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ISLAM IN THE SUDAN: THE IMPACT OF RELIGION,
AND RELIGIOUS ELITES, ON DEVELOPMENT

by

Brenda Ann Burke, B.A. (1981)

A thesis submitted to
The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

February 1988

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The undersigned hereby recommend to the Faculty of
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Abstract

This study considers the role of religion in the development of the Sudan; in particular, the effect of Islam on the establishment and reinforcement of power relationships, on influencing who makes development decisions and who participates in the benefits of development. It is hypothesized that the Islamic religion has been a primary influence on development in the Sudan and that the channel of influence between religion and development is elite behaviour. A related hypothesis is that the experience of colonialism reinforced structures in Sudanese society that had been established by Islam, and consequently had some effect on the country's style and pace of development. The paper reviews the particular characteristics of Sudanese Islam, examines the emergence of the leading Islamic religious families in the 19th century and their consolidation into the Sudanese elite during the Condominium era, and discusses the role of religion in the modern Sudanese state. The study concludes that many of the problems of Sudanese development--especially those related to underdevelopment of the regions, and lack of communication between the rulers and the ruled--can be linked to hierarchical and exclusionary principles in Sudanese Islam.

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THE SUDAN

200 mls

- Sudan borders
- ▨ Southern provinces
- Towns

- ⊙ Capital
- ~ Rivers
- ++ Railways

Religions of Sudan

	NORTH	SOUTH	TOTAL
Moslems	12,780,000 (90%)	380,000 (10%)	13,160,000 (73.11%)
Traditional Religions	1,278,000 (9%)	2,660,000 (70%)	3,938,000 (21.88%)
Catholics	71,000 (.5%)	270,000 (15%)	641,000 (3.56%)
Other Christian Religions	71,000 (.5%)	190,000 (5%)	261,000 (1.45%)
	14,200,000	3,800,000	18,000,000

Source: Sudanaid, Yesterday and Today, printed by St. Joseph's Technical School, Khartoum, Sudan, October 1978. p. 13.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 A Starting Point

An investigation in the realm of the cultural influences on development can involve difficulties for the researcher that are rather different from those presented by more purely economic studies. Although theories relating GNP growth (as an easily measured aspect of development) to such tangibles as savings and investment are not necessarily value-free, they are accepted as more neutral than hypotheses seeking to relate development to "unquantifiabiles" such as religion. A westerner engaged in a "culture-focused" study of a non-western society is frequently reminded of her own biases and confronted by the seeming futility of attempting to touch the heart of a world that is not her own.

But the importance of the less tangible influences on development has been increasingly recognized, as the "accepted" definition of development has evolved beyond the early focus on economic growth. The discipline of development studies as a whole could be considered as somewhat paternalistic, involving as it does the efforts of "experts," many from more developed nations, to investigate the

sources of poverty and inequity in less developed countries. Once, however, one has accepted the validity of the field of study, it is inconsistent to place limits on the scope of investigation, and to suggest that westerners may concern themselves only with problems of the macroeconomy, and not with cultural attitudes and institutions. The emerging holistic definition of development stresses the interrelatedness of economic and cultural aspects.

This paper concerns itself with cultural influences on development in the Democratic Republic of the Sudan; specifically, with the influence of religion on the country's development. In particular, the study focuses on the impact of Islam, the religion of 70 per cent of the Sudan's people and of the overwhelming majority of its political and economic leaders. That Islam has affected and continues to influence Sudanese development is clear. The chronic and costly civil war, which has halted the exploitation of oil resources in the southern Sudan and, more tragically, stopped the flow of food aid to 5.3 million people threatened with starvation, has religious as well as political dimensions. The wave of executions and brutal punishments sanctioned by Jaafar Numeiri's September laws, which imposed the ex-president's version of Islamic law on the country, has been denounced by the current political leadership; but the desire of the (Northern) Sudanese political elite for an Islamic constitution, its form and to whom it will apply, remains an important issue in the country's affairs, the resolution of which must have an impact on development.

