black-market' price of 8 piastres per cigarette. The snuff is bought for cash from another wholesaler, and costs 65 piastres per lb (when processed it fetches up to £S 1.50 per lb). He sells between 500 and 600 cigarettes, and around 3 lbs of snuff daily. His average net daily income is around £S3.

Azrag married two years ago, but his wife and newly-born son live in his home village. He goes at least once a year to see them, but he sends them money more frequently. During his absence Azrag, in consultation with the wholesaler, makes arrangements with relatives and/or friends for the running of the stall. Those who take over the stall are given the same terms as his own, and they do not give him any money from their 'profits'. So far he has accumulated £S 300 pounds in savings, which are kept with the wholesaler. Though his savings are enough to start a stall of his own, he is not thinking of separation. He believes that he is being subsidised by the wholesaler through the provision of free residence and maintenance. But he is looking forward to the day when he will be able to establish a stall to be run by another person and probably on the same terms as his. Azrag's business is not subject to official harrassment because of licence requirements, as his stall is considered part of the restaurant (a service to customers); but his higher-than-official prices often lead to disputed with his clients.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have attempted to transcend aspects of the limitations of the literature which seeks to relate the post-colonial proliferation of unskilled tertiary self-employment in Greater Khartoum to the lack of alternative employment opportunities by relating it to the process of urban growth, which generates a steadily increasing demand for unskilled tertiary services. I have argued that in the sphere of unskilled personal services this increasing demand

originates almost exclusively with the more affluent strata. Through the analysis of aspects of car-washing and laundry-work, I have attempted to show how the rewards for 'self-employed' unskilled tertiary workers can be much higher than for wage labourers, and how in the face of the insecurity of 'self-employment' these workers have devised methods to eliminate dramatic fluctuations in demand/income (through establishment of relations with a semi-permanent core of clients). The cultural stigmatization of these services, however, inhibits the entry of many other workers.

The proliferation of street/petty trading is likewise related to population growth. But the role of petty traders does not cease with the provision of goods (and credit) to the urban population; they also play a very significant role in furthering capital accumulation by wholesalers.

As petty trade is not subject to cultural stigmatization; and as very little money may suffice to start trading, the activity continues to attract a majority of unskilled workers looking for income-generating opportunities. But I have attempted to show that entry to petty trading is one thing and continuity in it quite another. Besides the 'external' disincentives relating to official harrassment and uncertainty of turn-over, more often than not continuity depends on one's background, precisely because each line of trade is dominated by members of certain 'tribal'/regional group(s). Entrants from these groups are readily received as members in the "bachelors' bands" formed by petty traders.

These bands fulfil several functions. As 'residence groups' they provide companionship and help to reduce the cost of maintenance for members; as 'trading networks' they provide information and facilitate introductions to wholesalers for the provision of stocks and extension of credit; as 'vigilance groups', they provide protection; and as rotating credit associations they augment the capital of each member. Many members of these groups are thus likely to continue in petty trade, while other entrants who find it difficult to establish themselves tend to conceive of petty trade as a transient activity to be pursued until alternative employment is secured. Commonly that alternative is manufacturing wage employment which, as explained in Chapter Five, is characterized by a pattern of widespread 'replenishment recruitment'.

The conditions of 'self-employed' unskilled tertiary workers described in this chapter have far-reaching implications for the conventional wisdom which attempts to characterize unskilled tertiary workers as 'redundant'. But these implications do not stem solely from the points which I have attempted to substantiate in this chapter concerning the "structural determinants" underlying the proliferation of tertiary activities and the way in which tertiary workers have managed to 'cope' with the apparent insecurity of 'self-employment'. They also stem from the challenge which the conditions of tertiary workers pose for the largely conjectural exercises which seek to postulate "wage employment" as the only form of "meaningful/productive

employment" for manual workers. In asserting this, I do not of course wish to deny either that wage employment opportunities in urban Sudan are severely constrained by the processes of peripheral urbanism, or that my analysis indeed suggests that the large majority of tertiary workers consists of 'hardy' workers, who earn small incomes that suffice to meet basic needs only. I wish rather to stress the point that neither of these two 'facts' provides a basis for the characterization of tertiary workers as 'redundant', precisely because such a characterization omits to take into account the striking and significant similarities that are observed between the conditions of, on the one hand, the unskilled tertiary workers alleged to be redundant and, on the other, the wage labourers in government and large-scale industrial and commercial enterprises. I believe this omission stems largely from a poorly-founded, but widely-held, belief that, unlike wage employment in the so-called 'formal/modern sector', 'self-employment' among unskilled manual workers is characterized by low productivity, dramatic and rapid fluctuations in the frequency of employment, and/or job insecurity. But virtually all the concepts devised for the characterization of tertiary 'self-employment' are, to say the least, muddled. For example on the rare occasions when the concept of "low productivity" is not taken for granted as self-evident, it is usually considered synonymous with "low earnings" (e.g. Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1977a:35). As I shall discuss in the next chapter, the urban wage workers in general, and the unskilled wage labourers in particular, not

only earn "low incomes" (often much lower than unskilled tertiary workers), but they also face serious job insecurity. In Chapter Seven, then, I shall seek to expose aspects of the mystification surrounding the conceptualization of the apparent structural segmentation of the Sudanese urban wage labour market.

NOTES

1. For an account of the perceptions of Nuer manual construction labourers regarding the status of unskilled personal activities (laundry-work in particular), see El-Wathig Kameir, 1980b:216 et passim).

2. The fees quoted are for 1981. Insofar as the 15 months I spent in field research were spread over a period of three years, inflation and the steady increases in prices posited serious difficulties in my attempt to use data collected in interviews in different years. In my analysis of cases on unskilled personal services I relied on data gathered between April and September, 1982, while in the analysis of cases on street/petty trading I relied on data gathered between May and September, 1981.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE URBAN LABOUR MARKET IN THE SUDAN

For capital, what is important is that the reproduction of labour-power is subsidized externally to a much greater extent when it is located in a predominantly non-capitalist environment than is usual in industrial countries (although this is still significant there), which consequently allows the super-exploitation of labour-power. It is the presence of such subsidies, and not the high rate of unemployment and the 'law of supply and demand', which make low wages economically and socially possible in developing countries (Frobel, 1984:71; original emphasis).

The aim of this chapter is to highlight the striking similarities between the different forms of employment for manual labour ('permanent' wage employment, 'casual' wage employment and 'self-employment') in Greater Khartoum, which forms underlie the apparent **structural segmentation** of the wage labour market in urban Sudan. The chapter starts with a brief critique of the literature. The main purpose of this critique is to outline, and ultimately refute the dualistic ('formal-informal') conception of the structure of the urban labour market adopted by the ILO Mission to the Sudan, and to show how the alleged implications of this dualistic structure have (unconsciously?) been incorporated into contributions purporting to criticize the Mission's views. I attempt to compare the terms and conditions of employment for the so-called 'formal' and 'informal' sectors pointing out their relative uniformity. On the basis of that comparison, I set out to formulate an alternative conception of the nature and origins of the apparent segmentation in the structure of the

urban wage labour market. I draw attention to the distinction between unionized and non-unionized workers, which I regard as the pillar of the **observed** structural segmentation of the labour market. To substantiate the significance of this distinction, I dwell on a detailed account of the position of trade unions in the Sudan. The chapter ends with a brief conclusion in which I attempt to bring together the main points raised.

THE DUALISTIC CONCEPTION

Studies on the structure and operation of the urban labour market in the Sudan, relatively few and preliminary as they have been, are largely recent and they focus almost exclusively on the situation in Greater Khartoum. With a few exceptions (notably Sa'ad El-Din Fawzi, 1954; 1957; McLoughlin, 1965; 1970; Ali Ahmed Suliman, 1974), the main body of the literature dates from 1976 and since the arrival of the ILO/UNDP Employment Mission which, in response to an official request, sought to formulate a comprehensive development strategy for the country. In pursuing its task, the Mission organized a series of research projects to obtain information on various aspects of the Sudanese economy. One of these projects dealt with the urban labour market. The larger part of the literature thus consists either of findings of research financed and/or conducted by the Mission (e.g. ILO, 1976; Mohamed El-Murtada Mustafa, 1976; 1983; idem. & Khalid Affan, 1975; 1977; Kannappan, 1977a; Khalid Affan, 1977; Sheehan, 1978), or of critiques of the Mission's conceptions

and recommendations (e.g. Chase, 1978; Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1978; 1979a; 1980a; El-Wathig Kameir, 1980a; 1980b). A few later studies, largely financed by the ILO and/or UNHCR, followed closely the original formulation of the ILO Mission (Jenkins, 1981; Ghosh, 1983; Mohamed El-Murtada Mustafa, 1983). It is worth noting that the question of the urban labour market is also briefly referred to in studies of trade unionism (Abdel Rahman E. Ali Taha, 1970; 1972; 1976; 1977) as well as in studies of rural-urban migration (Mohamed Abdel Rahman Ali & Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1974; Mohamed El-Awad Galal El-Din, 1974a; 1974b; El-Sayed El-Bushra, 1971a; 1972a; 1976; 1980; Salih El-Arifi, 1971; 1972; 1980; Mohamed Yousif A. El-Mustafa, 1983).

These relatively recent contributions are of course welcome insofar as they provide information filling some of the lacunae in the descriptive literature. But with the notable exception of the inspiring, albeit very brief critique by Chase (op.cit.), these contributions place serious constraints on our understanding of the structure of the urban labour market. I believe their limitations stem from flaws inherent in the dualistic conceptual framework shared by both the ILO-studies themselves and the contributions purporting to criticize them. This is due to the fact that the mass of data gathered by the ILO Mission has unfortunately been fed into the strait-jacket of the ('formal-informal') dualist concept of labour markets in third world cities first popularized by the ILO Mission to Kenya (1972) and subsequently incorporated, with minor modifications, into the analysis of other country

and city studies organized by the ILO as part of its World Employment Programme (cf. Bromley, 1979a; Moser, 1979). The **end-product** of that 'analysis' of the urban labour market in Greater Khartoum has been a situation in which the **theoretical statements** made in the contributions are often in direct conflict with the **facts** described in muted terms in the same works. This contradiction between research findings and theoretical perspective is most apparent in the main Report of the Sudan Mission (see below).

Generally speaking, the dualist conception of the ILO-studies on Third World cities overemphasizes the apparent segmentation of the urban labour market. It draws a distinction between the so-called 'formal' and 'informal' segments, and stresses the implications which this alleged distinction carries for the terms and conditions of employment of the wage labour force in each segment. The Mission (ILO, 1976:109) accordingly informs us that

Urban labour markets [in the Sudan] differ for the formal and informal sectors. The former ... is characterised by large scale of operation, a high degree of capital intensity, relatively high levels of remuneration, and a degree of legislative protection relating to hours of work, working conditions, minimum wages, overtime rates, bargaining and grievance procedures, and compensation and pension schemes; in other words, employment in this sector is similar to that found in the urban centres of industrialised countries. By contrast, the informal sector is characterised by small-scale operation, a primitive level of technology, a relatively low level of earned income, high dependency on family labour, and few regulatory measures of any kind..

In the so-called 'formal' segment of the labour market, we are told, the employers are government departments, public

concerns, and large-scale private enterprises. Basing itself on the returns of the National Population Census of 1973, the Mission estimates that 'formal' employment in Greater Khartoum is enjoyed by under 30 per cent of the urban labour force (ibid., p.363). This percentage covers civil servants and white-collar workers, as well as manual (skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled) wage earners.

The ILO studies note that the 'formal' wage labour market is far from perfect. Thus neither considerations of productivity, nor the forces of supply and demand, seem to play prominent roles in the determination of the "relatively high wages"; "pressure by trade unions" is said to be the crucial determining factor (ibid.; Khalid Affan, 1977:62ff). The assumption underlying this assertion is that since establishments in the 'formal' sector are large, in terms of the numbers employed, the trade unions in these establishments are also usually large in membership; and this is in turn held to strengthen the position of workers in the process of collective bargaining.

In contrast to the conditions of workers in the 'formal' sector, 'informal workers' are said to consist of both 'self-employed' persons and 'casual' wage workers. The ILO studies assert that the 'self-employed', who are usually unlicensed, are persistently harrassed by the authorities, and that the conditions of 'informal' wage workers are characterized by low earnings, discontinuous employment and a lack of 'privileges', such as paid sick-leave, annual holidays, and legislative protection, enjoyed by 'formal'

workers.

Despite their adoption of the dualistic conception of the wage labour market, the ILO studies do not suggest, and indeed *emphatically deny* that the segmentation results in discontinuities between the segments. Indeed, we are told that between the two main segments there exists a "hazy borderline" surrounding 'formal' employment and comprising the 'temporary' and 'casual' workers who have terms and conditions of employment **similar** to those of workers in the so-called 'informal' segment. In describing this 'borderline', the ILO Sudan Mission has thus itself provided a point of departure for critiques of its dualistic conception.

THE DUALISTIC CONCEPTION RECONSIDERED

It is common knowledge in the Sudan that almost all establishments in the so-called 'formal sector' resort to the employment of large numbers of wage workers on a 'temporary' or 'casual' basis. It was not until recently, however, that much attention was given to the analysis of the **numbers** in such employment, to the **proportion** of this labour to the total number of wage earners, and to the **differences** between permanent and non-permanent employment.

'Casual' and 'temporary' employment in large scale establishments is most commonly identified with the construction sector. A recent study of casual construction workers in Khartoum (El-Wathig Kameir, 1980a; 1980b), which vividly documents the problems and position of such workers, is indeed the first systematic analysis of casual employment

in urban Sudan. In this specific case, contractors usually face dramatic variations in production schedules owing to fluctuations in demand for their services or, when demand is present, because of the frequent shortages in building materials. Accordingly, the use of casual labour on a daily basis is viewed by contractors as an efficient, flexible, and economical way to operate in relation to fluctuations in their production schedules (see below). The Ministry of Construction is similarly known to engage unskilled construction workers on a 'non-permanent' basis (ILO, 1976:365).

Resort to 'casual' and 'temporary' employment is not confined to the construction industry, or even to those other government departments and large private establishments in which the pace and intensity of production fluctuate seasonally or otherwise. Thus even in the large scale manufacturing establishments -where employers are expected to be most **concerned** with developing a 'durable' relation with workers- 'non-permanent' employment is widespread. The following quotations, extracted from the the ILO Report (1976), provides an overview of the situation:

Employment in the formal sector in the Sudan, whether private or public, is characterised by an unusually large proportion of workers who are classified as "temporary" and who may be laid off without legislative interference (p. 109)... Data for 1973 for a group of concerns in the public industrial sector employing 22,000 workers suggest that as much as 40 per cent were "temporary" workers, the percentage being even higher if we exclude the white collar workers ..(p. 365).

According to Kannappan (1977a:88n), the data for 1973 mentioned above indicate that 8,791 out of 21,964 employees in

that group of concerns were classified as 'temporary'. Kannappan (ibid.) presents the following table to show the number of employees by category

Table 7:1

<u>Categories of Employees in a Group of Public Concerns in Khartoum, 1973</u>		
Category	Number	Percentage
Skilled	3,554	16
Unskilled	7,003	32
Temporary	8,791	40
White-collar	2,616	12
Total	21,964	100

What should be taken into account in relation to the table is that 'temporary' workers are **exclusively** unskilled. Excluding the white-collar and skilled workers, who are always 'permanent' employees, we find that 'temporary' workers actually constitute around 60 per cent of the total unskilled labour force (i.e. 8,791 out of 15,794 unskilled workers). Large as it is, there is good reason to suspect that even this percentage does not show the actual total 'non-permanent' employment in these concerns, and it certainly **cannot be** taken as **representative** of the actual proportion of 'non-permanent' employment in the so-called formal sector as a whole. The reason is that there is no reference in the table to the 'totally casual' workers employed on a daily basis and who, given the day-to-day fluctuations, are very difficult to enumerate in any survey (cf. Chapter Five). Moreover, it should be stressed that the table provides an overview of the

situation in public industrial concerns only; the proportion of 'non-permanent' employment in private large scale industry, which as I explained in Chapter Five is characterized by excessive rates of labour turn-over, is indeed much higher. The ILO Mission (1976:365) points out that the (MEFFIT) survey which estimated manufacturing employment in Greater Khartoum at 33,000 "placed 'temporary' manufacturing employment at 31,000".

In describing the magnitude of 'temporary' and 'casual' employment in the so-called 'formal' sector, it is important to stress that 'permanent' employment is not confined to large scale private establishments and government departments. Labour legislation in the country stipulates that a permanent post must be created if continuous employment is offered for more than 90 days; and permanent employment may thus be encountered in the smallest of enterprises. A classic example of this is an employed shop-keeper who runs a shop on behalf of an owner who pursues other interests.

The main point to stress is that the **facts** of 'casual' and 'temporary' employment in the 'formal sector' are recognized in the ILO studies, which also recognize that the wage labour force as a whole constitutes around a half only of the entire manual labour force in Greater Khartoum. The Mission (1976:111) indeed points to the "very small size" of 'permanent' wage workers and contends that "As elsewhere in the Third World, this is the labour elite, and we need constantly to keep in mind what a small proportion of the labour force they are".

Both the ILO Mission (1976:365) and Kannappan (1977a:88) attempt to explain the pattern of "heavy reliance" on 'temporary' and 'casual' employment by 'formal' employers. Two factors have been advanced in this respect. Firstly, there are "considerations of flexibility" to cope with the fluctuations in production schedules; but this factor is relevant only in the case of the construction industry (in which production virtually comes to a halt during the rainy season). Secondly, the two studies maintain that 'non-permanent' employment is observed even where fluctuations in schedules are not as marked; and this might be explained in terms of the desire of employers to avert the alleged "more expensive commitments" associated with 'permanent' employment. The ILO studies generally seem to emphasize the "costly nature" of 'permanent' employment whether in **remuneration** (the 'high wages') or **legislation** relating to it ("legislative protection", "after-service payments", etc.). This contention is, I believe, far-fetched.

The starting point in the critique of the ILO studies concerns the problem of classification. Thus, if a large proportion of 'formal' wage employment is actually 'non-permanent', and if 'permanent' employment is also observed in small scale enterprises, the formal/informal conception of the urban labour market becomes not only meaningless, but also a distortion blurring the facts of 'temporary' and 'casual' employment in the so-called 'formal sector' (cf. Chase, op.cit.). The insertion of 'non-permanent' employment in the so-called 'formal' segment of the labour

market as a "hazy borderline" between the two segments fulfils exactly that function.

The **serious flaw** in the dualistic conception of the structure of the urban labour market in Greater Khartoum does not stem solely from the fact that all classification is necessarily arbitrary, but also, and even more significantly, from the attempt to identify 'permanent' workers as a 'labour elite' upon which 'privileges' are alleged to be conferred. It is my central contention that the ILO studies on the Sudan have grossly misunderstood the nature, origin, and implications of the distinction between 'permanent' and 'non-permanent' employment. But this misunderstanding is by no means **confined** to the ILO studies which initially introduced the formal-informal distinction and its alleged implications into the analysis of the urban wage labour market in the Sudan. Many studies that explicitly reject the formal-informal conception of the structure of the urban labour market have **uncritically accepted** the alleged implications of the distinction. The otherwise very illuminating comparative study of factory workers and unskilled construction labourers in Greater Khartoum by El-Wathig Kameir (1980b) is a good case in point.

