

**THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL**

**Housing and Social Change in Saudi Arabia:  
A Community Study of Hwylan Village  
In Al Qassim Region**

**being a thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in the  
University of Hull**

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## Dedication

I wish to dedicate this thesis to my parents,  
my wife, and my children

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines housing, family and community in Hwylan, a small village on the outskirts of Buraidah, a prosperous city in Al Qassim region of Saudi Arabia. The wealth brought to the country by oil exploitation has made possible extensive development and modernisation which are often thought to be a challenge to the traditional way of life: family composition, relationships and social values. These issues are explored in detail in a small scale community study conducted through direct observations, interviews, and a questionnaire based survey.

The main part of the thesis dwells on the related issues of family, kinship and housing. It explores the extent to which traditional family life has been maintained and the extent to which change has been resisted or accepted.

Particular attention is paid to the different types of house currently occupied by the village population. The present housing stock is largely new with very few occupied houses built more than 10 to 15 years ago. The study assesses the influence of land tenure, property acquisition and interest free government loans on housing and the

traditional value system.

The central findings of the study reveal that striking changes in prosperity and in house types and domestic technology have not been accompanied by fundamental changes in the value system of the community. The general conclusion drawn is that the local culture remains strong and largely resistant to outside influences despite the village's proximity to the city of Buraidah.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 The Origins, Aims and Nature of this Study

This is a study of housing, family and community in Hwylan, a small village on the outskirts of Buraidah which is a prosperous city of some 150,000 people in Al-Qassim region of Saudi Arabia. The research on which the study is based was conducted with a 'community study' approach in the sense explained later in this section.

The study aims, in the first place to contribute to the limited number of ethnographic studies on social change and the present-day life of Saudi Arabians. Since the improvement of the economy from the exploitation of the country's oil resources. In the 1970's there has been a considerable amount of writing about Saudi Arabia (see section 2 of the literature review in Chapter Two). But studies at the local level of how change is perceived and experienced by individuals and families have not kept pace with attempts at higher level analysis of the state and the economy.

The second and more specific aim of this study is to focus on housing, both as a topic of interest and as an expression of changes and continuities in Saudi society. In the village of Hwylan there is no shortage of housing and no 'housing problem' in the sense that poor housing constitutes an acute social problem in many parts of the world, especially in the poorer developing countries. But there is, in the village and in Saudi Arabia generally, another kind of problem arising out of the challenge which new housing, seen as an aspect of modernisation through wealth, poses to tradition and custom.

In an article in *Aspects of Social Change in Saudi Arabia*, Kay (1982) wrote:

"Then came the wealth and power, thanks to God", an Arab merchant remarked to me, commenting on the experiences of the 1970's. He might equally have said: and then came wealth and the problems, for as fast as a sudden measure of influx of wealth solves one set of problems, it creates another. The latter are more worrying to deal with in that they are new, often unforeseen, sometimes without precedent and therefore cannot be solved by example. (Kay in Niblock, 1982, p171).

This view is relevant to the problem which first led me to take an interest in housing and the Saudi Arabian government's housing policy as developed through the Real Estate Development Fund which has since 1975 been massively capitalised by the State. As a member of Saudi society, I

had often discussed the policy of securing loans with colleagues and friends. Some of them were benefiting from such loans. In the course of our discussions, the impact of loans on family life had often been raised. Some of us thought that the government's policy might well have unanticipated consequences in promoting the nuclear family rather than sustaining the traditional values of the extended family and segregation of the sexes. The supposed tension or clash between 'modern' and 'traditional' in Saudi life has commonly been remarked upon, especially in regard to family life, the education of girls, the employment of women, etc. (see, for example, Lackner, 1978; Ibn-Saeed, 1989). Shalaby (1986) refers to this with specific reference to the planning of housing in the Arab world. "There are social and cultural issues of great complexity and delicacy in addition to the economic dimension", and he criticises planners and architects who "seem to have rejected the discipline of their culture" (p74).

The researcher thought that a study of housing, and especially of the impact of the government's loans, could make a contribution to this kind of discussion. With such issues in mind my plan on starting my study was to conduct a questionnaire-based survey on a sample of household heads in the city of Buraidah. I wanted to test the notion or

hypothesis that housing loans were a cause of change in family type, norms and behaviour.

With this type of survey in mind, I gave a seminar paper to the post graduate workshop of the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Hull University on 3 December 1986. My proposal brought suggestions from members of the workshop, some of whom were from the Middle East and some of whom were working on theses in a number of other countries. My colleagues suggested that the relative lack of intensive studies and of adequate statistics in Saudi Arabia would be a major handicap in conducting a large scale survey of the kind I had proposed. In the discussions which followed in the workshop and with my supervisor and colleagues after the seminar itself, I became aware of four sets of questions relevant to my initial proposal.

Firstly, are large scale surveys based on standardised questionnaires on populations about which there is little prior knowledge the best way to proceed? What would be the main variables to be taken into account in constructing the questionnaire? How can one know in advance of exploratory studies what specific topics to focus upon?

Secondly, how can survey data be used to establish causal explanations? In the case of my proposed study, how could I determine whether modern housing was the cause of change rather than the other way round?

Thirdly, are the advantages of large scale surveys greater than those of more detailed descriptive studies? In other words, what are the relative merits of 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' research?

Fourthly, what are the advantages and limitations of the methods of survey and ethnographic work in 'less developed' countries as compared to 'more developed' countries?

At the time I had less concern with the nature of community studies and ethnographic research. But the discussions put to me at that early stage of preparation made impact on me to read a number of community studies and to look more closely at various texts on research methods. Here I focus on views from the research texts which were to lead me to change my original research proposal and which have influenced the way in which I later conducted my field research.

The difficulties that my colleagues warned me against in wanting to conduct a questionnaire-based sample survey stemmed from two sources. The first was the relative lack of and poor quality of official statistics on the population of Saudi Arabia. The second was the fact that there are thus far too few for exploratory studies available to provide guidelines for the conceptualisation of the kind of problem I wished to study. The two seem to be related to each other. If there were sufficient reliable statistics to provide suitable sampling frames and to indicate useful lines of inquiry, we might well have had more and better studies on various aspects of Saudi society.

This point is made by Peil (1983) with particular reference to the developing countries in a wider discussion on the ways in which research is influenced by the environment in which it is conducted.

**As a first principle, one needs as much knowledge about the local situation as possible before venturing into the field. This poses many problems, especially in countries where statistics are grossly inadequate or non-existent and in areas which have been little studied. This may be a circular problem; research is needed because so little is known, but there is so little information that the project cannot be adequately carried out (Peil, in Bulmer M. and Warwick D. ed. 1983,p71).**

Heguye (1988) also warns us of the problem:

Surveys of high quality can only be conducted when we already know a good deal about the population, its culture, language, and social structure, as well as about the general problem we are studying. When these pre-conditions do not apply, surveys can at best be little more than exploratory. The question then arises as to whether conducting a survey is the best way of proceeding (Heguye, in Pons V. ed 1988, p226).

Bulmer (1983) reviews the disputes which have taken place over the appropriateness of the use of survey methods worldwide but with special reference to developing countries. He notes that some critics of the survey method make it appear that other approaches such as ethnographic research are trouble-free. But he strongly disagrees, arguing that one method is not in itself superior to another. The issue for him is not an either/or choice for or against survey methods:

**It is not a question of whether one method is better than another, but what the problem is to which a particular method - or combination of methods - is appropriate (Bulmer, 1983, p13).**

In the light of such arguments, the researcher had to weigh up the advantages and limitations of conducting a survey of Saudi Arabian environment against those of other approaches. The advantages of surveys are, briefly, as follows: (1) They allow us to collect a lot of data from and about large numbers of people in short period of time: (2)



By adhering rigidly to definitions and procedures of data-gathering decided upon in advance, surveys allow us to gather information in standardised and numerical forms; (3) The standardised responses to a questionnaire in turn allow us to conduct comparisons within the population surveyed as well as between that population and others surveyed in the same way; (4) To allow us to study change, surveys can be repeated with the same questionnaire at different time intervals; and (5) Sampling procedures enable us to reduce the time and costs of research (Heguye, 1988, pp224-225).

Against these advantages, however, there are the following disadvantages: (1) Time and cost limits, despite the use of sampling methods, usually mean that extensive surveys have to be confined to the type of superficial data that can be gathered in a brief interview; (2) Surveys are rigid and inflexible: they do not allow for changes of definitions or focus on the study proceeds; if they did, the advantage of standardisation which is one of their main strengths would be lost; (3) Bias can arise at all stages of survey work (drawing up the sample and questionnaire, interviewing, etc.) which is seldom as objective as advocates of the method may claim; (4) Surveys depend crucially on high standards of interviewing which may be difficult to ensure, especially when using hired interviewers, (5) Surveys depend

on questions being understood by the people surveyed in the same sense as they are posed which is also difficult to ensure; and (6) Although sampling is a powerful tool, we are often not in a position to draw the probability samples that are most desirable from a methodological point of view (Heguye, 1988, pp225-227) Similar assessments have been made by many writers and are emphasised by those with experience of research in developing countries. (eg Ward, 1988, and Mitchell, 1965).

After considering discussions of this kind, the researcher was to look at other methods and styles of research. The main reasons for my switch were: (a) that the circumstances of limited time research would not afford me the possibility of conducting adequate pilot studies before launching a survey, and would certainly not allow the possibility of conducting repeat surveys at intervals at time, (b) that the constraints of cost and time on the size of the sample, the length of the questionnaire, and the whole interviewing and processing programme would clearly be severe; and (c) that the lack of reliable statistics and adequate guideline studies would mean that the researcher could not expect to carry a sufficiently complex survey to achieve the general objective.

In the light of these reasons, especially the last one, the researcher came to consider that there were more appropriate ways of exploring the issue of housing in relation to social change. The method frequently presented as an alternative to sample surveys is ethnographic research, referred to by some as 'the anthropological method' (eg Whyte and Alberti, 1983). Other writers refer to it simply as 'field research' or more narrowly, 'participant observation' (eg. Burgess, 1984).

Francis explained his broad conception of ethnographic research as follows:

Ethnographic research is a style of social inquiry which makes use of a combination of methods, all based on the researcher's first hand and lengthy involvement in the everyday lives of the people being studied, in order to understand, describe and explain the 'social world' of a particular group of people in a particular natural setting. The primary purpose of such research is to describe the social life of people in a manner that is as faithful as possible to the way they themselves see it. The ethnographer adopts an unstructured or flexible stance in regard to the focus and direction of the research work. Theoretical frameworks, hypothesis, and explanations emerge from the research work as it proceeds, but they are not used to direct the kind of data sought and collected as is done in more structured styles of social research (eg the sample survey). Participant observation, unstructured interviewing and documentary analysis are the basic methods used in ethnographic research, though more structured observational and interview methods are also regularly employed (Francis, 1988, p384).

Francis (1988) and Burgess (1984) are among many who have drawn attention to the major advantages of ethnographic research in fields where little is known in any systematic way prior to launching a study. It is an approach particularly well suited to looking into the nature and approximate dimensions of a problem. It also lends itself to developing intensive in-depth studies. Most importantly, in dwelling on people and groups in their natural settings, it enables us to observe what people do, rather than simply relying on what they say they do.

Bulmer implies, however, ethnographic work has its own disadvantages and limitations. First, it cannot be reduced to a fixed set of procedures and it is doubtful whether an ethnographic inquiry can ever be satisfactorily replicated. Second, it is well suited to the study of small groups in limited localities but is impracticable for the study of large populations. It is therefore usually necessary to limit such studies to one or two selected groups or locations. Third, as a result of the first and second points, it is usually difficult or even impossible to generalise from ethnographic studies (Francis, 1988).

In considering the advantages and disadvantages of ethnographic research it is also important to refer to the

large extent to which it is based on the personal involvement of the researcher. This has often been seen by critics as a major weakness. In response to this objection, however, there are two main points to be made. One is that, subject to certain safeguards, personal involvement can be a great advantage as it allows us to move towards an understanding of the group or situation studied 'from the inside'. The degree to which this is adequately achieved may well vary from case to case. But the objective of describing social life in a manner as faithful to the way in which the people concerned experience it clearly directs us towards the inside view.

The second point to be made in response to the critics is that social research, even surveys, involve some personal input and identification. In this connection, Burgess (1984) makes the relevant point that whatever the method used, the researcher's motives for choosing a particular topic for investigation commonly stem directly or indirectly from his or her own past experiences, origins, or participation in the life of the group or situations drawn for study. Thus, looking at the origins of a project usually tells us "something about the values of the research and the way in which this has influenced the direction of the study and the presentation of the findings" (Burgess, 1984, p211). There

is no reason to suppose that this does not also apply to those who adopt the survey method (Francis, 1988).

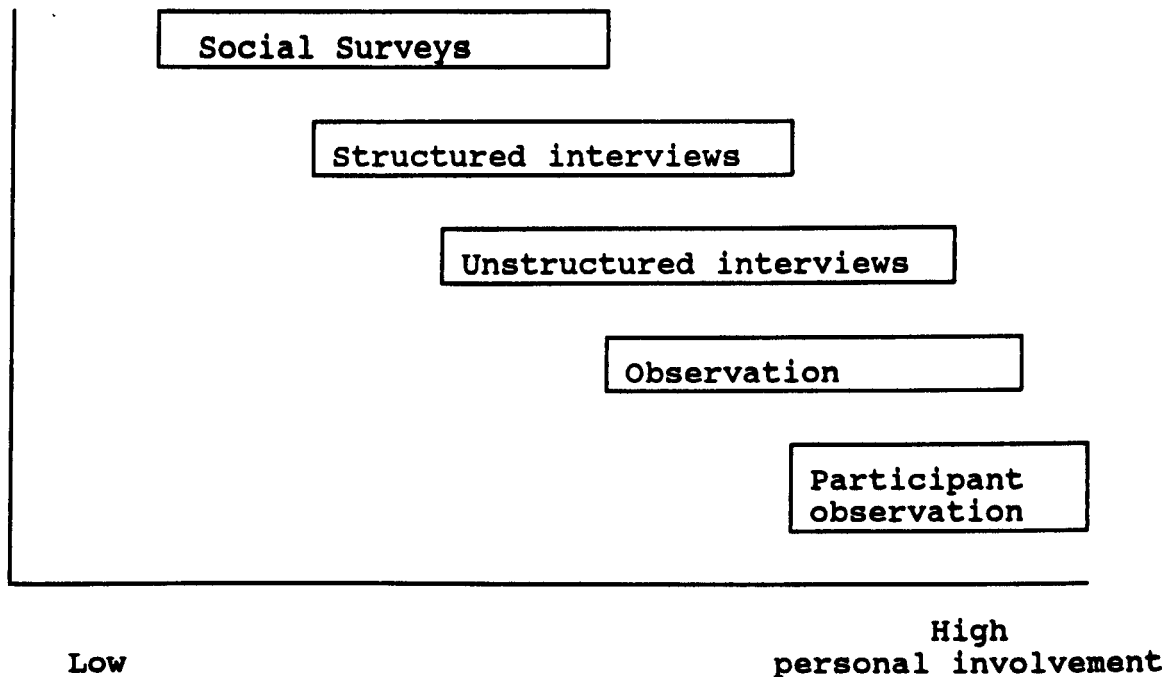
Even if we accept the above responses as valid, however, we need to recognise that personal involvement does vary in line with the techniques used in gathering field data. Mitchell (1977) suggests that these techniques may be ranged along the two dimensions of 'numbers involved' and 'personal involvement' as in Figure 1.1.

This, Mitchell argues, is the inevitable outcome of conflicting demands in sociological research. On the one hand, we ideally want to extend our inquiries over a larger number of cases in order to seize the full range of variation in whatever we are studying. On the other hand, we also want to become fully acquainted with each particular case. Whatever compromise we make between the conflicting demands on our time and resources will in itself largely determine the nature of our study. In the end, Mitchell concludes, the compromise we make may well be related to, or affect, our sociological orientation:

....those working within a 'positivist' orientation will tend to work towards the 'large numbers/low involvement'

Figure 1.1

Numbers involved



Relationship between number of respondents, and degree of personal involvement of sociologist. (Mitchell (1977:p89 in Worsley, P, ed. Introducing Sociology).

end of the continuum, whereas those working with an 'interpretive' orientation will tend to work towards the other end (Mitchell, 1977, p85).

In abandoning my original intention of conducting a survey on a sample of household heads drawn from a large population, I had to accept the logic of arguments like those put forward by Mitchell. But it also followed that I would be able to benefit from the use of a wider range of data-gathering techniques - intensive interviewing, in-depth case-histories, participant observation and the like.

When regarding examples of ethnographic studies such as those reviewed in Chapter Two, although these studies are generally conducted through a combination of methods, including ethnographic techniques and surveys, the term 'community study' has acquired certain meanings which are of interest in regard to this study. To appreciate what is meant by the term we need to bear in mind debates stemming from influential writings of the nineteenth century, especially Tonnies (1955) and Durkheim (1964). Pons (1977) comments on the significance of those debates as follows:

The arguments about communities are not, however, new. As an analytical concept, 'community' has a long history, embedded in theories of the sociology of change developed in the nineteenth century and even earlier. These theories have commonly taken the form of elaborating contrasting pairs of categories, of which the most important are those between rural and urban communities, and between 'community' and what we may call 'non-community'..... Despite their differences, various theories of social change tended to converge on one basic theme. All of them see social change as a movement from an old to a new emerging social order: a movement from the pre-industrial order to the industrial order or from traditional to the rational, from folk society to modern society, from the rural to the urban way of life, from small-scale personal society to large scale impersonal society, from the believed simplicity of illiterate primitive societies to the known complexity of modern technologically sophisticated society, and so on. Implicitly or explicitly, all these theories of the general direction of evolutionary and historical development are based on some underlying notion of the changing basis of human relationships, such as the change from blood ties to the cash nexus. They also contain, within them, conceptions of the community and of its place in the changing social order (Pons: 1977 p341 in Worsley p.ed. Introducing Sociology).



The theories referred to by Pons were elaborated by authors who did not themselves conduct community studies in the style later developed in the twentieth century, mainly by sociologists in Europe and North America from the 1920's to the 1950's and 1960's and by social anthropologists in other parts of the world. (Some classic modern sociology examples are Lynd and Lynd 1929; Warner and Low, 1947). These twentieth century studies were attempts to grasp the way in which individuals and families perceived, and were affected by the steady advance of industrial capitalist society. Their basic aims were to describe communities (usually villages, small towns, or urban neighbourhoods) as wholes. In trying to describe whole communities, these authors then sought to look at groups, situations and events within their total contexts.

The variations found in community studies, or differences of scope and emphasis between them, are no doubt the products of many factors, such as the fact that there cannot be any standardised 'community study method' the personal involvements of their authors, and the fact they are seldom started with a specific hypothesis. But the central reason is probably, as suggested by Francis (1988), that despite the long history of theorising about community, sociologists have never reached any consistent agreement as to what constitutes

a community. On the other hand, Francis does point to three principal and distinct uses of the term 'community' that are common in the literature. These are:

- 1 Community as locality - a human settlement with a fixed and bounded local territory...
- 2 Community as a local social system - a set of social, economic and political relationships which take place wholly, or very largely, within a particular locality...
- 3 Community as based on a particular type of relationship - as consisting of relationships based on a sense of identity and or shared characteristics, and as a feeling or spirit of "belonging" to a particular group... (Francis, 1988b, pp506-507).

These three conceptualisations clearly refer to different aspects of community which can be studied independently of each other, but authors of community studies have frequently failed to draw clear distinctions between them. As it was assumed that rural villages, consisted of tightly-knit inhabitants living in harmony, sharing a deep sense of identity, while cities were largely made up of lonely and

isolated inhabitants with lacking any common identities (Ibid, p507).

In gathering and analysing field data in the village of Hwylan, the researcher attempted to keep these distinctions in mind. It will be seen that Hwylan clearly is a community in the first sense of a settlement with fixed territorial boundaries, but today it is far from being a closed social system. Quite possibly, it never was so.

As far as the third criterion goes, I will describe how the people of Hwylan do share a feeling of "belonging" to their village, but this is no longer a very strong feeling. And it by no means excludes other affiliations and feelings of "belonging" to other communities as well - to the city of Buraidah, to Al Qassim region, to Saudi society and so on.

As long as these points are borne in mind, it may not matter much if this study is labelled as a community or a locality study. But I have chosen to refer to it as a community study partly to emphasise my focus on the internal connections between people living in the village and partly because I dwell on the historical, socio-economic and socio-cultural processes which have led to the Hwylan of today.

In line with past community studies, I attempt, in Chapter Four to outline Hwylan's history; its geographical structure and pattern of settlement; its demographic structure and the composition of population; its economic structure and the residents' occupations; its political and social structure; the local culture; its organisational and institutional structures; the way local level processes operate through different kinds of economic, social and political relationships; and the impact of wider forces on specific groupings. It is, then, in the context of an overall community setting that I attempt to look at both changes and continuities in the material and socio-cultural aspects of housing in Hwylan. As some of the literature on housing indicates (see Chapter Two), houses and their location, form, and uses can tell us a great deal about a community, but also knowledge of the historical, socio-economic and socio-cultural patterns of a community's existence over time are essential to understanding changes and continuities in its housing.

## 1.2 CONDUCTING THE FIELDWORK

One of the first steps I had to take after deciding on a small scale community study was to select a suitable locality for intensive research. The village of Hwylan was chosen for several reasons. Lying on the outskirts of Buraidah, it was within easy reach of my own home and I would be able to visit it daily without any difficulty. I had known Hwylan since my school-days and I thought this would be advantageous in reducing the time it would take me to become familiar with it. In addition, Hwylan had in 1961 been chosen as the site of a Social Development Centre (SDC) with the general aim of improving the social, cultural, agricultural and health standards of its area. I thought it likely that the Centre would already have some information on Hwylan and that it would also be helpful for me to gain access to the village.

I did, however, wonder whether the presence of the SDC might in one respect place an unnecessary limitation on the interest of a study conducted there on account that its existence might mean that Hwylan was untypical of other villages in the area. But after some reading and discussion I dismissed this as an objection on the grounds, referred to in the literature on community studies,

that it is probably false to assume that completely typical communities exist anywhere, and the purpose of intensive studies is in any case to explore rather than to generalize.

In his study, Turkish Village (1965), Stirling makes the point strongly that the whole implication of the objection to community studies on the grounds of typicality is mistaken:

I have not set out to make general statements about all Turkish villages and do not pretend to. The anthropologist, by his detailed fieldwork in one community, is able, explicitly or otherwise, to offer a model of social structure of this community. The chosen community cannot be 'typical' because there is no such thing. But the model is bound to throw light on other similar communities, either because the model fits and enlightens, or because the points at which it does not fit, in so far as they are not explicable by elementary common sense, suggest new problems (p.25).

Having dismissed this possible objection to the choice of Hwylan, my next steps were to assess on the ground whether a study then might be feasible and practical, whether I could obtain official permission for the study, and whether access to the population itself would seem possible. I therefore returned to Saudi Arabia at the end of 1986 and stayed in Buraidah for a month in December 1986/January 1987.

During this period I visited Hwylan a number of times. On my first visit I was struck by the visible changes which had taken place in recent years. I had visited the area of the village more than 20 years ago. Our vehicle had at one point stuck in the sand as there were then no paved roads. This visit came back to me very vividly. Apart from the SDC itself, all buildings in the village were then mud dwellings. Many were still standing in 1986 but most of them were now uninhabited and in a dilapidated state as the population had in the intervening years either left Hwylan or moved into new housing built with cement or bricks. Such observations strengthened my interest in studying the village from a sociological perspective.

On further visits to the village I met the Director of the SDC as well as several members of the staff - the Director of the SDC's Health Clinics, the Principal Social Worker, and others. All were interested in my proposal to conduct a study of the community and offered me their help. As I discussed their work and role with them, I realised that my earlier fears that the SDC might have 'distorted' Hwylan as compared to neighbouring villages were certainly ill-founded as the SDC's activities are by no means confined to Hwylan. They extend over an area that serves 24 villages to the West and South West of Buraidah.

I then discussed my proposal with officials in Buraidah with authority extending over wider areas, particularly the Director of the Real Estate Development Fund for Al Qassim region and some senior members of the Municipal and Rural Affairs Directorate. I met with no objections in principle to my proposed study but I became aware of a number of respects in which I would have to be cautious and tactful in seeking official statistics and other information.

My next step was to travel to Riyadh to meet the Deputy Minister for Municipal and Rural Affairs. Again there were no objections provided that I could produce official letters of permission and authority from my sponsor, King Saud University, and from the Emirate of Al Qassim region.

Encouraged by the outcome of these initial approaches, I paid a series of further visits to Hwylan itself and to yet other offices in Buraidah. I had by now definitely decided to study Hwylan and I immediately began to collect some basic documents from the Buraidah Municipality such as maps of the area and copies of the regulations for land grants. On visits to further institutions in Riyadh (the University, the Ministry of Planning Library, and the General Administration Institute Library) I obtained copies of



government development plans, relevant theses and other materials.

From the SDC offices in Hwylan itself, I obtained copies of the village's household medical lists containing basic information on the membership of each household, as well as medical details. I also began to establish contact with the villagers and to observe some of their activities - on the farms, in the open area around the part of the village where the SDC is located, and the like.

At the end of this month in Saudi Arabia I returned to Hull University to continue reading on community studies and ethnographic research. I was now in a better position to appreciate points made in research texts on difficulties of access, the importance of developing rapport over time, etc., as also on the opportunities which ethnographic research offers for the use of a combination of data-gathering techniques.

My reading on housing also became more focused and directly relevant as I constantly kept before me the image of largely empty and deteriorating mud houses standing next to the newer and more durable houses in which most of the inhabitants of Hwylan now live.

The fieldwork began on 6th November 1987. My first step was to obtain a series of letters of authority - at the University in Riyadh from the Department of Sociology, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and the General Director of Scholarships and Training; and in Buraidah from Al Qassim Regional Emirate. (I shall later refer to the way in which the letter from the Regional Emirate became an important document for me). The first phase of interviews and data collection continued until 25th October 1988. I then again returned to the field for a second but shorter period from 9th April to 27th May 1989.

Before starting my research in Saudi Arabia, I had in Hull drawn up a "shopping list" of documentary and statistical materials which I had reason to expect would be available from official sources. I had also drawn up a list of information which I wanted to gather from the inhabitants of Hwylan themselves. The "shopping list" of existing documentary and statistical materials fell into the following categories: (1) Demographic and census data; (2) Architect's house building plans; (3) Municipal services provided for Al Qassim region, including Hwylan; (4)



Agricultural and water services provided for farmers and householders; (5) REDF, Credit Bank and Saudi Agricultural Bank regulations governing loans; (6) Land Grant regulations; (7) Various government documents relating to property ownership; and (8) Copies of land deeds in Hwylan.

The data which I intended to gather from individual households about themselves and members of their households, as well as about their housing, fell into the following main categories:

1. Family and household composition.
2. Demographic and socio-economic characteristics such as age and sex, education, occupations, marital status, places of work and income.
3. Migration and residential histories.
4. Housing situation; past and present, including details on house construction, ownership of house and land, and the like.
5. Possessions of equipment, furnishings, cars, and the like.
6. Grants and loans related to housing and land, whether from official or non-official sources.
7. Attitudes and opinions on services and amenities in Hwylan.

8. Status evaluation of fellow residents.

These sets of information are listed in detail in Appendix V in the form of a questionnaire which I had started drawing up before I went into the field but which I modified as I gathered life histories and other information by observation or through casual conversations. In some cases the questionnaire could not be completed in a single interview and a return visit was made. The life histories were all compiled over the course of two or more sessions.

Throughout the period of field study I was engaged in the two different processes of gathering information. The first was with bureaucrats, mainly in Buraidah offices, and the second was in collecting data from the inhabitants of Hwylan. Despite having obtained all the necessary letters of authority to conduct the study, I came across some difficulties, and delays.

The responses to my requests for information from bureaucrats varied a great deal from ready cooperation to long drawn out discussions, delaying tactics and insistence on justification in terms of the reasons why I wanted the information. When I encountered delays I had the choice of two approaches. The first was to use my letters of

authority, especially the letter from Al Qassim Regional Emirate which referred to the letter of the Dean of Arts at King Saudi University in Riyadh and gave me formal permission to have access to all governmental institutions in the region. The reference to the letter of the Dean of Arts carried the advantage of indicating that my inquiries were for academic purposes and not for an official report. I carried this letter with me at all times and kept a copy in my car as well. Some officials gave me information on my verbal assurance that I had permission to conduct the inquiries, but others insisted on reading the letter for themselves.

My second choice was to try to obtain access on the basis of my own and my family's good name. As a native of Buraidah, I was personally known to some officials and it seemed better to ask them for access without relying on formal authority. I also used this approach with some bureaucrats whom I did not know personally but to whom I conveyed my local origins by giving them my family name, addressing them in the regional accent and by behaving in ways which showed that I was a local person.

In most cases I used a combination of both approaches. This was necessary when officials responded in

a way which showed that they trusted me personally but that they did not want to be criticised by others in their organization in giving me information without formal authority.

To appreciate the range of problems involved in getting information from some offices, it is necessary to understand general attitudes to bureaucrats in Saudi society. Many people tend to regard bureaucrats as people who are always "in meetings" or "too busy" to pay attention to individual inquiries. There is a belief that personal relationships are essential to receive serious attention and people commonly talk of using Vitamin "W" in order to get their problems solved or their needs met.

The term Vitamin "W" derives from the Arabic wasitah which refers to mediation between two people or parties. Thus, using Vitamin "W" refers to the process of getting something done - a service or a response - from someone who is reluctant to act without influence. This influence may take the form of a piece of paper or telephone call or other indication that the person requesting a service has a social relationship with someone else who also has a relationship with the bureaucrat concerned. It is

in this way that preference is accorded to members of kin groups, to friends, or to friends of friends.

Even so, there were several occasions when I had to wait for several days to gain access to some officials. I was sometimes told that the person I wanted to see was holding a meeting in his office, but, surprisingly, after being allowed into the office, I found that there had been no meeting at all. Other excuses for not giving me immediate access would then be given. There were few cases, either in Buraidah or in a few offices which I also visited in Riyadh, when I was given direct access to the people or materials I sought on my first visit. And in most cases I had to return more than once to the same offices.

As a member of Saudi society, I was not surprised by the slow pace of my work and I did not rely on fixed appointments. Instead, I would call casually, spend time chatting with other people waiting to see a bureaucrat. Typically I would sit on one of many chairs in an office outside the room of the man I wanted to see. I would then move closer to the secretary's table and to the door to the main office. When I did get the opportunity to see the

person I wanted; I would then engage him in informal conversation before drawing his attention to the purpose of my visit.

Frequently, my eventual contact with the person in charge brought a ready response. But on some occasions there were further obstacles to be overcome. For example, one man listened to me for some time before advising me to choose a more attractive place for my study. Concern was also expressed that I was conducting a study to be written in English on such a small and unimportant village as Hwylan. On another occasion, a respondent pleaded that he dislikes publicity for himself. He did not appreciate what academic research is and, despite my assurances that the research was for strictly academic purposes, he was concerned that it might be intended for the mass media. But in both cases I later gained cooperation.

On only one occasion did I meet with a straight refusal. I had called on a government department to collect copies of published materials. I was first passed on several times from one office to another being told each time that I was in the wrong place. When I finally met



the person who acknowledged responsibility for the materials I wanted, he said they were too scarce and not in distribution to the public. I pointed out that I had seen many copies in a nearby room and that they had been deposited in some institution libraries open to the public. I then also produced my letter of authority, but he still resisted saying that my formal letter did not specify the materials I was entitled to. I then gave up and later obtained the materials from other sources.

My one-year period of fieldwork in Hwylan began in November 1987 with certain advantages. I already had several contacts there established during my preliminary visit in December 1986/January 1987. In addition to members of the SDC staff already mentioned, these contacts included the amir of the village, the Immam of the Friday Mosque and a few local householders. I also had the complete list of names of household heads and some knowledge of the size and nature of their households. I had virtually memorised the names on this list. As an 'insider' to this region and its culture, I found it relatively easy to remember names and identities and to place people in their wider kinships and socio-economic status groups as this is habitually done with little or no effort in Saudi society.

During the period of fieldwork I visited the village daily, sometimes two or three times a day, except when unable to do so on account of work chasing up bureaucrats in Buraidah and sometimes in Riyadh. I began by trying to gain a broad view of the whole range of the 'public' activities that took place in Hwylan - in the several mosques where I prayed regularly, in the amir's office to which I paid frequent visits and later became an informal 'assistant' serving coffee to people calling on the amir, and at the SDC where I was in due course regarded almost as a staff member with the privilege of a room for my own use.

It did not take me very long to establish a good working rapport with the amir and his son who is his right hand man. After showing them my letter of authority from the Regional Emirate, both were quick to understand the type of inquiries which I wanted to conduct. I gained much information from them, but the main value of my association with them was that it indirectly facilitated my access to many other people. I met a number of villagers there for the first time and have no doubt that some accepted me more readily on account of my relations with the amir.

The amir's office and the adjacent sitting room are located in a building within the boundaries at his farm,

near his house. People normally wait in the sitting room or in part of the house when calling on the amir. I soon realised that the best time to observe and make contact there was between 8.00am and 12 noon when there was normally a number of people wanting to see the amir on a wide range of matters; for example, to ask for letters of reference to governmental institutions outside Hwylan; to complain about the quality of local water supply; to inquire about street lighting in some parts of the village not already lit up at nights; or to collect letters addressed to them at the amir's office.

Sitting with the people, I was able to gather much information from on-going conversations and also to initiate conversations myself when I wanted to do so. Sometimes I made notes in the presence of others; at other times, depending on the nature of the information and the situation of the moment, I felt it better not to take notes there and then and only did so on return to my car, to my office in the SDC or to my home in Buraidah.

I had thought of the possibility of actually living in Hwylan, but abandoned this partly in view of the extra cost it would have involved and partly because I found that I

made contacts quite easily at the amir's office and at the SDC where I also met numbers of people. Visitors to the SDC were mainly seeking medical attention at the health clinics but also included farmers calling for veterinary advice or attention for sheep.

As I got to know more people, and as I and my car came to be recognised by others, I found that many were quite willing to talk to me. Although I had no kinship ties in the village, the fact that I was soon able to hold conversations with people I only knew slightly, about village matters combined with the fact that I was clearly a 'local' person, led people to accept me with confidence. I noticed this over a few months and it was confirmed for me in many comments. One man, for example, said to me: "Oh, you, my son, you leave nothing without inquiring about it; you know you have our confidence otherwise we would have said nothing to you".

This does not, however, mean that I had no difficulties. Nor does it mean that I could approach everyone. In keeping with Saudi culture, I made no attempt to speak to any women except the non-Saudi Arabians working at the SDC. Had I not observed this custom my fieldwork

would undoubtedly have come to an abrupt end. Most men in the village would have refused to talk to me and the permission granted to me to conduct the study would in all likelihood have been withdrawn. The idea of men interviewing women remains unacceptable and this inevitably places a severe limitation on any male researcher. The same would apply in reverse for any female Saudi research worker.

As regards the men, I had few difficulties in the early stages of the study when I was still adopting the role of a participant observer. I have explained how I was accepted at the amir's office and around his house. The same was true at the SDC and when I went to pray at the local mosques.

I also encountered little difficulty in the second phase of my fieldwork when I began to ask some men to tell me their life histories. I approached men whom I already knew and did so mainly as opportunities presented themselves to chat at various times of day from morning to evening, and in various different settings such as in the streets, on the farms and at their homes. I gathered a total of close on fifty life histories, some in greater

detail than others. A few were obtained through semi-formal interviews, but most were collected through informal but purposive conversations over two or more encounters. I did not hide the fact that I was collecting life histories but I initially tried, as far as possible, to do so through conversations rather than question-and-answer sessions. At this stage my work was also helped by using an element of "snow-ball" sampling. One man would tell me of another, usually a kinsman or neighbour, whom I could approach to ask about his life experiences. This had the advantage that I did not always need to explain again what I was doing as the new man's kinsman or friend would already have heard about what I was doing.

It was when I later began to make more systematic inquiries about household members and to conduct interviews more formally that some objections were raised. This was in the third stage of fieldwork, two or three months before the end, when I was asking for details on all members of every household, using the questionnaire forms.

Despite my general acceptance in the village by this time, some people thought when I asked about their incomes, that I might be an agent of the REDF hired to check on those who were failing to make house-loan repayments.

Others became suspicious of me when I wanted to record details about female members of their households such as the ages of women and girls. On one occasion I was halfway through an interview when the man concerned suddenly interrupted my questions, saying: "I don't know you very well, so why should I provide you with all this information; today one cannot trust everybody". I had to be patient. I re-directed his attention to general topics we had already discussed and then ended my interview with him. A few days later when I was praying in the same mosque as he was, we resumed friendly relations, but I did not attempt to ask him any further direct questions until I met him again some weeks later. Eventually I felt confident to return to the questionnaire with him and he was fully cooperative without referring to the earlier occasion when the interview had broken down.

For the purposes of the survey part of my inquiries, I adapted the definition of household proposed by Casley and Lury (1981):

**A household comprises a person or a group of persons, generally bound by ties of kinship who live together under a single roof or within a single compound, and who share a community of life in that they are answerable to the same head and share a common source of food (p.188).**

The only change I made to this was to include expatriate servants who live in the houses of the families they work for. Though unrelated to the families, these domestic workers usually share the household's food without any deduction from the salaries paid to them by the household head. Expatriate farm workers were, however, enumerated as separate households as they do not normally share either the same premises or the same food as their employers. With them I did experience some difficulties from two different sources. The first was that they work long hours and it was more difficult to encounter them casually or to question them without interrupting their work. I therefore had to try to find them either late at night or during short breaks in their working day. The second source of difficulty was the fear of some expatriate workers that I might be checking on their legal status in the country. Difficulties from both sources were overcome with repeated efforts and by demonstrating that the employers did not object to me talking to their workers. The main point here is that if an expatriate's papers are not in order, the employer is as liable to be pursued by the authorities as are the workers themselves.

Fieldwork at the SDC presented no problems. As already explained, the Director of the Centre and senior



members of his staff were fully cooperative from the beginning. I had no difficulty in maintaining this cooperation. I was given a free hand to observe activities at the health clinics as well as the routine administration in the Centre. I was also offered hospitality at the Centre where I shared meals with the male expatriate maintenance workers. As explained in Chapter Five, a number of senior members of the staff are expatriates and I was able freely to interview the women as well as the men. Inside the SDC men and women work side by side.

Despite the difficulties mentioned, the fieldwork as a whole in the village was not seriously interrupted at any stage. It was an enjoyable experience with fewer frustrations than data-gathering from bureaucrats in the offices I visited in Buraidah and Riyadh. However, it was difficult to obtain sufficient details on the past; documents were few and people's knowledge of the history of the village was scarcely sufficient to allow me to reconstruct the earlier history of Hwylan in anything but the most general terms.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

The literature reviewed in this chapter falls into two sections. The first reviews selected writings on housing and society which emphasise the complex nature of housing as a social phenomenon. The second is on studies and assessments of social change in Saudi Arabia.

#### 2.1 Housing and Society

Housing has long been a subject of study of social reformers, planners, architects and others. Thus, for example, we find that Schorr opens his book on Slums and Social Insecurity (1964) by referring to a study of housing in nineteenth century Glasgow (p.1), and the literature on housing both in less developed and more developed countries has become vast. But the greater part of this literature is on housing as a social problem or in relation to social problems. To take an example from the Western literature, Morris and Winter (1978) are primarily concerned with the potential of the dwelling and neighbourhood to affect

people's physical and mental health, as well as their social and economic well-being, in order to assess the implications for housing policy-makers. And, for an example bearing on Third World countries, Hardoy and Satterthwaite (1981) who set out to outline the efforts of the governments of 17 of the poorer countries of the world to tackle the pressing problems arising out of the poor and generally deteriorating urban housing, the haphazard growth of large urban agglomerations with no effective public control, inflated land prices and the fact that large proportions of the population consequently live in conditions which enormously exacerbate ill-health, endemic diseases and social tensions.

It is, however, primarily the literature with a focus on housing as a social phenomenon with which I am concerned. I set out in particular to review examples of the literature which stress and explore two features of housing: a) its multi-faceted nature, and b) its socio-cultural aspects and implications, rather than its economic, aesthetic or architectural aspects.

I take as my starting point a paper on "Housing as a Field of Sociological Research" delivered in 1946 by Louis Wirth to the American Sociological Association (Wirth, 1947). In this paper, Wirth made a series of points that have

remained central to a wider range of writings. His point of departure is that "housing is a social activity" and that what sociologists must discover about it is, therefore, "all those aspects which are factors in and products of man's involvement in social life" (p.137).

It follows from Wirth's approach that sociologists need to take an interest in housing because it can tell them a great deal about society. Conversely, of course, the more sociological knowledge and understanding we have about society, the better can we understand housing, both as a social phenomenon and a social problem. Wirth stressed that sociology is not the only discipline bearing upon housing, but he concentrated in his paper on those aspects to which sociological research should, in his view, address itself directly. These were: (i) Housing as a social value, (ii) Housing in relation to the community, and (iii) Housing and social policy.

In regard to the first aspect, Wirth thought it rather shocking to find how little he knew about the various ways in which housing as a social value has been defined by different civilisations and by different groups in society (p.138). He also considered that the social value of housing from the point of view of different groups covers a very wide range

from the quest for basic shelter to the striving to achieve residential accommodations with varying degrees of luxury, various amenities of life, status-giving qualities and other characteristics, such as the location of the house, the materials out of which it is built, the style of architecture, the nature of the furnishings and equipment, the nature of the community in which it is built and the characteristics of one's neighbours (p.138).

On housing in relation to the community, Wirth stressed that people - especially, but not exclusively, in modern cities - invariably perceive their housing situations in comparison with those of their neighbours and in terms of the neighbourhood or community settings of their own houses (p.140). In regard to his third point, he dwelt primarily on the fact that housing is in most societies affected, to a greater or lesser extent, by social policy:

There may have been a time when individuals or families could solve their housing problems on the basis of their own resources and their own decisions. [But] this is becoming less and less true (p.141).

I use Wirth's paper as a starting point because it has turned out to be a statement touching on so many aspects of housing later developed and elaborated by other writers. The multi-faceted nature of housing has been stated over and over again. I take two examples: Beyer in Housing and Society (1965) and Smith in Housing - The Social and Economic Effects

(1970). Both authors introduce their texts by asking the seemingly simple question: "What is housing"?.

Beyer answers along the following lines:

Basically, it is a product - a highly complex product..... It is a bulky, durable, and permanent product. It has a fixed location, being used only in the place where it is built.... But housing is more than a complex product. It is both an economic and a social process. It plays a tremendous role in the economy of the country (U.S.A.).... It is not only sold but also rented..... Finally, housing has highly significant social implications because it provides the shelter for our basic unit - the family (p.3).

Smith's attempt at a definition is presented in a book written primarily for economists and its main emphasis is on housing as "a composite, social good" (and) "a more complex commodity than most economists realise" (p.xi). He then elaborates on its major dimensions.

i) Housing provides privacy, but privacy is a rather difficult concept to define.... clearly a social rather than a physical concept. Hence social custom enters the picture and most societies and culture have different notions about the groupings of people who ought to share the same roof. Moreover, there are needs for privacy both within the household and between households, the latter usually being

achieved by surrounding each household with open spaces or by separating households with walls, or by some combination of both (pp.3-5). And once we begin to consider spatial aspects of housing, we inevitably come to the requirement that houses also have location properties in relation to places of work and all other activities engaged in by their occupants.

iii) The third dimension of housing as a commodity is referred to by Smith as "environmental amenities....all the characteristics of the area surrounding a house which affect the way it is used and its desirability" (p.8).

iv) Finally, Smith refers to the fact that housing can become an "investment as well as a place to live". Hence the notion of home-ownership can in many situations not be divorced from the complex of property rights, legal and business practices and the like (p.9).

Many other attempts to define housing could be cited, but Beyer's and Smith's, taken in conjunction with Wirth's view of housing as a social activity, are enough to indicate that in modern or Western society housing is commonly seen as a complex phenomenon.

When we return to the so-called developing countries we find a similar recognition, especially in the anthropological literature where housing is commonly discussed as a central aspect of a community's or people's culture and way of life. To illustrate this, I have selected three particular studies: Oscar Lewis, Life in a Mexican Village - Tepoztlan Restudied (1972); Paul Stirling, Turkish Village (1965); and F Landa Jocano, The Hiligayon: An Ethnography of Family and Community Life in Western Bisayas Region (Philippines) (1983).

Lewis' study is a classic in the literature for its attempt to compare the village of Tepoztlan with an earlier anthropological account of it by Redfield in Tepoztlan - a Mexican Village (1930). The central task which Lewis attempted was to establish how much change had taken place in the "cultural habits of the people, their standards of living, their aspirations and their thinking" in response to the increase "in trade and the influx of wealth" which there had been in the seventeen years that had passed since Redfield's study (p.xiii). To answer this broad question, Lewis conducted his own full-scale community study using a combination of field techniques, including participant observation, interviews, autobiographies, case studies and psychological tests (p.xiv). In his final report there are detailed descriptions of housing and house furnishings, as



well as of the land tenure system, family life and many other aspects of the community's life. His study of housing covers three types of house.

First, there was the "primitive jacal house" which was the type considered least desirable by the majority of people. It was a flimsy structure of the cornstalks with a thatched roof of leaves. The inhabitants of this type of house were the poorest people. Only about 5 per cent of all dwellings in Tepoztlan were of this type (pp.178-179).

Second, there was the "adobe house" built of adobe bricks and usually with a tiled roof. These houses were, according to Lewis, "basically Indian" in design, but more solid than the jacal type and giving better protection from the elements. Some had brick floors and wooden shuttered windows. Unlike the jacals, many of the adobe houses had kitchens in the form of a lean-to with a tiled roof. Some 90 per cent of the villagers lived in houses of this type and included families of every category of wealth (pp.179-181).

Third, in contrast to both jacal and adobe houses, there were cacique style houses (the caciques were formerly the upper or ruling families in Mexico). The cacique houses had marked signs of Spanish and modern urban influences, a few

even "bordering on elegance". They were constructed of brick or stone. They were usually large and imposing and surrounded by an outer wall. But their condition varied a lot. Some were in a poor state of repair and these were usually occupied by the widows or sons of formerly wealthy men (pp.180-182).

In addition to these basic descriptions, Lewis gives information on the water and sanitary facilities, etc. and then describes at length the furnishings and the religious symbols in the houses; the patterns of the use of various rooms and spaces in the houses, and so on. These descriptions are later linked to his general analysis of wealth, status and levels of living in Tepoztlan.

Like Lewis' Life in a Mexican Village, Stirling's Turkish Village is an anthropologist's comprehensive analysis of the impact of the forces of change - better communications, an increasing demand for casual labour, etc. - on the life of, in his case, two villages - Salcaltutan and Elbasi, which he chose on account of differences between them to provide a limited comparative element in his analysis.

Like Lewis, Stirling describes the village houses in considerable detail. Most were built of stone, but also had,

as an important part of the homestead, caves behind or below the houses themselves. In former times, people commonly lived in such caves and a few still did so, but the caves were now used mainly for animals and for storing straw for animal feed. The houses were normally surrounded by a high-walled courtyard. They varied in size and layout depending mainly on the wealth and size of the households. But they had some common features. One of these features was that each house had at least one room with a fireplace to provide heating for the period of harsh winter weather and an attached oven or ovens for cooking. This room was the main living room referred to as ey, the Turkish word for house. The way in which this room was used conveys a good deal about the social organisation of the households:

**The ey is the scene of all household activities. Here are shelves of earthenware vessels and tinned copper pots and pans. Great wooden chests store the family supply of grain and flour. An upright loom serves for the women to weave woollen rugs, saddle bags and grain sacks. Round the oven, when guests call or the women have time to sit, are spread mats and rugs and cushions. Rolls of bedding stand in a neat pile, or sometimes in a special recess.**

**This room is the province of the wife of the household head, where she sleeps with her husband and at least her younger children... No men enters the ey of a household other than his own unless he is a very close kin - even a first cousin of one of the couple might hesitate - unless he has very special business, when he will call out to give a warning (p.21).**

Beyond the first common feature of the ey, almost all houses had at least one additional room, and many - all the wealthier ones and some of the less wealthy - had a special room for the men of the household. These special rooms were referred to as oda, meaning 'room' but implying that they were 'guest rooms'. The nature of these rooms tells us a good deal more about family and community life:

These rooms are much more luxuriously furnished (than the ey). They invariably have a built-in sedir, a divan which runs right round the walls... Originally these rooms were heated by open hearths, but in the last ten or fifteen years these have been ousted by small sheet-iron stoves.... These are in fact much more than guest rooms.... In contrast to the main room (ey), the oda belongs to the man and should preferably stand apart from the rest of the house, or have a separate entrance, so that male visitors see nothing of the house at all (p.22).

In her study of the Hiligayon people of the Phillipines, Jocano adopts a slightly different approach to the description of housing than either Lewis or Stirling. Instead of combining her descriptions of houses and social life, she first presents an entire chapter on the material culture of the people, and the greater part of this chapter is devoted to houses and how they are constructed.

The standard house-type described by Jocano is a square, four-walled, one - room structure with bamboo walls, and a

thatched roof of coconut palm or other leaves. Most dwellings are raised three or four metres from the ground of timber or bamboo poles with the dwellers' livestock being sheltered under the house at nights to protect them from theft. Access to the house is by bamboo stairs. Some houses are fenced with woven bamboo, others with ornamental plants.

Jocano then dwells on the internal features of the houses, their furnishings, etc. before describing various customs, beliefs and rituals relating to the construction of houses and to the events of occupying them for the first time or of moving them to another site. The following are a few examples:

There are certain beliefs associated with the construction of doors, stairs and windows which most rural Hiligaynons carefully observe. Stairs, for example, should always have an odd number of steps, preferably seven, because even numbers bring bad luck to the family. For the same reason, doors should always be constructed at the east side of the house, or early death will come to either of the spouses or to a member of the immediate family. There is no definite number of windows prescribed for a typical dwelling, but the belief associated with the construction of houses requires that at least one or two windows should face the east. Non-observance of this requirement will bring about a series of misfortunes to the family (p.14).

Before construction of a house, the man performs a ritual called pamatyag (to test). This is intended to know whether the spirits will permit the owner to build his house in the area he has chosen. The first thing he does is to put up markers around the chosen site. Then a carabao is tied in the middle. If the animal lies on its

side or stomach during the night, then the construction of the house proceeds.... (But) if the carabao stands during the whole night or is restless, the construction is postponed and another place is chosen... (p.19).

The descriptions of housing given by Lewis, Stirling and Jocano in their respective community studies illustrate a number of aspects of housing as a social phenomenon. They fully support the view expressed by M.G. Smith that "given its cultural centrality and social significance, the form of housing that a people has developed and uses offers a direct and strategic entrance to the study of their culture and society" (in Forward to Schwerdtfeger, 1982, p.xii). Izikowitz writes in similar vein that "just as kinship analysis or research concerning the economic life or any other single aspect of a given society can give us some valuable information about how the society is functioning and expressing itself, so can the study of the house" (Introduction to Izikowitz and Sorenson, 1982, P.5). The three community studies we have reviewed are also in keeping with Wirth's view, referred to at the beginning of this section, of housing as a social activity affected by many factors. Between them they clearly illustrate why housing needs to be studied in the socio-historical and socio-cultural contexts in which it is set. Unless we do that, we

cannot appreciate what Wirth called the "social value" of housing.

In the light of the above, the advantages of adopting a community study approach to explore housing are self-evident, especially in societies where social change is marked. On the other hand, studies which focus on single communities one at a time are, by their very nature and purpose, limited. It usually falls far beyond their authors' intentions to compare their findings with those from other cultures and civilisations as their focus is entirely on the interrelatedness of different aspects of their chosen community. A few fieldworkers have attempted to conduct comparative community studies in two or more different settings. An example of this is Schwerdtfeger (1982) who conducted fieldwork in three very different African Muslim communities in Zavia and Ibadan (Nigeria) and Marrakech (Morocco). Two of Schwerdtfeger's findings are of particular interest for the present study. One relates to the processes of change in people's attitudes to traditional house styles as affected by the continuous assimilation and mixing of ideas from indigenous African culture, Islam and Western influence. The other relates to striking similarities between the three communities in the composition and use of

space despite their widely differing ethnic origins and cultural backgrounds (pp.311-312).

More usually, however, comparative studies have inevitably had to rely on the descriptive accounts of other research workers, and such comparative work has now become an important field of study on its own.

A major contributor to this field is Amos Rapoport in his book, House Form and Culture (1969) and a series of later publications (1977, 1979, 1981 and others). A central issue in Rapoport's work is the question: "What are houses in different cultures used for?". Clearly there is much variation between cultures and civilisations in this respect. Recognising that housing is closely related to very different overall "human activity systems", he doubts whether it is possible to define a "dwelling" in a way valid and useful cross-culturally. The reason for this is not only that "activity systems" commonly vary a great deal but that the places in which particular activities occur in differing societies also vary and are unevenly distributed between family dwellings and other areas of human settlements:

.... consider what happens if one begins with human activity systems which express life-style and ultimately, culture. Even at the manifest and instrumental level



(ie. ignoring latent aspects) it then seems reasonable to consider the 'dwelling' as that setting, or system of settings, in which a particular set of activities occur. When this is examined in different cultures, it is found that very different systems of setting are involved and one must consider the house-settlement system. Only then can one answer the question: who does what, where, when and including or excluding whom? (1981, p.6).

Thus, instead of formulating a definition of house or dwelling, Rapoport attempted to develop cross-cultural models of the house forms and other buildings encountered world-wide in history and in contemporary societies. He posits the following:

1. Primitive = very few building types, a model with few individual variations, built by all.
2. Preindustrial Vernacular = A greater, though still limited, number of building types, more individual variation of the model, built by tradesmen.
3. High-style and Modern = Many specialised building types, each building being an original creation (although this may be changing), designed and built by teams of specialists. (1969, p.8).

The "primitive" model refers to societies in which people generally build their own houses to traditional patterns and by traditional methods, without any specialised tradesmen and craftsmen. There is a lack of differentiation in the use of space, as is also the case in regard to labour and activities in other areas of life (p.8). In essence, Rapoport stresses:

the term primitive does not refer to the builders' intentions or abilities, but rather to the society in which they build..... it refers largely to certain technological, as well as economic levels of development, but also includes aspects of social organisation (p.3).

The term "vernacular", as used by Rapoport, and the vernacular model he posits are, in his own view, more difficult to define than "primitive" and the primitive model, but he attempts to convey the meaning he intends by describing them in terms of the process which produces pre-industrial vernacular buildings - by the way in which such buildings are designed and built.

When building tradesmen are used for construction of most dwellings, we may arbitrarily say that primitive building gives way to pre-industrial vernacular. Even in this case, however, everyone in the society knows the building types and even how to build them, the expertise of the tradesman being a matter of degree (1969, p.4).

Like the primitive form, the vernacular is also traditional in the sense that it is shared by all and does not call for drawings and everyone knows what the product is meant to be. The craftsmen who build the houses still work within a tradition which yields "collective control", which "acts as a discipline", and thus tends to limit innovation:

... the characteristics of vernacular building as I see them [are]: lack of theoretical or aesthetic pretensions;

working with site and micro-climate; respect for other people and their houses and hence for the total environment, man-made as well as natural, and working within an idiom with variations within a given order (1969, p.5).

Rapoport's third model of high-style and modern is best explained by contrasting it with the pre-industrial vernacular model. Modern buildings are the outcome of a greater complexity of problems and greater specialisation in society. "The design of buildings and settlements is increasingly the concern of professional designers" (p.7). The changes we find as we pass on to the modern involve much greater differentiation in building types and spaces, and building process, and the trades involved. This affects the whole nature of settlements as well as house form:

With increase in the complexity of civilisation comes even greater differentiation of types of building and urban space, and separation of uses culminating in the extreme zoning practices of today (p.9).

Against the background of this analytical perspective, Rapoport then examines the principal types of explanations which have been advanced to account for the almost infinite variety of house forms encountered in different societies. He refers to these explanations as "alternative theories" which fall into two main groups: (a) physical ones involving

climate and the need for shelter: materials available, construction and technology; and sites; and (b) social ones relating to economics, defence, religion and the like. He has no difficulty in faulting all mono-causal deterministic theories. For example, climatic determination is easily challenged on the evidence of many differing house forms within similar climates, while major variations in housing of comparable materials and technology clearly indicate that construction techniques and availability of materials are best treated as "modifying factors, rather than form determinants, because they decide neither what is built nor its form" (p.25). "Nor does a change of materials necessarily change the form" (p.26).

Rapoport similarly challenges what he refers to as "anti-physical determinism". He acknowledges that socio-cultural perspectives relating to factors such as defence and religion provide us with "insights which seem more significant than those of physical determinism", but even so, none can be regarded as a valid or adequate theory on its own (p.41). His general conclusion is, then, that in their "simple forms" all theories - whether physical or socio-cultural - ignore the fact that building form manifests the complex interaction of numerous factors.

My basic hypothesis... is that house form is not simply the result of physical forces or any single causal factor, but is the consequence of a whole range of socio-cultural factors seen in their broadest terms. Form is in turn modified by climate conditions (the physical environment which makes some things impossible and encourages others) and by methods of construction, materials available, and the technology (the tools for achieving the desired environment). I will call the socio-cultural forces primary, and the others secondary or modifying (p.47).

The strength of Rapoport's work has received ample recognition in the literature on housing in several disciplines. As evidence of this in the socio-psychological and socio-cultural fields, I take the example of a collection of essays edited by Duncan in Housing and Identity - Cross-cultural Perspectives (1981).

In his own essay, entitled "From Container of Women to Status Symbol: the Impact of Social Structure of the Meaning of the House", Duncan attempts to elaborate on Rapoport's work and argues that:

in order to understand both attitudes towards, and the use of, the house in a range of different societies, one must understand the nature of the social structure in those societies (p.2).

With this end in view, he draws an important distinction between housing in collectivistic and individualistic

societies. He posits the following as the primary characteristics of collectivism.

- a) A relatively closed social group composed of known others. Outsiders are not easily incorporated into the group.
- b) Kinship, either real or fictive, is the most important organising principle of the group. Typical types of organisation are tribe, clan, lineage and family.
- c) A shared, stable value system. Values are shared by the members of a group so that people know each others' rights and duties. These values evolve slowly over time and are thought to have natural, often divine, justification.
- d) Material surplus is normally consumed by the collectivity or some part of it rather than by the individual producer.
- e) The ideology of the incorporated individual. Individuals are supposed to subordinate themselves to the interests of the group. Individual ambition is discouraged and must be masked.
- f) Low social and spatial mobility. Individuals occupy relatively fixed places in the social order (Duncan 1981, pp.41-42).

In contrast to the above, he posits the primary characteristics of individualism as follows:

- 1. Relatively open social groups. Unknown others are easily incorporated into the group.
- 2. The social organisation is based largely upon impersonal institutions rather than upon kinship.

3. There are competing value systems which different sub-groups in the population subscribe to. Values shift regularly according to fashion.
4. The ideology of the free and unique individual. The individual is free to pursue his self-chosen interest.
5. Relatively high spatial and social mobility. Individuals move from place to place in pursuit of their interests. Individual ambition is encouraged and the individual is given social approval for upward social mobility (p.50).

The proposition which Duncan then develops is that there are different attitudes towards the house in collectivist and individualist groups and societies. He dwells in particular on the different attitudes towards, and different perceptions of, the house by men and women in the two different types of societies. These differing perceptions, attitudes and practices stem to a large extent from two interrelated features of social organisation. Firstly, there is a greater degree of segregation in individualistic groups. Secondly, in collectivist groups, status is achieved through group-oriented consumption and display, whereas in individualistic societies people tend to see themselves first and foremost as individuals rather than as members of an extended family, lineage, tribe or other grouping.

One of the implications of these differences for social life is that men in collectivistic groups tend to be oriented more to public places, such as special men's houses, or

public institutions like cafes which are patronised exclusively by men, or certain 'public' rooms in the house, whereas women are primarily orientated towards 'private' space, which is the house.

Another implication is that in collectivistic groups the house cannot, for men, become an object of display or of status-achievement, precisely because it is largely the private space of women. Duncan considers that this contributes to the fact that in collectivistic societies one rarely encounters much architectural or artistic elaboration of the house; hence the reference in the title of his article to the house as a "container of women" rather than a status symbol.

In individualistic societies, on the other hand, the position is very different. These societies are characterised by lives that are more private and houses that are more public.

He argues this as follows:

Among individualistic social groups the house, the woman's private domain, has been ruptured and made more public and with it so has the woman herself. However, while the house is more public, in the sense that outsiders are allowed in, there is in fact more privacy



within the family. With the shift to the nuclear family, relatives who would be continuously present in the extended family are excluded from the household, and within the nuclear family parents and children have their own separate rooms. What this represents is the controlled admittance of outsiders into the house and greatly decreased access to kin (Duncan, 1981, p.51).

Finally, I stress the points made by Duncan about the house as an indicator and symbol of status. Where the collective is valued, private consumption does not attract attention. The house as a private object cannot, therefore, serve as a status symbol. In contrast to this, in the individualistic society the house becomes one of the main symbols of status. To quote Duncan again:

Under individualism, status-seeking is manifested through a dependence upon objects to affirm identity, and it is this very dependence upon objects, especially the house, to affirm identity which modifies the privatisation of the house, for it opens the private world to outsiders (p.51).

Duncan's perspective outlined in his essay in Housing and Identity pervades all the other essays in this volume in varying degrees and with differing emphases.

The work of Rapoport and Duncan and their associates has provided me with valuable insights for my attempt to analyse the significance of the different types of house in the Saudi

Arabian village of Hwylan. It is relatively easy to describe houses in any community and then to describe the pattern of family life and the like. But to analyse the connections between housing cultural norms and social life is more difficult. It will be seen that in my final attempt to do so after presenting my field observations I have drawn on the conceptual framework arising out of the work of these authors. The problem which has arisen both out of my field study and the above literature concerns the way in which there has been both change and continuity in housing and house forms in Hwylan. How and why have some aspects changed and others not? How and why do the "modern" and the "traditional" aspects exist side by side?

## 2.2 Social Change in Saudi Arabia

### 2.2.1 General Background

A number of scholars have written about the political condition of the Arabian Peninsula before the establishment of Saudi Arabia, for example, Ibn Ghanam (1983), Ibn Bishr (1982) Al-Abdullmohsin (N.D), Darwish (1987). They all emphasised that Saudi Arabia has witnessed fundamental changes in all aspects of life since the rise of King Abdullaziz (the founder of Saudi Arabia in 1932).

The western province of the country, called Alhijaz, contained the two Muslim holy cities, Makkah and Medinah, and had been ruled by the Ottoman empire since 1517. However this province suffered conflicts between its governors over its political authority. In the south-western province the rulers of Makkah had some political influence, but the local rulers were relatively independent, with more political independence in the southern area. Although the eastern province was also ruled by the Ottoman state, the major tribe was able to maintain its independence.

In the northern province, the local rulers were mainly independent in their political affairs. Regarding the central province, the Ottoman influence was weak, and limited to certain areas. Each town or village had its own local ruler and every bedouin tribe had its chief.

Conflicts and wars were very common. There was insecurity, illiteracy and a lack of relative knowledge, and traditions which often conflicted with religious teachings. The provinces needed stability. There were two factors that played a major role in achieving this: firstly, the central province was not directly or heavily influenced by Ottoman rule and, secondly, it was geographically distant from the Ottoman capital and its strongholds. These factors enabled

Mohammed Ibn Abdullwahab, a religious scholar, to instigate a return to the correct practices of Islam.

Ibn Abdullwahab was born in the village of Aluynah, a suburb of Riyadh, in 1703. His family was educated religiously and his grandfather and father were the religious judges in their village. Thus, he had a strong religious background. He travelled to Makkah and Madinah for pilgrimage and learning and also travelled to Basrah, in Iraq, to further his studies. While he was in Iraq, a conflict occurred between his father and the ruler of his village, as a result of which his father and his family had to move in 1726 to Huraymla, a village in the central province. His father became the judge of Huraymla. When Mohammed Ibn Abdullwahab returned from Basrah, he settled near to his family. His father died in 1740.

Mohammed started his religious call in Huraymla before his father's death though some of the village inhabitants did not accept his authority. However, the ruler of his former village, Aluynah, accepted his call so Mohammed was able to move back to his original village and was able to mobilise the people towards the new religious movement. The ruler of the eastern province, however, rejected Ibn Abdullwahab's call and asked the ruler of Aluynah not to support him. Ibn

Abdullwahab then moved from his village to Al Darayah, located between his village and Riyadh.

Al Darayah at that time was ruled by Mohammed Al-Saud who, with his people, supported Ibn Abdullwahab and had promised to protect him and to spread his call. This was in fact the beginning of the Saudi state in 1744, when religious and political factors combined to mobilise their followers. Ibn Abdullwahab sent letters and messengers to several provinces and neighbouring countries asking the people to follow his call and support the new Saudi State. Followers started to arrive in Al Darayah from various areas so that the village grew rapidly and became the religious centre for fifty years, until the death of Ibn Abdullwahab in 1791. The first Saudi State continued to dominate most of the central region for over seventy-five years. Its capital was Al Darayah, and its political power had spread over several provinces in the Arabian Peninsula. However, the Ottomans who ruled Makkah considered the spread of the first Saudi State as a threat to their rule, and fought the Saudis from 1811. A few years later, the Ottoman army surrounded the town of Ar Rass in Al Qassim for three months, but was unable to control it and a truce was agreed. Later, however, a strengthened Ottoman army was able to crush resistance in Al Qassim province and advance on the Saudi capital, Al Darayah.

After a siege lasting several months, its ruler surrendered and his capital was destroyed in 1817. The ruler was sent to the Ottoman's capital, Istanbul, where he was killed, bringing to an end the first Saudi state.

However, some of Al Darayah's inhabitants who fled the Ottoman attack were eventually able to return. Among them was Turki Ibn Abdullah Al Saud, who was able to regain his family rule and in 1824 captured Riyadh, which he made the capital of the second Saudi state. Turki was able to extend his rule to several parts of the Arabian Peninsula, using the religious and political factors for his power, as he was supported by Ibn Abdullwahab's family. Turki was assassinated in 1833 in a conflict with his ruling family. His son, Faisal Ibn Turki assumed power, but in 1838 the Ottomans fought against the Saudi state and Faisal Ibn Turki surrendered to the Ottomans, who exiled him and his family to Egypt.

In 1843, Faisal was able to return to his town and rule it again. He was able to spread his power over the country's central and eastern provinces until he died in 1865. Faisal's sons, however, fought against each other over the inheritance of political power, this weakened their state enabling the Ottomans to take power over the eastern province

in 1871. At that time, political conflicts between the population increased, and Ibn Rasheed, the ruler of Hail in the North, seized the opportunity to spread his rule and wrest power from the Al Saud family, thereby bringing to an end the second Saudi state in 1891, with its last ruler Abdullrahman Ibn Faisal.

Abdullrahman fled to Kuwait with his family, including his son Abdullaziz, born in 1876. Abdullaziz was unwilling to remain as a refugee in Kuwait and determined to restore his family's power.

#### 2.2.2 The Economic Condition in the Pre-establishment Period

Due to the harsh natural environment, the country was very poor. The main activities were primitive farming or herding animals, and there were very few commercial activities, except in some towns such as Al Darayyah, which were active in trade. Ibn-Saeed (1989:56) quotes the Saudi Arabian historian Ibn Bishr (1982) describing trade in Al Darayah as a major activity before the establishment:

I was looking at the market place from a high ground known as Al Batin, and at the western houses which belong to the Saud family known as Al Tareef and the eastern houses known as Al Bujairy where Al Sheikh family lives. I saw the market for men on one side and another for

women on the other side dealing in gold, silver, weaponry, camels, goats, etc. People could buy and sell and bargain as far as the eye could see and their sound was like the humming of bees. In the shops on the eastern and western side one could see robes and clothes and different types of dresses and weapons beyond description.