This study approaches the problem of religion's influence by examining the effect of Islam on the establishment and reinforcement of power relationships in the Sudan: that is, how has Islam influenced the country's responses to the questions: "Who gets what, when, where, and how--and who gets left out?"(1) The body of concepts about human life and culture associated with a religion, what we will call ideology, can engender attitudes and patterns of behaviour that influence the nature of the relationship between leaders and followers in a society, and consequently has an effect on development. The socio-cultural aspects of religion, including its social institutions (such as the "parish" or the secret society) may obviously have a similar effect. In the Sudan, the institutional aspects, in particular the tariqas or Sufi brotherhoods, which have enormous political, economic and cultural influence, have traditionally been considered more important than ideology. Bechtold observed that "religion as an institution is more powerful as an influence on political behaviour than as a belief system. While religious beliefs are obviously important to the practitioner, their substantive contents seem to have relatively less influence on his public conduct than their associated socio-cultural aspects."(2) However, the so-called Islamic resurgence in the Middle East and North Africa (perhaps associated with rising educational standards and "modernization" generally) may be having the effect of increasing the influence of ideology on decision-makers' behaviour. Voll forecast the emergence of a populace that wants "more than a simple institutional allegiance as the basis for its Islamic identity."(3) This paper will give consideration to both socio-cultural/institutional and ideological aspects, although with an

emphasis on the former, as required by the nature of source material available.

The researcher's status as a foreigner with limited opportunity for "field" research does impose certain limitations on the study. Asked for his reaction to the thesis proposal, one western Sudan scholar, while conceding the relevance of the project, was dubious about the possibility of obtaining data on the leading Sudanese religious families' economic affairs (an important aspect of elite behaviour that has an impact on development). He remarked: "It is as if you were conducting an investigation into the financial dealings of the Mafia in New Jersey, Chicago, or Las Vegas." (4) This paper, however, does not attempt detailed analysis of particular activities of the Sudanese power elite. It is a preliminary study, intended to establish the connection between certain concepts and institutions associated with Islam in the Sudan, the behaviour of leaders and followers, and the country's development. There are many micro-level studies that will be suggested by the work presented here, and which should be pursued by students with expertise in particular areas of development or regions in the Sudan. This research aims to uncover the questions that should be asked and to suggest some macro-level, preliminary answers.

1.2 Defining Terms

The study explores the extent to which religion has contributed to development in the Sudan. The meanings of both "religion" and "development" can be imprecise. This section aims to identify the issues involved in arriving at suitable definitions, and to develop

concepts that are appropriate to the goals of this paper.

1.2.1 "Religion"

A key problem in arriving at a definition of the term "religion" is combining a description of its utility with an account of what, beyond this function, is the reality of religion. What something does must grow out of what it is. Because this paper is concerned with the influence of religion on behaviour and its operation in human society, our definition must emphasize the utilitarian aspect, although without neglecting the intangible core of religion.

Leuba identified four categories of attempts to define religion. Intellectualistic definitions conceive of religion as faith or belief in certain "things," or the knowledge or apprehension of those things (which are given labels such as Ultimate Reality, the Infinite, Truth, and so on). Affectivistic definitions focus on the essence of religion as feeling rather than knowledge or belief. Slightly different are those explanations which identify a religious instinct which, like hunger or thirst, is believed to be impossible to analyze. Of Leuba's categories, only voluntaristic or practical definitions focus on utility, in that they view religion as fostering those actions, purposes and experiences; such as work, art and love, which are humanly significant.(5)

Eliade's definition represents a sound effort to combine what religion is with what it does. He analyzes religion in terms of a dichotomy between the sacred and the profane.