Kameir (ibid.) rejects the formal-informal conceptualization, and rightly attributes the emergence of the two "forms" of wage labour employment to variations in the requirements of different capital accumulation processes. But he accepts the alleged implications of 'permanent' employment, and accordingly sets out to show how the differences in the

terms and conditions of the 'permanent' factory workers contribute to their stabilization, while the insecurity of the 'casual' unskilled construction labourers creates conditions conducive to circular migration between Greater Khartoum and the home villages. There is a conspicuous absence in Kameir's study of any reference to 'temporary' employment, or to the rates of labour turn-over, in the two factories studied.⁽¹⁾

TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTION OF THE SEGMENTED STRUCTURE

A detailed assessment of all aspects of the terms and conditions of permanent employment in the Sudan is of course an enormous task that cannot be undertaken here. In order to substantiate aspects of the alternative conception of the nature and origins of the apparent structural segmentation of the urban labour market in the Sudan, I will deal with three closely related aspects of 'permanent' employment which are said to constitute crucial features of the distinction between 'permanent' and 'non-permanent' ('temporary' and 'casual' employment as well as 'informal self-employment'). These aspects are:

- (1) The alleged 'legislative protection' of permanent workers;
- (2) The alleged 'high wages' and other 'expensive commitments' associated with permanent employment;
- (3) the alleged role of trade unions in collective bargaining and its effectiveness in promoting the living standards of union workers who are **exclusively** union members;

I would stress that the ILO studies seem to have based their view of the above aspects of 'permanent' employment on what appear to be no more than 'first impressions' of labour legislation in the Sudan. This is clear in the overview which the Mission (1976:117) presents of the position of the trade unions in the country, and especially in the contention that:

The organised labour movement in the Sudan has secured an impressive armoury of legislation protecting its right to organise workers and providing the machinery for the orderly settlement of labour disputes. From the Trade Disputes Act of 1966 to the Employer and Employed Persons Ordinance of 1948 (as amended in 1969), to the Workers' Trade Union Act of 1971, Sudanese workers are furnished with collective bargaining procedures that bear comparison with those achieved by organised labour in advanced countries. However, a Presidential Order of 1974 prohibited the right to strike, as well as the employers' right to lock out, without ministerial approval; in consequence, the Sudan has been almost free from strikes in recent years. Far from this creating resentment among union leaders, the view seems to be that prohibition of the right to strike has not hampered organised labour in securing better wages and better working conditions for its members.

Before dealing with the details of the three aspects of 'permanent' employment which are alleged to confer privileges upon permanent workers, a general point of crucial importance concerning labour legislation and its relation to the position of workers has to be emphasized. This is that even if labour legislation in the Sudan **does** provide for the protection of the right of the labour movement to organize, bargain, and settle disputes in an 'orderly manner', such 'protection' should not be conceived as the simple consequence of legislation issued by a 'charitable' or 'impartial' state.

This is indeed particularly relevant in a country like the Sudan where the state assumes the role of the **protector** of the interests of employers, and is also itself by far the **largest employer** in the country. The most important point to make here is that the view of labour laws as an initiative taken by the state not only overlooks the basis of labour legislation in the Sudan as a **reaction** to initiatives of the labour movement, but also mystifies the status, function, and implications of such legislation in the **class struggle**, which the phrase "industrial relations" actually denotes, albeit in muted terms.⁽²⁾ When viewed in the wider context of class struggle, labour legislation may be seen as the outcome of struggle by workers against unacceptable terms and conditions of work on the one hand and, on the other, as an attempt by the state (representing employers) to avert the radical consequences that could arise if the struggle by workers was left to run its course uninterrupted. In maintaining this, I am not implying that all labour legislation necessarily constitutes 'victory' for the labour movement. Though some laws did amount to a measure of submission on the part of employers, labour legislation in the Sudan has, in the main, been designed to pacify the labour movement rather than to advance the cause of workers. But it is worth noting that labour legislation enacted between May 1969 and December 1970 stands as an exception -one that may be seen as proving the rule, as we will see later in the chapter. In a nutshell, then, the labour movement in the Sudan owes very little to labour legislation except for its temporary containment. This assertion, quite

contrary to the assertions of the ILO Mission, is as true of the 'legislative protection' of the right to organize and bargain as it is of the two other aspects of permanent employment to be discussed below.

JOB SECURITY

The illusion that 'permanent' workers in the Sudan enjoy **job security** appears to stem from the existence of certain laws that ostensibly provide workers with legislative protection against **unlawful termination** of employment by employers. This illusion is further **reinforced** when the apparent situation of permanent workers is compared to that of temporary and casual workers whom the law excludes. In the development of this illusion, two crucial points have usually been overlooked:

(a) What the law stipulates as **lawful termination**, against which **no protection** is provided;

(b) The nature of the **circumstances** under which employers may wish to terminate the employment of workers.

On the issue of the nature and scope of 'lawful termination', it should be noted that when 'lawful' is defined in very elastic terms, employers can always act **within** the law and legislative protection becomes a mockery of the concept. This is, I believe, the kind of legislative protection stipulated in labour laws in the Sudan. The ILO Mission (1976:393) referred to this issue as follows;

We wish to draw special attention to at least one other area of protective

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legislation, namely that relating to the conditions under which workers may be laid off by employers. Legal provisions pertaining to the termination of employment are contained in the Employer and Employed Persons Ordinance of 1949, as amended in 1969 and 1973. But the provisions of the Act deal essentially with only the questions of due notice and compensation. There is no provision in that Act which seeks to provide any measure of security for employed persons from arbitrary and unfair dismissal by an employer. It could, of course, be argued that the grievance procedure laid down in the Trade Disputes Act provides some protection of job security in this regard, since unjust dismissals may be channelled through that procedure. But this is not really an adequate measure to deal with this problem.

Before dwelling on the details of the law, I should stress an obvious point concerning the circumstances under which employers might wish to terminate the employment of workers. As long as the reasons that initially led employers to engage workers hold, employers tend to have an interest in retaining their services. In other words, employers do not hire wage workers for any purpose other than to perform certain specific tasks, and as long as there are such tasks, employers tend to keep their workers. This is of course as true of wage employment in the public and private concerns where "profitability" is the prime objective, as it is in the "spending" government departments that provide services.⁽³⁾ The central point is that the position of a wage worker as 'temporary' should not be construed as **inherently** insecure, precisely because as long as tasks are available, the position of the temporary worker will be, other things being equal, secure. Thus it is the usual practice for employers (especially government departments) to sack their 'temporary'

workers by the end of the working day on the last Thursday before the completion of the 90th day of continuous employment (after which a 'permanent' position would have to be created), but to reinstate them on the following Saturday. (Friday is the Weekend in the Sudan). Indeed, it is not uncommon to find 'temporary' workers who have actually worked for the same employer for more than six years. In noting this practice, I do not deny that many 'temporary' and 'casual' workers do get the sack. The 'casual' construction workers mentioned above are a classic case, although we have no systematic study of the conditions of the 'casual' workers who do get fired (Do they get employed by other contractors?).

The case of the 'temporary' workers who work for several years for the same employer clearly illustrates my argument concerning the conditions under which employers tend to terminate the employment of their permanent workers. In this respect we should note that 'permanent' positions are usually offered only in establishments which do not normally experience marked fluctuations in production schedules; otherwise employers tend to engage casual workers. In other words, the desire of employers to terminate the employment of workers should not be construed as an innate characteristic; whether employers employ permanent or non-permanent workers, the question of termination arises in specific circumstances only. These may relate to circumstances such as a total or partial dissolution of an establishment, a desire to sack incompetent workers, or a wish to get rid of 'militant' workers and trade union activists. Accordingly, the issue of

'legislative protection' should not be treated at a high level of abstraction; instead, our focus should be on the nature of the circumstances under which the question of termination arises, and the relation of these circumstances to the concept of 'lawful termination' against which no protection is offered.

In an attempt to review the laws regulating termination of employment, it is worth noting that, despite decades of 'post-colonial' rule, the current labour laws largely retain the basic concepts and structure of **oppressive** colonial labour legislation (cf. Farouk Abu-Eisa, 1981:5). For example, the current law regulating termination of employment (**The Employer and Employed Persons Act, 1976**) is little more than a minor amendment of the colonial **Employer and Employed Persons Ordinance, 1949**. For this reason it is essential to trace the current laws regulating termination of employment to their initial sources in the 1949 Ordinance and its later amendments.

According to Abdel Rahman E. Ali Taha and Ahmed H. El-Jack (1973:9), the purpose of the 1949 Ordinance was

the regulating of terms of employment in both private and public establishments. It set minimum standards relating to hours of work, overtime, holidays, rest periods, sick leaves, the payment of after-service benefits and other terms of employment. It also contained rules regulating the termination of employment dealt with under Section 10 of the Ordinance.

The 1949 Ordinance was not intended as a **universal law** covering all wage earners in the Sudan; Section 3 of the Ordinance stipulated that "agricultural labourers" and

"temporary workers" should be excluded from the jurisdiction of the Ordinance. As I explained earlier, it is this exclusion which created the illusion of the 'legislative protection' provided for 'permanent' workers and denied to 'temporary' labourers.

Section 10 of the 1949 Ordinance contained three main Articles each of which related to specific forms of termination of employment. Section 10 (3) stipulated the prohibition of termination by either party when the employed person is travelling in the course of work and is thus of no relevance to the current discussion. Sections 10 (1) and (2) dealt with the termination of contract by either party after giving notice and the termination of contract by employers without notice (summary dismissals) respectively; these two articles, and their later amendments, will be discussed in some detail here.

In its original formulation in the 1949 Ordinance, Section 10 (1) stipulated that:

Subject as hereinafter provided, every contract of service wherein no agreement respecting notice of longer duration is expressed not being a contract to perform some specific work without reference to time, shall be terminable by either party:

(a) Where the employed person is engaged on the basis of a monthly wage, at the expiration of one month's notice which may be given at any time;

(b) Where the employed person is engaged on the basis of a weekly wage: [i] if he has completed less than 2 years of continuous service, at the expiration of two weeks notice which may be given at any time.

[bA] Where the employed person is engaged on the basis of a fortnightly wage and has completed less than five years of continuous service, at the expiration of two weeks' notice which may be given at any time.

(c) Where the employed person is engaged on the basis of a daily wage, whether paid daily or not:

[i] if he has not completed six months of continuous service at the close of any day without notice;

[ii] if he has completed six months but less than two years of continuous service, at the expiration of two weeks' notice which may be given at any time;

[iii] if he has completed two but less than five years of continuous service, at the expiration of two weeks' notice which may be given at any time.

(d) Where the employed person is engaged on the basis of a daily, weekly or fortnightly wage and has completed not less than five years of continuous service, at the expiration of one month's notice which may be given at any time (cf. *idem.*, pp.9/10).

What should be noted in relation to the termination of employment after giving due notice is that employers (and employees) were not required to justify their wish to terminate the contract. Likewise, while "notices" were stipulated where employees had spent a minimum of six months of continuous service, no after-service payment or gratuity was to be provided for a worker **unless** he/she had continuous service for a minimum period of five years (Section 25 of the Ordinance dealt with gratuity). Though the after-service payment **was**, and still **is**, not an "expensive commitment", as we shall see later, an employer could nevertheless manage to avoid it by simply notifying the worker one month before the completion of the five years of his desire to terminate the contract.

Section 10 (2) went even further than the first article by enabling employers to terminate contracts without giving notice or a gratuity:

an employer may dismiss without notice an employed person for wilful disobedience of a lawful order or gross misconduct in or connected with his employment or serious negligence or wilful misconduct calculated seriously to injure the employer's

business.

The **nebulous** nature of the circumstances under which an employer could resort to summary dismissals hardly needs emphasis. Whenever employers wanted to reduce their labour force for economic reasons, but in such a way as to avoid payment of a gratuity, or simply wished to get rid of a 'militant' worker, the provisions of Section 10 (2) could be invoked. As will be explained later, employers commonly resorted to summary dismissals in order to inhibit the formation of trade unions; and it was for this reason in particular that the labour movement singled out Section 10 of the Ordinance and made an issue of demanding its amendment as a matter of the highest priority (cf. Farouk Abu-Eisa, op.cit.).

The first amendments of the Ordinance, however, were not made until February 1969, only three months prior to the military take-over which brought Numeiri to power. Of particular relevance among the amendments are the following points:

Firstly, the minimum period required for giving notice was reduced to three instead of six months of continuous service. The basic stipulation of Section 10 (1) in regard to giving notice without any requirement of justification was, however, left intact.

Secondly, the amendment introduced Section 10 (2b) which recognized for the first time the right of an employed person to terminate a contract without giving notice to the employer. The circumstances under which such termination could be

effected were laid down in terms of four clearly formulated reasons. There was no provision in the amendment, however, to recognize the right of workers who thus terminated contracts to any gratuity, although Section 26 was amended to recognize the right of employed persons to after-service payments. This latter stipulated such payments under difficult conditions and after long continuous service reaching in some cases a minimum of 15 years (cf. *idem*, p. 13).

Thirdly, the original Section 10 (2) dealing with summary dismissals for serious misconduct was amended to specify the reasons for which employers could sack workers immediately, and without notice or gratuity. The amendment stipulated summary dismissals when an employed person:

- (1) clothes himself with the personality of another or presents forged documents;
- (2) due to gross negligence commits a wrong resulting in a heavy financial loss to the employer;
- (3) in spite of being notified in writing, does not comply with any instructions made for the safety of employed persons and of the place of business; provided that such instructions are in writing and fixed in a conspicuous place;
- (4) omits to carry out his obligations under the contract of service concluded between him and the employer;
- (5) discloses any industrial secrets;
- (6) is convicted of an offence against honour or involving moral turpitude or if he commits in the place of business an act inconsistent with morals;
- (7) during the hours of work is found in a state of evident drunkenness or under the effect of a narcotic substance provided that a medical officer whenever possible testifies to that;
- (8) assaults his employer or the responsible manager or if, in the course of, or due to a cause attributed to, the business he commits any grievous hurt on any of his superiors.

Though this amendment seems to provide 'greater protection' than the original provisions, the effective difference between the two is only superficial. I do not deny

that at least seven of the eight circumstances stipulated are **an advance**, in the sense that the new formulation is quite unambiguous, but I would draw attention to the sixth reason in particular. The sixth point starts with the **unobjectionable** stipulation of summary dismissal when an employed person is convicted of certain offences, which implies that the case has been taken to court, but it ends by allowing summary dismissal for an act "inconsistent with morals". Thus, although it does not explicitly specify who is to determine whether an act is "inconsistent with morals", the amendment clearly refers to the employer or the responsible manager, who could manipulate this provision for his own purposes. Likewise, the article fails to specify the standard for such an evaluation of the act; and this failure also confers upon employers uninhibited "freedom to hire and fire".

Fourthly, the amendment introduced Section 10 (2c) to regulate termination of contract by either party without giving notice. The new article stipulated that all cases of termination without notice should be referred to the Commissioner of Labour whose consent was decreed essential to the validity of the termination. The Commissioner was required to consider the case and make his decision within a period of not more than seven days. Section 10 (2d), moreover, stipulated that if an employed person is summarily dismissed before the Commissioner of Labour makes his decision, the employer would have **either** to reinstate the employed person and pay him the full wage for the period of suspension, **or** to pay him, in addition to gratuity and other entitlement, a

compensation equalling three months' wages.

The attempt to 'regulate' summary dismissals resulted in a contradiction in the provisions of the different articles of Section 10 which became difficult for workers to understand. As Farouk Abu-Eisa (op.cit., p. 15) notes, Section 10 (2a) stipulated the right of the employer to "dismiss any of his employed persons immediately and without notice or gratuity if the employed person...", while Section 10 (2d) required that "an employer shall not dismiss the employed person and the employed person shall not cease to work unless the dispute is referred to the Commissioner of Labour..".

Section 10 of the 1949 Ordinance (as amended in 1969) was suspended on 18 October, 1970, when the Council of Ministers issued its executive Order No. 993 dealing with the dismissal of employed persons and trade union officials (cf. Abdel Rahman E. Ali Taha and Ahmed H. El-Jack, op. cit., p. 13). Since the provisions of the Ministerial Order were incorporated into the **Consolidated Labour Code** of November 1970 that repealed all previous labour legislation in the Sudan, I shall deal directly with the Code. Of particular relevance to this discussion are the provisions contained in Sections 85 to 87 of the Code.

The most significant difference between the Code (and its precursor, the Ministerial Order) and previous legislation is that the Code required employers to justify their desire to terminate a contract, even if with due notice and the payment of a gratuity (where applicable). The Code also stipulated that all cases of dismissal were to be referred to a

tripartite committee formed of the representatives of the Labour Office, trade unions and employers; the decisions of these committees, which were to be made within ten days, were considered as both binding and final (Section 85). It is interesting to note in this connection that whereas the Ministerial Order stipulated the penalty of **confiscation** of the establishment in case of non-compliance by employers, the Code stipulated the **reinstatement** of the employee who was also given the full wage for the period of his suspension.

In relation to the conditions of summary dismissals, the Code retained, under Section 87 (1), most of the provisions of the former Section 10 (2), but the new section consisted of seven instead of eight conditions for summary dismissal. The right of employers to dismiss an employee if the latter "omits to carry out his obligations under the contract of service", or if he "commits in the place of business an act inconsistent with morals" were dropped in the Code. But a new provision was introduced stipulating that an employer could apply to dismiss a worker if the latter had absented himself for more than 20 days during the last three months or for more than fifteen consecutive days.

The **Consolidated Labour Code** was described by employers (and their apologetic mouth-pieces) as an infringement of their (natural?) right to "hire and fire" workers; and, given the sympathy obtaining between the government and trade unions on the one hand, and between the government and some former members of the Sudanese Communist Party on the other (see below), the Code was at times characterized as a 'plot' that

would destroy the 'fabric' of Sudanese society and/or halt 'economic development' (see, e.g., Abdel Rahman E. Ali Taha and Ahmed Hassan El-Jack, op. cit., esp. pp. 25-35).

Notwithstanding the **self-professed** 'socialist policy' of the May regime during that early phase,⁽⁴⁾ the job security of 'permanent' workers was actually no better than it had previously been. Section 86 (1) of the Code stipulated that employers could apply to the tripartite committee to terminate the service of employees if (a) the establishment was partially dissolved; (b) the machine on which the workers were engaged broke down; (c) raw materials are not available; or (d) the **job was cancelled**. I do not need to elaborate on the freedom to "hire and fire" left for employers by that provision and particularly in relation to the elasticity of the concept of **job cancellation**. However, it should be noted that Section 86 (2) stipulated the payment to workers whose contract was thus terminated of compensation amounting to one month's wage.

The **Consolidated Labour Code** was short-lived; and only two months after its promulgation it was suspended and the previous 1969 amendment was reinstated pending new legislation. Section 10 (amendment) remained effective until 1973 when a further amendment was made, and it is this last amendment which is still operational. The 1973 amendment repealed the former Section 10 (1) stipulating termination of contract with due notice and introduced a new provision stipulating that:

A contract of service shall be terminated due to any of the following reasons:

- (a) in the case of the disability of the employee to perform his work or if he is so ill that he would cease to work even after the completion of the sick leave and normal holidays to which he is entitled, whether with or without pay, provided that the disability or illness is certified by the employer's Doctor or the Government Hospital, or if any dispute arises by the Medical Commission;
- (b) the completion of the work contracted for;
- (c) the total destruction of the establishment.

The provisions of Section 10 (2) were left intact while a new provision (Section 10 [3]) stipulating that in the case of the contravention of the notice requirement by either party a payment equalling the wage for the specific period of notice should be made to the injured party.

It is interesting to note that the 1973 amendment did not touch the provisions of 1969 relating to the conditions for summary dismissals for "serious misconduct", and retained the very eight points which the Ministerial Order and the Code modified. Nor did it affect the legal paradox concerning the stipulation of immediate summary dismissal and the requirement to refer all disputes to the Commissioner of Labour. Finally, under Section 12 (a) of the 1973 amendment, a new elastic provision was introduced stipulating that:

A contract of service is terminable due to the inefficiency of the employee or due to a reduction in the labour force for economic reasons.