Al Darayah in the 1800's was the capital of the Saudi state. Hence this level of trade was not typical of the area as a whole. Saudi Arabia historians such as Ibn Bishr (Fourth ed. 1982), Al-Abdullmohsin (N.D) and others mainly concentrated on battles and historical events and rarely wrote about economic and social conditions in the country before the 1900's.

During this period there were merchants in the towns of the central area, mainly the areas mentioned by Ibn Bishr. They exported camels and horses and imported goods that were not available locally from neighbouring countries, mainly Iraq, Syria and Egypt. In fact elderly people of today still mention these traders and some had engaged in such trade in their youth. They refer to their adventures in unstable and dangerous areas where they were in danger of robbery and raids and were in fear of their lives. This caravan trade had existed for generations. However, elderly people report that it ended in the 1950's, mainly due to the discovery of



oil, the stability of the country and the presence of automobiles, which created new occupations, opened the country for larger quantities of imported goods through sea ports from various sources etc.

Farming was the main economic activity of the settled population long before the establishment of Saudi Arabia. It was practised mainly in the villages and around towns where water was available from water wells and springs. However, in the south western province the rain was sufficient to benefit the traditional farming in the high mountains of Assir.

Al Zarkaly (1985) stresses that, on the whole, farming was very poor and limited to certain areas in the country. In Makkah and Jeddah areas lacked water resources. Riyadh had a limited number of small farms around the town, which were irrigated by spring wells. The Assir mountains which were more fertile, were almost isolated because of the lack of roads. The oases of the internal desert contained some small farming areas. Alahsa and Oatif oases and water springs in the eastern province, Wadi Fatima and Taif in the western part, Hail in the north and other areas all lacked development and sufficient farming products and methods were very limited (p1015).

For centuries, farming was mainly confined to the villages and oases. These farms were mainly family small holdings which produced a limited range of produce such as dates, wheat and barley. Animals, mainly cows and camels, were used to draw water from the hand dug wells and primitive methods of farming and irrigation were used by the local inhabitants.

Faris (1982) mentions that Daham Ibn Dawas, the ruler of Riyadh before King Abdullaziz, surrounded the area of a small oasis on the Hanifah wadi making it a protected farming area and sug and changing its name from Hijr to Riyadh, which means "the gardens". For several centuries the inhabitants of this area practised farming in its wadis as they had done since pre-Islamic times. Trade was practised by the local people, as there were small shops in its sug. These commercial activities served the areas inhabitants as well as pilgrim caravans passing on the way to Makkah (p87-90).

An organised national economy did not exist, and primitive traditional trade seems to have existed for many years. Johany (1982) concludes that before the unification of Saudi Arabia:

Economic activity outside Hejaz (where the holy cities are located) was confined to livestock raising by Bedouins, primitive agriculture, and production of simple tools by craftsmen who lived in small towns concentrated around sources of waters (p1).

The Bedouin's main economic activity was herding their livestock in the desert grazing areas. Their other needs were supplied by settled inhabitants who practised farming or crafts in their communities.

Lackner (1978) claims that herding and traditional farming existed from the pre-Islamic period and continued into the 20th century. These economic activities enabled the inhabitants to survive on very limited resources. Trade relations between farmers and bedouins were not able to transform production in the interior of the country. Where the trade routes met, some market settlements were developed, while coastal areas had links with the outside world. Farming was mainly practised in the oases of the central and eastern areas and the south western province. Dates were the principal diet of the people, as they were eaten in various ways, cooked or uncooked. Those too tough for human consumption were used to feed the animals. Products of the date palm were used to build houses, for fuel, and to make mats (p2-3).

An organised educational system did not exist. However, according to the Educational Documentary Journal (1989), a traditional religious school was established in 1824 in Dukhnah, near Riyadh by the Alshaikh family. Religion, mathematics and Arabic Linguistics were the main elements of the curriculum. Many people attended the school and the ruler gave financial support to those who wished to study (p125).

Religious studies, thus, were traditional and took place mainly to teach the inhabitants how to perform their prayers: these traditional study circles (Arabic: Kuttāb) were taught mainly by religious scholars who emphasised religious related teachings. Muslims are required to recite some verses of the Quran when they say their daily prayers which were learned by rote; those who attended such traditional study circles did not necessarily learn how to read and write.

Elderly people however, told me that not all communities had traditional study circles, although they stressed that memorising Quranic verses was very common among inhabitants of both sexes, as religious teaching required such memorisation. Some inhabitants also reported that their parents had lacked the ability to write or read, indeed those who could, were few. Ibn Saeed (1989) writes that:

Besides the sharia and the grammar of the Arabic language, there was the folk knowledge of astronomy, which was necessary to follow the movement of the stars and planets for information about the timing of grazing and harvest. The stars were known by particular names. The famous astronomers were Rashid Al Khallawi and Muhammed Al Qadhi (p58).

In addition to the above branches of knowledge, poetry was also well known among the inhabitants since pre-Islamic times. However it was not necessary for a poet to learn writing or reading. Poetry was an oral tradition passed through memorisation from one generation to another. In some cases, poets had recourse to scribes from among a few people who could write, to document their poetry.

### 2.2.3 The Establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Abdullaziz Ibn Saud was exiled in Kuwait with his father after defeat at the hands of the Ottomans and internal conflict among some of the local inhabitants. However, when still under 25 years of age, he secretly left Kuwait for Riyadh, with some of his followers. In 1902, they attacked the governor's palace in Riyadh and recaptured (Arabic: Fateh) the town from the appointed governor. This was the turning point which ultimately led to the stability of the country. Tribal raids (Arabic: Gazu) gradually started to decline as Abdullaziz and his followers fought one battle

after another and gradually started to mobilise the inhabitants of the areas which had fallen under their rule. Within a period of three decades Abdullaziz was able to control a large area of the Arabian Peninsula, and in 1932 he proclaimed himself King of the country formed as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. But, because of the poverty of the country at that time, the government lacked the financial and administrative resources to establish governmental institutions.

Al Zarkaly (1985) refers to the time before the establishment of the Ministries in the country. He writes that in 1925 the rulers first thought of establishing governmental institutions. Before that period (1925) the country had no ministries, but only the King's office which carried out the responsibilities of administration. Prior to 1927, government offices were established in towns to collect Almsgiving, (Arabic: Zakah) from the people. Each office was supervised by the governor of the town. In 1927, the General Directorate of Finance was established, and this was developed to become the Ministry of Finance in 1932. This Ministry was responsible for financial affairs, pilgrims agriculture, public works, transportation, customs duties etc (p375-378).

Sadiq (1965) outlines the development of the Saudi Government Administration Institutions. He reports that in 1926, there was no Ministry of Interior. However, internal affairs were administered by the public office, which was responsible for security, telegraph and postal service, health, municipality, commerce, industry, farming and mining. However in 1932 this public office was upgraded to a Ministry of Interior.

In 1925 King Abdullaziz wrote to foreign companies to order telegraph and telephone equipment, and in 1926, the Directorate of Telegraph and Mail was formed in the western province, though it was not until 1932 that a mail service existed between Makkah and Riyadh. There were only a few telephone lines, which increased gradually to reach 8000 lines in 1950. Telegraph and mail services were established in the larger towns. Transportation was the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance until 1953, when a separate Ministry was established. By 1957, the Ministry of Transportation had constructed 6000 km of roads in the country.

The strategy that King Abdullaziz followed in his political administration was the use of religion to gain the people's loyalty. This was similar to the strategy of the

rulers in the earlier Saudi states. He also emphasised the provision of religious education and appointed educated people to various governmental positions.

Al Sulaim (1982) claims that when Abdullaziz took power, the judicial system in Al Hejaz was more organised than in the central province (Najd) because of the reforms introduced by the Ottomans in 1836, 1856 and 1876 which were retained during Saudi rule. In contrast, Najd was not affected by the Ottoman system. Najd had its own traditional system for solving disputes, based on Sharia and customs. The governor and the judge of an area were responsible for administering law. The amir's role was to make the disputing parties reach an amicable solution, or to refer the case to a judge. When the disputants were referred to a sharia judge, the amir implemented the judge's ruling. The amir usually was supported by his town's elites, especially those who belonged to his family. These supporters were not officially appointed but traditionally were involved due to their strong religiosity or their elderly ages. In addition, the amirs employed police men who were called "the men of the amir". Their main duty was to present disputants to the governor.

The tribal system was important as the tribes had their own traditions and customs. Judicial decisions were made by



the elders of the tribe who were known for their wisdom and knowledge of tribal customs. Tribes might use their customs to resolve conflicts with other tribes. Abdullaziz did not make major changes in these systems as they suited and were accepted by the inhabitants.

#### 2.2.4 The Economy since the Establishment of the Kingdom

Prior to the unification of the country in 1932, there was no modern integrated national economy. Johany (1982) claims that there were several factors which had militated against unity and an integrated economy: the constant fear of raids on camel caravans by bedouins, the low rainfall and harsh desert climate and political instability. All these factors combined to prevent economic activities from developing beyond small scale production for local markets. It was only after the unification of the country that sufficient security was established to encourage the growth of the modern economy, and this soon became a reality with the discovery of oil in commercial viable quantities in 1938. This was the crucial event which triggered the beginning of large scale development in the country (p1).

According to Ibn Saeed (1989), even after the unification of the country, economic resources were not as great as

expected (p67): at the beginning of Abdullaziz's reign, there was no real concern about agricultural activities because of the lack of water resources, harsh climate and the weakness of the irrigation system. However, King Abdullaziz attempted to reform the irrigation system under the guidance of agricultural engineers from Iraq, Syria and Egypt and geologists from America to search for water and to develop the spring wells of the oasis. As a result, large areas of land were cultivated. About 9,000 ha in the eastern region were cultivated with dates, barley and vegetables, in addition to 25,000 ha of cultivated dates in other parts of the eastern province and 1500 ha of wheat and grain farming. In the central province, 2500 ha were cultivated with dates, wheat, corn, vegetables and fruit. In the southern province, 2500 ha were cultivated with various plants. In 1949 the government imported 634 water pumps which were sold on long term interest free credit to the farmers. Several dams were built, seven tractors were imported, together with plants and seeds and maintenance work shops were established for water pump repair. Credit and subsidies were offered to the farmers (Al Zarkaly, 1985, 3rd edition, vol. 2: p1015-1021).

At the same time, the King carried out a programme to settle Bedouins in Hijaz. There were three main reasons for this: to control them, to teach them religion and to get them

to cultivate land. Each clan was granted land with water wells. They were ordered to build houses and to cultivate. This transformed many nomad clans from dependence on herding camels to cultivation (Al Abdullmohsin, N.D., vol. 2 p220).

Trade was gradually developed after the establishment of the Kingdom. Before 1926, there was no government involvement in controlling trade activities but the government now began to promote trade and all enterprises were required to be officially registered. Between 1926 and 1946, the private sector developed quite substantially. At first, trade activities were confined to imports, mainly from India. Goods such as rice, sugar, tea, spices and textiles were imported. Trade with neighbouring countries also flourished. Many kinds of goods were exchanged with Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Yemen (Magrabi, 1982, p167-168).

Then came oil. In 1923, King Abdullaziz granted a concession to Holmes, a prospector from New Zealand who was to pay £2,000 a year, but this was soon cancelled. Between 1930-33 negotiations about oil exploration concessions took place. In 1933, a concession was granted to an American company at the cost of £50,000 gold down payment and oil was finally discovered in commercial quantities in 1938. But

World War Two interrupted the development of the industry. Soon after the end of the war, however production increased rapidly and changed the features of the economy significantly (Lackner, 1978, p30-35 and Johany, 1982, p1-2)

While the education system before King Abdullaziz's era was confined to religious teaching in a limited number of schools in major cities, under Abdullaziz there was remarkable development in public education, side by side with the religious and private schools. Al Zarkaly reports the number of schools, teachers and pupils in 1950 to 1953 to have been as follows:

Table 2.1 Formal Schools  
In Abdullaziz Era

Years	School	Teachers	Pupils
1950	146	634	16,029
1951	196	943	23,835
1953	326	1,652	43,734

There are no official statistics on the number of religious schools, but Al Zarkaly points out that they had spread throughout the country in large numbers. He estimates the number of teachers to have been more than 600. Moreover, several private schools were established with government permission and supervision.

In 1927, the Saudi Educational Institute was established, which was concerned with overseas scholarships and in the same year, 14 students were granted scholarships to Egypt (Al Zarkaly, 1985, 3rd ed. p633-638 - Sadiq 1965 p96-99). Lipsky (1959) summarised the formal educational system in the Abdullaziz period:

Dating from the early 1930's, the government school system has been centralized under the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for the overall program of primary and secondary schools. The few private schools also must follow a prescribed syllabus and are subject to government inspection and supervision (p278).

However, the growth of the formal education system during this period opened the door to more extensive development, especially after the economic explosion and paved the way for the establishment of higher education.

#### 2.2.5 The Economic Explosion

Before 1938, Saudi Arabia was one of the poorest countries in the world, depending only on its foreign earnings from the export of dates and some revenues from pilgrimages to Makkah. Industry did not exist, trade was limited and only in the main cities. About 90 per cent of the population lived in rural and nomad areas. Thanks to

the rapid growth of oil export in the 1950's and 1960's and the sharp rise of oil price in 1970's, the country has developed one of the fastest growing economies in the world, experiencing modernisation and development processes (Knauerhase, 1975, p36 and 163 - Kavoussi, 1984, vol 6, No.4, p282).

The remarkable increase in oil production since 1970 is shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

Oil Production, 1938 - 1989

<b>Years</b>	<b>Production (Million U.S. Barrels)</b>
1938	1
1946	60
1950	200
1955	357
1960	481
1965	805
1970	1387
1975	2582.5
1980	3622.6
1985	1158.9
1989	1846.6

Source

Nyrop, 1977 Op.cit. p265  
 Ministry of Finance and National Economy  
 The Statistical Indicator, 1982, p92 and 1991, p61

Since the discovery of oil, the government has been responsible for the direct administration of the financial affairs of the development projects. The economy depends mainly on oil revenues, which in 1981 constituted about 90 per cent of the national income. This oil is totally government owned. Free enterprise and unfettered capitalism rule (Ibn Saeed, 1989, p82).

In 1970, the First Five Year Saudi Arabian Development Plan was launched. The plan identified for development certain socio-economic sectors such as agriculture, industry, trade, health, housing and public services (First Development Plan 1970 - 1975, p21).

The Second Development Plan, launched in 1975, again confirmed Saudi Arabia's commitment to the free economy, whereby a large part of the production and distribution of services and goods would be left to individuals and groups with freedom of transaction (The Second Development Plan, 1975-1980, p5).

The Third Development Plan 1980-1985, reviewed the achievements of the first and second development plans in order to explain the most important turning points in the

economy. It emphasised the unfolding complexity of development and the ability of planning to give direction to complex development.

The Fourth Development Plan for 1985-1990 emphasised the principles of the third plan, focusing on efficiency in the use of resources, on the development of production sectors and manpower. The plan's objectives represented a comprehensive framework for structural change. It focused on safeguarding Islamic values, defending security and social stability, ensuring education, health services, and livelihood of the manpower, raising cultural standards, reducing dependence on export of crude oil, encouraging industry and agricultural projects, and completing the infrastructural projects necessary to achieve overall development.

The plan gave top priority to producing sectors, especially manufacturing, agriculture, financial and business. It also encouraged the private sector to take the initiative, and mobilise its own resources. The role of the government was translated into specific tasks and policies



and their implementation was under close review (The Fourth Development Plan 1985-1990, pp41-45).

The Fifth Development Plan for 1990-1995, is in accordance with the objectives and strategies of the Fourth Development Plan, taking into account the current economic conditions. It focuses on three major dimensions: the economic dimension through investment and development in manufacturing, minerals and public services, the social dimension, aiming to maintain the original socio-cultural values and improve the level of education, health and welfare, and the organisational dimension representing the fundamental role of public and private sectors (The Fifth Development Plan, 1990-1995, pp87-88).

#### 2.2.6 Monographs on Social Change since the 1950s

Against the above general background, we now turn to the literature on social change in recent times. This literature is very diverse. Different writers have taken differing perspectives and have worked to a variety of notions as to what constitutes social change. As one of them puts it, the concept of social change is "amorphous" (Anthony in El-Malakk, 1982, p.93). There is little agreement as to what basic unit of analysis to use in assessing change. At one

extreme there are writers who have focused mainly on change in the political economy of the country. At the other extreme there are those who have focused on change in the norms governing social relations in daily life, especially in the family, between men and women and at the level of tribe and kinship.

In attempting to cover the different perspectives used it is helpful to distinguish between: writings on Saudi Arabian society in general, including those which are most concerned with the domestic political economy; and analyses and assessments of specific aspects of change in the culture and way of life of the people, especially in regard to the family. We begin with the broader and more general studies before reviewing the more specific.

Lipsky's book Saudi Arabia, its People, its Society, its Culture (1959), attempts an overall view of Saudi society as it was in the 1950's. He sets out to emphasise "the presence and impact of forces of change, the constants of attitude and behaviour, the abiding values" (p.i) The book covers a range of topics from ethnic groups, languages, religion and the family through to features of the economy, agricultural and industrial development, formal education, the structure of government and the like. He attempts to outline the process

of change first started by the creation of the Saudi Kingdom and accelerated by the oil revenues of more recent decades. He sees this process as reaching to the very base of the society:

**New social groups are appearing and the old ones are in some degree losing their traditional allegiances through the development of diffuse interests and less exclusive loyalties...**

**Oil revenue has given the government a power it would not otherwise enjoy...(and)...has made it possible for an increasing number of Saudis to acquire knowledge and tastes that are altering their most basic attitudes. Some have moved from the view that what-has-been-ought-to-be-and should-be preserved to a quite novel acceptance of change. Meanwhile, most of their traditional values, some of them fitting only with difficulty or not at all into the new pattern of life, persist. The result is social and personal strain and ambivalence. (p.2)**

Despite his perception of change as deep and fundamental, Lipsky considers that the changes in institutions such as the tribe, and the family show no more than slow "evolutionary continuity" and that "the present order may have greater stability than many Western-oriented observers believe". (p.2).

How does Lipsky reconcile his perceptions of strain and ambivalence with his view of the society as characterised by slow evolutionary change and stability? His chapter on the family gives us some indication of the answer to this

question. He first underlines that "all social relations in Saudi Arabia are indirectly if not directly tied to family considerations" and that "the family is the fundamental and essential repository of any individual's identity" (p.47). He then describes the dominant patriarchal position of husband and father, the wife and mother's submission, the strict adherence to uniform patterns of child rearing, and the standard patterns of marriage, divorce and inheritance. In these descriptions, he makes no reference to change. At the end of the chapter, however, he presents a short section on 'change' in which he expresses the view that he thinks that with the increase of wealth, the family will in the future be affected by "innovations", but that "it would be easy to overemphasise the speed with which really fundamental change is likely to take place" (p.59).

In his chapter on religion and social organisation, Lipsky emphasises the strong nature of the fundamental articles of faith in Islam in both rural and urban life and especially in regard to everyday social behaviour. He says that the effects of religious sanctions are being slowly modified "by Western influence" but that "they remain powerful and largely decisive" (p.87). His overall conclusions on social change are given in his final chapters on values and patterns of living:

Underlying most social practices is a fairly well-integrated system of social values....(and)....it is doubtful that the core of traditional social practices has yet been shaken....."(p.294).

In addition:

The outpouring of oil wealth is placing a premium on money and what it can buy in terms of material luxuries. In this process other ideals which once balanced these desires tend to be lost while no new ones have yet taken their place (p.307).

Lackner (1978) differs from Lipsky in several respects. Her emphasis is less on the culture and society than on the political economy of the country. Also, she wrote in the late 1970's, about twenty years later than Lipsky, when the impact of oil revenues was far stronger than in the 1950's. Lackner does not refer to Lipsky and claims that so far there has been "little or no discussion of Saudi Arabia's internal social structure and dynamics" (p.ii). Her first major point is that our understanding of Saudi Arabia's 'development' cannot be helped by models used in relation to other developing countries:

Among developing countries, Saudi Arabia is unique; no analysis of it can fit into any pre-conceived model of development as the country's specificity far outrides any features it may share with other developing nations. Like most other Third World states, its borders were recently defined, but unlike many, it was never colonised; therefore its traditional mode of production lasted well into the 20th Century, while that of most underdeveloped countries was destroyed in the 19th.

Similarly, the population's achievement of 'nationhood' is still somewhat questionable, though far less so than it was 20 years ago (p.ii).

In addition to this, Lackner refers to two other factors that distinguish Saudi Arabia. First, it is rich with "astronomical oil revenues"; secondly, it has a "very small population officially claimed to be 6 million or above, (but) more reliably estimated at between 3.5 to 4 million inhabitants" (p.ii).

Whether she is right or wrong on the population, the main implication of great wealth combined with a relatively small population is that production on the basis of labour-intensive projects has never been an option, especially as women are virtually excluded from the labour force. Thus, while the country has had "almost unlimited investment capital", its development has only been made possible by the large-scale importation of foreign labour.

Lackner then gives us overviews of Saudi Arabia up to 1900, of the formation of the state, of the discovery and exploitation of oil, of the nature of the contemporary state and of the state's foreign policy. It is, however, her chapter on "Saudi Arabian Society in Transition" that is of particular interest to us.

While the state had begun to "reshape society" in the 1920's, Lackner stresses that it was only in the 1960's and 1970's that:

....traditional social structures have been uprooted under the contradictory pressures of a traditionalist political system and economic policies based on western concepts of development and modernisation. Since the mid-1960's the destruction of traditional relations has been accelerated to the extent to which, by the late 1970's it could be said that only insignificant traces of the traditional structure remain (p.172).

In the light of this view, Lipsky's perception of very limited social change up to the late 1950's appears quite understandable. The "uprooting" of traditional social structures claimed by Lackner had, by her own account, hardly started when Lipsky was writing.

In Lackner's view, the "radical social changes" of the 1960's and 1970's affected all aspects of Saudi society. She describes these changes with particular reference to the nomads, agriculture, the labour force and the migrant population, the state bureaucracy, the position of women, and the growth of towns. The main points she makes in regard to each of these are as follows:

Nomads: the traditional nomadic political economy based on tribal divisions, armed conflict and pressures on the settled agricultural communities almost disappeared in the 1960's and 1970's as the rate of planned and unplanned sedenterization increased rapidly.

Agriculture: changes which began prior to the 1960's accelerated greatly in the 1960's and 1970's; small peasants were increasingly squeezed out of the system as new and larger holdings were created and became mechanised; palm dates were displaced as the main staple of diet; agricultural entrepreneurship grew rapidly with active government encouragement.

The Labour Force and the Migrant Population: Despite policies designed to encourage villagers and nomads to work in towns, the number of Saudis in the industrial sector remained small - some 20,000 in oil and 40,000 in manufacturing industry" by the mid 1970's (p.202). The balance of workers was made up by migrants. In 1975 official estimates put the foreign labour force at 315,000 but, Lackner claims, it was "generally accepted that the total.... was at least one million" (p.191).



The State Bureaucracy: while migrant numbers rose in the modern-sector activities of oil, building and manufacturing, Saudis of all levels of education were drawn into administration in large numbers. Low-level positions were filled with young men from less privileged backgrounds and higher level positions mainly by US-trained graduates. She refers to administrative difficulties attributable mainly to the growth of bureaucratic institutions alongside the perpetuation of the tribal administrative structure.

The Position of Women: Women are still largely confined to their homes and the trend from extended to nuclear families has reduced rather than enhanced their opportunities for social involvement despite the growth of girls' education.

Urbanisation: The main cities have grown fast and had a combined population of 2.3 million in 1975. Most of these were migrants from the countryside who had arrived destitute, creating slums in city centres or on the outskirts of cities. The wealthier residents were in the throes of "modernisation", living in houses usually designed by Western architects. At the same time, concrete sky-scrapers were

built for government offices, first-class hotels and the like. "The destruction of the old cities is the most obvious physical indication of the way the country is turning its back on the past" (p.211).

Lackner concludes with the claim that Saudi society is characterised by "contradictions" and "tensions".

Financial wealth superimposed on a totally undeveloped society has created a way of life based on the material comforts of the West or an imitation of them...(while) Wahhabism has been retained as the ideology of the regime which is introducing massive and immediate change in its people's way of life (p.216).

.....consumerism has developed at a superficial level in so far as it involved neither the development of technology nor of a culture.....(p.217).

The net result is, in Lackner's view, "ideological confusion" (p.217).

Birk's and Sinclair's essay, "The Domestic Political Economy of Development in Saudi Arabia" (in Niblock, 1982) refers mainly to changing composition of the labour force. Like Lackner, the authors stress the recent origin of extensive economic development:

Prior to 1970, Saudi Arabian oil revenues, although large by Middle Eastern standards of that time, were only a

fraction of their post-1970 dimensions: revenues rose from \$1,150 million in 1970 to \$29 billion in 1975, and are estimated to have reached \$60 billion in 1980. Indeed, at the end of the 1960's so little had the focus of the Saudi Arabian economy moved towards oil that the annual pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj) remained a significant source of government income and employment for the national population.....So limited were oil revenues at the end of the 1960's and in the early 1970's that their impact in this large kingdom within the modern sector was accounted for virtually completely by the small urban surrounds of Jeddah, al-Riyadh, Damman and Dhahran. In character, this limited modern sector consisted of a modest - though growing government bureaucracy, a general proliferation of small-scale construction activity and innumerable trading concerns, some small, some large (p.199).

According to the figures and projections used in this essay, the labour force rose from about 1.7 million in 1975 to over 2 million in 1980 and was expected to rise to over 2½ million in 1985. Distinguishing between Saudi nationals and expatriates they give the following annual rates of increase:

	<u>1975 to 1980</u>	<u>1980 to 1985</u>	
Saudis	3.0%	3.0%	
Expatriates	7.2%	5.1%	
Total	4.8%	4.0%	(p.211)

According to these figures, the rate of growth of expatriates in the labour force appears much higher than the rate for Saudi nationals. They regard this trend as a source of strain arising from the country's enormous oil wealth and claim that "the unrelenting inflow of migrants and their families" threatens the consensus of opinion that development is acceptable and appropriate to the Kingdom". "Managing the migrant community is therefore a very important, if not the primary, task of government" (p.213). They do not, however, discuss social change as such.

In an essay entitled "Social Change in Modern Saudi Arabia" (also in Niblock 1982), Kay attempts to provide an overall perspective on differing aspects of change in the country, especially since the "tidal wave of prosperity" which "swept the country in the 1970's" (p.171). Her essay is based mainly on observations she made when she lived in Jeddah for three years, in the late 1970's. She begins by referring to the difficulty of attempting to assess the impact of wealth and foreign experiences as these have been so abrupt:

**Only six years ago, from 1974 onwards, did massive wealth begin to percolate through all strata of society (p.172)**

She also refers to what she regards as the two most visible "factors of change": the massive influx of foreigners and the magnetic attraction for many rural dwellers of the major cities of Jeddah, al-Riyadh and the Damman, Dahrán - Al Khobor complex (p.172).

In Kay's view, the focal points of change are: change in the pastoral setting; change in urban life; change in the pattern of family life, including the position of women; and changes in the relative strengths of "traditionalism" and "modernisation". In general, her assessment of change is in keeping with Lackner's. The Bedouin have been "opting fast for settled life"....(but)....."even those who have stayed in the desert....have adopted new ways which have greatly changed their way of life" (p.173). She claims that factors such as motor transport and subsidies, grants and loans from the state have combined to give the Bedouin "a new independence and security", though the major change affecting them is that the power of tribes has been, and is, greatly diminished. However important changes in desert life are, Kay considers them "insignificant in comparison to the changes which have ravaged the small, quiet walled towns of 40 years ago", (p.174). Extensive road-building, the introduction of drains, water pipes and the like have transformed the physical scene. The introduction of modern

comforts has led to the building of luxurious villas and economic differences are becoming more apparent as wealth is shown in possessions (p.175).

In regard to the family, Kay first makes a sweeping, general statement.

The pattern of tight family life is breaking up in face of this extreme mobility: the men move to the cities first, the young people being the most ready to go. Wives and children may stay in the village or tent, coping with the fields or animals, to follow later perhaps. The old people are often left alone in their original environment; if they are fortunate one of their children will stay on with them, but for how long? (p.172).

This assertion is, however, modified in several respects. First, Kay recognises that despite the overall climate of change, business families continue to work as a family unit and that business is almost kept in the family. She also says that some families scattered by the process of change tend to regroup in family compounds when they find it possible to do so. Secondly, while discussing the effect of social change on women, she refers to the continuing restrictions on women's lives. Only 1 to 2 percent of women are in gainful employment and the vast majority are still confined to their homes which they can only leave when escorted by a brother or close relative. There is some

relaxation of the strict segregation of men and women, but only to a very limited extent.

Finally, Kay discusses the seeming contradiction between the tendency to "modernism" with some flexibility and relaxation of traditional customs on the one hand, and the continuing insistence on the essential values and religious tenets of Saudi society on the other. There is, she says, a very cautious approach to change and this comes as much from the Western-educated sector of the population as from the religious authorities. The young men who return from abroad have been "shocked by what they have seen in the West". As a result:

**They cannot accept full freedom and equality for women and hence the agonized debate over just how much work women may be permitted to undertake. They have no desire to shake the strong, authoritative, social structure of the family and religion. Hence the tendency to go abroad more and more to enjoy the comforts and pleasures of the West, alternating with the more austere life, but reassuring security of the strongly moral society at home (p.181).**

Kay concludes that the pace of development cannot easily be halted. The key issue is how to carry it through without sacrificing the essential values of the Saudi society (p182).

When we come to studies focusing specifically on change in the social fabric and family life, we find that there is a general assumption, backed by a good deal of direct evidence, that recent decades have seen an appreciable shift away from the "traditional" to the "modern"; that is to say from the extended family and polygamy to the nuclear family and monogamy. We also find evidence of very considerable tension over the position of women in the family and in society at large.

These trends have been noted in many Arab countries. The "Arab family", consisting of a man, his wife or wives, unmarried sons and daughters, his married sons and their wives and children, and possibly unmarried or divorced sisters and widowed mother is said to be moving toward the conjugal or nuclear family (ie. a married couple and their children, especially among educated people) (see, for example, Berger, 1964, p112; Nyrop and others, 1977, p.150; Goode, 1970, p.123, and Amin, 1983).

Amin (1983), to take particular note of one of the above authors, refers to several studies in Egypt, Iraq and Bahrain, which have examined the transition from the extended to the nuclear family as a result of socio-economic and technological changes, including extensive urbanisation.



Statistical evidence given in these studies would indicate a rapid change in family type. For example, in Egypt in recent decades, there have been more nuclear families than before, while an Iraqi study showed that in 1940, 82% of all families were of the extended type and only 18% were nuclear, whereas by 1975, extended families accounted for only 34% and nuclear families represented 66% of all families (p.121-124).

Similarly, many claims have been made about trends of change in internal authority patterns within the family. For example, Barakat (1985) wrote as follows on the family in the Middle East in general:

The father traditionally maintained his hold over authority and responsibility, mainly because he owned family property and provided the family's livelihood. However, recent changes in family structure (particularly in response to the emergence of competing socio-economic units, the employment of women, and the immigration of children to the city seeking education and work) have contributed to democratisation of husband-wife and father-children relationships. In other words, the patriarchal tradition is passing through a transitional period. Increasingly, fathers are tending to relinquish their grip over family life and to share authority and responsibility with other family members. Yet the family remains hierarchical in structure (p.32).

With specific regard to Saudi Arabia, some writers claim that the traditional family persists and remains strong, but there is also evidence of trends of change in the directions

referred to above. For example, Al Jawayer (1983) found that only 16% of his sample in Riyadh lived in extended families; that 68% lived in nuclear families; and that the remaining 16% consisted of one-parent families, divorced people and other family types (pp.131-132). And Malik (1973) reports on the decline in polygamy in Riyadh as follows:

Polygamy has been virtually abandoned, especially among young people. The most important factor in this sharp decline in polygamy is no doubt the change of the woman's role. The wife, who is more educated than her mother and grandmother, is bitterly opposed the idea of a second wife. The children also reject the idea of their father marrying another wife besides their mother. The marriage, which is very expensive for a man with an average income, has deterred many men from having more than one wife. With the transformation of Saudi Arabian society from agricultural and pastoral to industrial, men have realised that children are becoming a heavy cost instead of a lucrative investment. Above all, polygamy is becoming a symbol of backwardness and conservatism, and monogamy a symbol of modernisation (p.138).

But, even if we disregard studies of nomads and their sedenterization (eg Alabbadi, 1981), we find a wide range of differing conclusions between studies conducted in different types of settlement and at different times in the recent past. Ganoubi's detailed study of the village in Irqah, close to Riyadh, in the 1970s reported that change in family was proceeding very slowly. He admits that family relationships have started to witness some acute tension, which he attributes partly to the influences of radio and

television but mainly to the fact that village youth working in Riyadh often develop ideas different from those of their parents. Yet his general conclusion is that social change is:

**Superficial... because it does not indicate explicit change in the minds and behaviour of the village people, including the educated youth, since they are tied to the past through a very deeply rooted legacy.... Changes have been resisted, or at least slowed down, by religion. (Ganoubi, 1976, p257).**

This view of change in the family as slow and limited is also supported by Shukri (1983) in her study of three villages in south-western Saudi Arabia. She describes far-reaching changes in the agricultural economy and in material aspects of life in the three villages, but found that traditional beliefs remained strong. In particular, she reports that traditional kinship relations, family customs in the home and religious values are still dominant and effective.

Almana's (1981) study differs from those of Ganoubi and Shukri, in two important respects. Firstly, she did not confine herself to one locality and one type of settlement, but drew samples from four sections of the population; a nomadic community in the south western part of Saudi Arabia;

a rural community in the eastern province; a community of recently settled nomads in the city of Dammam; and a group of educated, salaried women, also in Dammam. Secondly, her study focused very specifically on the position of women in the family and the community.

The interesting findings which Almana reports indicate major differences between the four groups in regard to women's awareness of their legal rights and in their attitudes towards, and positions within, their respective families. To take one example of these differences, she found that only 8.3% of the married nomadic women had been asked to consent to their marriages, whereas the corresponding proportion for salaried urban women was 89%. The rural and recently settled nomadic women emerged as closer to the nomads than to the salaried urban women in this respect, with 12.5% and 16.7% respectively who had been asked for their consent.

Almana's general conclusion was that Saudi Arabian society has "resisted granting women rights that would increase their autonomy and reduce their dependence on men" (pp.256-257). Despite some change, the position of women has been "tied to the consent, permission and co-operation of a

male guardian, thereby increasing women's dependency on men" (p.256).

However, the main interest of Almana's study for us lies in the variations she describes between different sections of society. In the cities, families are undoubtedly more involved in, and aware of social change, especially among the more educated strata.

The general argument in regard to the sensitive issue of women's education is well illustrated in an article which appeared in Al Yamamah Weekly Magazine of 22 July 1987. Entitled "Female University Graduates between Education and Work: the Jump over the Anxiety of Marriage", the article discusses whether females should continue their further education or get married and poses questions such as: Is education, especially at the university level, an obstacle to a girl's marriage? Does university education delay marriage? Is it true that a girl wishing to get a university degree will pay a high price in inability to find a suitable husband, so that as she gets older she may marry a less educated and less fortunate man? Such negative views are often held in the society towards higher education for girls, and it is even suggested by some that higher education institutions should close their doors to girls, limiting

education to intermediate or secondary level only, in order that they should not miss the opportunity to make a good marriage.

The questions were put to several Saudi female university students, who replied as follows: one denied that university education led to a delay or constituted an obstacle to a girl's marriage as she would marry whenever she found a suitable husband, but admitted that less educated men would be reluctant to take a highly educated wife, for fear that they would not be able to maintain their traditional superior status. Moreover, men worry that disparities in education will make it difficult for a couple to adapt to their new life together. Also, she said she would be happy to work when she graduated from university, as long as work did not conflict with their household task. She would prefer to marry an educated man because she felt he would treat her well and understand her work situation. An uneducated husband would be hard to deal with, she suggested.

Another girl strongly denied that university educated girls missed the opportunity to marry at the appropriate time. She felt that by graduation, at 24-25 years old, a woman has acquired some wisdom and understanding of life, and that this is a reasonable time to marry.

Another girl spoke of her ambition to be a school teacher. She was 25 years old. She expressed surprise that it was a good time to marry, when a girl had some experience of life. The problem was that young men were reluctant to marry university educated girls as they feared that their wives would be too assertive, and also that they may be too busy with their work to fulfil their household responsibilities properly. She added that a woman's education and work need not be obstacles to her home and family duties (pp110-111).

The views on social change in the family based on studies such as those by Ganoubi and Shukri are clearly very far removed from the opinions and aspirations of the young educated women interviewed by Al Yamamah Weekly Magazine. To generalise about social change in Saudi Arabia is therefore difficult without thinking in terms of an extended continuum which takes into account the various sections of Saudi Arabian society at different periods.

On the basis of a study conducted on a sample of families in Riyadh in the mid 1980s, Ibn-Saeed (1989) has no doubt that widespread personal affluence and comfortable living conditions are making a strong impact on family structure and

the husband/wife relationship, with women's rights and ancient customs constantly in question:

**A new tendency can be seen towards a simple family system, the modern couple preferring to have their own separate house because the young wife nowadays prefers to lead her own life away from the direct influence of her husband's parents (p.166).**

Ibn-Saeed's data show that current opportunities do lead many young people to aim for an independent house after marriage and, also, that the trend towards independent housing is accompanied by a tendency to family limitation:

**My conclusions confirm... that Saudi Arabia is moving from a system based on the extended family to one based on the nuclear family, that sources of income are more varied and patently growing, with women sharing in them and contributing financially in a way unheard of a few years ago; and that families are decreasing in size. (Ibn-Saeed, 1989, p.176).**

Alnowaiser (1983) studied two settlements, Unyzeh and New Alkabra, both urban communities of Al Qassim region and both containing "new" or "modern" areas as well as "old" or "traditional" ones. He paid particular attention to the similarities and differences between the patterns of life in the "new" and "old" areas and found some appreciable differences. But in general his conclusions are similar to Ibn-Saeed's and he states them even more forcefully:



The rapid modernisation process in Saudi Arabia has had a profound effect on its traditional social structure. The family unit is fast becoming a nuclear one, with fewer children per family than before. There is a marked decline in social contact between friends and relatives. Individualistic behaviours are increasing as communal functions decline. Relationships are becoming materialistic in nature, or they are developed around shared interests in contrast to traditional precedents... Such sudden, sweeping changes seem beneficial in terms of materialistic convenience, but have created confusion and conflict between traditional social and conflict between traditional and local religious norms and the modern trends. This can be seen in individuals or groups who develop dual personalities.... The person or group is caught at a point of sharp confrontation, pulled on the one hand by the symbolic, traditional or sacred culture forces, and, on the other hand, by instrumental, functional and perceptual modern forces. A person acts upon his perceptual state, deciding consciously or unconsciously whether to perceive things with a traditional symbolic attitude, or with a modern instrumental one. However, some people do both at different times and in different cases. (Alnowaiser, 1983, pp.155-156).

In the light of monographs referred to above, there can be no doubt that social change in Saudi Arabia is proceeding rapidly, even if unevenly. The urban studies reveal strong and convincing evidence of rapid and far-reaching change, but the more rural village-type studies indicate that there continues to be considerable resistance to the trend away from "traditional" towards "modern" norms and patterns of family and community life. This clear evidence of a continuum between the "new" and the "old" provides important guidance for further studies.

It will be seen that in the case of the village of Hwylan, which is the subject of the present study, there is convincing evidence of both continuity and change in the norms governing social relationships.

## CHAPTER THREE

### AL QASSIM REGION

#### Introduction

This chapter presents a profile of the Al Qassim Region under the following headings: 3.1 Location and Boundaries, 3.2 Climate and Terrain, 3.3 History and Population, 3.4 Urbanisation and Settlement, 3.5 The City of Buraidah, 3.6 The Economy - Agriculture, Industry and Services, 3.7 Transport and Communications, 3.8 Water Supplies, 3.9 Education, and 3.10 Health.

The purpose of the chapter, read in conjunction with our knowledge of the changing political economy of Saudi Arabia referred to Chapter Two, is to provide the historical and geographical context required for an appreciation of the nature of Hwylan Village to be described in the next chapter. The central issues here addressed concern the rate and the scale of development and modernisation in the region within which Hwylan is set.

#### 3.1 Location and Boundaries

Al Qassim region lies in the central part of Saudi Arabia (Najd) and extends north towards the Northern Frontier region. This location has for centuries been important

because of the caravan trade routes passing through it between Makkah and Iraq, between Makkah and Persia, and from Yemen to Kuwait, Iraq, Syria, and Jordan. The region has thus for long been closely linked to trade with other countries of the Arab world. It is also traversed by the pilgrim routes from Iraq, Iran and the other middle eastern countries (see Map 3.1). Internally, Al Qassim region is on the borders of Hail to the north, Riyadh to the south and east, and Al Madinah to the west (see Maps 3.2 and 3.3). It extends 360 kms from north to south and 400 kms from east to west.

The region constitutes one of the smallest of the country's 14 provinces. It covers 65,000sq.km., making up 2.9 per cent of the total area of the country (Al Ribdi, 1990:148). According to the 1983 Norconsult Survey, it had a population of 379,841, making up approximately 4.6 per cent of the country's population. Al Ribdi (1990:165) points out that, on the assumption that this 4.6 per cent share has remained constant, the population of the region by 1986 would have been approximately 551,000. Calculated in the same way it would in 1992 be 721,675. Buraidah, located 320 kms from Riyadh, is the largest city and the capital of the province.

The region is divided into three zones, which are related to its physical features. The western zone forms approximately half of the region's land size but, according

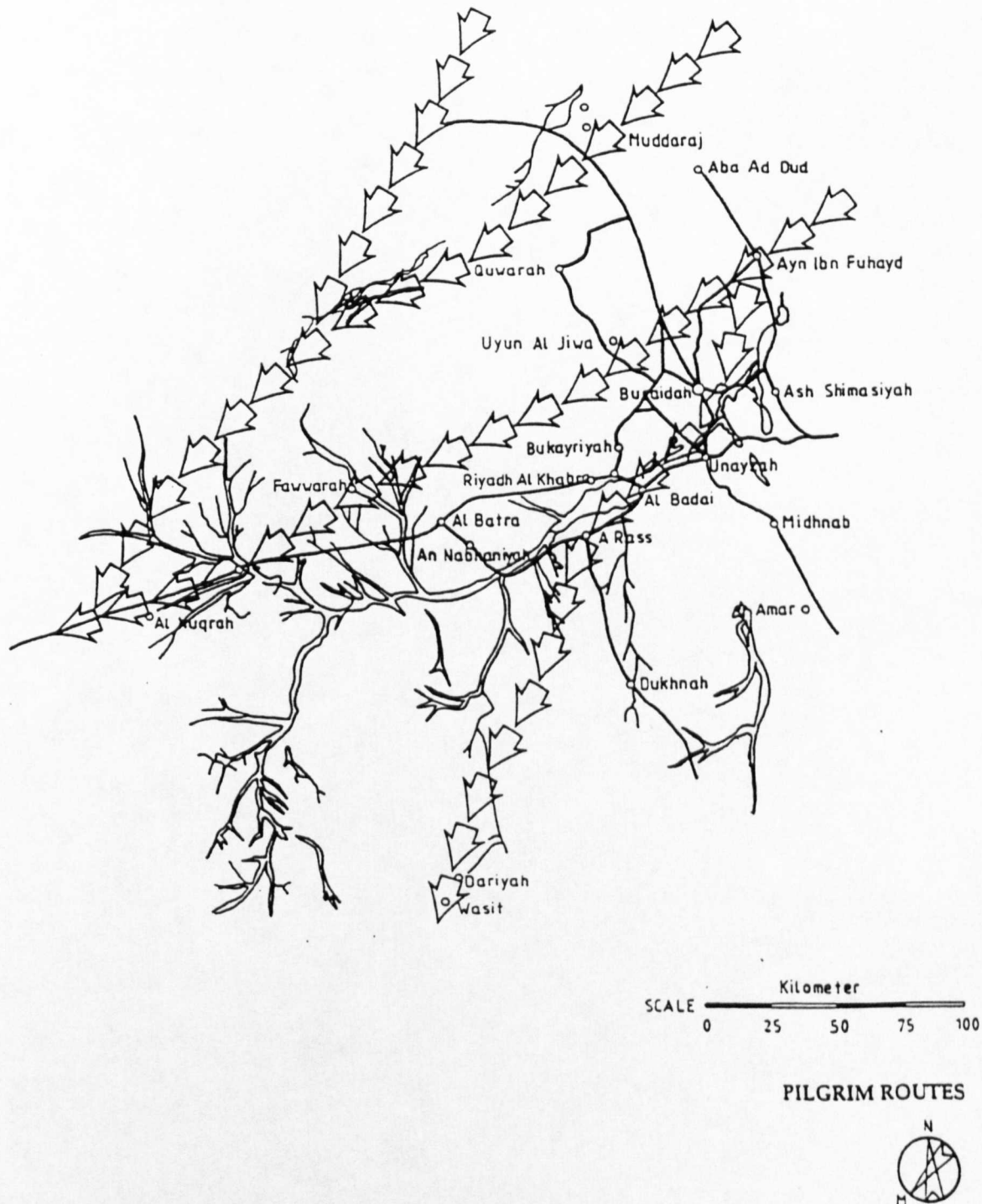
to the 1983 Norconsult survey, it had only 96,060 inhabitants, or 30.0 per cent of the province's total. This low population is due to the scarcity of water. The eastern zone covers about 25 per cent of the province's area, but in 1983 had only 32,504 inhabitants, making up 10.2 per cent of the total. This is due to its sand dunes, which prevent any extensive farming development. The third zone is the central or core area of the region. It covers 27 per cent of the total area, but had some 191,277 inhabitants or 59.8 per cent of the province's total (Tables 3.1 and 3.2). This zone has fertile land with ground water and is the location of the province's two largest cities: Buraidah with 107,546 inhabitants and Unayzah with 46,882 inhabitants in 1983 according to the Norconsult survey. By 1992 their respective populations would have been in the order of 165,414 and 79,348, if their annual increases remained constant at 4.9 per cent for Buraidah and 6.3 per cent for Unayzah.

### 3.2 Climate and Terrain

Al Qassim province has a predominantly desert climate, little rainfall, very hot summers and severe winters. The summer temperatures reach up to 110° F and in winter there can be freezing cold; a temperature of -4.50C was recorded in

Map 3.1

Pilgrim Routes Through Al Qassim Region

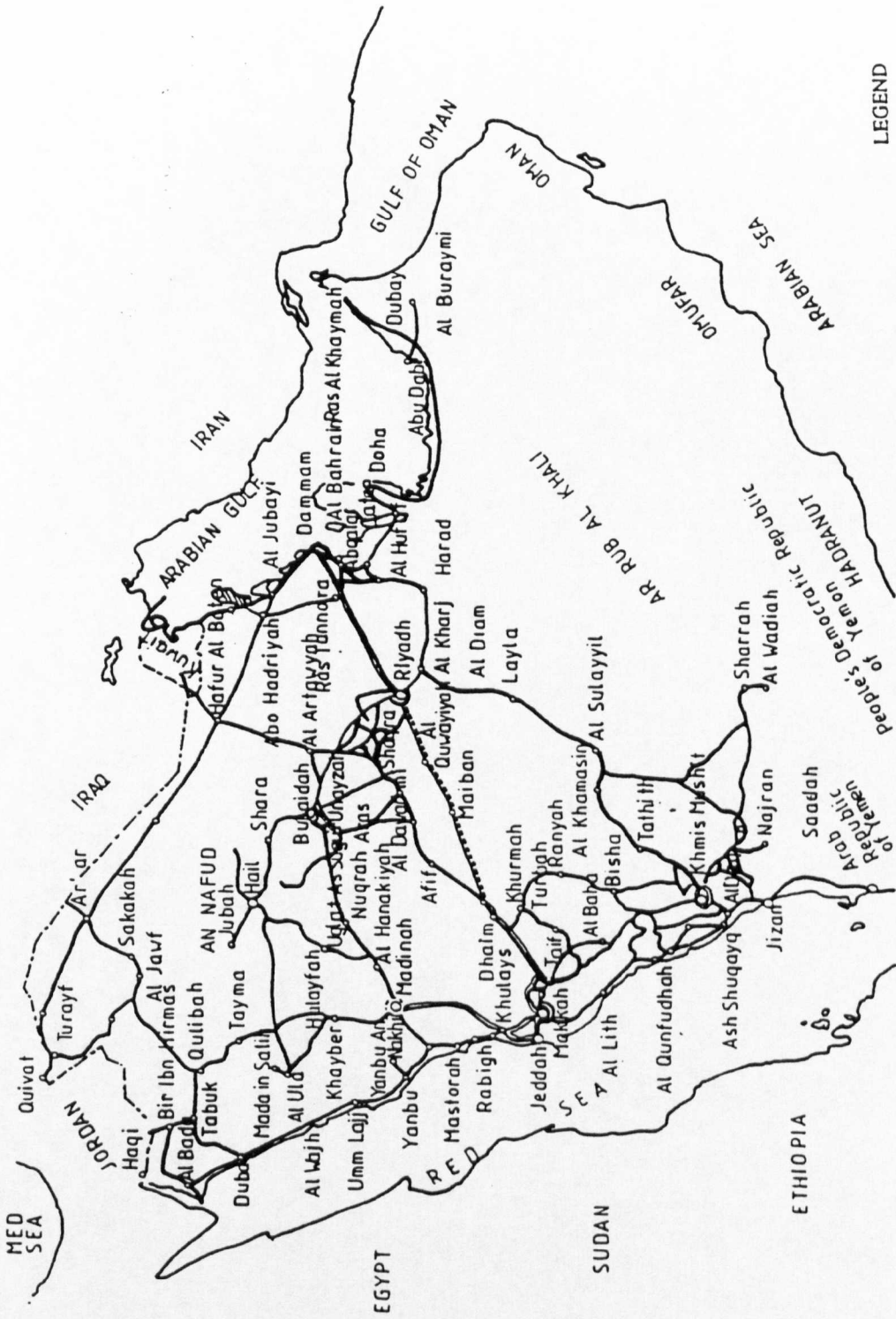


Source: Private thesis by Saleh S. Alwashmy quoted in, Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (1984) Report 2 part 1.

Map 3.2

The Location of Al Qassim Region and the Administrative Regions of Saudi Arabia





Map 3.3

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
 Ministry of Communications-Road Map (1988)



December 1971. Sandstorms are fairly common. Rain falls mainly from October to May. During the hot season, especially in the months June to August, there is seldom any rain at all. Summers start in May and last until September. Winters last from December to February. Autumn usually starts in October and lasts until the middle of November. In autumn the temperature is generally mild. Spring starts in March and lasts until the middle of April. The spring temperatures are mild to begin with but as time progresses the climate rapidly gets much hotter. The climate of the region is thus similar to that of many other parts of the Arabian Peninsula.

The average recorded humidity in the region for the years 1968 - 77 was 32.5 per cent, relatively low for the country as a whole. But again, there is considerable variation in this respect. During the months of June and July humidity is quite low, around 16 per cent, while during the months of December and January, it is very high, up to 50 per cent. Winds are normally hot and dusty during summer and cold in winter. The average recorded rainfall for the years 1968 - 77 was 107mm. Generally the rainfall consists of a few short showers, but occasionally it is quite heavy and can cause considerable damage to wadis and adversely affect the farms (Al Ribdi, 1990:152-4).

When the rains are delayed or do not come at all, people habitually perform rain prayers (Arabic = Salat Istesqa) similar to those performed in other parts of the country. These prayers have become highly formalised and are performed by rulers of the country as well as by many inhabitants, in the hope and belief that God will accept them and increase the rains. Al Ribdi (1990) stresses the importance which rainfall has in the lives of the people:

Rainfall incidence is undoubtedly the aspect of climate most noticed by the population because of its rarity and its past importance. The history books mention the rainy years because of the fertility they brought. Each year of severe drought is given a name because they lead to poor crops and grazing, heightened disputes between nomads and settled people over watering points, and because they lead to emigration. Part of this dependence on rainfall has been lessened in recent years by increased irrigation from aquifers, water importation and storage (pp 154-5).

Al Jerash (1968 : 14) dwells on the features of the terrain in the province. There are vast areas of sand (Arabic = Nufud) which are commonly dotted with dunes brought about by the strong winds of the Peninsula. The largest dunes are like turtle backs surrounded by smaller dunes and extended plains (Arabic = Aurug). The local practice of planting tamarisk trees on the slopes of the dunes has two purposes; one is to prevent sand movement, the other to provide tamarisk wood for buildings.

The province's terrain also includes mountains, hills, wadi bottoms, salt flats (Arabic = Sabakhah) and inland cliffs. The region's western area is a largely sand free plain dotted with occasional mountains and hills. The eastern part has sandy areas, wadi bottoms , salt flats , plains and cliffs. The northern area of the province is largely sand free, but the core area has large sand areas (Nufuds) which stretch around Buraidah and Unayzah. The nufuds are usually interconnected and make up the areas favoured by nomads for grazing (Shamekh, 1975 : 55-6).

The extremes of the climate inevitably have major implications for agriculture in the region. Farming cannot depend solely on the low rainfall. "Dry" farming is thus not possible in most parts of the region and the generally fertile soil can only be exploited where there is sufficient underground water (See Section 3.8 below).

### **3.3 History and Population**

We have already noted the long-standing importance of the region due to its location on the route of pilgrim caravans travelling to Makkah. Yet the region has little recorded history.

It is difficult to outline the early history of population and settlement in the region because almost nothing has been recorded of it. What evidence there is indicates that Al Qassim has been inhabited for a long time by a thin scatter of settlements. Its limited settlement and its relative isolation are repeatedly mentioned in the Arab poems written both before and after Islam. (Al Ribdi, 1990, 163 - 4).

Most of our knowledge about the region's most distant past comes from folklore and oral history. There are, however, a few very old documentary sources which have been used by modern scholars in trying to recapture the past.

According to Palgrave (1865), the term Al Qassim denotes sandy but fertile ground (p.252). According to Al Muarek (1987:17) the name of Al Qassim derives from the sand of the area in which *Haloxylon Persicum* trees (Arabic = Ghada) grew. For this explanation, he relies on Arabic poems before and since Islam, as does Al Obodi M. (1979), who claims that the name Al Qassim came from sandy hills (Arabic = Qassimyat) where the Ghada grows.

Al Musalam (1988 : 17) refers to the writings of Al Hamadany, one of the earliest Arab historians, and the author of Sefat Jazirat Al Arab in the first half of the tenth century. According to Al Hamadany, Al Qassim was a vast sandy country but a highly fertile farming area with date palm trees in large numbers. It had plenty of water and some

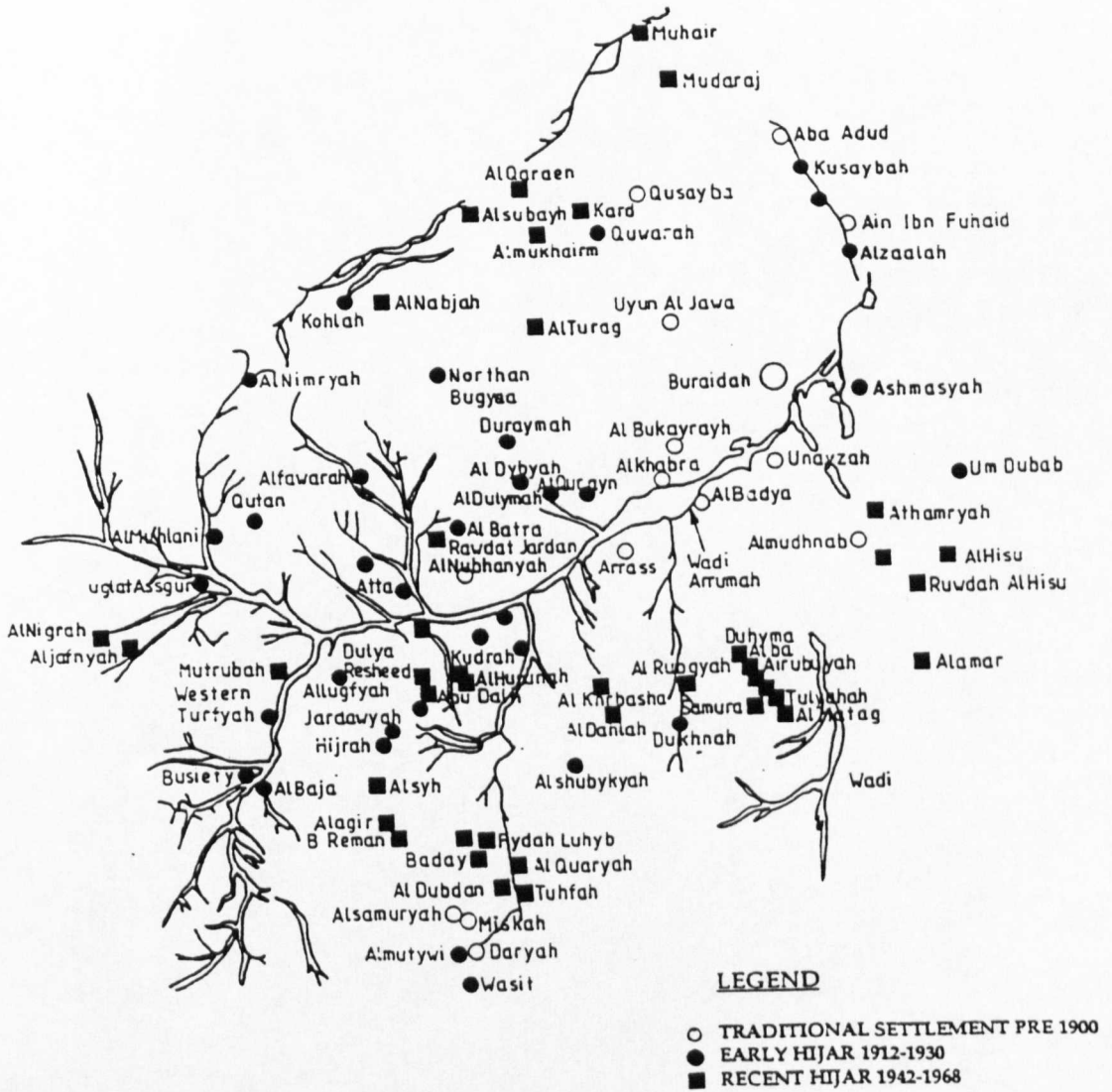
of its settlements were surrounded by protective walls. It was on the route to Madinah and Makkah. It had fertile hills, sand hills and water springs. It was also a watering source for the Abbs, a pre-Islamic Arab tribe who inhabited it more than fourteen hundred years ago.

Shamekh (1975 : 65-6) refers to a number of ancient settlements in the region, though few of these sites have been explored scientifically, as have those of Al Jowa, 30 kms north of Buraidah, and of Al Qaryatyn, 8 kms north of Unayzah. (These are the sites of two villages where many pieces of pottery, brick, coloured glass and house foundations can still be found.)

The main towns of the region have long histories. Al Obodi (1979) suggests that the town of Darryah dates from 700 (or 100 AH) while Shamekh (1978) dates Unayzah from 1232 (or 630 AH) and Ibn Essa (N.D.) dates Buraidah from 1541 (or 948 AH). But most of the smaller settlements cited in Arabic poetry before Islam were no more than watering sites for tribal people and most of the region's present settlements are recent, a clear majority from the present century (see Map 3.4). The settlements of earlier times are mainly in one area which includes the capital of Buraidah and today constitutes its central zone.

Map 3.4

Location of New Settlements in Al Qassim Region



SCALE 0 25 50 75 100 KMS

Source: Unpublished Thesis: Dr. Ahmed A Shamekh.



Little is known in any detail about the region's population even in modern times. Census figures exist for 1962 and 1974, and there are the Norconsult Survey figures for 1983. All other figures are purely estimates, and even the census and survey figures are difficult to interpret in some respects. Firstly, the administrative boundaries were changed between 1974 and 1983. Secondly, the 1974 census figures are given for 7 sub-regions, and do not include the Qubah sub-emirate, while the 1983 Norconsult Survey figures are given for 3 zones and include Qubah. A third difficulty stems from the adjustment of the figures on the basis of estimates to allow for nomads and others who were not interviewed (i.e. expatriate workers living in compounds). In addition, the validity of all the figures has commonly been questioned.

Al Ribdi (1990:164) refers to a report of the British Military prepared in 1900 which estimated the population at 300,000, but the first nationwide Saudi census of 1962 gave Al Qassim a population of only 223,000 or 6.7 per cent of the country's total. It should be stressed, however, that the 1962 census figures were never accepted by the Saudi Government and were not published on the grounds that the total of 3.3 million inhabitants for the whole country was much lower than expected. In 1972 the World Bank estimated

the country's population to be 7,616,000, while the Middle East Economic Digest estimated it at 8.2 million for the same year - see Shamekh, 1975:36).

The second census of 1974 put the region's population at 324,523 or 4.6 per cent of the country's total inhabitants (including 13,313 expatriates) and the 1983 Norconsult Survey put the total at 379,841 (including nomads and expatriates living in compounds) which indicated a gross increase of 55,318 persons in nine years, or an annual average growth of 1.8% (Tables 3.1 and 3.2).

**Table 3.1**  
**The 1983 Population of Al Qassim Region by Sex**  
**and by Zone Excluding Nomads and Expatriates**  
**in Compounds**

Zone	Males	Females	Total	Percentage males
Central	102,733	88,544	191,277	53.70
Eastern	17,512	14,992	96,060	53.80
Western	50,633	45,427	96,060	52.71
<b>Al Qassim TOTAL</b>	<b>170,878</b>	<b>148,963</b>	<b>319,841</b>	<b>53.43</b>

**Source:** Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (1984), Report 2, part 1, project no. 209, p89. (Norconsult)

**Note:** This table shows the population covered by the socio-economic survey of 1983. About 55,000 nomads and 5,000 expatriates living in compounds were not covered by the survey.



**Table 3.2**  
**The Population of Al Qassim in 1974 and 1983 Including**  
**Nomads and Expatriates in Compounds**

Population	1974	1983	Natural increase	Annual increase
Settled pop	236,210	288,035	51,825	3.0
Nomads	75,000	55,000	20,000	-3.5
Expatriates*	13,313	36,806	23,493	12.0
TOTAL	324,523	379,841	55,318	1.8

Source: Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs, (Norconsult) Op. cit. p86...

\* Increase mainly by immigration.

According to the Norconsult Survey, 90% of the region's population were Saudi nationals (excluding the estimated 55,000 nomads not covered by the survey). The expatriate labour force formed about 10% of the total (excluding some 5000 expatriates living in compounds).

Table 3.3 shows that a salient feature of the population of the region is its youthfulness with 58.9 per cent of the total aged under 20 years. The higher age groups constitute progressively lower proportions; those of 20 - 29 years of age constitute 16.3 per cent, while those aged 30 - 39 make up only 9.4 per cent, and so on. The table also shows that the age structure of the population varies between different

parts of Al Qassim. The central zone has 57 per cent of the population under 20 years of age whereas in the eastern zone this percentage is 60.7 per cent and in the western zone 62 per cent. This difference is probably accounted for by migration to the larger cities of Buraidah and Unayzah in the central zone (See section 3.5 below). As shown in Table 3.1, however, the sex ratio does not vary significantly between the three zones.

#### **3.4 Urbanisation and Settlement**

We have already referred to evidence of some early settlement in the province but the majority of settlements and larger scale urbanisation only developed during the present century. Shamekh estimates that at the beginning of this century, the towns and settlements of the core zone contained 90 per cent of the region's settled population. (cf Map 4). But large numbers of the Bedouin population have become settled in recent decades, especially due to improved economic conditions since the 1950's. Shamek estimates the newly settled nomads at 75,000 which would mean that the rate of nomad settlement had doubled between 1960 and 1975. According to the 1974 census, there were still 75,000 nomadic people in the region, but this number had declined to an

Table 3.3

Population of Al Qassim Region by Zone According to Age Groups in 1983

Age Group	Central Zone		Eastern Zone		Western Zone		Total		Al Qassim Total	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%	Males	%
0-9	56,270	29.4	11,281	34.7	34,486	35.9	102,037	31.9	50,268	49.3
10-19	52,721	27.6	8,456	26.0	25,072	26.1	86,249	27.0	45,076	52.3
20-29	34,240	17.9	4,779	14.7	13,064	13.6	52,083	16.3	29,943	57.5
30-39	18,362	9.6	2,941	9.1	8,549	8.9	29,852	9.4	16,556	55.5
40-49	12,229	6.4	2,220	6.8	6,052	6.3	20,051	6.4	10,424	50.8
50-59	9,173	4.8	1,390	4.3	3,938	4.1	14,501	4.5	8,340	57.5
60-69	5,053	2.6	901	2.8	2,786	2.9	8,740	2.7	6,101	69.8
70-79	2,116	1.1	428	1.3	1,345	1.4	3,889	1.2	2,736	70.4
80+	1,113	0.6	108	0.3	768	0.8	1,989	0.6	1,434	72.1
TOTAL	191,277	100.0	32,504	100.0	96,090	100.0	319,841	100.0	170,878	53.4

Source: Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (1984), Report 2, part 1, project 209, p90.

estimated 55,000 by 1983 according to the Norconsult estimates. These figures would imply an annual rate of decrease of approximately 3.5 percent.

By 1983 the three main cities had a total population of approximately 180,934 (Buraidah 107,546, Unayzah 46,882 and Ar Rass 26,506). Less than half of the population (approximately 43 per cent) lived in scattered villages and oases. The extensive economic development of recent decades has attracted an increasing number of nomads to the urban centres, where they have adapted to an urban life style. Another factor which has contributed to the decrease in the number of nomads in the province is the Government land grant schemes for those of limited income.

Population increase has been different in the three main zones of Al Qassim. In the central zone, population growth has been faster than in the region as a whole. Thus, the area has increased its share of the total population, from about 48 percent in 1974, to about 53 percent in 1983 (Norconsult: 1984:85). This increase has taken place almost exclusively in the larger cities, namely Buraidah and Unayzah, whereas the population in many of the smaller towns and villages has stagnated or even declined. In the eastern part of Al Qassim, population increase has been at the much lower rate of about 1.4 percent per annum, and in the western area there

has been an even lower rate of increase at 0.4 percent per annum (Ibid, 1984:85).

With regard to population density in the region, it is estimated that in 1974 the average was 5.2 percent persons per sq.km., compared with 8.4 persons per sq.km. in 1986 (Al Ribdi, 1990:167). Although this is a relatively low density, it is in fact greater than the average for Saudi Arabia as a whole (3.2 and 3.3 persons per sq.km. in 1974 and 1986 respectively). Again, however, there were marked differences within Al Qassim province. According to the 1974 census, there were more than 14 persons per sq.km. in the central zone, while there were less than 2 persons per sq.km. in more isolated areas. However, population densities have increased in all parts of the region, but more so in the highly populated areas than in the less inhabited ones, as people have tended to move to urban centres (Al Ribdi, 1990:167).

### **3.5 The City of Buraidah**

The most important city in Al Qassim region is its capital, Buraidah, which was described in the 1920's by Philby (1928) as "a great clay town, built in waste sand within surrounding walls, towers, streets, and houses, beside a bluish dark wood of ethil trees upon high dunes with a

great mosque of square minaret". He further described it as " Jerusalem in the desert " (p.186).

According to Al Ribdi (1986), basing himself on Al Obodi (1979), Buraidah began to develop about 1400 - more than 550 years ago - when the village of Al Shamas was established. Al Shamas is now located less than two miles from the present centre of Buraidah and about one mile north of its main Friday mosque. It is the city's oldest neighbourhood or quarter. There are also some records indicating that in 1577 many people migrated to Buraidah from Al Washim region in the central area of the Arabian Peninsula. Their migration has been attributed to family and tribal disputes in their area of origin. Many of these migrants were members of the Al Ubu Olylan family, who became the rulers of Buraidah and remained in power for some three hundred years up to 1864, when the Aba Al Khail family took the city by force and ruled it for about 30 years. In 1904 it was captured by the late King Abdullaziz and thus became part of his growing Kingdom. Since then the rulers of the city have always been appointed by the King.