[T]he sacred is pre-eminently the real, at once power, efficacy, the source of life and fecundity. Religious

man's desire to live in the sacred is in fact equivalent to his desire to take up his abode in objective reality, not to let himself be paralyzed by the never-ceasing relativity of purely subjective experiences, 'to live in a real and effective world, and not in an illusion.(6)

In the profane experience, on the other hand, space is homogeneous and neutral and consequently no true orientation is possible.(7)

The concept of sacred and profane is developed in Eliade's descriptions of religious and non-religious man. For the religious man, there is an absolute reality; he believes in transcendence. The nonreligious man espouses the relativity of human experience and sees himself as a subject and agent of history. For the religious man, human beings and human societies fulfill their potential insofar as they reactualize sacred history and imitate divine behaviour. Nonreligious man claims to be self-made, through a process of desacralizing himself and the world. Eliade believes that nonreligious man has been formed by opposing his predecessor, and that the sacred, including the vestiges still present in his emotional make-up, represents the prime obstacle to his freedom.(8)

The basis for behaviour of the religious man is the image of divinity revealed to him by myths; "religious man wants to be other than he finds himself on the 'natural' level and undertakes to make himself in accordance with the ideal image.... [T]he whole of life is capable of being sanctified;"(9) even physiological acts such as eating and sex are given religious meaning. This is in contrast to the experience of nonreligious man, for whom the contents and structure of the unconscious are similar to mythological images and figures that serve as the raw material for the divine models, but who does not use his dreams or imagination as a guide to his conduct.(10)

Eliade sees the split between sacred and profane as clear-cut; one does not shade into the other. This can have consequences for the interaction between the individual and society.

One of the outstanding characteristics of traditional societies is the opposition that they assume between their inhabited territory and the unknown and indeterminate space that surrounds it. The former is the [ordered] world...the cosmos; everything outside it is no longer a cosmos but a sort of "other world," a foreign, chaotic space, peopled by ghosts, demons, "foreigners" (who are assimilated to demons and the souls of the dead).(11)

Jennings supports Eliade's observation that "religious man's desire to live in the sacred is...equivalent to his desire to...live in a real and effective world..." He believes religion serves to bring various aspects of life into "some type of organized perspective in order to achieve a meaningful and purposeful wholeness."(12) Religion is the unifying factor which provides the individual "with the basic frame of reference within which and by which life could be determined."(13)

At least in primitive and traditional forms, then, religion provides a comprehensive order and a total value system.

Ducasse offers a more strictly utilitarian, and some would argue, a more modern definition of religion: "any set of beliefs that are matters of faith--together with the observances, attitudes, injunctions and feelings tied up with the beliefs--which, in so far as dominant in a person, tend to perform for him privately, and for society through him, particular functions."(14)

For Ducasse, these functions are both private and social. The personal function of religious beliefs is "to generate a state of mind which permits the individual to maintain a degree of detachment and equanimity through misfortune and good fortune." (15) The social function is more complex. Ducasse, in the tradition of earlier writers such as Marshall, suggests that religion operates to restrain damaging individualistic instincts. The spiritual development of men can be ranked, according to Ducasse, on the basis of the strength of various impulses: malicious, egoistic, equitable, and altruistic. Religion provides motivation for just or altruistic, and socially beneficial, conduct in those cases where the interests of the individual conflict with those of the group. Social pressure may also serve this purpose; but religion may be effective even in those cases in which social sanctions fail. (16)

In this paper, we will focus on the "humanly significant" aspects of religion; that is, on what religion does. Religion has the function for the individual of rendering his thoughts and actions "real" or meaningful. Socially, following Ducasse, we may observe that religion can influence behaviour, reconciling individual will with the social good.

It is not an accident that the role of the state is frequently cast in terms similar to those used to describe the social function of religion. Jennings observes that states are born out of conflict between the individual and social aspects of human nature. Hence religion and politics have traditionally been closely interrelated. (17) Islam views the state as part of the cosmos or world that has been ordered by religion. In predominantly Islamic countries, "the secular separation of religion from politics, or from other dimensions of society that is common in the west is not visible...." (18)

In line with the paper's focus on the social (and political) utility of religion, we must draw a distinction between religion as institutionalized and formalized and religion as it is lived by a people. The paper makes no argument concerning the relationship between a hypothetical "pure" Islam and development. Rather, the particular brand of Islam considered is the type that has developed in the Sudan, a concrete product of social structures and historical circumstance as well as a theological "stock." Chapter 2 will be devoted to a consideration of the "special" characteristics of Sudanese Islam.