From this review of legislation 'regulating' termination of employment, it is clear that the so-called "legislative protection" of the job security of 'permanent' workers is nothing but an illusion. As in the case of 'temporary' and 'casual' workers, the job security of 'permanent' workers lasts only as long as the availability of tasks to be undertaken, or as long as a permanent worker does not

'antagonize' his employer by becoming 'militant' even when tasks to be undertaken are available.

A conceivable objection to my general contention might be presented on the grounds that, in spite of the overall similarities between the respective positions of 'permanent' and 'non-permanent' workers in an establishment, the former could still be 'relatively' better placed. Thus it might be argued that 'temporary' workers, who could be sacked without 'legislative interference', would be most likely to go first when the labour force is being reduced for economic reasons. But even if such an objection were substantiated, the fact remains that termination of contract "due to economic reasons" was stipulated as "lawful" and that termination might be sought for other than 'technical' considerations; 'militant' workers may face "job cancellation", which is a source of insecurity for all workers, 'permanent' and 'non-permanent' alike, in an establishment. Therefore, as far as 'job security' is concerned, the distinction between 'permanent' and 'non-permanent' workers is essentially irrelevant; and the kind of "legislative protection" offered to 'permanent' workers falls far short of any view that they constitute a 'labour elite'.

To recapitulate, then, the job security for wage workers depends on two factors. The first is availability of tasks; **therefore** it is likely that workers in establishments which experience frequent dramatic fluctuations in production schedules are relatively insecure. But this is only a **probability**; before we indulge in speculation about **actual**

insecurity of 'casual' workers we have to establish, through empirical research, whether or not sacked 'casual' workers are able to find **alternative** employment. The second factor concerns the **willingness** of employers to retain the service of a certain worker; therefore 'militant' workers are most likely to be sacked. But these factors are relevant to all categories of wage workers and not simply to 'temporary' workers.

Though the **context** of their employment is different, 'self-employed' workers can hardly be said to face more serious job insecurity than 'permanent' and 'temporary' wage workers. For skilled 'self-employed' workers in particular, both job security and rewards are far better than for wage workers; hence their progressive withdrawal from public employment. For the 'hardy' unskilled tertiary workers, on the other hand, the insecurity of jobs is counterweighed by several 'coping responses' as I explained in Chapter Six. Indeed, the label 'self-employed' (even if 'quoted') can be very misleading when applied to unskilled tertiary workers, precisely because it implies a false sense of 'independence'; these workers invariably become 'employed' only when they are employed by others, and whether we characterize what they receive in return for their work as a "fee" or as a "wage", it is superfluous to the basic point of their employment for others. 'Self-employment' in tertiary activities may be better characterized as a "form" of 'casual wage employment'; the salient difference being twofold. In the former workers have 'several' employers and are paid 'piece-rates' only'.

In asserting the irrelevance of the "form" of employment

for job security, I do not wish to **dismiss** the distinction between 'permanent' and 'non-permanent' workers as an 'illusion'; I wish rather to stress the view that the alleged implications of this distinction for job security are either grossly exaggerated or poorly founded. Accordingly I propose that the significance of the distinction between 'permanent' and 'non-permanent' workers stems from its correspondence to the distinction between unionized and non-unionized workers; 'temporary' and 'self-employed' workers are denied union rights. It is my contention, which I shall soon corroborate, that the seeming structural segmentation of the wage labour market does not arise from the existence of differential terms of employment in different ('formal'/'informal') segments (or sectors) of the labour market, but rather from the presence of different "forms" of employment which create divisions within the working class on the basis of trade union membership. But the significance of the unionized/non-unionized distinction does not stem from the present role of trade unions in the Sudan, but rather from the potential threat of the unions to a system of production based on cheap labour, i.e. from the possibility that strong trade unions might lead an effective struggle for higher wages and better terms and conditions of employment. Before discussing the question of the role of trade unions, I need to corroborate the relative uniformity of the terms of employment for the different sections of the wage labour force by considering first the issue of the "expensive commitments" alleged to be associated with 'permanent' employment.

WAGES AND THE OTHER 'EXPENSIVE COMMITMENTS'

Notwithstanding the enactment in 1974 of standard minimum wage legislation for the lowest-paid manual workers, the recent literature on the wage structure emphatically asserts the existence of significant intra- and inter-sectoral wage variations in the country.⁽⁵⁾ In the discussion of these variations, a series of distinctions are usually drawn between; (a) the public and private sector; (b) government departments and parastatal concerns; and (c) large scale and small scale private enterprises. A typical statement of the implications of these distinctions for wages is furnished by Kannappan (1977a:90):

Wage rates in Government are higher than in private employment.. Within Government, established state enterprises like the Sudan Railways pay better than other branches of Government. However, one must note the practice of employing casual and temporary staff and of contracting out work through others..

The position as regards private employment is more complex because of greater variation in size, activities undertaken, skill employed, the influence of government regulations, the pressures of unionisation, and so on.

The small number of foreign firms are at the top of the wage hierarchy, even topping the Government. A few of the larger Sudanese firms, including public enterprises, appear to be in this category, carried over from the days prior to nationalisation, and the rest, although among the better paying employers, perhaps trail the government scales of pay. Our information is rather scanty on the smaller enterprises ..[but] it is widely believed that [they] ..pay wages well below the government level.

Ali Ahmed Suliman (1974:33-34) quotes a statement by the Labour Minister in 1969 that the minimum monthly wage in the

public sector was £S 13.90, while the relevant figure for the private sector did not exceed £S 4.50. A more recent estimate of the wage differential is provided by Khalid Affan (1977:75; but cf. Mazloun, 1974) who claims that, "on average", wage earners in the public sector receive "earnings" that are 25% higher than in the private sector.

The message which the literature attempts to convey is clear. 'Permanent' employment in the so-called 'formal sector' is not only higher paid than 'casual' and 'temporary' employment, but also better remunerated than both wage- and 'self-employment' in the "numerous smaller private enterprises". This is the contention which has led to the characterization of 'permanent' workers in the so-called formal sector as a 'labour elite'. But in this section I attempt to refute this contention on the basis of two main points. The first is that, irrespective of whether workers are employed on a 'permanent' or a 'casual' basis, wages for manual work in the Sudan are relatively uniform for the skilled and unskilled workers respectively. The second point is that though 'differentials' are observed between the wages of highly-skilled manual workers and of unskilled workers, manual work is generally **lowly** remunerated; the really significant and far greater differentials being between, on the one hand, the 'wages' of skilled and unskilled manual workers and, on the other, the 'real earnings' of the so-called 'classified staff' (civil servants and professionals). To clarify this contentions, I will start the discussion with a brief account of the wage structure in

government employment.

THE WAGE STRUCTURE: 1900-1973

In Chapter Four I discussed aspects of the problem of labour shortage which the British colonial administration experienced during its first decades. In the context of that shortage, the colonial administration attempted, albeit in vain, to introduce some measure of control over wage determination. The following statement by the Governor-General of the 'Anglo-Egyptian' Sudan (Governor-General, 1909:720-1) is typical of accounts describing the anxiety of the administration over wages:

I should like to see a fixed rate of daily pay for unskilled labour made, and all Government Departments employing men in... [Khartoum] Province should not be allowed to exceed the rate fixed. At present a department paying at the rate of Pt. 3.5 per diem may find that its labourers have left to work with another Department which offers Pt. 4 to Pt. 5 a day...

It should be noted in this connection that the government intended, from the start, to keep the wages of its workers to the minimum. This was particularly true of the 'permanent' workers in government departments as evidenced by the withdrawal, during the first decade of colonial rule, of workers from government to private employment (cf. Chapter Four). But in spite of all the anxiety over the shortage of labour, the differential between the wages of unskilled labourers in private employment and the salaries of colonial administrators was unbelievably large; while in 1902 the "average" daily wage for unskilled labourers was 3 pt., or £E 0.90 per month (cf. Chapter Four), for example, the **starting**

basic salary for the lowest-grade personnel of the Sudan Political Service, excluding 'fringe benefits', was £E 420, or £E 35 per month (see, MacMichael, n.d., p. 4).

The first successful attempt by the colonial government to introduce a measure of control (as opposed to co-ordination) of the wage rates was the system of "Block Grants" adopted in 1937 (See Sa'ad El-Din Fawzi, 1955:159ff). Under this system, the head of a government department was given an appropriation (grant) for a definite purpose which might contain provision for pay of individuals only, or which might provide for a service or a new project, and might, therefore, include both the pay of employees and the cost of materials and machines (ibid.). The head of department was thus his own policy-maker and, within the financial limits of the Grants, had full autonomy over decisions relating to both the number of workers to be employed and the wage rates to be paid. The outcome was a situation of hybrid wage structure in government employment. A salient feature of that structure was variation in wage rates for similar jobs in different departments on the one hand and, on the other, a stark wage differential between the wage of the unskilled general labourer and that of the skilled artisan. It is noteworthy that during this period the majority of skilled workers were expatriates (cf. Chapter Four); with progress in the recruitment of Sudanese into the ranks of skilled labourers, the differential was progressively narrowed as I shall explain below.

The emergence of a relatively unified or 'coherent' wage structure and/or policy in government employment is thus a

relatively recent development. More precisely, it dates back to the end of 1951 when the colonial Executive Council accepted the system recommended by the Unclassified Staff Commission (better known as the **Wakefield Commission**, after its Chairman). According to Sa'ad El-Din Fawzi (1955:165), the "group system" recommended by the Wakefield Commission aimed at the creation of seven groups

covering the variations in skill and responsibility in jobs undertaken by all categories from the unskilled general labourer [Group 1] to the skilled artisan [Group 7]. Into these new groups were to be assimilated the then existing categories of labour. Comparatively short ranges of pay were attached to the various groups -and no overlapping between adjacent scales was allowed. Moreover, the range of pay applicable to any job was to fall within the range of pay allotted to a single group only. The various groups thus constitute separate but consecutive steps in one ladder representing various stages of skill, experience and seniority.

Though the "group system" of the Wakefield Commission created a uniformity of scales in government employment, its proposals nevertheless perpetuated the hybrid wage structure. In the determination of the actual amount to be received in wages, the Commission decided to adopt the principle of a **subsistence wage** for the lowest-paid (Group 1) worker calculated on the basis of the subsistence requirements of a family of four. In recognition of regional variations in the cost of living, the Commission divided the country into regions each of which was supposed to have a different cost of living level. The "main regions" with a relatively high cost of living comprised what we may generally characterize as "Northern Sudan". The "lower-productivity lower-cost-of-living

regions", on the other hand, comprised the Southern Region and a few districts in present-day Darfur and Kordofan and the Central Regions (ibid., p. 167). In relation to Southern Sudan in particular, the Commission made two recommendations. First, workers in the South were not to be promoted beyond Group Four. Second, the South was to be divided into three types of district and for each a different wage rate was fixed. Type (a) consisted of the Zande and Meridi Districts of Equatoria Province; type (b) comprised Turit, Yei, Tonj and Aweil Districts; and the whole of the Upper Nile Province was categorized as type (c). According to Ali Ahmed Suliman (1974:35):

In the North, Group One started with a monthly wage of £E 5.800 ...In type (a) districts in the South, Group One started with £E 1.300, in type (b) districts Group One started with £E 1.750, while in type (c) districts the starting wage was £E 2.500 (My translation).

In adopting the principle of "subsistence wage", the Wakefield Commission showed sensitivity to probable increases in prices in the long run. For this reason it recommended that the wages paid should consist of two components: (1) a basic wage and (2) a cost of living allowance (COLA). It was thus envisaged that there would be no need to revise the whole wage structure in the event of price rises; adjustments in the COLA, which was to be tied to a **price index**, would suffice to compensate workers for increases in prices.

The hybrid wage structure introduced by the Wakefield Commission encountered many practical problems in its implementation (cf. Sa'ad El-Din Fawzi, 1955). It also induced

resentment on the part of individual workers and was opposed by the trade union movement. To mention but one of its stark anomalies, workers transferred from the "main" to the "low-cost-of-living" regions experienced a reduction in their (money) wages. It was not until 1968 when the recommendations of the Cadre Commission were accepted, that a policy of equal pay, irrespective of region and sex, was, at least in principle, adopted by the government (cf. Ali Ahmed Suliman, 1974:35 et passim).

The 1968 Cadre Commission introduced minor modifications into the Group System introduced by the Wakefield Commission. In recognition of the probable increase in productivity of workers (compared to 1951), for example, a new group (Group Eight) was introduced. Likewise, the Cadre Commission attempted to deal with the complaints of workers who did not get promoted to a higher group and, consequently, got "stuck" at the wage-ceilings of their respective groups; these latter, according to the original system, were to be reached in six years (i.e. only six annual increments in the basic wage were given to each group irrespective of the number of years a worker ultimately remained in that group). Ali Ahmed Suliman (ibid.) claims that many unskilled general labourers (tulba) had actually remained in Group One for thirty years. The Cadre Commission allowed the annual increments to continue for nine, instead of six, years, but though it retained the formula of "basic wage + COLA", the COLA was no longer to be tied to any price index (cf. ILO, 1976:368). Table (7:2) shows the wage structures recommended by the two commissions.

Table 7:2

The Wage Structure in Government Employment, 1951 & 1968

Group	1951		1968	
	Starting (££)	Ceiling (££)	Starting (££S)	Ceiling (££S)
One	5.800	7.800	12.500	18.800
Two	6.600	9.000	15.000	22.650
Three	8.300	12.300	18.000	27.000
Four	10.500	16.500	21.600	32.400
Five	14.500	23.500	26.000	39.050
Six	23.500	29.500	31.350	46.650
Seven	23.500	37.500	37.500	56.400
Eight	-	-	45.000	67.500

Source: Ali Ahmed Suliman, 1974:36

Table (7:2) corroborates my earlier contention concerning the narrowing of differentials between skilled and unskilled workers in the period 1951-1968. In noting this, I should stress the point that the highest-paid wage workers actually represent an insignificant proportion of manual workers (a mere 0.3% of all government employees in 1962 were classified as Group Seven) while by far the largest single group was that of the lowest-paid manual workers (24.1% of all 'classified' and 'unclassified' government employees in 1962); as we go up the hierarchy of unclassified staff the percentage gets smaller (cf. Table 7:3). Given the few "ports of entry" into the ranks of unclassified staff (see Kannappan, 1977a), only a tiny minority of the relatively well educated (General Secondary and above) manage to start anywhere but at the bottom of the hierarchy. For the "ordinary" skilled worker, it takes over 20 years to be promoted to a supervisory position (Group Seven); and as such the "highest-paid" are not only skilled workers, but also ones with either the longest record of continuous service or, as with technicians, with a good educational record. In noting the narrowing of the differential between skilled and unskilled workers, I should also stress that the **real wages** of all categories of manual workers were actually reduced. As shown in Tables (7:4) and (7:5), throughout the period from 1938 to 1970 real wages were steadily declining, except for the hardy lowest-paid.

The point about the differential between skilled and unskilled workers leads directly to the question of the differential between manual workers in general and the

Table 7:3

Level and Structure of Government Wages, 1962

CATEGORY/SCALE	AVERAGE MONTHLY PAY (£S)	PERCENTAGE OF ALL EMPLOYEES
<u>Manual employees:</u>		
Group I (unskilled)	6.750	24.1
Group II (semi-skilled)	7.950	13.2
Group III (semi-skilled)	10.500	10.5
Group IV (skilled)	13.415	5.7
Group V (skilled)	19.000	1.8
Group VI (skilled)	27.500	0.3
Group VII (supervisory)	30.500	0.3
<u>Clerical employees</u>		
Junior, Class 1	11.500	3.2
2	17.000	0.1
3	18.500	0.0
4	19.000	0.2
5	20.000	4.1
Senior, Class 6	22.500	0.0
7	25.000	0.8
8	28.335	0.2
9	30.835	0.8
10	33.335	0.0
<u>Semi-professional and technical staff</u>		
Scales group 1 (1)	11.500	2.7
2 (4)	17.000	3.1
3 (1)	19.000	5.5
4 (1)	20.000	3.0
5 (3)	23.000	1.6
6 (5)	26.000	1.7
7 (1)	32.000	5.5
8 (6)	33.250	0.4
9 (1)	36.250	3.1
10 (6)	53.750	0.4
11 (3)	69.165	0.8
<u>Administrative and prof- essional staff</u>		
Scales group 1 (1)	39.500	1.8
2 (6)	56.450	0.2
3 (5)	68.750	2.3
4 (3)	76.250	0.4
5 (1)	79.600	0.8
6 (3)	91.250	0.7
7 (3)	97.540	0.1
8 (1)	106.650	0.2
9 (2)	114.900	0.3
10 (3)	130.270	0.1
11 (3)	165.000	0.0

Source: ILO, 1962:35-6, as quoted by Abdel Rahman E. A. Taha, 1976:132-3

Table 7:4

Movement in Money Wages and the Cost of Living, 1938-1954

Monthly Wage 1938 (££)	Monthly Basic Wage 1st Jan. 1952 (££)	COLA (end of July, 1954; ££)	Total Emoluments (end of July, '54; ££)	Index of Wages 1938=100	Cost of Living Index (July, 1954; ££)	Real Wages 1938= 100
1.800	7.000	2.100	9.100	506	432	117
2.100	7.400	2.220	9.620	458	432	106
2.400	7.800	2.340	10.140	423	432	98
3.000	9.300	2.790	12.090	403	416	97
4.600	11.100	3.305	14.405	400	416	96
4.500	12.300	3.545	15.845	352	400	88
5.100	13.500	3.785	17.285	339	394	86
6.900	17.500	4.585	22.085	320	381	84
11.000	26.500	6.310	32.810	298	359	83
14.000	33.500	7.360	40.860	292	356	82
15.000	35.500	7.660	43.160	288	351	82

Source: Sa'ad El-Din Fawzi, 1955:171

Table 7:5

Minimum and Maximum Money and Real Wages in 1951 and 1970

Year	Minimum Money Wage	Minimum Real Wage	Maximum Money Wage	Maximum Real Wage
1951*	5.800	5.800	37.500	37.500
1970**	13.900	6.950	56.400	28.200

* in £E

** in £S

Source: Ali Ahmed Suliman, 1974:42

'classified staff' in government employment. As shown in Table (7:3), the 'average' wage of a skilled worker (Groups 4-7) in 1962 was well below the 'average' salary of the clerical employees -not to mention the comparatively more highly paid civil servants and professionals. Likewise, the average basic salary of the **four highest-paid categories of classified staff** in 1962 (130 Sudanese pounds) was four times the wage of the **highest paid** unclassified staff, and over six times the average wage of **all** categories of skilled workers. As I explain below, the **total earnings** of the upper groups of classified staff are actually much higher than their respective basic salaries. The highly-inflated basic salaries (i.e. excluding 'fringe benefits') have for long been explained as "relics" from colonial days, but, in view of several post-colonial 'revisions' of the pay structure, such an explanation may be viewed as either 'naive' or 'apologetic'. To paraphrase the ingenious Sudanese proverb: when one writes, one does not write one's self off.

THE WAGE STRUCTURE: 1974-1984

In July, 1974, the government enacted the Standard Minimum Wage legislation and established a minimum monthly wage of £S 16.50 for workers employed in government or in private firms with ten or more workers in major urban centres (Mohamed El-Murtada Mustafa, 1983:287). The private sector was allowed a two-year period (i.e. until 1976) to comply with that legislation (Khalid Affan, 1977). In 1978, the government adopted the Job Evaluation and Classification Scheme (JECS),

which is currently operational in the country.

The JECS abolished the dualism of pay structure in government employment that was based on the distinction between 'classified' and 'unclassified' staff by the introduction of a new Group System consisting of 18 groups covering all types and grades of government employees (from the unskilled general labourer to under secretaries). In this new system COLA no longer forms a component of the wage (or salary) received. Since the introduction of the JECS, the pay rates have been revised twice, and at the time of writing there are rumours about a third revision to cope with the exorbitant rates of inflation in the country. Tables (7:6, 7:7, 7:8 and 7:9) show the level and structure of wages and salaries in November 1983, in four different categories of government employment. Table (7:6) is for employees in Central, Regional and Local Governments; Table (7:7) is for employees in the Agricultural Research Corporation which, being a research institution, has a more 'generous' pay rate than government departments; while Tables (7:8) and (7:9) are for two of the three 'pay leaders' in government: the Banks and Khartoum University. The third is the military employment, but unfortunately I did not have access to the pay-rates in the People's Armed Forces, whose personnel are probably the highest paid in the country.