The size of Buraidah's population in its earliest years is not known, but it must have been quite substantial by the standards of the period. We do know for certain that by 1577 Buraidah was already a walled city for protection from tribal

raids. The city soon began to attract migrants from Al Qassim region itself, and its walls were extended from time to time to cope with the expansion of the population.

Al Ribdi (1986, Vol. 1:124) estimates that in 1742 there were some 170 houses with a population of 1360 persons, and that by 1887 these figures had increased to about 1600 houses and 12,800 people. In 1907 the number of houses had risen to 1818 and the population to 14,500. According to Philby's estimates (1928 : 201), the population was about 20,000 in 1917 and the 1962 Saudi Census put the population at some 30,000. Ten years later (1972) Doxiadis Consultants estimated the population at 46,500 and the 1974 census returned a total of nearly 70,000 (Al Ribdi, 1986, Vol. 1:129). The next figure we have comes from the Norconsult Survey (1984) which claimed a population of 107,546 (including non-surveyed people) for 1983. According to these figures, the average annual rate of growth between 1974 and 1983 was almost 5 per cent, a much faster rate than for Al Qassim region, where the growth rate was 1.8 percent per annum. Assuming a stable rate of increase of 4.9 percent since 1983, Buraidah's present population would be some 165,414 in 1992.

The rapid growth of the city's population between 1974 and 1983 was largely due to migration, mainly from the city's own hinterland, with larger numbers of male than female

migrants. Male migration ran at a rate of increase of approximately 4.95 percent, whereas the female rate was only 3.96 percent (see Table 3.4). This difference was particularly marked in the 20 - 39 age group which in 1983 had 17,435 males and only 11,360 females (Table 3.5).

In 1983, 30 percent of Buraidah's inhabitants were under 10 years of age and 58 percent under 20. Only 4 percent of the inhabitants were 60 years of age or above (Table 3.5). Comparing these figures with those for Al Qassim region as shown in Table 3.6, we see no marked difference in age group distribution.

Table 3.4  
Buraidah's Population Growth  
by Sex 1974-1983

Sex	Population in 1974	Population in 1983	Population increase 1974 to 1983	Annual % increase
Male	36,820	56,882	20,062	4.95
Female	33,104	46,960	13,856	3.96
TOTAL	69,924	103,842	33,918	4.5

Note: It was not possible for Norconsult to survey the whole population. The total figures, therefore, refer only to those actually surveyed and exclude those in company compounds, hospitals etc...

Source: Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (1984), report 2, no. 2, project 209, p4.



**Table 3.5**  
**Buraidah's Population According to Age and Sex 1983**

Age Group	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0-9	15,815	27.9	15,612	33.1	31,427	30.3
10-19	14,884	26.2	13,608	29.0	28,492	27.4
20-29	11,097	19.5	7,229	15.4	18,326	17.6
30-39	6,338	11.1	4,131	8.8	10,469	10.1
40-49	3,422	6.0	2,896	6.2	6,318	6.1
50-59	2,633	4.6	2,106	4.5	4,739	4.6
60-69	1,620	2.8	871	1.9	2,491	2.4
70-79	668	1.2	365	0.8	1,033	1.0
80+	405	0.7	142	0.3	547	0.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>56,882</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>46,960</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>103,842</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (1984), Al Qassim Region Comprehensive Development Plan, Project 209, Report 2-2, p5.

**Table 3.6**  
**The Population of Al Qassim Region by Age and Sex in 1983**

Age Group	Male No.	%	Female No.	%	Total No.	%
0-9	50,268	29.4	51,769	34.7	102,037	31.9
10-19	45,076	26.4	41,173	27.6	86,249	27.0
20-29	29,943	17.5	22,140	14.9	52,083	16.3
30-39	16,556	9.7	13,296	8.9	29,852	9.3
40-49	10,424	6.1	10,077	6.8	20,501	6.4
50-59	8,340	4.9	6,161	4.1	14,501	4.4
60-69	6,101	3.6	2,639	1.8	8,740	2.7
70-79	2,736	1.6	1,153	0.8	3,889	1.2
80+	1,434	0.8	555	0.4	1,989	0.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>170,878</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>148,963</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>319,841</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (1984), Report 2, Volume 1, op. cit., p91.

Table 3.7  
Buraidah's Expatriate Population in 1983

Nationality	Persons	%
Yemeni	2,804	19.6
Egyptians and Sudanese	4,984	34.8
Other Arab	3,219	22.5
Asians	2,284	15.9
European - American	104	0.7
Other (Non - Arab)	935	6.5
TOTAL	14,330	100.0

Source: Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs, (1984) op. cit. p5.

Table 3.7 shows that by 1983 there were about 14,330 expatriates living in Buraidah households (i.e. approximately 13.8 per cent of the population). In addition, there were a further 3,614 living in company compounds near the city. Egyptians and Sudanese taken together formed the largest expatriate group of about 5,000, followed by Yemenis numbering about 2,800. Other Arabs totalled about 3,200. In addition there were some 2,300 Asians and about 1000 Americans, Europeans and other non-Arab nationals.

Excluding the expatriates living in company compounds, approximately 55,000 persons (52.9 per cent of the population) lived in nuclear family households and about 40,000 (41.3 per cent) in extended family households. In addition, 5,700

(5.5 percent) lived in households made up of unrelated persons and 263 (0.3 percent) lived alone (Norconsult, 1984, Report 2.2, pp. 3-9).

The occupations of the people of Buraidah in 1983 are shown in Tables 3.8 and 3.9. There were 24,000 inhabitants who were employed, representing about 23 percent of the total population and 92 percent of the males 20 years or older. Retail and wholesale trade employed about 5000 persons, or nearly 21 percent of the total. The public sector employed nearly 11,000 persons or 45.7 percent in services, health, education, government institutions, 3,544 persons or 14.7 percent of employed people worked in the construction sector. Transport accounted for nearly 5 percent or 1,175 persons. Manufacturing employed 3.5 percent, while agriculture employed only 3.1 percent. Finance accounted for 2.4 percent, and the rest (4.8 percent) were involved in other or unspecified services.

The activities of the whole population, including women and children but excluding expatriates living in company compounds, are shown in Table 3.9. There were 35,154 students (33.9 percent) and 16,362 housewives (15.8 percent). The housewives accounted for 90 percent of the female population aged 20 years or over. A total of 16,665 persons

or 16 percent were employees and 5,751 or 5.5 percent were self-employed. Those who worked both for themselves and for an employer accounted for 0.4 percent or 365 persons, while the temporarily employed constituted 1.2 percent or 1,276 persons. Retired people formed 709 persons or 0.7 percent, while the disabled formed 162 persons or 0.2 percent. Children and the unemployed taken together formed 26.3 percent or 27,398 persons. Unfortunately, the source of these figures does not differentiate occupations followed by males and females. Thus, we do not know the exact occupation of the 10% of women who were not housewives. From the researcher's experience however, it can be said that these women would be working mainly in female educational institutions, the occupation considered most acceptable for women in Saudi society. The figures on the occupations of the population are a clear indication of Buraidah's capital status and of its role as a trade, service and educational centre for the region.

Until recent years, Buraidah had developed as a traditional Islamic city with an " organic pattern ", with the main mosque at its centre and walls around its periphery.

**Table 3.8**  
**Buraidah's Employed Persons by Economic Sector**  
**of Main Job in 1983**

<b>Economic Sector</b>	<b>Employed Persons</b>	<b>%</b>
Agriculture	749	3.1
Manufacturing	830	3.5
Utilities	992	4.1
Construction	3,544	14.7
Retail - Wholesale Trade	5,042	20.9
Transport	1,175	4.9
Finance	567	2.4
Education*	4,172	17.3
Health Services*	405	1.7
Government - Public Services*	4,577	19.0
Other Services*	1,843	7.7
Other Activities	41	0.2
Unspecified	120	0.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,047</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* Combined public sector activities

**Source:** Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (1984), op. cit. p14, based on 1983 Norconsult survey, non-adjusted data.

**Table 3.9**  
**The Activities of Buraidah's Population in 1983**

Occupation	Number	%
Employed	16,665	16.0
Self Employed	5,751	5.5
Employed and Self Employed	365	0.4
Temporarily Employed	1,276	1.2
Housewife	16,362	15.8
Disabled	162	0.2
Retired	709	0.7
Students	35,154	33.9
Children and Unemployed	27,398	26.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>103,842</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (1984), Report 2, No. 2, Vol. 2, p15.

However, during the last few decades, it has expanded far beyond its earlier boundaries and stretches along the main roads to the south, east and the north (see Map 3.5). This expansion has taken place simultaneously with large scale land development, the emergence of detached modern houses, and a rapid increase in vehicle ownership. The city now extends to the wide flat plains to the north and north east, where most of its large new neighbourhoods are situated. Virtually all buildings in these new neighbourhoods are modern houses.

The traditional commercial area remains important in serving all parts of the city, but new commercial buildings - shops, warehouses, garages, workshops and factories - have been established along all the main roads, leading north to the airport, south to Unayzah and Riyadh, and east to Al Zulfi.

The main administration buildings are located in the south-eastern quarter of the city. The Al Qassim province Emirate, the Police Headquarters, the Fire Department, the main Hospital and the Education Directorate for Boys, are all located in the south eastern area. In the last two decades, however, several administrative institutions have been located in other areas. These include the Agricultural Directorate in the western area of the city, the City Municipality in the centre, on the main street of Alkhobeeb, the Ministry of Justice and the Law Courts, the Agricultural Institute, the Technical College, and the Vocational Training Institute in the north west. The province's television station, the ruler's residential areas, the city water tower, and the Telecom and Communication buildings are all located in the north eastern section of the city. The city has thus expanded in all directions, but principally to the north, due to the flat area there and the location of the airport. The

southern and western areas are less suitable for building due to the sandy terrain.

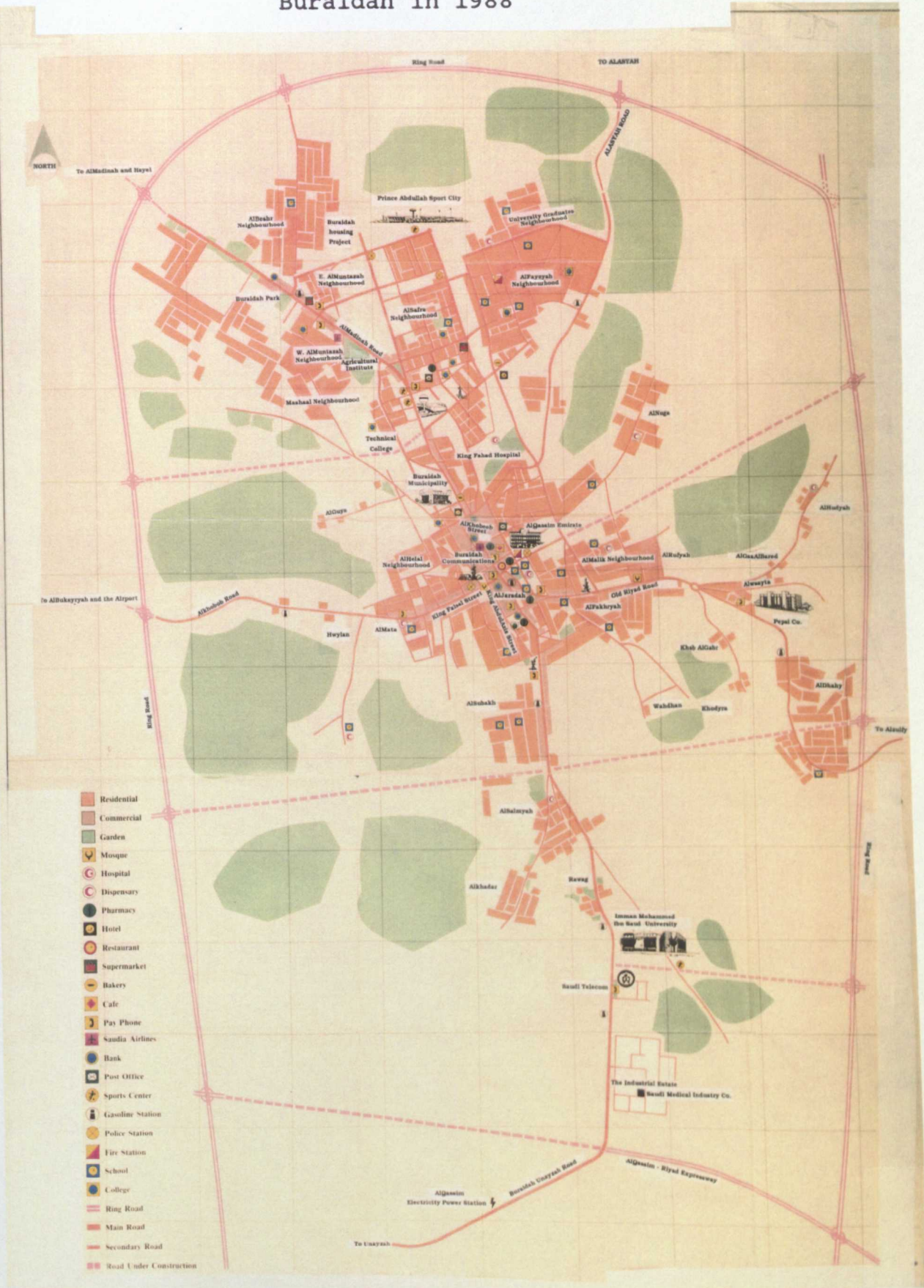
In 1983 it was estimated that there were about 2,100 commercial premises in Buraidah. Many of these are located in the city centre, but shops have been increasingly located on the city's various main roads with different types of business. For example, large manufacturing shops are mainly located on the airport road. The Makkah centre in the south east has several hundred shops selling various goods. Many have their own parking facilities and recreational areas.

There are six large recreational parks built in various locations in the city, supervised and owned by the Municipality. There is a large modern sports complex in the north east area, as well as two sports clubs which compete on a national level.

In 1982 a major government housing project was launched involving about 1,000 modern houses in the north eastern part of the city. These houses cover 400 sq. m. each. Although completed in 1985, the project houses remained vacant until the Gulf conflict was over, when the Saudi Arabian Government sold the houses to applicants for loans from the region's



# Map 3.5 Buraidah in 1988



Source Adapted from Al Muarek I. (1988), Tourist Map and Guide for Al Qassim Region, Alobykan Co., Riyadh (In Arabic).

REDF. The terms of repayment are similar to the loans granted for houses costing around 350,000 S.R.. The loans are payable yearly over a 25 - year period.

Other important land uses in Buraidah include educational, health and religious buildings. There are some 75 buildings of educational institutions, including a branch of Immam University, a commercial institute and numerous schools. Health facilities include the central hospital, a fever hospital, a specialist hospital, a health institute, and six health clinics. Religious facilities include more than 150 mosques.

Industrial land use includes numerous small workshops located mostly in the north eastern part of the city, and in the south along the road to Unayzah. In addition there is a large industrial estate on the Unayzah road with steel and fabric factories, and a chemical factory producing medicines. A large cement factory is located on the north eastern outskirts of the city.

The roads linking Buraidah to other areas of the country were constructed along the routes previously used by animal transport (Al Ribdi, 1986, Vol 2, pp164-165) and this has inevitably influenced the shape and expansion of the city.

Despite this, however, the above regional developments over the past couple of decades have largely changed the city's organic character as an Islamic city. Its ecological pattern is now more similar to that of a typical Western city, and change in the character and nature of the city continues to develop. Car park facilities have rapidly become insufficient and are being augmented. Many roads need to be widened to cope with the increasing traffic. Sewage facilities are inadequate and are being attended to. There is also a continuously developing need for more government buildings to accommodate official services, rather than privately rented buildings and houses. The government has undertaken a long term project to build thousands of public and private buildings. It has so far built about 1,000 modern houses, distributed to people who have not had loans from the REDF.

Generally speaking, housing in the city of Buraidah varies a great deal from mud houses to extremely large villas. The most luxurious houses, built since the 1970's, are situated in the northern area while the mud houses where poorer people live, are located in the southern area and around the city centre near the fruit market. Recently, however, many mud houses have been replaced by modern houses. Indeed, a large number of mud houses were abandoned when their inhabitants moved to modern houses in other parts of

the city. Therefore the government has bought up and demolished mud houses around the city centre to enable expansion of the city market.

### 3.6 The Economy - Agriculture, Industry and Services

We have seen that Al Qassim is characterised by fertile land with good water resources and that it is the location of the largest wadi in the Arabian peninsula which runs through the region between the urban settlements of Buraidah, Unayzah and Ar Rass. The wadi is over 650 km long. It comes from the western part of the country near Madinah and in the rainy season used to reach the Gulf. Now, however, it has been impeded by developing sand hills and road constructions. As a result, the wadi is contributing to a rise in the water table which has led to an increase of water in the aquifers.

Al-Salman (1988:332) describes how agriculture was, and continues to be, one of the main economic activities in the region. It is one that is important for many of the inhabitants' livelihood. The rich water resources of the region and the fertile land near Al Rumah wadi have led to significant agricultural growth in this area. Before the large scale use of modern technology since the 1960's, farmers faced many difficulties and hardships. The efforts

of dowers to find water were not always successful, and wells had to be dug by hand.

Since the ground-water table is fairly shallow, the depth of water in wells is not very deep (between 15 to 20 metres). Sawani, the old method of irrigation with water drawn by camels harnessed to pulleys, was used until about twenty five years ago when camel power was replaced by pumps. The digging of wells was expensive, as were the camels. Farmers usually kept four camels only and normally used two pairs in rotation to give each pair a resting period to graze and regain strength. Often, however, camels would die of disease, a serious loss for the farmers. In 1879 most of the Sawani camels of the region died of disease, and the farmers had to draw the water themselves. The year of 1879 thus came to be known as "the year of pulling water" (Arabic = Sanat Alzuabah). Many farmers had to rely on loans from wealthy families in order to survive economically. In spite of such difficulties in the past, farming remains one of the major activities of the region.

The main food production includes a variety of vegetables and crops, but the single most important crop is that of dates. Date-palm trees are used not only as a major source of food; their leaves and roots are also used in this region

to build houses. At least one hundred and fifty years ago dates and grains of this region were being exported to Egypt. Today dates are still exported to other parts of Saudi Arabia and several countries in the middle east. Other fruits and vegetables produced on a considerable scale are grapes, figs, melons, plums, onions, tomatoes, lemons and alfalfa (Al-Salman, pp.332-6).

Al-Muarek (1987:97) mentions that in 1953 a spring well was hand dug in north west Buraidah to a depth of 120 metres. This well was huge and had sufficient natural pressure to push the water upwards without the need of pumps. Several such wells and springs were recorded in this area. Being located in the heart of the country, the region lacks lakes and rivers, but underground water resources were extremely important in maintaining farm production.

Al-Musalam (1988:101-2) nonetheless refers to the recurring concern of the region's farmers over water supplies. He records that in 1939 a large number of farmers held a meeting to discuss the worsening conditions of farming due to inadequate water, as many of the date-palm trees had died. One of the Buraidah men who had trade links with drillers travelled to the Gulf State of Bahrain to draw up a conditional agreement for the supply of drilling machines.

The condition was that the Saudi government should not object to a Bahrain agent drilling in the region. On his return from Bahrain, the man went to Riyadh to meet King Abdullaziz and to explain the crisis which the region's farmers were facing. He reported the purpose of his visit to Bahrain and the willingness of Bahrain agents to provide drilling machines to the region. The King appreciated the desperate situation of farmers and ordered that the machines be transported free of cost by the government. He also ordered his finance minister to travel to Al Qassim to discuss the crisis with local farmers. Eventually, the first drill was brought to the region in 1943 and drilling started on a farm located to the south of Buraidah. After the outbreak of the Second World War, however, the drilling had to stop as it was difficult to obtain spare parts for the drilling machines. Al-Musalam (1988:107-9) further records that in 1952 the government provided local farmers with 300 water pumps on credit, as well as large quantities of wheat seed.

The above events preceded the more systematic development of agriculture in the region which began in 1955 when the government first established regular ministries. The first Minister of Agriculture was appointed and his ministry was allocated a budget of 50,000 Saudi Riyals for Al Qassim region. This development programme involved two mechanical

engineers to advise and repair machines for the farmers. It also provided guidance to the farmers of the region and supplied them with trees to plant at very low cost.

In 1957 the Ministry of Agriculture changed its name to the Ministry of Agriculture and Water in order to expand and further develop farming activities. The branch of this Ministry in Al Qassim region was called the General Directorate of Agricultural Affairs. Through this Directorate, the Ministry of Agriculture and Water developed an effective administration for farmers and also began a survey of virgin lands in the area. This was followed by a scheme of virgin land grants to allow expansion of farming in the region.

The Saudi Agricultural Credit Bank was established in 1964 with a branch in Buraidah and seven sub-branches in neighbouring cities of the region. The main purpose of this bank was to provide interest-free loans to the farmers to buy farm machines, water pumps, seeds etc. It also provided finance support for the establishment of several agricultural projects such as greenhouses, dairy farms, animal breeding and fruit and vegetable production. Such great efforts by the government to channel the oil wealth into the development of farming and other sectors aimed to diversify the economy



and to reduce dependence on oil. The government also realised that the only way to reduce migration of people from rural to urban areas was to promote agriculture, education and health in rural areas of the country (Al-Walaie, 1985:pp.346-50).

The effects of the above measures on the region's farming were dramatic, with large increases in the areas of land under cultivation. According to the 1974 agricultural census, there were 7,780 farms in the region and this number rose to 13,600 by 1983. Many new farms were larger in both area and production. The region's cultivated land covered 13,000 ha in 1974 and rose to 33,500 ha by 1984 (an increase of almost 250 per cent) (Norconsult, 1984:234-251). The Agricultural Directorate was also responsible for the region's drinking water, issuing licences for drilling and supervising the work involved.

The government adopted a policy of encouraging farming establishments to invest in modern technology and methods in order to improve farm production and to develop an agriculture-based economy (Al Qassim Trade Magazine 1988:32). Five major agricultural companies were established in the country, one of them in Al Qassim region. The finance for these was arranged through public shares and they were

granted huge virgin land grants by the government to increase agri-production, mainly wheat in the early years. More recently, they have started to produce vegetables, fruits and dairy products, to package dates, and to raise animals.

As a result of the above, the area of cultivated land in the country increased from 150,000 ha in 1975 to 2.3 million ha in 1983. Government grain silos and flour mills were established in several areas in the country including a large project in Al Qassim province. The mills buy wheat from farmers at subsidised prices. Barley and dates are also purchased by the government at subsidised prices. In 1985 the region produced more than 700 thousand tonnes of wheat as a direct result of cultivating more land, utilising over six thousand water wells and eighteen thousand water pivot irrigation systems. Water sprinklers, water dripping and greenhouses are now common in the region and commercial farming on a large scale is well established.

By 1983 the total value of exported agricultural products from the region was 1070.6 million S.R. of which 803 million or 75 per cent was for wheat, 142 million S.R. for dates, 91.7 million S.R. for water melons, 27.4 million S.R. for tomatoes and the rest of the total for other products (Norconsult, 1984:257).

Igra (7th Jan 1991) refers to Al Qassim as the "food-basket of Saudi Arabia". In 1990 there were 300 large farming projects, 24 large poultry firms producing 84 million chickens a year, 6 egg firms producing 454 million eggs a year, 17 lamb raising firms raising 160,000 lambs a year and 2 large cattle firms, producing beef for local consumption as well as for export.

In 1989 over a million chickens and 18 million eggs were sold outside the region (Igra pp.52-3). The region has also become a leading supplier of wheat, melons, dates, tomatoes and potatoes to other parts of Saudi Arabia and to neighbouring countries. This commercialisation of farming is mainly due to the efforts of the government which in 1981 alone granted loans of 1,547 million Saudi Riyals to the Buraidah area in addition to the heavy subsidisation of farm equipment and fertilisers.

By 1986, according to the country's statistical book (1988:591-618), the region produced the following quantities of produce: wheat 750,561 tons; barley 3,954 tons; tomatoes 11701 tons; potatoes 2,490 tons; squashes 9,055 tons; egg plants 29 tons; okra 48 tons; carrots 2,245 tons; onions 2,173 tons; cucumbers 8,399 tons; maize 29 tons; sesame 20 tons; melons 20,061 tons; water melons 64,334 tons. There

were also 13,704 hectares of alfalfa; 721 hectares of other fodder; citrus 293 tons; dates 32,209 tons and grapes 9,714 tons. There were 226,405 poultry in traditional farms, 676,277 sheep, 80,436 goats, 9,805 cows and 47,834 camels.

The government spent heavily on the agricultural revolution to guarantee the food supply, to achieve self-sufficiency and to reduce dependence on imports. Initially, it was very expensive, but with time the government has managed to promote agri-business in the country, thus creating a new breed of agri-businessmen (Al Walaie, 1985:346-50). Norconsult (1984:183;iv) estimates that in 1974 agriculture employed 36,000 persons (55 per cent of the total employment in the region), but that this had declined to 20,000 persons (23 per cent) in 1983. The decline in the number employed was mainly due to a rapid increase in large scale farming using modern agricultural machinery.

Although there was a large increase in the region's employment from 65,000 in 1974 to 88,000 in 1988, such growth was mainly in trade, government and construction employment. Nevertheless, farming grew as an activity and became the mainspring of Al Qassim's economy, although actual employment figures had decreased due to greater concentration on wheat

cultivation, (4/5 of the land under cultivation in 1983) which is not labour-intensive.

Intensive use of the latest irrigation methods imported from the highly developed countries has also played a major role in the development of modern, less labour-intensive agriculture. Moreover, there is now a substantial population of young expatriate workers, who, in the absence of their families, devote virtually all of their time to work. Saudi Arabians who were once full time farmers now often consider themselves to be otherwise employed, but still hold their lands.

Although Al Qassim is primarily an agricultural region, it has for long been an important area for trade, and a considerable measure of industrial/manufacturing economic development has taken place in the past 20 years, especially in Buraidah, where an industrial area has been developed on 1.5 million sq m. lying along the main road between Unayzah and Buraidah. This area now contains a number of factories: manufacturing, clay tiles, aluminium ware, furniture, gas processing, plastics, bricks, pharmaceuticals etc. The industrial land is owned by the government which lets areas to private companies at low rentals on subsidised long term

leases. In addition, long term interest-free loans are available to those companies.

In 1981, there were 1,006 manufacturing companies in the region, with nearly 7,000 employees or 7.6 per cent of all employed persons. Assembly work is the main industry, accounting for one third of all manufacturing employment, though mainly in small firms averaging 5 employees. More than 25 per cent of the manufacturing sector is made up of textiles, leather goods and clothing establishments, with an average employment of 3.3 persons for each establishment. Between 1976 and 1981 the number of manufacturing establishments employing more than 5 persons increased from 80 to 307, including increases of 7 to 12 food and drink firms, 3 to 54 clothing, leather and textiles firms, 4 to 45 wood, wood products and furniture firms, 49 to 71 bricks, blocks and cement firms, and 17 to 117 firms producing metal products, while 5 new firms were established in printing and two in plastics and petroleum products.

In 1976 there was only one firm employing more than 50 persons; by 1981 these were six: two food firms, 3 bricks, blocks and cement establishments (one of them Al Qassim Cement Company, which produces 10 per cent of the cement in the country) and one metal products firm.

In the field of services, trading firms, restaurants and hotels have become increasingly prominent in the province's economy. Trade establishments increased from 3,569 in 1976 to 3,977 in 1981 and restaurants and hotels from 55 in 1976 to 172 in 1981. Trade and commerce constitute about two-thirds of the region's total number of private sector establishments and they provide work for more than one-third of all employees. Two-thirds of the total retail employees are Saudi nationals, but expatriates constitute 94 per cent of restaurant and hotel staff.

The above trends are reflected in the employment figures of the region for 1974 and 1983. The proportion of people employed in agriculture fell from 55 per cent in 1974 to 23 per cent in 1983; the proportion employed in manufacturing rose from 2.5 per cent to 7.6 per cent over the same period; in construction, from 7.6 per cent to 12 per cent, in trade from 7 per cent to 12.7 per cent, in finance and private services from 0.4 per cent to 6 per cent; in government or public services from 21.2 per cent to 31.5 per cent; in trade and construction from 14.6 per cent to 25 per cent.

The number of dependent persons in the region (under 15 years and 65 years or older) rose from 92,626 in 1974 to 150,884 in 1983, an increase of 62.9 per cent. Over the same

period, the total number of employed persons rose from 65,559 to 88,652, an increase of 35.2 per cent. (Norconsult, 1984:182-3).

### 3.7 Transport and Communications:

#### 3.7.1 Cars and Roads:

Prior to 1924 there were no cars in the region. Camels, horses and donkeys were used both within the region and in travelling to and from neighbouring countries. Al Muarek (1987:112) refers to the first car brought to Buraidah in 1924. A small number soon followed, but there were no roads and they were driven alongside the camel routes across the deserts. Attempts to drive elsewhere commonly led to drivers becoming lost or stuck in the sands. In 1940 King Abdullaziz Al-Saud sent a telegram to Buraidah's treasurer suggesting that lorries delivering wood to Riyadh should use a better route.

Al Musalam (1988) also dwells on the problems of transportation in the region. Camels travelling from Buraidah reached Riyadh in ten days, while in 1939 cars took three days. In 1946, when King Abdullaziz decided to visit the region, the treasurer of Buraidah hired workers and



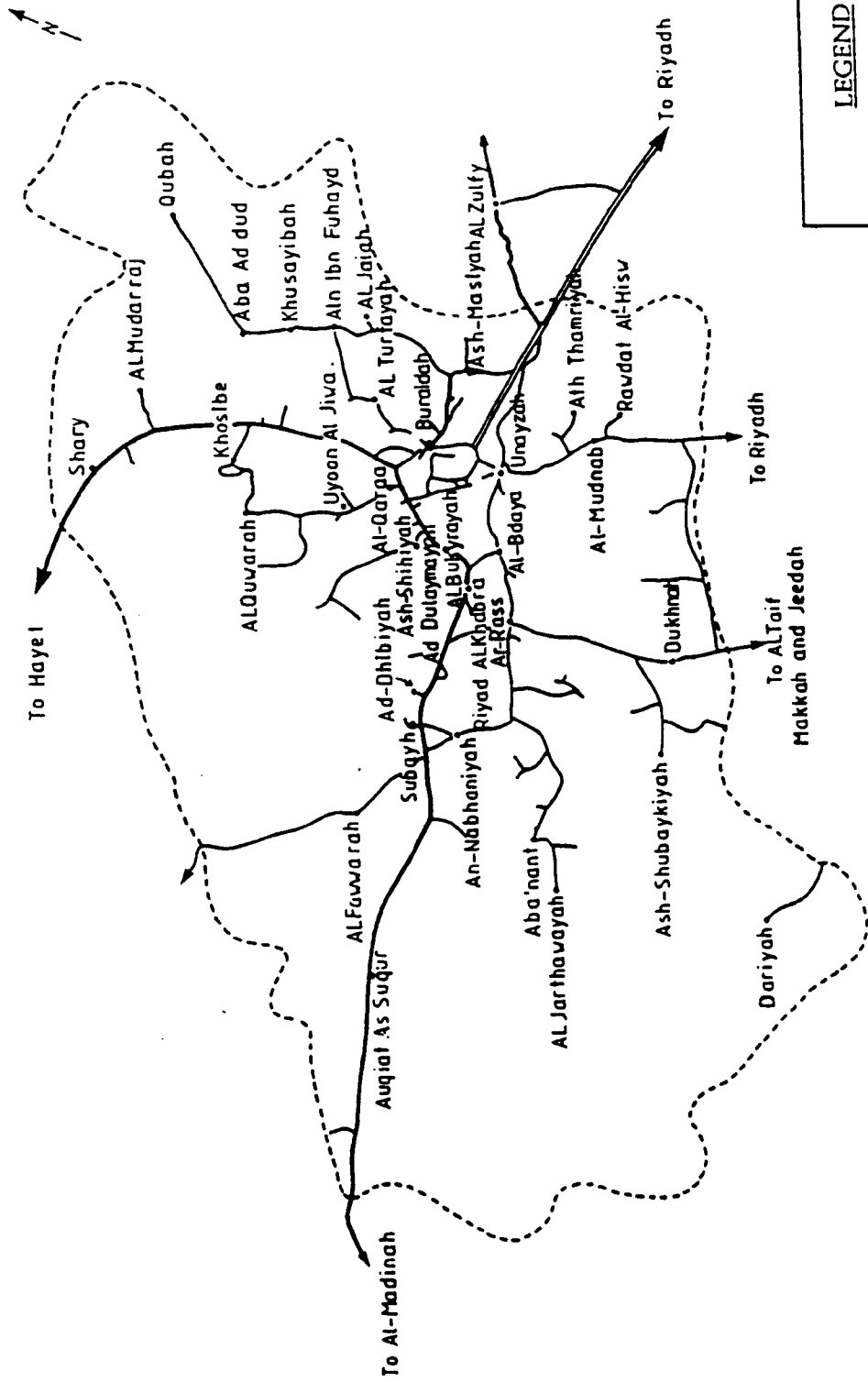
camels to prepare a road of dried mud and stones for the King's car. The work was completed in two months and was later to serve as the main road between Buraidah and Riyadh as well as between the eastern villages of the Buraidah area.

The route to Madinah and Makkah was easier than that to Riyadh as it had fewer sand hills and gravel surfaces. But it still took a car three days to travel from Buraidah to Madinah. From Buraidah to Hail took two days by car. It was not until 1954, when a Ministry of Transportation was established, that the construction of roads linking the region to Riyadh and the western province was started (p81-85).

In 1964, the Ministry of Transportation increased its efforts to construct roads in many parts of the country, including Al Qassim region. In 1966, the first paved road of the region was completed. This linked Buraidah to Hijaz and from there to Riyadh. The route from Buraidah to Sagir was 152 km. Prior to 1970 when the Ministry of Transportation's first development plan was launched, the total length of paved roads in the region was 600 km. By 1987 this totalled 3090 km in addition to 9500 km of unpaved agricultural roads (Ministry of Transportation, Roads in Al Qassim Region, 1988, p.3).

In April 1986, King Fahad opened the new Al Qassim - Riyadh motorway. It cost 1,608 million S.R. and is one of the most modern motorways in the country, covering about 320 km. It was constructed according to modern standards. It is two-way, with three lanes each way. It is shorter than the older motorway by 100 km. It has wide hard shoulders, with yellow safety lines and strips, guidance signs, services and metal fences on its sides (Al Qassim Chamber of Commerce Magazine, 19th Issue, May 1986, pp.6-8).

Although the region now has a large road network (see Map 3.6), there is a plan to expand it further with a road to Madinah intended to link it to the trans-Saudi Arabian motorway running from Dammam to Riyadh and Jeddah. In recent years, ownership of cars has become very common in the region. In 1975 there were 24,676 vehicles registered in Al Qassim, and this increased to 108,518 in 1981, a growth rate of 440 per cent in that period (Norconsult, 1984:261-72). In the region, as in other parts of the country, car ownership has become very important for daily family life, although women are still not permitted to drive. Many families have several cars. Import tax on cars and parts is relatively low. The country is open for car import from many countries around the world, and the price of cars is relatively low compared with other countries. People have easy access to



Map 3.6

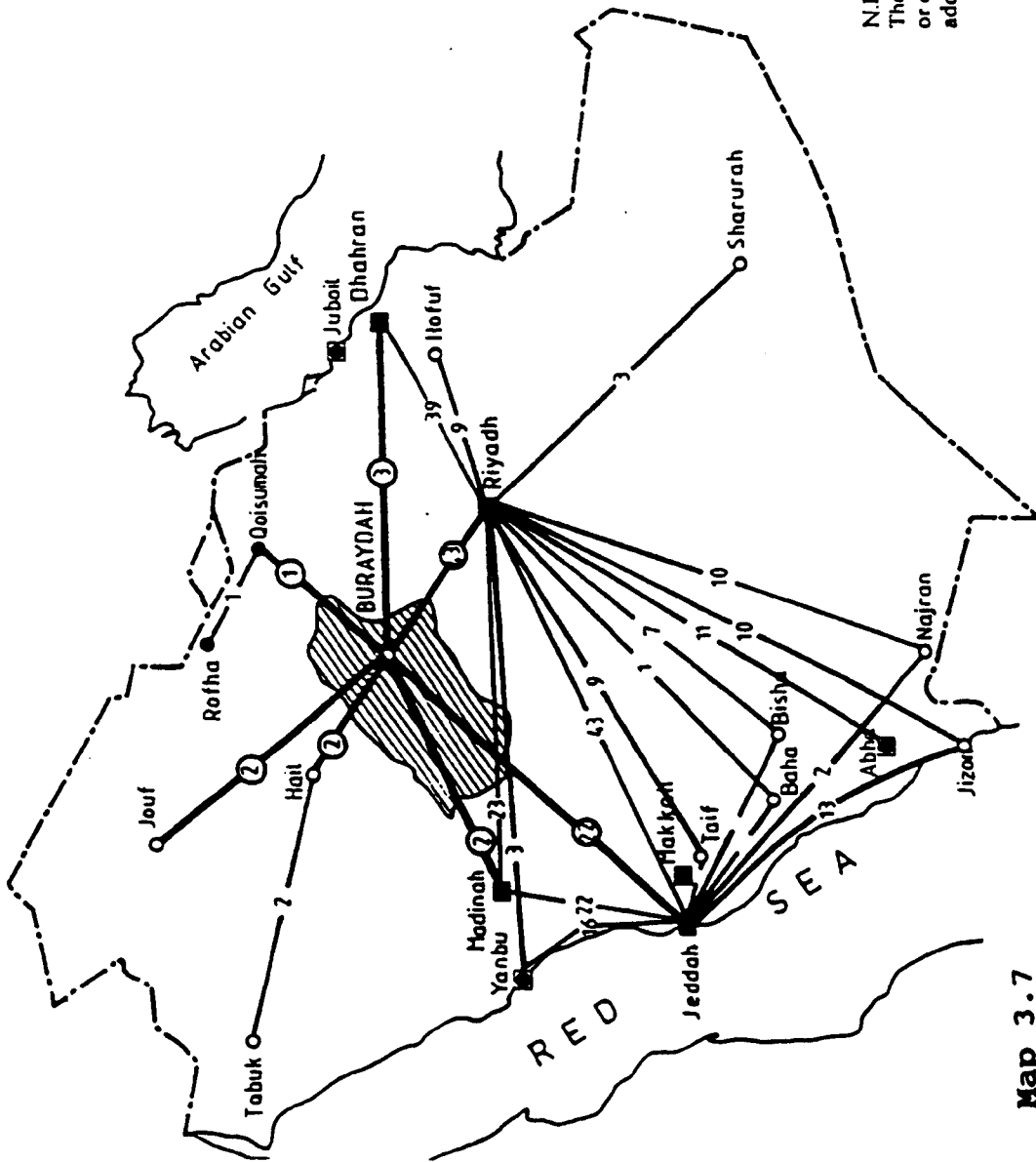
Road Network of AlQassim Region in 1990

Source Al Ribdi (1990 : 177)

vehicle maintenance in terms of availability and cost. There is no obligation for vehicle insurance and petrol is very cheap. Most Saudi Arabian families thus prefer the privacy of cars to public transport. It is considered undesirable for women to expose themselves to unrelated males by using buses or taxis. Thus, although public transport has become available in recent years, few women use it. There is no up to date information as to which people, or what proportion of the population, have cars, but Norconsult (1984 Report 2-2:273) estimated that in 1983, there were 265 vehicles per 1,000 people in the region. The figure must now be appreciably higher.

### 3.7.2 Airport:

In 1945, King Abdullaziz ordered that an airport be constructed at Buraidah, east of the city. In one month the airport was ready for airplanes to land. A few days later, the King's eight planes landed at the airport when he visited the region accompanied by members of the royal household and officers. These were the first air flights to the region (Al- Abdullmohsin, N.D. Vol. 4 p237).



N.B.  
The routes shown in the figure are direct or connecting flights only. There are numerous additional flights operating from Riyadh and Jeddah.

Map 3.7

Inter-Regional Air Linkages from Al Qassim in 1983

Source: In Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (1983) Report 2 part 1.

In 1950, the first passengers and mail aeroplane landed at Buraidah's airport. Later, Saudi Arabian Airlines increased their flights to the region (Al Mussalam, 1988, p.82) (see Map 3.7).

In January 1964 a new airport for the region was built and Saudi Airlines opened services to all major cities of the country. The new airport was located 30 km west of Buraidah. In 1985, this airport was expanded with better facilities and services, including international flights during the summer holidays to carry expatriate teachers and employees on vacation between Al Qassim, Egypt and Syria (Al Muarek, 1987, p.116 and Al Musalam, 1988, pp.82-83).

In recent years there has been a large increase in air passenger traffic to and from Al Qassim. In 1976 there were 31,000 passengers, in 1978 this figure rose to 177,000 and in 1981 to 203,642. Since then population movement has increased and more frequent services and larger planes have become necessary to meet the region's needs. The 1988 Saudi Statistical Yearbook indicates that passengers travelling from the province's airport to other Saudi Arabian airports alone totalled 159,553, in 1987.

### 3.7.3 Postal and Telephone Services:

Before 1925 there were no formal communication services in Al Qassim. However, as the tribes and towns were unified, King Ibn Saud wanted to stabilise the country and assure its security. In 1926 he sent a contingent of young men to the United Kingdom for training in communications. On their return to the country he imported mobile telegraph equipment to operate between Riyadh and Makkah. Four years later a telegraph station was established in Buraidah itself. The inhabitants were unhappy about it as they considered such technology alien to their culture, and they went to their local judge to ask whether they should accept it. The judge ruled that this did not conflict with tradition, so they accepted it and eventually realised the benefit of having news and communications to and from other parts of the country. In 1945 another telegraph station was established in Al Qassim, located in Unayzah (Al-Abdullmohsin, N.D. Vol. 3, p175, p257-8 and Vol. 4, p232).

In 1960 limited telephone services with 500 lines for government offices, people's houses and businesses were introduced between the main cities of Al Qassim (Al Musalam, 1987, p81). During more recent years there has been a rapid increase in telephone services. If regional telephone

services are measured in terms of number of telephones per head of population, the network in the Al Qassim region in the early 1980's was rapidly approaching standards common to developed countries in Western Europe (Norconsult, 1984, Report 2, No. 1, p281). In 1983 there were nearly 32,000 lines in service in the region's three major cities, while there were 41,500 lines planned for Buraidah. Unayzah had nearly 20,000 lines in service and 30,240 planned lines. The third city, Ar Rass, had 12,700 lines in service and 16,150 planned. There were also 18,700 lines in service in smaller towns and villages, in addition to 200 public call boxes of which 95 were in Buraidah, 39 in Unayzah, 17 in Ar Rass and the rest distributed among other localities. Telex lines numbered 232 for the region, of which 150 were in Buraidah, 40 in Unayzah, 24 in Ar Rass (Ibid, pp281-2). It is now taking a few weeks to receive a telephone line after submitting an application, as the demand continues to increase.

When telegraph and then telephone services were first introduced to the region, many people were against them as some thought they were "jin", working according to Satanic orders, but when religious men assured them that this was not the case, they readily accepted them. Telephones are now considered necessary for daily family life and it is



sometimes considered prestigious to have more than one line in the house. Women have also started using telephones in contrast to earlier days when they felt embarrassed to answer the telephone owing to the risk of exposing their voices to unrelated men.

In 1983, there were 46 post offices in the region in addition to mobile postal services covering 228 localities (Norconsult, 1984, Report 2-1, p283). In 1985 there were 234 villages served by postal services and in 1987 a further 50 villages started receiving mail service (Almadinah Newspaper, 1987, p72). Currently a mobile mail service delivers mail to most parts of the region, but it is still difficult to send letters as several localities have no post offices or boxes. Although the postal service has developed rapidly in the last two decades, improvement in mail deliveries to private houses is still needed in some communities. This could be achieved by naming the streets, numbering the houses, and giving better training to mail personnel.

### **3.8 Water Supplies**

In recent years, studies of Al Qassim's water resources have revealed a reduction of the water level due to the large

increase in both household and farm consumption. Norconsult (1984) highlighted the problem:

The rather small and scattered settlements within the shield area of Al Qassim obtain their water supplies from shallow aquifers. The generally unsatisfactory quality and quantity of the water contained in these aquifers often represent a problem for the settlement, and prevent agricultural development dependent on irrigation water (Report 2, part 1, p79).

Low rainfall and low efficiency in water use have prompted the water authorities to seek a solution. A project has now been launched to bring desalinated water to the region from the Gulf coast. The distance between the Gulf coast and Buraidah is 800 km. The project is intended to bring desalinated sea water from the coast to the region as a whole while passing and serving other towns and villages on the way from the Gulf. In many settlements, huge water storage and distribution stations have already been built, including 6 stores around Buraidah. The water will be used for both household and agricultural use. It is not known when delivery will begin.

### 3.9 Education

Prior to the 1930's, most of the region's population was illiterate. There were various reasons for this. First of

all, lying in the middle of the country, the region was relatively poor with few economic resources. Secondly, prior to the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under King Abdullaziz Al-Saud, the region - like other parts of the peninsula - was unstable due to tribal feuds and disputes. The people were largely isolated from the outside world and generally held a negative attitude towards education. Even those who had the chance of some education saw no need to go beyond limited traditional teachings to enable them to perform their required daily prayers. There were very few religious instructors teaching either in the mosques or in their houses. Where and when teaching was given, the main purpose was to enable youngsters to memorise the Quran. When such teachings took place at the homes of the religious teachers, the houses were called Kutab and the teacher himself was referred to as the Mugary. Although the instructors were mostly volunteers, they were in many cases paid in kind, eg. in coffee, grain, clothing or dates. When the student was able to recite a chapter of the Quran, a ceremony took place organised by the religious teacher and the student was rewarded with traditional sweets or cakes to encourage his classmates to follow his example. A more important ceremony took place when a student finished reciting and memorising the whole Quran. This ceremony was called Zaffah. The teacher led his students around the

streets, reciting the Quran loudly as they passed near houses and shops. The students might receive more gifts, such as cakes, new clothing and sweets. In most cases, after this recitation, the student was considered to have graduated and to need no further education. (These practices have been altogether abandoned since the establishment of regular education).

The education described above was mostly for males. Very little attention was given to the religious teaching of females. When girls were instructed, they were taught separately from the boys, and by female instructors who taught in their homes rather than in the mosques. Ceremonies were confined to the teacher's house. Again the goal of female teaching was to enable the girls to perform their prayers.

The position in the country as a whole is described by Al Rawaf and Simmons (1991):

The first government department concerned with education, the General Directorate of Education for Boys, was established in 1926, but the provision of education in Saudi Arabia was not significant until oil revenues provided the necessary capital in the early 1950's. One result of increasing wealth was the establishment in 1954 of the Ministry of Education; however, its concern at that time was not with education for all, but with the education of boys alone. Indeed,

it was not until 1959 that the Saudi government formally addressed, for the first time, the question of girls' education (p287).

But it was in the western part of the country, mainly in Makkah, that males' formal education started. Up to 1937 (1356 Hijri) there were no formal schools in Al Qassim. In 1937 King Abdullaziz Al-Saud realised that the central and eastern provinces of the country had no system of formal education and called on the Director of Education in Makkah to establish nine formal schools in the major towns of the eastern and central regions, including Al Qassim. The attendance at these schools was very poor. People did not welcome such institutions as they were worried they might lead to changes in their sons' beliefs and behaviour. They also feared that education might lead to their sons being drafted into the army. The elites and Ulama of these areas communicated with the King and requested that these schools should be shut down, but the request was refused. Many people started shunning those who taught in them. Resistance to the boys' schools at that time was stronger than it was to be to girls' schools some thirty years later. But when male graduates from the new schools began to be employed in various governmental posts, the people's attitudes started to change. Those who rejected education were only able to work

in the lowest levels of government offices, eg. as caretakers, cleaners and servants.

The government introduced formal education gradually, first winning over public opinion. For example, the Saudi newspapers wrote about female education and Ulamas discussed whether the government should educate women, whether they were allowed to have education or not, and if so, to what level. Different opinions were raised, but all stressed that education should be within the framework of religious teachings. Although there were some female Kutab, as stated earlier, it was not until 1959 that girls' formal education was launched. The body that supervised this sector was founded in 1960. It was called the General Presidency for Girls' Education. The number of schools and attendance at them began to increase (Alomari, A. 1984:83-85).

Between 1974 and 1983 the number of school enrolments in Al Qassim increased dramatically from 20,109 to 67,922. Reliable statistics on the proportions of boys and girls at school were not available to me, but the enrolment figures shown for 1974 and 1983 in Table 3.10 clearly indicate the general trends of schooling becoming a normal expectation for boys and an increasing tendency for the expectation for girls to follow that for boys.

The rates of illiteracy for males and females in 1983 are shown in Table 3.11 which distinguishes between the three zones of Al Qassim. The rates increase steadily with age and show particularly strong rises between 20 and 40 years. In keeping with earlier observations on the three zones of the province, literacy tends to be higher in the central zone as compared to the eastern and western zones.

This general picture reflects the impact of governmental attention given to education throughout the country in the past 20 to 30 years. In Al Qassim, as in the country as a whole, rapid developments in the provision of education have continued since the early 1980's.

In Al Qassim, boys' education up to secondary level is administered by the Ministry of Education branches in the region, located in Buraidah and Unayzah. However, in keeping with the country's traditions, female education is administered separately by the General Presidency for Girls' Education, which has a branch in the region. It also supervises nursery schools for both sexes, and female adult education including female teachers' institutions and colleges. Male teachers' institutions and adult education

**Table 3.10**

**Increase in Boys' and Girls' Schools Enrolment in  
Al Qassim Region 1974-1983**

Years	Educational Level							
	Primary		Intermediate		Secondary		Total	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1974	10,261	2,949	4,502	496	1,613	288	16,376	3,733
1983	32,323	20,270	6,195	4,412	2,501	2,221	41,019	26,903
Per cent increase	215	587	37	789	55	671	150	6.21

Source: Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (1984) Report 2, part 1, project 209, p139-141.



are administered by Ministry of Education branches. Private schools in the region are jointly supervised by the two bodies: the Ministry of Education branch supervises the males' section, while the Presidency for Girls' Education branch supervises the female section. In private, as in public schools, there is no co-education.

The Universities of King Saud and Imam Mohammed Ibn Saud have branches in Al Qassim. The Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Science in Buraidah had 128 male students in 1984, increasing to 400 in 1988 with total graduates of 55 up to 1987. The Faculty of Economics and Administration in Unayzah had 342 male students in 1984, increasing to 477 students, including 124 females, in 1988, with total graduates of 66 male students up to 1987. Female students started attending this faculty in 1986, when 91 females were enrolled. These two faculties are branches of King Saud University which plans to increase its faculties in the future and build a huge campus north west of Buraidah.

The Imam Mohammed Ibn Saud University also has faculties in the region, located south of Buraidah. The Islamic Law

Table 3.11

Illiteracy Rates by Age-Sex Groups and Zone in  
Al Qassim Region in 1983

Age Group in Years	Central Al Qassim %		Eastern Al Qassim %		Western Al Qassim %		Total Al Qassim
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
10-19	3	19	5	33	10	40	15
20-29	12	36	17	58	19	60	27
30-39	22	71	24	82	37	82	48
40-49	33	90	40	91	38	96	63
50-59	54	95	65	98	61	99	73
60+	68	97	64	90	76	100	80

Source: Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (1984 Report 2, part 1) project no. 209, p103.

Faculty had 1,169 students in 1984, of which 104 were female. In 1988 it had 1,234 students of which 81 were female. Total graduates of both sexes up to 1987 was 529. The Faculty of Arabic and Social Sciences in Al Qassim had 1,063 students in 1984, of which 167 were female. In 1988, the total number of students was 1,018, of which only 13 were female. Its total graduates of both sexes up to 1987 was 422. The Girls' Training College in Buraidah had 377 students in 1984 increasing to 985 in 1988, with total graduates of 300 up to 1987 (Saudi Arabia Statistical Yearbook, 1988:47-107).

In 1983 there were nearly 300 boys primary schools in Al Qassim with 2,035 male teachers and 32,323 students. In the same year, Intermediate and Secondary schools for boys totalled 99, with 820 male teachers and 8,696 students. Girls' primary schools in 1983 totalled 198, with 1,532 teachers and 20,270 students; girls' intermediate and secondary schools numbered 49, with 588 teachers and 6,633 students in 1983. The total number of pupils of both sexes attending primary, intermediate and secondary schools in the region in 1983, was 67,922 (as shown in Table 3.10).

The Male Teachers' Training Institute in Buraidah had 815 students in 1976. The Institution for the Blind in Buraidah had nearly 200 students in 1976. The Vocational Training

Institute in Buraidah was established and had 70 students in 1976. In 1984, Commercial Secondary School was established in Buraidah to educate males in accounting and secretarial fields. It had 200 students in 1984. The Agricultural Institute in Buraidah for males had 322 students in 1980; the Intermediate College in Ar Rass had 615 male students in 1980; Adult education had 4,788 students in 1980 (Al Musalam, 1988:74-75).

Adult education has become very popular in recent years among people who were not able to attend schools during their childhood. Study is mostly in the early evenings, as many adult education attendants are working people, and housewives. There are also 4 health institutes in the region, 2 of them for males and 2 for females, where health diploma degrees are provided for graduates, who mainly work in the government's hospitals. Two technical institutes were also established: the technical college in Buraidah, and the technical institute in Unayzah.

In order to encourage the people to attend schools and colleges, education at every level is free of charge for all. There are free books and free accommodation for university students, and salaries (allowances) are paid to the students at the university, colleges, vocational training and health

institutes and technical colleges. Since 1975 the government has also introduced land grants for university graduates. To provide people in certain specialisations with a secured future, interest free loans are granted to men who graduate from vocational training, with the aim of enabling them to establish their own businesses, such as car maintenance or carpentry workshops. Females who graduate from tailor training institutes are eligible for similar loans to establish themselves in business.

The educational sector in the region, whether for males or for females, is still expanding, as the population increases, mainly by natural growth as we mentioned earlier (Table 3.2). Moreover, many people have started to realise the importance of education for their lives and for their children, and do not limit their education to low levels; it is very different from the position in the early days of formal education, when the people were less enthusiastic and underestimated the importance of education.

### 3.10 Health

Before 1940 there were no medical institutions in the region. People at that time relied on folk healing, using herbs and plants that were grown in the region or imported.

Another traditional method of healing was cauterization. Religious healing was also very common and took the form of verses of the Quaran being read in front of sick persons in attempts to cure them. In some cases, folk healers were paid in money or kind (e.g. wheat, cloth, dates or coffee) but in other cases their services were provided free of charge. Traditional medicine was practised not only by men but also by some women. The poverty of the country and its relative isolation from modernised countries were important factors accounting for the relative absence of modern health care in the country. Since the discovery of oil in large quantities, rapid developments in bio-medical health care have accompanied developments in education, agriculture and all other aspects of life in the region.

In 1941 the government established the first medical unit in the region, on the main street of Buraidah (Al-Musalam, 1988 : 79). In 1942, abnormally heavy rainfall destroyed many buildings in the city, including the newly established clinic but the clinic was moved to another part of the city and continued its service. Its single doctor trained a number of Buraidah men on health care as nursing staff. In 1955, the Minister of Health (a new Ministry) visited the region on the government's instructions, to assess the need for medical care. In the same year the construction of a

large central hospital was started in the south eastern part of Buraidah. Another two hospital projects were also started in the region, one in Unayzah the other in Ar Rass. The central hospital in Buraidah was opened in 1958. Various specialists were employed and in 1960 the General Directorate of Health Care was established in Buraidah to supervise and manage the health care units that had started to increase in the region (Al Muarek, 1987:124). Al Ribdi (1990:192-3) mentions that a school health clinic was established in Buraidah in 1955 to provide health care for teachers and students of the local schools. But the most rapid growth in the health sector in the region began after 1972, when the number of hospital beds rose from 352 in 1973 to over 1300 in 1986 as new hospitals were established. The number of health centres grew from 47 to 119 between 1973 and 1986 as most localities were provided with health services.

## Conclusion

We have outlined the nature and history of Al Qassim province with particular reference to trends of change in recent decades. Its location is important, as it is in the centre of the country, and prior to recent developments in modern transport was regularly travelled by the caravans of both traders and pilgrims. The region has for long been a farming area, as its land and water are suitable for certain products. With the modernisation achieved in recent years, through large inputs and subsidies from the central governments oil wealth, the region has become a major producer of cereals and other agricultural products.

Although the basic statistics for the region are poor, it is known that the population is young and growing. In addition to growth through natural increase, there has since the 1970's been a large influx of expatriates from many countries. These workers have played a large part in the development of the province.

Urbanisation has developed rapidly as nomad numbers have decreased and more inhabitants from small settlements moved to the larger towns. Branches of the main governmental ministries are located in Buraidah, the administrative centre



and the largest city in the region, enhancing development and work opportunities for the region's inhabitants.

The economy of the region is dominated by agriculture. Although there has been some industrial development, this is still largely limited to manufacturing and assembly in small business establishments. Transport and communications have developed rapidly and continue to do so.

Although a great deal of attention has been paid to the water supply, additional supplies are still needed for many localities in the region. There is still a need to filter local water, and to raise the awareness of water consumption among the region's inhabitants.

Educational development in the region has progressed rapidly. However, illiteracy among the elderly and middle-aged inhabitants is still very high and the educational gap between young and old reflects the recency of change which characterises the country as a whole.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE VILLAGE OF HWYLAN

#### Introduction

In Chapter One we referred to the advantages and limitations of small-scale local-level studies as compared to more extensive social surveys. The principal advantages stem from the fact that in small-scale studies the central topics or problems being investigated can more easily be perceived and examined within their total contexts. To gain the maximum benefits from this difference, it is important to dwell in as much detail as possible on various aspects of the locality chosen for field study. This point is stressed by Francis (1988) who recommends that community studies should pay some attention to the locality's history, its geographical structure and pattern of settlement, its demographic structure and the composition of population, its economic structure and the residents' occupations, the local culture, the organizational or institutional structure, and the like. In response to such advice, this chapter sets out to provide a general profile of the main features of Hwylan and its population.

Today the people of Hwylan depend partly on agriculture, partly on the earnings of commuters to Buraidah, and partly on the provision of services for its own inhabitants and those of surrounding areas. From being a relatively self-contained community in the past, the village has, since the 1950s and 1960s, become a peri-urban area with many of its inhabitants commuting to Buraidah daily to attend school or to work. The growth of Buraidah has attracted a number of men to jobs there, some as their principal occupations and some in addition to other sources of income. For the women in particular, however Hwylan remains a local community within which they live the greater part of their lives.

#### 4.1 Location and Background History

Hwylan is situated three miles southwest of Buraidah. It is one of a number of similar settlements linked to Buraidah by a good road which leads into King Faisal Street, one of the city's main arteries. In one important respect, however, it differs from the other villages in the area by being the location since 1961 of a Social Development Centre (SDC) which caters for the population of a wider area made up of some 24 neighbouring villages.

To the east and west, Hwylan is bordered by sand hills which have checked its expansion on these sides. To the north and south lie the settlements of Khab Al Buraidy and Al Qussayh respectively (see Map 4.1). From east to west, it measures less than half a mile and from north to south just under two miles (see Map 4.1).

In the region of Buraidah, Hwylan and its neighbouring settlements are known as Khobob (plural, singular Khab), an unusual term, largely unknown to people from other regions of Saudi Arabia, meaning something like small settlement, village or garyah in Arabic. This distinctive term in itself raises questions as to the nature and history of Hwylan. It suggests that to its own inhabitants and to other people of the region it may well differ from other types of Saudi Arabian villages or garyah. It is a settlement of the type found around Buraidah which, as we saw in Chapter Three, has known some form of urbanisation for centuries, even going back to pre-Islamic times.

Antiquity thus enters into the conception of Hwylan held by its own people and there is ample outside evidence that this is justified. For example, Al-Ribdi, (1986 : 15 and 30)



notes that the pre-Islamic poetry of Aby Dawood Al-Eyady contains references to three places around Buraidah named: Khab, Jawa and Dhulaim. Today, one of the Khobob in the area is still named Khab, while a place named Jawa lies about 25 miles to the north and another named Dhulaim some 15 miles to the east. Altogether there are 45 Khobob around Buraidah, 31 to the west, 9 to the southeast and 5 to the south.

Some Khobob are very small, with only a dozen or fewer households; others have several dozens, as in the case of Hwylan with 50 Saudi households and 24 dwellings or single rooms housing expatriates as households of one or in small groups. In regard to variation in size, the Khobob are similar to many Bedouin garyah far removed from urban areas throughout Saudi Arabia. Thus, Hurewitz writes in his foreword to Motoko Katakura's study of Wadi Fatima lying between Jiddah and Makkah, that Bedouin settlements vary in size "from as few as five tents or houses to as many as six hundred" (Motoko Katakura, 1977 : X). Katakura herself regards "any settlement where residents have built a mosque and a cemetery as a village" (p. X).



a) The Northern Entrance of Hwylan

b) The Main Street of Hwylan



The Khobob of Al Qassim region all qualify as villages by such broad criteria, but they are clearly very different from Bedouin villages. None of the families of Hwylan lives in tents and few, if any, have ever done so. Going back at least four centuries, Hwylan was already a farming community with most of its inhabitants settled as cultivators and living in traditional houses built of mud, stone, tamarisk wood and date palm leaves, and with roofs, windows and doors of date palm and tamarisk roots.

Today a few mud houses stand out in contrast to similar houses built of cement over the past 25-30 years, and in still sharper contrast to the modern villas erected since the 1970s (see Chapter 7 for a full discussion of houses and building materials). Thus it is that even in its physical appearance Hwylan exhibits one of its most striking features, namely, the mixture of 'old' and 'new', to which we shall refer in discussing its overall social and economic configuration.

The differences between the Khobob around Buraidah and the normal run of Bedouin villages are, it must be stressed, of long standing. These differences are partly attributable to the history of the region and to the Khobob's proximity to the city of Buraidah. But they are also in part a function



of geographical factors. As Al Ribdi (1986 : 55) points out, the sand hills in Buraidah area have no pastures of the kind normally sought by Bedouins for their herds. Moreover, the life style of settled farmers is one considered inferior by Bedouins.

#### 4.2 Local Beliefs as to the Origin of Hwylan:

The inhabitants of Hwylan believe that their Khab was first settled between five and six hundred years ago by a family of Al-Qassim origin. Later it attracted settlers of several different tribes, some from the immediate environs and others from more distant areas. This is important, for the inhabitants remain very much aware of their diverse origins.

The following fragment of Hwylan's oral history was given to me by an elderly informant (Informant No. 1) who lived there before moving to Buraidah, where his present home is. The first man to settle in Hwylan was a Bedouin salaby, (that is, a person who is not a member of any notable Arab tribe). His real name is not known but his nick-name of Ahwal has been handed down from generation to generation. He settled on virgin land which he then cultivated (Arabic: Bath) in the

southwest of the village where the community's principal mosque - the only 'Friday mosque' now stands close to a farm once owned by Al-Shamlan family who were also early residents. Ahwal had a squint eye, hence his nick-name which means squint in Arabic.

This claim is generally accepted by the inhabitants and is also recorded in The Geographical Dictionary of Saudi Arabia, Al-Qassim Region by Al-Obodi 1979 : 826-7). Al-Obodi writes that Hwylan is said to derive from the nick name of Ahwal, who was the first to settle and cultivate there. Ahwal's land was later bought by another family of non-notable Arab tribal origin, referred to as Nijajeer or carpenters, a derogatory term commonly used in the region to refer to people who cannot trace their descent from a notable tribe. This family remained in Hwylan for many generations before migrating to Kuwait about fifty years ago during a period of famine but without selling their property, which was leased. In 1984, a visitor brought documents from this family, his maternal uncles, authorising him to sell it on their behalf. He arranged for another person to talk to the local people and announce an auction date. The land was then bought by two men who are still residents of the village.

Another informant (No.2) who himself lives in the village, told me that he thought the name of Hwylan might derive from the Arabic word hwlyawan, meaning 'sweet water', but this was contradicted by another informant (No.3) who believes it was named after Ahwal (Noun : Ahwal : Adjective Hwylan).

Without denying No.1's claim that Ahwal was the first resident, No.2 believes that another family of early settlers, Al-Khummys, were of notable tribal origin, and that they thus became the recognised rulers of the village for many years before ceding power to yet another family of notable background, Al-Guffary, in the 1870s.

Since its earliest existence, according to No.2, only three families have been principal rulers.

- (1) The Al-Khummys family ruled before the 1870s.
- (2) The Al-Guffary family held power from the 1870s to the 1940s through three rulers: first Sulaiman Al-Guffary, then his son Jarbo Sulaiman Al-Guffary and later another son, Nassir Jarbo Al-Guffari.
- (3) The Al-Barak family ruled from the 1940s to the 1960s, first through Ali Al-Barak and then through

his son Saleh Ali-Barak (the Amir from the 1960s to the present).

The Al-Khummys family ruled for longer than their successors, the Al-Guffary. But no one claimed to know the exact period of prominence of the Al-Khummys family. The Al-Barak family have been the rulers since the 1940s and since the late 1970s the amir of the village has been a paid government official.

Informant No.3 is himself the great grandson of Sulaiman Al-Guffary, the first Al-Guffary amir, whom he claims was a close friend of Muhana Aba Al-Khail, the amir of Buraidah in the years 1863-1875. He told me that Sulaiman Al-Guffary was a wealthy trader who came to Hwylan at that period and bought a farm there. He then settled in Hwylan to live in a spacious mud house which he built on his farm. Because of his wealth and his friendship with Muhana, the latter appointed him as the amir of Hwylan. He kept this position for more than 30 years, then his son Nassir inherited it from him and ruled for 15-20 years, Nassir's son Jarbo, in turn inherited the position and ruled for another 15-20 years. When he migrated to Riyadh in the 1940s, Ali Al-Barak was chosen to rule Hwylan with the approval of the local inhabitants. Ali Al-Barak ruled for about twenty years.

When he died, his son Saleh was nominated as amir by the government administration.

Such fragments of oral information would be difficult to use as the basis for a systematic history of Hwylan, but three main points emerge which are generally accepted by the present population. The first is that Hwylan has a long history accompanied by many and various beliefs about it. The second is that Hwylan's history cannot be separated from that of Buraidah and of neighbouring Khobob. One inhabitant made the point very clearly : "We have always been part of the Jamma (community or group) of Buraidah, and before the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (in 1932), the rulers of Buraidah influenced the selection of Hwylan's amir". This was changed in the 1970s when it became the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior to appoint the amirs of all areas throughout the country.

The third point on which all are agreed is that the local population has always been of diverse origins, some from notable tribes and others not. The social significance of this will be referred to again, especially in discussing marriage and the family in Chapter Six.

#### 4.3 Composition and Layout:

For at least fifty years and probably much longer, Hwylan consisted of five fairly distinct neighbourhoods referred to locally as manzelat (sing : manzelah). A sixth manzelah is more recent, having developed around the Social Development Centre (SDC) established in 1961 (see Map 4.1). As these manzelah have some social significance, it is helpful in describing Hwylan to do so with reference to each manzelah in turn. To facilitate this description, some aspects of each manzelah are summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

The Main Features of the Six Manzelat of Hwylan

Name of the Manzelah	No. of home-steads	No. of farms	Mosques	Shops	Schools
Jassir	13	6	1	-	-
Al Zahara	2	2	1	-	-
Hwylan	11	7	2	-	Boys' intermediate
Al Qyrah	8	5	2	-	-
Markaz (SDC)	27	1	1	Grocery Flat-tyre Repair Shop	Girls primary Boys primary
Al-Duyabiyah	13	8	2	Baker Grocery	-
All	74	29	9	4	3

\* Two of the farms are owned and worked by one person and are counted as one in later tables and comments.