1.2.2 "Islam"

This section offers a definition or description of Islam with an emphasis on those social and cultural aspects that relate to the theme of this study. The Arabic word "Islam" has been translated as "the act of resignation or submission" to God;(19) the translation does not capture the sense of a two-way relationship, with man serving God who acts as Lord to man, that is another dimension of Islam. Adams describes Islam as in one sense the name of a community, but more profoundly "a religious word signifying an inner attitude, always renewed in each new situation of life, an attitude of humble recognition of man's obligation to fulfill the purpose of his majestic and all-powerful Creator. A man's proper relation to God is Islam, and it brings in its train both the fulfillment of human life here on earth and reward in the hereafter."(20)

The historical sources of Islam, according to Faruqi, are the tradition of the hanifs and the city of Mecca. The Hanifiyyah is "the ancient 'Semitic' tradition of religious ideas interpreted by and preserved in Arabia as its own indigenous tradition," a treasury of legends,

prophetic revelations and ideas shared by religions from the Sumerian, through Judaism and Christianity and to Islam.(21) Mecca, at the time of Mohammed early in the seventh century, was the centre of a "utilitarian, hedonist culture": economically, the centre of a trading complex; socially, ruled by tribalism; politically, the centre of intertribal alliances; and religiously, the place of the Haram or sanctuary, at the centre of which stood the Ka'bah, the house built by Abraham and Isma'il for the worship of One God.(22)

Faruqi offers this summary of the message of Mohammed, the prophet of God. There is no God ~~but~~ God. (The Arabians of the era had many gods.) In the hierarchy of things, man is placed higher than the angels, because he possesses moral freedom and responsibility. Only man can actualize the divine will in creation: only man has the faculties to appreciate truth, goodness and beauty. What knowledge is required for this actualization has been given to man in the revelation to Mohammed, which is the last revelation, valid for all times and places. Man has the choice to fulfill or not fulfill the promise of his creation, Faruqi concludes, and he will be judged on the final day according to his choices and his performance.(23)

Faruqi's description of Islam includes a useful discussion of what was innovative about the religion and what came from existing religious and social structures. Islam took from Mesopotamian tradition the concept that reality is dual, split into the sacred and the profane: the divine is relevant to the profane, and that relevance is moral law. From the same source came the understanding that creation can attain a divine pattern; that realizing such a pattern is man's purpose; and that man's fate will be blessed or unblessed depending on how adequately he fulfills the divine

command. Mohammed's message also made use of the legends of Adam, Noah, Abraham and the patriarchs, accepted the sacredness of the Temple at Mecca, and re-established the pilgrimage. Islam rejected the Arab practice of praying to numerous gods and abolished the priesthood and sacraments, but adopted Arabian institutions of the holy months and in particular Ramadan. Although the religion was intended to unite men across ethnic frontiers, "Islam assigned elect status to Arabic and all the cultural categories innate within."(24)

— Islam accepted Jewish and Christian ideas of personal immortality, the resurrection of the body, the day of judgment and heaven and hell, but founded new institutions of five prayers a day (salat), enforceable wealth-sharing (zakat), and daily reading of the scripture. About the third pillar of the faith, the giving of alms, Christopher comments: "Down almost to our own day the Muslim world has tended to rely much more on such gifts by individuals than on government or community action to finance social services and welfare."(25)

In the realm of social ethics, Islam sought to reduce inequality and class distinctions, as well as the power of the family head over his wives, children and slaves, and to expand the Arab tribal cohesiveness to include the universal community. The law of society was to be based, for the first time, not on a strategic balance of powers between tribes but on public law.(26)

In particular, and perhaps in contrast to other major world religions, "Islam developed as a religio-political movement in which religion was integral to state and society."(27) In addition to setting guidelines for spiritual development and standards for individual conduct, Islam seeks to provide a "comprehensive core of life,"(28) equipping its adherents for an

active role in the development of community and state. Sayed Kotb, a Moslem Brother activist and one of the most influential modern writers on religion, gives this description of the spiritual and political unity of Islam.