As maintained earlier, the JECS does not distinguish between 'classified' and 'unclassified' employees. But neither the distinction between 'mental' and 'manual' labour, nor the differentials in their remuneration, were dissolved; nor were

Table 7:6 The Level and Structure of Pay for Employees In Central, Regional and People's Local Governments in the Sudan, November 1983 (in LS).

Group	Scale	Year of Service in the Group										Annual Increase				
		Year 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		11	12		
One	5400/5940	5400	5535	5670	5805	5950										135
Two	4860/5260	4860	4960	5060	5160	5260										100
Three	4420/4780	4420	4510	4600	4690	4780										90
Four	3980/4340	3980	4070	4160	4250	4340										90
Five	3550/3910	3550	3640	3730	3820	3910										90
Five (a)	3280/3730	3280	3370	3460	3550	3640	3730									90
Six	3010/3460	3010	3100	3190	3280	3370	3460									90
Seven	2440/2980	2440	2530	2620	2710	2800	2890	2980								90
Eight	1845/2440	1845	1930	2015	2100	2185	2270	2355	2440							85
Nine*	1120/1675	1120	1165	1210	1255	1300	1345	1400	1455							45/55
Ten	1820/2235	1820	1875	1930	1985	2040	2105	2170	2235							55/65
Ten (a)	1545/1930	1545	1600	1655	1710	1765	1820	1875	1930							55
Eleven	1325/1710	1325	1380	1435	1490	1545	1600	1655	1710							55
Twelve	1115/1490	1115	1165	1215	1270	1325	1380	1435	1490							50/55
Thirteen	905/1215	905	945	985	1025	1065	1115	1165	1215							40/50
Fourteen	695/985	695	730	765	800	835	870	905	945	985						35/45
Fifteen	660/905	660	695	730	765	800	835	870	905							35
Sixteen	570/745	570	595	620	645	670	695	720	745							25
Seventeen	510/664	510	532	554	576	598	620	642	664							22
Eighteen	430/590	430	450	470	490	510	530	550	570	590						20

Source: Ministry of Finance, Khartoum (I am indebted to my wife, Sarra Bushra, for obtaining this table).

Table 7:7 The Level and Structure of Pay for Government employees in the Agricultural Research Corporation as from April, 1981

Group	Scale	Gross Annual Pay for each year in the Group												Annual Increas		
		Year 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
Five	4320/4720	4320	4420	4520	4620	4720										100
Five (a)	3760/4160	3760	3860	3960	4060	4160										100
Six	3230/3730	3230	3330	3430	3530	3630	3730									100
Seven	2700/3240	2700	2790	2880	2970	3060	3150	3240								90
Eight	2320/2860	2320	2410	2500	2590	2680	2770	2860								90
Nine	1400/2005	1400	1455	1510	1565	1620	1675	1730	1785	1840	1895	1950	2005			55
Ten	2080/2470	2080	2145	2210	2275	2340	2405	2470								65
Ten (a)	1880/2265	1880	1935	1990	2045	2100	2155	2210	2265							55
Eleven	1546/1910	1546	1598	1650	1702	1754	1806	1858	1910							52
Twelve	1320/1684	1320	1372	1424	1476	1528	1580	1632	1684							52
⁵ Thirteen	1025/1380	1025	1065	1115	1165	1215	1270	1325	1380							40/55
⁴ Fourteen	800/1115	800	835	870	905	945	985	1025	1065	1115						35
Fifteen	765/1025	765	800	835	870	905	945	985	1025							35,
Sixteen	645/820	645	670	695	720	745	770	795	820							25
Seventeen	576/730	576	598	620	642	664	686	708	730							22
Eighteen	490/650	490	510	530	550	570	590	610	630	650						20

Source: Pay Sheet in the Fisheries Research Centre (Agricultural Research Corporation), Khartoum, (I am indebted to my wife, Sarra Bushra, who works as researcher in the Fisheries Centre for supplying me with the table).

Table 7:8

Salaries of Officials in Commercial Banks

Group	Year 1	2	3	4	5	Annual Increment
One	6,180	7,416				
One (A)	6,000	6,300	6,600	6,900	7,200	300
Two	5,052	5,302	5,554	5,806	6,060	252
Three	4,300	4,515	4,730	4,945	5,160	215
Four	3,698	3,882	4,066	4,250	4,440	184
Five	3,000	3,150	3,300	3,450	3,600	150
Six	2,550	2,677	2,804	2,931	3,060	127
Seven	2,050	2,152	2,254	2,356	2,460	102
Eight	1,660	1,743	1,826	1,909	1,992	83
Nine	1,345	1,412	1,479	1,546	1,614	67
Ten	1,100	1,155	1,210	1,266		55
Ten (A)	900					

Source: Personnel Section, Abu-Dhabi Commercial Bank (I am indebted to Ali B. Magboul for obtaining this table).

Table 7:9

Salaries of Teaching Assistants and Academic Staff

Position	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Teaching Asst.	1,675	1,760	1,845	1,930	2,015	2,100								
T. Asst. (1)	2,270	2,355	2,440	2,530	2,620									
T. Asst. (1)	2,800	2,890	2,980	3,070										
T. Asst. (1)	3,160	3,250	3,340	3,520										
Lecturer	3,550	3,680	3,810	3,940	4,070	4,200	4,330	4,460	4,590	4,725	4,860	4,995	5,130	5,265
Assoc. Prof.	5,805	5,940	6,215	6,435	6,710									
Professor	6,985													

Source: Personnel Section, Khartoum University (I am indebted to my wife, Sarra Bushra for obtaining this table).

they intended to be dissolved. Thus, although I have no information on whether any manual workers in supervisory positions are in Groups Fifteen and Fourteen, it is certain that over 90% of the (former) 'unclassified' staff are encountered in the bottom groups (Groups Eighteen, Seventeen and Sixteen). This is so on account of the number of years a worker is expected to spend in any one group, i.e. the years for which he/she is given annual increments before reaching the ceiling of the group. The situation is, then, that even if a worker is promoted in the same year as he reaches the ceiling of a group, it would still take him/her at least 25 years to move from the bottom of Group Eighteen to the ceiling of Group Sixteen. A "fresh" University graduate with B.A. (Honours), on the other hand, is recruited directly into Group Nine, and within less than ten years he is promoted to Group Seven at least. And if he should then read for an M.A. or a Ph.D., his prospects are very substantially enhanced.

Furthermore, as the tables show the differentials in **basic pay** only, I would stress the **tax-free monthly allowances** which civil servants and professionals, particularly those beyond Group Seven, also 'earn'. These groups are usually given government houses (the monthly rent of which is equivalent in the private market to well over one £S 1,000) or, because of the recent shortage in government houses, a Housing Allowance (ranging from £S 200 to £S 350). Every high ranking official is entitled to this housing allowance, even those who have received loans to build their own houses. One further and rather striking set of allowances concerns mileage and

transport. Those officials who do not own cars are entitled to a monthly Transport Allowance of approximately £S 40, while those who own cars and use them 'in connection with' their work are given a monthly mileage allowance of approximately £S 100, which is more than **double** the minimum wage. Car loans are of course made available to officials, and these are repaid through deductions of around £S 40 are deducted from monthly salaries.

In comparing the earnings of civil servants and professionals with those of manual workers I should stress that I am not unaware of the fact that in recent years even the highest-paid government employees have experienced a **sharp decline** in their real incomes. The hard facts of inflation during the last decade, and since 1978 in particular,⁽⁵⁾ are experienced by all those who have opted to stay and work in the country rather than emigrate to the oil-rich Arab countries. For the period 1970-1980 the rate of inflation is estimated as 400% (Africa Contemporary Record, 1979/80:P.B. 121). Table (7:10) depicts the increase in the cost of living for the low-income (below £S 500 per annum) and high-income (£S 500+) groups from January, 1970, to end of December, 1979.⁽⁶⁾

In relation to the low-income group, it should be noted that the minimum wage in government employment in 1970 was £S 13.90. Thus, irrespective of whether or not that wage sufficed to meet the requirements of the general unskilled labourer at that time, the deterioration in living standards experienced by him up to 1979 looks horrific. What in 1970 used to cost

Table 7:10

Cost of Living Index in the Sudan, 1970-1979
(January 1970 = 100)

Date	Cost of Living Index for Low-income Groups (below fS 500 per annum)	Annual Increase as %	Cost of Living Index for High-income Groups (fS 500+ per annum)	Annual Incr- ease as %
Dec.1970	102.5	—	102.4	—
Dec.1971	102.8	0.3	103.9	0.5
Dec.1972	128.1	24.6	121.2	18.9
Dec.1973	152.1	18.7	144.6	19.3
Dec.1974	197.9	30.1	181.9	25.8
Dec.1975	217.6	10.0	198.6	9.2
Dec.1976	241.5	11.0	218.5	10.0
Dec.1977	268.0	11.0	247.5	13.3
Dec.1978	338.8	26.4	314.9	27.2
Dec.1979	487.9	43.7	453.8	44.1

Source: A study on cost of living prepared by a group of white-collar government unions, 1980, as quoted in Al-Maidan (Periodical of the Sudanese Communist Party), 1980, no. 707, p. 4.

100 Pt., by 1979 was bought for 486.9 Pt. In order to maintain the same living standard in 1979 as the general unskilled labourer had enjoyed in 1970, the minimum wage in 1979 ought to have been £S 67.68; in reality, the minimum wage in 1979 was £S 28.00 (the minimum wage was increased from £S 15 in 1973 to £S 16 in 1974 to £S 28 in 1978).

The rise in the price index for the period 1980-84 was even higher than in the 1970s. No official statistics are available, but most estimates point to something like a 500% increase. According to the latest revision of the wage-rate (November 1983), the gross annual wage of the lowest-paid is £S 430, or £S 35.83 per month, nearly half what the minimum wage ought to have been in 1979 to enable the general unskilled labourer to maintain a living standard equal to that which he used to enjoy in 1970.

From the foregoing account of the wage structure of the so-called 'labour elite' it should be clear that the wages of manual workers in government employment, and unskilled manual workers in particular, are far from being a 'privilege' or "an expensive commitment" for employers. It is indeed because of this wage structure that Sudanese workers are involved in what Chase (op. cit.) calls "an extended urban labour market reaching the Gulf region". Thus, whereas migration to the oil-rich Arab countries had initially involved technocrats, civil servants and skilled workers, in recent years the numbers of unskilled manual workers emigrating from the Sudan have increased very rapidly (cf. Chapter Five). What should be stressed in relation to wage-rates in government employment is

that the 'non-permanent' unskilled workers receive the same standard minimum wage as their 'permanent' counterparts; both categories are classified as Group Eighteen, or unskilled general labourer. There is, however, one important difference; unlike 'temporary' and 'casual' workers, 'permanent' workers are given annual increments in pay. The actual value of increments is, however, very small. Thus, while the starting annual salary for two workers employed on different contracts is the same (£S 490), after ten years of continuous employment the 'permanent' worker may be £S 160 a year, or around £S 13 a month, better off than his 'non-permanent' counterpart. But the annual increment does not constitute an inalienable 'right' of workers, as it is only granted on the basis of favourable reports.

The discussion so far has focused mainly on the level of remuneration in government employment. To acquire an overview of the wage structure in the labour market as a whole, we also need to consider the levels of earning for two other main sections of the urban wage labour force: (a) those employed by the so-called "wage leaders" - parastatals and large scale private enterprises - and (b) those employed (or 'self-employed') in the "numerous smaller private enterprises" of the so-called 'urban informal sector'.

THE SO-CALLED WAGE-LEADERS

In relation to the contention that the so-called "wage leaders" pay higher wages than government departments, one basic observation should be spelt out. Nowhere in the

literature could I find a precise statement on the level of remuneration paid by the parastatals and/or the large scale private enterprises, or any comparative figures showing wages in parastatals and government departments. The contention that the former constitute "wage leaders" seems to have been established by assertion rather than empirical evidence, and is most likely prompted by assumptions concerning the relative strength of trade unions in enterprises with large numbers of workers.

Later in this chapter I will deal with the issue of trade unions and their role in collective bargaining; it is sufficient to note here that, though differences in wage-rates could once be noted between parastatals and government departments, at present - and indeed since 1970- all distinctions between the two in wages and other terms of employment have been dissolved. This statement should not be taken to mean that the pay-rates for all public employees are identical. I have already noted that in certain 'specialized' government institutions (such as State banks, Khartoum University, the National Council for Research and the Agricultural Research Corporation) workers are paid a little more than in government departments. But these institutions **are not** the parastatals to which the literature refers; the parastatals comprise the public industrial and commercial concerns in addition to a number of other corporations such as Sudan Railways, the Central Corporation for Electricity, and the Rural Water Development Corporation. As I explain below, in many of these parastatals a form of 'collective bargaining'

was observed before 1970 but, as a result of the 1969 ban on strikes and the re-organization of parastatals in 1970, workers in them were brought under the same terms and conditions of employment as in government departments. The same changes in the structure of trade unions which affected workers in the parastatals are also observed in the case of the large scale, mainly foreign, enterprises that once paid relatively high wages to their workers and used to conclude agreements with the trade unions representing workers.

EARNINGS OF 'SELF-EMPLOYED' AND 'CASUAL' WORKERS

The data I gathered on 'earnings' for 'casual' and 'self-employed' workers suggest a rather different situation from what the 'conceptual framework' of the ILO studies purports to convey. But, in this respect, I would draw attention to the differentiation process among the 'self-employed' who range from petty commodity producers and 'veiled out-sellers' to 'incipient' and 'full-fledged' capitalists. In this chapter I do not discuss the level of income of the relatively affluent stratum of 'self-employed', comprising categories such as shop-keepers and workshop-owners, but I here concentrate on aspects of earnings for petty and/or street traders, unskilled tertiary workers, and semi-skilled and skilled craftsmen working for others.

Generally speaking, the findings of my research suggest no significant overall differences between the wages of 'permanent' government workers and paid workers in the so-called 'informal sector'. In numerous cases of 'informal

employment' the daily wage of unskilled workers is actually higher than that of government workers. Given the other 'benefits' which government workers are entitled to, such as after-service payments and paid annual holidays (see below), the differences observed between the daily wages of the two groups tend to disappear. But I should stress that this generalization is not intended as a strict comparison of the **total earnings** of the two groups of workers. An amalgam of factors renders such a comparison very difficult, if not virtually impossible. To take one of the most important of these factors, the earnings of government workers may not be the same as their wages and other 'benefits'. Quite a number of government workers engage in 'informal activities' which effectively increase their total incomes. Many government drivers (as well as junior clerks), for example, work as taxi-drivers in the evenings, and some own taxis. Moonlighting by other categories of government workers is also known to be a normal practice, often undertaken during official work-hours. What my generalization is intended to convey, rather, is that **the rewards** are basically uniform whether in government or in so-called 'informal' employment.

As I considered aspects of earnings for self-employed unskilled tertiary workers in Chapter Six, I now present no more than a brief recapitulation. My research findings suggest that, through arrangements with regular clients, workers engaged in unskilled personal services manage to secure, in addition to earnings on the 'spot market', a 'guaranteed' monthly income. For car-wash boys, the minimum guaranteed

monthly income is £S 35, while for launderers it is £S 50. Though the incomes of the two categories from the 'spot market' showed considerable fluctuations, in the majority of cases total monthly income exceeded £S 100. Though some of the 'hardy' street traders earned a low monthly income of £S 30 to £S 40, it was common for lowest-grade traders to earn an average of £S 60, while the relatively 'established' traders (e.g. wheel-stall traders, licensed vegetable-sellers) earned at least £S 100 a month. In other words the income of unskilled 'self-employed' tertiary workers may be three times as high as the minimum wage in government employment. A similar conclusion is expressed, in muted terms, by Ghosh (1983:100):

Production workers and spinners, etc., who typically work in organised sector establishments, do not receive wages substantially higher than those engaged in casual "market-place" jobs. Thus, car-washers, shoe polishers, porters, cart-pullers and auctioneers, for example, may get very high incomes. The variation is quite high, but the simple possibility of very high returns should serve to attract people.

To present a wider view of levels of remuneration for 'self-employed' and 'casual' workers, I collected data on incomes in two so-called 'informal manufacturing and repair' activities: rope-bed making and car-repairs. I have also drawn from unpublished data on tailors generously put at my disposal by my colleague Simaya Agryal. The choice of these activities was not incidental, but was prompted by common knowledge of the considerable variations in skill requirements, the level of income as well as seasonal fluctuations in production

schedules. Car-repair is the most skilled and best-rewarded of the three activities, while one of the operations in rope-bed making (i.e. stringing beds with straw-rope) is accessible to almost all rural Sudanese from the northern, central and western regions, as they are commonly undertaken within the 'subsistence sphere' of domestic production. This task is usually performed by 'target-migrants' and the labour force involved shows considerable instability. But the other operations in rope-bed making demand special skills and, as a result, are relatively better rewarded. These tasks concern the cutting of cross-pieces and legs for the structure, the digging of holes on legs to fit cross-pieces, the operation of electric lathes to decorate bed legs, and the stringing of beds with strengthened thread (doubara) and plastic rope. Tailoring requires relatively high skills, but in the industry many semi-skilled and unskilled workers are also employed in ironing, sewing of buttons, and so on.

Except in the case of tailoring, remuneration in the activities surveyed is normally based on piece-rates; and the level of daily earnings is consequently a function not only of availability of tasks to be undertaken, but also of the number of contracts a worker is able to perform. In the case of rope-bed making the tasks are well-defined and in each of the markets in which workshops are located there is a strong tendency for a single rate to prevail for any one type of operation; inter-market variations are sometimes observed, but they are generally very small and more often than not reflect variations in the transport costs for workers. It was in

rope-bed making, out of the three industries, that a conspicuous absence of apprentices was noted. But, whereas qualified tailors working on sewing-machines owned by merchants normally got a percentage of net proceeds (deducting cost of thread, buttons, etc.), car-mechanics working for others were contracted for specific tasks. But unlike the case of rope-bed workers, for car-mechanics the tasks showed considerable variations, and there were normally no fixed rates for tasks. This was partly due to the fact that the fee charged by workshop owners was usually determined through haggling with clients and was also subject to other considerations such as whether or not the client was a known regular customer; and in cases of minor repairs (e.g. engine tuning) it was not uncommon that no charge was made.

In interviews with, and observations among, workers in the rope-bed industry in three different markets over a period totalling three months I probed into the conditions of 63 workers. Three of these workers operated electric lathes, and, on average, each earned £S 190 monthly. Of the others, 27 were low grade stringers (using traditional rope), 12 were upper grade stringers, 16 were hole-makers, and 5 were carpenters designing and cutting cross-pieces. On average, the low grade stringers earned a minimum of £S 3.50 each day (working from 7 a.m to 5 p.m), but it was not uncommon for a worker to earn £S 5; higher grade stringers commonly earned £S 7, but particularly quick stringers earned as much as £S 10.50 (stringing three beds, instead of the average two beds, in a single day). Hole-making is the most tedious activity, and

hole-makers earned a minimum of £S 6, but because of the demanding nature of the activity it was rare for hole-makers to work for more than six days each week; but while a majority of hole-makers took a day off on Fridays, a few turned to stringing with traditional rope. Carpenters earned £S 8 pounds on average, while the electric lathe operators commonly secured £S 1.20 per hour worked and, on average, earned £S 8.50. It is worth noting that all carpenters and hole-makers bought, and maintained and/or replaced, their own tools (hammers, saws, planes, etc.); the estimated average monthly cost of tools (covering both maintenance and depreciation costs) for hole-makers was £S 5, while for carpenters the cost was £S 7. I was informed by workshop owners that during the rainy season each year the industry usually experiences a period of relative recession of demand and production falls by 40 to 50 per cent (compared to the rest of the year). Nevertheless, because the workforce, especially the stringers who constitute the overwhelming majority, consists almost exclusively of migrants who return to their farms during the rainy season, it is not uncommon for workshop owners to face problems in finding the necessary number of stringers.