(1) Manzelah Jassir: Jassir lies in the northern part of Hwylan where it borders the next village of Khab Al Buraidy. It takes its name from Jassir Al-Abdulkarim who owned a farm there some thirty years ago. It has 13 homesteads, six farms mainly of date palm trees, and a small mosque built of mud which is still used by the inhabitants for the five daily prayers. According to Hwylan's amir, the mosque was built by Jassir Al-Abdulkarim as a philanthropic gesture, more than 25 years ago. This was the first mosque in this manzelah.

A narrow road lined by tamarisk trees demarcates the borders of the farms and meets up at the eastern end with the village's main thoroughfare running from north to south. In the northern part of Jassir there is a small cluster of 10 houses. Some of the houses are built of mud and others of cement, but all are in traditional style, in contrast to some of the modern houses in other neighbourhoods. Most of the inhabitants of Jassir's manzelah are relatively poor. Their lowly status and economic standing are evident at a glance from the poor condition of the houses.

(2) Manzelah Al-Zahara: Al-Zahara is located south of Jassir. According to informant No. 2 who lives there, the neighbourhood is called Al-Zahara after the extended family of Al-Zuhary who resided there some thirty years ago. It was

one of the largest extended families in the area. There are now no surviving members of this family in the neighbourhood, but the name continues to be used, though some of the younger residents have begun to refer to it as Al-Sawany because it still has a well from which water is drawn by old method of harnessing camels to a wheel (this method is called sawany in Arabic). The water from this well is no longer used on the farm, but the owner keeps the well and its camels as a matter of interest to recall the past and to demonstrate its capacity to visitors. The water actually used for irrigation on the farm, as on others in Hwylan, now comes from wells operated by diesel or electricity - driven water pumps.

It is relevant to note, as an indication of the tendency for the boundaries and identities of neighbourhoods to change over time, that the two manzelat of Jassir and Al-Zahara are now sometimes regarded as forming part of the neighbourhood of Al-Qyta. This is a name which, unlike those of Jassir and Al-Zahara, does not derive from a person or family. It means 'cut' or 'detached' and stems from the fact that this part of Hwylan is the furthest removed from the Friday mosque and the 'centre' of the settlement. Informant No. 2 told me that this name had in fact been used in the more distant past, but that its usage declined when the prominent Jassir and Al-Zuhary families resided there.



There are only two homesteads in Al-Zahara, one being a room occupied by foreign farm workers and the other a mud house used as a second home by a person who normally lives in Al Markaz neighbourhood but stays in Al-Zahara when he works there. There are two date palm farms but only one mosque, Al Rawaf mosque. The mosque was originally built by the Al Rawaf family from Buraidah who used to own a farm in this manzelah. Being built of mud-bricks it was destroyed by heavy rainfall more than 25 years ago when the village's amir, with financial assistance of a wealthy person from Buraidah, had it rebuilt, again in mud. But twelve years later, he rebuilt it in modern style, with a contribution from another wealthy person.

This manzelah is the least populated area of Hwylan as a whole, as most of it is covered by its two farms.

(3) Manzelah Hwylan : This manzelah is believed to be the part of the Khab of Hwylan which was first inhabited. This was where Ahwal settled and it is generally accepted that this is the reason for the manzelah being called Hwylan. There are 11 inhabited homesteads of different types - mud, cement traditional and modern. In addition, there are several unoccupied mud houses which are crumbling and in an abandoned and unrepaired condition.

There are seven farms, all having both date palms and vegetable cultivation. These include the oldest farms in the village.

The village's only Friday mosque is located in this manzelah. The mosque has been rebuilt several times. It was originally built in mud by an unknown person as an act of charity. In 1965, a wealthy man named M. Al Dubaykhy, who had lived in the village but left it some time ago to live in Riyadh, rebuilt it in its present modern style. The second mosque in Hwylan manzelah is Al Rubyaah mosque, located in the southwest. It was first built as a charitable endeavour by an unknown person. Originally it was a mud building, but it was rebuilt in modern materials five years ago, by a person who kept his identity confidential.

This manzelah was the 'centre' of the settlement of Hwylan as a whole before the growth of the manzelah of Al Markaz over recent years.

(4) Al Oytah : This manzelah has eight homesteads including that of the amir. Some of the houses are in cement of traditional style and some are modern. It has five date palm and vegetable farms and the emirate's office is located on the amir's own farm. It has two small mosques used for daily

prayers, but no schools or shops. The first, Al Ruybah mosque was originally a charitable foundation built by a woman of Al Ruybah family. It was a mud building until a person from the foundress's kin group decided to rebuild it in modern materials, less than 15 years ago. The second, Al Dhahyan mosque is located on the farm of this family as Mushary Al Dhuhan built it many years ago according to his father's will.

(5) Al-Markaz: Al-Markaz means "the centre" and this manzelah derives its present name from the fact that it is the neighbourhood of the SDC. The manzelah surrounds the SDC on all sides. It acquired the name after the establishment of the SDC in 1961. It is the most recently developed area and has 27 homesteads, some being modern villas, others traditional cement homes and a block of flats attached to the SDC. There are no mud buildings. It has one modern mosque, built in 1975 by a local man, one grocery shop, the girls' primary school, the boys' primary school, the water tower and Hwylan's only coin telephone. There is one farm, surrounded by a brick wall for security and privacy. In general appearance it is strikingly modern, in strong contrast to a manzelah like Jassir.

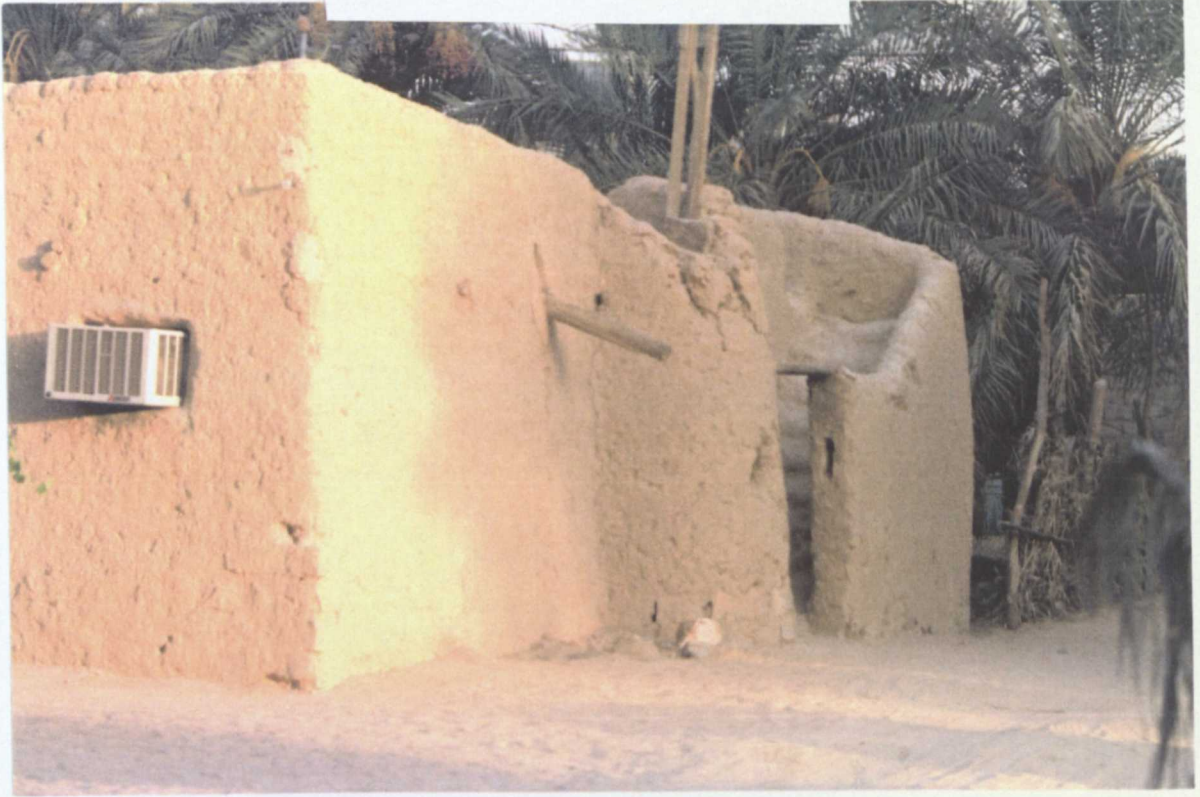


a) A view within the Hwylan Neighbourhood of the village

b) The SDC (Markaz) Neighbourhood







a) Mud Mosque in Jassir Manzelah

b) Modern Mosque in Hwylan Manzelah



(6) Al-Duyabiyah : This manzelah extends from Al-Rubiyah farm to the southern part of the village. There are 13 homesteads including mud, cement, and modern houses. It has eight farms, including some of the largest in the village. There are two mosques; one of mud, and one cement-built. The latter is the Khamees mosque which is the smallest in the village and no longer used. It is located on the southern part of the village's main road on the southwest of Khamees's farm. It was built in cement by Khamees himself, but has fallen into disuse from cement because the Khamees family is the only one near to it and there are other mosques close by. The second mosque is Al Duyabiyah mosque. This was first built by Al Muttwa, the first farm owner there more than eighty years ago. It was originally a small mud mosque. A wealthy man from outside the village wanted to rebuild it in modern style, but he died before he could achieve his wish. Then Ali Alayaf and his brothers, who were at one time from the nearby village of Wasit, sold their farm in their home village after their father's death in 1986 and decided that part of the proceeds of the sale should be used to rebuild this mosque, where their father used to pray in it when the farm was first leased to him some eighty years ago. The neighbourhood also has a bakery and a grocery shop.

The Khab of Hwylan as a whole does not have a single main place where the men meet. With easy access to Buraidah, the people of Hwylan have never had their own sug. Instead, they frequently use the Buraidah sug and some of the men use that as a meeting place. Alternatively, the men from different manzelah tend to have contact with each other in the various neighbourhood mosques used for daily prayers. Local institutions such as the schools and SDC centre are also, at times, used on places for casual social intercourse. The men tend to meet outside the schools when fetching their children, especially girls, and outside the SDC when accompanying family members to visit the doctors at the clinic.

Neighbourhood contacts between men, and to some extent between women, are easier and more common in some manzelat than in others. In Jassir manzelah, for example, some degree of neighbouring is made possible or included by two factors: firstly, the houses are close to each other and, secondly, the area as well removed from the main road. It is thus less exposed to people from beyond its immediate environs. Children here are usually allowed to play outside. When a mother wants them to come home she will come to the door and shout for them. Or she may put on her veil, but not necessarily her black robe, and venture outside to fetch her

children. Visits between women in this manzelah are also more common, especially in the late mornings when the husbands are at work and the children at school. There is then more time for visiting and the women feel free to have their own homes. In this respect life in Jassir is perhaps reminiscent of older days.

There is similar social interaction between the residents in some parts of the SDC manzelah, mainly the south and south east areas, where houses are adjacent or close to each other and there is less exposure to vehicles. Members of households located in the north and west of the SDC manzelah have less interaction, partly because they are located on the village's main road. In addition, the houses here are more exposed to some expatriate employees who work mainly in the SDC and whose homes are located there. There are also people coming to the SDC itself. Hence the doors of family houses are usually kept closed and children are advised not to go outside. Women are rarely seen going out of their houses, except of the family car parked close to the house door, which reduces the exposure of women to passers-by. The cars are of course driven by households or adult male relatives.

The khab of Hwylan has two cemeteries, which are used by residents of all manzelah. The old cemetery is located in



the southwest, close to the area where the first settlers lived. It has existed since the village's earlier days. The cemetery was established on public land, or common land (mushaa). Less than twenty years ago, it was enclosed with cement walls by Buraidah Municipality. In Saudi Arabia, people usually site the cemeteries away from their houses. The location of this cemetery suggests that when the first settlers chose its location, it was some distance from their homes, southeast of the area originally inhabited. However, today there are farms, houses and mosques around it. Hence a surrounding wall is now considered desirable.

The "new" cemetery is located in the mid-west of the village, just east of the boy's intermediate school. About sixty years ago, the local people decided to establish this cemetery as the old one was too small to bury the many villagers who died in a cholera-type epidemic. A total of 30 French Riyals was subscribed by local people to pay for the land, which was bought from a local farmer. It was later enclosed by cement walls by Buraidah Municipality, at the same time as the first cemetery.

When the approximate boundaries of the manzelah are examined in relation to the map of the settlement as a whole it can be seen that the Khab of Hwylan has in recent years

developed its own ecological form with differentiated areas. The centre or hub lies mainly in the manzelah of Al Markaz with some overlap into the manzelat of Hwylan and Al-Duyabiyah. The differentiation observed has been affected by the presence of the main road passing through the settlement. The earlier form, with comparatively little differentiation between manzelat, has been changing into a village with its core situated on both sides of the main road to Buraidah from the south.

#### 4.4 Community Facilities and Services: the Modernization of Hwylan

The development of community facilities in Saudi Arabia as a whole has been a central concern of the government, especially since the 1970s. The government recognised that real development called for the improvement of the whole infrastructure, including public services, water supplies, electricity, roads... etc. In Hwylan, some public services, such as electricity and water, were available over twenty-five years ago, while others have been provided more recently.

During the course of the survey conducted in 1988, household heads were asked their opinions of these services.

In this section, we describe the community facilities and report on the household heads' views on them.

#### 4.4.1 Water

In the past, the village's population relied on local wells for water for domestic use. The water was carried to their houses in pots or in containers made of leather or rubber. For example, several houses in Hwylan manzelah relied on a well located on the farm of Al Duhyan as he allowed people to use it free of charge. In 1965, he dug another well on his farm located west of the village's Friday mosque, and supplied the houses in that area that were not located on farms. The residents bought pipes to carry the water from the well to their houses. About the same time, Al Duhyan brought one of the first water pumps to Hwylan with the help of a government subsidy, to enable him to irrigate his farm as well as to supply other local households with domestic water.

In the late 1970s the village's water tower was built by the Ministry of Agriculture and Water. A water well was dug inside the water tower premises and metal water pipes were connected to all the locality's households. The water service supply was and still is free of charge.

As shown in Table 4.2 the households now use water from a number of sources. Sometimes the public supply from the water tower is filtered, at other times it is used as it comes, despite the fact that people say it is of poor quality. The households that filter the water normally attach filters to the main water pipes leading to tanks located on the roof. Farmers' households often use water from wells on the farms as this is of high quality.

Only one householder now transports water to his house from a public source. From time to time, he can be seen carrying a metal tank on his pick-up vehicle. He stores this water in an underground tank and has an electric pump to transfer it to the tank on the roof of his house.

Two household heads who did not trust the public water supply bought water from tankers (truck-deliveries) to fill up the house cistern. There were often tankers in the north east part of Buraidah to provide water deliveries. Water supplied in this way cost about 100 S.R for a large size truck.



a) The Water Tower in Hwylan

b) Water from Spring Well in a farm in Hwylan

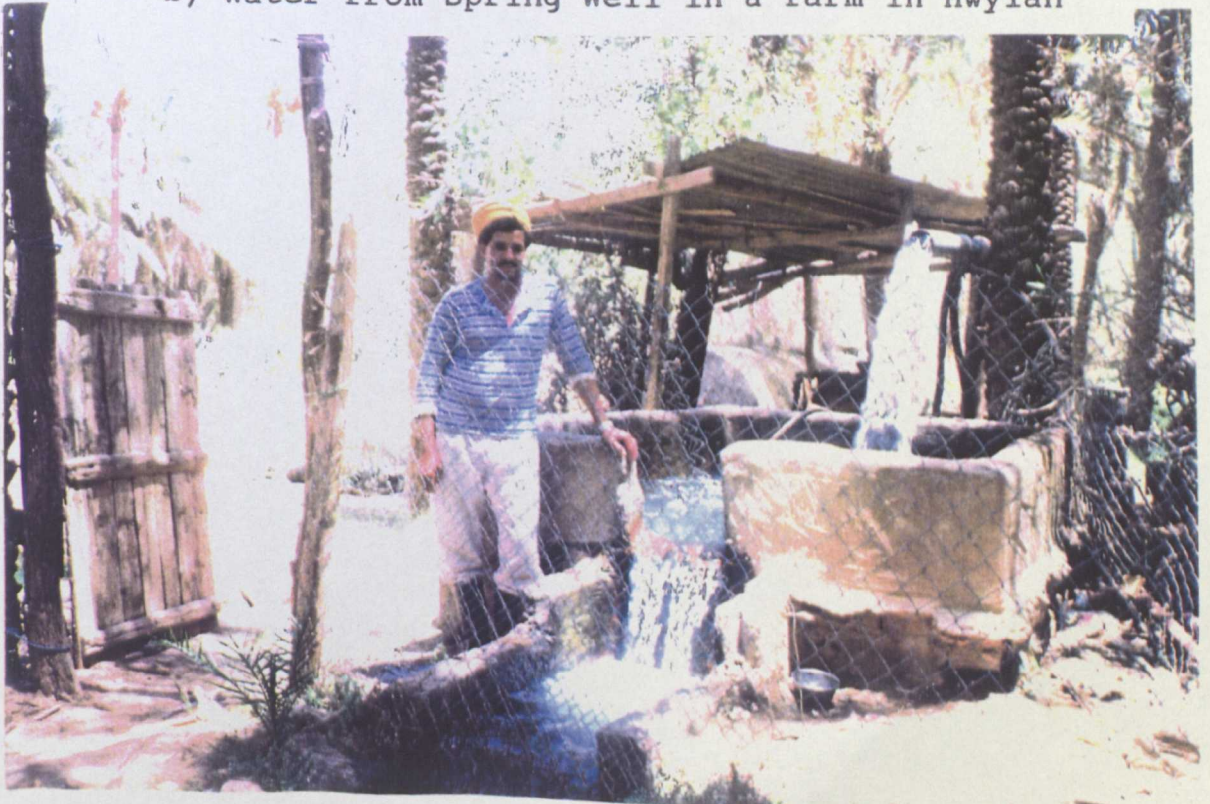


Table 4.2

Drinking Water Used by Hwylan Households

<b>Drinking Water Source</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
Hwylan Water Tower (with filter)	20	40
Hwylan Water Tower (not filtered)	18	36
Buy filtered water	9	18
From a farm well	25	50
Water from another source	1	2
From water tankers	2	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>150*</b>

\* Multi-Responses make the percentage more than 100%.

As shown in Table 4.3 only 26 per cent of household heads thought the water supply to be 'excellent' or 'very good', but a majority considered it 'good' or 'acceptable'. The responses of those who were not fully satisfied with the water supply were accompanied by complaints about the supposed impurity and irregularity of supply.

The expatriate worker who operated the water pump was employed by a private firm located in Riyadh with a branch in Buraidah. The firm had a contract with the Ministry of Agriculture and Water to run the village's water tower. He operated the water pump from 5.30 am to 12 noon then from

Table 4.3

Evaluation by Household Heads of Public Services and Facilities in Hwylan

Serve	Excellent		Very Good		Good		Acceptable		Do Not Know		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Telephone	8	16	3	6	4	8	21	42	14	28	50	100
Water	3	6	10	20	11	22	22	44	4	8	50	100
Street Cleaning	14	28	19	38	11	22	6	12	-	-	50	100
House Electricity	35	70	14	28	1	2	-	-	-	-	50	100
Street Electricity	13	26	10	20	17	34	10	20	-	-	50	100
Health	37	74	10	20	3	6	-	-	-	-	50	100
Roads	5	10	11	22	17	34	16	32	1	2	50	100
Post Service	4	8	9	18	11	22	12	24	14	28	50	100
Boys' Schools	23	46	17	34	5	10	1	2	4	8	50	100
Girls' School	11	22	17	34	15	30	2	4	5	10	50	100
The Social Development Centre	35	70	8	16	6	12	-	-	1	2	50	100



2.00 pm to 7.00 pm daily. The pump is run from a battery. Although the water tower building had all electric facilities such as wires, plugs, lights, these were not connected to the main cable located only a few metres outside the building. The operator had reported the matter to the village's amir but nothing had been done about it.

A doctor working in the SDC in Hwylan reported that he had taken a water sample from the tower and had it analysed and tested in Buraidah Municipality. It was found that the water was pure and of good quality for drinking but only if filtered first. The inhabitants of Hwylan were therefore advised to use water filters or to boil the water before drinking it, but some old people did not accept this advice as they said that they used to live a normal life while drinking camel's milk directly from the camel's breast!

During the period of the fieldwork, the private company which operated the water tower was changed, and another company took over the operation. During that month, the researcher, while sitting in the amir's office, heard some local people complaining that they had no water. They suggested that the water tower pump was still not working, and asked the amir to intervene. One said that the previous day, five water tankers had delivered water to some



households in the locality free of charge from the new contractor. He wanted water delivered to his house as well. The amir promised to do his best. Later an expatriate came in and told the amir that he worked for the new company operating the tower, and asked the amir who needed a water delivery. The amir gave him the appropriate details. The researcher asked the worker what was being done to supply water for local households. He said that his company had a three-year contract with the Directorate of Agriculture and Water of Al-Qassim region. A new water pump and pipes had been bought and were being installed, which was why the supply was temporarily cut off. The new pump was still operated by battery, although electricity had now been connected to the building, and the water was still in need of purification.

#### 4.4.2 Electricity

Electricity was first introduced into the village in 1961 when the SDC was built. The privately-owned Buraidah Electric Company supplied this service to Hwylan households and charged for its provision. The company then came under the supervision of the Ministry of Industry, which boosted its financial resources as it became jointly owned by the

government in an attempt to improve the service throughout the province.

Street lighting was initially provided only on the village's main road, but the SDC and the amir had jointly tried to extend the lighting to side roads. The emirate collected between 200-500 S.R. from householders and this was used to light up more streets, with the SDC paying half the cost. However, some roads remained unlit. This was reportedly because of the high cost of maintaining them until Buraidah Municipality took responsibility for the whole system.

It can be seen from Table 4.3 that domestic electricity was generally regarded as 'excellent' or 'very good' but street lighting was not rated as highly. Those who complained that there were no lights near to their houses naturally tended to argue for improvement.

#### 4.4.3 Telephone

Only five households in Hwylan had telephones and many interviewees complained of the lack of this important service:

Suppose a fire broke out in the house, or somebody had an accident, or got seriously sick? Without a telephone available in the house, this might put us in a dangerous situation. How can we call the emergency services? Then they will take longer to arrive and it will be too late for the emergency services to come to help us.

Many inhabitants complained of the insufficiency of telephone lines. One respondent said he had applied for this service more than ten years ago, yet still had no service. He had bought cordless telephone equipment with a roof antenna, but it did not work. Another claimed to have been the first person in the village to request the Telephone Service Department in Buraidah to supply Hwylan's households with this service, when it was launched more than twenty years ago. He added that those responsible for administering the service were dishonest, selfish and unresponsive to Hwylan's need for telephones. Another pointed out that telephones existed in the SDC, the locality's schools, the village's emirate and five private houses. He felt it should also reach other households. He was willing to pay for the wires if this could help to provide him with a telephone service. And so on.

In the light of such complaints, it is surprising that the evaluation of the telephone service recorded in Table 4.3 was not less favourable. But it is significant that 28% of

the households simply gave "don't know" answers, perhaps not wishing to be more critical.

#### 4.4.4 Roads

The village has several roads, but the main street which crosses it from the north to south is the only surfaced road. The others are narrow, winding and unsurfaced. Table 4.3 shows the views of the household heads on their roads. Only 10% said they were 'excellent', 22% stated they were 'very good', while 34% said 'good'. 32% considered them to be acceptable and only one respondent was unsure. A common saying in the area is that a tricky person is one "with more bends than the roads of Hwylan" (in Arabic: Awaj men sug Hwylan). The state of these roads is certainly not in keeping with the now common use of vehicles in Hwylan (see Chapter Nine).

#### 4.4.5 Street Cleaning

Street cleaning in Hwylan is administered by Buraidah Municipality. There are several waste containers in the village where household waste is disposed. These containers are emptied twice a week. In February 1988, the number of

waste containers was increased, as was the frequency of work by the expatriate street-cleaners.

The cleaners are Pakistanis or Indians. They are driven to the village in a Municipality vehicle, and they work there from 7.00 am to 12 noon when they are driven back to Buraidah. They dress in orange uniforms, carry a broom and push a gardening trolley as they collect the street's waste. They bring with them orange-coloured plastic bin bags which they give to householders or in some cases throw the bags over the yard wall. The bags are accompanied by the message:

**Municipality of Buraidah City - General Cleaning, Waste accumulates for small things. Try not to throw anything on the road, but only in waste containers. Co-operation, even in small things is important. When waste is not kept together, the effort to collect it becomes dispersed. Please co-operate in putting waste inside this bag, fasten it, then put it outside the door or in the nearest waste container, preferably early morning. Keep Buraidah clean and tidy.**

The cleaners are often served with food by the locals, with children taking the food to them to eat in the street during their breaks. They are also offered cast-off clothes which they send or take back to their country of origin.

As shown in Table 4.3, street cleaning received a moderately good evaluation by the householders.

#### 4.4.6 Postal Services

There is no post office in Hwylan but mail is delivered once or twice daily by a postman from Buraidah's main post office. As the village's houses are not numbered, and its streets are not named, most of the mail is delivered to the village emirate from where it can be collected from time to time. The exception to this is letters addressed to the schools or the SDC, which are delivered direct to the premises concerned. In practice, most of the mail is for the expatriate workers, who maintain contact with their families back home, by letter.

Table 4.3 shows the householders' evaluation of the postal service in Hwylan was similar to that of the telephone service, with a number having no opinion about it. Several respondents did, however, mention the village's need for a post office.

#### 4.4.7 Education

We saw in the chapter on Al Qassim region that formal education did not start until the 1940's, prior to which the region's population received mainly traditional education, provided by religious teachers in the Kutab.

In Hwylan, there is at present, one boys' primary school, one boys' intermediate school and one girls' primary school. Just as formal education in Al Qassim region has met with some hostility, so was it initially met with suspicion in Hwylan. During the 1950s, however, some community leaders began to call for boys' education to begin. According to the Immam of the village's principal mosque, he and a few others wrote to the Directorate of Education in Al Qassim region to request a boys' primary school. The request was approved and the Immam had a mud house built south of the village's Friday mosque in 1954. He then leased this house to the education directorate as a boys' school for 300 Saudi Riyals a year. The school used this building for two years until it collapsed as a result of heavy rainfall in 1956. The Directorate of Education supplied tents to be used as temporary classrooms until the mud house was rebuilt. Fifteen years later, a modern school building was constructed on the north east area of the village, to which the school moved in 1970.

Not all the parents had welcomed the opening of the school, and this was reflected in low attendance in its first five years, when the average number of pupils was only 15. A man from the village recalled his father's opposition:

I wanted to study the first year the school was established but my father prevented me from doing so, on the ground that I might learn and leave my parent's village for further education or work. I listened to my father, and as a result I am now illiterate. When I grew up I had to work. It is true I found a job, but I am at the bottom of the civil service ranks. Why? Because I did not attend school. I cannot read and write or handle a pen.

It was mainly the elderly conservative men who objected to their sons' studying. They wanted their children to stay with them in their houses and feared that if they allowed them to be educated, their sons would leave not only their houses but also their village. Another man spoke to me as follows:

Over thirty years ago, some local boys started to attend the village school. Really, I was very keen to attend the school but both of my parents objected. I watched the boys going to school every morning with tears in my eyes. I was very depressed. My depression increased when we were playing in the streets, the others had started to read and write, I could not. I tried to learn something from my play mates, but this was impossible. I really wanted to learn by attending the school. I raised the matter with my parents several times but they continued to refuse. They thought if I learned, later I might migrate, leaving them behind. It was several years of struggle. Now I cannot read a letter, and I cannot earn as much as those who are educated.

Another person said that his parents had also objected but that he was able to persuade them to agree on condition that he studied only within the boundaries of the village.



That meant that when he graduated from the village's primary school, he would not be able to attend intermediate school in Buraidah; there was no intermediate school in the village at that time. He agreed to the condition set by his parents, but a few years later he started to attend evening school in Buraidah and he was eventually to obtain a better job after studying at intermediate level in this way.

In 1977 an intermediate boys' school was established in Hwylan. It met with no objections, as had the primary school in the 1950s. The school used the same building as the boys' primary school until 1980, when it moved to a leased building located on a family farm, west of the village's cemetery. The building was built by the farm owner in a cement traditional style (see Chapter Seven), according to the requirements of the Education authority. But it was actually of a lower standard than the boys' primary school building, being relatively small for its 70 pupils, and lacking modern facilities such as playing fields and large classrooms.

It was only in 1979 that a girls' primary school was established in the north east part of the village. It is a modern building, originally designed as a family house. It is owned by a local person who leases it to the Presidency of

Girls' Education which supervises girls' education throughout the country.

The householders' evaluations of these schools in general, their levels, their locations and their premises given in Table 4.3 show a high appreciation of the boys's schools, 46% saying they were 'excellent', 34% 'very good', 10% 'good'. However, most of the local men said they thought that the boys' intermediate school needed a new building to replace the rented traditional building which they thought unsuitable for an educational institution.

The evaluation of the girls' primary school was less favourable. Several people complained about the location of the girls' school on the periphery of the village and thought it should be relocated in the main street for easier access. They also thought a modern building should be opened to improve educational facilities.

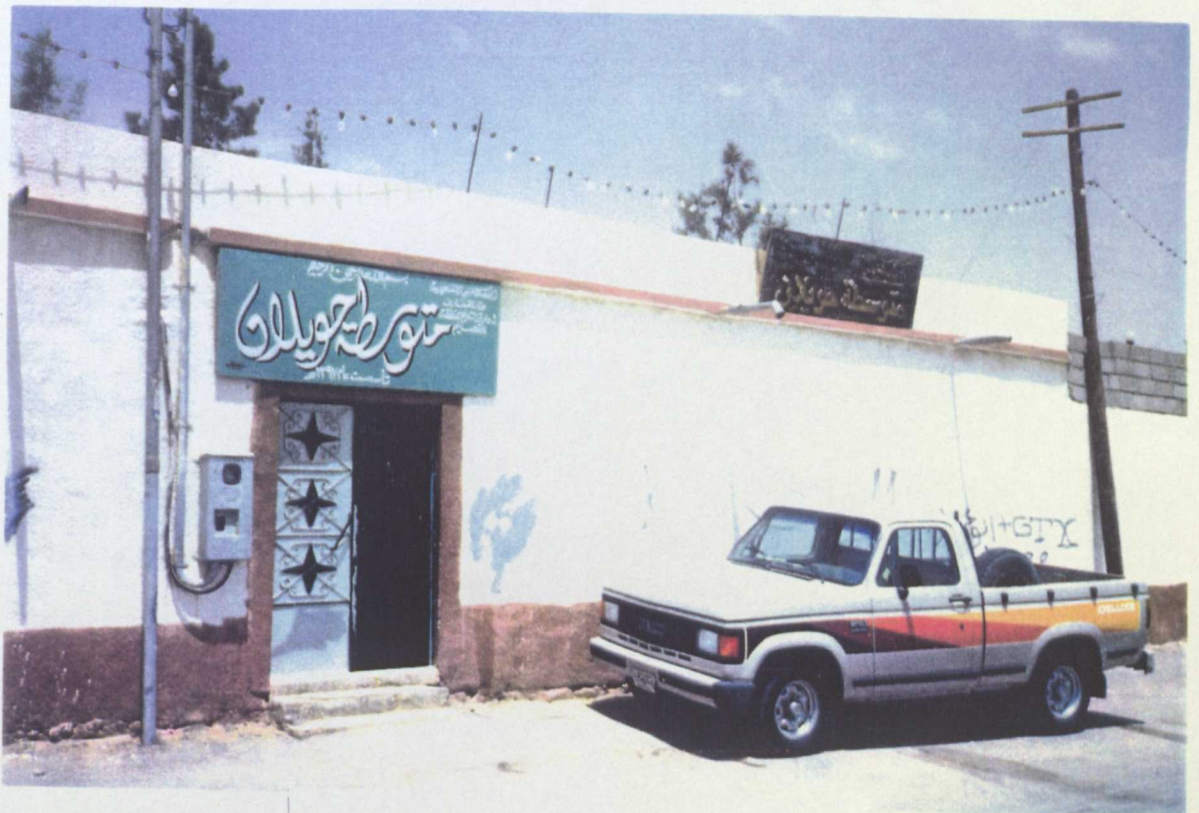
#### 4.4.8 Health

We saw in the chapter on Al Qassim region that the first clinic in the region was established in 1941. Before that,



a) The Boys' Primary School in Hwylan

b) The Boys' Intermediate School in Hwylan



the region's inhabitants relied mainly on traditional medicine for their health care. Hwylan's population equally used to rely on traditional medicine. The village had its own traditional healer, and his son continues to practice today, not only for the village's population but also for those from the surrounding area. He uses religious healing, reading Quranic verses over the sick person, and writing Quranic verses on small pieces of paper using saffron. The papers are then dissolved in water and drunk by the patients. In some treatment sessions he reads verses while blowing over opened spring water bottles, which he then prescribes for the patients to drink, in the belief that they are curative. He also gives general advice to patients. On one occasion, for example, when a patient came to him with a skin allergy, he said to him, "Your problem can easily be solved. Your skin infection is caused by eating tomatoes affected by fertilisers". He told the patient to avoid eating tomatoes and read him verses from the Quran.

The healer claims that he can cure patients of infertility which does not respond to modern medical treatment. He may tell them that they are infertile because they suffer from "devil's eye". By reading verses, he claimed to cure the "devil's eye". In fact most of his clients' problems were cured by Quranic verses. He does not

use the traditional method of cauterization (burning) but believes the Quran has verses which can cure many health problems.

He says that he practices this work mainly to please God by helping people and does not charge for his services. But when patients offer him money, he does not hesitate to accept it. While practising this type of healing, the healer is not opposed to modern medicine and he and members of his family often use the modern medicine and health facilities available in the village and in Buraidah.

Before the establishment of the SDC clinic in 1961, the population of Hwylan had began to use health care facilities in Buraidah. The SDC was established by the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, Agriculture and Water, and Health and Education. Its purpose was to improve the health, cultural, social, educational and agricultural levels in Hwylan and its neighbouring villages.

It is located in a large modern building in north east Hwylan. From its early years, the SDC has employed both Saudi and non-Saudi nationals but the professionals (doctors and nurses) are all expatriates (see Chapter Five for more details). All the female workers are non-Saudi nationals due

to the local cultural constraints on women working in capacities which might lead to their mixing with men.

Normal working hours at the SDC are Saturday to Wednesday from 7.30 am to 2.30 pm, but the clinic is open until 5.00 pm every day including Thursdays. Although the SDC provides various services - agricultural, educational... etc, the clinic is the facility which is most used by the inhabitants of Hwylan.

As shown in Table 4.3 the householders are highly appreciative of the health facilities in the village with over 90% rating his health services as 'excellent' or 'very good' and giving similar ratings to the SDC as a whole.

#### 4.5 Population

Prior to the survey conducted for the present study in September 1988, there had been only two attempts to enumerate the population of Hwylan in any formal way. One was at the time of the national Saudi Arabian Census in 1974 and the other in 1986 when a local survey was conducted by the SDC in Hwylan (Hwylan Social Development Centre: unpublished document, 1986).

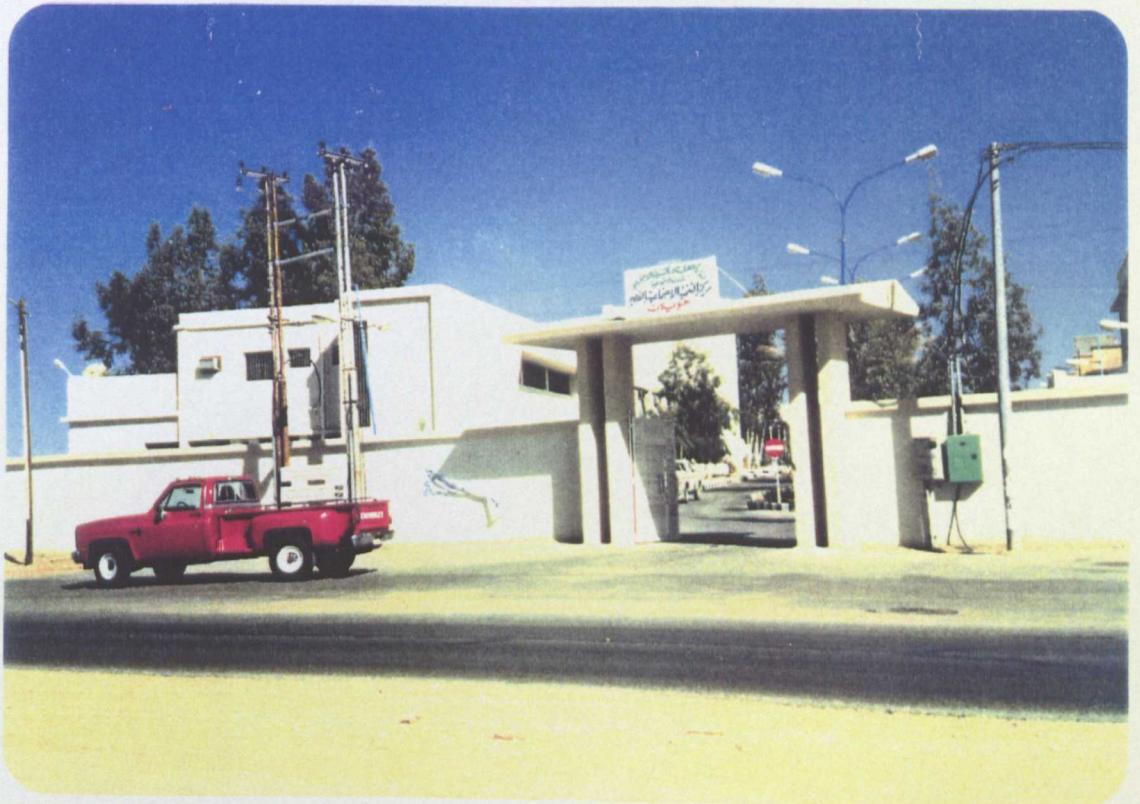
According to the National Census of 1974, the population at that time was 1348. By 1986 this had fallen to 597, and





a) The Tyre Repair Shop and the Boys' Primary School on the Village's main road

b) The SDC in Hwylan



in 1988 to 552, of whom 87 percent were Saudi Arabian nationals and 13 percent foreigners, mainly men. Our concern here is to draw attention to the salient characteristics of the population, while also drawing attention to difficulties which stand in the way of any thorough going historical reconstruction of the social and economic history of Hwylan.

The first striking fact revealed by a comparison of the population figures of 1974, 1986 and 1988 is that the population has fallen sharply by well over 50 percent in the very recent past. In this particular respect, Hwylan has clearly been in decline with massive out-migration and only modest in-migration in return. According to the personal estimates of informants, the population was never greater than two thousand. The recent fall in population should not, however, be interpreted as a indication of rural impoverishment and disintregation of the community. It is, rather, that the nature of the settlement has been changing very markedly. Many families have left, mainly to settle in Buraidah itself (see Chapter 6), but the settlement, like its neighbouring Khobob, has become more prosperous in keeping **with** the spectacular increase in the affluence of the region and of Saudi Arabian society as a whole. This prosperity has been accompanied by major changes in literacy, education, occupations and the like.



Although the number of inhabitants has declined, the age and sex composition of the population has not been distorted as is so commonly the case in many rural areas of developing countries with rapid out-migration. As shown in Table 4.4 and Fig 4.1, the age and sex composition of the population remains relatively well balanced and has large numbers of children and young people. The principal age/sex imbalances in the total population are accounted for by the expatriate element, which consists mainly of men between the ages of 20 and 40. These men constitute over a half of the total expatriate population but, they are far from being fully integrated members of the community (see Chapter Five).

The Saudi members of the population are largely of local origins. As can be seen from Table 4.5, over 60% were born in Hwylan itself and over 20 per cent in Buraidah. The remainder are mainly from the region and only 5 or approximately one per cent were born in other parts of Saudi Arabia. Not surprisingly, there are more children and young people born in Hwylan and Buraidah than adults. But the adults are also predominately from Hwylan and its immediate vicinity.

Table 4.4

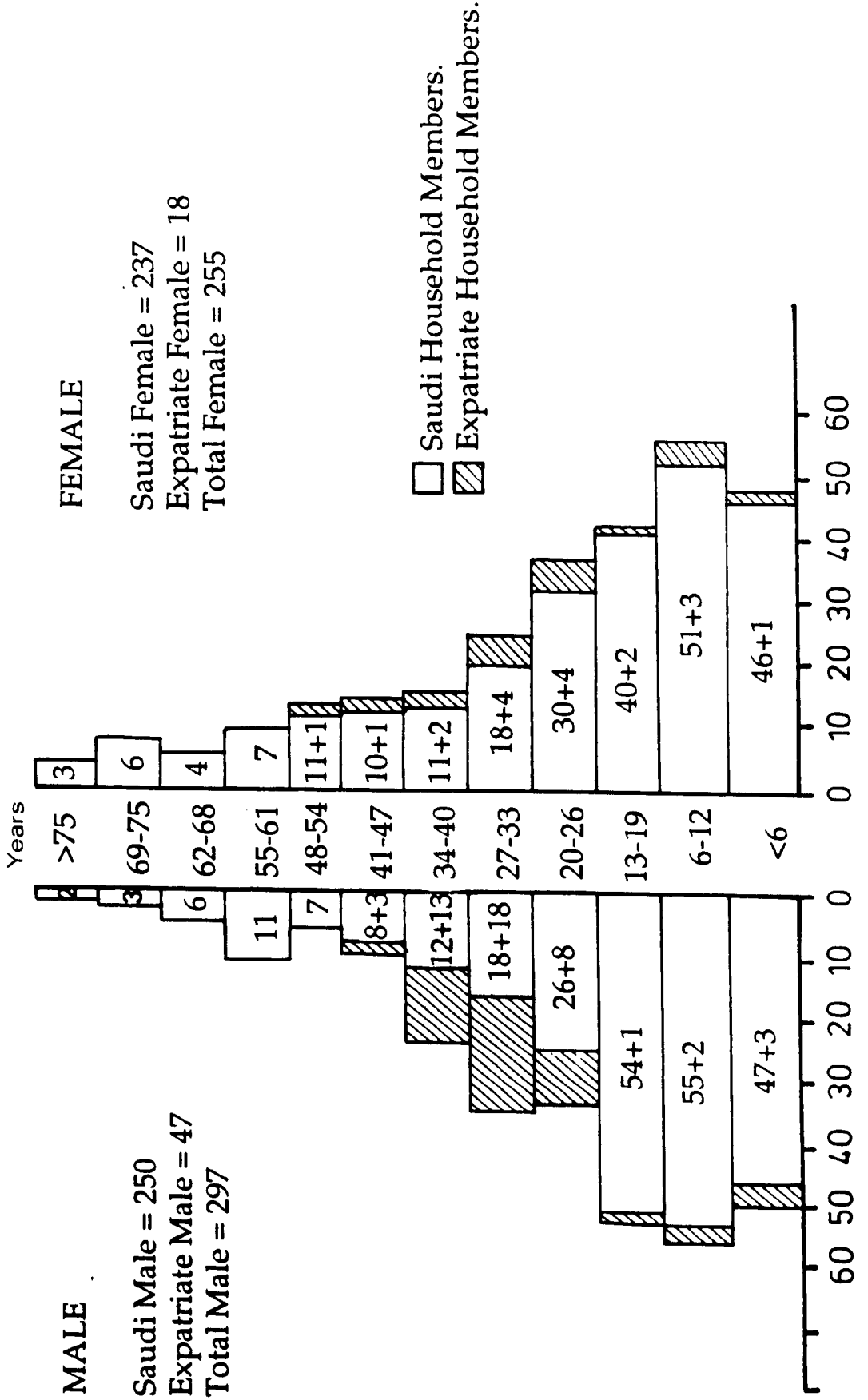
Hwylan's Total Population (Saudi and Expatriate), in 1988 by Age and Sex

Age group years	Male						Female						Total	
	Saudi			Expatriate			Saudi			Expatriate			No	%
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%				
<6	47	18.8	3	6.4	46	19.4	1	5.5	97	17.6				
6-12	55	22.0	2	4.3	51	21.5	3	16.7	111	20.1				
13-19	54	21.6	1	2.1	40	16.9	2	11.1	97	17.6				
20-26	26	10.4	8	17.0	30	12.7	4	22.2	68	12.3				
27-33	18	7.2	18	38.3	18	7.6	4	22.2	58	10.5				
34-40	13	5.2	12	25.5	11	4.6	2	11.1	38	6.9				
41-47	8	3.2	3	6.4	10	4.2	1	5.6	22	4.0				
48-54	7	2.8	-	-	11	4.6	1	5.6	19	3.5				
55-61	11	4.4	-	-	7	2.9	-	-	18	3.2				
62-68	6	2.4	-	-	4	1.7	-	-	10	1.8				
69-75	3	1.2	-	-	6	2.5	-	-	9	1.6				
75>	2	0.8	-	-	3	1.3	-	-	5	0.9				
TOTAL	250	100	47	100	237	100	18	100	552	100				

Note The Saudi households also included 7 non-Saudi females (6 domestic helpers and one Egyptian woman married to a Saudi man)

Fig 4.1

**Hwylan's Population Pyramid (Saudi and Expatriate) in 1988.**



**Table 4.5**  
**Place of Birth by Age**

Place of Birth	Age in Years															Total				
	<6		6-12		13-19		20-26		27-33		34-40		41-47		48-54		>55		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Hwylan	62	66.7	78	72.9	61	65.6	31	56	12	34.3	12	50	8	57	6	35	22	52.4	292	60.8
Buraidah	23	24.7	20	18.7	22	23.7	20	36	10	28.6	6	25	1	7.1	1	5.9			103	21.5
In the Region	8	8.6	9	8.4	6	6.5	3	5.5	13	37.1	6	25	5	35	10	58	20	47.6	80	16.7
In Saudi Arabia but outside the region					4	4.3	1	1.8											5	1.04
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

The literacy and education levels attained by the adult Saudi population are given in Table 4.6 for the men and Table 4.7 for the women. About one third of the men and nearly 80 per cent of the women are completely illiterate. Among the older people (over 55 years), all the women and over 70 per cent of the men are illiterate, but these proportions are much lower among the younger adults, down for those under 40 years to 14 per cent for men and 67 per cent for women. As is to be expected the levels of education attained by those with some formal schooling also show a marked difference between the sexes with over 60 per cent of the men aged 20 to 40 years having received secondary or higher education as compared to less than 10 per cent of the women of the same age category. As far as the figures allow comparison, these differentials are broadly in line with the figures on literacy in Al Qassim region given in Chapter Three.

The numbers of males and females under 20 years of age in Hwylan currently enrolled in schools and other educational institutions are shown in Tables 4.8 and 4.9. Most children between the ages of 6 and 12 years are at school with only 10.9% of the boys and 15.7% of the girls not enrolled. Between the ages of 13 and 19 years, 13% of the boys are not currently enrolled but the corresponding proportions for girls is significantly higher at 37.5%. Furthermore, as

shown in Tables 4.13 and 4.14 presented in the next section, there are 16 men over 20 still engaged in studying or training, as against only two women. The general situation is, then, that the educational gap between males and females has clearly begun to close but remains wide at secondary school and higher levels.

Table 4.6

The Literacy and Education of Saudi Males  
Over 20 Years of Age

Literacy/Education	Age						Total	
	20-40		41-54		>55			
	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Illiterate	8	14.0	7	46.7	16	72.8	31	33.0
Read/write only	1	1.8	-	-	3	13.6	4	4.3
Elementary/Intermediate	13	22.8	5	33.3	3	13.6	21	22.3
Secondary	29	50.9	2	13.3	-	-	31	33.0
Higher Education	6	10.5	1	6.7	-	-	7	7.5
Total	57	100	15	100	22	100	94	100

As will be seen in the next section, there is also a wide disparity between men and women in gainful occupations. Only six adult women go out to work or to study, two as teachers and two as cleaners in girls' schools and two as students, whereas most adult men are either gainfully employed or continuing their studies.

Table 4.7

The Literacy and Education of Saudi Females  
Over 20 Years of Age

Literacy/Education	Age						Total	
	20-40		41-54		>55			
	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Illiterate	39	67.3	15	93.8	20	100	74	78.7
Read/write only	-	-	1	6.2	-	-	1	1.1
Elementary/Intermediate	13	22.4	-	-	-	-	13	13.8
Secondary	5	8.6	-	-	-	-	5	5.3
Higher Education	1	1.7	-	-	-	-	1	1.1
Total	58	100	16	100	20	100	94	100

The above observations underline that, despite current advancement in girls' education, the house remains the domain of women and the "world outside" the domain of men. It also means, as Table 4.10 shows, that girls' and womens' daily lives are largely confined to the village whereas a majority of older boys and men are involved in life not only outside their homes but also outside the village. The village community is thus the immediate context of life for women, but men's daily lives are to a considerable extent followed in the wider setting of Buraidah and its environs.

Related to this disparity in participation in social life is the fact that women marry appreciably earlier than men. As can be seen from Tables 4.11 and 4.12, about three

quarters of the adult women under 26 years were married, in contrast to less than a quarter of men under 26 years.

Table 4.8

Current Educational Enrolment of Saudi Males  
under 20 years by Age

Enrolment	Age						Total	
	<6		6-12		13-19			
	No	%	No	%	No	%		
None	45	95.7	6	10.9	7	13.0	58	37.2
Elementary/Intermediate	2	4.3	49	89.1	35	64.8	86	55.1
Secondary	-	-	-	-	11	20.4	11	7.1
Higher Education	-	-	-	-	1	1.8	1	0.6
Total	47	100	55	100	54	100	156	100

Table 4.9

Current Educational Enrolment of Saudi Females  
under 20 years by Age

Enrolment	Age						Total	
	<6		6-12		13-19			
	No	%	No	%	No	%		
None	46	100	8	15.7	15	37.5	69	50.4
Elementary/Intermediate	-	-	43	84.3	16	40.0	59	43.1
Secondary	-	-	-	-	4	10.0	4	2.9
Higher Education	-	-	-	-	5	12.5	5	3.6
Total	46	100	51	100	40	100	137	100



Table 4.10

Daily Movements of the Saudi Population  
13 years and Over by Sex

Movements	Males		Females		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
No movements ie. stay in Hwylan for school, work or domestic life	69	46.6	116	82.9	185	64.2
To Buraidah for school or work	67	45.3	15	10.7	82	25.5
To a nearby area for work or school	12	8.1	9	6.4	21	7.3
Total	148	100	140	100	288	100

Table 4.11

Marital Status of Saudi Males  
Over 20 Years by Age

Marital Status	Age												Total	
	20-26		27-33		34-40		41-47		48-54		>55			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Single	20	76.9	3	16.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4.5	24	25.5
Married (one wife only)	6	23.1	15	83.3	13	100	8	100	7	100	15	68.2	64	68.1
Married (two wives)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	27.3	6	6.4
Divorced	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Widowed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	26	100	18	100	13	100	8	100	7	100	22	100	94	100

Note: There was no married male under 20 years old. Some men had been divorced but did not remain so.

Table 4.12

Marital Status of Saudi Females  
Over 20 Years by Age

Marital Status	Age												Total	
	20-26		27-33		34-40		41-47		48-54		>55			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Single	8	26											8	8.5
Married	21	70.0	17	100	11	100	6	100	10	100	8	40.0	73	77.7
Divorced	1	3.3											1	1.0
Widowed											12	60.0	12	12.8
Total	30	100	17	100	11	100	6	100	10	100	20	100	94	100

Note: There was only one married female under 20 years of age

In the next age group of 27 to 33 years, all women were married, as were 83.3 per cent of the men. Above the age of 33 years, all adults were married with the exception of one elderly single man and 12 elderly widows. We may note in passing that there was only one (young) divorced woman in the village and that most men had one wife only, though six elderly men had two. (These observations are referred to again in Chapter Six on Family and Kinship).

**4.6 Occupations and Means of Livelihood**

The village economy has changed radically since the nationwide economic boom of the 1970s and the rapid decline

in the village's population in the 1970s and 1980s. Most of today's households derive substantial parts of their incomes from work in Buraidah and/or from government sources such as subsidies to farmers, various grants and loans, and allowances paid to students attending colleges, agricultural and health institutes and other centres of vocational training.

In the past, most of Hwylan's men and older boys worked on the local farms. Those whose families did not own a farm worked as farm labourers for others. Adult women were also involved, though to a lesser extent, but their participation ceased altogether when some farmers began to employ expatriate labourers some 30 years ago.

Palm dates were the principal cash crop which was sold or traded at the Buraidah market for goods such as clothing, kitchenware, furnishings, spices, salt and sugar. People commonly kept animals: camels and donkeys, mainly for farm work such as drawing water and for the transport of goods; and cows, sheep and goats for meat and dairy products, mainly for household consumption or local petty trading. Thus, although dates were the principal source of income, the farmers also practised a semi-subsistence economy.

The present occupational and economic situation of the Saudi population of the village is set out in some detail in Tables 4.13 to 4.19.

Table 4.13 shows that 50.0% of the adult men gave government employment as their principal occupation, followed by only 19.1% who think of themselves primarily as farmers. Students make up 17.0%, "others" 7.5% and the remainder are either unemployed or retired. But there are significant differences according to age. The younger men are largely government employees or still studying, while a clear majority of the older men are farmers. (Table 4.14 shows that women are scarcely involved in the labour market and it is exceptional for them to be engaged in any activity other than housework).

The occupational profile of the men is, however, more complex than is revealed by their first or only occupations. When second and third occupations are taken into account, it is clear that farming still plays a more important part in the household economies of the village than Table 4.13 would suggest. There were 21 out of the 94 men who had second or third occupations, as shown in Table 4.15 which lists all the occupations of the men pursuing more than one. It can be seen that seven of these 21 men have farming as their first



Date palm trees and vegetation in the village's farms



occupation, but that a further 13 have farming as a second or third occupation. When these 13 are added to the 18 shown in Table 4.13 as having farming as their only or principal occupation, the number of farmers in the village rises to 31.

Table 4.13

Principal Occupations of Males  
Over 20 Years by Age

Occupation	Age			Total	
	20-40	41-54	>55	No.	%
Government Employment	33	10	4	47	50.0
Farmer	-	4	14	18	19.1
Student	16	-	-	16	17.0
Others*	5	1	1	7	7.5
Unemployed or retired	3	1	3	7	6.4
Total	57	15	22	94	100

The "other" category consists of four men with their own businesses with three private sector employees.

Table 4.14

Occupations of Females Over 20 Years of Age

Occupation	Age			Total	
	20-40	41-54	>55	No.	%
Housewife*	50	16	18	84	89.4
Helps at house (unmarried)	4	-	-	4	4.3
Student	2	-	-	2	2.1
Teacher	2	-	-	2	2.1
Cleaners at girl's school	-	-	2	2	2.1
Total	58	16	20	94	100

\* Included in the category of housewife are 12 widowed women and one divorced.

Table 4.15

The Occupations of 21 Men who had  
Two or Three Occupations

No.	First occupation	Second Occupation	Third Occupation
1	Farmer	Religious*	-
2	Farmer	Religious	-
3	Farmer	Religious	-
4	Farmer	Religious	-
5	Farmer	Cattle market dealer	-
6	Farmer	Vegetable market dealer	-
7	Farmer	Vegetable market dealer	Religious
8	Government employee	Farmer	-
9	Government employee	Farmer	-
10	Government employee	Farmer	-
11	Government employee	Farmer	-
12	Government employee	Farmer	-
13	Government employee	Farmer	-
14	Government employee	Farmer	-
15	Government employee	Farmer	Shop keeper
16	Government employee	Farmer	Religious
17	Government employee	Religious	Farmer
18	Government employee	Religious	Farmer
19	Government employee	Religious	Farmer
20	Building Contractor	Farmer	-
21	Student	Shop keeper	-

\* Religious refers to either an Immam or a Mudhen (prayer caller), posts which are remunerated by the government.



To gain a more accurate picture of adult male occupations we therefore have to look at all the occupations followed and not only the first or principal ones. When this is done, ignoring the retired and unemployed, the occupations of the adult males are as follows: government employment 49 or 41.9%, farming 31 or 26.5%, studying 16 or 13.7% and others 21 or 17.9%. This category of "others" consists of nine religious post (immams and mudhens), three private sector employees, three market traders, one car dealer, one transport and two construction firms, one Arabic furniture shop, one grocer shop and one bakery. Of these businesses, only two - the grocer shop and the bakery - are located in Hwylan, the rest being in Buraidah. (There is also one business in Hwylan, the tyre repair shop, whose owner lives in Buraidah).

Table 4.16 sets out the specific occupations of the government employees by their monthly salaries. Over a half hold relatively low-status jobs such as drivers, office messengers and lower-grade clerks with salaries under 4000 S.R. The remainder earn over 4000 S.R as professional workers or higher-grade clerical and administrative workers. When these incomes are compared with the average monthly sums made from farming as shown in Table 4.17, it is clear that few farmers do well out of their farms. Two "farmers"

claimed to be making no profit at all out of their farms and 75% made less than 4000 SR per month. Most incomes from farming are thus little or no higher than incomes from quite lowly government posts. This partly explains why so many farmers have more than one occupation.

Table 4.16

Occupations of Adult Male Government Employees  
by Monthly Salary

Occupation	Monthly Salary in S.R.					Total	
	Under 2000	2001-4000	4001-6000	6001-8000	Over 8000	No	%
Maintenance worker	2	1	-	-	-	3	6.1
Driver	1	2	-	-	-	3	6.1
Office messenger	1	5	-	-	-	6	12.2
Doorman	1	3	-	-	-	4	8.2
Religious guide	-	2	-	-	-	2	4.1
Clerical and administrative	4	5	2	2	-	13	26.5
Health professional*	-	1	3	-	-	4	8.2
Engineer	-	-	1	-	-	1	2.0
Educational professional*	-	-	2	6	5	13	26.5
Total	9	19	8	8	5	49	100
%	18.4	38.8	16.3	16.3	10.2	100	-

\* The health professionals were graduates from the Health Institute working in hospitals and laboratories as chemists and the like and the educational professions included Teachers and School Supervisors.

Table 4.17

Farmers Classified by Size of Farm and  
Monthly Income from Farm Alone

Sized farm (sq km)	Monthly Income in S.R.							Total	
	No income	Under 1000	1001-2000	2001-4000	4001-6000	6001-8000	Over 8000	No	%
Under 20,000	2	3	2	1	1			9	32.1
20000-50000	-	5	3	1	1	1		11	39.3
50001-100000		2	1				2	5	17.9
Over 100000		1	1	1				3	10.7
Total	2	11	7	3	2	1	2	28	100
%	7.1	39.3	25.0	10.7	7.1	3.6	7.1	100	-

The farms of Hwylan do, nonetheless, play an important part in the social and economic life of the community. As can be seen from Table 4.17 the farms vary quite considerably in size from under 20,000 sq metres to over 100,000 (the largest covers approximately 150,000 sq metres). All produce dates and vegetables, while five also grow cereals, mainly wheat. But there is little correlation between their size and the incomes derived from them. Furthermore, as shown in Table 4.18, there is no clear correlation either between farm size and the employment of expatriate farm workers or between size and the owners having a second or third occupation.

In this connection it is also of interest to look at the total number of men - 31 Saudi farmers and 11 expatriates - who work on the farms. Between Saudi farmers and expatriate labourers there were only 42 men working the farms, an

average of 1.5 per farm. In addition, however, a number of the farmers commonly hire casual labour (mainly Egyptians and Indians) from the Buraidah labour market for a day or two at a time. Such casual labour is generally used at particular seasons to do the work of fertilising the date palms or to plant vegetables. On the nine farms that do employ regular expatriate labourers, most of the heavier work is usually done by them.

Table 4.18

Farms in Hwylan by Size, by the Employment of Expatriate Labourers, and by the Pursuance of other Work by the Farmer

Farm size in (sq metres)	No.	No Employing expatriates	No. with owners having second or third occupations
Under 20,000	9	2	7
20,000-50,000	10	3	4
50,000-100,000	6	4	5
Over 100,000	3	0	2
Total	28	9	18

Finally, an important point is that the main crop (dates) requires little continuous labour to produce. Nor does the harvesting of the dates. In contrast to earlier days when dates were laboriously picked by farm labour before being transported to the Buraidah market, they are now often sold

to traders "on the palm". The purchaser then provides the labour to harvest and remove the crop.

A number of factors have contributed to this new style of farming with little labour and often as a part-time occupation. Firstly, as revealed in the two case histories of farmers presented in the appendix to this chapter, the production of vegetables for the Buraidah market is not considered worth the effort by some farmers owing to competition from cheap imported vegetables. Thus some farmers produce them for home consumption alone. Secondly, few of the farms are intensively cultivated, with some having large tracts of scrub land. This in itself is a factor in blurring any possible correlation between farm size and income from farming. Thirdly, the profitability of farming depends to a considerable extent on the quality and quantity of the date palms on a farm. And, as palm trees take years to produce dates in any quantity, the present profitability of a farm may well depend on palm trees planted up to thirty or forty years ago.

Most important of all, however, is the fact that relatively well paid government posts at various levels are now readily available in Buraidah both for the less educated and more educated young men.

The net result is that farming as a way of life involving virtually all members of the family has been largely replaced by farming as a partial asset. Only a small proportion of the population are solely dependent on it for their livelihoods. Despite this, the ownership of a farm remains an important social value in the village. Farm owners are well placed to entertain their kinsmen and friends in a style which only the wealthier non-farmers can rival. A farm remains an important symbol of traditional hospitality, a fact which is illustrated by one farmer who still keeps sawani camels to demonstrate to visitors how water was formerly drawn from wells. The camels provide entertainment, especially for younger people, to whom they are of interest in giving an idea of life in Hwylan in the past.

The total incomes from all sources of the adult male population are shown by broad age groups in Table 4.19. Over 60% have modest total incomes comparable to those working in quite lowly government posts. Those with substantially higher incomes are relatively few - only about 22% earning more than 6000 SR per month and these include both younger and older men. Only about 10% of the adult women had their own incomes; these included the few in employment, one who owned a rented property, and the college students who received educational allowances.

Table. 4.19

Monthly Income of Men from all Sources\*

Income in S.R.	Age				Total	
	20-40		Over 40		No	%
	No	%	No	%		
Under 2000	18	36.0	13	36.1	31	36.0
2000-4000	13	26.0	9	25.0	22	25.6
4001-6000	10	20.0	4	11.1	14	16.3
6001-10,000	8	16.0	7	19.4	15	17.4
Over 10,000	1	10.0	3	8.3	4	4.7
Total	50	100	36	100	86	100

\* This table excludes those students not paid allowances.

4.7 Social Status

In Arabic cultures of the past social classes comparable to those of Western industrial societies did not exist. But there were of course status groupings based on family alliances and power. In the case of Saudi Arabia, enormous disparities of wealth and power have arisen, especially since the large-scale exploitation of oil, and we have seen how the development of the national political economy has had far-reaching direct and indirect effects in the village of Hwylan. In this section, we examine the factors which household heads said were important in affecting the status of families and individuals in the village.



a) The Tyre Repair Shop and Street Cleaner



b) A Grocery Shop  
in the Village



Plate 4.9



a) Harnessing irrigation in the past, kept now only for show

b) Modern irrigation systems have become common in the village's farms



The 50 Saudi household heads were asked to list the order in which they considered that five factors - religiosity, age, education, kinship connexions and wealth - affected their status evaluation of fellow residents. The results are shown in Table 4.20 with simple rank scores based on the order in which each of the factors was placed.

Table 4.20

Factors Affecting Status Evaluation by the 50 Household Heads in Hwylan

Factor	Importance Ranking					Rank Score
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	
Religiosity	40	7	3	-	-	1.3
Age	7	26	13	3	1	2.3
Kinship connexious	2	13	15	17	3	3.1
Education	1	3	19	23	4	3.5
Wealth	-	1	-	7	42	4.8

The table shows that religiosity was ranked first by 40 of the household heads, second by 7 and third by 3, yielding a rank score of 1.3. At the other end of the scale, wealth was ranked second by one household head, fourth by seven and fifth by 42, yielding a score of 4.8.

The highest status was thus widely accorded to religious people who are seen as devoting their lives to serving God and helping other people, largely irrespective of their

education or wealth. Age was accorded second place, followed by kinship connexions, education and wealth, in that order.

Read as a whole the table provides strong evidence of the conservatism of Hwylan society with the 'traditional' factors of religiosity, age and kinship connexions clearly being ranked higher than the 'modern' factors of education and wealth. Similar tables were drawn up distinguishing, first, between owners of 'modern' and 'traditional' homes and then between farmers and non-farmers, but there were no significant differences in the rankings. (The Tables are therefore not presented here).

The above results were entirely in keeping with observations and conversations conducted with the household heads of Hwylan during the course of the field work. In this respect, the household heads emerged as a homogenous group with no striking deviants. I have no convincing means of knowing whether women in the community would have differed, but it seems unlikely. Despite Hwylan's increasing involvement in the life of Buraidah and the modern economy of the country, it remains a 'traditional' and 'conservative' village in its general outlook and ideology.

## Conclusion

This chapter has presented a general description of Hwylan and its people, looking at the village's location, history, layout, demographic structure and economy. Community facilities were also described. It was necessary to rely mainly on information provided by local inhabitants and on observation as written materials about the village are scarce.

Hwylan has a long history as a settlement closely linked to the community of Buraidah. Today it consists of six neighbourhoods (Arabic: Manzelat), some named after families which had dominated them in the past and others after particular features. Public services and community facilities are the government's responsibility. Most of these facilities have developed remarkably in recent years, the exceptions being the telephone, postal services and domestic water supply. The people complained strongly of the inadequacy of the latter.

The population declined sharply from 1348 persons in 1974 to under 600 in 1988. This decline was due to massive out-migration related to social mobility resulting from dramatic

changes in the political economy of the region and the country as a whole.

Farming is still one of the main occupations, with vegetables, fruits and some cereals being grown both for home use and for trade. The majority of men in Hwylan are government employees but farming, full-time or part-time, remains an important social and economic activity. There are large differences in education and literacy between the younger and older inhabitants and between males and females, with younger people and males tending to be better educated.

The economy of the village has to be viewed in the context of the development of the national economy since the 1970's. As a result of financial aid coming from government institutions and the employment of men in Buraidah, Hwylan has witnessed rapid and far-reaching changes in housing, communications and technology, education and the like.

There is a wide range of wealth between families but there are no social classes in the Western sense, but status is affected by a number of factors: religiosity, age, education, kin and wealth. High status still depends mainly

on the 'traditional' criteria of religiosity, age and kinship connexions, rather than the 'modern' criteria of education and wealth.

## APPENDICES TO CHAPTER FOUR

### I Case History of Farmer No.1

Saad, over 45 years old, is married and lives with his family members on their farm. He has farmed since childhood. His life history is given in an edited version of his own oral account:

In the past, when I was young, farming was done by traditional methods. Farms were irrigated by harnessing camels, wells were dug by hand, women and children used to work on the farm. Farm products, such as dates and grains, were mainly produced for household consumption, but the household also used to exchange their surplus for other items they needed. One of the adult males would load the donkey with dates or grain and take them to the town (Buraidah) market, where he sold the produce and bought salt, coffee, tea, spices, clothes, kitchenware.....etc. He brought these back to the village for family consumption. There were no vehicles, no paved roads, no electricity and no water pumps. The life style was simple. Mutual co-operation was much better than nowadays. When a family needed something, they could borrow from a friend. People also co-operated in their farming activities. One helped the other whenever it was



needed. The village was like one family. A tool might be borrowed, hands were provided for help between the farmers. The only fertilizers used were animal wastes. The animals kept for meat and dairy produce included goats, sheep and cows.

In the last thirty years or so, farming has changed very much. Water wells are now dug by drills hired from outside the village, water pumps have replaced harnessing, vehicles have replaced donkeys and camels. When I have extra work on the farm, such as seasonal palm date pollination, I hire casual expatriate workers from Buraidah labour market. They do the necessary work in one or two days. Then I pay them and they leave. In the past when the family members used to do this work with each other, people would climb the palm trees to do the pollination by hand. Now they use ladders and modern technology.