Islam...is a faith of the unity of all the powers of the world; and beyond doubt, it is a united faith. It stands for the unity of gods, and for the unity of all the prophets in their testimony to this one faith since the dawn of time....So also Islam stands for the unity of worship and work, of faith and life, of spiritual and material realities, of economic and spiritual values, of the present world and the world to come, of earth and Heaven. From this pervasive unity there issue all the Islamic laws and ordinances, all its exhortations and rules, as well as its teachings on political and economic theory, on the balance of credits and debits, and of privileges and responsibilities. Thus in this fundamental principle of unity there are contained all the various rules of life.(29)

Historically, Islam has had difficulty giving political reality to this concept of unity. In fact, according to Crone, Islam is unique among the great civilizations in the extent to which the state has ceased to embody public norms.(30) Islam began with the caliph as the political and spiritual head of state. But the caliphs were doomed to failure in the context of a "tribal hostility to settled life which, having become religiously fixed, constituted one of the fundamental constraints within which Islamic culture and the Islamic polity were to evolve. The Arabs escaped absorption into the cultures of their subjects because morally they stayed in Mecca. But because morally they stayed in Mecca, they were to find it impossible to legitimate a Muslim state in the settled lands."(31) The problem was resolved, beginning with the Abbasid era in 750, by linking the ideal society to Islamic law (as briefly discussed below) and delegating political responsibilities to a succession of foreigners and slaves. Thus the "characteristic" contrast in medieval Islam is between

society and state, with political power held by professional men frequently from minority religions. Meanwhile "the commercial wealth of the cities, the landed property of the aristocracy and the religious learning of the church had all come together in a non-political elite; and the bourgeois appearance of medieval Muslim society arises precisely from its non-political character." (32) Resolving the split between state and society is one of the great challenges for Islam in the modern age.

Generations of scholars have refined the body of Islamic law, which consists of rules for conduct and action derived from the religious principles and ethical ideals of Islam. Sharia is the expression for "the totality of Islam's prescriptions--religious, moral, political, economic, etc." It is divine derivatively, "insofar as it is a practical embodiment of first principles that are Quranic, revealed and divine." (33)

Islamic schools of law differ in their acceptance and interpretation of the various foundations for the doctrines of the religion. These foundations include the Quran; the verified sunna or hadith (the sayings and actions of Mohammed); the ijma ("the unanimous agreement of the Moslem nation, or rather of representatives of the same, the legal doctors of Islam, called the Muftahidin, on certain legal or theological questions"); (34) and the qiyas ("the reasoning by analogy of ... the Muftahidin, with regard to certain difficult and doubtful questions of doctrine and practice, by comparing them with similar cases already settled by the authority of the Quran, sunna, or ijma, and thus arriving at the solution of undecided questions.") (35) The Maliki school views the sources of law as the Quran, the verified sunna, and the ijma of the Prophet's companions; and when interpreting the law, assigns priority within each category first to the text, then to the common sense meaning, and only

finally to a meaning that may require analysis or elaboration. More conservative is the Hanbali School, the only law permitted in Saudi Arabia, which "holds every letter and word of the Quran as eternal" and considers the Arabic meaning as the "anchor." The school that represents the majority of Moslems worldwide is the more flexible Hanafi School, which adds to the four basic sources of law istihsan , or "creative juristic preference," which is meant to permit the Islamic view to adapt to new cultural and time-specific situations.(36) In the Sudan, both the Maliki and the Hanafi schools have adherents,(37) although at the popular level the leaders of the Sufi brotherhoods have a greater impact on behaviour than do the learned legal doctors. One of the distinctive characteristics of Sudanese Islam is that these specialists in the interpretation of the law did not develop as a class. Their influence has generally resulted from membership in an established holy family or been encouraged by government patronage.(38)