Car-mechanics normally work six days a week. But while the ideal for experienced car-mechanics, especially those who can afford to buy the necessary tools, is to establish themselves as 'own-account workers', typically working under the shade of trees and taking on young boys as hands and/or apprentices, a majority of mechanics, particularly the recently qualified, normally work for workshops on sub-contracts and/or on a

piece-rate basis. In contrast to the rope-bed industry, in which production is usually ahead of demand, the pace and intensity of work in car-repairs depend on demand. But though I observed day-to-day fluctuations, it was very rare for a car-mechanic not to find tasks to perform; indeed, clients were often asked to come the following morning. In observing 23 car-mechanics (8 of whom were 'own-account workers') over a period of two months, I noted that the lowest level of daily earnings was by a recently qualified car-mechanic who stayed at the work site from 7 a.m to 4 p.m. but earned only £S 3. Qualified mechanics commonly earned £S 7 per day, but it was not uncommon to find some earning £S 12 or more on at least one day each week; more experienced mechanics working for others usually earned around £S 18 daily, but as they were preferred to less experienced mechanics, it was not exceptional for them to earn £S 30 on one day at least twice a month. Earnings of 'own-account' mechanics showed larger variations compared to those of mechanics attached to established workshops. On "average" days, new 'own-account' mechanics usually earned around £ 15 daily, and though on "bad" days (which, for reasons I could not establish, were usually Saturdays) earnings were as low as £ 5 only, on "good" days daily earnings were well above £S 25. The average **gross** earnings of long standing 'own-account' mechanics ranged from a low "bad" of £S 10, to an "average" of £S 25 and a "good" of over £S 50. I could not, however, establish the average **net** income of 'own-account' car-mechanics. But, although I cannot describe precisely the frequency and directions of

fluctuations in demand, it is probable that each type of 'day' was experienced about twice a week. Remuneration for apprentices was fixed, and did not vary with the fluctuations in demand which the master-mechanics experienced; in addition to one or two meals, a daily wage ranging between 75 pt. and £S 1.25 was given to apprentices, normally paid weekly (every Thursday).

Unlike apprentice mechanics, tailoring apprentices were not given a fixed daily cash wage, although meals were usually provided by the master-tailor. Their pay depended on the number of pieces assigned to them (sewing buttons and rim as well as ironing), but, on average, they earned around £S 2.00 per day. For tailors, on the other hand, income differed for 'own-account workers' (who owned sewing-machines and paid £S 20 monthly for merchants in rent of site) and 'partners' (who worked on machines owned by merchants and received 50 per cent of net proceeds). Like the rope-bed industry, tailoring is an activity with marked seasonal fluctuations, and demand becomes exceptionally high towards feast days. During the month of Ramadan (in which Muslims observe fasting), Simaya found out that while, on average, the net monthly proceeds for tailors working on machines owned by merchants were around £S 300, 'own-account' tailors earned £S 960 (sewing 12 pairs of trousers each day). The average monthly net proceeds from a sewing-machine in other seasons ranged between £S 265 and £S 300, but the proceeds are shared equally between tailor and machine-owner.

In general, then, the level of income for 'self-employed'

and 'casual' workers in the so-called 'informal manufacturing and repair sector' are without doubt much higher than in government employment discussed earlier. One possible objection to the status of the foregoing analysis as a critique of the ILO studies is that my data relate to the period 1981-83 and as such are not **readily comparable** to the situation described in the literature for the mid-1970s. In reply, I would contend that, although some **quantitative changes** have taken place, particularly since 1978, the **basic relation** between the two levels of remuneration compared above is virtually identical to the situation described in the ILO studies. By "quantitative changes" I refer, for example, to the increase in **money wage** and the decrease in **real wage** since 1978. The evidence I can bring to corroborate this view of the situation in the mid-1970s, however, is fragmented and derives from the **very sources** that assert the existence of significant differences in the levels of remuneration between the two 'sectors'. That such evidence is available in the literature is hardly surprising; I have already noted the discrepancy and contradiction between the '**conceptualization**' and '**description of the situation**' in the literature. But the point in bringing out this evidence is not to show that the so-called 'informal wage workers' are as 'well-paid' as their counterparts in the so-called 'formal sector'. It is rather to corroborate the view that **all** manual wage labourers in the urban wage labour market -and unskilled manual workers in particular- are equally **poorly-paid**.

To begin with, despite the ILO Mission's contentions

concerning the low wages of 'informal workers' compared to the income of the 'labour elite', in discussing the so-called 'informal sector' (Technical Paper 13), it mentions, in passing, some surprising findings from its 1974 survey of the 'informal sector'. According to the Mission (op. cit., p. 383), the "approximate average monthly revenue" in "informal manufacturing and repair" was £S 60 ranging from

a low of £S 30 for footwear to a high of £S 150 for metallic products ... The value of average capital assets was about £S 129 with a low of £S 14 and £S 15 for leather products and beverages respectively to a high of about £S 250 for wood products, indicating that capital as such may not be a barrier to entrance in some of these handicrafts ... The average monthly earnings of employees in these establishments reaches about £S 20 which is more than the statutory minimum wage. However, a low of £S 8 for footwear is reported.

The findings of the Mission not only suggest that in the overwhelming majority of cases 'informal employment' paid workers actually earned more than the statutory minimum wage but, when compared with other data produced by the Mission itself, also support my earlier contention that the earnings of 'informal workers' could be relatively higher than those of 'formal' workers. In a table summarizing, inter alia, data on average daily earnings of paid workers in 'informal manufacturing and repair', the Mission (p. 381) reports an average daily income for all 'informal manufacturing' workers of £S 0.80. In another section in the Report, however, the Mission presents a table showing, inter alia, average earnings of workers in a sample of 'formal sector' manufacturing establishments with five or more workers surveyed in 1973 in

which the average daily wage of workers (overtime included) is reported to be £S 0.60 (idem, pp. 367/8, but quoted from Sudan Government, 1973). Had the Mission compared these two averages, its logical conclusion would have been that wages in the 'formal' sector were well below, and not by any means significantly higher, than in the 'informal sector'. This point constitutes the corner-stone of Chase's critique of the Mission's view on the 'labour elite' (op. cit.):

We can consider the privileged wage standards ... of formal sector urban labour by reference to the average monthly earnings (March 1973) of surveyed formal sector urban manual workers. For the approximately 36 per cent of workers in establishments employing fewer than 100 workers, the average monthly earnings, overtime included, approximated £S 16; while for the approximately 64 per cent employed in firms of 100+ workers the relevant figure would be £S 21...

The minimum monthly wage in government employment in 1973 was £S 15 (Ali Ahmed Suliman, 1974). Calculating the average monthly earnings of 'informal workers' from data furnished by the Mission, the relevant figures would be: £S 17.10 in food and beverage manufacture; £S 27.60 in the manufacture of leather and leather products; £S 9.00 in the manufacture and repair of footwear; £S 27.60 in the manufacture of wood products and furniture; £S 23.10 in the manufacture and repairing of metallic products; £S 37.30 in electrical repairs; £S 16.20 in repair of motor vehicles and motor-cycles; and, finally, £S 18.00 in "others" -e.g. clothing (see ILO, 1976:381). It should be emphasized here that these averages are of the earnings of **paid** 'informal workers' and not of the 'self-employed' who are reported to

have had a much higher level of "revenue" (an average £S 60 per month).

One serious criticism that could perhaps be levelled at the foregoing comparison concerns the **frequency** of employment and unemployment for 'informal workers', which might well reduce their actual monthly earnings. It is generally assumed in the ILO studies that 'informal workers' experience discontinuous employment and frequent spells of unemployment. In none of the ILO studies, however, are there any data on unemployment among the so-called 'informal workers'. I certainly would not deny that in many cases 'informal workers' do experience unemployment which, if endured for a 'sufficiently long' period, may lead to return migration. Circular migration for unskilled migrants, however, is in the overwhelming majority of cases not only the 'norm', but also the original **intention** of the semi-proletarianized small farmers and pastoralists who come to the cities as 'target migrants'. Their migration, as explained in Chapter Two, is often intended to supplement their income from primary export domestic production. It is only in relatively exceptional circumstances that an unskilled migrant is "lucky enough" to find a well-remunerated activity and gives up his interest in the productive activities he used to pursue in his home village.

In pointing out the incidence of circular migration, however, I do not altogether endorse the view that 'informal employment' is as discontinuous as generally assumed. In Chapter Six I discussed some of the methods by which unskilled

'self-employed' tertiary workers cope with the insecurity of their employment. Moreover, **even when** employment is available, migrants do sometimes return home when they have realized the 'target' which originally brought them to the city. Leaving aside the findings of my own research, El-Wathig Kameir's study (1980a; 1980b) of the casual unskilled manual construction labourers in Greater Khartoum, who constitute by far the most extreme case of discontinuous urban employment documented in the Sudan, may be taken as evidence.

According to Kameir, the unskilled manual construction labourers (tulab) are all casual workers employed by building contractors;

Every contractor has a gang of "semi-stable" workers. The number of workers varies according to the number of contracts undertaken by the individual contractor. I refer to them as "semi-stable" because, while they usually stay with one employer during their stay in town, they are not permanently employed and can be fired without notice ... The pace of work depends on cooperation between the builders and the tulab ... and it is because of this that contractors normally prefer to employ groups of builders and tulab that have previously worked together ... (idem, 1980b:170).

Furthermore, Kameir reports a situation of "feasts and famine" experienced by building contractors and, by implication, the tulab. He describes how the tulab -all Nuer from Southern Sudan- are organized in "accommodation cells"; and how members of different "accommodation cells", scattered in new building sites all over the Three Towns, visit each other and thus facilitate the flow of information about employment opportunities throughout Greater Khartoum. Through regular visits by tulab to their home villages in the South,

information about employment opportunities is also transmitted to prospective migrants intending to come to Khartoum.

To substantiate his view of the discontinuous employment experienced by the Nuer tulab, Kameir presents a table showing the level of employment by one building contractor over a period of 30 **consecutive** days and how the workers were deployed on seven of his sites. The number of workers taken on daily varied a great deal from a low total of six on one day to a high of 23 on three days; and over the whole 30-day period there was constant "chopping and changing of building operations between different sites". Table (7:11), taken from Kameir (1980a:460/1), shows the fluctuations in production schedules for the contractor.

Though Kameir presents the table as evidence of discontinuous employment, it can be interpreted in a way that reveals a **fairly continuous** pattern of employment not only in the building industry as a whole, but also with the specific contractor in relation to whose production schedule the table was compiled. In regard to the industry as a whole (the level of many contractors), I would argue that the unemployment experienced by members of a gang associated with any one contractor may be compensated for by employment by other contractors, given the reported flow of information between members of different "accommodation cells" as well as the continued boom in the building industry (see Chapter Five). But even in the specific case of the building contractor studied by Kameir, unemployment did not figure as a serious problem and, certainly, the reported levels of wages received

Table 7:11

Employment of Day Labourers by One Building Contractor and the Transference of Workers Between Seven Sites Over a Period of Thirty Consecutive Days

DAY	NUMBER OF WORKERS ON THE DIFFERENT BUILDING SITES							TOTAL NUMBER
	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Site 5	Site 6	Site 7	
1	6	-	-	1	2	-	1	10
2	6	-	-	1	2	-	1	10
3	4	-	2	1	2	-	1	10
4	2	-	2	1	2	-	1	8
5	-	-	2	1	2	-	1	6
6	2	-	4	1	2	-	1	10
7	1	7	-	1	-	-	1	10
8	-	-	-	23	-	-	-	23
9	-	-	-	23	-	-	-	23
10	-	-	-	23	-	-	-	23
11	4	-	2	3	2	-	1	12
12	4	-	1	1	2	-	1	9
13	2	2	1	1	-	-	1	7
14	2	2	1	2	-	2	1	10
15	2	2	-	3	-	4	1	12
16	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	8
17	-	2	5	2	-	4	1	14
18	-	6	-	3	-	4	-	13
19	4	2	-	2	1	2	-	11
20	3	-	-	2	2	4	1	12
21	3	-	-	2	2	4	1	12
22	-	-	-	2	-	4	1	7
23	-	2	5	-	-	4	-	11
24	4	2	-	2	1	4	-	13
25	3	-	-	2	1	4	-	10
26	2	-	7	2	-	-	-	11
27	4	-	2	2	-	5	-	13
28	4	-	2	2	-	5	-	13
29	4	-	4	2	-	1	-	11
30	-	-	-	2	2	4	1	9

Source: El-Wathig Kameir, 1980a:460/61

by the members of the "semi-stable gang" of that contractor were by no means lower than those of government workers.

The membership of the "semi-stable gang" associated with the contractor is reported as consisting of 14 workers. The frequency of employment in the month surveyed for each member can accordingly be calculated as the average of the total man/days deployed by the contractor excluding those man/days in excess of 14 (the number of gang members) deployed in any one single day. On the 3 days when 23 workers were employed (days 8, 9 and 10), for example, the relevant figure was 14 only. The assumption here is based on Kameir's report that contractors tended to recruit workers mainly from members of the semi-stable gangs. The total frequency of employment for all gang members during the 30 days can therefore be calculated in the following way:

(1) The lowest number of workers employed continuously is 6 (the first six workers when six or more workers were employed), and this gives us 180 man/days;

(2) A seventh worker was given employment for 29 days (the first additional worker when 7 or more workers were employed);

(3) An eighth worker was given employment for 26 days (the second additional worker when 8 or more ...);

(4) A ninth worker was given employment for 25 days (the third additional worker when 9 or more ...);

(5) A tenth worker was given employment for 23 days (fourth additional worker when 10 or more ...);

(6) An eleventh worker was given employment for 16 days (the fifth additional);

(7) A twelfth worker was given employment for 13 days (the sixth additional worker);

(8) A thirteenth worker was given employment for 7 days (the seventh additional worker);

(9) A fourteenth worker was given employment for 4 days only (the eighth additional worker when 14 or more workers were employed).

The total man/days worked by the gang would thus have been 180+29+26+25+23+16+13+7+4, which amounts to 324 man/days. Given the arduous nature of the work, no one worker could be expected to be present throughout the 30 days; because of this, I calculate the days worked in terms of the average frequency of employment for all members of the gang at around 23 days in the 30 days surveyed (i.e. 324/14). This calculation, it should be noted, **assumes** that the member of the gang rests rather than either seeks re-employment through his "contacts" on other building sites or takes on another activity (e.g. cigarette-selling as described in Chapter Six).

Furthermore, on the basis of the calculated average frequency of employment, we can go further to estimate the average monthly earnings of the members of the gang. Kameir reports that the "average" daily wage was £S 0.60; but in two particular operations (digging of foundations and concrete enforcement) the wage was £S 1.25. Of the 30 days surveyed, 3 days are reported to have been on concrete enforcement on the ceiling (these were when 23 workers were employed); and I *assume that digging of foundations was for two days only*. Calculating on this basis, the average earnings for each member of the gang during that month were as follows:

(1) 18 days on 'average wage'	18x60=	£S 10.80
(2) 3 days on enforcement	3x125=	£S 3.75
(3) 2 days on foundations	2x125=	£S 2.50
Total earnings in 23 days		£S 17.05

When El-Wathig Kameir conducted his survey in 1977/78, the minimum wage in government employment was £S 16.50 (cf. Khalid Affan, 1977:72). In other words, even the most vulnerable of 'casual workers' could well earn above the minimum wage for

'permanent' government workers. Even when the earnings of the casual construction workers during the 23 days are calculated at the lower, "average", daily wage of £S 0.65, total earnings per worker would still be £S 14.95. Such figures clearly defy all attempts to characterize 'formal' workers as a 'labour elite'.

The foregoing comparison of earnings in the 'formal' and 'informal' sectors is intended as a plea for a more careful approach to the analysis of the urban wage labour market than hitherto offered by 'conventional wisdom'. Clearly, the comparison should not be taken to denote "virtual identity" in the terms of employment experienced by the two groups of workers. One must give full recognition to the so-called 'benefits' and the alleged 'expensive commitments' associated with 'permanent' employment: the paid annual holidays, the provisions for sick-leave and the after-service payments together with the stipulated compensation in cases of death or injury in the course of work. But though, in principle, the presence of such 'benefits' has potentially far-reaching implications for the conditions of 'permanent' workers, in monetary terms the current values of these 'benefits' are so low that they serve only partly to compensate 'permanent' workers for their poor wage-rates as compared to their counterparts in the so-called 'informal sector'.

THE 'FRINGE BENEFITS'

In this section I will consider aspects of the 'benefits', which are the exclusive 'privilege' of permanent workers: paid

annual holidays, provisions for sick-leave and after-service payments together with the stipulated compensation in cases of death or injury in the course of work. The first three of these 'benefits' was originally stipulated in the 1949 **Employer and Employed Persons Ordinance**, while compensation was first dealt with in the **Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, 1949** (Sudan Government, 1975, vol. III).

In the original **Employer and Employed Persons Ordinance**, paid annual holidays were given to permanent workers with two or more years of continuous service; and for all categories the holiday was 15 days only. In the 1969 (Amendment) Act, however, the minimum period of service was reduced to 18 months of permanent employment, and the duration of the holidays was made a function of the period spent in employment ranging from 15 days for workers with less than five years of service, to 20 days for workers with more than five but less than ten years of service, to 25 days for workers with more than ten but less than twenty years of service, and to a maximum of 30 days for workers with over 20 years of continuous service (cf. Farouk Abu-Eisa, op. cit.). The **Consolidated Labour Code** of 1970 reduced the minimum period for a worker entitlement to annual paid holidays to one year of continuous employment, and increased the minimum period of holiday to 18 days for those with less than four years of employment. With the suspension of the Code in 1971, however, the same provisions as in the 1969 Amendment were reinstated and are operational at present (cf. Sudan Government, 1975, III pp. 362ff).

In relation to paid sick-leave, the 1949 Ordinance stipulated that workers who spent a minimum of two years in permanent employment are entitled to paid sick leave of 30 days for every 24 consecutive months of continuous service. The 1969 Amendment retained the two year minimum for entitlement, but distinguished between three categories of paid leave according to length of employment as follows:

- (1) Workers who spent more than two but less than ten years of continuous employment are entitled to a month on full wages, a month on half wages, and a month on quarter wages for every 24 months of continuous employment.
- (2) If the worker had completed between ten and twenty years in continuous employment, he was to be granted a month and a half on full wages, a month and a half on half wages and a month and a half on quarter wages for every 24 months of continuous employment.
- (3) If the worker had completed twenty or more years, he was entitled to 2 months on full wages, two months on half wages and two months on quarter wages for every 24 months of continuous employment.

Again, the **Consolidated Labour Code** stipulated more favourable terms for workers, and not only reduced the minimum period of continuous employment to three months, but also increased the duration for full wages, half wages, and quarter wages, to three months each and, in addition, stipulated a further three-month period of leave without pay -i.e. stipulating sick-leave of up to one year for every two years of continuous employment. At present, however, it is the 1969 Amendment which is operational (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 360ff).

With regard to after-service payments, the **Employer and Employed Persons Ordinance** of 1949 stipulated a minimum of five years of continuous service for entitlement. For workers with five but less than 12 years of continuous employment, the

Ordinance stipulated an after-service payment of half the basic wage plus COLA for each year of service. For each additional year of service the worker receives a full month's basic wage plus COLA, provided that this is calculated in terms of the average wage for the last three years of service. For a worker with twenty years or more, the Ordinance stipulated the payment of full annual wages plus COLA.