Farming has become costly, as people now use chemical fertilizers, fuel, pumps, seeds.....etc. In fact, I have had to rely on loans from the Saudi Agricultural Bank and money lenders in the town to pay for various things I needed, mostly for the farm. I have used loans for drilling a water well, for improving the farm soil and for a water pump. The



loans from the Agricultural Bank were interest free and there are subsidies for farm needs.

Although my farm produces various products, such as dates, vegetables and fruits, my main income comes from dates because vegetables in Buraidah market are very cheap with large quantities imported from abroad. I am not able to harvest big crops; nor can my children, who are now busy with their studies, and it would cost more if I hired or imported labour to do this work. In fact I suggest that we ought to stop importing what we can produce ourselves. I could then make a profit when the prices go up. I could produce more than I do but now imports discourage me from doing so or from delivering to the market. My children only help me to pick up the vegetables needed for the family. If there was a marketing company for farming produce, many farmers would be encouraged to produce more quantities of vegetables in addition to dates.

## II Case History of Farmer No 2

Sulaim is over 55 years old and married. He lives with his family on the farm on which he has worked since childhood. He gave his recollections as follows:

When I was a teenage boy I used to work on the farm all day. We drew water from the wells using camels and cows. It was about 40 years ago that we first heard about water pumps being brought to the region. We were told that the pumps were worked by coal. But it was not until ten years later that we began to use them in Hwylan. From that time harnessing camels and cows began to vanish. This reduced our labour effort and helped us a lot. We produced mainly dates and wheat. Farm produce was very cheap at that time. Several kilos of wheat cost only one riyal, but the riyal was not available to everybody as it is nowadays. Nearly all the farm work was done by family members of the household, males and females, young and old.

There were also some Saudi Arabian farm workers who were usually hired on a casual day basis. A farm worker who worked all day long was usually paid in kind, mainly dates as few farmers had grain to offer in exchange of labour. Up to about thirty years ago, a worker was sometimes hired to work

for one month during the season, and imagine that he was paid only one riyal for a month's work, very hard work; but one riyal was enough to meet his living needs.

Most of the people in Hwylan including our household, depended mainly on dates for our main diet. We used to make various types of food from dates, raw and cooked. Wheat was also very important, but not many people cultivated it.

In general, we were far more active than nowadays; imagine that the women worked on the farms. They cut the wheat, they cleaned it, crushed it or ground it to make flour and made bread or other food. Women in fact worked hard; today they are mainly dependent on men, and we men do not work alone. We hire labour, not from the village but from abroad. These foreign workers are either hired for casual work or they come on contracts to live and work in the farm. I have an Egyptian on contract. He lives on the farm and works daily. I have several adult male family members. But things have really changed. Today they study or work in other jobs. Their work on the farm is quite minimal.

I want to remain a farmer but my children are of a different generation and things are different now. I am not educated to be able to do other work. When I was a child

there were no schools. Now, to be honest, education for my sons is more important than anything else. I have to admit this, but everything is caused by God, let the sons have their education, and what they will learn or earn is, no doubt, God's will. One cannot know the future.

Over the past twenty years, I had several loans from the Saudi Agricultural Bank for my farm. These loans encouraged me to keep my farm, otherwise, it would have been difficult for me to run it. Things nowadays are expensive and various supplies are needed: seeds, plants, fertilizers....etc.

In earlier days, we used to transport dates to Buraidah on donkeys which got tired on the way to town because of the sand. Sometimes we carried the dates on our backs. We were stronger than nowadays. Today cars have replaced the animals. In fact we have got so used to them that we use them for short distances and we use them more than once in a single day. Before we travelled much less than this. Things have changed, only God does not change. Imagine that now palm date pollination costs ten riyals for each palm, and we depend on labour from abroad to do it!

## CHAPTER FIVE

### EXPATRIATES IN HWYLAN

#### Introduction

In Chapter Two we referred to the large influx of foreign workers recruited to work in both the private and public sectors in Saudi Arabia, especially since the 1970's. Virtually all settlements in the country now have substantial numbers of expatriate workers and, as we saw in the previous chapter, Hwylan is no exception. The enumeration of the village population in September 1988 revealed that there were 65 expatriates living independently of Saudi households. In addition, there was one Egyptian woman married to a Saudi man and six women - two Filipinos, two Sri Lankans and two Indonesians - living in Saudi households as domestic helpers.

Although the expatriates living independently of Saudi households have little social contact with the native inhabitants outside working hours, they constitute an important element in the socio-economic structure of the village. This chapter is devoted to an examination of their socio-demographic characteristics, their recruitment and reasons for coming to Hwylan, the ways in which they are

employed, their accommodation and wages, and the nature of their integration.

### 5.1 Socio-demographic profile

According to local informants, expatriates began to come to Hwylan about thirty years ago. The first was an Egyptian man recruited to teach in the boys' primary school. He was followed by other professionals who came to work in the SDC after its establishment in 1961. Egyptians, Tunisians, Jordanians, Indians and Pakistanis were at various times employed there. Later, a few local farmers began to employ foreign labourers and, more recently, building and other semi-skilled workers have also been recruited. As we shall see (Table 5.4), about a quarter had been there less than a year and over a half for one to two years only. This is partly because the demand for expatriates has been rising, but mainly because of their high turnover as labour migrants. When their contracts end, they may choose not to return or their employers may decide not to renew their contracts. This in itself militates against their full integration as members of the community. But there are other factors as well. Only the Egyptians and Yemenis, who make up about a half of all expatriates, are Arabic speakers, so the remainder are impeded in their efforts at integration by

language difficulties. Moreover, the activities of most expatriates are severely restricted by law. For example, they are not allowed to own property in Saudi Arabia or to set up in business on their own account. (The Yemenis were in the past a partial exception to this). The expatriate population thus exhibits characteristics typical of a migrant labour force even though some are professionals such as doctors, nurses and teachers.

As shown in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1, 72.3 per cent of the 1988 expatriate population were males and there were only 12 persons or 18.5 per cent under the age of 20 years. The largest single age and sex category was that of men aged 20 to 40 years; there were 38 making up 58.5 per cent of the total, whereas there were only 10 women aged 20-40 making up 15.4 per cent. Table 5.1 also shows that 14 of the men were single and 27 married. But only five of the married men had their wives and families with them in Hwylan. These were all professionals or office personnel, most of them working at the SDC. Of the five married women, only one was a full-time housewife, the others working as professionals at the SDC and one at a local school. The remaining adult males were living as single men, whether married or not.

Table 5.1

Expatriates in Hwylan by Age, Sex and Marital Situation

Age	Males				Females				Total Population			
	Single	Married living alone	Married with wife in Hwylan	Total		Single	Married	Widowed	Total			
				No	%				No	%		
<6	3	-	-	3	6.4	1	-	-	1	5.5	4	6.2
6-12	2	-	-	2	4.3	3	-	-	3	16.7	5	7.7
13-19	1	-	-	1	2.1	2	-	-	2	11.1	3	4.6
20-26	8	-	-	8	17.0	4	-	-	4	22.2	12	18.5
27-33	6	10	2	18	38.2	2	2	-	4	22.2	22	33.8
34-40	-	10	2	12	25.5	-	2	-	2	11.1	14	21.5
41-47	-	2	1	3	6.4	-	1	-	1	5.5	4	6.2
48-55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	5.5	1	1.5
Total	20	22	5	47	100	12	5	1	18	100	65	100



HWYLAN'S EXPATRIATE POPULATION PYRAMID IN 1988

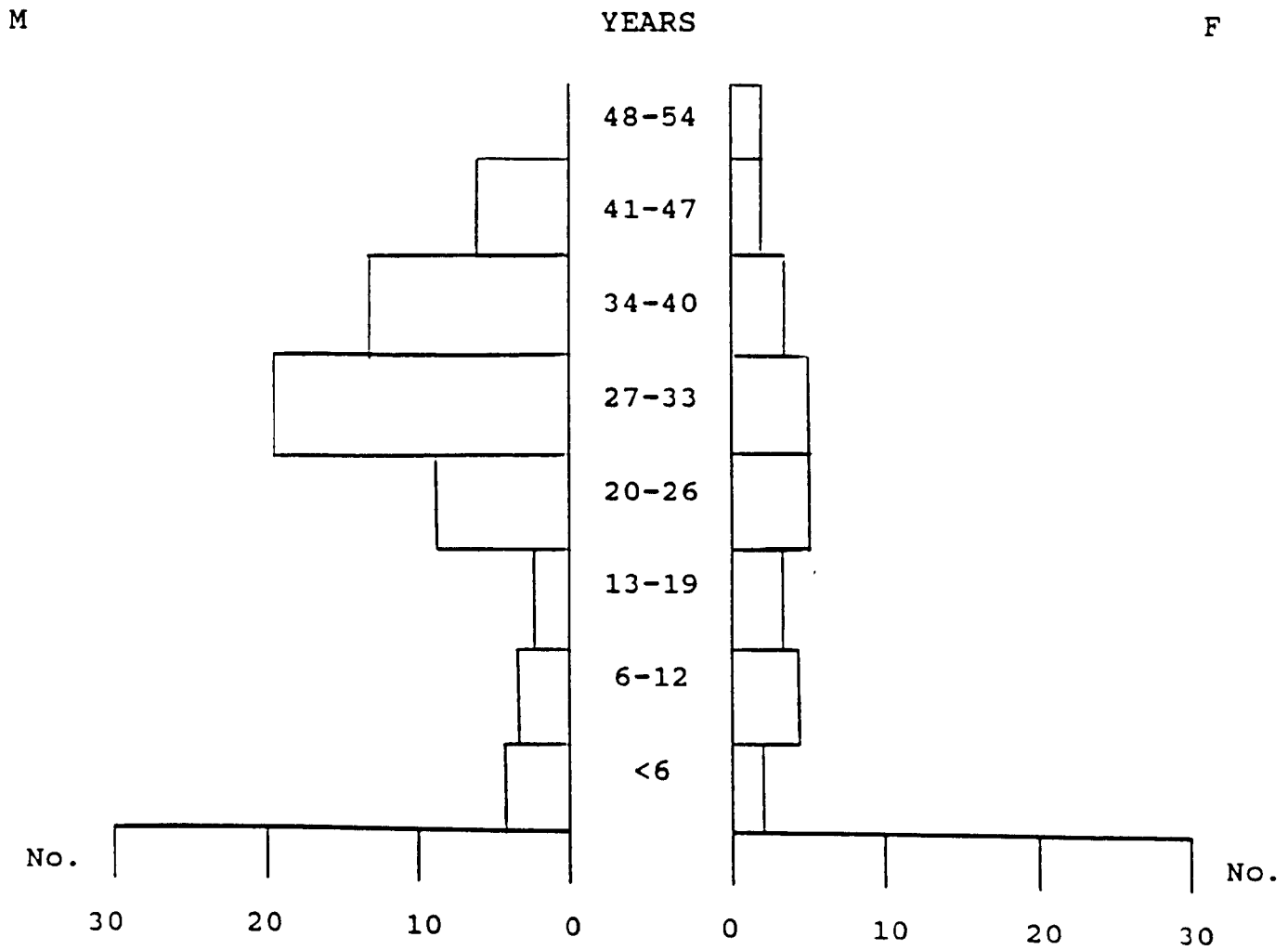


Figure 5.1

Three of the married couples had between them 12 children (six boys and six girls) who made up the 18.5 per cent of the expatriates under 20 years of age. All were students in Hwylan or elsewhere.

The nationalities and occupational categories of the employed adult population are shown in Table 5.2 and their specific occupations by sex in Table 5.3. As can be seen in Table 5.2, the two main nationalities among the expatriates were Egyptians and Indians, both being represented by professionals as well as by labourers and semi-skilled workers. They were followed by smaller number of Turks, Yemenis, Filipinos, Pakistanis and one Indonesian. Few of these were professional workers.

A clear majority of about two thirds of the migrants were employed as semi-skilled workers, shop assistants or farm labourers and nearly one third as professionals. It can also be seen that there was a fairly marked tendency for members of some national groups to be found in particular occupations. Thus, all the Turks were semi-skilled workers, most of them being employed in building and construction work, while all the Yemenis were shop workers. Conversely, all the farm workers were Egyptians with the exception of one Indian. In contrast to this tendency, professional and semi-

skilled workers were more heterogeneous in culture and nationality. Not surprisingly, as shown in Table 5.3, there was also a tendency for the men to be concentrated in particular occupations, while all the women worked in professional posts, mainly in the health sector.

The largest single category of workers was in building and construction doing semi-skilled jobs such as brick-laying and house-building. Most of them worked in Buraidah but lived in Hwylan, as did their employer who had built accommodation for them close to his own house. Farm workers were the next largest category of workers. Most of them lived on the nine farms on which they were employed.

Three of the nurses and one midwife worked at the SDC while three nurses worked in nearby villages. The six nurses, two Filipinas and four Indians, shared a flat (see Case History No 2 in appendices to this chapter), while the Pakistani midwife had her own room in the SDC. There was also a female health visitor, working in the SDC. The five doctors consisted of two married couples - one Egyptian and one Indian - and an Indian man whose wife did not work. The male Egyptian doctor worked at a government clinic in Buraidah while the others, male and female, worked at the SDC.

Table 5.2

Expatriates in Hwylan by  
Nationality and Occupational Category

Nationality	Semi-skilled workers	Farm workers	Shop workers	Professional and office workers	Total	
					No	%
Egyptian	5	10	0	6	21	40.4
Indian	5	1	0	7	13	25.0
Turkish	6	0	0	0	6	11.5
Yemeni	0	0	5	0	5	9.6
Filipino	1	0	0	2	3	5.8
Pakistani	2	0	0	1	3	5.8
Indonesian	1	0	0	0	1	1.9
Total	20	11	5	16	52	100
%	38.5	21.2	9.6	30.8	100	

Note: This table excludes one Indian housewife, four Indian and eight Egyptian children. If we include them the total is 65 and the national proportions are as follows: Egyptians 44.6%, Indians 27.8%, Turks 9.2%, Yemenis 7.7%, Filipinos 4.6%, Pakistanis 4.6% and Indonesian 1.5%.

Table 5.3  
Occupation of Adult Expatriates by Sex

Occupation	Men	Women	Total	
			No	%
Builders	12	0	12	23.1
Farm workers	11	0	11	21.2
Nurse/midwife or health visitor	0	8	8	15.4
Physician/GP	3	2	5	9.7
Shop workers	5	0	5	9.6
Cleaners at the SDC	5	0	5	9.6
Mechanic Water Tower worker	2	0	2	3.8
SDC Clerk	1	0	1	1.9
Private driver	1	0	1	1.9
Private sector clerk	1	0	1	1.9
Teacher	0	1	1	1.9
Total	41	11	52	100

The five cleaners shown in Table 5.3 were all Indians working for a Saudi maintenance contractor whose firm was located outside the province. He himself did not live in Hwylan but had arranged for the cleaners to live there as he had a contract with the SDC. The five shop workers were all Yemeni men who worked in the village's two grocery shops, a bakery and a tyre repair shop.

In addition to the above groups, there were two water tower operators (one Filipino, one Pakistani) and a few

single cases: an Egyptian clerk at the SDC whose wife taught at the girls' primary school, an Indonesian driver employed by the village's amir, and one Egyptian clerk working in the private sector in Buraidah.

The length of stay of all expatriates is shown in Table 5.4 distinguishing between Egyptians, Indians and the rest, and in Table 5.5, for employed persons only, distinguishing between the four broad occupational categories previously used in Table 5.2

The data in Tables 5.4 and 5.5 indicate that the majority of the expatriates, more than 67 per cent, had less than 3 years residence in the village; most of these being semi-skilled workers. Only the professionals and some farm workers had longer terms of residence.

Table 5.4

Expatriates by Length of Residence in Hwylan

Length of Residence	Egyptians		Indians		The Rest		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Under one year	1	3.4	4	22.2	12	66.7	17	26.2
1-2 years	9	31.0	6	33.3	3	16.7	18	27.7
3-4 years	13	44.8	3	16.7	1	5.6	17	26.2
Over 4 years	6	20.7	5	27.8	2	11.1	13	20.0
Total	29	100	18	100	18	100	65	100

Table 5.5

Length of Residence of Expatriates in  
Employment by Occupational Category

Length of Residence	Semi-skilled worker		Farm worker		Shop worker		Professional and office worker		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Under one year	11	55	1	9.1	5	100			17	32.7
1-2 years	9	45	5	45.4			4	25	18	34.6
3-4 years			3	27.3			6	37.5	9	17.3
Over 4 years			2	18.2			6	37.5	8	15.4
Total	20	100	11	100	5	100	16	100	52	100

The two best established groups were the Egyptians and the Indians. One Egyptian health visitor (female) had first come to Buraidah in 1974. She remained there for two years before moving to Hwylan to work in the SDC. When she first came, she was single, but after three years she revisited her home country, married an Egyptian and was later able to find a job for him as a clerk in Buraidah. A few years later, they were joined in the area by her brother and his wife. The brother now works in Buraidah. This example is an indication of the way in which the Egyptian group has developed, gradually building up a small colony of fellow nationals in the area in close contact with each other. The Indians have similarly developed their own groups in and around Buraidah.

The main reason for the development of national groups of the above kind is that expatriates in general are largely segregated from the Saudi inhabitants on account of differences in culture, nationality and in some cases religion, the exception to this being the Arab workers. These differences, as well as the sense of belonging to their original communities, have led the expatriates to rely on their various common affiliations in the face of their virtual exclusion from Saudi society. Thus Hwylan expatriates tended to have out-of-work social relationships only with members of their respective groups, whether this be in the village itself or beyond. In addition to this, they tended to group together according to their occupations and social status. The farm workers associated with each other, while clerks and professionals tended to have their own relationships. Thus the Egyptian farm workers on the one hand and professionals on the other scarcely had any significant contact with each other.

The female nurses of different nationalities were the only expatriates to constitute an integrated group. Apart from being largely segregated from Saudi society, they were, as women, extremely restricted in their movements and associations. For example, they were only allowed by their employers to go shopping once a month. At other times they



relied on the SDC housekeeper to obtain what they needed on their behalf.

Table 5.6 shows the educational levels of all the expatriates in Hwylan. Four of the children were below school age and of the remaining eight, five Egyptians were at school in Hwylan and three Indians in Riyadh.

Of the expatriates aged 20 to 26 years old, seven had reached the elementary and intermediate level, two had reached secondary level, while three had reached the higher education level. None of the expatriates of either sex, under the age of 27 years, were illiterate. There were only four illiterate expatriates, all aged 27 to 33 years old. This age group also contained two persons who could read and write only, nine who had reached elementary or intermediate education, and five who had reached secondary level. In this age group, only two individuals had received higher education.

Among the 14 foreigners aged between 34 to 40 years old, there were two people who could read and write only, and seven who had elementary or intermediate education. The largest number of highly educated migrants were in this age group. Of the four expatriates aged between 41 and 47 years

Table 5.6  
Expatriates by Education and Age

Age (years)	Education													
	Illiterate		Read/Write		Elementary/Int		Secondary		High. Educ.		Child		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
0-6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	6.2	4	6.2
6-12	-	-	-	-	5	7.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	7.7
13-19	-	-	-	-	1	1.5	2	3.1	-	-	-	-	3	4.6
20-26	-	-	-	-	7	10.8	2	3.1	3	4.6	-	-	12	18.5
27-33	4	6.2	2	3.1	9	13.8	5	7.7	2	3.1	-	-	22	33.8
34-40	-	-	2	3.1	7	10.8	-	-	5	7.7	-	-	14	21.5
41-47	-	-	1	1.5	-	-	-	-	3	4.6	-	-	4	6.2
48-55	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.5	-	-	-	-	1	1.5
Total	4	6.2	5	7.77	29	44.6	10	15.4	13	20	4	6.2	65	100

old, there was one who could read and write only, but three had achieved higher education. The only expatriate older than 47 had been educated to secondary level.

As shown in Table 5.1, only five married males had their wives and children with them. These were all holders of higher degrees. Two were Indian physicians, one whose wife was also a physician, while the wife of the other was a housewife with secondary education. The remainder were Egyptians: The males were a physician and two clerks, and their wives were a physician, a teacher and a health visitor.

With the exception of the higher degree holders, the expatriates were not necessarily working in jobs reflecting their level of education. Four secondary level holders, two Indians and two Turks, were working either in the construction sector or as cleaners. Four men with intermediate education were working as farm labourers or in the grocery shops or the construction sector.

## 5.2 Recruitment, Incomes and Remittances:

For all the employed expatriates, the main reasons for coming to Saudi Arabia were financial. This is common

knowledge and has often been referred to in the literature on the Gulf countries. Owen (1984:4) gives the following examples:

The Official Bangladeshi position when negotiating contracts for its workers going to the Gulf is based on the assumption that Gulf salaries are 6-8 times as high as local ones for professionals and skilled labour, and 5-6 times as high for unskilled: Sri Lankan house maids, labourers and cooks can obtain 12 times their local wages in the Gulf; an Egyptian school teacher who earns \$600-700 a year in his own village can save at least \$12,000 a year while teaching in Saudi Arabia; an unskilled Egyptian peasant can earn more in Saudi Arabia than one of his own cabinet ministers back home.

Interviews with expatriates in Hwylan fully confirmed that the high wages offered to them were the most important reason for seeking work there (see, for example, Case Histories I and II in Appendix to this chapter). Work in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States in general is keenly sought by many people in the poorer countries of the Third World, but competition for the available work is keen and the Saudi Arabian labour laws governing entry to the country are strict. The most important requirement in submitting an entry and work application is to have a sponsor (Arabic: Kafeel) from within the country. The only nationals who were for long exempt from this requirement were Yemenis. They were allowed entry without a visa or a sponsor or the offer of a job, provided they had valid passports. Many came to

Saudi Arabia in the 1960's and enjoyed the privilege of being able to move from one job to another without official permission. They were also permitted to have their own businesses such as retail shops or motor workshops. But these privileges have been withdrawn since the Gulf War, owing to Yemen's support for Iraq.

The case of Ahmed, a Yemeni living in Hwylan in 1988, illustrates the use of these privileges. Aged 35 years, Ahmed migrated to Saudi Arabia about 20 years ago. He first worked in Jeddah as a construction worker, then as a bakery worker. On his removal to Al Qassim region, he worked in several towns, always as a bakery worker with other Yemenis. He moved to Hwylan in 1988 to work in the grocery and bakery shop. He knew that he was allowed to bring his family with him, but because of his financial situation, he preferred to leave them in his home country. For them to join him in Saudi Arabia would have cost nearly 30,000 Saudi Riyals in travel expenses and passports, and he would then also need to rent a house, whereas living alone is much cheaper as he is provided with free accommodation by his employer. This enables him to save money which he periodically remits to his family in Yemen.

In contrast to the Yemenis, Egyptians and other nationals had to have visas to enter Saudi Arabia and they were required to have sponsors before visas were issued to them by the Saudi Arabian Embassy in their home countries. The bureaucratic conditions and financial demands that had to be met are illustrated by K.A, an Egyptian, aged 30 years, who migrated to Hwylan three years before I interviewed him. He had been a farm worker in Egypt, but he explained that although he was employed in his country, his salary in Hwylan was almost seven times what he earned at home. He heard from several friends that Saudi Arabian salaries were much higher than in Egypt. His friends told him of a recruiting agency in Cairo. He went to the agency with his passport, to apply for work in Saudi Arabia. The agency photocopied his passport, and took his home address. A month later, the agency informed him that there was a job for him in Hwylan as a private farm worker. On receiving this news, with which he was delighted, he again travelled to Cairo to hand in his passport to the agency but they now wanted to charge him a fee for their service. Neither he nor his family had the EL500 required, yet failure to pay would mean he would lose the opportunity of the job in Hwylan. His parents gave him some of this money, and his family borrowed the rest from friends. He returned to the agency and handed in the money. Part of this was to pay for the processing of his passport

and the purchase of a one-way sea travel ticket from Suez to Jeddah. The rest of the money, nearly half of what he had paid, was the fee for the agency. The agency, as authorised by his sponsor, signed a contract with him for two years and specified his monthly salary. A few days later, he left Egypt by ship and arrived in Jeddah. His sponsor paid the cost of his travel from Jeddah but did not reimburse his travelling expenses from Jeddah to Buraidah. When he arrived in Hwylan, he started working on his sponsor's farm. He was provided with free accommodation. Two years after his arrival in Hwylan, he was entitled to a vacation for three months. Although his sponsor should have paid for his vacation travel to Egypt, he did not do so, therefore K.A. had to pay his own expenses. Despite this, after three months in Egypt, he returned to his work. K.A. said that another reason for his wanting work in Saudi Arabia was to perform the pilgrimage to Makkah, which he did in 1987.

An Egyptian woman, A.A.A., aged 36 years old, had come to Saudi Arabia as a health visitor more than ten years previously. She had been told by some friends about an advertisement placed in an Egyptian newspaper by the Saudi Ministry of Health. She contacted the Saudi Embassy in Cairo, as she knew she would get a much higher wage in Saudi Arabia than in Egypt. An appointment was made for her with

the Saudi Embassy for an interview. She was offered the post and handed in her passport and her B.A. degree certificate. Later, she signed a work contract with a representative of the Saudi Ministry of Health and was subsequently given air travel tickets from Cairo to Buraidah.

After working in Buraidah for two years, she was asked by her Ministry to move to Hwylan to live and work in the SDC. At that time she was single, but she later married on a visit to her country ten years ago. Her husband was allowed to join her, but his travel expenses were not paid by her employer, and she had to pay for him herself. Some time after his arrival, he found work in Buraidah. A.A.A. also encouraged her brother to seek a job in Saudi Arabia, and he too migrated from Egypt when he found a job in the region four years ago.

Other Egyptian migrants also said that they had migrated because of high wages in Saudi Arabia. Professionals, such as health visitors and doctors were recruited by advertisements in their country's newspapers, placed by the Saudi Arabian government institutions, whereupon they contacted the Saudi Arabian embassy in Cairo. Semi-skilled and manual workers had to apply for work through the recruiting agencies in their country of origin. These



agencies were contacted by Saudi Arabian sponsors who wanted Egyptian workers.

Professional and skilled workers from India, Pakistan, Philippines, Indonesia and Turkey had also been attracted by advertisements in their countries' newspapers or been told about opportunities in Saudi Arabia by their friends. They contacted the Saudi Arabian Embassy or a recruiting agency authorised by a Saudi Arabian employer who then interviewed them, processed their passports and bought them their travel tickets. Semi-skilled and manual workers are not recruited by Saudi Arabian embassies and they have to take the initiative by contacting recruiting agencies who charge them for their services. They also have to pay their own travel costs (see, for example, Case History No. 1 in Appendix to this chapter). These migrants therefore usually have to borrow money to meet their costs.

We have said that the expatriates can, in Saudi Arabia, earn far more than in their own countries. The lowest monthly income, as shown in the note to Table 5.7, was 400 S.R. The data in the table also shows that only five migrant workers earned less than 600 S.R. The 20 expatriates who worked as farm workers, building workers, mechanic and private driver were paid between 600-1199 S.R per calendar

month. However, all of them were accommodated free of charge and most of their food was provided by their employers, which helped them reduce their living expenses while staying in the host community. These facilities no doubt enable them to save most of their wages. Accordingly, they can remit the greater part to their families, since they have few expenses in Hwylan.

The nine expatriates who earned between 1200-1799 S.R. were mainly building workers and shop keepers. Four nurses, midwives or health visitors, two clerks and three shop keepers were paid monthly wages between 1800-2399 S.R. Only two nurses, midwives or health visitors had monthly incomes between 2400-2999 S.R. while two of them earned 3000-3599 S.R. The highest wages were paid to the five physicians, who received more than 3600 S.R.

Although there were large differences between the monthly income of the expatriates, all of them were able to remit a significant proportion of their wages to their families in their countries of origin. The following interview information illustrates this.

Table 5.7

Expatriates' Income in Saudi Riyals by Occupation

Occupation	Under 600	600-1199	1200-1799	1800-2399	2400-2999	3000-3599	3600>	Total	
								No	%
Building worker		6	6					12	23.1
Farm worker		11						11	21.2
Nurse, midwife and health visitor				4	2	2		8	15.4
Physician							5	5	9.7
Shop worker			2	3				5	9.6
SDC Cleaner	5							5	9.6
Mechanic water tower worker		2						2	3.8
SDC Clerk				1				1	1.9
Private driver		1						1	1.9
Private sector clerk				1				1	1.9
Teacher			1					1	1.9
Total	5	20	9	9	2	2	5	52	
Per Cent	9.7	38.4	17.3	17.3	3.8	3.8	9.7		100

\* The minimum monthly wage among the expatriates was 400 S.R.

M.S., a worker from Pakistan aged 35 years old, was married but had left his family in Pakistan. He reported that he liked his job, since he was paid a monthly wage of 1000 S.R. He was not concerned about where he worked in Saudi Arabia or what job he did, as long as he was paid such a good salary to maintain his standard of living and that of this family. If he had remained in his own country, he would have earned only one fifth of what he could earn in Saudi Arabia. Although his living conditions where he worked in Hwylan were very poor, his satisfaction was mainly related to the remittances of about two thirds of this salary that he was able to send back to his family. Another reason was that he was able to perform the pilgrimage to Makkah, which would have been very expensive if he had undertaken it from Pakistan.

C.T. was a Filipino worker who came to Saudi Arabia in 1987 to work in a private firm. His salary was less than 1000 S.R. a month, but he said that this wage was far higher than what he could earn in his own country. His accommodation was provided for him free of charge, and although it lacked basic facilities, he was quite happy in his work as long as he could save money and send an average of three hundred U.S. dollars (1000 S.R.) to his widowed

mother every two or three months, which he did by means of a cheque from a bank in Buraidah, payable to his mother.

O.G. was a South Eastern Asian who worked on the amir's farm as a driver. He had come to Saudi Arabia eighteen months previously. Although his wage was at least four times higher than he could earn in his own country, he considered that at 800 S.R. a month, it was too low, because he worked all day long. His accommodation and most of his food were provided free of charge for him by his employer, which enabled him to save an average of 150 U.S. dollars (560 S.R.) a month to send to his wife, his children and his parents. Although his wife worked as a teacher in his country, his earnings in Saudi Arabia were at least four times higher than her wage. Meanwhile, his parents also depended on his remittances.

P.C. was an Indian building cleaner, from the state of Kerala. Wishing to work in Saudi Arabia, he applied to a recruiting agency in India, which later contacted him with the news that they had found a job for him at a salary of 750 S.R. a month. The agency charged him 25,000 Indian Rupees in order to process his passport and provide him with a visa to Saudi Arabia. His father gave him the money. After all the

necessary formalities, he signed the contract with the agency which was authorised by his Saudi employer to recruit workers. The contract he had signed indicated his monthly salary would be 750 S.R. However, when he arrived in Saudi Arabia in 1985, his employers told him that he would only be paid 500 S.R. a month. Although disappointed, he had to accept it, as even 500 S.R. is much more than he could earn in India. But he nevertheless felt cheated. To make matters worse, he was at first unable to send money home because his employer did not pay him for ten months on the grounds that there was no money available. P.C. had to borrow from fellow countrymen in Buraidah to live on. Fortunately, accommodation was provided for him free of charge. He said that he would certainly not renew his contract which was due to run out in less than six months.

Skilled migrants, who earn much higher wages, and are usually provided with accommodation allowances, are able to remit much larger sums than semi-skilled and manual workers. A.E. was an Egyptian clerk in the SDC, with a wage of 2500 S.R. a month. He said that his salary was at least five times what he could earn in Egypt. Since his arrival in Hwylan, four years previously, he had saved at least 1000 S.R. a month which he sent through a bank in Buraidah to his parents in Egypt.

S.Y. was a nurse. She had two years previously come from the state of Kerala in India. She earned 1980 S. R. a month, a very high salary compared to India's wages. She was provided with free accommodation, which enabled her to save substantially. She sent to her parents, through a bank in Buraidah, an average of 1000 S.R. a month. She said she would be very keen to renew her contract when it ran out. She was very happy with her high salary, which was sufficient to keep not only herself but also her family in India.

### 5.3 Living Arrangements

Expatriates have no need to look for accommodation when they first come to the country on a contract with the government. An official meets the newcomer at the airport and escorts him or her to temporary accommodation. When the workers are settled, they normally have to look for suitable accommodation themselves and are paid an accommodation allowance by their sponsor. In some cases, especially the nurses and other female migrants, the government is responsible for providing them with accommodation free of charge. In the private sector, employers are usually responsible for arranging a house, a room or a flat for their employees. However, some migrants are not entitled to have accommodation arranged by their employer. This is especially

so in the case of Yemeni migrants, who therefore arrange their own accommodation, with the help of their countrymen. They often live with their Yemeni friends until they find their own houses.

The accommodation of migrants in Hwylan is shown in Table 5.8. There were 28 or 43.1 per cent occupying single separate rooms. These were mainly farm labourers whose employers had built rooms on their farms for those who worked for them or shop workers occupying rooms attached to the shops. Other workers employed by a small construction firm lived in rooms attached to their sponsor's house. The migrants living in separate rooms were all males; some lived with workmates while others lived alone.

Table 5.8

Expatriates' Accommodation

Housing Type	Number	%
Mud House	2	3.1
Modern villas (shared)	22	33.8
Flat (room at SDC)	12	18.5
Individual Room (separated)	28	43.1
Tent	1	1.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The second largest category of expatriates consisted of those living in villas. Including family members, there were



22 or 33.8 per cent in such accommodation. They tended to be the more highly qualified, working in professional and administrative positions, as doctors, clerks or health visitors. In addition to being well paid they received accommodation allowances which enabled them to rent good houses and also to bring their families to the country. These modern houses were located near the SDC, close to their place of employment. The houses were shared between two or more families.

Twelve of the foreign migrants lived in flats, located inside the SDC. These people consisted of a midwife, female nurses and male building cleaners. The flats were provided by the SDC free of charge. Sex segregation was strictly maintained, as the males' flat was located on the north east side of the SDC premises and the females' flats on the south west area of the building.

The female nurses were "strongly encouraged" to observe the tradition of the society. This in fact meant that they were not allowed to go out on their own. A mini-bus transported them collectively from their flats to their work places and to the shopping areas in Buraidah.

There were two men living in mud houses. They were farm workers whose employers had allocated unused houses on their farms to the workers. One farm worker lived in a tent, located on his employer's farm. He indicated that his sponsor had provided him with a cement-built room, but he preferred to live in the air-conditioned tent provided by the farmer.

Some of the migrants - mainly the single men - were not overly concerned about the nature of their accommodation, since they did not intend to stay permanently. They were therefore content to accept whatever accommodation was provided by their employers. Others, however, particularly the highly educated such as physicians, and those who had brought their families, had higher expectations on account of their status and of the fact that they were paid accommodation allowances.

As shown in Table 5.9, 43 migrants or 66.2 per cent, lived in accommodation provided by their sponsors: one mud house, a number of separate rooms, flats in the SDC, and a tent. Dwellers in this type of accommodation included males and females who were unmarried or who had not brought their families with them. Nine lived alone, the other 34 shared with fellow migrants.

Table 5.9

Housing Tenancy Type

Housing Tenancy Type	Number	%
Rent	22	33.8
Provided by Sponsor/Employer	43	66.2
Total	65	100.0

The remainder of 33.8 per cent were in accommodation rented by themselves. These were all members of nuclear families and all the rented accommodation was in modern houses.

5.4 Style of Life

The interviews with the migrants covered their style of life and details of household composition. They lived in relative isolation with little or no close contact or relationships with the indigenous population outside working hours. They therefore tended to build up their relations within their own ethnic groups, the Egyptians with their country people, the Indians with Indians and so on. Largely excluded from local society, they naturally turn to their fellow nationals where their own cultural norms are practiced. For example, when an Egyptian family pays visits to another Egyptian family, they meet each other with no segregation between males and females. But when in company

with Saudis they observe Saudi norms such as the seclusion of women.

Singles in each national group tend to spend their free time with each other, drinking tea, chatting, listening to recordings from their own country and exchanging information. Exchange of visits among them is usually in the evenings.

As shown in Table 5.10, single persons constituted about one third of the expatriates, while married people with their families in the village made up the remaining third.

Table 5.10

Expatriates' Position in Family/Household

Position	Number	%
Head of Household	5	7.7
Son	6	9.2
Wife	5	7.7
Daughter	6	9.2
Singles, living alone	9	13.8
Singles, living with other singles	34	52.8
TOTAL	65	100.0

The family groups were of two nationalities only: three were Egyptian and two Indian. The head of one of the

Egyptian families was a clerk at a private company in Buraidah, while his wife worked for the SDC as a health visitor. Their daughter was eight years old, and their two sons six and four years old. The second Egyptian family head was a clerk at the SDC, and his wife was a teacher at the girls' primary school. They had two daughters aged ten and four years old, and a son aged eight. The third Egyptian family head was a physician at one of the government clinics in Buraidah. His wife was a physician at the SDC. They had two children, a girl of ten and a boy of five.

In the first of two Indian families both parents were physicians at the SDC clinic. They had three children, two daughters aged 19 and 17, and a son aged 14 years old. The second Indian family head was also a physician at the SDC, but his wife was not employed. They had one son, aged four.

There were nine expatriates unaccompanied by any family members and living alone. They formed 13.8 per cent of the total expatriates and were of three nationalities: five Egyptian farm workers, all males, four of whom were married and the fifth single; two Yemeni men, one married working in the tyre repair shop, the other single, working in a grocery shop. There were two Pakistanis living alone, one man working as a construction worker, who was married but had not

brought his wife with him, the other a widow who worked as a midwife for the SDC.

Just over a half of the expatriates were living with other expatriates. Some of these were single, others were married but unaccompanied by any of their family members. This category included males and females from all of national groups represented in Hwylan. Six were female nurses, all single and aged between 25 and 29 years and of two nationalities, two Filipinos and four Indians. These nurses all shared a flat in the SDC.

In general, the expatriates practiced their own cultures within their households. When of the same nationality, they spoke their own languages or dialects, listened to cassettes from their countries of origin, ate their native food, and wore their native dress, etc... But, outside their homes, they carefully observed Saudi customs.

### **Conclusion**

During the 1970's a large number of foreign workers were recruited to work in both private and public sectors in Saudi Arabia. Although the government gave priority to highly skilled workers to supply the shortfall in the medical and

technological sectors, the private sector had much less need of such professionals, especially in the village areas. Most expatriates in Hwylan village were semi-skilled, since they were working in jobs not needing skilled people. The only exceptions were the medical staff. As the data showed, the majority of the expatriates were working in agriculture, construction or shops, which really do not need high qualifications.

Their social interaction with the inhabitants of Hwylan was very limited. They formed small sub-groups, surrounded by a strongly religious and traditional society. They had very little or no effect on the values and customs of their host community. While they observed Saudi customs when appropriate, it seems unlikely that Saudi society had any deep or lasting effect on them.

## Appendix to Chapter Five:

### The Case Histories of Two Expatriate Migrant Workers

#### I An Egyptian Farm Labourer

My country is Egypt. I lived in a small rural village all of my life. My age now is 30 years old. I was not able to continue my studies, so I ended my education without graduating from the primary school, at less than 14 years of age. My parents are poor, but I was dependent on them for my needs until I grew up. In 1984 many Egyptian workers migrated to work in Iraq, so I decided to go there as I had difficulty in finding a job in my own country. I borrowed some money from kin-people and friends, and I travelled to Iraq through Jordan by land. When I travelled there I was just a tourist in the eyes of the authorities, because I had no sponsor or employer, but actually I was planning to work there. I ended up in a city in southern Iraq, working in a private hotel as a service man, cleaning beds and tidying rooms. I was paid 150 Iraqi Dinar per month. I worked there for one year.

I was not able to save enough money there, so I decided to give up and go to another country. I travelled by land to Jordan. Again, I was viewed by the authorities as a tourist



because I had no employer, but I went there to get a job, better than the one in Iraq. Illegally, I went to the labourers' market, where I mixed with those who worked in the building sector. I got jobs on a daily payment basis handing cement bricks to the builders. I worked there for three months. Again, I was not satisfied with my earnings, so I went back to Egypt to my village, but I was very anxious to find a job somewhere else.

I decided this time to get a job in Saudi Arabia. I travelled from my village to Cairo. I took my passport with me to a recruiting agency which I heard about from several friends. I asked the agency to find a job for me in Saudi Arabia. The agency photocopied my passport and told me to check with them every week to find out whether they had found a job for me or not. After only twenty days, I went to the agency and they told me they had found a job for me in Saudi Arabia, as a farm worker in a small village near Buraidah. They told me that my monthly salary would be 750 S.R. plus free accommodation. I was happy at this news, because I was very keen to work in Saudi Arabia. I would get a higher salary, I could perform the pilgrimage to Makkah, and I could save more money for my future. Also I could buy electrical appliances very cheaply and take them with me for my family.

The recruiting agency told me I had to pay 500 Egyptian pounds (approximately one month's expected salary) as a fee for their services and to buy my ticket. This amount was a lot of money for me and I could not afford it, so I borrowed from my kin-people and friends. I knew that the amount I was paying was far higher than my ticket would cost and too much for the processing of my documents, but I would not be able to get a job overseas if I did not comply with the requirements of the recruiting agency. Therefore, I paid the full amount they asked.

The agency processed my documents and organised my travel from Suez to Jeddah only. The cost of travelling from Cairo to Suez to Jeddah to Buraidah, I paid myself, but I was so happy that I had found a job in Saudi Arabia, I had no desire to argue or ask, I just did what the agency wanted. When I arrived in Jeddah, I went to the taxi station and I travelled with others by taxi to Buraidah. I had my employer's address and people whom I asked, directed me to Hwylan, where I started my work on my sponsor's farm. I am very happy in my work now. I have been working here for two years and eight months.

My sponsor is a very kind man. He raised my salary from 750 S.R. to 800 S.R. a month and often invites me to parties

in his home or at his relatives' or friends' houses. All my meals are also provided for me free of charge.

Since I came to work here I have lived alone in this room, which is quite nice, built of cement bricks, on my employer's farm. My sponsor provides me with meals every day and brings them to my room. Since I came, he has bought me a bed. I have bought my own black and white television set and a cassette player. My employer does not like me having these things, and whenever he comes into my room, I switch off my television. He does not object to the cassette player because I play religious tapes.

There is a ceiling fan in my room but I have no wall air conditioner. I have no toilet to use near my room, so I use the edge of the farm as my toilet, or the mosque toilet. Whenever I need to take a shower, I use the farm's small pool for bathing.

My sponsor wakes me up every day at 4.00 am, then I wash for prayer. I go to the nearby mosque, perform the early morning prayer, then I work on the farm until six in the morning. My breakfast is then brought to me, then when I finish eating, I work again until about 12 noon. I say the early afternoon prayer at the mosque, then my lunch is

brought to me. When I finish eating, I take a rest until 3.00 pm, then I work for about one hour until the late afternoon prayer call. I perform the prayer in the mosque then I work again until the early evening prayer call, which is about 6.00 pm, which is the end of my daily work. I rest in my room, then my dinner is brought to me. I stay in my room until the late evening prayer call. I pray in the mosque, then I go walking to visit my Egyptian friends in the village or they come to visit me. We watch television or listen to the cassette player or radio. We talk until ten or eleven p.m, then everybody goes off to his bedroom. All of my friends are Egyptians, most of them working on farms in the village.

I work every day, even on Thursday and Fridays. However, my employer gives me a few days holiday during the sacrifice and Ramadhan feasts. I have a contract with my employer, which specifies my salary and that I am provided with accommodation and food free of charge.

I have visited my country only once since I came. I stayed there for four months, during which I got married as I had been able to save some money. However, I stayed with my wife only one month and I came back to my work.

I paid for my own fares when I went for my holiday. I went to Jeddah by taxi and from Jeddah to Suez by ship. The total cost of the return journey was two thousand S.R. It was supposed to be paid by my employer, but I did not ask him to pay it as I was too shy to discuss it with him. I believe he will help me in the future.

When I went to Egypt, I took with me a cassette player as a gift for my mother, which is much cheaper than in Egypt.

When I went for my visit to my country, I was not planning to get married, but my parents told me I should get married. They selected a wife for me and they talked to me about her, so I decided to marry her, which I did, even though I did not know my wife before and she was not related to me by kin. I feel very happy that I got married and I praise my parents' choice. The total cost of my marriage was nine thousand Saudi Riyals, which I am very thankful to God that I was able to save from my work abroad, so I did not need to borrow from anybody. I save about 700 S.R. a month out of my salary, which I send to my father every four or five months, when I exchange the Saudi Riyals for American dollars at Al Rajhi Bank in Buraidah. I get a cheque in U.S dollars to the order of my father and I mail it to him, then the family spend what they need and save the rest.

My wife lives with her parents in our village, but sometimes she goes to live with my parents. I receive letters from my family at least once a month and I write to them. My letters are posted to the village emirate and I check with them regularly.

I have two brothers younger than myself. Both live with my parents in our village in our house, which is located on a small farm leased to my father.

I do not want to bring my wife to live with me here because it is better for her to live in my country. In any case, according to the regulations of this country, I am not allowed to bring her here, as only doctors, teachers, engineers and qualified people may be allowed to bring their spouses. My employer may get a visa for my wife for three months maximum to perform the pilgrimage to Makkah, but I have not discussed this matter with my employer yet.

I do not know how to drive a car, but every morning I load the small pick-up truck with the farm produce, then one of the employer's sons drives the pick-up to the fruit and vegetable market in Buraidah and he sells them there through a dealer.

This produce includes dates produced from seven hundred palm date trees, okra, green beans, tomatoes etc. Most of the dates this year were sold to a trader while they were still on the palm tress, as wholesale. The trader comes when the dates are ready, picks them up and sells them in Buraidah market.

When I need to go to Buraidah, I go with my employer's son, or I just stand on the village main road asking passers-by for a lift, which I get mostly free of charge.

I have no intention of settling here for good, but when I feel that I have secured my future financially, and when I am able to buy my own house or land to cultivate, I will return to my country for good. How long that will be, I do not know, only God knows. However, I am still young enough to work away from my country and from my family for several years.

## II An Indian Nurse

My country of origin is India, from the state of Kerala. I am 26 years old, female and still single. I graduated from a nursing college in my home state, then I was trained at a nursing institute in a major city in my country, until I got a diploma in 1983. I worked for three years in a big city in my country. However, in mid 1986 I was able to find a job in Saudi Arabia. I have a contract with the Saudi Ministry of Health. The contract indicates that my salary per month is about 2500 S.R. plus free accommodation. It does not state the location of my work, as I am required to work anywhere in this country according to my employer's need.

The first seven months I was here, I used to work in Al Qusyah village clinic which is less than 3 miles from here. Then I was appointed to work in the SDC clinic. I like working here as I believe I am paid a very good salary and will have new experience. If I worked in my home country, I would only get one fifth of what I am paid here.

I live now in the SDC, in an upstairs flat, with other female nurses from the Philippines and India. There are six of us in the flat, two to a room. We share the kitchen and the washing machine. We cook our own food there, and



whenever we need to buy anything, we ask the mini-bus driver. He is sponsored by the Ministry of Health and the bus is owned by the Ministry. We give him the money and he buys what we need, as we are only allowed once a month to go shopping; we spend all our time at work inside the SDC buildings. Free transport is provided for us to and from our work, as some of us work in the nearby villages' clinics.

The nurse who lives with me in my room, is also from India, from my own state. She used to study with me in the Delhi Institute of Nursing, but I only got to know her here. The six nurses who live in the flat are Indians and Filipinos. We are all Roman Catholics.

One of the difficulties I have found here is that when I go shopping, I must put on a veil covering my face. I go shopping only once a month with the other nurses in the mini-bus, to Buraidah market. This is according to our employer's regulations. However, sometimes the Director of the SDC gives us permission to go shopping more often if we need to. Sometimes we write a list of things we really need and give it with the money to the SDC keeper, who tries to get them for us free of charge.

Sometimes nurses treat patients at their houses, which helps them get to know people in the area, but this is not often. Some babies are delivered at home by the Pakistani midwife, but most women in labour are taken to Buraidah Maternity Hospital, as there is no obstetric unit here in the SDC clinic.

I keep in contact with my family by letter. They write to me at the SDC address and I reply by giving my letters to one of the SDC employees who will mail them for me. I get two letters a month from my parents. Although my parents' house has a telephone, I have never contacted them by telephone, because there is no telephone in our flat.

My parents still live in Kerala, in a small village. My father used to have his own business as a coconut salesman in his own shop, but now he mostly stays at home, located on our family farm. He works a little on the farm. My mother is a housewife and she also helps to cultivate the farm, which is small but requires much work. I support my family financially. Whenever they need money, they write to me, and I send them money by cheque in U.S. dollars. Sometimes I send them money without them asking me.

I have four brothers and one sister. Two of my brothers are civil engineer mechanics, working in a major city in my country, they both hold diplomas. One is 23 years old, the second is 21 years old. They are both single. My sister is 17 years old. She studies in a college in my village. She is single and lives with my parents. My third brother is 15 years old. He is also single and lives with my parents. He works as a typist in an office. My youngest brother is 11 and attends the secondary school. He also lives with my parents.

I do not know how long I will stay here in Saudi Arabia, but I hope that my contract will be renewed.

Before I came to this country, I was reading an Indian newspaper and read an advertisement that the Saudi Health Ministry needed nurses to work in Saudi Arabia. I applied to the recruiting agency, which placed the advertisement on behalf of the Ministry. The agency interviewed me twice and I was accepted for the work, which they told me would be in the Al Qassim region. A few days later, I collected my air tickets from Delhi to Riyadh then to Al Qassim airport. I signed a contract, which indicated my monthly salary, free foods and housing, but since I came here the food has not been paid for by my employer, nor am I paid a food allowance.

This is also the case for other nurses in the SDC. The recruiting agency did not charge me a service fee as they charge the Saudi Health Ministry.

I get 45 days off every year as a vacation, when I get return air tickets from Al Qassim to Delhi, and I travel to visit my parents. During the vacation period my salary is still paid to me.

## CHAPTER SIX

### FAMILY AND KINSHIP

#### Introduction

Despite dramatic changes in the economic and technological factors affecting Arab societies in recent decades, the ideals of the extended family remain strong. Nuclear families are now quite common in many sections of Saudi society (see, for example, Ibn Saeed (1989), and Lackner (1978) referred to in Chapter Two) but the traditions of the extended family still define many social relations and obligations. For example, brothers are expected to help each other, even if they live in separate households. Kinship continues to have a strong influence on the individual's life, with the father maintaining authority over his family. Also residential rules remain strongly patrilocal.

In this chapter family and kinship in Hwylan are discussed in the context of what is known about Saudi Arabian society in general. The cultural concept of family is broadly the same throughout Saudi Arabia. Local differences in some aspects of family life, whether in the past or present, will be discussed in order to set out observations of family

relations in Hwylan in an appropriate perspective. The discussion as a whole is directly related to the central concern of housing in this study.

In writing this chapter, constant reference was made to the work of Ganoubi (1976) in the village of Irqah which occupies a position outside Riyadh and is in this respect similar to Hwylan in relation to Buraidah.

### 6.1 Family Relations

As we saw in our review of studies of social change in Saudi Arabia in Chapter Two, family and kinship obligations continue to exert a major influence on all the individual's other social relations. In his or her relations with others in the community, the individual must constantly consider the possible implications for his or her family. The more important the relation in question, the more severe are the constraints. Moreover, the significance of these implications increases with the possibility of other members being involved. These general points were stressed by Lipsky (1959) in his general assessment of Saudi Arabian society and have been recognised in virtually all subsequent studies. Thus Alnowaiser (1983) claims that the extended family (Arabic: Essrah or Ailah) is the most important unit of

social structure and interaction. Cultural norms and the well-being of the family as a whole are considered much more important than the wishes of the individual. The individual develops his/her personality within the family group and there is a firm commitment to keeping the family bond strong and to maintaining its reputation in the community. Family and community well-being take precedence over the person's individual wishes (p.73).

Ganoubi (1976) similarly stresses that in addition to providing a person's social identity, the family in Irqah bestows religious, economic, political and educational functions on the individual. Paternal name-lines are important in reflecting the fact that organised kin groups are related through males. Although the maternal line (Arabic: Khawal) is also important, the paternal line always carries greater strength. A person's identity is linked to the paternal line which is of decisive importance in family structure. Marriage is preferred between paternal first cousins. When a man marries it is customary for him and his wife to live in the father's house or next to it (p.47).

It is of paramount importance that paternal blood linkage be carefully maintained, in order to keep the family bond as strong as possible. This is not only important for the

individual, but also for the whole extended family as all members normally want to keep that identity within the common tradition and to maintain the respect of others. Violating these cultural norms threatens one's standing in the community.

A person's own given name is followed by his/her father's name; then by that of his grandfather and so on, ending with the family name. However, local people in Hwylan, as in the rest of the society, use mainly their first and family names. In many cases the family name is the same as that of an ancestor who was particularly noted for his piety, wealth, generosity, or for his valour in fighting for his tribe or clan. In other cases, family names derive from nicknames acquired on account of some distinctive physical characteristic or behavioural trait. Sometimes the name is a religious one, such as one of God's names or the name of a prophet. Some of God's names are Karim, Rahim, etc. and prophets' names include Saleh, Musa, Ibrahim, and Mohammed. In yet other cases, the family name derives from a place where the family used to live: a region, a village, town or wadi. For example, some Hwylan residents, when asked where their family originally came from indicated place names corresponding to the family name of the respondent.



Many Hwylan families have the same family names as others outside the village, either in Al Qassim region or beyond. Yet a good proportion of these had no blood relationship between them. Indeed, informants often specified that they were even of different tribal origins.

It was generally believed that some cases of identical names with no kin relationship had originated through individuals taking the names of the families for whom they had worked or provided services in the past. However, our investigation showed that this was not always the case, as many of those with the same names denied that there had been such services or work and claimed that the ancestors of each had come from different places and tribes. In Hwylan, as in Saudi society in general, both men and women retain their family names throughout their lives. When a woman marries, she does not change her name.

The naming of a new born baby is mainly the responsibility of the father. This tradition is commonly upheld and reflects the father's authority over family affairs generally. However, in some cases, the mother may suggest other names which do not coincide with the father's preference. In such cases, the father may either accept or ignore the mother's suggestion. If the child's paternal

grandfather is still living, he should be consulted about the naming of his grandchild and his suggestion is usually favourably considered, especially if he is living in the same house or close to the family. The paternal grandmother may also be consulted, but the preference carries less weight than the grandfather's.

Several first names are particularly popular in Hwylan; for example, Mohammed, Saleh, Abdulla, Abdul Rahman, Ali. Within a family or kin group, some names tend to perpetuate themselves. Thus a person's first name may be the same as that of his grandfather. By choosing such names, people demonstrate loyalty to their heritage and strengthen inter-generational bonds within the family. They also express respect, remembrance and blessing of their ancestors. A married man whose father or mother has died is likely to name one of his children after him or her. Several instances of this were noted.

However, we also found that similarities in names among the people in the area sometimes created problems for those concerned. For example, one man obtained a land grant from the government and received the relevant official documents from the municipality. Later he discovered that another person from another area, who had the same first, middle and

family names, claimed that he was the rightful recipient of the grant as he had also applied for one. The first person finally gave up the land grant to the other after the problem had been settled by the municipality making a second grant. When visiting the Real Estate Development Fund head office in Riyadh to obtain lists of people who had been granted loans for house building, I found that certain names occurred frequently, being used by many people throughout the country.

In Hwylan itself, several "fresh" names were found, mainly among the younger generation. This is due in part to the contact of the local inhabitants with other areas, and in part to the increasing popularization of certain names through the mass media. The use of these fresh names reflects a less rigid approach to naming than in the past. An elderly man commented on this change saying: "The world has changed. I not only have difficulty in saying some names, but also in remembering them. We live under one roof, share salt and bread and the young people should obey their parents but some of them do not follow our traditions".

A young man whose wife had a child a few years ago said that his father objected to the name he had chosen, considering it as a violation of the tradition of the family. It took him several months to persuade his father to accept

this fresh name. He said that his father told him to obey him, not only because he was his parent but also because he provided him with free shelter and food.

When a parent has his/her first child, people normally start to call the parent by the name of the child instead of by his or her own first name. Lutfiyya and Churchill (1970) report that this is common in Arab society in general:

**From birth until death, the Arab villager is always identified with other members of the joint family through the composition of his name. Once a child is born to a young couple the people of the village stop referring to the parents by their first names, as is customary, and begin calling them after the name of their child (p506).**

Thus, they explain, a man with a boy child called Saleh will be called "the father of Saleh" (Arabic Abu Saleh). The same thing applies when the first child is a girl. However, in such cases, if a male child is subsequently born, the couple will cease to be referred to by the girl's name and will be called by the name of the new-born boy. The child is always called Ibn ("son of") and then the father's name (Ibid p.506).

In Hwylan, however, the more traditional practices still prevail. Thus, for example, if the first born is a girl, the parents are not referred to by her name, but continue to be

called by their own first names until they have a male child. As a result, a parent who has only female children continues to be called by his/her own first name and not by the name of any of the female children.

When conducting the survey of the village population it was difficult to obtain the names of female members who had reached the age of puberty, as heads were often reluctant to give any details about women and girls who had reached puberty in their respective households. The majority of household heads were fully co-operative in providing information about males but did not mention females by name, merely saying "a girl", so that further enquiries involving considerable difficulty had to be made.

This reluctance to provide information about females after puberty is directly related to the seclusion of women in Arab society in general, and especially in Saudi society, as a family's honour depends to a large extent on the chastity of its women. In pre-Islamic times, some Arabs would bury their new born females alive to avoid dishonour. They also preferred to avoid social contact outside kinship circles as this might lead to marriage to an outsider.

A family house is identified by the name of the household head (who, as we have seen, is known by the name of his first male child). Thus, when referring to a house whose head is Ahmed but whose first male child is called Saleh, people normally say "Saleh's father's house" (Arabic: Bait Abu Saleh). If the household head does not have a male child, his house is denoted either by his own first name or family name, or sometimes by both if this is necessary to avoid confusion with someone else of a similar name.

Ganoubi (1976) reports that in Irqah, a wife speaking to her husband in front of other people does not call him by his name, but instead says "father of" (Arabic: Abu) followed by his eldest son's name. Similarly the husband refers to his wife as "mother of" (Arabic Umm) followed by her eldest son's name. But if he calls her when he wants to do something for him, he will say in Arabic "hayanti" which can be roughly translated as "attention, you". And when speaking about her, he refers to her as "mistress of the house" (Arabic: Ra iat Al bait) (p.181).

In Hwylan these forms of address were used by some household heads, but we also observed that men sometimes referred to their wives as "the woman" (Arabic: Almurrah), or "my children's mother" (Arabic: Umm Al Eyal). The terms "my

kin" (Arabic: Ahli) or "the house kin group" (Arabic: ahl Al Bait) were generally used to refer to more than one wife, as well as to other female members of the household over the age of puberty. On the whole, however, the differences between Ganoubi's community and Hwylan are really very small, both largely retaining traditional practice.

The individual has to behave and act in accordance with the family norms which in Hwylan are also seen as the norms of the community. When a person acts in a manner unacceptable to his family, they are all shamed. And when an act or achievement pleases them, they all display their pride. A person may hide some behaviour from other members of the family in order not to shame them, or not to let them feel their reputation is injured. For example, people in Hwylan invariably mentioned that their sons had graduated from institutions or were attending universities, or were doing well in their work. But some, especially youngsters, concealed unacceptable behaviour like smoking and took care not to be seen by others who might expose their behaviour to their families. Several male youths indicated that they went to friends' houses in Hwylan or nearby to enjoy watching videos or to play cards which they could not do in their parents' houses, as such activities are socially disapproved of, especially by the more conservative.

The population of Hwylan consists of several lineages of which a number are multi-lineages. Some are of Saudi tribal origin and some are not. There are lineages which originally came from one tribe but different clans, while others are non-tribal descendants but of different lineages. Relations between several lineages were observed to be strong, due to the small geographical size of this settlement.

Hwylan's village composition in terms of lineage and status is similar to that of many settled communities in Saudi Arabia as a whole. As Nyrop (1977) indicated, some localities have members of one lineage while others have members of many related or unrelated lineages. Social status depends on the person's status within the lineage and that of the lineage in the locality. As in the case of the desert inhabitants, members of lineages are usually concentrated in certain areas so that families of the same lineage tend to live next to or close to each other, forming distinct clusters. A neighbourhood may then take its name from the family group. While some families' houses are located close to those of other members of the joint family, the names of neighbourhoods are not family names, except for Jassir Manzelah, which, as we saw in Chapter Four, is named after Jassir whose family built the mosque there. The name continues to be widely known and used, even though the



original Jassir moved a long time ago. In contrast to this, Al Zahara Manzelah is no longer generally known by that name, as none of the family has remained in Hwylan. There are other families with several households and many members, but none of their neighbourhoods carry their names.

It is in the household that a person is taught his/her religious duties - how to obey God and how to distinguish between permitted and forbidden behaviour, how to pray and to observe the Ramadan fast. Everyone is accountable to the rest of the family. They are also responsible for each other in relation to other households and to the authorities. Ganoubi records that when members of a family are proud of an achievement by one member, they say, "he has whitened our faces, may God whiten his face"; when they are ashamed of unacceptable behaviour, they say "he has made our faces black, may God make his face black" (pp. 176-7).

In Hwylan people commonly indicated their pride in the religious, educational or economic achievements of family members, while others showed dissatisfaction. For example, the majority of household heads frequently mentioned that their sons attend prayers in the mosques regularly. Many also expressed pride in their sons' achievements in their education by saying, when mentioning a son's name, that he

attended college or the institute of health or of agriculture. Other fathers admitted that their sons had finished education before graduating from primary school, and clearly considered this as something of a disgrace to the family.

At the same time, the conservative attitudes of the community's household heads were reflected in the fact that similar interest and pride was not felt in regard to girls' educational achievements. Many heads did not favour education for their daughters, and some did not even wish their daughters to progress beyond primary school education. They expressed the view that "the best place for a woman is her house". The idea is that a woman should, and will, get married, then her duty will be to serve her husband, keep house and care for the children. Therefore, it is felt that preparing a girl for these duties is more important than academic education. Very few heads considered that woman's education is also important. These heads argued that when a daughter graduates from college or an institution she may work as a teacher at a girls' school and earn money which will help her, both now and in the future.

In approaching relations within village households, we may distinguish between three rather different sets: Firstly,

relations between males: male children are expected to respect, obey and submit to their father's authority, as a matter of religious duty, and because the father is the bread winner for his family. And younger brothers are expected to respect their older brothers. Secondly, relations between males and females: males have authority over females, who obey them and respect their wishes and decisions. Thus wives submit to their husbands, sisters to their brothers, daughters to their fathers and daughters-in-law to their fathers-in-law. Thirdly, there are the relations between females: mothers, daughters, sisters, wives etc. As in the present study of Hwylan, Ganoubi (1976) indicates that he was not able directly to observe these in Irgah due to the village situation, but he says that hostilities do occur between mothers and daughters-in-law, between co-wives and between brothers' wives (pp.179-185).

Ganoubi's study confirmed what is generally known about authority in the household, which lies in the hands of the male head, usually the father, or if he has died, then the eldest brother. He makes and executes decisions for the family. His family members are expected to accept these decisions. Females have less power than males to show their dissatisfaction with the head's decisions, even when they are on matters of more relevance to women. Females are

socialized from a very early age into their duty to serve their parents, their elder sisters and their brothers. Patai (1970) points out that:

**The subordinate position of a girl, first in the house of her own parents, then in the house of her husband and his parents, serves as an additional motive for making a woman want to have as many children as possible and as soon as possible (p.580).**

In most Arab countries, the birth of a girl-child is not welcomed in the same manner as the birth of a boy. This is mainly because males carry the family name, preserve its wealth and take care of their parents in their old age, whereas on marriage, daughters become attached to their husband's families and move to the house of their parents-in-law (see, for example, El Hammamsy, 1970:p.595).

In Saudi Arabia, female children are similarly less welcome than boys. This is reflected in the difference between the birth ceremony held for a son and that held for a daughter. The tradition of having a meal to celebrate the birth of a child is practised by almost every family, including those in Hwylan. But when the celebration is for a boy, two sheep are slaughtered, while for a girl, only one sheep is slaughtered. Moreover, the congratulations offered to the new parents also differ. When a boy is born the kin

show their delight, congratulating his parents warmly and expressing the hope that the boy will take care of his parents and serve them in their old age. In contrast, when a girl is born, a polite expression of congratulation is offered, but it is briefer and not so warm as in the case of a baby boy.

The inferior status of females is clearly observed in Hwylan, even in childhood. Boys tend to give orders to girls, even when the boys are younger, and in various settings boys enjoy superiority over girls. One informant explained that his sons are the rulers of the household during his absence and that the eldest son takes his father's place when he is away, even though some of the daughters of the household are older. When the household head is present he has authority over all its members and all obey his orders. Indications of respect include the fact that, if sons are sitting in the living room when the father enters, they stand up until he sits down. Only after that do they themselves sit. They are expected to say "good morning" or "good evening" to him and to ask about his health or other concern of the moment. When he returns from a journey or other absence, or when one of them returns, they are expected to greet him and also their mother with warmth, kissing his or her head or forehead. If the father is sitting with other

people in the sitting room when a son arrives home, the son's first attention should be to his father. And if the grandfather is there he will greet the grandfather before the father. He then greets his paternal uncles in order of age, the eldest first, and then his brothers, eldest first. When the male members of the household sit in the sitting room, the oldest brother is expected to sit closest to the father, with younger brothers following in order of age. When they go to visit somebody's house as a group, the sons are expected to enter the house behind their father, again in order of age. It was, however, observed that among half brothers (brothers of different mothers) relations are not as strong as among full brothers.

Parents normally intervene to settle disputes in the home between sons' wives and they are able to do this as they are accorded respect by both their sons and their sons' wives. Fathers - and mothers-in-law expect respect from their sons' wives as a reflection of the wives' obedience and respect for their husbands. A father or mother may criticise his/her son, not only if he himself is not sufficiently respectful to them, but also if his wife does not show sufficient respect. In the latter case, it will be said that the son lacks influence over his wife.

The father-in-law is referred to by his son's wife as uncle (Arabic: Khal) and the mother-in-law is referred to by her son's wife as aunt (Arabic: Khalah). A man uses the same terms to refer to his parents-in-law. However, when the marriage is between first paternal cousins, the couple will both refer to their in-laws as "paternal uncle" (Arabic: Amm) and "paternal aunt" (Arabic: Ammah). This is an indication that the strength of the paternal relation is not altered by the marriage.

Despite not being able to study directly the relations between women in Hwylan, we can say that the general norms of expected behaviour between them are largely upheld in all aspects of family and household life. We did directly observe relations between fathers and their children who respect and obey without question. For example, when a father asks his son to do something for him, the son responds promptly, saying Sam, an abbreviation for Saman, meaning "listening to your command or order". This abbreviation is also widely used in Hwylan to reply to others who seek help or service, or who give orders as between males and females (Arabic: Samy). To express even greater commitment, a son or daughter may reply "listening and obeying". Another example observed was that when a father asked for someone to bring him Arabic coffee from the kitchen (located in the back part

of the house), one of his older sons stood up in response, but the father said that a younger son should stand up instead. Both accepted the order and the younger son brought and served the coffee.

A man who has more than one wife will either set up a separate home for each wife or divide his home into sections, one for each wife. This helps to avoid disputes between wives or between wives' children. But disputes do occur. One informant with married sons indicated that conflicts take place between their wives. Another indicated that his sons had to move into separate homes due to conflict between their wives or their wives' children. As one head put it, "women and children have separated us", meaning that disputes had caused some married sons to move out and set up separate households.

As Table 6.1 shows, 30 out of 50 household head reported that one or more family members had moved out of their houses. One head admitted to the move of members but refused to comment on the subject. The reason for his refusal was not only to maintain privacy, but also because of his evident sadness about the departure of children from their parental home.



Table 6.1

Movement out of the House of One or More Members  
of the Family

<b>Movement out of the house</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
None moved	20	40
One or more member(s) moved	29	58
One or more member(s) moved, but no details	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Information given about the departures is shown in Tables 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4.

As can be seen from Table 6.2, the majority of those who had left the family home had moved either to Buraidah (76 out of 124 persons), or outside Al Qassim region (40 out of 124 persons). Only 6 persons had moved further than Buraidah but still within the region and 2 persons within the village itself. The majority of those who had moved were daughters (40), sisters (24) and sons (32) of the household head. For sons, the main reason for moving was work (12 out of 22). For daughters and sisters, the main reason was marriage (38 out of 40 daughters and 17 out of 24 sisters).

Table 6.3 shows that because of the high proportion of females moving out of their original family homes as a result

of marriage, the total number of married people who had moved (whether inside or outside the village) was more than twice that of their unmarried counterparts (37 single and 83 married persons).

Table 6.4 gives the length of time since the respective moves shows that the majority of moves had been relatively recent. While only 16 out of 124 persons had moved less than a year before the study, 49 had moved 1-4 years earlier and 20 had moved 5-9 years earlier. The remaining 39 had moved over ten years ago.

The departure of females on marriage is accepted with equanimity by their families as normal cultural behaviour. However, the departure of other members, especially sons, is a cause of sadness to their parents. Household heads said things like, (1) "It is very sad that my son moved out, but I could not persuade him to stay"; (2) "Although I have adult sons still living with me in my house, I cannot hide that I have other sons who have moved against my will. Life has changed"; (3) "Although my sons have not gone far, only to Buraidah, which is only a stone's throw away, living together in the same house would definitely be much better"; and (4) "One cannot imagine living without one's sons, especially an old man like me. They come and visit us frequently, but so

what, if they are not near me all the time". Others whose brothers had moved out expressed their feelings in such terms as "We came from the same womb, but life has changed; everybody is busy somewhere" or, "What reduces my sadness, is that my brothers keep in contact with me. The places they live are not close, but our hearts are". While departures have to be accepted under modern conditions of life, it is considered important that family members should maintain close contact. When this is done, the sorrow is somewhat eased.

In general, the findings of family life in Hwylan are consistent with the view expressed by other writers of the Middle East (eg Barakat, 1985) that some change in family relationships is taking place. Several household heads said that it had recently become more difficult for them to maintain complete authority over their children. The following statements illustrate this: (1) "My children now have their own wishes"; (2) "My daughters' education is problematic, now that they (girls) have raised their heads"; (3) "Let the boys have their wishes"; (4) "My sons go out of the house and come into the house. I do not ask detailed questions" and (5) "Today's girls look for education rather

Table 6.2

Place of Move and Reason for Move of Family Members by their Relation to the Household Head

Relation to household head	Place Moved To				Main Reason for Move					Total
	In the village	Buraidah	In the Region	Outside the Region	Study	Work	Marriage	Family problem	With family member	
Father	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Mother	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	2
Wife	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	4
Son	-	13	-	9	2	12	-	2	6	22
Daughter	-	25	2	12	-	-	38	-	2	40
Brother	-	5	1	3	1	7	-	-	1	9
Sister	-	14	2	7	-	-	17	-	7	24
Son's wife	-	5	-	3	-	-	-	2	6	8
Brother's wife	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	4	4
Grandchild	-	6	-	4	-	-	-	-	10	10
TOTAL	2	76	6	40	3	20	55	8	38	124

Table 6.3

Marital Status of Family Members who have Left the Household

Relation to household head	Place Moved To			Marital Status at the time of the move				Total	
	In the village	Buraidah	In the Region	Outside the Region	Single	Married	Divorced		Widowed
Father	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Mother	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	2
Wife	-	4	-	-	-	1	3	-	4
Son	-	13	-	9	14	8	-	-	22
Daughter	1	25	2	12	2	38	-	-	40
Brother	-	5	1	3	4	5	-	-	9
Sister	1	14	2	7	7	17	-	-	24
Son's wife	-	5	-	3	-	8	-	-	8
Brother's wife	-	2	1	1	-	4	-	-	4
Grandchild	-	6	-	4	10	-	-	-	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>124</b>

Table 6.4

Length of Time since the Move of Family Members

Relation to household head	Place Moved To				Time of Move					Total
	In the village	Buraidah	In the Region	Outside the Region	Less than 1 year ago	1-4 years ago	5-9 years ago	10-14 years ago	15 > years ago	
Father	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Mother	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	2
Wife	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	1	1	4
Son	-	13	-	9	2	7	4	2	7	22
Daughter	1	25	2	12	1	20	4	5	10	40
Brother	-	5	1	3	2	2	3	1	1	9
Sister	1	14	2	7	5	6	4	3	6	24
Son's wife	-	5	-	3	1	3	2	2	-	8
Brother's wife	-	2	1	1	1	2	1	-	-	4
Grandchild	-	6	-	4	3	7	-	-	-	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>124</b>

than for husbands". Such statements indicate the trend of transition in this locality. Young people are receiving education. Isolation from other societies is reduced by travel and the mass media. Family functions are transferring from the household to other institutions. Young people have started to obtain paid work and even, in many cases, paid education. There is a circle of friends which is no longer limited to the immediate neighbourhood. These factors all contribute to reducing the family head's authority over his children.

## 6.2 Marriage

Marriage in Saudi Arabia, as in other Arab countries, has important social and religious significance. The view is commonly expressed that a person who marries thereby fulfils half his religious obligations, the other half being fulfilled by performing religious duties such as praying.

As Berger (1964) points out, young men and women are not free to meet each other or to form romantic attachments to select marriage partners. Rather, marriage is a joining of two families. Therefore, arrangements for the marriage are made by the couple's parents, who look for a marriage partner

from a family whose status equals their own. Nyrop and others (1977) refer to this social tradition as follows:

**Marriage is a family, rather than a personal affair. Because the sexes ordinarily do not mix socially, young men and women have few or no acquaintances among the opposite sex, although among bedouin a limited courtship is permitted. Parents arrange marriages for their children, finding a mate through either their own special contacts or a professional matchmaker (p.151).**

We have already noted that marriage is preferred between first cousins, (Arabic: Bent Amm). As Cole (1987) explains, the major reason for this is that first cousin marriages are considered more likely to be successful; it is not expected that a man will divorce his cousin, whatever their differences, due to the strong mutual obligations of the partners and to the loyalty of both to those related by blood (p.204).

As in Saudi Arabia as a whole, marriage in Hwylan is according to Islamic law; polygamy is practised, although religion restricts it; the husband must treat his wives equally, otherwise he should have one wife only. The authorising passage from the Quran reads:

**Marry such women of your choice, two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them) then only one (p.179).**



However, as noted in the literature review in Chapter Two, there is much evidence that polygamy is decreasing as a result of a variety of social and economic factors. Nowadays it is seldom practised by young men.

As we saw in Chapter Four, in Hwylan there were only six men married polygamously. Each of these had two wives only and all were over 55 years of age. All but one had relatively high incomes. The one who had a low income had married his second wife outside Saudi Arabia, and had thereby avoided the extremely high cost associated with marriage locally.

Among the men, it is now mainly the younger generation who have reservations about polygamy. And, although a number of older men expressed enthusiastic approval of the practice, their remarks were often jocular. When asked their serious views, some said they would like to marry a second wife but had difficulty in finding women who would agree. They also said that a woman who does agree to become a second wife will invariably ask for a separate home for herself. Also, today, women may be unattainable because of the cost of the dowry. To take another woman (wife) nowadays is much more difficult than in the past. Some complained of the likelihood of

objections from the first wife and of the need to give her a large sum of money to persuade her to agree (Arabic: Rudhawah). But there is no doubt that if they could afford it, and if they could persuade their first wives to agree, many would wish to find a younger wife. They generally believed that a second, younger wife, keeps one looking young and healthy. Although husbands in the community were older than their wives, many claimed, when asked to give age details, in the course of the survey, that their wives were now very old. They usually expressed this by saying "Oh, God, good life end" (Arabic: Ya Allah Hussan Al Khatemah), suggesting that their wives were old enough to justify them taking second, younger wives. Despite their higher ages, these husbands evidently felt young enough, at least in spirit, to have second wives.

Although there is no mosque ceremony, marriage has to fulfil certain religious requirements. In all Muslim societies, marriage is considered as a civil contract. It can take place anywhere, but there must be two witnesses. Religion encourages marriage and considers it a social obligation. It is seen as a way of love and mercy between men and women, and as the essential basis for family life and the rearing of children (Abdul Jabar, 1983, pp.112-3).

In Hwylan marriages take place in the people's houses or on farms, some at marriage palaces (see below). When a male passes the age of puberty, usually after the age of seventeen, his parents start thinking of finding a wife for him. In most cases they look for a girl from their own kin group, preferably a first cousin on the paternal side. They consult their son about the choice, and he will usually accept their choice. If so, his father makes the initial approach to the guardian of the girl. He may go alone or accompanied by a friend or male relative who will help in the negotiations. If the girl's guardian does not know the prospective groom well but the preliminary negotiations seem favourable, he will make enquiries as to the man's education, work, personality and, above all, his fulfilment of religious teachings. If satisfied, the guardian may agree to the marriage without consulting the bride or her mother, or he may seek permission from the negotiators to go inside the house to consult the mother. After that he will return to the sitting room to give his answer, or he may tell the negotiators that he needs time to consult his wife or daughter and will give an answer within a few days. If several days elapse without an answer, this usually indicates that there is some reservation about the arrangement. If no progress is made, the guardian of the bride may apologise to the groom's guardian or representative, saying something

like: (1) "Our girl is too young to get married at present", or (2) "Our daughter is to marry a close relative". Such excuses may not necessarily be true, but are considered polite.

However, if the negotiations do proceed as desired, the bride's guardian tells the seekers that he is happy to give his daughter to their son, saying, "Your closeness to us is our wish". Then the others respond "It is our wish too, may our God conduct the best" (Arabic: Rabna youafeg or Yakteb Al Saleh). Details of the girl's appearance and behaviour may then be given to the prospective groom before proceeding to further negotiations, provided that the groom's mother knows the bride-to-be or that she is related to them by kinship. Otherwise, after the initial negotiation, the mother of the groom may enquire about the proposed bride from other women, or may visit the girl's parents in order to see the girl and to obtain information on behalf of her son. Sometimes girls who have passed the age of puberty will hide in the house from women whom they think have come to find out about them with a view to a marriage arrangement. But this does not usually affect the outcome. Most grooms do not see their brides until the wedding night. However, in a few cases, the bride's guardian may allow the proposed groom to see her, but usually only after the marriage contract has been agreed.

In Hwylan, marriage contracts are issued by the immam of the village Friday mosque (Arabic: Madhoon). The issue of the contract requires two witnesses in addition to a representative of the bride who herself very seldom attends the issue of the contract issue. She is usually represented by her father or her male guardian if her father is dead. The groom and his father do attend the contract issue, which usually takes place either at the bride's parents' house but sometimes at the immam's house. Most contracts are issued during the week preceding the marriage ceremony. Within the last ten years it was decided by the religious authorities that marriage contracts should be issued by the courts or those who are authorised by the courts, rather than by any respected individuals. Now written marriage contracts state the full names of the bride, the groom, the witnesses and the religious marriage contractor (Arabic: Madhoon Sharri). They also state whether the bride is a virgin (Arabic: Bekr) or has been married previously and divorced or widowed (Arabic: Thayeb, ie. not a virgin).

The dowry is rarely stated in the contract, and the space for it on the form is usually left blank. When it is filled in, people wish to give the impression that they are not concerned about the dowry and therefore indicate a purely nominal amount, (eg. one Saudi Riyal), even if the actual

dowry totals several thousand Saudi Riyals. Thus an apparent lack of concern about the amount of the dowry's offer is a form of politeness and not necessarily a reflection of the true situation. In practice, the dowry usually ranges from thirty thousand to one hundred thousand Saudi Riyals. Such large amounts constitute an obstacle for many young men who are not well-to-do, and it is quite common for dowries to be collected through donations. On one occasion, during the course of the fieldwork, the immam of a local mosque made a speech asking people to donate generously to help the many young men who wished to get married but lacked the financial means to do so.

Alguizany (1990) says that dowries in Saudi Arabia have risen steeply in recent years, well above the level demanded by religious values. Islam enjoins all muslims to be generous and not ask for very high dowries. The prophet's sayings even specify that one can marry with a dowry of a handful of dates, as an indication that financial considerations should not stand in the way of marriage (p.35).

Islam has never defined the dowry amount due to differences in people's economic situations and social values. This matter does, however, create difficult

problems, as the wealthier people who can afford high dowries exert pressure on poorer families to maintain the same level of provision. Since this is beyond the financial means of the poor they are compelled to borrow money to get married, sometimes causing long-lasting difficulties (cf. Golly, 1988, p123).

As in many other Islamic countries, the dowry in Saudi Arabia is paid by the groom's family. This is a heavy burden on the family, costing thousands of riyals, sometimes as much as 100,000 S.R. for unnecessary celebrations and gifts, mostly for show, in many cases hiding the fact that the family's financial means are low.

Al Shamry (1985) makes the general point that high dowries in Saudi Arabia are related to the massive development in the country in recent years, and that the dowry has increasingly become an indication of social status and economic position (p.15). As Saudis see it, their extravagance in marriage celebrations and gifts is to show generosity. This is so, even among the poorer people, who may often have to rely on borrowing in order to emulate the rich.

In Hwylan, one man with no regular income said he was not able to get married as he is too poor. He applied to the Saudi Credit Bank for a marriage loan but the bank's regulations would not allow him to have a marriage loan unless he could produce his marriage contract with his application. Meanwhile, his intended bride's family would not agree to the contract until he paid the dowry. He said, "I really am caught between two fires. I feel very sad about the situation. I am already in debt to many people by several thousand riyals. How can I pay my debts and pay for my marriage? I am not healthy enough to be able to get work and I live on the minimum of living conditions thanks to Buraidah Charity Society, which helps me to buy food, but God knows, one dreams of a wife and children. May God help".

In Saudi Arabia, in general, the two sides agree a dowry before the time of marriage and they also agree whether the dowry is to be paid in cash, or in kind, eg. clothes, jewellery, furniture, and household goods. If paid in cash, the guardian gives part of the amount to the bride's mother to enable her to equip her daughter with clothes, jewellery, furniture, household goods, shoes, perfume and whatever else she needs. In some cases the bride at this point still does not know about her marriage, or when it will take place, and



she has no opportunity to prepare herself. This was very frequently so in the past, less so today.

In Hwylan, up to twenty years ago, when a young male reached marriageable age (eighteen years or older) he tried to show off his good behaviour, generosity and worth, aiming to establish a good reputation in the eyes of others. He tended to conceal anything which would be unacceptable to the community, and he would strictly observe the five daily prayers in the mosque.

When a father decided his son should get married, he appointed a go-between or matchmaker to look for a wife for his son. This person was called Khateeb in Arabic. A suitable bride had to be from a respected family and have a good reputation as a housewife. The Khateeb would tell the groom's father about the girl and if she suited their requirements, either the Khateeb or the groom's father would go to ask the bride's father for her hand. If the latter agreed, the dowry (Arabic: Mahr) was handed to her guardian, who, with her mother, bought the clothes and jewellery needed for the bride. A date for the marriage ceremony and marriage contract was fixed.

The ceremony took place at the bride's parents' house, in the late afternoon (after late afternoon prayers, Arabic: Asr). Guests came. They ate camel or mutton with either rice or crushed cooked wheat. The men then visited the bride's neighbours, going from house to house, drinking Arabic coffee and tea. An educated man made speeches to the guests, focusing on religious teachings about good behaviour and fulfilment of religious duties, while also encouraging all young people to get married and to follow the traditions of the community.

After late night prayers in the mosque, the family and guests would again gather in the groom's parents' house. The father of the bride took the hand of the groom, who was dressed for this occasion in new clothes and a robe, (Arabic: Meshlah), and led him to his bride's room in her father's house. The room door was then locked on them. Women danced to traditional music and the men returned to their respective houses.

The groom stayed with his bride's family for a whole week, during which he was invited to the bride's relatives' houses. On the last night of this week, after late night prayers, the groom took his bride, accompanied by her female relatives, to his parents' house. Another ceremony provided

by the groom's family took place until late at night. This was called "the night of movement" (Arabic: Lilat Al Ruheel). The next day the groom's family organised a feast for the bride's family and their relatives, friends and neighbours.

One month after the marriage ceremony, the groom took his bride back to her parents' house to visit her family (Arabic: Zyarah). Her relatives, friends and neighbours were invited to dinner which used to take place in the late afternoon. The groom left her to stay with her parents for three days during which he did not stay with her. She gave her parents and relatives gifts of clothes, jewellery etc. from her groom. When she went back to her groom's house she took with her wheat cake (Arabic: Kulyja) which would be distributed among the groom's relatives. The marriage ceremony was then over.

In recent decades, however, especially in the last fifteen to twenty years, the situation has changed to some extent. Young girls are given more of a voice in their day-to-day lives. They are being told about their proposed life partners, and given some of the dowry to buy what they need for marriage. They go to Buraidah, accompanied by their mothers, to choose what they need and to take fabrics to a dress-maker. Usually, several costly dresses are made,

whereas in the past the trousseau was much simpler and clothes were made at home.

The groom's guardian provides meat for the marriage ceremony. In the past it used to be camel, but now it is usually mutton. The number of sheep varies from one family to another, according to their financial situation. Sheep may also be given to the groom's family as gifts and aid by the family's kin group or friends.

The date, time and place of marriage are agreed after negotiations between the two families, which may take months but sometimes less. Relatives, friends and neighbours are invited. Each guardian invites his relatives. According to present custom in Hwylan and Al Qassim region, issuing invitations depends on the social status of host and guest, their ages and their kinship relations to each other. Before people started using printed and decorated invitation cards, they used to go in person to extend invitations to the ceremony. The guardian usually sent one of his sons, preferably an adult, to invite the guests, but only if the guardian was older or of higher status than the person invited. If the invited person was older or of higher status than the guardian, it might have been an insult for the groom or bride's guardian to send a representative, rather than

coming in person. The invitation might then have been refused. Today, with cards in use, it is still a matter of social importance who delivers the card. One informant told me that he had recently been dissatisfied with the way a friend in another locality had invited him to attend his son's marriage. He said he should have come in person, knocked on the door, talked to him and handed him a card personally. He added, "I am old enough to be entitled to this, but some people, may God guide them to the right way, do not know their obligations".

Another informant recalled the first marriage card to be sent in the community in 1391 hijri (1971). At the time it was considered unacceptable by many people in the village, as they thought the person who sent the invitation card was lowering his own status (Arabic: Tahgeer) and that he should have come in person to the house two or three days before the ceremony to issue a verbal invitation. Nowadays, however, invitation cards are considered very important and people tend to criticise those who do not have cards printed.

Another change of recent years is that it is now common to hold the ceremonies at marriage palaces (Arabic: Qasr Afrah) instead of private houses. In fact these palaces are becoming very competitive business in the country at large.

There is no palace in Hwylan but the residents use one located nearby on the main road to the airport west of Buraidah. The palace is normally rented for one night only. It accommodates guests and reduces the work of the ceremony which is a heavy burden for the parents of both the bride and the groom. But it is very expensive. The meal, drinks, carpets, perfumes and services are all included in the cost of renting the palace. One informant said that the renting of a marriage palace was becoming increasingly fashionable by middle income families in imitation of the well-to-do. Women usually put pressure on their male guardians to rent a palace to impress others in much the same way as they do over hiring domestic helpers (Arabic: Shagalah).

In Hwylan, as in other parts of the country, there are two types of lineage. Firstly, there are lineages of Saudi Arabian tribal origin (Arabic: Qabili). Secondly, there are those who are not of Saudi Arabian tribal origin (Arabic: Khadiyy). The study revealed no marriages between the two types. Men do, however, sometimes marry a woman from outside the region, regardless of her tribal origin and lineage. In other parts of the region, there were a few instances of marriage between the two types of lineage but these tended to give rise to problems, as some members of the families concerned were opposed to such marriages. One man reported

that when he married a second wife, his children objected, not because they opposed polygamy, but because the second wife was from an inferior lineage.

Ganoubi (1976) similarly found that intermarriage between the two types of lineage was socially unacceptable and contrary to tradition. It ran counter to the desired feelings of equality, in descent and origin, with people of tribal origins feeling that the non-tribal lineages were inferior (pp.149-151).

The two lineage types are significant in the area mainly with regard to marriage. They normally have relatively little effect on other relationships in the community. Ganoubi (1976) found the same in Irqah:

As far as descent (asl or nasab) is concerned, Hadar and Bedouin Gabiliyin claim their descent from deeply rooted Arabian origin whereas the Khadiriyin do not claim such descent. But it is not easy to have confidence in genealogies to the extent of being able to affirm that the Gabiliyin are descended from pure Arabian origins distinguishing them from other villages who are not. The Gabiliyin people rely for determining their descent rather on other evidence than on established facts. On the other hand, any attempt to understand the method the villages follow in tracing their genealogy cannot be successful without acknowledging what is meant by Gabiliyi and Khadiriyi, for these two concepts identify the nature of a person's descent.

The term Gabiliyi (Pl. Gabiliyin) refers to a person who descends from tribal origin or belongs to a well-known

Arabian tribe. The term Khadiyyi (Pl. Khadiyyin) refers to a person who does not know his tribal origin or a person whose tribal connection has been lost. This could be a consequence of personal circumstances, for example, he might have run away from his tribe for one reason or another, or changed his surname identifying him with a particular tribe or been compelled to take up an occupation despised by the tribal people, such as haircutting, butchery or iron-working... (pp.151-152).

Although the issue of the two lineages is mainly important in connection with marriage, there are some occupations that are usually followed only by those of non-tribal lineage: iron-workers, barbers, butchers, carpenters, smiths.... but all these are simply matters of custom.

Alnowaiser (1983) confirms this in a study conducted in Al Qassim region:

Race is not a differentiating factor in society, nor should it be according to Islam. As the Quran states, there is no difference (in race) between an Arab and a non-Arab except according to the degree of obedience to God and according to whether or not he is a good element in society (p.81).

In Hwylan, it was observed that determination of each family lineage is either through occupation or through marriage. As stated earlier, the first settlers of the village were referred to by the labels used for non-tribal lineages, as they were carpenters. Also when one asks about a family, the



answer may include a reference to a better-known family in the same lineage, with whom the respondents have a kinship or blood relationship. The difference in status is also indicated by people saying that non-tribal people are of "110 electric power" and tribal people are of "220 electric power", referring to the superior attitude of tribal people towards non-tribal people.

### 6.3 Divorce

We have seen that the choice of mate and the procedures of marriage in Saudi Arabia are not easy matters, as they involve two families and not only two persons. Similarly, divorce is very difficult, not merely because the religion does not favour it, but also because of the close family ties involved. Divorce is therefore considered a last resort, to be avoided if at all possible. Al Turki (1973) remarks that by religious values, divorce is the most hateful of all permissible things to God (p.165).

In Hwylan as in other parts of the country, divorce is governed by Islamic religious laws. It may take place when a husband tells his wife that he divorces her, then she leaves his house and returns to her parent's house. She is only entitled to take her personal belongings and cannot

inherit from her former husband, nor can she share his property. However, after divorce the husband may well ask his wife to return to him. Even after a second separation, the couple may reunite if they wish. However, if a man divorces his wife for a third time, this is considered final, and she may not return to him.

After divorce, a woman must wait at least three months before marrying another man, in order to avoid uncertainty as to the paternity of any child she may have. If, during the three-month waiting period, it transpires that the woman is pregnant from her previous marriage, she must then wait until forty days after the birth of the baby before remarrying.

It would appear from the above that divorce is arranged relatively easily in Saudi Arabia, as the matter is mostly in the hands of the husband. He need only say to his wife the words, "I divorce you" or, "You are divorced", and legally according to Islamic law, the divorce is considered to have taken place, without need for official documentation unless the couple wish it. However, as we have said, although the formula may be simple, in practice divorce is not undertaken lightly.

Al Torki (1973) refers to the much greater powers of men in the matter of divorce. Although a woman may, under Islamic traditions, seek divorce by returning to her parents' house and asking her husband for something that he may not be able to provide (eg. a separate house), the extent to which this occurs appears to vary a great deal (pp.163-4). Thus, for example, Katakura (1977) reports that divorce was not uncommon in a rural area in the western part of Saudi Arabia:

**In spite of the prevalent idea that only the husband is an Islamic society has the right to request a divorce, the wife may instigate such a separation. In fact, in Bushr 48.2 percent of the divorces which had occurred had been requested by the wife. It is possible for the wife to achieve a divorce, if she wishes, because parents and relatives will provide her with psychological support after marriage. She can easily return to her parents' home. Also the Bedouins tend to regard a divorce simply as the cancellation of the contract of the marriage, not as 'aib' (shameful or indecent) (p.94).**

In Hwylan, divorce is infrequent and largely instigated by men. None of the very few cases of divorce reported to me was instigated by the woman. One man reported that when he was young, about forty years ago, (he is now almost sixty years old) he divorced his wife within a week of marriage as he felt she was not suited to his life. He said that he had never seen her before the marriage night. Others reported that divorce was mainly due to domestic problems between

husband and wife, usually because the husband felt that the wife did not manage the house properly.

When a woman is divorced, she returns to the house of her parents or of her guardian - usually her eldest brother if her father is dead - who then becomes responsible for her financial and family affairs. If she has young children, they will usually join her in the house of their maternal grandparents or maternal uncle. If she remarries the children may join her in their step-father's house, but must join their natural father, though they may join either parent depending on the agreement between the two parties when divorce takes place. Financially, their father is responsible for their welfare. If the woman does not remarry, the children may continue to live with their mother's parents or, when they grow up, they may set up an independent household with their mother.

#### 6.4 Household Composition and Size

We have laid stress on the continuing strength of family feeling and family bonds in Saudi Arabian society and in the village of Hwylan. But we have also referred to a number of studies of Saudi and other Arab societies which point to the increase in nuclear families, the decline of polygamy, and

the strains which sometimes develop between the older and younger generations in regard to family obligations and the like.

An analysis of household composition and size is of particular interest as an objective measure of both continuity and change in the in the importance of the family as household organisation is one of the clearest indicators of what is taking place. We have no means of knowing the size and composition of Hwylan's households in the past but it is of interest to examine the situation of the present before considering some of the opinions expressed in Hwylan about the past.

Table 6.5 presents in detail the composition and size of households at the time of our survey in 1988. We may first look at the figures in terms of two types of households: Type A being single-person and nuclear-based households and Type B being households containing two or more married couples. It can be seen that 34 or 68% of all households were of Type A with an average of 7.9 members, while 16 or 32% were of Type B with an average of 13.3 members. Set out as it is, the table allows us to see the actual composition of households in a way which is clearer and more precise than

merely referring to 'nuclear' and 'extended' family households.

For example, it is a matter for debate as to whether a nuclear family based household including say, a husband's widowed mother is more accurately defined as 'extended' or 'nuclear'. If we do include such a household in the 'extended' category, then the proportion of extended family households is even higher than that of Type B households alone (ie. 50% rather than only 32%). If we also add the two households each containing a polygamous man and his wives and children, the proportion of 'traditional' rather than 'simple nuclear' households rises up to 52%.

Another way of assessing the extent to which the strength of the traditional family environment is still experienced is to look at the number of people living under such arrangements. The number of persons living in Type A households made up 55% of the population and the number in Type B 44.8%. But the number in 'simple nuclear' made up only 34.9%. A further significant fact shown by the table is

Table 6.5

Distribution of Households by Composition and Size

Type	Composition	Number of households		Number of Persons		Average size
		No.	%	No.	%	
A single person and nuclear/ family based households	Single person	3	6	3	0.6	1
	Married couple	1	2	2	0.4	2
	Married couple with children	19	38	163	33.9	8.6
	Married couple, their children and husband's widowed mother	8	16	74	15.4	9.3
	Single man with married brother and his wife and children and the head's widowed mother	1	2	7	1.9	9.0
	Married man with two wives and their children	2	4	18	3.7	9.0
Type A sub totals	-	34	68	269	55.9	7.9

(cont.... on next page)

Table 6.5 continued.....

Type	Composition	Number of households		Number of Persons		Average size
		No.	%	No.	%	
B Households containing two or more married couples	Married couple, their children, a married son and his wife and children (but the son living away for work)	1	2	7	1.5	7.0
	Married couple, their children, brothers and sisters and the head's parents	1	2	10	2.1	10.0
	Married couple, their children, married sons(s) with wife or wives and husband's widowed mother	2	4	22	4.6	11.0
	Married couple, their sons(s) with wife or wives and their sons' children	4	8	54	11.2	13.5
	Married couple, their children and son(s) with wife or wives	3*	6	30	6.2	10.0
	Married couple, their children, head's brothers with or without wives, and head's sisters	1	2	13	2.7	13.0
	Married man with two wives, their children and married son(s) with their wife or wives and their children	3	6	59	12.3	19.7
	Married couple with their children, husbands sisters and married brothers with their wives and children, and husband's widowed mother	1	2	17	3.5	17.0
	-	16	32	212	44.1	13.3
	-	50	100	481	100	9.6
Type B sub-totals	-					
Totals for Types A and B	-					

\* One of the heads in this category had two wives but only one wife and his children formed part of this household. The other wife and her children lived in a house in Buraidah.



Table 6.6

Households by Number of Members

Number of household members	Number of Households	%
1-2	4	8
3-5	3	6
6-10	21	42
11-15	17	34
16-20	3	6
20-27	2	4
TOTAL	50	100

that, whether nuclear-based or extended family based, the strength of patrilocality and patrilineality remains overwhelming in household arrangements.

In addition to this, we see that whether 'nuclear' or 'extended', household size remains large as shown in Table 6.6. Only 14% of households had less than six members and 44% had more than 10 members.

Discussions with household heads about family size and lifestyle revealed the pride felt by those whose adult sons were still with them. Their pleasure was evident as they emphasised, "my elder children are with me", "we are still together in one house", or "thank God my sons are here".

A few household heads whose adult sons had moved away and set up independent households expressed their disappointment. One respondent gave me his story as follows:

When my sons grew up they insisted that I should build a modern house like many other people. I had not enough money but my sons told me the government lends money without interest and I would have a long time to repay it back. My sons' suggestions were very attractive to me, and I agreed. God knows, if I had known the situation would be like this, I would never had agreed, but it has happened. I applied to the Real Estate Bank, we started the construction according to my sons' suggestions and we took care that each of my sons should have his own rooms in the new house, for himself, his wife and their children. The house cost me a lot more than the 300 thousand Saudi Riyals of the loan, so I had to borrow money from money lenders in Buraidah and elsewhere. The house was large enough to accommodate us all, but these guys (the sons) started working with good wages, in addition their wives quarrelled and their children as well. My sons left me and moved to their own houses, yet I am not able to keep up repayments to the REDF, nor to the people who lent me money. The house is too large for us now, but God knows the future.

#### 6.5 Family Daily Routines

Islam has a considerable impact on all aspects of life in Hwylan, hence daily routines are strongly related to religious observance. Islam requires muslims from the age of seven to pray five times a day and most males from teenage upwards observe this. The prayers in the mosques are attended by males, while females perform their prayers in their houses. During the day, when the prayer caller summons

the people to the mosque for prayer, shops are closed and males leave their houses and walk to their neighbourhood mosque to perform their prayers. When the prayer is over, the shops reopen and the men and boys walk back to their houses. Some may be observed to linger in the mosque or outside in the street chatting for ten minutes or more.

Respect for the elderly is observed outside as well as inside the houses. For example, when males are walking towards the mosque, younger men will not pass in front of an elderly man in the street, but rather greet him and walk behind him or by his side, slowing their steps to his pace, to show respect. Sometimes a father and his sons go to the mosque as a group. At other times, they go separately depending on where they are coming from. Inside the mosques, the places behind the Immam or prayer leader, are taken up by the most senior men present and followed by the younger men, again to show respect.

Daily routine can be timed according to the five daily prayer times. Between 4-5 am, adult members of the family wake to the early morning prayer call. They wash and dress, then the men set off for the mosques, as do most of the boys, while the women pray at home. Within half an hour the men

return home. Some may go back to bed, but others remain awake.

About 6.00 am, the wife makes Arabic coffee for her husband and prepares the breakfast. The children, especially those who attend school, are woken up. They have their breakfast together with their parents at about 7.00 am, before leaving for their schools. Boys who live near their school usually walk but girls are often driven to school by their father or an adult brother. If they walk to school, they will be accompanied by one or more of the males of the household, as all females are customarily accompanied by males, even if only a young boy is available to perform this duty. Those who live further from school, especially girls, are usually driven by their fathers or brothers or, in the case of girls, transported to the schools by the girls' school bus.

The mother and other adult females, who only exceptionally work outside the house, remain at home doing their household chores, such as cleaning, washing clothes and preparing lunch.

The father's daily routine depends on his employment. If he is a farmer, he goes out to do his farm work, or if he

employs an expatriate farm worker, he may take him his breakfast from the house and advise him on the farm work for the day. If the farm has produce such as dates or vegetables these are first collected in small plastic or metal containers and transported in the farmer's vehicle to Buraidah's market, where it is given to a dealer for sale. This is usually done between 7.00 and 8.00 am. The father, if he does not have another job, then returns to his farm to continue the farm work or to supervise the expatriate worker(s). Sometimes he may go shopping in Buraidah.

If the father is employed in Buraidah he goes to his work there. Government sector employees work from 7.30 am. to 2.30 pm. except for Thursdays and Fridays, which are the weekend in Saudi Arabia.

Between 12 and 1.30 pm, the school day ends and the children leave for their homes. Again, the boys are usually observed walking in the streets, while the girls remain in the school waiting for their fathers or brothers to take them back home. Next to the girls' primary school in Hwylan is a small room adjacent to the main building. This room is for the school caretaker or "guard", who is not allowed to enter the school during the school day or whenever females are inside. His wife also works in the school as a servant and

as a mediator for communication between him and the school head and other female teachers and the students. For example, when the mail comes, the postman does not enter the school, but hands the mail to the "guard" who rings a bell; then his wife, who is inside the school, talks to him from behind the door and he passes in the mail to be handed to the head teacher. When the school day is over the guard checks who leaves the school and keeps the girls inside the building. When a father or brother comes to pick up his daughter or sister, the guard then rings the bell or shouts loudly; he does not utter the girls' first names, but only their family names. The girl then comes out of school and leaves with her relative. This is also done for female teachers when their relatives come to pick them up. Some of the girls who do not live near the school are provided with a bus for their transportation. The bus is driven by a male. He does not talk to the girls, but simply drops them off outside their respective houses.

The boys' intermediate school pupils were observed performing their early noon prayer inside the school, since they have a slightly longer school day than the primary school. There is a mosque in the school yard, and they remain in school for early noon prayer then pray together with their teachers and the school staff, before they leave,

usually walking to their houses. This social division of sex and age is in keeping with religious values and is still strictly maintained in the locality.

When the children return home they are served with lunch, which is the main meal. Regarding meals, it should be pointed out here that sex segregation is still maintained. For example, households with adult males and adult females, tend to have their meals separately, the females eating in their part of the house and the males usually eating in the sitting room.

The father's occupation is a significant factor in determining whether or not he eats the main meal with his family. Those who are farmers or not employed in the government sector usually return home earlier (between 12-1 pm.), in which case they are more likely to join their families for lunch. However, those who come later (after 2-3 pm.) usually have their meal waiting for them, served by the mother, while the children will already have had their meal.

The father usually has a nap after lunch, until 4.00 pm. when he attends the late afternoon prayer (Arabic: Salat alasar) in the mosque. He then returns to the house, where his wife prepares Arabic coffee and black tea, which he

drinks while sitting with his family. Children usually remain in the house after the asr prayer, doing their homework. The father either stays home or goes out, to his farm, or perhaps to Buraidah to visit relatives or friends, or to go shopping in the sug.

The early evening prayer call starts about 6.30 pm. Again, males attend the prayers in the mosques while females pray at home. The males then return home, and usually have dinner between 7.30 and 8.30 pm. Sometimes dinner is served after the late evening prayer, held between 8.00 and 8.45 pm. If the family has a television they watch it together until between 11-12.00 pm. when everybody goes to bed.

Joint families, which include sons' wives, normally share the household chores between all the adult females. For example, one will do the cooking while another does the cleaning. The next day they will exchange duties. Their mother-in-law supervises most of the household chores and also helps. For adult females to learn to do household chores is very important in the family routines. For example, the mother makes sure that her daughters gradually take over and learn the household chores by training them within their home in order that they should become good wives and satisfy their husbands and their families.



Age division is an important factor in family routines. For example, children not only respect their parents, but also their elder brothers. When they sit in the sitting room the father sits in his own place and his children sit near him in order of age, with the eldest closest to the father. Older brothers may ask younger ones to serve them, and it is rare for a younger brother to ask his elder brother to serve him, unless it is something he is not able to do because of his age.

Males tend to seek their father's advice while females seek their mother's advice as it is believed that the mother knows the girl's needs best and vice versa. Fathers exert their authority in the household over all the children, but especially over the sons when they go out. For example when a son returns from outside the house, the father asks him, "Where have you been? With whom have you been?", in order to make sure that the son keeps a good reputation in the locality. When the son wants to go out he asks his father for permission. However, if the father needs anything, the son's duty to serve his father takes precedence over his desire to visit a friend. The father may ask, "Where are you going? What are you going to do? With whom are you going? When will you be back?". He advises his adult sons to be careful when they drive, not to be late, etc.

Adult females have far fewer outings from the household than adult males. All the older males exert authority over females, and the segregation of females continues to be maintained inside the house. For example, if a female child comes to the men's sitting room while a visiting male is there, her father or brothers will order her back into the women's domain, saying (Arabic: Rohy Le Ummek) "Go to your mother", or "Go away from men" (Arabic: Rohy an arrejäl). When an adult male has an adult male visitor, he closes the door which divides the sitting room from the womens' domain. He shouts, "There is a man (or men) in the sitting room. Nobody should come here. Make tea", which he later takes to serve to his visitor(s). Hence women's tasks are limited to the household, while the husband is the breadwinner for the family. He is, by religious tradition, responsible for the family's financial welfare, a tradition strongly maintained in Hwylan.

Keeping up the reputation of the family in the locality by good behaviour is of utmost importance to the local inhabitants. For example, adult males try their best not to miss daily prayers in the mosque when they are not working. They also try never to behave in a way that might be unacceptable to any other inhabitants, such as smoking

cigarettes or playing cards. If they do such things, they do them in private.

### Conclusion

The general patterns of family life and kinship in Hwylan are in most respects similar to the rest of Saudi society but there is stronger conservatism and a greater tendency to cling to the values of the past than in large towns. Social relations inside and outside the household are still overwhelmingly influenced by family values, though there is some evidence of new ideas and experience filtering into the community, albeit very slowly. For example, some fresh names appearing in the community are becoming more popular among the younger generation and consumption styles are increasingly 'modern' as we shall see in a later chapter.

The elderly still try to dominate family decision-making. It is felt that this is how it should be, as long as they live in one household. The seclusion of women is still strictly observed. Not only are they confined to the interior part of the house, but even mentioning a woman's name in front of others remains unacceptable, even inside the family house. The dominance of the males, who are always the heads of the household, has scarcely been affected.

Attachment to the immediate family is still observed. The individual is always expected to think of his family's reaction when interacting with others. He or she makes the family proud by achieving and maintaining a good reputation, and shames them by unacceptable behaviour. In the house, the father is the most respected person. Brothers respect their older brothers and younger ones are expected to listen to and serve the older ones. When a man gets married, his wife is expected to respect her husband's father and to listen to his orders, as he is the head of the house rather than her husband, even in matters that directly involve her own life.

All these observations are in keeping with the findings reported in Chapter Four of the criteria by which status is assessed in the community. 'Traditional' criteria are more decisive than 'modern' ones.

However, there is an increasing tendency for family members to move out from their parents houses for various reasons. Apart from females moving out when they get married, which is the norm, it is not uncommon for men also to leave their parents on or after marriage. It is evident that there are a number of factors affecting the departure of family members, including work, study, house size, divorce, family problems and rejoining other family members who had

already left the house and, often, the village. The elderly regret these developments but have no option but to accept them.

Marriage and family are included within the religious framework of Islam and the traditions of the community. Trends of change are most apparent in material aspects such as the great increase in marriage costs, the holding of marriage ceremonies in hired palaces instead of family houses, and the introduction of invitation cards.

A few of the men are polygamous but marriage to more than one wife is not regarded as an ideal by young men and most women are said to be critical of it.

## APPENDICES TO CHAPTER SIX

### CASE HISTORY NO.1

Sulaiman is over 50 years old. He is illiterate, married and lives with his family including his married sons, their wives and their children. During his youth he was a builder of mud houses. However, when mud house building declined, he rented a small farm in a nearby village. He bought two cows and a few goats to provide his family with dairy products. There were less than a dozen date palms on the farm. Their produce was also used for family consumption.

After a few years, Sulaiman gave up farming to look for a better paid occupation. He and his wife were successful in obtaining work in the neighbouring village. Their place of work is only a short distance from their home, so they walk there and back each day. Their income is important to the family, as they have always been relatively poor.

The family consists of twelve people of various ages. His eldest son is in his thirties. He has never attended school as, during his childhood, the family were unaware of the benefits of formal education. However, his second son, who is ten years younger than the first, completed the sixth

grade of primary school. For some years he did nothing, then when he reached his late teens, he started looking for work. He found work as a government clerk outside the village and now commutes daily. The third son, who is about two years younger than the second, also had the chance to attend school. He obtained the intermediate certificate and then left school. In his late teens he found work in the private sector outside the village. He also commutes daily. The youngest son received more parental encouragement in his education, but frequently absented himself from school against his father's wishes and eventually dropped out. He is now unemployed and either stays at home or spends his time in the streets.

Sulaiman said that he is happy that his older children are working, but added that if they had received a better education, they would have been able to get better jobs and higher salaries. This would have improved the family's living standards, but he accepted the outcome as God's will. He is happy that his sons remain in the parental home, although they are married and earning. If one of his sons were to suggest moving out, he would try to persuade him to remain.

The family lives in a cement traditional house with simple furnishings and domestic equipments. Nonetheless, it is an improvement on his circumstances of years ago; then there was hardship, no electricity and virtually no equipment. He referred to the past as follows: "Life was very hard, it was terrible. Now there are schools, jobs and health care". He is aware that people can get land to build a house or for farming, and that loans are available from the Saudi Agricultural Bank or the REDF but he has not applied to either as he does not think he is eligible for a land grant. His sons have not applied for the same reason.

When Sulaiman's sons got married, he paid the necessary dowries for them. Although the dowries were very high, he managed to find the money without relying on loans, which would have been a burden for the future. He accepts it is sometimes necessary to borrow money and he had himself borrowed from a friend when he built his cement house but took good care not to involve himself in heavy debt. His modest home is sufficient for his family's needs and he is quite happy.

There is a television set in Sulaiman's house, but he does not watch it, and at heart does not really approve of T.V. ownership. One of his sons had brought the set into the



house, saying it was a gift for the family and he did not wish to refuse.

Discussing relationships among family members, he admitted that disputes can lead to the separation of members, but that a father should always exert his influence to avoid or resolve disputes, so as to prevent separation and departures. In his family, relations are good. If one of his son's wives were to argue, her husband would himself rebuke her to avoid trouble for the family as a whole. If one of his sons were to fail to do this, Sulaiman would be angry. Household work is distributed equally among the women on a rota basis and this has up to now avoided any serious problems.

What really upsets Sulaiman is the situation of his youngest son, Ahmed, who dropped out of school and refused to attend the Occupational Training Centre in Buraidah. Ahmed was admitted to the Social Correction Centre in Buraidah at the request of his father who admitted that he could not handle him. Ahmed was considered a juvenile delinquent because, in addition to playing truant, he engaged in various unacceptable activities and hung around the streets. He remained in the centre for a year but ran away during the course of a visit home. The father does not hide his anxiety about his delinquent son. He hopes Ahmed will eventually

realise his mistake and learn an occupation or study. He commented Sadly, "Today's sons are different. Good food and clothing are offered to them, but they are never satisfied. When I was young, my hands and feet were cracked from hard work. We had very few clothes. Now these kids have more than a dozen garments each. God grant that things don't get any worse".

Sulaiman recalled that when he was younger he and his family relied on folk healing and traditional herbal medicines, but in recent years he has used modern clinics in the village or elsewhere. He still sometimes uses folk healers who read verses of the Quran to treat certain health problems. The best treatment for "devil eye" in his belief, is the Quran and one should not ignore it .

Sulaiman said that he would like to live in a modern house, but this is beyond his financial means, especially as he considers that one should only build a villa if it is sufficiently good and spacious, to last a long time and to accommodate an increasing family, including grandchildren. His adult sons contribute to the household food and each of the married ones is responsible for his wife's and children's clothing. So the household manages alright and he sees no real need to think of a villa.

## CASE HISTORY NO.2

Hamad is over seventy years old and married. He lives with his wife and some of his children. He is an illiterate farmer. When he was young, "before the time of oil", he was very poor, as were most people, not only in Hwylan, but throughout the region and the country as a whole.

As a boy he lived in Hwylan on the same farm that he occupies now. His family depended mainly on their date produce, though they also grew some wheat. When he was about twenty, he joined the camel caravans of traders of Al Qassim region, known as Agylat, and made a living travelling with the other traders to Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Kuwait and Iraq. These trade caravans exported camels, and horses and imported clothes, spices, housewares, etc.

When oil was discovered in the country, the trade declined and Hamed decided to settle in Saudi Arabia but outside the region as there was little work in the Buraidah area. For some years he was engaged in building traditional mud houses in Riyadh. Sometimes he was paid in kind (eg wheat) rather than in cash. Later he started to earn cash. He earned only small amounts for several days of heavy work

and long hours. He lived frugally as few things were needed and the necessities of life were very cheap.

A few years later, he decided to travel back to his own village to settle on the family farm still being watched by his father. He married and lived with his parents in their mud house. "We worked together, cultivated and ate together. We used to buy electricity, spices, salt and housewares from the town. We travelled on foot or on donkeys... There was no steel" (Meaning there were no vehicles).

After his father's death, Hamad's brother moved out of his own mud house in the village but Hamad continued to live and work on the farm. Due to the strength of the familial bond, the farm was not divided between the inheriting family members. However, one of the kin members, who inherited part of the land left in the care of Hamad, bought part of it. Although he paid Hamad the money, he was not given access to the land. After waiting for several years in order to try to avoid a family dispute, the purchaser began to feel that he was too patient with Hamad. A kinsman then got a friend to act on his behalf to claim the land he had bought, but Hamad rejected the claim. The kinsman's representative then went to court and sued Hamad. The court authorised an evaluation of the land which had been sold and Hamad was ordered to

repay the cost. He did so by borrowing money from money lenders and friends.

Later, Hamad sold another part of the land to yet another person but after receiving the money, he (Hamad) had changed his mind. As he still held the deeds to the land, he was able to get loans from the Agricultural Bank for the farm.

Part of the farm now remains undivided among the inheriting kin group, and Hamad continues to live and work on it.

A few years ago, under pressure from his grown sons, Hamad applied for a house loan from the REDF. He was granted the loan and then he said he wanted to use it to marry a second younger wife. But his sons convinced him that he should build a spacious modern house instead. He started building the house in the expectation that his married sons would then live there with him. At their instigation he built rooms for them and their children. The building cost Hamad far more than he had borrowed from the REDF, so he had to take further loans from friends and money lenders outside the village. He said "somebody is over my shoulder", meaning that he is in debt for a large sum of money.

When his sons found work outside the village, they moved to live nearer to their work. Hamad said, "The guys left me with the women" (meaning his wife and unmarried daughters). "They persuaded me to build this large house which put me in debt and then moved away. I cannot keep up all the repayments. Isn't this a shame..... I am happy that they have learnt and can earn their living, but I am not happy that they moved out. I never visit them, because they left me. Although they visit me often, they do not help me financially. They earn high salaries but they do not help me financially or, if they do, their contribution is minimal. This is wrong. I have become an old man, I cannot work as hard as before. A lot of dates remain on the palms without being picked until they become useless. These guys have never experienced the sort of hardship we had. I had to struggle to fill my stomach. Even the girls now have raised their heads and spend much time with their books... My wife used to milk the cow and made butter milk or dairy products but now we buy it in plastic bags from commercial shops.... Today's lifestyle is different".

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### HOUSING IN HWYLAN

#### Introduction

Traditional houses in the settled communities of Saudi Arabia, both rural and urban, were mainly built of mud or clay, with other local materials. The houses were designed to cope with the harsh natural environment and in accordance with cultural values. However, with the rapid economic development of the country, changes have taken and are taking place in house design in the materials used and in methods of construction. Some houses are built of cement, though retaining the design of the traditional house, while the modern house or villa is built with a variety of materials and may depart in some respects from the traditional design.

These changes in housing have a wide range of implications, such as increased costs, the need to import materials, the involvement of a large expatriate labour force, and the development of various forms of building contract. At the same time, these changes are not necessarily accompanied by significant changes in family

groupings and lifestyles. Many people still live in extended families, and the traditional cultural values of kinship, family loyalty and the seclusion of women, remain strong. Thus, the new housing reflects an attempt to maintain a balance between the aspirations of socio-economic development and the inevitable changes that accompany it, on the one hand, and the desire to retain traditional values on the other.

With these points in mind, this chapter explores the nature of housing currently found in Hwylan and its relationship to the economic and cultural contexts of the community.

### 7.1 Types of Housing in Hwylan

As shown in Table 7.1, houses in Hwylan range from traditional mud houses to modern villas and one flat. Cement houses of traditional style constitute 48 per cent of the total, followed by modern villas, which form 40 per cent of the total. Only five houses are traditional mud houses, while one family lived in a modern flat provided by the SDC where the head of the family worked as caretaker of the whole building.



This distribution reflects the transition in types of residence from mud houses, which have in recent years been abandoned in large numbers, to cement traditional and modern villas. The transition is evident from the responses of the household heads who were asked what type of houses they lived in prior to their present ones.

Table 7.1

Present House Type Excluding Expatriates

<b>Present House Type</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
Mud	5	10
Cement Traditional	24	48
Modern (Villa)	20	40
Flat	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 7.2

Family's Previous House Type

<b>Previous House Type</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Mud House	39	78
Cement Traditional Home	8	16
Modern House (Villa)	1	2
Lived in the same Mud House	2	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Two cases among the sample lived in the same mud house in which the head was born - No case had previously lived in a flat.

As Table 7.2 shows, most of the household heads had lived in mud houses before moving into their present homes. This was the case for 78 per cent, indicating the radical change in houses occupied during the lifetime of the present householders. Most of the others (16 per cent) had moved from traditional cement houses. Only one household had lived in a villa before their present house. The survey also found two families who had continued to live in the same mud houses and had not so far transferred to another type.

This housing situation broadly reflects the phases of socio-economic development in the region (and in the country generally), as well as the current values and aspirations of Hwylan householders.

## 7.2 The Mud House

The mud house (Arabic: bait Dheen) was the traditional type of house, built of local materials: mud or clay, stone, tamarisk wood and date palm leaves. Tamarisk wood was used for the doors and windows, stone for the foundations, mud for the walls and date palm leaves for the roof. The builders and workers of these houses all came from the community or its surrounding area.

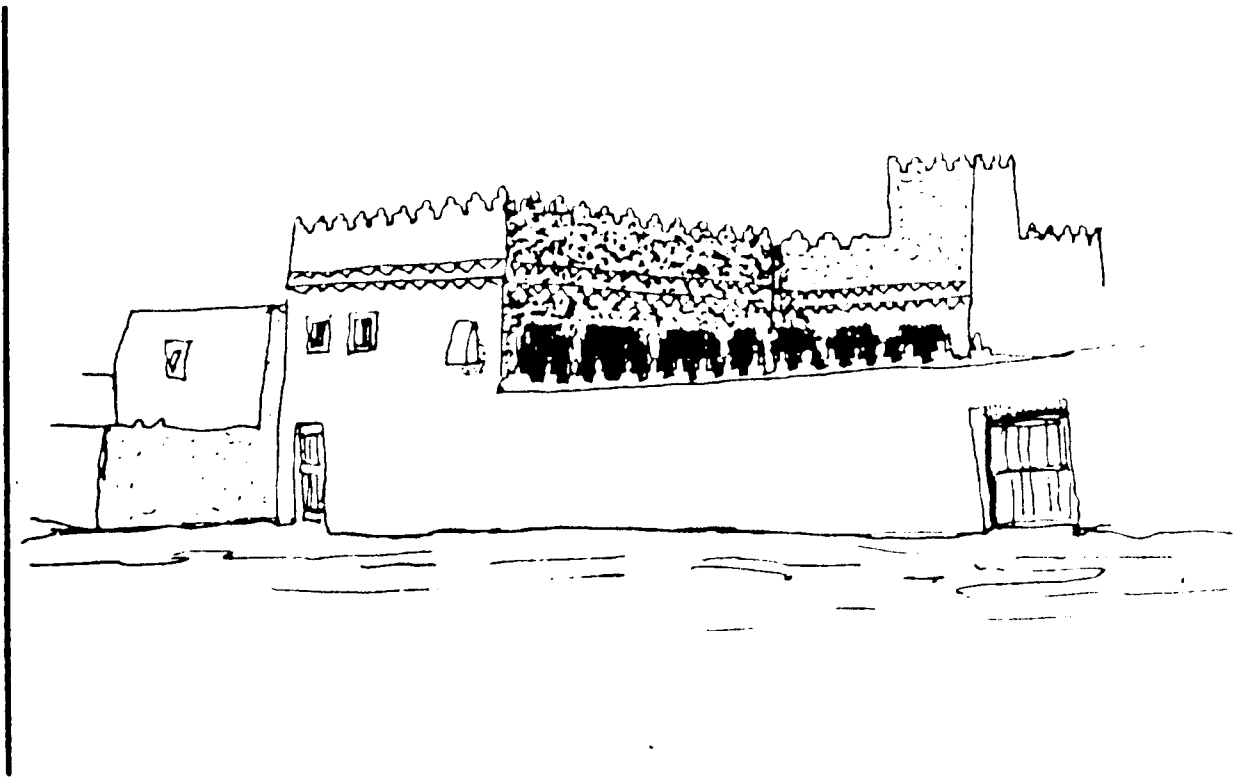
Ganoubi (1976) and Al Ribdi (1986) have described the traditional building materials and techniques used in the central part of Saudi Arabia in some detail and these are virtually the same as in the region of Buraidah:

**Palm trunk and fronds (Arabic: khoos or Jareed) were used for roofs as they insulated against heat. Thick walls also were suitable for both winter and summer. The houses had one or two storeys only, with small windows looking onto an inside courtyard and providing the house with daylight and ventilation. During summer, the residents used the roof for sleeping at night. Houses were attached to one another to reduce the heat from the sun and the force of the winds, and in the past such attachment was important for local defence (Ganoubi, p75).**

In the case of Hwylan's mud houses, the clay came from the north east part of the village or from the immediate environs. Tamarisk trees were grown in quantity in Hwylan itself, so much of the wood for building came from local supplies, the rest being brought from surrounding communities. The stones came mainly from a few kilometres away, from the area which is now the north eastern part of Buraidah. Date-palm leaves also came from both the immediate locality and surrounding areas. The means of transport up to forty years ago, before the introduction of motor vehicles, were donkeys and camels carrying containers made of rubber, leather or date-palm leaves. These animals were supplied by hirers (Arabic: Jamalah), or borrowed from friends if the owner of the house under construction did not have any

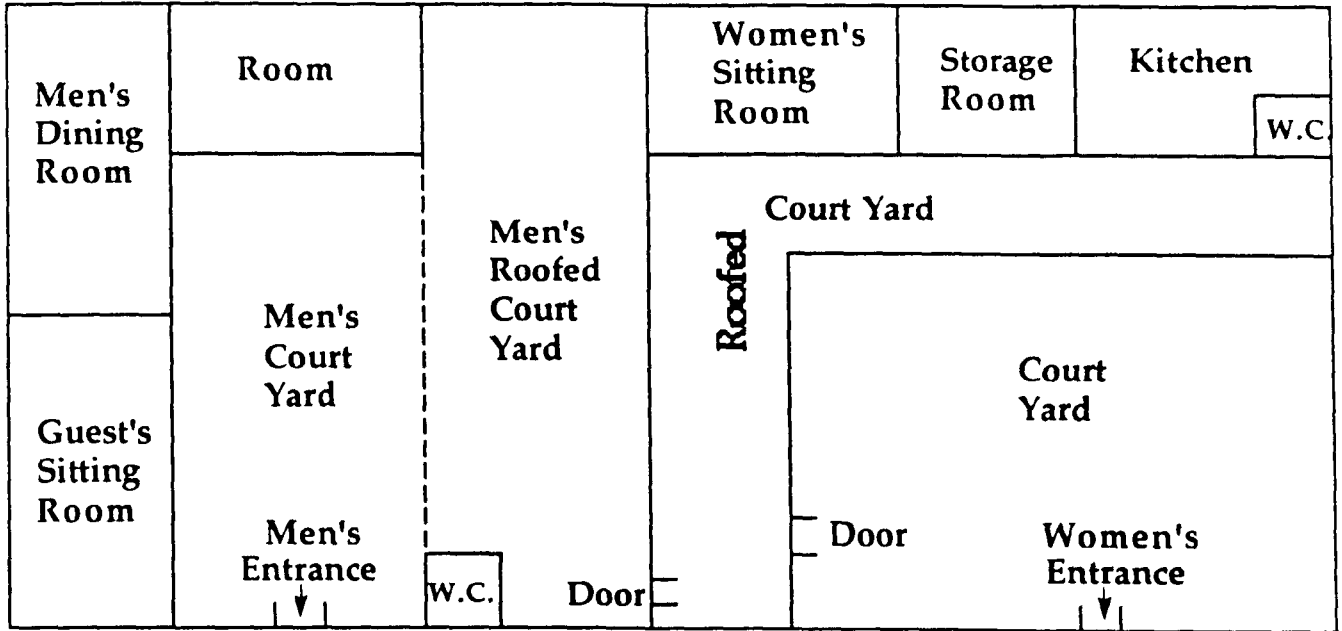
Plate 7.1

Sketch of a Mud House

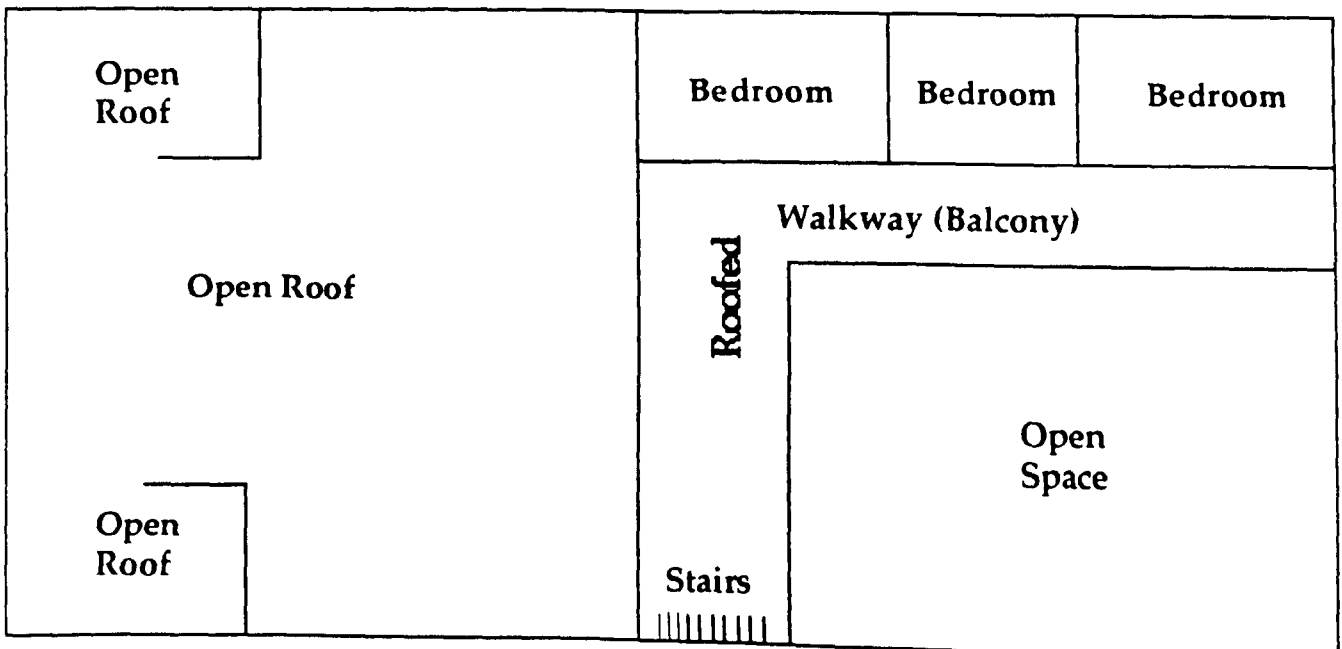


Source: Al-Hujylan M., The Social Development Centre In Al Qassim, Unpublished B.C.C. 1. Project, Civil Engineering College, King Saud University, N.D. p12.

Plate 7.2



a) Mud House Ground Floor Space Plan



b) Mud House Upper Floor Typical Plan, drawn by the researcher on the basis of Observations in Hwylan.

Plate 7.3



a) Abandoned Mud Houses in Disrepair in Hwylan

b) Mud House in Hwylan, still in reasonable condition but no longer occupied



himself. Water was hauled from the local water wells and, when necessary, was also transported by camels or donkeys.

The builder and his labourers were usually paid according to daily rates (Arabic: yomyah). Before the 1930's their remuneration was generally in kind rather than cash, because at that time there was no regular use of currency. These payments might be wheat, dates, clothes or coffee, depending on the agreement between the house owner and the labourers and on the means of the owner and the goods he could offer.

The builder was given verbal instructions for the house design by the house owner. He was told where to place the sitting room, the Arabic toilets, the women's section, the storage room, the bedrooms and other sections of the house. He was told the approximate dimensions required and any other design features that fitted the family's needs, financial means and the like. The design and dimensions were first drawn by the owner of the ground using his feet or a stick to draw lines. These were then marked out by the building using mud bricks. All mud houses were designed by their owners in this way, as is now still the case with traditional cement houses (see Table 7.3).

Table 7.3

Distribution of House Types by the way they were Designed

Present Houses	By owner (past or present)		Architect Design		Don't Know		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Mud	5	10	-	-	-	-	5	10
Cement Traditional	24	48	-	-	-	-	24	48
Modern (villa)	4	8	16	32	-	-	20	40
Flat	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	2
TOTAL	33	66	16	32	1	2	50	100

Although the labourers involved in house-building were of low status, the builder himself was a person of some consequence. His workers showed their respect for him by addressing him as ustad, which can be translated as: 'instructor' or 'experienced person'. He did the actual bricklaying himself and closely supervised the labourers, who dug and mixed the mud for the bricks in accordance with his instructions on the amount of clay, chopped straw (Arabic: tebn) and water to be used. They then handed the sun-dried mud bricks to him, while chanting words such as:

"Brick, mud, Oh God"

"Brick, mud, Help God"



The builder decided the breaks for rest and evaluated the workers' efforts and performance, in passing this information on the house owner, who might reward the workers with, for example, increased payments, encouraging words or promises of further work building a house for a friend or relation.

Construction work started in the early morning, especially during summer, and continued until just before the early afternoon call to prayer (at about 12 noon), when the workers had a break on the work site, or went to the house of the house owner if he had another one close by, where they were served lunch by the owner or his sons. They then went to noon prayers in the nearest mosque, as the culture dictates that there is no work during prayer time. After prayers, they resumed work if the weather was not too hot, or they returned to their homes until the next morning.

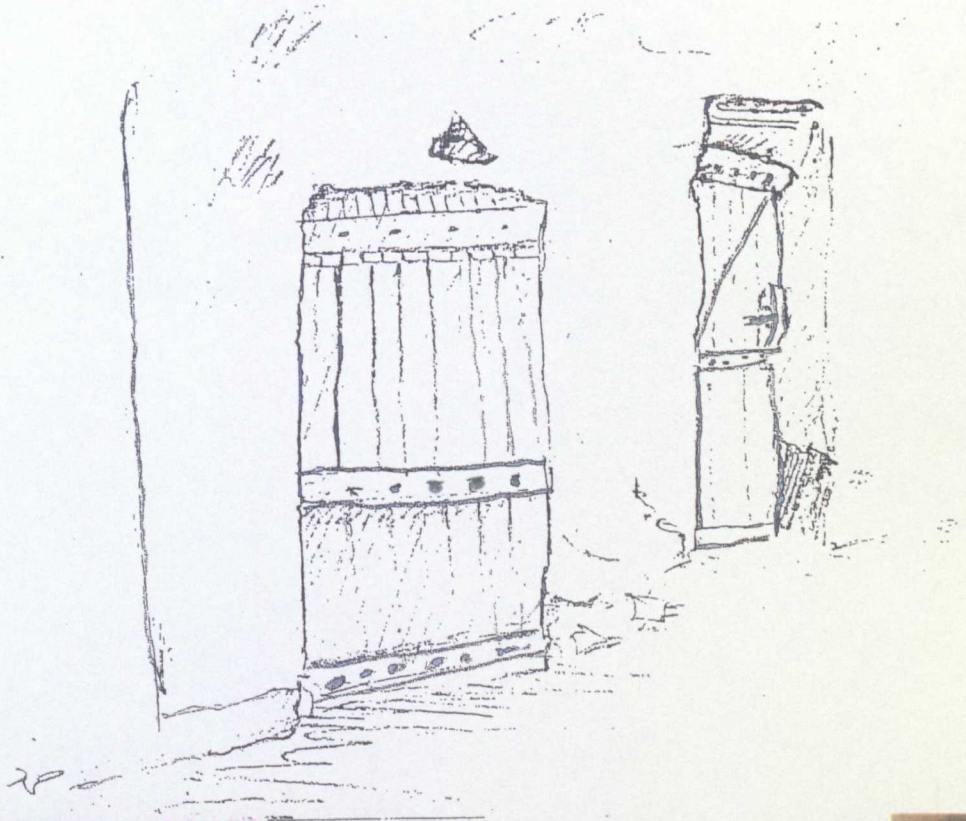
Whereas the mud bricks were made on the building site, the stones were cut and sold by professional labourers working on their own account. Tamarisk branches for rough wood were cut by the builder according to the measurements needed as the building progressed, but tamarisk house doors and windows were bought ready-made, or ordered to specification from carpenters in Buraidah. Doors and windows were generally painted by the carpenters before being sold to

their customers, so they tended to reflect the artistic taste of the carpenters rather than of the house owners.

Al Qassim province was well known for tamarisk - made doors and windows of high quality. The region was also noted for the colours used: various oriental colours such as yellow, red, brown and dark blue used in triangular, squared, or striped patterns. Window locks were also made from tamarisk wood. The doors were solid, heavy and close fitting. The windows were also heavy, but small and set high in the house walls to provide privacy and especially to prevent women from being seen by passers-by.

A typical mud house plan is shown Plate 7.2. They were usually of two storeys, and always had separate entrances for men and women as well as separate rooms and courtyards for males and females. The "family section" was on the female side of the house which was separated by a door which was always kept closed when male guests were present. The bedrooms were upstairs. The separate male and female entrances to the house were also kept closed for privacy. The family section courtyard was used for children to play in, to dry clothes in the sunshine and sometimes to grow vegetables and fruit.

Mud House Doors Made From Tamarisk Wood



The design and furnishing of the mud house reflected important social values. Particular attention was paid to the men's sitting room: it had to be wide enough to accommodate guests, so it was always larger than other rooms in the house. The men's sitting room was also regarded as an expression of the generosity of the house owner. Plastering was important for this room and its walls were usually coated with gypsum. It also had a higher roof than any other room in the house, with an opening roof window to allow fire smoke from tea and coffee-making to escape.