The 1969 Amendment, again being the current law, reduced the minimum period for entitlement to after-service payment to three years. According to the Amendment, workers with three to ten years service are entitled to half the basic monthly wage, plus COLA for each year of service; those with ten but less than twenty years of service are entitled to one month basic salary, plus COLA for each year over the first ten years; while for those with twenty or more years of service the after-service payment was amended to become the equivalent of two years full pay instead of one. The short-lived Code reduced the minimum period to two years of service, and for the first ten years stipulated the payment of three-quarters of the monthly wage for each year, a full month's wages for each year from the 11th to the 20th, and one and a quarter month's wages for each year of continuous service for those with more than 20 years service. The after-service payment stipulated in the Code, however, was not to exceed the total wage of 36 months nor to be less than the wage of 24 months calculated on the basis of the last month in which wages were received. As maintained earlier, the provisions of the Code were suspended; and the present law regulating payments is the

same as the 1969 amendment.

In connection with the payment of compensation, the current law constitutes a virtual reproduction of the colonial **Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, 1949**. According to the latter, the dependants of a worker who dies in the course of work are entitled to the equivalent of wages for 30 months or £E 600, whichever is the lower. In cases of injuries resulting in being bed-ridden permanently, the compensation stipulated is either £E 700 or the wages for 42 months, whichever is the lower. In cases of partial disability, the compensation is to be calculated (according to a Table of Percentage Disability attached to the Ordinance) as a percentage of the compensation for total disability. The only attempt to amend the Ordinance was in the Code, which stipulated the payment of the wage of 1,260 days or £S 800, whichever is the greater, as compensation for full disability and £S 600 or the wage of 900 days, whichever is the greater, in compensation for death (cf. *ibid.*). With the suspension of the Code, however, even these small gains were lost to the workers.

When their **money-value** is calculated, the so-called 'privileges' and 'expensive commitments' associated with 'permanent' employment actually cost very little. The compensation for death, for example, is less than what administrators and professionals earn in one month. Nevertheless, we should not overlook the relative security which some of these 'privileges' provide -a security which the so-called "legislative protection" does not provide, as we saw earlier. This is particularly true of sick-leave stipulations.

A 'permanent' worker, in case of illness, may stay for a period ranging from three to six months (though not with full wages throughout) and comes back to find his job waiting for him. Neither the 'temporary' workers nor the totally 'casual' workers are entitled to anything resembling paid sick-leave or an assured position upon return to work.

The role of trade unions in achieving this modest, but nevertheless positive gain for 'permanent' workers cannot be ignored. It is indeed **to avert** the consequences of a strong trade union movement that in some branches of production, such as manufacturing industry, which do not experience marked fluctuations in production schedules, we find "heavy reliance" on 'temporary and casual' employment. Needless to say, **had** the unions been strong enough to engage effectively in a process of collective bargaining, the wage levels of union workers would have been higher, and the 'benefits' would have been a relatively "expensive commitment". But as I shall now explain, the conception of the ILO studies of "pressure by trade unions" as the determining factor of the alleged 'high wages' of 'permanent' workers is poorly-founded.

TRADE UNIONS AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Prior to the military take-over in 1969, the forces of supply and demand, productivity considerations and collective bargaining played minimal roles in the determination of wages (cf. Khalid Affan, 1977:62ff). Wages were thus almost exclusively determined through administrative and/or legislative action (cf. Abdel Rahman E.A. Taha, 1977:193ff). I

have already described the role of the two Commissions of Wakefield (in 1951) and Cadre (in 1968) as well as the present JECS. However, in a handful of large scale, mainly foreign, companies (e.g. Mobil Oil and Shell) and a few public concerns such as Sudan Railways and the Gezira Board, a form of 'collective bargaining' was adopted. In relation to these exceptions, it is generally recognized that the adoption of collective bargaining was a function of the size of the workforce and, by extension, of the relative strength of the trade unions. In the case of the multinational and foreign companies in particular, desire to avert the emergence of widespread nationalistic feelings was probably a relevant additional factor. By virtue of their strength, trade unions in these few establishments managed to obtain for their members higher wages and better terms of employment than in either government departments or small scale private enterprises.

It should be emphasized in relation to the pre-1969 situation that while a form of collective bargaining existed at the level of a few single enterprises, general trade unions and federations were almost totally excluded from the higher levels of national wage policy. More than once the government not only **refused** to negotiate with the Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation (SWTUF), but also **declined** to even recognize the SWTUF as the legal representative of workers (Abdel Rahman E. Ali Taha, 1977:195). The only occasion on which a pre-1969 government actually engaged in negotiations with the SWTUF, in January 1968, was in response to a desire by the government to

avert widespread industrial action by union workers (ibid.). The antagonistic government-trade union relations throughout both the colonial and post-colonial periods will be considered below. For my present purpose it suffices to point out that throughout its history the trade union movement in the Sudan was fighting more to assert its right to exist than to obtain better terms and conditions of employment for its membership comprised of 'permanent' workers.

Thus, up to the take-over by the Free Officers in May 1969, only a few relatively strong trade unions in some large scale private enterprises and a few public concerns were able to involve themselves in negotiations with their employers within single establishments. For the large majority of workers, the terms and conditions of employment were decided unilaterally by government; the workers could only influence decisions indirectly, through **industrial action** rather than through negotiations.

The regime of Field Marshal Numeiri has passed through two distinct phases in its relations with the labour movement. In the first phase (May 1969 - February 1971), the Free Officers adopted a self-professed 'socialist' programme and proved, in the main, to be 'sympathetic' to the demands of the labour movement. This phase, which reached its highest point in the promulgation of the **Consolidated Labour Code** of November, 1970, witnessed the closest coordination and 'understanding' between government and trade unions ever experienced in the Sudan. With the suspension of the Code in February 1971, the second phase began. In this second phase, which is still under

way, the regime has proved to be the most difficult opponent with which the labour movement has had to deal.

The 'sympathetic' attitude of the May regime during the first phase did not result in improvements in the general conditions of workers. As Abdel Rahman E. Ali Taha (1976:122) puts it, in return for 'sympathy', "workers were asked to forego wage demands, to increase production and lend political support for the regime.. workers ..not only froze their wage demands, but were [also] subjected to a heavy tax burden". As will be explained in more detail below, the "sympathy" referred to concerns measures that effectively increased the number of trade unions and their membership. At the same time, the regime undermined the effectiveness of trade unions as 'pressure groups' from the first day of the coup, first by prohibiting strikes through a Republican Order, and later by measures to 'regulate' certain public concerns and which brought collective bargaining to an end in the few establishments where relatively strong trade unions had previously managed to involve themselves in the determination of wages.

The measures affecting collective bargaining were stipulated in a 1970 Republican Order that suspended the internal rules and regulations of some 18 public concerns "pending their revision". The establishments affected included Sudan Railways, the Gezira Scheme Board, the Central Corporation for Electricity and Water, and the Rural Water Development Corporation, which had the strongest trade unions in the country (cf. Farouk Abu-Eisa, op. cit.). The Republican

Order in effect denied the workers in these establishments the gains for which they had fiercely fought, and subjected them once more to the general rules and regulations operating in other government departments. In large scale private enterprises, on the other hand, collective bargaining came to an end as a result of the ban on strikes. Private employers could thus ignore workers' demands without any fear of disrupting production through industrial action. It is indeed these constraints upon trade union activity which explain why the real wages of workers are progressively decreasing as inflation rises steadily. A relatively weak trade union movement is of course one of the pre-conditions for the prevalence of such conditions, and it is for this reason that I need to consider aspects of the initial emergence and later development of trade unions in the country.

THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN THE SUDAN

Though the trade union movement in the Sudan consists of both blue- and white-collar workers, it is the former who initiated the movement historically. Since a number of contributions dealing with aspects of the history of trade unionism in the Sudan are available, I do not need to give a detailed historical account. The most important contributions are those by Sa'ad El-Din Fawzi (1957), Abdel Rahman E. Ali Taha (1970; 1972; 1976; 1977), Mohamed Omer Beshir (1974) and Lobban (1977; 1982). In addition to these, we have had a few contributions to the study of labour legislation in the Sudan in recent years (Abdel Rahman E. A. Taha & Ahmed El-Jack, op.

cit.; Farouk Abu-Eisa, op. cit.; Hashim Abdel Karim Rufa'i, 1981); and the contribution of Farouk Abu-Eisa is particularly useful in understanding the legal provisions affecting trade unions.

One important reservation should be spelt out in relation to the contributions to the historiography of trade unions. This concerns the tendency of most scholars to equate the origin of the trade union movement with the legislation issued by the colonial state in 1949 (**The Trade Union Ordinance**) which recognized the right of a small sector of wage workers to organize. Most scholars have thus tended to assert that the movement is "a creature of the recent past" dating back to the strikes of 1947/48 staged by railway workers. These strikes, it is often claimed, were induced by the increase in prices following the Second World War (Sa'ad El-Din Fawzi, 1957:22; Abdel Rahman E. A. Taha, 1972:14); and their success resulted in the promulgation of the **Employer and Employed Persons Ordinance** and the **Trade Union Ordinance** in 1949. Despite this assertion, all scholars have, in the actual course of their accounts, dealt with some of the "events" that had occurred at least a decade earlier and which are relevant to the understanding of trade unionism in the Sudan. As Abdel Wahab Musa (1959:147) says, in his review of Fawzi's The Labour Movement in the Sudan, "instead of telling the story chronologically", these scholars "chose the other way... [they] started at the point where the workers' consciousness crystallised in a clear attempt to form trade unions, and from there went on to tell the story in detail".

I am not concerned merely to refer to the **correct chronology**; but I also wish to stress the view that, through placing emphasis on the events of the 1940s and attempting to equate the "birth" of the trade union movement with the legislation of 1949, two basic points have, in effect, been overlooked. The first concerns the relationship between trade unions and the **Trade Union Ordinance**. The Ordinance marked neither the "birth" of trade unions, nor even the "crystallization" of workers' consciousness to form unions. It was, rather, a capitulation by the colonial state to an already established and well-organized -albeit illegal- trade union movement that forcefully asserted itself. This point has been well made by Farouk Abu-Eisa (op. cit., p. 6):

The 1949 Ordinance recognized the right of workers to organize in trade unions that could serve their objectives and regulate their relations with employers ... [Well before that Ordinance, however] Sudanese workers had established their own unions and engaged in union activities despite the opposition of the colonial government to, and lack of laws to legitimize, such organizations and activities. In the face of the intensive pressure applied by the labour movement through industrial action, however, the foreign administration had no alternative but to concede the right of workers to organize ... The Ordinance thus followed in order to 'regulate' an already established trade union movement. This is a crucial point which has to be recapitulated; the right of workers to organize is not a 'gift' from anyone. It is a right of which workers had been deprived, but which they forcefully seized through a long and protracted struggle... (My translation).

In the same way that the workers gained recognition for their trade unions through their own struggle, they engaged in concerted struggles to assert the right of trade unions to

organize into a federation. Thus, in spite of resentment by the colonial state, in 1950 the workers unilaterally declared the establishment of the Sudan Workers' Trade Union Federation, SWTUF (see, Sa'ad El-Din Fawzi, 1957; Abdel Rahman E. Ali Taha, 1970; 1972). In the face of opposition from the colonial administration, the newly established SWTUF organized in August 1951 one of the most successful strikes in its history; and from then onwards it continued to assert its existence despite lack of government recognition, which was eventually gained in 1968.

The drive of the labour movement towards the formation of trade unions found its first **successful** expression in numerous workers' clubs in many Sudanese towns, starting with Atbara (1934) and Khartoum (1935). Though these clubs were ostensibly established for "social" and "recreational" purposes, from their inception they constituted bases from which the labour movement struggled to obtain recognition for the right to organize trade unions. The leadership of the trade unions emerged from among the members of these clubs, and the clubs were themselves explicitly identified with the trade union movement. This last point is clearly corroborated by the case of the workers' club in Khartoum, which in 1946 launched its own magazine, El-A'mil El-Sudani (The Sudanese Worker). From the time of its first issue, the magazine advocated the need for the establishment, and recognition of fully-fledged trade unionism to represent Sudanese workers nationally (cf. Sa'ad El-Din Fawzi, 1957). There is no way then in which trade unionism can be equated with the colonial **Trade Union**

Ordinance. The initiative of the labour movement to establish workers' clubs, and of the railway men in particular to form their national federation (The Workers' Affairs Association) in 1946, well before the enactment of the Ordinance not only testifies to the organizational skills of Sudanese workers, but also, and more significantly, reflects the workers' crystallized **consciousness** of their common class position and interests at a very early stage.

The first point leads directly to the second, which concerns misconceptions in the literature of the process that resulted in trade unionism. As maintained earlier, most scholars tend to attribute the origin of the trade union movement to the strikes of the 1940s and then contend that the post-war rise in prices was the "main factor" behind the militancy of workers. My central contention in this connection is that trade unionism, defined as the concerted efforts of workers to unite in their struggle to obtain better terms and conditions of work, was an integral aspect of the process of the emergence of a wage labour force in the country. **Fully-proletarianized** workers deprived from the ownership of the means of production and whose consumption requirements are to be satisfied not by their own products but through purchases made by the money obtained in return for sale of their labour power, find it imperative to struggle against employers to obtain a higher purchasing-power. An individual worker stands no chance of effective struggle; and unity among workers becomes a necessity rather than a virtue. But **unity is a process;** it starts from the level of the single

establishment, through industrial or sectoral levels, to national (and international) levels. At all these levels the principle underlying workers' organization is that of trade unionism, that is to say, of the need of workers to unite in order to be effective in their pursuance of better terms and conditions of work. Trade unionism in the Sudan, which can only be meaningfully conceptualized in the terms proposed, may thus be traced back not only to the establishment of workers' clubs, but also as far back as 1903, when workers from the Forestry Department went on strike in protest against their conditions of work (Mohamed Omer Beshir, 1974:190). From that date on, and throughout the colonial period, the militancy of workers never ceased, as evidenced by a long series of strikes that increasingly involved larger numbers of workers drawn from different regions of the country (idem., pp. 190ff; Abdel Wahab Musa, op. cit.). Bearing in mind that the Sudanese wage labour force was virtually **non-existent** before the turn of this century (cf. Chapter Four), one may well contend that trade unionism is a characteristic **inherent** in the class position of wage workers; and we can then see how the progressive proletarianization of increasing numbers of Sudanese led to the further entrenchment of trade unionism.

At the beginning of this chapter I claimed that labour legislation in the Sudan was intended to constrain rather than to consolidate the labour movement. The 1949 **Trade Union Ordinance** is no exception. The Ordinance was issued to contain industrial action by workers rather than to encourage genuine workers' unions. The original design of the colonial state was

indeed to establish 'works committees' that would involve workers in a "consultative capacity"; but it was explicitly stated that these committees were not to concern themselves with the rates of pay and terms of service of government employees (Sa'ad El-Din Fawzi, 1957:27). As workers rejected the designs of the colonial government, and pressed for the recognition of their own organizations, the Ordinance was issued, but in such a way as to hamper the development of effective trade unionism. Union membership was accordingly **restricted** to 'permanent' workers; and, given the small size of that group of workers in a situation in which employers could resort to 'temporary' and 'casual' employment, a major constraint was imposed upon trade unions at the very moment that they were recognized. Likewise, even with their restricted membership, the trade unions were faced with many provisions in the Ordinance which constrained further their effectiveness. Section 17 of the Ordinance, for example, made registration a **compulsory** condition for the recognition of a trade union; and no union or any of its members could engage in union activity before the completion of the registration requirement. The colonial Registrar of Trade Unions found a convenient pretext in this provision to obstruct the formation of trade unions by means of prolonging the formal procedure for registration (cf. Farouk Abu-Eisa, op. cit.). Likewise, Section 27 (2) prohibited those registered trade unions with members who were public employees from affiliation to, and unification or collaboration with, any "political" organization or party in pursuit of their objectives. Given

that during the colonial period "public employees" constituted by far the majority of union workers in the Sudan, the attempt by the colonial government to obstruct union activity is clear.

In accounting for the struggle waged by the labour movement during the colonial period, many scholars have tended to over-emphasize the "nationalist" nature of the movement and virtually to disregard its working-class origins. But in stressing the class, or 'partisan', roots of the labour movement I do not, of course, deny that almost all wage earners did, and continue to subscribe to the **ideology of nationalism**. (7) Nor is it my intention to belittle in any way the crucial and decisive role which the labour movement played against British colonial administration. As Abdel Rahman E. Ali Taha (1972:15) puts it, the industrial action by Sudanese workers "must have shaken the colonial government and destroyed the facade of invincibility that surrounded it". What should be stressed in connection with the apparently 'nationalistic' or **anti-colonial** character of trade unions in colonial Sudan, however, is the position of the colonial state as the largest employer of union workers in the country. In other words, the conflict between the trade unions and the colonial state was underlain, on the one hand, by the unions' struggle to improve the terms and conditions of work and, on the other, by the unwillingness of the colonial state (both as employer and as 'guardian' of the interests of employers in general) to concede such improvements. Such was the situation between government and trade unions in colonial Sudan, and

such has been the situation in the post-colonial period up to the present. In both periods, the trade unions entered into conflict with the state by virtue of class interests. But in asserting this view of the origins of trade unions I do not suggest that formal trade unions are merely "tools" of the labour movement to fight for its rights. Trade unions are themselves arenas for class struggle; thus, in order for trade unions to fight for workers, the labour movement did, and continues to, fight fiercely for the control over unions. But this fight is not solely against the designs of employers who attempt to contain trade unions through labour laws issued to create divisions within the working class (along the unionized/non-unionized distinction) or to control the unions (see below), but also against workers who, by upholding 'nationalistic' and/or 'sectarian' loyalties, may act in a fashion contrary to their class interests.

TRADE UNIONS AND THE 'NATIONALISTS'

The conflict with the colonial state, coupled with the ideology of nationalism among workers, had created conditions conducive to the fostering of an alliance between the labour movement and the "educated elite" that was seeking to control an independent Sudan. Despite persistent efforts by the 'elite' to mobilize the support of individual workers, however, the alliance between the labour movement and the Graduate Congress led by the 'elite' has never been consummated. A more **convenient** alliance was instead formed between the 'elite' and the various fractions of the

(commercial and agricultural) bourgeoisie along with the religious and 'tribal' leaders (who in many cases were also part of the bourgeoisie). With the disintegration of the Graduate Congress and the formation of the "traditional" political parties in the Sudan, the various fractions of that alliance came to constitute the leadership of the political parties which gained power after flag Independence in 1956. The only allies that the labour movement could find were, and still are, a small minority of 'petit-bourgeois' elements (a few professionals, a handful of academics, students, etc.) and the Communist Party of the Sudan which, though small in membership compared to the "traditional" parties, nevertheless carries more than proportional political weight (Mudathir Abdel Rahim, 1969; Warburg, 1978; Mohamed Omer Beshir, 1974; Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, 1984). As soon as flag Independence was achieved, and the "nationalist" movement started to subside giving way to "sectarian" loyalties, the 'post-colonial' state proved just as uncompromising with the labour movement as its colonial predecessor.

The conflict between the labour movement and the state was thus carried over into the post-colonial period. The crisis accruing from the intensification of the conflict in the immediate post-colonial years culminated in a general strike in October 1958 (Mohamed Omer Beshir, 1974:198). The government, which was controlled by the rural-based Umma Party, was also facing another crisis in Parliament over the issue of accepting aid from the United States; and as a result of the weakening position of government the first

parliamentary democracy in the Sudan came to an end. The military junta of General Abboud was literally handed power by (formerly General) Abdalla Khalil, the Prime Minister, on 17th November, 1958. Among the first measures undertaken by the junta was the arrest of union leaders and the dissolution of all trade unions in the country. These measures were met by stiff opposition from workers, and the military government had to submit to the right of 'blue-collar' workers to organize. Thus it was that early in 1960 an Ordinance was issued recognizing trade unions for manual workers whereas white-collar workers were not given that right. As with the original **Trade Union Ordinance**, the new law imposed many constraints on trade unions. Not only was no federation allowed, but the minimum number of workers required to form a union was increased from 30 to 50. As unions could only be established by workers of the same employer, the new law resulted in a drastic decrease in the number of unions and in the total number of members. According to Abdel Rahman E. Ali Taha (1972:18), the total union membership decreased from 86,355 workers organized in 135 unions in 1958 to 61,959 members organized in 71 unions in 1960.

The attempts by the Abboud Regime to pacify trade unions only resulted in the intensification of the struggle by workers to overthrow the government. The labour movement, however, was not the sole target of alienation by the junta. As opposition to the military gained strength, the October 1964 general strike staged by workers and students (who were soon followed by other sections of the population in the first

total civil disobedience in the Sudan) effectively guaranteed the overthrow of the junta and/or the success of the October Revolution.

The 'revolutionary' elements that assumed power in 1964 had the full backing of the labour movement in the Sudan which took the "unprecedented step of suspending wage demands so as to help the government cope with the economic crisis it was facing" (Abdel Rahman E. Ali Taha, 1972:20). The Secretary General of the SWTUF became Minister without portfolio in that 'revolutionary government'. By June 1965, however, the "traditional" political parties once more assumed power in the Sudan; and with their ascendancy there was a renewal of the antagonistic relations between the government and the labour movement. In an attempt by the government to divide, and ultimately weaken, the trade unions, the **Trade Union Ordinance (Amendment) Bill** was issued in 1966 (cf. Farouk Abu-Eisa, op. cit.). The Bill prohibited the formation of trade union federations except by unions belonging to the same industry or employer, and only federations constituted along these lines could form a confederation. Consequently, two federations were formed comprised of private-sector workers and public employees respectively.

MAY REGIME: FROM COURTSHIP TO COURT-MARTIALS

With the exception of the brief period from October 1964 to May 1965, the trade union movement in the Sudan was thus in a constant state of struggle to assert its sheer existence as the legal representative of workers. Only in a few public and

large scale private establishments could trade unions (at the level of a single establishment) involve themselves in collective bargaining. When the Free Officers rose to power in May 1969, the labour movement lent support to the 'socialist' programme of the Revolutionary Command Council. Though I accounted earlier for the course in which collective bargaining was brought to an end during this first ("sympathetic") phase of the present regime, in other measures the sympathy of the Free Officers could hardly be doubted.

THE ERA OF 'SYMPATHY'

The sympathy of the government is, for example, clearly corroborated by the creation of the Ministry of Labour (in place of the former Labour Department) and by the attempts to involve the trade union movement in the process of labour legislation and policy-making. Following brief negotiations between the Labour Minister and the SWTUF, the Revolutionary Command Council authorized the former to establish a competent committee led by trade unionists to review all labour legislation and to present recommendations for new laws (cf. Farouk Abu-Eisa, op. cit.). Thus, in the early part of the first phase, no new laws were issued, but a number of Ministerial Orders, which constituted the basis of the **Consolidated Labour Code** of November 1970, were introduced to deal with some urgent issues of the labour movement. Of particular relevance to this point are the Orders which, respectively, suspended Section 10 of the **Employer and Employed Persons Ordinance**, 1949 (as amended in 1969);

abolished the principle of "same employer" in the formation of trade unions; and, finally, simplified the procedure for the compulsory registration requirement.

I have already dealt with the Ministerial Order No. 993 suspending Section 10 of the 1949 Ordinance that regulated termination of employment and I need not repeat all the details here. What is important is that the new provision constituted a severe constraint upon the manoeuvres which employers used to adopt in their attempts to obstruct the formation of trade unions in their respective establishments by firing, from time to time, a number of workers to reduce the size of the workforce to under 30 workers (which was the minimum legal size to form a union). Another Order reduced the procedure for the compulsory registration requirement to the simple filing of papers by unions and the prompt checking of number of workers by the Registrar. The most significant Order, however, was that stipulating a new principle for the formation of trade unions (cf. Farouk Abu-Eisa, *op. cit.*). By means of this last, workers in small establishments, who because of their small numbers had until then been unable to form a union on the basis of the same employer, were allowed to organize on the basis of the same industry at the level of the one town or district. The Code went even further than the Orders and recognized the right of apprentices to join trade unions. In consequence, the first phase of Numeiri's regime witnessed a dramatic increase in the numbers both of trade unions and of members. The Code also stipulated the necessity for unity in the trade union movement, and accordingly

prohibited the formation of more than one federation each for blue-collar and white-collar workers unions whether at the level of a single industry, or sector, or nationally. Likewise, whereas the Code recognized the right of teachers to have their separate national federation, the right of the national federations to form a single confederation was also recognized.

The identification of the Code with trade unions was most explicit in its definition of "worker" which effectively abolished the distinction between 'manual' and 'mental' labour and as such recognized the rights of blue- and white-collar workers to form a joint trade union if the members concerned decided to do so; affiliation to the higher levels in such cases was also left to be decided by the members of the joint union. The position of individual trade unionists was also consolidated. The Code stipulated many guarantees for union leaders against dismissal because of union activity; and transfer of union leaders, except with the consent of the union, was also prohibited. Finally, the Code stipulated wage payments for full-time union officers, paid-leaves relating to union activity for non-full-timers, etc., all of which had previously been at the discretion of employers.

In relation to the involvement of trade unions in policy-making, the Code stipulated the creation of three Councils consisting of the representatives of workers, employers and the government; and in each council the representatives of workers were to comprise at least half the total number of members. The first of these Councils, the

Supreme Labour Council, headed by the Minister of Labour, was to be responsible for the formulation, in accordance with the general policy of the state, of policies concerning all aspects of work organization and industrial relations. The other, and lower, two councils headed by the Undersecretary for Labour were the Manpower and Training Council and the Work Relations Councils. These two were to be specialized councils advising the Supreme Council. Subject to the consent of the Labour Minister, moreover, the decisions of the Supreme Council were to be automatically operational; and in cases of disagreement the policies were to be submitted before the Cabinet for a final decision.

The **Consolidated Labour Code** was thus a landmark in the history of the labour movement in the Sudan, not least because it recognized the class basis and interests of trade unions and unionists. Only two months after its promulgation, however, the Code was suspended with the effect of reinstating all the pre-1969 labour laws it had repealed. The suspension of the Code heralded the beginning of the second phase in government-trade union relations in the era of Numeiri, an era which is still under way. The factors contributing to this change are several and complex and cannot be discussed in any detail in the present context. For my purpose it is sufficient to note briefly some of the salient factors that induced the change.

The most important point is that, whereas pre-1969 governments persistently tended to mystify aspects of the class struggle taking place in the Sudan, the rise of the Free

Officers to power not only **unmasked**, but also **intensified** class struggle at a number of levels. The self-professed 'socialist programme' of the new regime shattered the myth of the impartiality of the state, which post-colonial regimes had previously claimed. Through the measures undertaken to end the domination of foreign, mainly finance, capital in the Sudan, to nationalize and/or confiscate a majority of large scale industrial and commercial enterprises, and to assert forcefully the control of the state over all banking and foreign trade in the country, the Free Officers, in effect, engaged in an **offensive** against the bourgeoisie (in spite of the inclusion of the so-called "national bourgeoisie" into the "forces of national alliance"). The Code was thus only one among several measures that antagonized the bourgeoisie who, in return, sought not only to re-assert their 'privilege' to "hire and fire" workers, but also to restore their control over the **commanding heights** of the Sudanese economy -foreign trade in particular. Likewise, the 'secular' orientations of the Free Officers challenged the authority and power of the various 'tribal', sectarian, and political leaders who, as in the armed confrontation staged by the Ansar in Abba Island in March 1970, opposed the new regime and attempted to bring about its overthrow. In short, as a result of the the measures undertaken by the Free Officers, a struggle over power exploded, and it had to be resolved one way or the other. The Free Officers, however, were not themselves a homogeneous group; and in the absence of a **mass** organization to resolve the disagreements in the Revolutionary Command Council in a

democratic fashion thought appropriate by the masses, friction developed among the Free Officers themselves. The commonly held contention that the conflict within the ranks of the Officers was between "communists" seeking transformation and "social democrats and nationalists" pursuing reforms is a gross oversimplification. The same conflict was observed within the ranks of the Communist leadership and it resulted in splits within what had once been the strongest and most organized Communist Party in Africa and the Middle East. But the details of that conflict are beyond my purpose. It is sufficient to note that Numeiri and the 'reformists' eventually resolved the question of power following the abortive counter coup by the "communist" Officers, albeit at the cost of retreating from virtually all the 'socialist' measures previously undertaken. This retreat was, and continues to be reflected in the reinstatement and further entrenchment of foreign finance capital (foreign banks) and multinational corporations, as well as in the emergence of the "new rich" and the repression of the labour movement.

THE ERA OF REPRESSION

The **Trade Union Act, 1973**, and its 1976 amendment, typify the retreat in relation to the labour movement. Thus not only have the union rights of apprentices been withdrawn and the distinction between 'mental' and 'manual' labour been reintroduced, but the very objectives of the trade unions recognized by the state have been emptied of their class basis and interests. In Section 2 (5) of the Act which defines the

objectives of trade unions, priority was given to "increasing production" over the role of unions in defending the rights of members "within the limits of union laws, and the imperatives of the national economy".⁽⁸⁾ The attempt to restrict union activity through the insertion of the nebulous "imperatives of the national economy" hardly needs any emphasis. Article (6) of the same Section which deals with the "legitimacy of union activity" went even further; it now stated that unions and federations are entitled to adopt all the means suitable to the realization of their objectives in accordance with the Act, but it stipulated "exceptions" for activities considered to "constitute a crime against the security and peace of the state, or against the security of its basic institutions, in accordance with the current laws". As pointed out by Farouk Abu-Eisa (op. cit., p. 52), this last clause constrains the legitimacy of union activity, and accords undue discretion to the state to define, and from time to time to change what is to be construed as touching on its security.

The observation that the regime in this second phase has attempted to constrain union activity does not, of course, posit any new experience for the labour movement. Virtually all governments in the Sudan, colonial and post-colonial alike, did what they could to that end. What really constitutes a new experience in this second phase is the persistent effort to bring trade unions under the direct control of the state and the ruling party (the Sudanese Socialist Union -SSU), and to dissociate 'formal' trade unions from the labour movement altogether. Up to 1971, the trade

unions had developed **independently** of direct state control and supervision although the state, through legislation, attempted to create divisions within the labour movement and to constrain trade unions in advancing the cause of union workers. The **Trade Union Act** of 1973, however, not only stipulated a new structure and organization for trade unions that conferred unlimited powers upon the Minister of Labour, but also accorded to the General Registrar the authority to suspend the activities of any union organization.

The provisions for the new structure and organization of trade unions (cf. Hashim Rufa'i Abdel Karim, 1981) are contained in Section 3 of the Act, which is supplemented by two other laws (**Basis for Union Formation Regulations** and **Union Structure Regulations**) issued by the Labour Minister. Starting from the lowest level, there are the branches (with 50 or less members), union bureaux (with over 50 workers), general unions and, finally, federations. Article 8 (2) of Section 3 accords the status of legal personality to the general unions and federations, but denies it to both the branches and the bureaux. Coupled with the new powers accorded to the Minister concerning the formation of general unions and federations, this new organisation effectively constrained trade unions in representing their membership even at the level of the shop-floor.

According to the new regulations, the Minister of Labour, "in consultation with trade union federations", is authorized to specify the sectors, industries, occupations and establishments in which workers can form general unions and

federations. But the Minister has **consistently** formed general unions by bringing together, as "one sector", union bureaux of workers who work for different and unrelated employers, and whose work is varied. The formation of the General Union for Services and Housing is a good case in point. This general union represented, among others, workers from the Customs Department, the Central Corporation for Water and Electricity, the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Public Works, the Prisons Department, and the Civil Aviation Department (cf. Farouk Abu-Eisa, *op. cit.*, p. 54). Only the union bureaux of workers from the Central Corporation for Water and Electricity managed, **perforce**, to extricate themselves from that strait-jacket. It is worth noting that the branches and bureaux were deprived of the legal personality status. Thus, in the event of any shop-floor dispute, employers can refuse to negotiate with them, and can demand negotiations with the legally recognized centre. Owing to the diversity of the problems of the different bureaux, the general union representatives cannot always be informed about the precise nature of the dispute at the level of an establishment -not to mention the burden imposed upon general unions to deal with every dispute in due time. The predicament of union branches and bureaux hardly needs further elaboration. On the one hand, workers have to accept affiliation to the "legally recognized" general unions decided by the Minister -unless, of course, they are exceptionally strong which is very rare in the Sudan at present. (Article 29 [A] of Section 3 of the Act authorizes the Registrar to refuse applications from bureaux to form

general unions unless the formation is in accordance with the instructions of the Minister). On the other hand, any branch or bureau which undertakes action without the consent, or not in accordance with the decisions of the general union is subject not only to the **suspension** of its affiliation and activities, Articles 13 (1) and 13 (3), but also to **dissolution** as it would be committing a "violation of the consent of the trade union movement", Article 13 (5). Above all else, the weakness of the trade unions is most evident in the impossibility of undertaking 'legal' industrial action. Strikes are prohibited in the Sudan; and any person and/or union activist found enticing workers to strike is liable to prosecution under the **State Security Act**. The railway workers staged a strike in 1981, and in spite of the status of their union as the most powerful in the country, many of its members were imprisoned. To avert any further disruptions in the transport sector, a so-called Strategic Regiment was created within the People's Armed Forces. Recruits are instructed in wide-ranging skills, not least among which is train-driving. It is only the 'privileged' professionals (judges, academics, physicians, engineers, etc.) who seem to be effective in persuading the government, through 'industrial action', to improve their pay, as the events of the last three years have shown. As soon as wage workers or junior clerical workers appear to be staging a series of strikes which might culminate in a general strike, the government reacts simply by declaring a **state of emergency** as clearly witnessed by the events of Summer 1984. Needless to say, such a tactic by the regime is

effective only in the short-term, for workers cannot endure for long the progressive deterioration in their living standards.

I do not need to consider the other provisions of the **Trade Union Act**, which are equally detrimental to the labour movement, in order to corroborate the conclusion that the trade unions in the Sudan are severely constrained, and that these constraints help us to explain how the deterioration in the living standards of union workers has been allowed to take place. In view of the foregoing discussion, it is very surprising to encounter assertions that the trade union movement in the Sudan "has secured an impressive armoury of legislation" and that "Sudanese workers are furnished with collective bargaining procedures that bear comparison with those achieved by organised labour in advanced countries". But notwithstanding the gains achieved by organized labour in industrialized countries, it has to be stressed that most of these gains were actually achieved during periods of general economic expansion, when capital could easily afford concessions to neutralize the militancy of the labour movement. During periods of economic recession and of crises of accumulation, however, no concessions of any kind are allowed **unless** the labour movement threatens (or succeeds in) the total destruction of capital. But in the Sudan (as in other underdeveloped countries) the crises of capital accumulation are chronic; and no 'concessions' are allowed unless the labour movement engages in a general strike intended to transform the processes of peripheral capitalism which

underlay the politico-economic crises.

One final point I should briefly touch on concerns the relations between trade unions and the Sudanese Socialist Union, the sole political organization recognized in the country. At each level of the SSU hierarchical structure (towns, districts, provinces, regions and centre) there is a Workers' Secretariat; and the Workers' Secretary at the highest level enjoys ministerial status. All secretaries are appointed by the President of the SSU (who is also the President of the Republic) or his subordinates at the lower levels. At present there are no laws explicitly stipulating the subordination of trade unions to the Workers' Secretariates, but, at the highest level at least, the Secretary is in close contact with the national federations as well as the national general unions. The general unions and federations, on the other hand, do not -at least not overtly- oppose the policies of either the government or the SSU and among their officers there are usually a number of members and/or ardent supporters of the SSU; but, as in the cases of the 1980 Memorandum protesting against low wages in the context of inflation and the 1981 strike by the Railway Workers Union, it should not be assumed that all formal trade unionists are complacent. It is also relevant to recall here that any trade unionist who opposes government policy is liable not only to prosecution for illegal opposition, but also to denial of the right to participate in union activity altogether, not least through arbitrary arrest without trial. In this context of severe constraints upon formal trade

unions, the workers often undertake action independently. The "grain prices crisis" in El-Obeid (November, 1980), in the course of which workers engaged in demonstrations, broke into merchants' grain stores and burnt the buildings of the SSU Regional Secretariat, is a good case in point. But, though such sporadic and spontaneous measures posit the evidence of continued workers' militancy, they cannot replace the organizational forms that can wage concerted and organized struggles to improve terms and conditions of employment. The institution of such organizational forms, however, is not a scholastic question to be analysed in the abstract, precisely it depends on **praxis** by the labour movement and, first and foremost, on the will and efforts of the workers themselves.

CONCLUSION

The urban labour market in the Sudan, as in other underdeveloped countries, is characterized by a apparent structural segmentation. Scholars have tended to explain this 'segmentation' as a consequence of differential terms and conditions of employment experienced by different sections of the urban manual labour force. Central to this explanation is the distinction between 'formal' and 'informal' workers. The former are said to constitute a 'labour elite', upon which 'privileges' are conferred, while the latter are assumed to lack all 'privileges'. However, in their actual accounts, scholars have pointed out another distinction between 'permanent' and 'temporary and casual' workers in the so-called 'formal sector', but have contended that the 'formal

workers' employed on a 'non-permanent' basis experience the same terms and conditions of employment as do 'informal workers'.

The central point I have attempted to develop in this chapter is that the literature on the urban labour market in the Sudan has grossly misconceived the nature, origins and implications of this apparent structural segmentation. I have therefore considered in some detail three main aspects of 'permanent' employment, and compared them to conditions of 'casual' and 'self-employed' workers to corroborate the relative uniformity of the conditions of the manual labour force as a whole. These aspects are (1) the alleged job security and "legislative protection" which the 'permanent' workers are said to enjoy, (2) the assumed "high wages" and "expensive commitments" of 'permanent' employment and, (3) the role of trade unions in collective bargaining. The evidence available suggest that the so-called 'labour elite', far from earning 'high wages', actually receive less than the 'casual' and 'self-employed' workers, but the 'fringe benefits' to which the former are entitled compensate for their relatively lower pay-rates. More significantly, the evidence indicates a horrific deterioration in the standards of living of wage earners in general, and unskilled labourers in particular, over the last decade.

In stressing the homogeneity of the terms and conditions of the different sections of the urban wage labour force, my intention has been to dismiss neither the distinction between 'permanent' and 'non-permanent' ('temporary', 'casual' and/or

'self-employment') as irrelevant, nor the apparent structural segmentation of the urban labour market as a figment of the imagination. On the contrary, I believe that the apparent segmentation has its **material basis** in the differential placement of the different sections of the urban wage labour force, and that the distinction between 'permanent' and 'non-permanent' workers is relevant to the understanding of the origins of the apparent segmentation. This relevance arise from the correspondence of the 'permanent'/'non-permanent' distinction to the distinction between '**unionized**' and '**non-unionized**' workers. Union workers are exclusively 'permanent' workers; 'temporary', 'casual' and 'self-employed' workers are all denied union rights by labour legislation. But this denial weakens the position not only of 'temporary' and 'casual' workers, but also of the trade union movement itself. Through a detailed assessment of the development of trade unionism in the Sudan, I have attempted to show that throughout their history trade unions have been fighting more for the assertion of their right to existence than for involvement in collective bargaining and the determination of the terms and conditions of employment. By stressing this position of trade unions, my aim has been the corroboration of the view that the significance of the unionized/non-unionized distinction does not stem from any present or past roles assumed by trade unions, but rather from the potential threat which a strong trade union movement poses to the process of capital accumulation based upon cheap labour.