Ganoubi (1976) has also referred to the importance of the guest room:

**The guest-room used to be the only place for making tea and coffee with a special built-in coffee hearth (wejar) with built in shelves for coffee and teapots as well as other used utensils. The wejar is usually decorated with white plaster. But the practice of building the wejar in the guest-room has nearly ceased except for a limited number of old houses. At present most of the houses have rooms for making tea and coffee which are also used in each house as family rooms, especially during winter where members of the household gather round the wejar fire entertaining themselves while drinking tea and coffee (p.74).**

The houses lacked sewerage, plumbing, piped water and the like. But they were comfortable physically and socially for Saudi families. They catered for privacy and sex

segregation, they were usually spacious and had good lighting, ventilation and thermal retention capacity.

About twenty five years ago, cement started to be used in mud houses, not for the main structures, as it was expensive and people lacked the skills to build cement houses, but for coating roofs to provide extra protection against heavy rainfall, as mud absorbs rain and this sometimes led to the collapse of the house. In some cases, people coated the top of the walls with gypsum to reduce the absorption of rain, again to prevent collapse. Drainage outlets were also lined with gypsum or cement. During the seasons of heavy rainfall, people made sure that these outlets were clear of stones or other obstacles to prevent seepage from the roof coming on the walls.

Elderly people in Hwylan recalled that in 1956 there was heavy rainfall in the area, including Hwylan. At that time, all the buildings were of mud: the houses, the mosques and the village's only boys' primary school. The rainfall was extremely heavy on the first day, and this was followed by continuous showers for several days. Cement and gypsum had not yet been used in the village. After absorbing rain for several days, a number of buildings collapsed, including the boys' primary school, the main mosque and several houses.

The majority of the village's inhabitants, even those whose houses had not collapsed, moved to the eastern sandhill in the locality. Emergency aid in the form of tents was provided from the region's emirate in Buraidah and people lived in these for several months while their houses were rebuilt.

Elderly inhabitants still refer to 1956 as the year of the flood (Arabic: Sanat Al Gargah), exaggerating the extent of the rainfall. In this locality, as in other parts of central Saudi Arabia, the memory of this year has been passed on from one generation to the next. The older generation claim that when mud houses collapsed, many householders could not afford to rebuild owing to the poor economic situation of the times. The cement houses which the young people now enjoy had not yet been introduced.

Despite this experience, many elderly people of the locality, regardless of their present house type, look back nostalgically to the old days when there were only mud houses. The reasons they give for this are that mud houses cost much less than cement ones, that they were built by Saudi nationals without the need to import expatriate labour, and that the period of construction was much shorter. They also recalled that during the mud house era, when people built their own houses, there was no need for many things

that have since become important and increased the cost of the homes. For example, one man stressed that there was no need to paint the interior walls, whereas now, when people plan a villa, they start thinking of what colours to use. Suggestions for colours come from women as well as men. In the case of mud houses, everything was simpler; there was no intervention by women or younger relatives. He added that now, anyone wanting to paint his house gets confused and has to spend several days shopping around for paints and is faced with a bewildering choice of American, European or Japanese products, and with different methods of application, different patterns etc. He missed the simplicity of the mud house, but admitted that he nonetheless preferred to live in a modern house, because it resists rain. The life style of every generation are God's gifts (Arabic: Nemah) which, he believed, one should appreciate and not deny. When one has money, there are many materials, furnishings, equipment, etc. to choose from. "Money and all these things are provided by God" (Arabic: Rezq). He concluded by hoping that God would continue these gifts.

Another local man, aged over fifty, looked back with affection to the mud house in the following terms:

When we were building mud houses there were no building regulations or specifications for materials that we used. No need in the past to go to the Municipality to have permission to build my own house on my own land (Building Licence), I just went to a builder and asked him to come to the site where I wanted to build my mud house and the builder told me when he could start. He showed up early in the morning, after the early morning prayer. He brought his tools and started the work. When we built our mud houses no-one asked about our land deeds, but now the surveyors come and measure everything by centimetres according to the deed information. Then building regulations of certain specifications covering the whole building process must be observed.

Such comments reflect admiration for the simplicity of the mud house building process and appreciation of the freedom people enjoyed before building regulations were introduced and before surveyors began to "interfere".

The evident nostalgia felt in regard to mud houses is related to the whole life style associated with them. In Hwylan, coffee and tea making was not confined to the guest room, but also done in the kitchen, or outside the guest rooms, in the courtyard or in the open on the farm. This is related to the fact that many of the inhabitants of Hwylan were farmers. Among these people the responsibility for coffee and tea making was shared by men and women. At times, the household head might have farm work to attend to, which made it inconvenient for him to spend his time making coffee or tea, so his wife would prepare it for him while attending



to meals in the kitchen. If the husband had no guests, she would serve him coffee or tea outside the house, while he was working. If he had guests, she would call him to fetch a tray to take to his guests, sitting outside in the sun, if it was winter and sunny, or in the shade of date-palm trees if it was summer.

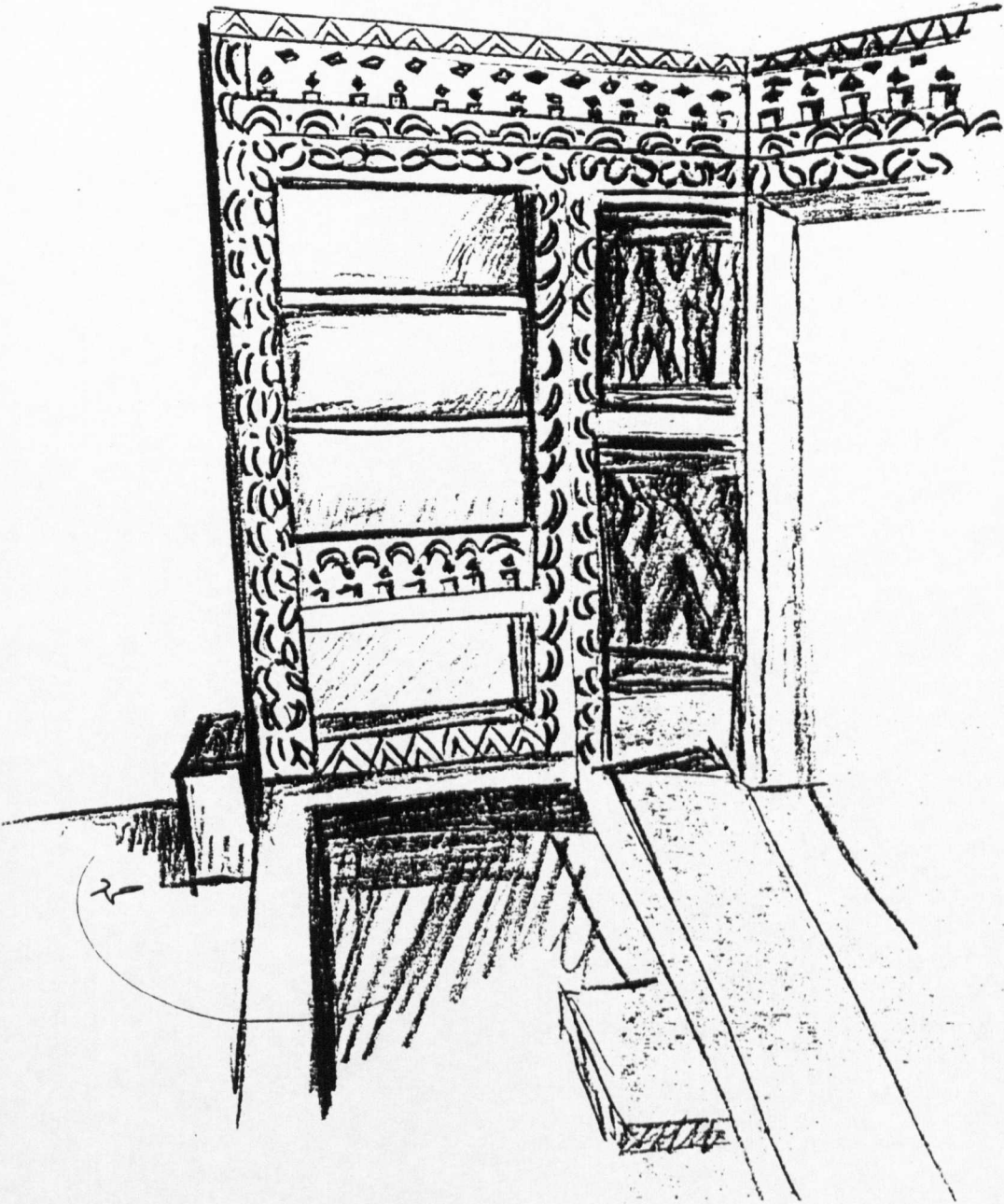
The men who had no farm would generally prepare coffee and tea for guests in the guest room. Coffee-hearths (Arabic: wejar) with built-in shelves for tea and coffee pots (Arabic: kumar) were standard in the mud houses of the village (see Plate 7.5). To express their generosity, people tended to fill the shelves with colourful tea and coffee pots and glasses (Arabic: fenjal and byalah), not necessarily for frequent use but as an indication that the household members could serve and entertain many guests, and that the household was ready for this when required.

Coffee beans were roasted in the guest room (Arabic: mailis) on a fire set up in the coffee hearth, using a kind of a metal pan with a long handle (Arabic: mehmas). Then the coffee beans were ground by means of a heavy metal hand-beaten mortar (Arabic: nejer), a task which was done loudly, the mortar beaten with a special rhythm to show the family's joy in entertaining the guests, and also to demonstrate the

ability of the man to grind the coffee well and thus convey that he was well experienced in entertaining guests, and well trained by older family members who had entertained guests before him.

When he had prepared the drink, the host tasted it before serving the guests to make sure that the ingredients were well balanced and that the guests would be satisfied with this preparation. He then served the coffee, starting with the man sitting on his right hand side. If there were several guests, this was usually the eldest of them. In keeping with the norms of the culture, they sat in order of age - the senior closest to the hearth on the right hand side of the host. The host might ask one of his sons, if he had any of ten years old or older, to serve the guests, standing up and pouring the coffee from the pot, which the server held in his left hand, into one of the cups held in his right hand and handing one to each guest in turn. The guest usually drank several cups. Traditionally, the cups were passed and received using the right hand. When a guest had drunk enough he shook his hand holding the empty cup and handed it back to the server saying "enough" (Arabic: bass). The server was then expected to say, "I shall pour one more for you".

The Wajar and Coffee Hearth in the Mud House



Based on field sketch of a house in Hwylan

Whether the guest agreed to this extra cup or not, the server would pour another one, and this could be repeated several times between the guest and the server. The host, if he was the father of the server, would prompt his son if he was not sufficiently insistent in serving extra cups: "Insist, my dear son" (Arabic: lazem). The son would answer his father with "Yes, father, God wishes it" (Arabic: Inshallah). Dates might be served with the Arabic coffee. After coffee, tea was served in a different pot and cups in the same manner.

If there was a meal, it would be brought in and served with all the men sitting together. The host would invite the guests to start eating by saying loudly, "Say in the name of God" (Arabic: Sammu-be-Allah), or if the hospitality was for a special guest or family or friend, who might have brought with him other companions, the host might say to the invited guest, "Say in the name of God" (followed by the name of the guest) giving him the priority to start the food and indicating that this meal was prepared in his honour. When they started eating, the host would say loudly, "You are most welcome. This is a delightful moment for us. Today is brightened by your presence. Eat well, please. The house is yours; our house is your house". These words would indicate his happiness and strong relationship with his guest. They might reply to him, "May God increase your wealth" (Arabic:

Allah yogneek); or they might say "This is your custom and we are of your group" (Arabic: Assa hadha min tabuku wahenna min rabuukum) - an indication of their happiness at visiting his house and their satisfaction with the relationship which they wished to continue.

Al-Shahi (1986) has written about the social values related to the Arab house in general:

An Arab, on welcoming a guest, uses the expression, "Welcome, my house is yours". While the Arab house is respected as the private property of its owner, yet the Arabic expression has some radically different implications which are rooted in the culture and social organisation of the Arabs. My concern in this paper is with a system of values associated with the Arab house (such as those related to kinship, women and hospitality) which remain dominant despite variations in the type, size, location, allocation of space, building material, layout and ownership of the Arab house (p.25).

Thus, in Arab countries, the expression "Welcome, my house is yours" is said to the guests, regardless of whether the householder is the owner or not, and this applies regardless of the house type, size, location etc. It is an indication of the host's wish to provide the guest with comfort and to discard formality, so that the guest will enjoy himself as if he were in his own home. However, it should be mentioned that the male guests are entertained in the men's section of the house.

Al-Shahi (1986) also refers to the women's section in the Arab house. There was a social separation between men and women, reflected by the building of houses where the women had their own section separate from the men's section. The men's guest room was situated away from the family area because it is forbidden (Arabic: muharram) for men outside the family to violate the honour of the family by seeing the women (Arabic: harim) (p.26).

Women not only had their own section of the house, but also in most cases their own home entrance to the house. It was expected that men, when visiting somebody's house, would knock at the men's door, while women would knock at and enter through the women's door. When the knock was at the men's door a boy or man had to answer and when at the women's door, a woman or girl was expected to answer.

Katakura (1977) has also written about the mud house and noted the similarity of contents, arrangements and interior sections with those in Arab tents, except that mud houses had built-in shelves and windows. The garden would be used for entertaining guests during summer nights, after laying down a carpet and cushions (Arabic: musnadah) (Pp.75-76).

In Hwylan, it was not common until recently for houses to have gardens. This was because the villages of the area had many farms, so guests were entertained on the farms, in the day time during winter to get the warmth of the sun, and in the evenings during the summer season to enjoy the cool night. When entertained inside, the male guests were in the men's guest room, while the women were received in the women's section at the back of the house. Much money and attention was devoted to the guest room (Arabic: majlis or guhwah). Its furnishings included the most expensive oriental carpets the householders could afford, as well as many utensils for coffee and tea, and the firewood store (Arabic: dakkah). which was always kept amply supplied in readiness for visitors. Women might entertain women guests in the men's guest or sitting room when there were no men at home at the time. On the farms, they might entertain women outside in the shade of the date-palm trees. Since foreign farm workers have begun to work in the village, however, women have mostly entertained inside the house.

Shalaby (1986) comments on the Arab house in the following terms:

**On the home level, the conceptual organisation of spaces is based primarily on the separation between private and public areas (inside-outside interaction). If the outside world is the domain of men, the house is the domain of women. The word 'home' in Arabic language is**

"sakan" which is related to the word sukina, sacred area, which denotes the family living quarters. The Muslims, thus, building their homes inward-looking and enclosed to achieve full privacy and space for women (the family private area). At the same time a reception room (family semi-public area) is located on the boundary of the house, an intermediate area between the outside and inside. The main entrance is a very important element in the house since it controls contact between the sensitive areas (family private, family semi-public and the outside) (pp.75-76).

The people of Hwylan hold that women's activities should be largely confined in the house. Prior to the presence of foreign male workers on the community farms, women did participate in the outdoor life on the family farms, but this has been completely abandoned. If women are seen outside the house, they are walking to the houses of neighbours, relatives or friends, who live close by, otherwise cars driven by male relatives take them to the homes of friends and kin who live further away.

### 7.3 The Cement Traditional House

Cement and brick-built houses were introduced to Hwylan less than thirty years ago. As shown in Table 7.4, only three out of 24 cement traditional houses were built over fifteen years ago, while ten were 10-14 years old. Eight were 5-9 years old and only three had been built less than



five years ago. In contrast, most of the villas were built less than ten years ago; no mud houses were recent.

In socio-economic terms, the cement traditional house may be seen as bridging the status gap between the mud house, with the lowest status, and the modern house or villa with the highest. The owners of cement traditional houses tend to express their satisfaction with the better conditions they enjoy as compared to owners of mud houses. But most of them aspire to further improvement when they can afford to build a modern house, a 'villa'. They commonly refer to a family or individual as 'living in a villa' and see this as a symbol

Table 7.4

Type of House by Year of Construction (House Age)

Year House is Built	Less than 5 Years ago		5-9 Years		10-14 Years		Over 15 Years		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Mud	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	10	5	10
Cement Traditional	3	6	8	16	10	20	3	6	24	48
Modern (villa)	4	8	15	30	1	2	-	-	20	40
SDC Flat	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	2
TOTAL	7	14	23	46	11	22	9	18	50	100

of prestige, or they refer to a man who has "received from the Fund", which means that he lives in or has built a modern house, since the REDF only provide loans for building modern

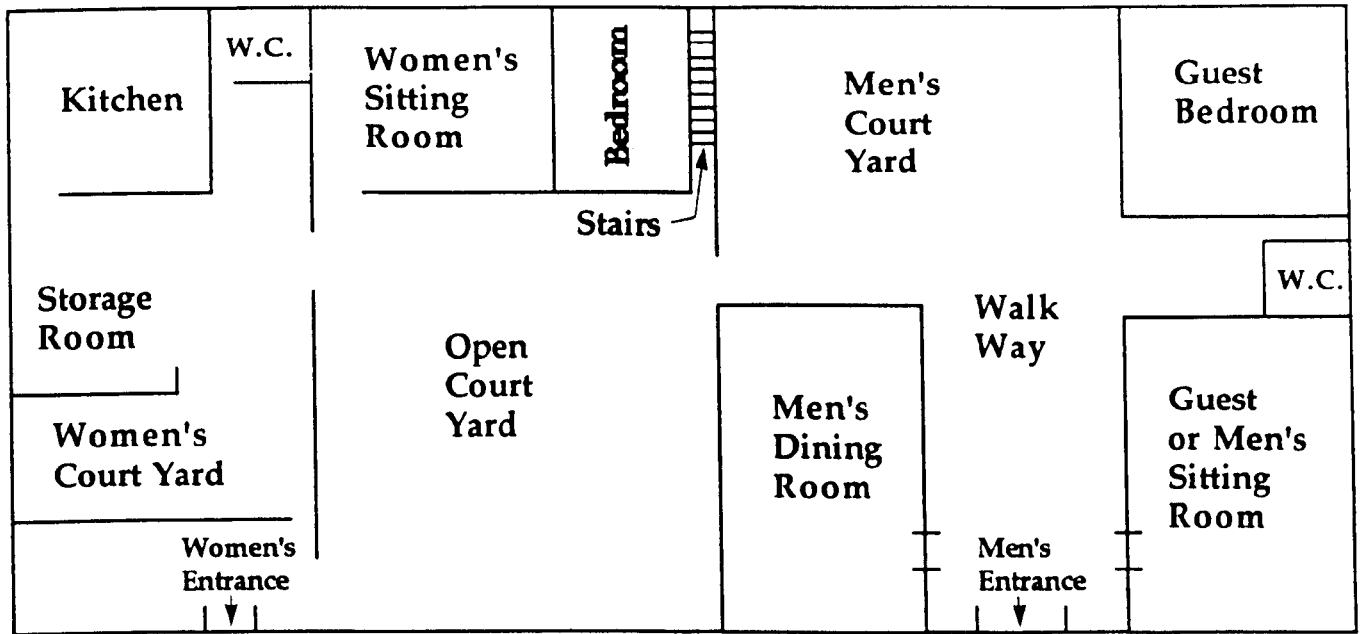
type houses (see Chapter Eight for more details). Further evidence of the significance of a modern house is that when a person meets another whom he has not seen for some time, he asks him, "Have you built?" or "Have you applied to the Fund?". In asking these questions, the enquirer invites the good news that his friend has improved his housing condition, reflecting an increase in prosperity and well-being.

To preserve traditional Saudi Arabian culture, the privacy of the family is still observed in the design of the house, which is similar to that of the mud house (see Plate 7.6). Segregated spaces of the house for men and women are still found, and goods and furnishings are similar to those in the mud house (see Chapter Nine for more details).

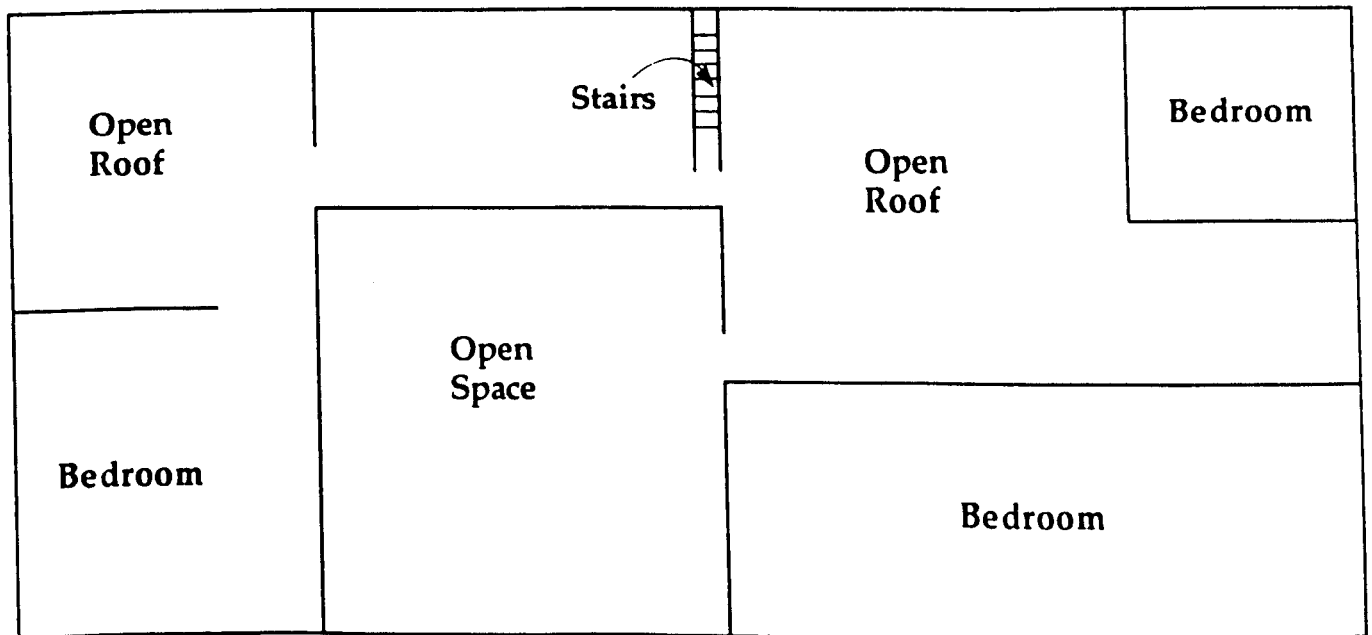
#### 7.4 The Modern House (Villa)

The villa (Arabic: fullah), a term deriving from the western word 'villa' is the most recent house type in Hwylan, having appeared less than fifteen years ago (see Table 7.4). A villa is an indication of the high socio-economic status of the family who occupy it. It is also the house of the future as the younger generation see it.

Plate 7.6



a) Cement Traditional House Ground Floor Plan



Upper Floor

A Typical Cement Traditional House Plan Drawn by  
The Researcher on the Basis of Observations in Hwylan

Plate 7.7



a) Cement Traditional House on a Farm in Hwylan

b) Another Cement Traditional House in Hwylan



Villas now typical of the towns of Saudi Arabia have been described by several writers. Mofti (1981), for example, notes that they are usually surrounded by walls for privacy. The entrance, when open, usually does not provide privacy for the garden, but this privacy is maintained by the walls.

The men's guest room is close to the main door or entrance. This room is usually larger than in the other house types and has two sections, one for sitting in and another for dining. The guests' toilet is still placed close to the guest room, so that guests may use it without any access to the interior private part of the house. Separate entrances for men and women are still provided. The furniture is either traditional or western-style and sometimes combines features of both types. Dining room arrangements may be western style or may continue to be for eating on the floor. The family's separateness and sex segregation is still maintained by the presence of a door between the guests' section and the family section.

Bedrooms usually have modern fitted furniture. The kitchen is located between the guests' section and family section. It is equipped with modern appliances such as gas stoves. The bathroom facilities are more modern including,



Plate 7.8



a) The REDF of Al Qassim Region, located in the North Eastern Part of Buraidah

b) A Modern House in Hwylan built partly with a loan from the REDF





Plate 7.9

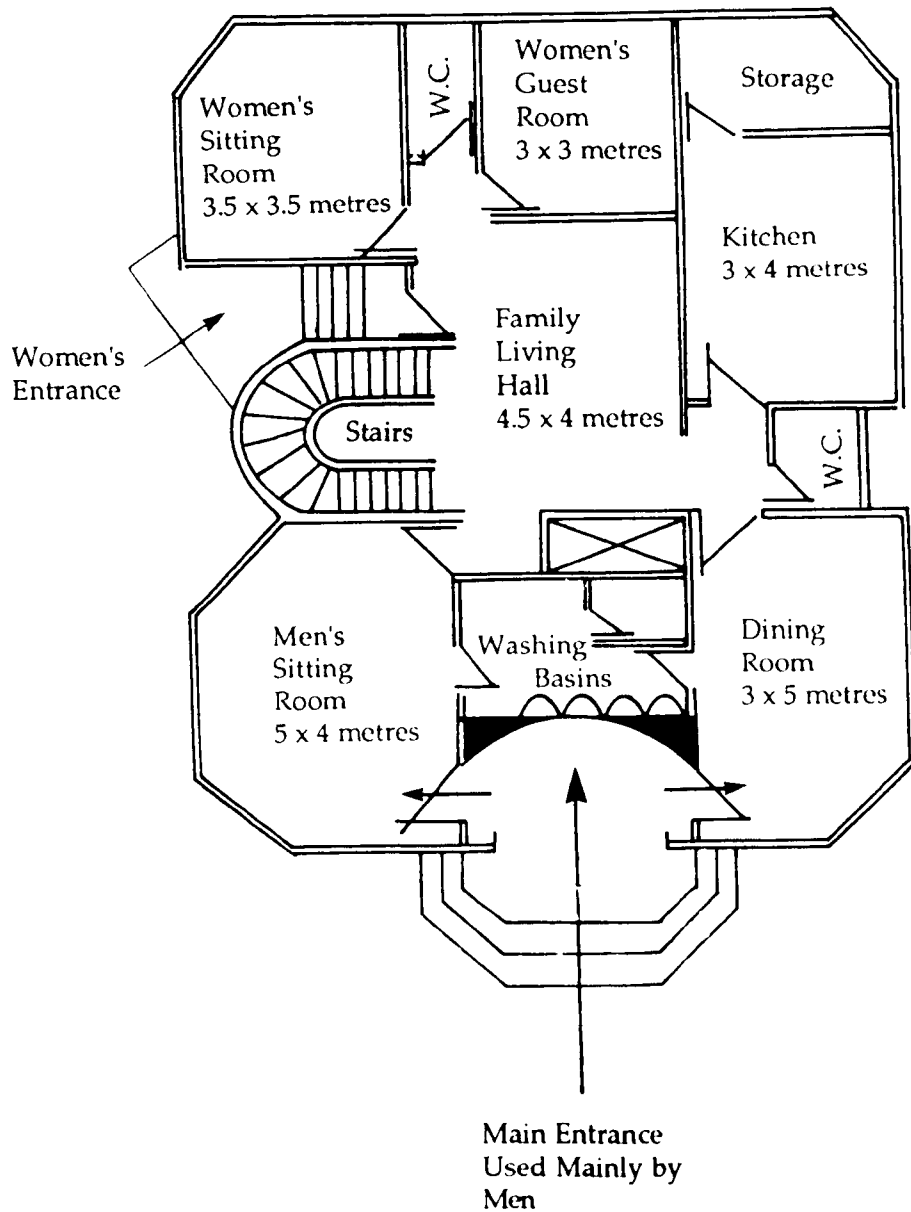


a) A Modern House and Unpaved Road in Hwylan

b) A Modern House on the Main Road in Hwylan with Shop Premises for Future Investment



Plate 7.10



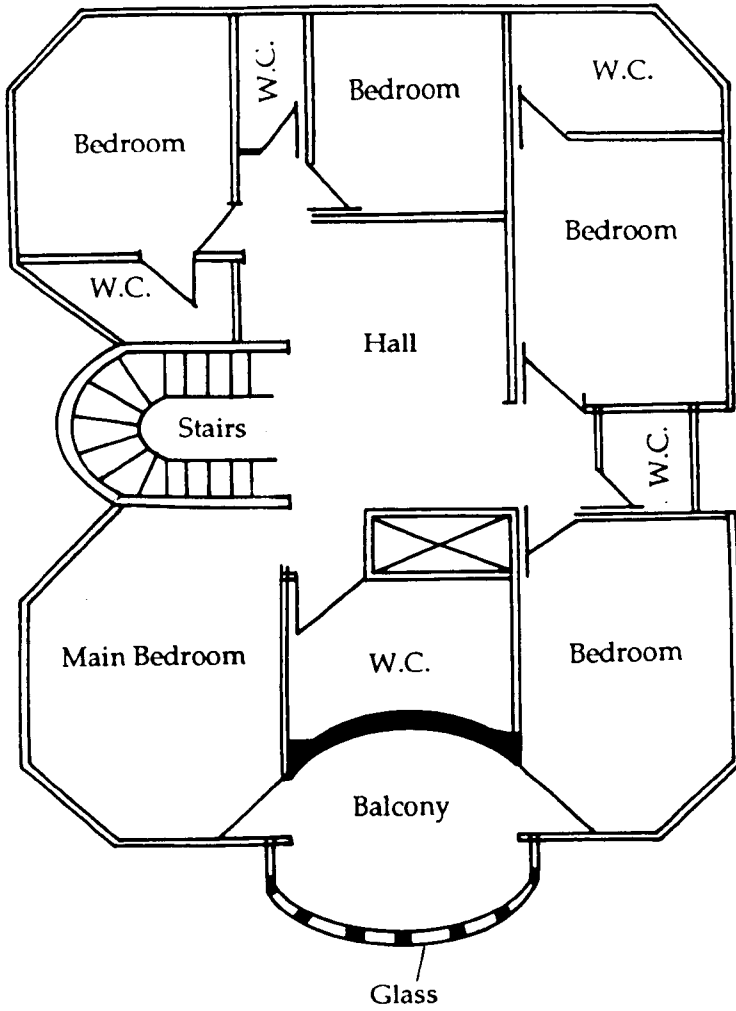
Modern House (Villa) Ground Floor Space Plan

Note: As none of the householders in Hwylan has retained their original architects' plan, a typical design for the region is presented

Note: Plan supplied by Al Mudhandsun Civil Engineers Office in Buraidah.



Plate 7.11



Modern House (villa) Upper Floor Space Plan

for example, a flush toilet cistern and western-type bath. Septic tanks are normally installed and many are linked to the main sewers or emptied regularly. The roof is built of reinforced concrete, while the walls are of cement bricks, sometimes covered with thin panelling (the roof may still be used for sleeping, but this custom is decreasing).

Electric air-conditioners are used, as large windows are installed which expose the house to the sun's heat. Nor do they provide full privacy but this disadvantage is commonly off-set by having high surrounding walls. Windows are made of wood and glass, and covered by a metal screen. Curtains are used both for privacy and to keep the heat out of the house. The house is surrounded by a garden which also allows light into the house, but does not maintain privacy for the family from their neighbours unless there is a high surrounding wall.

In Hwylan the villas all tend to follow this general description but western style furniture is used to a very limited extent. There are water tanks on the roof and cement water tanks underground, outside the building but inside the garden walls. Extra rooms for guests in the garden (Arabic: mulhaq) are built for informal visits by less prestigious friends. Modern appliances are more common in the modern

house, such as wall air conditioners, refrigerators, gas stoves, etc. Such facilities exist in other types of houses as well but are usually fewer and less elaborate. This is mainly due to the fact that a family able to own a modern house is also able to afford higher expenditure inside the house (see Chapter Nine for more details).

There is a direct association between the spread of villas in Saudi Arabia, mainly in the cities, and the government policy of improving housing conditions in the country as a whole. When the REDF was established in 1974 to provide interest free loans for Saudi nationals to build their houses, it was specified that only modern houses were to be built by borrowers. Several people in Hwylan have built their houses through loans from the REDF, which are a major factor in the increasing number of modern houses in this community (see Chapter Eight for more details).

It can be seen from Plates 7.10 and 7.11 that the layout of the villa is not very different from that found in other houses; for example, the women's entrance, women's section, women's sitting room, men's guest room and guest's toilet are all retained in similar positions in relation to each other. However, the kitchen has been moved closer to the men's

section. An additional room is linked to the guest men's w.c.

In general, then, while there are many improvements in the living conditions of villas, as compared to mud and cement traditional houses, the cultural requirements are still met. Such minor changes as there are all fit into the framework of the community's social values and traditions. While some modern houses have verandahs on the top floor, these are rarely used by the family members, and when they are, heavy dark glass is fitted around them so that family privacy is maintained. Also, there are larger and lower windows in the modern houses but heavy metal screens are attached to them on the outside and there are always curtains inside to ensure that the women of the household are not seen by unrelated men. In addition, as already noted, there are normally high walls around the villas. When a person knocks on the main door or rings the bell, it is usually the male children who repond to the caller. Thus, in observance with the culture, not even the voices of the women are heard by unrelated adult males. Finally, it is of interest to note the relationships between the principal occupations of householders and the type of houses occupied by their families. As shown in Table 7.5, there is no strong

Table 7.5

Type of House by Principal Occupation of Household Head

Type of House	Occupation							Total
	Government	Private sector	Own business	Farmer	Student	Unemployed	Retired	
Mud	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	5
Cement	8	1	1	10	1	2	1	24
Modern	12	-	2	6	-	1	-	21
Total	24	1	3	17	1	3	1	50

association between occupation of the head of a household and type of house. This points to the absence of any clear differences in the lifestyles of farmers and government employees. As will be seen in Chapter Eight, however, there is a clear positive association between type of house and monthly income, with the proportion of the villa dwellers increasing as income rises.

**7.5 House Size and Use of Space**

As shown in Table 7.6, over a third of all the houses in Hwylan cover 200 to 400 sq. metres. This size category includes three of the five mud houses and 14 out of the 24 cement traditional houses but only two out of the 20 villas. Of the 20 villas, 13 cover more than 600 sq. metres as against only one mud house and one cement traditional house.

The table also shows that not surprisingly, there is a market tendency for houses covering larger areas to have more bedrooms. The trend towards larger houses is thus also a trend towards more modern houses.

Table 7.7 compares the different types of houses in regard to bedrooms, dining and sitting-rooms, and toilets. It can be seen that there is little difference between the mud and cement traditional houses in regard to the average numbers of bedrooms, dining and sitting-rooms, and toilets. Although the cement traditional houses are on average larger than the few remaining mud houses, they have similar facilities. There is, however, a marked difference between mud and cement traditional houses on the one hand and villas on the other. Firstly, the large average size of the villas allows for expansion all round and they thus have more bedrooms, more sitting and dining rooms and more toilet facilities including, in a few cases, western-style toilets in addition to Arabic style. Secondly, it is interesting to note that in the villas the ratio of bedrooms to dining and sitting rooms is higher (4.5+/6.3+ as against 2.3/4.4+ in cement traditional houses) which indicates that with larger size there is a change in the use of space. The main explanation of this is that in the villas sitting and dining rooms are built for women as well as men, whereas in former

Table 7.6

House Size by House Type and No. of Bedrooms

House Size	Mud House						Cement Traditional								Villa (Modern)								Flat	Total	
	No of Rooms						No of Rooms								No of Rooms									No	%
	2	3	4	5	6	6	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+					
Less than 200 sqm	1						2	1													1	2	5	10	
200-400 sqm			1	1	1			3	5	6								2					19	38	
401-600 sqm								2	1	1		2				1		1	1	2			11	22	
More than 600 sqm					1							1	1	2	1		1	1	1	7			15	30	
TOTAL	1		1	1	2		2	6	6	7		3		2	1	1	1	4	2	9	2		50	100	

Note: No House has less than two rooms.

Table 7.7

Types of Houses by Numbers of Rooms and Toilets

Number of Rooms/Toilets	Mud Houses			Cement Traditional House			Villas			
	Bedrooms	Dining and sitting room	Arabic style toilets	Bedrooms	Dining and sitting rooms	Arabic style toilet	Bedrooms	Dining and sitting rooms	Arabic style toilet	Western style toilet
1	-	1	-	-	6	6	-	-	-	1
2	1	2	4	2	11	14	2	3	3	-
3	-	2	-	6	3	1	1	1	4	1
4	1	-	1	6	2	2	1	9	7	-
5	1	-	-	7	2	1	1	1	2	-
6	2	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	2	-
7	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-
8+	-	-	-	3	-	-	9	1	2	1
Average number per house	4.6	2.2	2.4	4.4+	2.3	2.1	6.3+	4.5+	4.2+	0.6

This table excludes the flat in the SDC.



times women usually had less dining and sitting space than men.

The villas also incorporate features not shown in the tables. Thus, for example, most have showers for bathing. They may or may not have a flush tank but either way, the toilets are connected to drainage pipes leading to underground tanks located outside the house. In the past, such tanks were built on square rocks with mud in between to allow waste water to be absorbed into the underground sand. Now, however, most modern type houses have reinforced concrete drains and the underground waste tanks are built well away from the house. These are regularly emptied by hired vehicles with a water pump, and the waste is drained in an unpopulated area. Self-pressure showers and cleaner built-in toilets are common, especially since the sanitation and hygiene campaign launched by the SDC. Western toilets are still uncommon in the village and only three villas had them. But even in these houses, western style toilets are located alongside the traditional toilets in the same bathrooms, so that families or their visitors can use either type as they wish. The large numbers of toilets in all the houses, and especially in the villas, reflect the continuation of the cultural values of segregation within the household. For example, a person who is married and lives

with his parents has his own toilet to be used by himself and his wife.

#### 7.6 House Construction

We have already seen that most of Hwylan's presently occupied houses were built less than fifteen years ago. To provide a more precise picture, the age of the dwellings, with their construction costs, are shown in Table 7.8. In this respect, cost of construction does not include the purchase of land, because those who owned their houses had built on land they already owned or had been granted land under the virgin land grant scheme, while those who did not own the houses in which they lived seldom had any idea of the land cost, though in some cases they knew the cost of the house as they had themselves built the houses on land which they rented, leased or possessed by endowment (see Property Tenure in Chapter Eight for more details).

The table shows that the cost of most of the mud and cement traditional houses, when this was known, had been under 50,000 S.R; whereas all but two of the villas had cost more than 200,000 S.R. The cost of the villas was higher because they are larger, made of cement reinforced with metal, built by qualified foreign labour, of more recent

Table 7.8

Cost of House Construction by House Type  
and Year of Construction

Construction of the House (House Age) Years								
House Construction Cost SR	House Type	Less than 5	5-9	10-14	15 years and more	Don't Know	Total	
							No.	%
Less than 50,000	Mud Cement	-	-	-	2	-	2	4
		3	7	5	3	-	18	36
50,000 - 200,000	Cement Villa	-	-	-	-	-	5	10
		-	2	5	-	-	2	4
200,001 - 350,000	Villa	1	4	1	-	-	6	12
350,001 - 500,000	Villa	1	5	-	-	-	6	12
More than 500,000	Villa	2	4	-	-	-	6	12
Dont Know	Mud	-	-	-	3	-	3	6
	Cement	-	1	-	-	-	1	2
	Flat	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
TOTAL		7	23	11	8	1	50	100

construction, in most cases designed by an architect and built at least in part by contract rather than by the owner himself.

Table. 7.9

Nationality of the Building Workers by  
Type of House

Nationality of Workers	Type of House				Total
	Mud	Cement Traditional	Villa	Flat	
Saudi	5	-	-	-	5
Yemeni	-	16	12	-	28
Egyptian, Syrian and Lebanese	-	2	6	-	8
Indian, Pakistani and others	-	5	2	-	7
Don't Know	-	1	-	1	2
Total	5	24	20	1	50

Some of the above points are brought out in Tables 7.9 and 7.10. The mud houses were always built by Saudis, whereas the cement traditional houses and villas have been built by expatriate workers. Table 7.9 shows that Yemenis are preponderant in the foreign labour construction force. They were the first to move into house construction, starting on the cement traditional houses in the 1970's. More recently they have been joined by workers of several other nationalities and it can be seen that the work on villas in particular has been shared between the Yemenis and the more recent immigrants.

One reason for the dependance on foreign builders is that the Saudis initially lacked the techniques required to build the new types of houses made of cement and other imported materials. Now, however, there is a consequent reason which is that Saudis have other better paid occupational opportunities and they have come to regard building as low-status work.

Most owners opt to have their houses built, fully or partially, by small construction firms. As shown in Table 7.10, 32 out of 44 householders in cement traditional houses and villas had given partial contracts to builders, while only three had given complete contracts, which means that the owners had not had to engage the workers themselves. There were, however, a smaller number of owners who had given complete contracts to a builder or hired workers to build houses under the owner's direct instructions as was the case for mud houses in the past.

Owners of modern houses - traditional or villas - who choose to be entirely responsible for building can very easily hire foreign workers on the Buraidah labour market.

Table 7.10

Present House Type by Type of Construction Contract

Type of House	Part Contract	Complete Contract	By the Owner	Don't Know	TOTAL
	No	No	No	No	No
Mud	-	-	4	1	5
Cement Tradit.	16	2	5	1	24
Modern (villa)	16	1	3	-	20
Flat	-	-	-	1	1
TOTAL	32	3	12	3	50

Anyone driving there will find his car quickly surrounded by expatriates seeking building work. They knock on the car windows shouting: "I am a carpenter", "I do good plumbing", "I won't overcharge you", etc. It costs the person wanting to build a house a good deal less to hire workers directly than to have a contract with a builder.

Typical cases of two owners, one of a cement traditional house and one of a villa, are expressed in their own words below. A man aged over 60 years, living with this family in a cement house said:

**I used to live in a mud house in Hwylan. Over five years ago I decided to improve my housing conditions like others, here and elsewhere, having relatively low income with more than 10 family members including my children and my wife. As the Arabic proverb says, "stretch your legs only to the limits of your bedding" which means I**

should build a house within the financial means of my situation. The only choice was a cement traditional house. I brought a Yemeni contractor with his native country workers from Buraidah, I supplied the building materials which I bought according to the contractor's request from Buraidah's building material shops. The work was completed within less than three months, with a total cost of just under 50,000 S.R. The house has more than 5 bedrooms. I have designed the house personally according to my financial means and family's needs. To build a modern house I would need more money and I am already in debt for a lot of money; also I would need land under my full ownership.

The owner of a villa, aged 45, described some aspects of house construction according to his experience:

More than five years ago we decided to build a modern house, to have better housing conditions, as since I was born we had always lived in a mud house. I applied for a loan from the REDF, I also sought an architect to design the house. I wanted a large house, because my family numbers more than a dozen members. The house construction was completed by Yemeni nationals as contractors and workers did the job, with myself providing the materials. During the building process I got loans from the REDF, as well as from money lenders. The total cost of the construction was 475,000 S.R. of which 300,000 S.R was from the REDF and the rest, as mentioned, from lenders. The cement at that time was more expensive than at present, and there was heavy demand for it. Metal reinforcements were also very expensive but now it seems things are a bit cheaper.

The size of Hwylan's families and their attachment to extended family values underly the aspirations of most family heads to build houses as large as possible. But when they opt for villas this often involves them in incurring debt

over and above loans from the REDF. Yet several respondents said that since it was God's will that people should build modern houses and that they should put into them all the money they can afford, even relying on loans beyond that from the REDF, (e.g. from friends or money lenders), to make the house as large as possible to accommodate a large family and to provide visitors with every possible comfort. A typical comment was "The house is for my children and grandchildren as well. As long as I live, I want them with me in my house".

#### 7.7 House-warming Celebrations and Gifts

In this section we discuss the social values associated with families' transferring from a previous house. When a family wants to move the event is finally decided by the breadwinner who passes the information first to his kin group and then to his neighbours and friends. It is an important cultural value that the head of the family should tell the kin group about his move, even if some are not living in the same locality. Failure to do so adversely affects their social bond. Friends and neighbours, according to their personal relations with the head and his family, should also be informed.



In most cases, people are not asked to help in moving furniture and the like to the newer house, unless the family cannot cope without assistance, e.g. if they have no car, or no grown up boys. But the kin group and friends who live nearby know that they are expected to help and generally do so, irrespective whether their help is actually needed. They come forward to help to express their emotional support and to wish happiness for the family in their new accommodation.

A few days after the family's move, the kin group, friends and neighbours are invited to a removal celebration (Arabic: Nezulah) by the head of the family. This celebration generally takes the form of social gathering and a dinner party, usually on a Thursday or Friday, the Saudi weekend, so as to allow as many people as possible to attend.

The kin group, friends and neighbours, are all expected to provide gifts for the family. Some people bring their gifts before the celebration, others on the day of the party. The gifts vary in their kind and value from one person to another, according to their financial means and relation to the recipient. Other social factors are also taken into account in choosing the gifts, such as the status of the head and his religious and social attitudes. For example, a person wanting to give a television set must consider the

possible reaction of the recipient. If that person would not approve of a T.V. set in the house, the donor will buy something else, such as an oriental carpet. Also, sex-related factors need to be observed. For example, an adult male friend should not buy a gift to be used by the housewife and adult female members of the family, but choose a gift for male or general use. Similarly, women friends are expected to avoid buying gifts that are primarily for men's use; instead they should give items primarily for women's use, such as gold. In some cases, in order to overcome these sex-related factors, the givers try to select gifts of use to both sexes, such as towels, carpets, wardrobes, cutlery, mugs, coffee and teapots and kitchen-ware. Cash is rarely given as a removal gift, even if the donors know that the household head had borrowed money to complete the building of his house. Cash gifts are uncommon and if given at all, are presented during the house building process.

Families often receive gifts quite exceeding their needs. In due course they will be expected to reciprocate when their relatives and friends in their turn celebrate their own removal.

## Conclusion:

This chapter has described the great changes which have taken place in housing in Hwylan village over recent decades. The traditional mud house is no longer built. It has given way to houses which differ from the traditional in the materials used, in modes of construction, and in the outward appearance. The first change to take place was from mud houses to traditional cement houses and this was soon followed by the appearance of villas. The majority of the village households (78 per cent) reported that they had previously lived in mud houses, but at the time of this study in 1988, only 5 households out of 50 still occupied mud houses. Villas, which were unthought of twenty years ago, are now occupied by 20 households. Traditional cement houses were at first thought to be entirely satisfactory but now the people are aspiring more and more to villas and, if prosperity continues, it is anticipated that cement traditional houses may in the future follow mud houses in becoming obsolete.

The type of housing occupied is directly related to the socio-economic status of the families. The wealthier people have the financial ability and the desire to build modern houses, while the less well-to-do and the poor people rely on

mud or cement traditional houses. Such is the desire to have a villa, however, that as soon as people have the financial means, they usually do not hesitate to build one. Indeed, some of them do not have the means, but obtain loans to build villas and in this they are encouraged by the government's policy of modernising the country (see Chapter Eight for further details).

The manpower involved in building the newer types of house is mainly expatriate, in contrast to the mud house, which used to be built by Saudi nationals.

The cement houses adhere closely to cultural principles and requirements in their design. Villas do not ignore the traditional cultural requirements, but do incorporate some changes. Sex segregation is nonetheless still strictly observed. Thus, the striking transition from mud to cement traditional and modern houses has not been accompanied by any fundamental change in the social fabric of family life. As the customs associated with removal illustrate, traditional relationships and kinship bonds remain strong.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### LAND TENURE, ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY AND LOANS

#### Introduction:

We have seen that as a result of the development of the national economy, the government has been able to finance policies of modernisation. Among these is the fact that people can easily obtain loans from various sources; from the Real Estate Development Fund for building modern houses, from the Saudi Agricultural Bank for farming purposes, and from the Saudi Credit Bank for house improvement or marriage or to establish a business. These loans are interest free with easy repayment terms. But not all the householders of Hwylan own land. Some live on rented or endowed land or on land subject to long term lease. All those who are not individual owners may therefore hesitate to build better houses as they may one day be asked to leave.

As part of our concern with housing, we look in this chapter at the land on which the houses are built, with particular reference to land tenure, acquisition of property and loans.

## 8.1 Land Tenure

As throughout Saudi Arabia, land tenure in Hwylan is governed by religious values and always held according to the Islamic laws of property. Therefore, there are various ways in which people can own, rent, sell or use land and property.

1. Privately owned (Arabic: mulk) property can be sold, inherited, granted, lent without charge, rented or changed to endowment for charitable use (Arabic: waqf or sabil, see below).

2. Communal property (Arabic: ammah or mushaa) is owned and used by the community for its activities and institutions, grazing lands and all public service establishments. Responsibility for the property rests with the relevant formal institution. For example, boys' schools are under the supervision and administration of the Ministry of Education, girls' schools under the supervision of the Presidency for Girls' Education, and roads under the supervision of the Municipality. In the case of Hwylan, the relevant supervisory institutions are all located in Buraidah.

Communal land may be vacant land that has not yet been claimed by a person, group or institution. Until 1966 land

not owned by any particular person(s) or institution(s) was 'free land'. According to Islamic law, anyone growing anything usable, such as tamarisk or date-palm trees on virgin land (Arabic: ehya) could in the past claim its ownership, provided that this land had not already been claimed by others or by institutions for public use. However, the government took over the control and organisation of land claims in 1966 under Royal Decree No. M26. Grants of virgin land throughout Al Qassim province are now made mainly by the General Directorate of Agricultural and Water Affairs, a branch of the Ministry of Agriculture.

3. Property endowed (Arabic: waqf or sabil) by its owner(s) for charitable purposes is used for a variety of institutional activities, such as mosques and houses for the needy. Such use of waqf property is permanent, but the users do not become the owners. A person may endow up to one third of his property and the rest is left to inheriting family members, as inheritance (see later in this chapter for more details).

4. Long term leases (Arabic: subrah) are normally cheaper than regular rent, due to their long term. They are a way of helping low income people and attracting others to cultivate

or take care of a property in exchange for a small payment of money or farm produce such as dates.

## 8.2 Right of Occupation of a House

The rights of occupation of the people of Hwylan are shown in Table 8.1, from which it can be seen that half of the households occupied their houses by right of direct individual ownership.

Table 8.1

### Rights of Occupation by Type of House

Right of Occupation	Mud or Cement		Modern (villa)		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
By ownership of household head	10	34.5	15	71.4	25	50.0
By ownership of parents	3	10.3	1	4.8	4	8.0
By ownership of household head's wife	0	-	1	4.8	1	2.0
By undivided inheritance	6	20.7	2	9.5	8	16.0
By long term rent or endowment	9	31.0	1	4.8	10	20.0
By short term rent	1	3.5	0	-	1	2.0
By virtue of job (provided by sponsor)	-	-	1	4.7	1	2.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>



Fifteen out of 25 houses privately owned by householders were villas and these represented a majority of all the villas, whereas only about a third of the other houses were owned by their occupants. There is thus a significant relationship between right of occupation and house type.

In Table 8.2 the same information is set out in greater detail with the addition of the incomes of heads of households. Even though the numbers in different categories are small, it is clear that the proportion of individual owners increases as income rises: 6 out of 16 household heads (37.5%) with incomes of less than 2000 S.R; 9 out of 19 (47.4%) with incomes of 2001-6000 S.R. In the sections to follow the circumstances of occupation of each of the 50 households are briefly given so as to explain the overall patterns of ownership, tenancy and right of occupation.

### 8.3 Individual Owners of Villas

The cases of the 15 individual villa owners are set out below, starting with the lowest income earners.

No.1. (Under 2000 S.R) is a farmer who had bought the land on which his villa is located about 8 years ago at a cost of 60,000 S.R. He built his villa with the benefit of an REDF loan. His family includes several children and grandchildren, eighteen in all, with more grandchildren expected. He therefore chose to build a large house. The size of the house and the high cost of building materials at the time were major factors in the high cost of the house which was 1000,000 S.R. Therefore he had to rely on loans additional to that from the REDF. His farm land, located near his house, was granted to him as virgin land, ehya, more than 35 years ago. In addition, less than five years ago, he applied for another virgin land grant through the Agricultural Affairs Directorate. It was granted to him and is adjacent to his original farm. The man's three grown sons who live with him are government employees in Buraidah and they contribute to the family finances, mainly for themselves, their wives and their children. Their father reported that they had not contributed to the cost of the house, and he had not asked them to do so, to avoid the possibility of inheritance disputes among family members on the death of the father.

Table 8.2

Type of House Right of Occupation and Head's Monthly Income

Right of Occupation	TOTAL																	
	<2000 S.R.			2000-4000 S.R.			4001-6000 S.R.			6001-8000 S.R.			>8000 S.R.			No	%	
	Cem	Villa	Flat	Mud	Cem	Villa	Flat	Mud	Cem	Villa	Mud	Cem	Villa	Mud	Villa			
Ownership by head	4	2	-	-	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	5	25	50
By short term rent	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
By long term lease or endowment	4	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	10	20
By ownership of parents	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	8
By virtue of job provided by sponsor	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
By undivided inheritance	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	8	16
By ownership of head's wife	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
TOTAL	12	4	1	1	8	4	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	5	1	5	50	100

Family members usually limit their contributions to consumables, such as clothes and food rather than property. They expect that their children will continue to live with them. He thought that his grown sons might benefit from the REDF loan scheme in the future, but was almost certain that, if they did so, it would be mainly for investment as they would continue to live in the house.

His sons in turn said that they were happy to observe traditional practice and to stay with their parents for themselves and for the satisfaction of God. They believed that it was their duty to live with their parents, to try their best to avoid familial disputes and to maintain strong family bonds. On the question of benefiting from the government's housing schemes, they said that if they applied for loans and land grants, they would still remain in their parents' house, whether they built their own house in the locality or elsewhere.

No. 2 (under 2000 S.R) is a farmer who said that he had inherited part of his farm from his deceased father. He had no co-heirs and he paid off his father's debts so as to be the sole owner.

I did not allow my father's creditors to take over my father's farm. I borrowed the money to pay his debts after his death in order to keep the farm. I also borrowed money to buy the adjacent land and I built a modern house on the part I bought, as it was a good location for a house.

He was glad that he had bought the land and built his own villa, but complained that increase of prices in Saudi Arabia between 1975-1985 had put him heavily in debt. Nowadays, the money he had spent when he bought the land would be enough to buy the same land and build a similar house as well, but he said, "one cannot predict the future".

No.3 (2000-4000 S.R) is a driver. He explained that he and his wife and children used to live with his parents in their mud house which was owned by his father. When his father died, he chose to build a modern house on land which he had bought by borrowing from money lenders outside the village. To pay for the construction of the villa, he applied for a loan from the REDF and arranged further loans from money lenders. He took his widowed mother with him when he moved to his newly built modern house, abandoning their former mud house. His father had endowed the mud house for charitable use by needy family members, but it became unsuitable for accommodation due to lack of maintenance. It

has now been vacant for more than five years and is virtually beyond repair.

No.4 (2000-4000 S.R) is an office messenger who said his low income is due to his illiteracy. But it is fortunate for him that when he was only ten years old, forty years ago, he used to carry water from a nearby farm to irrigate tamarisk trees which he cultivated until they were grown. Twenty years later he took two witnesses to Buraidah court to document this. He obtained a deed for the land, which was then registered in his name. He chose to build a modern house and moved from a mud house leased to him by long term lease (Arabic: subrah). He obtained a loan from the REDF as well as further loans from his relatives and friends. He still maintains the mud house he left on the farm leased to him and sometimes, rests there in the afternoons after working on the farm.

No.5 (2000-4000 S.R.) is a door-man in government employment who had also cultivated tamarisk trees on virgin land when he was young. About twenty years ago he was able to register this land in his name. Although this land is relatively small (200 sq.m), he decided to build a villa with his savings and loans from friends. He had previously had a loan from the REDF to build a house in Buraidah and was

therefore ineligible for another loan. He used to let his house in Buraidah for a yearly rent of just over 10,000 S.R. but complained that since many modern houses have been built in the city, rents have dropped. His Buraidah house was vacant at the time of interview and he was eager to find a tenant, even at a lower rent than in the past. His concern at the time of interview was that he is due to retire in the near future and he was worried about how he would keep up with the loan repayments for his villa.

No.6 (2000-4000 S.R) is a farmer who had for long worked on the land where he had held his former house on long term lease (for twenty years) (Arabic: subrah). But, some eight years, ago he had bought this farm of 15,500 sq metres, at a cost of 500,000 S.R. He decided to build a modern house but because he did not have the land deed, he could not apply for a loan from the REDF and relied on money lenders instead. Although he had two sons employed in Buraidah, and two student daughters receiving government allowances, he did not expect them to contribute to his property. He was happy to be the breadwinner for the family, despite being heavily in debt.

No.7 (6000-8000 S.R.) is a farmer but he also has a second occupation in religious work, though most of his

income comes from his farm, on which his house is located. He had bought the farm 15 years previously and had lived in its mud house until four years ago. He then built the modern house. It was important that it should be large enough to accommodate his children and grandchildren. As he had enough money, there was no need for him to borrow from any source.

No.8 (6000-8000 S.R.) is a teacher who had, when he was less than ten years old, cultivated the land where his house was subsequently located. Twenty years ago he had claimed the land and it was registered in his name, but it was not until eight years ago that he built his villa. He said that he applied to the REDF for a loan, but his application was rejected because the regulations at that time required the street to be a certain width and length, conditions which were not fulfilled. So he built the house partly out of his savings and partly with money borrowed from a friend. Since the REDF regulations were changed, his brother has built on the land next to his house with an REDF loan.

No.9 (6000-8000 S.R) is a government clerk who had bought land in Hwylan six years ago and built his second modern house there. The first, which was built mainly through a REDF loan is in Hwylan, and is rented, while the second house was built mainly with his savings.



No.10 (6000-8000 S.R) is a farmer who had bought a farm more than 15 years ago from several local inhabitants. At the time, he lived with his family in the farm's cement traditional house, but less than 14 years ago he built his modern house and moved into it. He did not need any loans to build his property.

No.11 (over 8000 S.R) is a teacher whose job is his main source of income. He also has another property in Buraidah, which he built mainly with a loan from the REDF and which is rented. He built his villa in Hwylan with his savings and loans from a friend. The land on which his present house is located was bought nine years ago. Its area is 700 sq.m, and it cost about 50,000 S.R. He built his house eight years ago at a total cost of 250,000 S.R.

No.12 (over 8000 S.R) is a businessman with a high income from his grocery and bakery shops in Hwylan and his small construction firm in Buraidah, from where he came to live in Hwylan. He was able to save money to buy the land for his house and he then obtained an REDF loan. His main intention when he bought the land was to build a modern house and to establish his grocery shop and bakery in the main street.

No.13 (over 8000 S.R) is a teacher who stated that his main income came from long employment in the government sector, which had contributed almost 90 per cent of his income, while 10 per cent came from a rented house he owned in Buraidah. He pointed out that he bought his land less than 10 years ago and built on it at a cost of 2,000,000 S.R. He had a loan from the REDF, but added to the loan over five times as much again, because he wanted a luxurious house, since he could readily afford it and believed that one's house is vital to one's comfort in life.

No.14 (over 8000 S.R) is a teacher who had bought the land on which his villa is located twenty years ago. He had already, in 1953, obtained a virgin land grant on the adjacent land, so the farm he now cultivates was partially bought, and partly granted by the Agricultural Affairs Directorate. He built his villa five years ago with a loan from the REDF.

No.15 (over 8000 S.R) is a government clerk who is also a farmer. He had bought his farm in 1953 and lived in a mud house for some 20 years. He then built a cement traditional house where he lived for more than five years. Because he already had a loan from the REDF to build a modern house in Buraidah, he did not apply for one to build his villa in

Hwylan, but received financial help from one of his sons who used to live with him before moving outside the province for his work.

#### 8.4 Individual Owners of Cement Traditional Houses

Out of the 10 individual owners of traditional cement villas, four had incomes of less than 2000 S.R., five of 2000-4000 S.R. and only one of 6000-8000 S.R. Their cases were as follows:

No.16 (Under 2000 S.R) is an unemployed man of poor health whose income is primarily from charity. His father, who lived in an endowed house in the village, had bought land and built the house for him partly out of his own savings and partly from money collected from charity sources. Being aware that the help he had given his son might lead other family members to believe they had a claim on the property, he brought witnesses to the front of the house and, pointing to it, said, "This house is not my property, it is the property of my son. I only acted as charity money collector and supervised the construction process". The father added, as he was talking to the witnesses, "I have confirmed to you that this property belongs to my son to avoiding confusion and possible future disputes among my sons regarding the

ownership of this property". The father wanted to help his son, but at the same time prevent any disputes after his death. The son said that he would like to own a modern house but added "I have almost no money for a villa". His children who were sitting nearby, also said they would like a modern house, but that they realised their father did not have the means to build one.

No.17 (under 2000 S.R) is retired but is financially responsible for a family of ten children. When he bought the land and built his house, he borrowed money from lenders and sold his mud house in Buraidah. On his low income he could not envisage the heavy burden of an REDF a loan of some 300,000 S.R. He would have liked a modern house, but for the present, a cement house was acceptable to him. He pointed out sadly that land in the locality which he, with others of his kin group, had inherited forty years ago, had been sold very cheaply thirty years ago. If this had not happened he thus might have been better off now.

No.18 (under 2000 S.R.) is a maintenance worker in private sector employment who has lived in his cement traditional house for more than 15 years. It is a very small house for a family of more than 10 persons. But he said that if he had not bought the land by yearly instalments some

twenty years ago, he might not have been able to own a house at all. He would be glad to build a modern house with a loan from the REDF, but he knows that his plot is too small to qualify for a loan.

No.19 (under 2000 S.R) is a doorman in government employment who had bought his land in two stages: the first about 40 years ago, for less than 100 S.R, the second 20 years later for 20,000 S.R. In all, the land area is only 200 sq metres. He had originally built a mud house there, but about 10 years ago he found it within his financial means to build a cement traditional house on the same site, borrowing nearly half of the construction cost from friends. His modest income and the small size of his land were his main reasons for not applying for an REDF loan to build a villa. He added that God did not order him (Arabic: ma'amar Allah) to apply nor was it God's will that his children should do so.

No.20 (2000-4000 S.R) is an office messenger. He had bought his land more than 20 years ago. Its area was 600 sq.m and it cost 10,000 S.R. He built a mud house, in which he lived for less than 15 years, then about seven years ago, he built a cement traditional house on the same land. He said that this house was acceptable for the time being, but

he hoped to build a villa in due course, when his financial situation improved.

No.21 (2000-4000 S.R) is an office messenger whose case is similar to No.6's. Various personal factors had brought him to Hwylan. He had several relations there and they had encouraged him to buy land in the village over ten years ago. He then built his cement traditional house.

No.22 (2000-4000 S.R) is another office messenger. He had come to own his property by claiming it over twenty years ago after growing tamarisk trees there earlier in his life. This land was adjacent to his farm, which he later inherited from his deceased father. He lived in a mud house on the farm for some years but when he wanted to marry, ten years ago, the bride's family only agreed to the marriage on condition that he built a better house. He was not well off, so he had to find private financial help to build his cement house. This satisfied his bride and her family and he was able to marry.

No.23 (2000-4000 S.R) is a farmer who built his house on the farm which he had bought more than twenty five years ago. He lived in a mud house there until he built his current house ten years ago. The house is occupied by his extended

family. He did not apply for an REDF loan because he did not want to get an identification book, which is one of the loan's requirements. His reason for not applying for an identification book was that he did not want to be involved in the government bureaucracy.

No.24 (2000-4000 S.R.) is a farmer whose case was very similar to No.7's. He had previously lived in a rented house in Buraidah. He bought his farm in Hwylan by instalments and moved there mainly because he had kin in the village.

No.25 (6000-8000 S.R) is a teacher. He is the only individual owner of a cement traditional house with an income more than 4000 S.R. a month. He was originally from another village in the region and moved to Hwylan just over ten years ago. He said that his main reason for moving was that his former village had no electrical supply. He bought 270 sq.metres of land in Hwylan at a cost of 30,000 S.R and built his cement house to improve his housing standards. Three years ago he bought more land close to his work place, and has now applied for an REDF loan to build a villa. He is on the waiting list for this loan.

## 8.5 Regular Term Rent

Regular term rent is different from long term lease, discussed later. It is not common in the locality and, as shown in Table 8.2, only one case was found in Hwylan.

No.26 (2000-4000 S.R.) is an office messenger whose family inhabited a rented mud house. The family had moved into the house when it fell under the terms of a long lease (Arabic: subrah) with the farm on which it is located, but is was later bought from its original owners by two local men. The owners had themselves left Hwylan many years earlier. The sale of the farm took place about five years ago when No.26 still had a subrah type tenancy. He then agreed with the new owners to pay regular rent. He also owns vacant land in the locality which he had claimed after cultivating tamarisk trees there when he was only ten years old. But his low income prevented him from applying for a loan. He said, "When the people had their eyes open I had my eyes closed and only recently, when I opened my eyes, did I find that people now have different standards, making money and building modern houses". He regretted not having done more to help himself and his family and now feared that he would never be able to catch up with the standards of housing enjoyed by many others.



## 8.6 Long Term Leases and Endowments

As shown in Table 8.2, there are ten cases of long term leases, (5 subrah, and 5 endowment, sabil or waqf). In eight of these cases (Nos 27-34) the householder lives in a cement traditional house, while one (No.35) lives in a mud house and one (No.36) in a villa. The income of the respondents who live in properties of these tenancy types tends to be relatively low. There are four cases in the lowest income category of householders living in subrah or sabil cement houses (one subrah and three sabil).

No.27 (under 2000 S.R) is a farmer over 60 years of age. He has a large number of children, but only one son of working age, who earns 2000 S.R. a month and this does not help much. The social security system supplements the family's low income. The family used to live in a rented mud house in a nearby locality. But in an effort to improve the family's living and housing conditions, the father took a long-term subrah lease on a small farm with a cement house four years ago. He saw this as an opportunity to improve his family's living and housing conditions, especially as the owner of the house and farm accepted rent in kind rather than in cash. (The rent paid is one quarter of the date produce). Since moving to the farm, he has obtained loans from the

Agricultural Bank and is now optimistic that the farm production may improve. He would be delighted to live in a villa but saw no prospect of this. For him, cultivating this farm is a much easier way of housing his family than by paying a cash rent.

No.28 (under 2000 S.R) is unemployed, and over 55 years old. He lives in a cement house held by sabil. Until five years ago, he lived with his mother who owned the house. Before she died she told him that the house would be endowed for him to continue living in it, provided that he bought food or sacrificed a lamb for charity in her memory, whenever he was able to do so. (According to Islamic values, charitable work does not end with the death of a person). He said that because he lived in his mother's house, he always remembered her and loved her very much and that, despite his poverty, he often offered charity gifts, including the yearly sacrifice of a lamb. He was strongly attached to the house and reported that five years earlier, the SDC had offered to help him to improve it, but that he had refused to leave the house for the work to be done, despite warnings that it was in a dangerous condition.

No.29 (under 2000 S.R) is a driver living with his family in a cement house held by sabil. The land on which the house

is located was owned by his father, who died eight years ago. The family had lived in poor conditions in a small mud house until two years ago when his mother died. After her death he was able to rebuild the house in cement traditional style. According to his father's will, the house was endowed for needy members of the family, and since he was the most needy, he continued to live on the property. The father's will had, however, stated that whoever occupied the property should offer charity meals occasionally, plus an annual sacrifice of a lamb on his behalf, for God's blessing. No.29 regularly fulfilled his father's wishes, which cost him less than a quarter of what he would have had to pay in rent on such a property. He hoped that he would in due course own a modern house, but at present he has no deed for the property as it is endowed in his father's name. So he could not get a loan from the REDF and his income is in any case too low. He quoted the saying: "Stretch your legs only to the limits of your bedding".

No.30 (under 2000 S.R), is a farmer living with his family in a cement house under sabil. Since his retirement five years ago, he has worked a farm leased to him in a nearby village. He moved to Hwylan as he found an endowed house was available there on a low rent was within his means. In contrast to the previous cases, he paid rent in cash

rather than kind. This is in keeping with local social values. Those who live in houses endowed for them by their parents pay in kind for their parent's blessings, but No.30 is not related to the person who endowed his house. Hence he pays in cash.

No.31 (2000-4000) S.R.) works a farm leased to him on a long term subrah lease. He built a cement traditional home because the lease is for forty years. He has applied for an REDF loan to build a villa, not in Hwylan but in a near by village where he owns sufficient land to qualify for a loan.

No.32 (2000-4000 S.R) is a farmer with a case similar to No.27 except that the term of his lease is unspecified.

No.33 (4000-6000 S.R) is a farmer who lives with his family in a cement traditional house leased on a long term (subrah). The house stands on a farm which was leased to him by his father twelve years ago, for a fixed sum of 5000 S.R. When the father died, two and half years ago, the rent became payable to the inheriting family members, including the respondent himself and his widowed mother. Adjacent to the farm he had leased from his father was another one which was leased to his father thirty years ago. The respondent took over this lease after his father's death, since it was of no

fixed duration and there was no written agreement, merely an understanding that he paid one third of its date produce to the owners. The respondent is prepared to return the farm to its owners but up to now they have never wanted it back. When asked whether he wished to apply to the REDF for a loan, he said that he did not envisage doing so at present. As he does not own the property, he could not build on it. Moreover, there is another property in the locality which the family members (including the respondent), inherited from their father. It was cultivated by his brother, and he and the other inheriting family members have up to now preferred not to divide it. The respondent's overall position in relation to property is therefore quite complicated and at present he finds his cement traditional house quite acceptable.

No.34 (4000-6000 S.R.) is a business man and a farmer living with his family in a villa. He is the only case in Hwylan of a man living in a villa built on land held either by a subrah or sabil tenancy. The farm where the villa is located is held by a long-standing endowment which had been passed down from his grandfather to his father more than 40 years ago. His father left Hwylan to live in Buraidah when he married his second wife 15 years ago, but he still came to Hwylan daily to supervise the farm until his recent death.

The agreement by which the respondent lives on the farm has seven years to run, but he expects it to be renewed. If the agreement is not extended, he would have to leave the farm and the villa to its owners. In the unlikely event of this, he would, he says, build another villa in Hwylan. The reason he had built a villa on a property which he did not own is that, as a construction business owner, he was able to do so at a reduced cost. Also, he built a very modest villa. His case is, therefore, exceptional.

No.35 (6000-8000 S.R) is a farmer who lives in a mud house under a sabil tenancy. He is 65 years of age, has never owned any property and has always lived in endowed houses. His former tenancy was on a farm in a nearby locality where he had lived in a mud house for fifteen years until moving to Hwylan sixteen years ago to avail himself of the opportunity of a larger house for his family which was growing rapidly. At the time of interview his household consisted of 16 persons, including a married son with several children. The owner of the farm lived in Buraidah and had agreed to let the house and the farm in return for one third of the farm's date produce. The farm has good quality date-palm trees and the remaining two thirds provide sufficient income for him. He said that he would like a better house, but he did not own any property, so could not apply for a

loan from the REDF. He had not applied for a land grant in recent years, because he thought it unlikely that he would be granted any land near to his present house. When younger he had missed out on the opportunity to obtain a virgin land grant. His father had died when he was still a child, and he had not foreseen the advantage of cultivating virgin land.

No.36 (6000-8000 S.R.) is a door-man in government employment who holds the subrah tenancy of a cement traditional house. Unlike No.35, his income comes from several sources: first, from his work as a doorman in a nearby village school; second, from his work in a local mosque, third from a rented modern house in Buraidah; and fourth, from the farm which he works and where he lives. His family had lived in this locality for generations. He explained that he had obtained the farm as follows:

**This farm actually belonged to my grandfather. My father used to live here, but when my grandfather passed away, he left this farm to his children, including my father and his brothers. They did not divide the farm on a long term lease and when my father died twenty five years ago, I agreed with my relatives to remain there to cultivate the farm. After my father's death, I became an inheriting person as well. This was because I inherited some of my father's share in this farm. It was a small share, but my mother, who now lives with me, also inherited some of my father's share. Being heir with my mother was not the only factor that kept me here. I had spent all of my life here, and other heirs, who are mainly my uncles, were willing to help me and agreed for me to remain here.**

The cement traditional house on long lease was built five years ago, partly with his money and partly with that of the relatives, who had shares in the farm. The latter contributed 50% of the cost.

#### 8.7 Houses Owned and Provided by Parents

As shown in Table 8.2, there were four households living in houses owned and provided by one of their parents.

No.37 (under 2000 S.R) is a student receiving an educational allowance, and he also keeps a small shop in Buraidah. He is only 25 years old and not yet married. The cement house where he lives is owned by his widowed mother, as she had bought the land ten years ago for 15000 S.R. But most of this sum and the cost of the house, built ten years ago, was provided by himself (from his earnings in Buraidah) and by his half brother, whose family shared the house with him. He and his brother preferred to live together to take care of their widowed mother. His half brother had bought land in Buraidah three years ago and had applied for an REDF loan, but was still on the waiting list. They planned to live together in Buraidah when the brother's loan application enabled them to build a villa there. Their mother had



already approved their intention to move. No.37 also hoped to have his own modern house in Buraidah in due course. He has applied to Buraidah's Municipality for a land grant, but was still waiting for it. But, even if successful in getting his own house, he intends to continue living jointly with his half brother in order to care for their mother

No.38 (2000-4000 S.R) is a car dealer living in his parents' cement house. He is married with six children, and they all live with his elderly parents in the latter's house. His father had bought the land of 200 sq.m twelve years ago at a cost of 15,000 S.R. and had paid for the construction of the cement traditional house. It had not contributed to the cost of construction partly because of his relatively low income but mainly because his father wanted to maintain full ownership. He said that he would have liked a modern house, but in the family's financial situation, they were unable to buy enough land.

No.39 (4000-6000 S.R.) is a government employee working in a small town less than twenty miles from Hwylan. He is 25 years old and unmarried and he lives in his father's cement house. He described his situation as follows:

This cement traditional house is owned by my father who moved from here seven years ago with my mother and brothers and sisters. They moved because my father did not know how to drive. He wanted to live in Buraidah because he works in the vegetable market there, and did not want to rely on us to give him lifts every day. So they moved to Buraidah and I moved with them leaving this house vacant. I studied in Buraidah. When I graduated, and started work I decided to move back to Hwylan to live in my father's vacant house. I preferred living here as I prefer the local mosque to perform my prayers.

Although he had moved away from his parents' family, he goes to his parents' house in Buraidah daily for visits and meals. His parents did not object to his moving. The house from which they had moved had remained vacant for five years and it is difficult to rent as it is small and located in Hwylan manzelah, the oldest neighbourhood, where there are several uninhabitable mud houses. No.39 said that his limited means at present prevent him building his own modern house but he intends to apply for a government land grant and hopes that he will be able to build a modern house later.

No.40 (4000-6000 S.R) is an office messenger in Buraidah and the only householder living in his parents' villa. He described the housing tenancy as follows:

When my mother was young, more than 40 years ago, she used to carry a pot filled with water, to grow tamarisk trees on this land. It was not owned at that time. Over twenty years ago, we accompanied witnesses to Buraidah's court and claimed the land and were granted a deed for it

in my mother's name. My father died 18 years ago. Because my mother is a widow, she applied for an REDF loan in her own name. The loan was granted to her 4 years ago, and this house was built. The area of the land was 500 sq.m, large enough for a villa.

The REDF loan of 300,000 S.R. was insufficient to build the house, but his mother had money inherited from her husband. The total cost of the house was 400,000 S.R. Living free in his mother's house, he is well able to cater for the family. His income is mainly from his government post but also from a villa for which he obtained an REDF loan and built in Buraidah. Before his father's death, the family lived in Buraidah, but when his father died they decided to move back to Hwylan. It had been the family's community for generations and they have kinsmen still living there. A segregated part of the house is rented to expatriates working in Hwylan and this brings in 8000 S.R. a year.

#### **8.8 Accommodation Provided by Employer**

No.41 (2000-4000 S.R) works as the caretaker of the SDC building. He is the only Saudi householder living in accommodation provided him by virtue of his job. His family was also the only one living in a flat. Flats, being small, are not generally favoured by Saudis who prefer large houses for their families, which they hope will grow in size. No.41

had previously lived in a rented cement traditional house in his original locality, a nearby village, but the offer of both a job and a flat to live in, made the idea of moving attractive. He would nonetheless prefer to own a modern villa and has applied to Buraidah Municipality for a land grant in his village of origin. He still awaits the outcome.

### 8.9 Occupancy of Houses with Undivided Inheritance

We may recall that inheritance in Hwylan, as in all other parts of Saudi Arabia, is according to the Islamic law (Arabic: Sharia). The relevant implications of this are briefly stated by Ibn-Saeed (1989):

An individual can make a bequest through his will to any other person or to a charitable organisation of up to one third of his estate. However, an overriding condition is that persons standing in certain relationships to the deceased, such as son, father, mother, etc. must inherit by right. Islamic law is plain on this subject, a person cannot will one third of his estate to just one of his sons, because in Sharia they have equal rights, regardless of whether they have been on good personal terms with their father (p123).

A female inherits half of what a male inherits, if they are in the same relation to a dead person because the man, by Islamic tradition, is the breadwinner for the family. As shown in Table 8.2, there are eight households in Hwylan

living in houses that were inherited jointly with relatives. Four cases are in the lowest income group, of which three are cement traditional houses and one a modern house. In the 6000-8000 S.R. income group, only two had inherited properties; one a mud house and the other a villa; and in the highest income bracket there was only one, a mud house. The Undivided inheritance cases were as follows:

No.42 (under 2000 S.R) is a farmer who had inherited the farm on which his house is located more than 20 years ago, from his father who had, in turn, inherited it from his (the respondent's) grandfather. Other relatives, a brother, a sister and his mother had inherited the farm jointly with him, but the land was not divided. Instead it was left for No.42 to cultivate after his co-inheritors left the village on marriage or for employment. He paid his relatives their share of the farm's produce, mainly in dates. They never questioned his payments when the proceeds from the sale of the dates were shared. He remained fully responsible for spending on the farm and for running it. In 1983 he built his cement traditional house which cost him 40,000 S.R. Due to his low income he relied on loans from his relatives and friends to build the house and to operate the farm. But ,because the land was inherited and not divided among the heirs, he had no deed for it in his name, so could not apply

for an REDF loan. He said that initially he had not fully understood the REDF loan scheme, but when he did, he had advised his own sons to apply for loans as soon as they were ready to marry.

No.43 (under 2000 S.R), a farmer, was a similar case to No. 42. He lives with his family in a cement house located on the farm he had inherited from his father. His father had bought this land from his (the father's) co-heirs, then No.43 inherited it with co-heirs about thirty years ago. But, the property was not divided among the other heirs who had moved away from the locality after their parent's death. The respondent preferred to live there cultivating the land. He spent money from the farm's proceeds, mainly dates, to run it. Although he had no written agreement with his kin group regarding the operation of the farm, he periodically offered them some produce when they met on family social occasions. He knew that he should do so if he wanted to keep the farm. The cement house in which he and his families lived was built 20 years ago when he decided to improve on the old farm mud house. He had himself paid the cost of the house construction. He did not apply for an REDF loan, despite the fact that he had another property with a cement house in the same village. At the time of the study, this second house remained occupied. Moreover, one of his sons had already

applied for an REDF loan, which made the respondent think a further loan in the family was not important.

No.44 (under 2000 S.R) is a farmer who inherited the cement house in which he lives jointly with co-heirs. But he and his father had for some years previously lived and farmed jointly, each taking a half of the proceeds. After his father's death, however the value of the yield had to be divided among the heirs who lived on another similar farm in the locality. None of them wanted to divide the property, preferring to keep it cultivated. The respondent had also inherited, jointly with his relatives, an abandoned mud house located in Hwylan Manzelah and he owned a small cement traditional house in Buraidah which was rented for a relatively small sum. He could have applied for an REDF loan but he did not want to have an identification book which is essential to make the application. In addition to this, he did not want a villa on the farm as he was not the outright owner.

No.45 (under 2000 S.R) is an elderly man living in a modern house located on a farm which he had inherited. At the time, the farm had a mud house. The farm had belonged to his ancestors and was passed down from his father to him and other relatives. About eight years ago, he built his villa

with an REDF loan in the expectation that his co-heirs would allow him to buy them out. These payments are, however, not complete, so he is not yet the full legal owner.

No.46 (4000-6000 S.R) is a religious guide who lives in a large mud house. Although employed in Buraidah, he also works the farm which was formerly owned by his father who died less than fifteen years ago. He inherited the farm and house jointly with other family members. They decided not to divide it, preferring to maintain the farm and the house in the family. Though old, the house had been repaired ten years ago with cement, as people no longer use mud. His widowed mother still lived with him, but his two younger married brothers have moved from Hwylan for work reasons, leaving him to take care of the farm without any written or even oral contract. They felt no payment was required from their brother for cultivating and running the farm, and that whatever he gave them in the future would be acceptable as he was regarded as the farm's trustee.

No.47 (6000-8000 S.R) is a teacher living in an inherited mud house. He is single and lives alone. His father had owned the mud house since he built it about 45 years ago. He had died twelve years ago and was inherited after jointly by the respondent's mother, his brothers and sisters and



himself. His eldest brother had left home when No.47 was only two years old, to work outside the region. The rest of the family, except for four married sisters, continued to live together in the house until four months ago when they all decided to join the brother who had moved. No.47 said that he did not join the family in their move because of his work in Buraidah. Moreover, he was told he could remain in the same house without payment to his heirs. He said he would prefer a modern house but would have to wait until he had enough money to buy land before applying for an REDF loan.

No.48 (6000-8000 S.R) is a teacher occupying a modern house on land which was inherited. He is well educated and employed in a government boys' school in a nearby locality. He is married and lives with his wife and their children, his married brother and family, and his unmarried brothers and sisters, 13 persons in all. Their father died less than 10 years ago, when the family inherited the farm. Six years ago the family built a modern house on the farm and moved from their mud house. As the co-heirs had not divided the property, the house was paid for from their several earnings, but mainly from a house on the farm which is rented to Hwylan's Intermediate school. No.48 reported that he had also received an REDF loan when he built his own modern house

in Buraidah, but he was currently in the process of selling it. He prefers living in Hwylan as the trustee of the family's property, and because his work is in a nearby village.

No.49 (over 8000 S.R.) is a government educational administrator, the head of the only household in the highest income group living in an inherited mud house. He is also the most highly educated of the household heads, with a university degree. His employment in Buraidah is his main source of income. He is married and lives with his wife, children, his widowed mother, sisters, his married brother with his wife and children, and an unmarried brother - 17 in all. The house, and a small farm, were jointly inherited after their father's death ten years ago. The heirs preferred not to divide it, but to continue living together. He could easily have afforded to move out of the house and to set up his own household, but he has chosen to live with his mother and the rest of the family as the trustee of the household. He also owns a farm in a nearby village which was in part bought and in part granted to him as virgin land. Although he had built a villa there, he does not intend to move, and only spends his leisure time there. In addition, he owns a large piece of land in Hwylan, which was granted to him more than twenty years ago because he had cultivated

tamarisk trees there when he was a teenage boy, as well as a substantial piece of land in Hwylan and another north of Buraidah. These properties are all still vacant and were bought mainly as investments.

#### 8.10 House Owned by a Wife

No.50 is a retired man living in his wife's house with their daughter. We have seen from the previous cases that most properties in Hwylan are owned solely or largely by men and this is in keeping with cultural values in Saudi Arabia. There was, however, this single case of a household head living in a villa owned by his wife. The man is 72 years old and retired. He said that although he had lived all his life in Hwylan, he had never owned property there. He had however, built a villa with an REDF loan on land that he bought in Buraidah, but his house is rented for a little under 2000 S.R. a month. This is his main income, but his wife also earns as a servant in Hwylan's girls' primary school. His wife had bought the land eight years ago in order to build a villa without a loan. According to Saudi culture, however, he remained the household head, responsible for his wife and daughter, the only persons in the house.

## 8.11 Loans

In order to place the REDF loans in context, in this section we investigate the sources of all major loans reported by household heads in Hwylan, whether for housing or other purposes. The Real Estate Development Fund, the Saudi Arabian Agricultural Bank, the Saudi Credit Bank, friends and money lenders are the main sources from which household heads obtain loans. Table 8.3 shows that out of 50 household heads, 42 (84%) reported having used major loans from one or more of the above sources. The REDF had lent to 34 per cent of the household heads to build modern homes either in Hwylan or outside the locality. Apart from the widowed woman referred to earlier, 17 household heads had borrowed from the REDF. Nine of them had built modern houses in Hwylan and, with one exception, all lived in these houses. The exception let the house and he lived in another modern house he owned in Hwylan. Seven out of 17 had built modern houses in Buraidah, most of which were let. Only one was building a house in a nearby village on a farm he owned. At the time of interview, he lived in a cement house on a farm in Hwylan and was undecided as to whether to move or stay there.

As we saw in Chapter 7, 20 of the present houses in Hwylan are villas. As the REDF only provides loans for

modern houses, this means 11 of the villas were built without loans from the REDF.

A total of 23 household heads (46%) had obtained loans from the Saudi Arabian Agricultural Bank. They were mainly men who owned or leased farms, as the bank provides interest free loans for water pumps, seeds, fertilizers, the drilling of wells, etc.

The Saudi Credit Bank had lent to eight household heads (16%). One of them said that his loan of 15,000 S.R. was to enable him to remarry, after the death of his first wife. Seven said they had borrowed from the S.C.B. to repair their mud or cement traditional houses in Hwylan, while one of them had repaired a house outside the region. (For more details of S.C.B. loans see the interview with its director in the Appendices).

There were 15 household heads (30%) who had obtained substantial loans from friends. One of them said that he had borrowed to get married; seven said they had borrowed for family needs; one said it was to buy property; eight said they had used loans when they built their houses; and seven had borrowed to buy farm equipment. Some of the respondents had more than one loan from one or more friend(s).

Only nine householders (18%) had borrowed from money lenders. In three cases, these loans were used for marriages and in seven cases for family needs. One said he had borrowed to buy property, four for building houses, and three for their farms.

Table 8.3

Major Loans Taken Out by Household Heads

Loan Provided by	Taken out Loan(s)		Not taken loan(s)		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
REDF	17	34	33	66	50	100
Saudi Agrict. Bank	23	46	27	54	50	100
Saudi Credit Bank	8	16	42	84	50	100
Friend(s)	15	30	35	70	50	100
Money-Lender	9	18	41	82	50	100
Any one or more of the above	42	84	8	16	50	100

The 33 household heads who had not obtained loans from the REDF gave various reasons for not doing so. (Some respondents gave more than one reason). Seventeen said they did not get loans from the REDF because they did not own land. Eight said they did not need a loan from the REDF as they felt the houses they lived in were good enough or that they were financially able to build their homes without loans. Seventeen said that they preferred not to apply to

the REDF since a loan would not be enough to build the houses they wanted, and they could not themselves make up the difference. Only one respondent felt he was too old to apply for a loan. He commented that he had few years left so there was no point in applying, but would happily stay in his cement traditional house. Five household heads did not apply for loans because they did not yet have deeds to their land, which they still shared with co-heirs and had not divided. Two heads mentioned that they had already applied for loans from the REDF but they were still on the waiting list and would build modern houses when they got loans. One household head reported that he did not apply for a loan from the REDF because he had no identification book which is one of the application requirements. The reason he gave for having no identification book and not wishing to get one was that he was not prepared to be involved in government bureaucracy. Many have made use of the loans available for land and houses.

Subsidised farming loans, from the government Agricultural Bank, were obtained by 23 out of 50 respondents. REDF loans were obtained by 17 out of 50 household heads. However, independent financial means and loans from private sources were also a common factor in whether or not they built houses with REDF loans. Eight respondents felt they

did not need loans from the REDF when they built their houses, while seventeen heads did not apply for these loans because they did not have sufficient means to envisage repayments. Undivided inherited land also prevented a few people from applying for loans, as the land has to be registered in the applicant's name.

### Conclusion

We saw in Section 8.2 of this chapter that a half of the household heads were themselves the owners of the houses they lived in and that a further 10% occupied their houses by virtue of the ownership of their parents or, in one case, of a wife. Ownership is the most frequent in the case of villas (over 80%), whereas the rights of occupation of a majority (55%) of mud and cement houses are not by individual ownership (Table 8.1).

From the cases presented in Section 8.3 to 8.10, we can draw a number of conclusions. Firstly it is abundantly evident that the ownership of a house, preferably a villa, is regarded as highly desirable by many people. Apart from those who have already met this goal, there were a number of others who aspired to it (eg. Case Nos 29, 31, 37, 39 and 41).



Secondly, it is clear that people commonly regard the ownership of a house - villas in particular, but cement houses too - as an important investment. For example, Case Nos. 9, 11, 36, 37, 40, 44 and 49 either owned villas outside Hwylan from which they drew rent or were hoping to build villas even if they did not intend to live in them.

Thirdly, it is evident that many people own land or houses in Hwylan as a result of their own or their forebears' residence there under socio-economic conditions which were vastly different from those of the present (eg Case Nos. 4,5,7,18 and 42). It is much more difficult to acquire land or houses there now than it was in the past unless one has substantial financial means. Most house owners owned the land on which their houses are located before building. The type of house built there depended mainly on the area of the land and on income and other financial resources.

Fourthly, it is clear that a few inhabitants (eg Case Nos. 17,19,21 and 22) regard a cement traditional house as perfectly acceptable, but for most, this is second best (eg Case Nos. 16,18,20,25,33,38). Mud houses are a relic from the past and all the cases of mud house occupants are exceptional in one sense to another. There is no case of an individually-owned mud house. Three are held by undivided

inheritance (Nos. 46,47 and 49), one on a short term rental agreement (No.26) and one by endowment (No.35).

Sixthly, the preference of some people not to divide joint inheritances is clearly illustrated in a number of cases (eg Nos. 33, 42, 43, 46, 48, 49). This is not only because properties are sometimes considered too small to divide, but also because some families feel that the division of an inheritance may damage their family bond (eg Nos. 46,49).

Finally, most cases illustrate, in one form or another, that extended family considerations continue to play an important part in housing decisions. The recent growth in ownership, and aspirations to ownership, of modern villas is clearly not associated in any marked degree with "individualism" or a desire to break away on one's own. Virtually all villas are built in sizes and styles suitable to accommodate extended families, while a few cases of householders opting to continue living in cement or mud houses show that family considerations had affected their decisions. The importance attached to caring for parents or other elderly kin is commonly a factor in sons' decisions on housing.

At a more general level, the materials presented show that interest-free government loans have played, and do play, a major role in the life of Hwylan's inhabitants. But there is no evidence to suggest that the loans are a factor in promoting nuclear family households. On the contrary, it is clear that the building of larger houses, especially villas, is often a factor enabling extended family households to persist.

## CHAPTER NINE

### The Possession of Cars, Modern Domestic Appliances and Furnishings

#### Introduction

It is well known that wealth and modern technology have dramatically affected the political economy and infrastructure of Saudi Arabia. In Chapter Three we outlined their effects in Al-Qassim region and in the last chapter we examined the impact of these forces of change on the housing conditions of the inhabitants of Hwylan.

Before turning our attention to the findings on the possession of cars and modern domestic appliances in Hwylan, we may briefly recall the propositions outlined by Ogburn (1973) concerning the impact of modern technology on people's relationships and their traditional way of life. While recognising that new technology calls for new skills, new attitudes and new visions in the adaptive culture, Ogburn introduced the notion of "cultural lag" due to the fact that the social fabric takes time to adapt and that we can therefore expect a transitional phase of adaptation during which people may be ambivalent about new technology, sometimes resisting it and often being selective about what they accept and what they reject.

In Chapter Three we referred to examples of such ambivalence and resistance in Al Qassim. For example, the introduction of telegraphic equipment in the 1930's was first met by a request to King Abdullaziz not to introduce such evil machines. Later, people accepted modern telecommunications very readily and these are now taken for granted. Similarly, radio was at first regarded as something magical, and therefore sinister, and later, when television was first introduced, women would not watch it unveiled as they feared that the male presenters could see them.

In this chapter we focus on the penetration of different items of modern domestic technology in Hwylan. In particular, we compare the possessions of the inhabitants of mud and cement houses on the one hand, and of villas on the other. To what extent do they differ? And are there any indications of differing lifestyles between the occupants of the villas and the rest of the population?

### 9.1 Modern Possessions in Different Types of Houses

Tables 9.1 and 9.2 present the survey findings on the modern possessions of the 50 Saudi households of Hwylan. Certain items were found in all or almost all households. These included air conditioners (100%), fridges/freezers

(98%), electric fans (96%), cars (94%) and washing machines (92%). Possession of these items is now so common that they are regarded as 'necessities'. And, while there are a few mud or cement houses which do not have fridges/freezers, electric fans, cars and washing machines, the main differences between mud and cement houses on the one hand and villas on the other, is that the latter have a higher number per house than the latter (eg villa householders have 3.1+ cars and 3.3+ fridge/freezers as against 2.4+ and 2.5+ respectively for the householders in mud or cement houses.

Other items on the list are, however, less commonly found. Only 64% of households have T.V. sets and even fewer, 44% have radios, while telephones, video machines and modern sofa suites are exceptional. The number in regard to these items are small and we should not therefore attach too much significance to the differences between mud or cement houses and villas, but there is a slight tendency for villas to be more frequently equipped with those items than are mud or cement houses. To appreciate the social significance of the data presented, we need to consider the nature of the different types of items, and the attitudes towards them, in the context of Saudi culture.

Table 9.1

Possession of Cars, Modern Domestic Appliances and Furnishings by House Type

Type of possession	Mud and cement houses (29)										Villas (21)					Total of Houses with specified items	
	None	No. of items									None	No. of items					
		1	2	3	4	5+	1	2	3	4		5+	No	%			
Air conditioner	6	3	9	4	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	15	50	100	
Fridge/Freezer	1	6	9	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	3	5	49	98	
Fan	2	3	5	3	7	9	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	48	96	
Car (incl vans etc)	2	11	5	4	4	3	-	-	-	-	5	5	3	3	47	94	
Washing machine	4	14	9	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	8	3	2	46	92	
T.V. set	11	14	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	4	4	1	32	64	
Radio	18	8	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	1	1	22	44	
Telephone	28	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	-	-	6	12	
Video machine	27	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	5	10	
Modern sofa suite	29	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	-	4	8	

\* Including one flat in the S.D.C.

Table 9.2

Comparison of Possessions by House Type

Possessions	Percentage of Houses with Specified Items		Average No. of items per house			
	Mud and cement	Villa	Total	Mud and cement	Villa *	Total
Air Conditioner	100	100	100	3.1+	4.6+	3.8
Fridge/Freezer	96.6	100	98	2.5+	3.3+	2.9
Fan	93.3	100	96	3.3+	4.6+	3.9
Car (including vans etc)	93.3	95.2	94	2.2+	3.1+	2.7
Washing machine	86.2	100	92	1.3	1.9	1.6
T.V. set	62.1	66.6	64	0.8	1.4	1.1
Radio	37.9	52.3	44	0.5	1.1+	0.8
Telephone	3.4	23.8	12	0.03	0.3	0.2
Video machine	6.9	14.2	10	0.07	0.2	0.1
Modern sofa suite	0.0	19.0	8	0.0	0.3	0.1

\* Including one flat



9.2 The Nature of Different Items and Attitudes Towards Them

(i) Air conditioners and fans

The prevalence of our conditioners and fans is obviously related to climatic conditions and the fact that they are not seen as items of any cultural significance. They are appreciated simply for the comfort which they afford. This point was made by elderly inhabitants in particular. Several other persons said that sitting or sleeping in front of the air conditioner or fan is something which they appreciate as they get older and are no longer able to go for walks in the cool of the evening.

As the figures show, cooling devices are generally within the financial means of even the poorest householders. But the wealthier members of the population do tend to have more and better cooling facilities. There are two types of air conditioner in common use. The first is called Sahrawy, a name deriving from the Arabic word Sahra, meaning desert. Water is pumped from the water pumps into a wall-fitted air conditioner which humidifies the room and therefore cools it. This type is relatively cheap, costing an average of 500 S.R. It is commonly owned by both the wealthier and the poorer

people, including those in mud and cement houses. The second type of air conditioner is also fitted on the wall, but unlike the first type, does not require a water supply. However, it costs three times as much as the first type, and uses much more electricity. Most of these are imported from the United States or Japan and tend to be found mainly in the villas.

While most houses had fans (usually fitted to the ceiling), they were on the whole more important for the less wealthy who in some cases said they used them to avoid the cost of switching on air conditioners.

(ii) Fridge/Freezers

Only one house in Hwylan does not have a fridge or freezer. As with air conditioners and fans, the appreciation and prevalence of fridge/freezers is related to climate and comfort, but also, more than the previous items, to their material value. Many of the fruits and vegetables used by households are seasonal and fridge/freezers enable people to keep supplies throughout the year. Also, the village farms produce large quantities of high-quality dates, Sukary. Farmers therefore keep frozen stocks to sell on the Buraidah market when prices are higher, and most villagers keep frozen

stocks for their own consumption and as gifts for friends and relatives, especially for those visiting them from other areas of the country where sweet dates are scarcer. The number of fridge/freezers a household can afford does therefore acquire considerable social significance over and above their economic value. The more sukary are stored, the greater one's ability to express generosity and pride to others. Hence the freezers have also become symbols of status.

(iii) Washing machines

Washing machines are particularly appreciated during the long, hot summers which demand frequent changes of clothing for comfort. There are only four households without at least one washing machine and three of these consisted of a single man each. These men either relied on neighbours to help them out with their washing or they used one of Buraidah's laundrettes. Only one householder without a washing machine said he could not afford one. Some of the wealthier homes have as many as three or four washing machines, going well beyond the strict requirements of "necessity" to conspicuous consumption.

(iv) Motor vehicles

Only three out of 50 households do not have at least one vehicle. Many have two or three and several even have five or more each. As with the above items, the villa households have a significantly higher number (3.1+ as against 2.4+). One's own transport has become a necessity in a sense which can only be fully appreciated if one considers the use of vehicles in the context of the culture. Not only do men use cars and vans to go to work, in farming and for going to the Buraidah market, but women cannot move about freely by any other means. Thus cars (driven by men of the family) are of quite vital value for women to visit family members, to attend social gatherings of women or simply to go for drives, especially when it is very warm. In these ways, cars are for women an extension of the home.

(v) TV sets, Radios and Videos:

The number of households with television sets, radios and video machines are, as we have already noted, much lower than those with modern domestic appliances related to comfort and the running of the home. This is clearly not due to the expense of these items but to the fact that they are of a different kind. They bring news and views and values of the

"outside world" into the homes and in some households there is still a strong negative feeling towards them.

Although the Saudi Arabian television service, which is provided free of charge by the Ministry of Information, shows a variety of programmes, both in Arabic and English, objections to television remains among more conservative or religious elements who claim that such devices are in conflict with their beliefs. For example, one respondent aged 44 years said that he had strong religious views and that he would always oppose having a T.V. set in his house. It was not that he could not afford to buy one, but that he felt it conflicted with his beliefs and attitudes. He feared that it might affect his family's traditional behaviour. Another respondent, 40 years old, differed to the extent that he said that his reason for not having a T.V. set was that he had a low income. He did not mind watching T.V. when visiting friends, but he thought it was not important for his family members. Negative attitudes thus ranged from strong disapproval to simply giving T.V. a low priority. Others said that television prevents people from working properly and often makes them late for prayers. Yet others had reluctantly resigned themselves to television. They did not like it, as they felt it created family problems; but they were unable to prevent grown-up children sharing their houses

from having what they wanted. While the average number of television sets per house differed significantly between mud and cement houses and villas - and therefore to some extent between the wealthier and the poorer - the possession of television, radios and videos cut across both categories, as is clear from Tables 9.1 and 9.2.

Some respondents living in villas, and well able financially to buy sets, chose not to do so. One said that his son had bought a set when still living in the parental homes and before moving to Buraidah, but the son later became more conservative and destroyed the set on one of his visits home. The father was unhappy as he liked to watch television, but he felt constrained by his son's objections, even though the son no longer lived with him.

While the problems of television ownership have only become an issue in recent years, the dilemma concerning radio is of longer standing on similar grounds. Radio ownership is now affected by two contradictory factors. On the one hand, television has tended to replace the radio and reduced its importance. On the other hand, fundamentalist objections to radio are just as strong as to television. Both these factors are reflected in the data in Table 9.1 and 9.2, which

show that the ownership of radios is lower than the ownership of television sets.

Videos are a relatively recent introduction compared with radio and television, and most villagers know little about them. In view of the tendency for people to reject things they do not understand, or with which they are unfamiliar, few respondents own videos. In some cases they did not realise what they were, in other cases they felt they were costly for the limited benefit they bring. But the most important reason for not having them was again religious conservatism. Only two mud and cement houses have videos, while three modern houses have them and one of these has two.

(vi) Telephone

In Chapter Four we noted the people's views on the absence of sufficient telephone lines in Hwylan. Only six houses had their own telephone and five of those were villas. Many other people would like to have them, but lines were still in short supply at the time of the study. Three of the household heads who had phones explained that they had managed to transfer lines from friends in Buraidah, who possessed more than one line. The fourth was that of the

village amir, who possessed two lines, one of which was also connected to his office, located on his farm. The fifth and sixth households had managed to get telephone lines by virtue of residence in or close to the S.D.C.

Most of the respondents argued that the locality should have better access to telephones. They said that the wealthier people had more influence, "Vitamin W", than the poorer to gain such a service. On the other hand, those who had telephone lines complained about the cost of the service, and the inconvenience caused by neighbours coming to use their telephones. Although this increased their telephone bills and disturbed their privacy, they could not, following traditional values, deny their neighbours the convenience of using their telephones.

(vii) Modern Sofa Suite

In strong contrast to the popularity of modern domestic appliances related to housework, very few houses in Hwylan have adopted Western-type furnishings. As shown in Table 9.1, the only houses to have a modern sofa suite are four villas, whereas all the houses had Arabic-style settees (including those with Western-type sofas). Similarly other furnishings in the houses are predominantly Arabic in style.



This observation must be seen in conjunction with the fact, explained in the previous chapter, that the designs of the houses and the spacial arrangements of rooms and facilities in both the cement traditional houses and the villas remains essentially the same as in the old traditional mud houses. While readily adopting many modern domestic appliances, members of the society continue to practise family life and hospitality within the framework of traditional customs and values. To follow Western fashions in the interior of the house would be a breach of culture and identity which very few would even contemplate.

### Conclusion

The conclusions to be drawn from the above are as follows. Firstly, the data do not suggest any significant difference in the acceptance of modern appliances by occupants of different types of houses. Such differences as there are between mud and cement house-dwellers and villa-dwellers reflect differences in financial means rather than in the style of life and values.

Secondly, there are marked differences in the acceptance of different types of possessions, but such differences cut across socio-economic strata. They are related to strength

of ideological/religious views rather than to income. It is difficult to know whether there is here a "cultural lag", in Ogburn's terms, or whether the division between the less and the more conservative is a steady, perhaps even an increasing feature of the community. As illustrated by the data on television, radio and videos, there has clearly been selective acceptance of western type domestic possessions.

## CHAPTER TEN

### Summary and Conclusion

The rapid changes in the affluence of Saudi Arabians since the 1970's attracted the researcher's interest in exploring the social significance of innovations in the nature and type of housing. Following on the discussions and reading outlined in Chapter One, it was decided to study one village in detail rather than attempt a large-scale survey. This decision carried the advantage that the study could add to the limited number of ethnographic studies on Saudi Arabian society thus far available.

Hwylan, the village chosen for this study, has no shortage of housing and has no serious housing problem of the kind often encountered in developing parts of the world, but it faces another problem arising from the challenge which affluence and the new housing associated with it present to the people's perception and practice of their traditional way of life.

The village of Hwylan was chosen for several reasons: it is within reach of the researcher's own home in Buraidah; the

researcher had visited Hwylan in his youth and remembered how the village had been at that time, so the changes in its housing types and physical features between that early visit and the fieldwork conducted in 1988 were of particular interest. Furthermore, the village was of manageable size for a detailed study.

The field work began with several pilot visits to the village and to the government institutions in Buraidah and Riyadh to investigate whether access would be possible and to collect relevant materials about the village, the region and the country as a whole.

Throughout the field work the researcher was engaged in collecting data from various sources: the inhabitants of Hwylan (both Saudi household heads and expatriates), bureaucrats in Al Qassim region and the REDF headquarters in Riyadh. Most people were very co-operative once they had been assured that the purpose of the study was academic.

Before launching the field work, various studies of housing and society were reviewed. The starting point was an article by Louis Wirth (1947), "Housing as a Field of Sociological Research". This led the researcher on to a wide range of studies on housing and society culminating in the

close reading of comparative studies such as those of Rapoport (1969) and Duncan (1981). All the reading done emphasised and illustrated the importance of studying housing in its overall context. In studying housing in Hwylan, an attempt was therefore made to approach the village in its broad geographical socio-historical and social contexts, with particular emphasis in Chapter Three on the rate and scale of development and modernisation in Al Qassim region as a whole.

Hwylan and its predominantly Saudi population were described in Chapter Four. We saw that it is strongly influenced by its proximity to the large and prosperous city of Buraidah but that its identity as a long-settled community of local people remains strong. At the time of the study, the village had a population of 552, of whom 65 or 13% were expatriates.

The origins of the expatriates, their reasons for coming to Hwylan and their style of life were discussed in Chapter Five. While their presence is of considerable economic importance, they have little social intercourse with the Saudi inhabitants and make virtually no direct impact on the community's social life except through the SDC where they occupy most of the senior professional posts.

Chapter Six focused on the nature of Hwylan's family life in the context of Saudi Arabian culture. Although the extended family is giving way to the nuclear family, the traditions of the former remain strong and effective. Many households are still based on extended families and, when members do live separately, they are still expected to help each other, to maintain close contact and to observe familial obligations relating to the life events of marriage, illness and the like. Important indicators of the continuing strength of traditional family life are the identification of the individual by his/her paternal line, the preference for marriage within kinship groups, patrilocal residence, and patriarchal authority. Such values remain highly influential and there is considerable resistance to change in them.

Males maintain their superior position over females. The inferior status of females has been little affected either in childhood or adulthood. Boys often give orders to girls, even when the boys are younger. Similarly, young people are still expected to respect and obey their elders and those expectations are generally upheld within the family and the community. The choice of a marriage partner continues to be seen as a familial rather than an individual concern and the families of both sides try their best to support a marriage and to ensure its success.

There is, however, often evidence of change in the composition of households, of which 44 per cent were based on nuclear families - a proportion which would certainly have been much higher only two decades ago. Reasons for moving out of the family home included marriage, work, study and family problems (for example, tension between mothers and daughters in laws, or between brothers' wives). Nonetheless, households are still large; more than 85 per cent had more than five members, and some had 15 or more.

Chapter Seven was devoted to a description and discussion of housing in Hwylan. Here there is a major and visible change as compared to the recent past. Twenty years ago, 82 per cent of the present families occupied mud houses; 16 per cent lived in cement traditional houses; and only 2 per cent in modern houses. The situation at the time of this study was very different. Only 10 per cent still lived in mud houses, while 48 per cent lived in cement traditional houses and 40 per cent in modern houses. The mud house is now regarded as belonging to the past, and there are signs that the cement traditional house may similarly become obsolete if present trends and aspirations are maintained. Virtually all the villagers were impressed by modern houses and even the poorest often aspired to living in villas, despite the fact

that villa-ownership may pose severe financial and related problems.

However, although modern houses constitute a major improvement in the occupants' standards of living, their essential design principles are similar to those of the mud house and in keeping with the socio-cultural values of the community (eg. segregation of the sexes, privacy, and hospitality to guests). The rapid change in house type has not been accompanied by significant changes in this respect. Moreover, the evidence of this study suggests that family life does not differ appreciably between the occupants of different types of houses. The occupants of villas are on the whole wealthier than the occupants of mud and cement houses, but their consumption values are similar, as is shown by the possession of various domestic appliances (Chapter Nine). Despite marked economic differentials and stratification, the community remains culturally homogeneous.

Accordingly, changes in house type co-exist with the persistence of strong elements of the traditional way of life. It seems unlikely that this will change fundamentally in the foreseeable future. As long as religious and



traditional values remain intact, it is difficult to envisage a trend away from the present situation.

In Chapter Nine the extent to which imported innovations are accepted or rejected was illustrated by examining attitudes to, and possession of, modern domestic appliances. All the households, whatever their house type, had several modern appliances such as air conditioners, fridges, washing machines and cars. The wealthier homes, especially those living in villas have larger numbers and, often, more expensive possessions of this kind, but such items are regarded as acceptable and desirable by all. The situation is, however, different in regard to television sets, radios and videos. Conservative religious persons tend to hold negative attitudes towards these, which are seen as disseminators of alien values, and hence as agents of social change. Some people therefore refuse to have such appliances in their homes and a few had got rid of them (sometimes under pressure from more conservative family members). Significantly, however, differences in attitudes to, and possession of, TVs and radios are not correlated with house type; they cut across the population living in different types of houses.

Modern sofa suites are uncommon in the village, and those who have them tend to use them for 'decorative' purposes, preferring to sit on traditional Arabic style settees, a further indication that modernisation of the domestic setting is not necessarily accompanied by changes in lifestyle and social values.

Land tenure, acquisition of property and loans were discussed in relation to housing and social change in Chapter Eight. Up to 1968 when Royal Decree No. M26 was passed, virgin land that was not privately owned could be granted to any person who had cultivated it in the past. Several villagers had acquired Ehya land in this way and had subsequently built their houses there. The discontinuation of this practice is a factor likely to contribute to greater economic differentiation between householders. (There are of course, other important factors such as differential access to well-paid jobs, differential access to loans and capital, etc).

Several other types of right of occupation were recorded. Some villagers did not own any land, but occupied houses by long term rent (forty, fifty or more years) or by short term rent. Such tenants are naturally disinclined to build modern houses, even when they can afford to do so, as they are

reluctant to invest in property which they may one day be asked to leave. So they tend to rent houses instead. We also saw that some villagers own land or houses in nearby areas, especially Buraidah. Despite a drop in rents since the mid 1980s, such properties represent important investments for those who own them. On the whole, householders living in rented or endowed houses had considerably lower incomes than householders owning one or more houses.

We also saw that the type of house occupied is positively related to income, those with higher incomes being more likely to have modern houses. Out of 15 respondents with incomes of more than 6000 S.R., 10 lived in villas, while 21 out of 30 respondents with incomes of less than 4000 S.R. occupied mud or cement houses. Nevertheless, there were a number with low incomes who had built modern houses on their own land with the aid of interest free loans from the REDF, the Saudi Agricultural Bank or the Saudi Credit Bank. A clear majority of the household heads had obtained loans from one or more of these sources, and in some cases from friends and money-lenders as well.

Although the ownership of land and long-term interest-free loans do not pose any real threat to the traditional

value system, they have certainly affected the type of housing and led to the building of more modern houses than would otherwise have taken place.

In the light of our findings on various particular aspects of housing and family life in Hwylan, we may now draw some general conclusions in relation to the literature on social change in Saudi Arabia and on housing in changing societies.

Despite Hwylan's proximity to the city of Buraidah, it appears that social change in family and community life has not developed as markedly as Ibn Saeed (1989) found in Riyadh or Alnowaiser (1983) reported from Unyezah and New Alkabra. There certainly has been change, but our findings seem to be closer to those of Ganoubi (1976) in Irgah and Shukri (1983) in the villages she studied. The influence of religion and traditional life are more effective in small communities and it seems that they constitute a stronger pressure to conform in this small community than in larger ones.

There is in Hwylan little expression of dissent and there are no signs of the development of a radically different way of life. The past is strongly respected and present-day cultural life can be seen as a faithful approximation of

traditional ways under the new circumstances of wealth and greatly improved material standards of life. At the same time, however, the point needs to be made that it is likely that would-be radicals or dissenters may well have left Hwylan. Also, as Alnowaiser (1983) notes, people often behave differently in different settings and it is possible that some people from Hwylan behave differently and express different attitudes when away from their home village. There may thus well be elements of alternating behaviour which would indicate greater social change in the life of individuals than is observable in Hwylan itself.

In specific regard to housing and the move away from mud houses - first to cement traditional houses and then to modern villas - it would at first sight be tempting to regard this trend as being in line with the models posited by Rapoport; that is, to view mud houses as corresponding to his 'primitive' category, cement traditional houses as corresponding to his 'preindustrial vernacular', and villas to his 'high style and modern' category. But this would be to disregard the essential relationship that exists between housing and society in Saudi Arabia. What the analysis presented in this thesis shows is that Saudis in a community like Hwylan have been quick to adopt the technology of house construction available to them from Western societies without

commensurate change in the culture of family life. They have embraced changes in material culture but they have done so within the framework of their own social values. The changes we examined in house types should not be considered an accurate measure of such changes as have taken place in the Social fabric.

## APPENDIX I

### Information supplied by interview with the Director of the Social Development Centre and Relevant Documents

Q1 What are the services provided by the SDC in Hwylan?

A1 Raising awareness among the people of the area in regard to health, cultural and social issues, and agricultural improvements. Also promoting development within the tradition of the Islamic society with the aim of raising standards of living through increasing their incomes or guiding their consumption. The people's income may be raised through self-employment and by taking advantage of government financial and material supports, as well as by giving technical advice through plans and programmes designed by the SDC and other leadership groups. To encourage progress and development by providing the required services to meet social, educational, agricultural, recreational and other needs. We also take care of all age groups and both sexes and we promote awareness by co-operation between the various committees set up to carry out our activities. These committees include:

(1) The Agricultural Committee

Representatives of the region's farmers meet regularly and discuss farming policy to fulfil the needs of the region's farmers within the framework of the government's farming policy. This committee has planned and conducted the following programmes:

- a) extensive supervision of fields in summer and winter;
- b) the introduction of new crops;
- c) the introduction of new fertilisers;
- d) the introduction of spray machines to prevent plant diseases;
- e) the introduction of plastic containers for vegetables and dates;
- f) the introduction of greenhouses; and
- g) the introduction of new irrigation methods such as dripping.

(2) The Social Committee

This meets regularly and designs programmes which foster the social and psychological stability of the region's people. This committee has conducted the following programmes jointly with the youth,



handicraft and local community development committees:

- a) the improvement of housing conditions;
- b) the introduction of construction of water mains;
- c) street lighting for the villages;
- d) typing programmes for males;
- e) computer training programmes for males; and
- f) adult education for males.

(3) Handicraft Committee

This also meets regularly and works to encourage interest in rural handicraft and manual industry. Some of the programmes which have been conducted by this committee include:

- a) establishment of honey production;
- b) crafts using date palm leaves;
- c) the introduction of poultry raising;
- d) programmes for making fruit jellies;
- e) programmes for milk and dairy industry; and
- f) programmes for keeping farm products.

(4) The Cultural Committee

This committee determines cultural policy for the area's students and youths. It has conducted the following programmes:

- a) cultural competitions;
- b) research and studies;
- c) raising the aspirations of school students;
- d) educational competitions among students;
- e) Quran memorising competitions;
- f) adult education;
- g) follow up educational programmes as well as establishing summer activity centres;
- h) experience and information exchange;
- i) the development of school libraries;
- j) sports and social teachers' programmes; and
- k) sports tournaments for schools.

(5) Youth Committee

This is a part of the Social Committee concerned with youth activities. It has conducted the following programmes:

- a) constructing and furnishing of sports clubs in the area;
- b) establishing sports fields, including water facilities and lighting for these fields;

- c) providing furniture needed by clubs and supporting the clubs with health, media, cultural and recreational needs.
- d) organising sports tournaments;
- e) holding environmental camps;
- f) cultural competitions between youths; and
- g) participation on public occasions.

(6) The Sick People's Friends Committee

This committee supplements the available health care and preventive treatment through health and environmental programmes. It has conducted the following:

- a) the control of house flies and other pests;
- b) healthy house programmes;
- c) the cleanest house competition;
- d) the healthiest kitchen;
- e) competition for the cleanest toilets and bathrooms; and
- f) filtering drinking water.

(6) Women's Committee

The Women's Committee is concerned with the policy related to women's health, social life and parenting. It has conducted the following programmes:

- a) first aid in the home;

- b) first aid training;
- c) gifts for new born babies;
- d) care for pregnant and nursing mothers;
- e) child day;
- f) water tanks;
- g) the clean house;
- h) health competition;
- i) children's nurseries;
- j) children's summer clubs;
- k) milk sterilizing (pasteurizing) equipment;
- l) typing training for women;
- m) clothes design and tailoring;
- n) women's adult education;
- o) home economics training; and
- p) educational competitions among female students.

Q2 What are the main obstacles facing these services in general?

- A2
- (1) Shortage of money sometimes.
  - (2) Shortage of some services in relation to the size of the region's population.
  - (3) The worry about new things due to uncertainty as to the results.
  - (4) Sometimes there are requests from the people for more services than they really need.

- (5) Some traditional handicraft and local industries are vanishing and there are negative attitudes towards reviving them.
- (6) Lack of awareness among some people.

Q3 How are services introduced to the people by the SDC?

A3 By organising work between the committees according to everyone's concern; through the village emirs; through the Social Department Centre which carries out research and studies; through the centre's departments which raise awareness among the public. Also, some of the people are concerned to secure more government support through different formal agencies.

## APPENDIX II

### Interview with the Director of The Real Estate Development Fund of Al Qassim Region

Q1 What are the activities (services) of The Real Estate Development Fund?

A1 The Real Estate Development Fund branch offers the following services:

- (1) Supervision of loans in the region and the provision of certificates of building progress.
- (2) Receiving loan applications.
- (3) Following up the repayment of loans in the region.
- (4) Carrying out the legal sales of debted building to The Real Estate Development Fund.
- (5) Mediating between the region's people and The Real Estate Development Fund headquarters in Riyadh and vice versa for work procedures that need approval from the Fund's headquarters.

Q2 What are the main obstacles that face The Real Estate Development Fund's services in general?

A2 The obstacles could be summarised as follows:

- (1) The Real Estate Development Fund serves a large area with numerous towns, villages and settlements and there are inadequate roads to some settlements. These facts, and the desire of The Real Estate Development Fund to be close to all the people, no doubt affect the work level.
- (2) Many of the borrowers do not keep up their repayments.
- (3) The Real Estate Development Fund's work is divided between two bodies, each with its own independent administration: The Real Estate Development Fund and the commercial banks.
- (4) There is a lack of construction awareness among many borrowers.
- (5) The Real Estate Development Fund provides services to many areas that are as yet not suitable for development.

Q3 How are The Real Estate Development Fund's services offered to the people?

A3 The Real Estate Development co-operates with nine commercial banks in the region to facilitate the services and to be closer to the people. These banks are located in Buraidah, Unyazah, Al Rass, Al Bukyryah, Al Badya, Al

Mudhnab, Riyadh Al Khabra, Alasyah and Sajer. In these banks there are Real Estate Development Fund departments which act as communication links between the people and the branch.

Q4 Do the people understand the Real Estate Development Fund services?

A4 The Regional Community consists of educated, semi-educated, illiterate and Bedouin people so there must be a lack of understanding of the Real Estate Development Fund services and goals.

Q5 What are the services the Real Estate Development Fund provides to Hwylan village?

A5 All the services mentioned earlier apply to Hwylan village.

Q6 How do you evaluate the services of the Real Estate Development Fund to Hwylan Village?

A6 Good.

Q7 What are the obstacles to providing Hwylan with the Real Estate Development Fund services?

A7 None.



Q8 For how long has The Real Estate Development Fund (Al Qassim branch) provided services to the region's people?

A9 Since it was established in 1978.

Q10 How many loans have been provided to Al Qassim people?

A10 The total number of loans in Al Qassim region up to the present (1988) is 28,156.

Q11 What is the percentage of borrowers who make repayments to the Real Estate Development Fund on time in Al Qassim region in general and in Buraidah in particular? And what do you think are the main reasons why people do not make regular repayments?

A11 In Al Qassim region 65% make regular repayments and in Buraidah 70%. The main reasons why people do not repay include:

- (1) Inability to pay due to shortage of finance, especially by women and elderly people and some others of limited income who are genuinely hard-pressed.
- (2) Many borrowers avoid repayments even though they can afford them.

(3) Many borrowers who are able to repay compare their repayments with those of the women, the elderly and the poor, and take the view that they will repay when those repay.

(4) Many people believe that they are victims because their houses were badly constructed and are now unsuitable for occupation.

Q12 In which villages in the Buraidah area have people got category (A) loans?

A12 None.

Q13 Hwylan is a village in Buraidah area and its people have been granted category (A) loans, while there are villages next to Hwylan where people have category (C) loans. What are the reasons for providing Hwylan with category (A) while other villages have lower category loans?

A13 Hwylan is considered by Buraidah Municipality as one of its neighbourhood.

Q14 If a person is granted a loan from The Real Estate Development Fund to build a house on particular land but builds on another piece of land for the following reasons, what does the REDF do?

- (1) someone knowingly builds on land other than that for which they got the loan?
- (2) the Municipality surveyor made a mistake by confusing adjacent plots?

- A14 (1) If the land on which a person builds is next to that for which he borrowed or is in the same block and has the same direction, then the problem may be solved by debting the land he has built to The Real Estate Development Fund, while continuing the debt on the other land until the procedure for debt on the built land is over. Then we write to the justice office to release the debt on the unbuilt land. But if the land on which the property is built is away from the debted land or in another area, then the person will be asked to give back the loan he was given and he may reapply for a loan for the new land.
- (2) Same answer as for 1.

Q15 Are there special designs The Real Estate Development Fund recommend the people to follow? If so, how are these designs chosen?

A15 Designs are the responsibility of the Design Departments in the Municipalities.

Q16 Say a person got a loan about five years ago, but has never repaid it, what happens if this is due to:

- (1) evading repayments;
- (2) financial difficulties; and
- (3) the person's death?

- A16
- (1) If he is evading repayments while he is able to repay, the government institutions will enforce all repayments.
  - (2) If he is not repaying because of financial difficulties we will re-arrange a repayment plan according to his means and circumstances.
  - (3) If he is dead and has heirs who are able to repay, they will be asked to do so. But, if they are children and not able to repay, we will arrange with higher government institutions for the debt to be cancelled.
  - (4) In a case where the building is rented, if the occupier is a government office then there is an agreement between government offices in principle that the rent payments be paid into The Real Estate Development Fund account. If the occupier is a person, then there is an agreement with the civil rights division of the Police.

Q17 What programmes have been introduced by The Real Estate Development policies within the last five years?

A17 The most important policy introduced recently is allowing the owner of a building for which he is in debt to The Real Estate Development Fund to sell to another person who did not get a loan from The Real Estate Development Fund, on condition that the buyer applies for and is granted a loan in his own right.

Q18 Say a widowed woman gets a loan from The Real Estate Development Fund, she has no work or income and lives with her children, what would be the repayment requirements in such a case?

A18 The Real Estate Development Fund imposes a condition on any woman who wants a loan from The Real Estate Development Fund that she have an agent who will be liable for the repayments if the borrower becomes unable to make repayments to The Real Estate Development Fund.

Q19 If a person gets a loan from The Real Estate Development Fund and after he has started building, has to move away from the town or village where he is building, because of his work or studies, so construction is halted, what are the options open to such a person?

A19 The choices granted to a borrower in these circumstances are:

- (1) He could repay the full amount of the loan to The Real Estate Development Fund then apply for a new loan in the place of his choice at any time.
- (2) There is a possibility of The Real Estate Development Fund granting an extension of the repayment period, though his first repayment to The Real Estate Development Fund will still be at the same time (two years after his receipt of the first payment of the loan).
- (3) He may authorise a person of his choice to receive the loan payments from The Real Estate Development Fund.

Q20 If a person wants to get a loan from The Real Estate Development Fund but insists that he wants to build a mud house, what will The Real Estate Development Fund do about this situation?

A20 The Real Estate Development Fund loans are only to build modern houses and any other application is rejected.

Q21 In the past The Real Estate Development Fund would grant loans to two persons jointly for one piece of land. What are the reasons for abandoning this practice?

A21 Because its disadvantages are greater than its advantages.

Q22 At present, it is more difficult for a divorced woman to get a loan from The Real Estate Development Fund. Why is this?

A22 This is not correct. If a woman presents a divorce deed confirming that she is divorced and has not remarried, she is entitled to a loan.

Q23 What are the reasons behind inability of some people to apply for loans from The Real Estate Development Fund in terms of land problems?

- A23 (1) A condition of granting land to those of limited income is that the person must have no loan from The Real Estate Development Fund and must present confirmation of this. This provides the opportunity to get a limited income land grant, and then later to apply for a loan to build on it.
- (2) The Real Estate Development Fund does not lay down conditions for the land to which the loans applies, but it is important that it should be within the building area and have building permission from the municipality.
- (3) There is no restriction on the area of land which may be built on, the borrower may build whatever

size of house he wants, within the limit of the land debted to The Real Estate Development Fund.

- (4) The Real Estate Development Fund provides loans for the heirs of a dead person (orphans only) to build a house for themselves, on condition that none of their parents had a loan. The oldest brother will be the authorised agent. This does not prevent any of these orphans obtaining a loan when they reach the age of eligibility.
- (5) Up to the present, it is not allowed to get a loan for Sabil land (charity held land).
- (6) It is possible to get a loan for a long term leased land Subrah if the term is more than twenty seven years from the date of the loan.



### APPENDIX III

#### Information supplied by the Director of Saudi Credit Bank in Al Qassim Region

##### Activities (services) of the Saudi Credit Bank:

- The Saudi Credit Bank is a government institution. Its objective is to provide interest free loans to people of limited income to help them overcome their financial difficulties.
- The obstacle facing the bank is delay of due repayments by some borrowers.
- The bank's services are offered to people when they apply for loans from the bank.
- The people understand about the bank's services.
- The bank provides loans for the following:  
Marriage loans, house repairs, setting up or expanding a business.
- For Hwylan village - there are no statistics on loans for each city or village; however, the level of services and obstacles facing the bank are the same for all areas.
- Statistics of granted loans from the month of Safar 1397 H to 30-10-1408 H (1979-1988) are 10,399 loans, totalling 133,888,700 Riyals.

- Marriage loans = 2,750 loans totalling 46,780,200 Riyals.
  - House repairs = 6,587 loans totalling 86,306,000 Riyals.
  - Occupational = 61 loans totalling 795,000 Riyals.
  - Medical treatment = 1 loan for 7,500 Riyals.
  - Establishing specialised business = 18 loans totalling 1,660,000 Riyals.
- There is an evaluation process when people apply for loans for house repairs. Applicants must bring an income certificate from their sponsor, whether they are employed by the government sector or by the private sector. If the applicant is self employed (Mutasabeb) he must bring witnesses to show that his income does not exceed 3,000 Riyals monthly or 36,000 Riyals a year. The amount of a house repair loan is 20,000 Riyals. A marriage loan is 15,000 Riyals. An occupational loan is 20,000 Riyals.
  - The bank does not provide marriage loans to applicants unless they bring the official marriage contract.
  - Occupational loans may be granted on condition that the applicant has graduated from a vocational training centre or one of the technical institutions or tailoring

and fashion design centres and he/she is free to establish a private business. This person will be evaluated partly on the basis of the information he provides. The bank will also send an official from the bank and one from the vocational training centre to visit the shop or garage for evaluation. Those who were trained by a parent or friend may go to a vocational training centre to be tested. If they do pass, they will be given a certificate and then they may apply for a loan.

- Medical treatment loans are now no longer given due to the progress and development of health care in the kingdom, which is available free of charge.
- Applicants for a house improvement/repairs loan must own the house and live in it and provided that the house is in need of repair, tenants do not get such loans. However, long term, and endowment leased houses (subrah and sabil) may be granted loans, or houses that are debted to The Real Estate Development Fund, the loan must have been granted at least ten years previously and the applicant must present evidence of his repayments on due dates.

- Loans that women can get:
  - A loan for house repairs, if she owns the house.
  - A loan for occupation and establishing a tailoring shop provided that she has graduated from the tailoring training centre. The amount of this loan is up to 200,000 SR.

The bank deals with Riyadh Bank and Al Arabi Bank because they have more branches than any other bank in the region. This eases the service to the people. However, repayments can be made through any bank, the borrower just has his repayment credited to the Saudi Credit Bank account.

#### APPENDIX IV

##### Technical Differences between Mud Houses and Cement Traditional Houses as Assessed by the Senior Civil Engineer of the Municipal and Rural Affairs Directorate of Al Qassim

Privacy is part of the cultural tradition and means that Saudi houses need more space than those in western countries because in the Saudi house there are separate sections for men and women, separate toilets so that women do not have to use the facilities near the house entrance, used mainly by men or by guests, and separate rooms for children above a certain age. This is in accordance with religion which obliges the family to segregate males and females when they reach a certain age.

In the Saudi society, especially nowadays, many families have one or more domestic servants (male or female) and/or a chauffeur in which case separate quarters need to be provided for them to maintain family privacy, especially when the servant is male.

There are usually separate entrances for males and females. Also, due to strong importance attached to privacy, gardens may be used mainly by men, especially if the windows of a neighbouring house face the garden. This problem is more common than in the past when people use to build mud houses

because mud houses had fewer windows, higher walls and more consideration for others' privacy than modern houses. Moreover, the windows of mud houses faced onto an interior courtyard rather than to neighbouring houses.

Another difference is that mud houses used to be close to each other, whereas modern houses must have space between them according to the building regulations which are imported from the USA where they were designed for wood built houses. There must be at least 4 metres between houses to allow easy access by fire services.

Design problems also include economic problems. Sometimes people build areas in the house which may not be needed or not suitable for a Saudi family, like an upstairs verandah which faces the street and is open to passers by. This conflicts with family privacy, especially that of women.

The owner's income should be considered when designing a house for him. Costs should not be beyond his financial means; at the same time, low quality building materials should not be used.

APPENDIX V

Questionnaire of Information Wanted from Household Heads

1. Age .....
2. Occupation .....
3. Location of Work
  - a. Hwylan.....
  - b. Buraidah.....
  - c. Nearby Villages.....
  - d. Unemployed.....
  - e. Retired.....
  - f. Student.....
4. Education
  - a. Illiterate.....
  - b. Read and Write Only.....
  - c. Primary/Intermediate.....
  - d. Secondary.....
  - e. Higher Education.....

5. Marital Status

- a. Single.....
- b. Married.....
- c. Divorced.....
- d. Widowed.....

6. Number of Wives at Present, if Married

- a. One Wife only.....
- b. Two Wives.....
- c. Three Wives.....
- d. Four Wives.....



7. Members of the Household

No.	Relation to Household head	Age	Sex	Occupation	Marital Status	Birth Place	Education	Monthly Income	Nation-ality
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									
18									
19									
20									
21									
22									
23									
24									
25									
26									
27									
28									
29									
30									

8. Income of the Household Head

No.	Amount S.R.	Source of Monthly Income
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

9. Family Type

1. Single person living alone.....
2. Nuclear family.....
3. Extended family.....

10. Domestic Helpers

1. None.....
2. Number, if any.....
3. Nationality.....
- (a)..... (b).....

11. Year of occupation of present house.....

12. Family Housing History: For Houses before the present house

No.	House Type	Own Rent	Period occupied by the family	
			From	To
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

13. Present House

No.	House Type	Number of Bedrooms	Number of Sitting/Dining Rooms	Toilets	
				Arabic	Western
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

14. Present House and Land Size by sq.m.

1. Land Size
2. House Size

15. Year that the Present House was Built.

1. Less than 5 years ago.
2. 5-9 years
3. 10-14 years
4. 15-19 years
5. 20 years or more
6. Don't know.

16. How the Present House was Designed.

1. Personal design of present owner.....
2. Architect's design.....
3. By a previous owner, not the present occupier.....
4. Don't Know.....

17. Type of construction Contract

1. Part contract.....
2. Complete contract.....
3. By the owner.....
4. Don't Know.....

18. Nationality of Contractor

1. The owner (Saudi).....
2. Saudi (not the owner).....
3. Yemeni.....
4. Egyptian.....
5. Syrian and/or Lebanese.....
6. Pakistani/Indian.....
7. Don't Know.....

19. Nationality of Workers

1. Saudi.....
2. Yemeni.....
3. Syrian/Lebanese.....
4. Egyptian.....
5. Indian/Pakistani.....
6. Filipino.....
7. Afghan.....
8. Don't Know.....

20. Right of Occupation of Property

1. Owner occupied.....
2. Rented.....
3. Endowment (Sabil).....

4. Long term lease (Subrah).....
5. Owned by parent(s).....
6. Provided by sponsor.....
7. Inherited.....

21. How Ownership was Acquired

1. Not owned.....
2. Bought land only.....
3. Bought the house.....
4. By cultivating virgin land.....
5. Inherited.....
6. Part bought, part virgin land grant.....
7. Owned by parent.....
8. Owned by wife.....

22. The Year the House was Acquired

1. House now owned.....
2. Less than 5 years.....
3. 5-9 years.....
4. 10-14 years.....
5. 15-19 years.....
6. 20 or more years.....

23 Price Paid for the Land

1. Property not owned.....
2. Less than 100,000 S.R.....
3. 100,000 - 200,000 S.R.....
4. 200,001 - 3900,000 S.R.....
5. 300,001 - 400,000 S.R.....
6. 400,000+.....
7. Virgin land grant.....
8. Owned with other inheriting kin.....
9. Don't know.

24. Total Cost of House Construction.

1. Cost.....
2. Don't Know.....

25. House Equipment and Furnishings

Equipment of Furnishing	Number
Air conditioner	
Refrigerator-Freezer	
Washing Machine	
Telephone	
T.V. set	
Video machine	
Radio	
Electric Fan	
Sofa	
Arab sitting arrangements With carpets and cushions	

26. Cars Owned by Members of the Family

1. None.....
2. Number of car(s) owned.....



27. Have you ever obtained loans?

1. Yes..... 2. No.....

If 'yes' indicate the following:

No.	Amount of the loan S.R.	Source of loan	Purpose of the loan (for what it was used)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

28. If loaned by the REDF, are you making repayments?

1. Yes..... 2. No.....  
3. Repayment not due yet.....

29. Reasons for not repaying to the REDF

1. Financial difficulties.....  
2. Oversight.....  
3. Repayment method is not suitable.....

30. Reasons for not getting loan from the REDF

1. Do not own land.....
2. Do not need loan.....
3. Financial situation does not warrant.....
4. Feel too old to apply.....
5. Single person (unmarried).....
6. No deed for land.....
7. Applied but application still being processed.....
8. No identification book.....
9. Other (please specify).....

31. Do you own property other than this?

1. Yes..... 2. No.....

If yes, specify the following

No.	Location of other properties	Size of property	How the property is used	How you acquired the property
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

32. Have you ever applied for a government land grant?

1. Yes..... 2. No.....

If yes, place of your application for land grant:

1. Buraidah Municipality.....
2. Al Qassim Agricultural Directorate.....
3. Al Busur Municipal Office.....

4. Other (specify).....

33. Date of grant application.

34. Have you been granted land?

1. Yes.....

2. No.....

If yes, type of land grant:

1. Low income grant.....

2. Special government grant.....

3. Virgin land grant.....

4. University Graduate grant.....

35. Location of any Government Land Grant

1. Hwylan.....

2. Buraidah.....

3. Nearby village or town (specify).....

4. Farming area.....

5. Outside the region.....

36. Please state your opinion of the following services and amenities in Hwylan.

No.	Service of Amenity	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Don't know
1	Telephone					
2	Water					
3	Street cleaning					
4	House electricity					
5	Street Lighting					
6	Health Services					
7	Roads					
8	Postal Service					
9	Boys' schools					
10	Girls' schools					
11	The SDC					

- If you have no telephone service, have you applied for it?

1. Yes..... 2. No.....

- If you have applied for a telephone service, state your application date.

37. Source of drinking water used in the house

1. Hwylan water tower without filtering.....

2. Hwylan water tower with filtering.....

3. Buy filtered water.....
4. Farm well.....
5. Bring water from other source (specify).....

38. Do you have any suggestions regarding services in Hwylan, If so, what are they?

39. How do you evaluate the status of people in Hwylan?  
(give number one for the most important and number five for the least important)

1. By age.....
2. By wealth.....
3. By religiosity.....
4. By education.....
5. By kin.....

40. In what activities do you participate in Hwylan community?

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

41. Family members who have left the household

No.	Relation to the family head	Sex	Date of his or her move	Marital status when left	Place moved to	Reason for his or her move
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

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