NOTES

1. Had El-Wathig Kameir (1980b) studied the conditions of 'temporary' workers in the two factories and compared them with those of 'permanent' workers, he would have noted how little, if to any extent, the difference in wages for the two groups is. Basing my analysis on the wage-rates for the 'casual' workers in the construction industry reported by El-Wathig, I will attempt a comparison later in the chapter.
2. Such a view has been advanced by Abdel Rahman E. Ali Taha and Ahmed H. El-Jack (1973:38) who, with the utmost of contempt for Sudanese workers, write as follows:
We believe that the regulations of termination of contract, and for that matter all labour legislation, should be designed to fit the socio-economic environment of the particular country in question. We propose that in this stage of our economic development it might not be wise to place too many restrictions on the freedom of employers to run their establishments effectively. The industrial labour force in the Sudan is an infant creature. It lacks discipline, skill, and commitment to industrial life. Under such circumstances employers justifiably need more freedom to handle their labour force...
3. This view of the reasons to engage workers is not intended to cover all forms of employment in the country. The case of the Unemployment Relief Fund which was created to neutralize University graduates and Secondary School leavers (cf. Chapter Three) is one such exception.
4. The Consolidated Labour Code was enacted during what I call the 'first phase' of Numeiri's regime, which was established in May 25, 1969. In order not to distract attention from the discussion of termination of employment, however, I will postpone the consideration of aspects of government-trade union relations under the present regime, and deal with it later in the chapter.
5. According to Khalid Affan (1977:72), "this law excludes three quarters of the labour force in the Sudan since it does not cover seasonal agricultural labourers or workers outside 'stipulated' urban areas or workers in establishments that employ less than ten employees, or workers whose age is below 18 years".
6. The deterioration in the value of the Sudanese Pound since 1978 is one indicator. Until June 1978, one Sudanese Pound was equal to US\$ 2.87; in 1979 it was devalued to £S 1= US\$ 2, and, after a series of devaluations between 1979 and 1985, in April 1984 it stood at £S 1= US\$ 0.55, and now (February 1985) the actual price of US\$ 1= £S 5.20.

7. The commodities and items covered by the study are those selected by the Department of Statistics for its household budget survey of 1967/68. These comprise (1) vegetables and fruits which numbered 20 varieties; (2) grain, beans, milk, oil and fats, all of which numbered 18; (3) sugar and drinks -eight commodities inclusive of cigarettes; (4) clothing, which comprised 29 varieties for adults (over 15 years) of both sexes and 29 for children (under 15 years); (5) accommodation requirements, which include house-rent, cooking-fuel and lighting; (6) miscellaneous items such as linen and blankets, household utensils, matches, industrial soap and other 'personal items' (e.g. toilet soap, hairdressing, education, books, newspapers and recreation, which includes cinema, games, and subscriptions in clubs and unions). The relative importance and weight of each item for each income-group is calculated separately. For the low-income group, food and drinks stood as 66.52% of total expenditure; accommodation requirements at 12.36%; clothing at 5.51%, and miscellaneous at 15.21%. For the high-income group expenditure on the same items was 60.46%, 11.31%, 0.60%, and 21.46% respectively (see, Al-Maidan, op. cit.).

8. A specifically "Sudanese" nationalism is of course lacking in case the term "nationalism" is to be construed as denoting the phenomenon that furnished the ideology when the nation-states emerged in Europe. The fact that the present boundaries of the Sudan are a colonial creation that cut across the human frontiers of race, religion, and language hardly needs recalling. The current turmoil in Southern Sudan (not to mention the 17 year war in the South that ended in 1972 along with the 'regional' movements that gained political weight in the mid-1960s such as those of the Beja of the Red Sea, the Nuba of Kordofan and the Darfurians) clearly points to the unresolved "national question(s)" in the country. In using the term "nationalism" thus I denote the dominant perception of the what binds the different groups of the country to one another. I refer to this perception as an "ideology" because it masks the structure of asymmetrical (class and other) relations which comprises the essential component of that bond.

9. As pointed out by Farouk Abu-Eisa (op. cit.), the listing of the objectives of trade unions in that order was not incidental. It does not only accords credibility to some current calls to have increasing productivity as the primary target of trade unions, but also attempts to constrain the class basis and interests of trade unions. Given that the state is the largest single employer of union workers in the country, whatever action undertaken by unions in pursuit of the class interests of workers would be interpreted as contrary to their 'basic objective' (of increasing productivity).

OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSION

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time
(T.S. Eliot: '*little Gidding*')

Under the growing influence of the world-system-dependency perspective, considerable progress has been achieved in the understanding of the peripheral capitalist basis of the processes of urbanization and urbanism in the so-called 'Third World'. In contrast to the earlier 'conventional wisdom' which saw urbanization as a suprahistorical process and 'Third World urbanization' as a 'reiteration' of the historical process in 19th century Europe, very few scholars would today advocate any approach to urbanization which fails to consider the significant variations in the socio-economic and historical contexts within which urbanization is taking place. I subscribe to the view that conventional wisdom has mystified the conceptualization of the role of capitalist-colonialism which has led to the re-orientation, and the structural malformation, of the production processes in the colonies in the context of the institution of an international division of labour.

Notwithstanding the progress achieved in the critique of the conventional wisdom and/or in the understanding of the dynamics of urbanization in underdeveloped countries, views reminiscent of that 'wisdom' still loom large in the literature. In the Sudan, as in other underdeveloped countries, scholars have continued to assert that rural-urban unskilled labour migration is the main factor behind the recent acceleration of urban growth, but very little has been

achieved by way of substantiating that assertion. Likewise, and despite significant differences in their interpretation of the 'push-factors' stimulating rural-urban labour migration, many scholars continue to view in negative terms the implications of unskilled labour migration for the structure and operation of the urban wage labour market. It is accordingly still claimed that the rate of increase in the wage labour force exceeds the rate of employment generation and that a growing section of the urban unskilled manual labour force is steadily being made 'redundant' or forced into unskilled tertiary 'self-employment' to eke out a living by 'inventing' jobs. It is also claimed that the 'labour-surplus situation' which obtains in 'Third World cities' has resulted in a structural segmentation of the labour market. The various "forms" of employment which obtain in these cities (i.e. wage- and 'self-employment'; 'permanent' and 'non-permanent' employment, etc.) are accordingly said to carry significantly different terms and conditions of employment for workers. Thus, 'permanent' workers in the so-called 'formal' sector of the labour market are conceived as a 'privileged' section of the workforce, whereas 'informal' workers and 'casual/temporary' workers in the 'formal' sector are said to be 'insecure' and 'impoverished'.

On the basis of analyses of the political economy of peripheral capitalism in the Sudan and of the structure and operation of the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum, I have set out in this thesis to expose and redress, at least in part, the limitations of such conventional wisdom. In Chapter

Two I presented an analysis of the major transformations which the domestic form of agricultural production has experienced over the last eight decades, and explained aspects of the dynamics of proletarianization (or the transformation of non-wage producers into wage labourers), which underlies the rural-urban unskilled labour migration. The central point substantiated in Chapter Two is that the Sudan was transformed, under conditions of full-scale capitalist-colonization, into an arena for primary export production, and that this transformation was achieved on the basis of the domestic form of production which, by satisfying a large part of the consumption requirements of producers through its 'subsistence sphere', provided the cheapest source of labour. The processes of monetarization and commercialization which underpinned the transformation of domestic agricultural production, however, set into motion a process of qualitative differentiation, by which a few producers graduate into incipient capitalists while a majority is forced to seek employment in the labour market. The outcome of the contradictory interplay between the resilience of domestic production and the process of differentiation has been semi-proletarianization. The large majority of semi-proletarianized domestic producers, however, seek wage employment in rural agriculture, while only a small minority undertakes rural-urban migration.

The number of rural-urban unskilled labour migrants in the Sudan is small not only in comparison to the semi-proletarianized workers seeking wage employment in the

countryside, but also in relation to the total number of rural-urban migrants who, in addition to wage labourers, include capitalists, bureaucrats, and professionals as well as 'non-economically active' categories such as students, house-wives and children. As the Census data do not specify the social characteristics of migrants to Sudanese cities, and as analyses of the dynamics of urban growth have been distorted by ideological intrusions, the role of migrations by these other strata has been almost completely overlooked. To substantiate my view of the significance of these other forms of rural-urban migration, I explored in Chapter Three the dynamics of population growth in post-colonial Khartoum; and comparative data on El-Obeid, Port Sudan and Wad Medani were considered to corroborate the relevance of this type of analysis to the understanding of urban growth in the country at large. Through a critical assessment of Census returns in the period 1955/56-1983 and a synthesis of data on growth of specific categories, I set out to show that though the urban manual labour force has undoubtedly increased considerably during the post-colonial period, a far greater growth has taken place among 'non-wage earners' (businessmen, civil servants and professionals), while the greatest rates of growth have occurred in categories of 'non-earners' (house-wives, children, students, elderly, etc.). The ultimate objective of the chapter was to show that when increased rural-urban migration is accepted the single most important factor in population growth relate to these other groups and not to wage labour migrants. In the course of the analysis,

several lacunae in the literature on the dynamics of growth in Greater Khartoum were pointed out. There is, for example, a general failure to recognize the role of the extension of municipal boundaries in boosting rates of migration to, and fertility in, Greater Khartoum, while virtually no research into the dynamics of female and child migrations has been undertaken. What is certain, however, is that the manual labour force (skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled, irrespective of whether wage- or 'self-employed') not only represents a tiny minority of the total urban population, but also constitutes less than half the 'economically active' population.

The small size of the manual labour force in Greater Khartoum is not at all surprising when we take into account the implications of the pattern of peripheral capitalist urbanism, whose functioning remains tied to the colonial-type trade economy, and whose 'basic' activities (administration and commerce) demand only a relatively small manual labour force. In Chapters Four and Five I considered the implications of the colonial-type trade economy for the determination of the 'intra-urban processes' governing the operation of the wage labour market in Greater Khartoum during the colonial and post-colonial periods. In these two chapters I explained that the larger part of the demand for urban labour in 20th century Sudan has been external to both administration and the 'basic' avenues of capital accumulation (import-export trade and related activities such as banking, insurance and transport). Thus, although the demand in commerce and industry, small as

it was, continued to grow throughout the colonial period, the major source of labour demand was the construction industry, and the unstable nature of this demand meant frequent oscillation between 'labour-surplus'/'mass unemployment' and 'labour-shortage'/'full employment' situations in the operation of the wage labour market. The dramatic post-colonial expansion in primary export production intensified further the processes of the colonial-type trade economy, and employment levels in both administration and commerce increased appreciably. Most of these opportunities, however, concerned bureaucrats and professionals rather than manual workers. The deformed industrialization prompted by import-substitution policies created relatively significant opportunities for wage employment during the first two decades of flag Independence; but from 1969 onwards Greater Khartoum lost its attraction power for industrial investment, but due to widespread replenishment recruiting 'modern' manufacturing industry has continued to provide (transient) industrial employment for large numbers of workers.

Recent industrial investment in Greater Khartoum is almost exclusively confined to capital-intensive food-processing industries, especially 'bread manufacture'. Needless to say, the main factor underlying continued investment is underlain by the increased demand for bread consequent upon population growth. But the more significant effects of the population momentum in post-colonial Khartoum concern the generation of a steadily growing demand for a wide range of personal and community services, which provide employment for

ever-increasing numbers of people ranging from high-level manpower to unskilled 'self-employed' workers.

In Chapter Six I analysed the findings of my research into the conditions of the unskilled tertiary 'self-employed' workers in Greater Khartoum. I attempted to illuminate the role of population growth in augmenting the demand for unskilled tertiary services, and came to the conclusions, largely contradicting to widely-held views regarding the conditions of these workers. I attempted to show how the increase in the number of workers performing unskilled personal services (e.g. car-washing, shoe-shining, laundry-work and portering) has been promoted almost exclusively by the continuing growth of the affluent urban strata. While the demand for the services of petty and/or street traders originate from elements of all classes, a large part of the demand seems to be from the low-paid clerical and manual workers. But the role of petty traders does not cease with the provision of goods to meet this demand. Petty trading provides wholesalers with a cheap system of distribution (compared to retail shops) which augments their accumulation because it is through interaction with petty traders that the wholesalers are able to appropriate a large portion of margins stipulated for retailers, in addition to the officially stipulated 'wholesale profit margins'.

Furthermore, in Chapter Six I highlighted aspects of the 'coping responses' or mechanisms by which 'self-employed' tertiary workers managed to minimize, and often even to eliminate, the insecurity of their 'self-employment'. In the

case of petty traders, insecurity is mitigated through ethnic and/or regional specialization; and membership in these groups grants admission to residential groups and/or trading networks as well as to rotating credit associations -all of which are important for continuity in petty trade as they help in different ways to augment the small capital possessed by the individual traders. In the sphere of personal services, on the other hand, 'self-employment' is increasingly becoming a form of concealed wage employment in which 'connections' with established urban families and/or individuals are crucial, as workers seek to conclude tentative 'long-term' contracts with a core of clients. By this method 'self-employed' workers manage to secure a minimum 'guaranteed' income, over and above what they may earn on the fluctuating and insecure 'spot market'. Workers who do not belong to the regional/ethnic groups dominating an activity often find considerable difficulty in establishing themselves, and there is as a result a high degree of circulation of personnel. Some of these 'badly placed' workers appear to seek alternative employment, especially in 'modern' manufacturing industry which is plagued by 'replenishment recruitment', while others tend to re-enter the rural wage labour market, or to emigrate to neighbouring Arab countries. More systematic research is however needed regarding the pattern of circulation between wage- and self-employment in urban Sudan.

The levels of earnings of the 'self-employed' tertiary workers analysed in Chapter Six compared favourably with the pay-rates of wage earners in the so-called 'formal sector'

which I discussed in Chapter Seven. The earnings of workers in the so-called 'informal manufacturing and repair sector' were found to be much higher than those of wage workers in the public sector and the large scale private enterprises. But the differences in daily earnings of the different sections of the unskilled labour force tended to disappear when I took into account the alleged 'expensive commitments' that associate 'permanent' employment, viz., after-service payments, compensation schemes, paid holidays and sick-leave. The difference in level of earnings between wage and 'self-employed' skilled workers remained conspicuous even when the 'privileges' were taken into consideration, and it is because of this that skilled workers in particular are increasingly withdrawing from wage employment into the potentially much higher rewarding 'self-employment'. In relation to the unskilled workers in the so-called 'formal sector', differences in pay-rates were noted between 'permanent' and 'non-permanent' ('temporary' and 'casual') workers. Available evidence on the conditions of unskilled 'casual' construction labourers in Greater Khartoum defies all allegations concerning the status of 'permanent' workers as a 'labour elite'; but more research into the conditions of 'temporary workers', especially in 'modern' manufacturing industry, is indispensable in our search for a better understanding of the conditions of 'non-permanent' workers. Particular attention should be accorded to the investigation of the alternatives pursued by 'non-permanent' workers after they are sacked.

The overall uniformity of the conditions of the different sections of the manual labour force is not confined to aspects of remuneration. Through a critical review of labour legislation and trade unionism in the Sudan, I demonstrated that the views held in relation to the position of 'permanent' workers actually are poorly-founded. The 'legislative protection' against 'unlawful termination', which 'permanent' workers are said to enjoy, was thus found to be a mockery of the concept, as the scope of what is 'lawful' is so wide that employers can invariably act within the law. Likewise, the role of 'pressure by trade unions' in the determination of wage rates in the so-called 'formal sector' proved to be a gross exaggeration; since their inception, trade unions in the Sudan have been fighting more to assert their right to exist than engaging in effective 'collective bargaining'. Only a few trade unions in certain large scale public and private concerns were, in the pre-1969 period, strong enough to acquire for their members relatively better terms and conditions of employment compared to other wage workers. With the 1969 ban on industrial action, the 1970 re-organization of parastatals, and the 1973 Trade Unions Act, all of which served to undermine the relative strength of these few unions, the relatively 'privileged' status of workers in large scale concerns has, in effect, been undermined. Although from its inception to 1969 trade unionism in Sudan developed independently of the state (except for the latter's intervention through legislation), in recent years the regime has made persistent efforts to bring the trade union structure

under its direct control. This is particularly true in the case of the higher levels of the union hierarchy (general unions, federations and confederations). But though a degree of tension appears to exist between the higher and lower levels of union structure, a thorough dissociation of 'formal' trade unions from the labour movement has not been achieved, as many recent events in the Sudan testify. The severe constraints facing the higher levels of union hierarchy should not be construed as a total emasculation of union activity, but very little is known about trade unionism and its role at the shop-floor level.

In stressing the present weakness of trade unions in the Sudan, I do not, of course, deny the modest gains which the trade union movement has so far achieved for its members; entitlement to paid holidays and sick-leave in particular are very important as they provide a measure of job security which the so-called 'legislative protection' actually fails to provide. But I should stress that employers very seldom employ a wage worker on a 'permanent' basis unless he/she is skilled or, in the case of unskilled workers, unless a high degree of commitment to the establishment is required (as in the case of guards and messengers, who must be trustworthy). In the case of other unskilled workers, employment on a non-permanent basis seems to be the rule, especially in those branches of production, such as the building industry, which experience frequent fluctuations in production schedules. Thus, in 'modern' manufacturing industry, which does not experience fluctuations in labour demand, only a small core of the

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unskilled workforce is employed on a 'permanent' basis, while most are recruited as 'casual' and/or 'temporary' workers.

As far as the terms and conditions of employment are concerned, then, there are scarcely any appreciable variations between the different sections of the wage labour force. This uniformity clearly discredits current conceptions of the origins and implications of the apparent structural segmentation of the labour market (i.e. the observed prevalence of different "forms" of employment for manual workers). But I conclude that the apparent segmentation cannot be wholly explained in terms of variations in the labour requirements and/or production schedules of different capital accumulation processes, or of specific 'disincentives' and/or difficulties for capital regarding the institution of a wage labour process in certain branches of production (as in a majority of unskilled tertiary activities). Nor can we impute a relation of 'virtual identity' between the different "forms" of employment.

One of the major points I attempted to substantiate in Chapter Seven was thus that we should not dismiss the distinction between 'permanent' and 'non-permanent' employment as irrelevant, as this distinction has material implications manifested in the **differential placement** in relation to entitlement to trade union membership. In other words the significance of the distinction between 'permanent' and 'non-permanent' workers is in its correspondence to the distinction between 'unionized' and 'non-unionized' workers; union membership is exclusive to workers employed on a

'permanent' basis, while 'casual', 'temporary' and 'self-employed' unskilled workers are all denied union rights by labour legislation. But, given the present position of trade unions, the significance of this latter distinction stems not from any present or past roles assumed by unions, but rather from the potential threat which a strong trade union movement poses to the processes of capital accumulation based upon cheap labour. The exclusion of 'casual', 'temporary' and 'self-employed' workers, who constitute a majority of urban wage workers, from union membership has served to create divisions within the working class and to maintain union membership as a 'privilege' for a small group of workers -so small as to be severely constrained in its attempt to improve its terms and conditions of employment. In other words, the apparent structural segmentation of the urban wage labour market, far from being the consequence of differential terms and conditions of employment for different section of the manual labour force, is indeed the cause and precondition for the maintenance of generally poor terms and conditions of employment for wage workers throughout the economy.

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NOTE ON ABBREVIATION

DSRC	Development Studies & Research Centre
ESRC	Economic & Social Research Council (NCR)
KUP	Khartoum University Press
MERIP	Middle East Research & Information Project
NCR	National Council for Research (Sudan)
SNR	Sudan Notes & Records

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