What is regarded in the west as the major schism in Islam, that between Sunni and Shia branches, began not over theological differences but as a political problem. The early Shia were those who did not accept the rule of the first three caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman, arguing that leadership should have been channelled through the family of Ali, Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law, rather than established as an elective office among the Quraysh tribe. Ali and his line of successors are known as Imams, and groups of Shia differ in the number of Imams they recognize. It is believed that the last legitimate Imam disappeared (rather than died) and will return as a sort of messiah at the end of time. Dominant in Iran, and counting numerous adherents in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, Shiism has evolved into a syncretic faith; commenting on the role of the imam, for example, Christopher observes "the concept of a mediator or intercessor

between man and God...seems more compatible with the Christian view of Jesus than with the austere monotheism of Muhammad."(39) Sudanese Islam comes from a solidly Sunni tradition; but its syncretism has produced characteristics that bear a surface resemblance to Shiism.

Many of those characteristics are related to the way that Sufism has evolved in the Sudan. The importance of Sufism in that country, and among African Moslems elsewhere, justifies a short discussion here of its place in Islam. Sufism is generally described as Islamic mysticism; adherents are "less concerned with their fate in eternity than with a yearning to achieve gnosis, the knowledge of God."(40) The doctrines and institutions have a lot in common with gnostic faiths of the pre-Islamic Middle East. The Sufi umbrella covers a variety of forms of practice. Gilsenan observes: "Popular Sufism has demonstrated a considerable range and flexibility in its adaptation to societies differing both in social and political structure and in the wider cultural perspective."(41) In part because of its syncretic nature, Sufism is sometimes charged with corrupting Islam. However, it has proven to be one of the main missionary channels for the conversion of non-Arab peoples.

Within Sufism, there are two main streams: one cultivating an individual approach to the mystical experience, and the other favoring a corporate pursuit of "the way." From the second stream evolved the institution of the Sufi brotherhood or turuq (plural tariqa). Gilsenan describes a brotherhood as "a fraternal organization, founded on principles held to be Islamic, bound together by loyalty to a sheikh or guide (murshid) who is at the head of a pyramidal hierarchy of ranks."(42) The concept of a hierarchy, then, with prescribed roles for leaders and followers, is fundamental to the Sufi order. A second basic characteristic

is exclusiveness. "The whole community acts as a political bloc vis-a-vis outsiders, and generally the only internal threat to its cohesiveness results from competition over succession to leadership."(43)

Baraka can be translated as a "blessing" or type of grace that is transmitted from the sheikh to his followers. Von Denffer explains it as "nearness that allows prosperity," and identifies this "nearness" as a basic concept of Moslem popular belief.(44) Baraka is the primary source of legitimacy of the turuq leader, and consequently the basis of hierarchical order in a Sufi brotherhood.

Nasr is emphatic in his writings that scholars, in considering the path of Islam, "must not overlook Sufism, which lies at the heart of the Islamic tradition, and which has acted throughout Islamic history as the source for spiritual and religious regeneration, being the invisible origin of even eternal and social movements of a religious nature."(45)

This section has identified certain fundamental tenets of Islam that are important to this study, as a basis for the account of the historical evolution of Sudanese Islam later in the chapter.

1.2.3 "Development"

Arriving at an acceptable definition of development is complicated by the need to consider one's western bias, and to balance it by reaching towards a more Islamic definition. The task is difficult because "development" is to some extent a western concept. In particular, any definition of development that is linked to theories of modernization would likely be rejected by Islamic ideologists. Maulana Maudoodi was possibly the greatest influence on radical Islamic attitudes towards modernity; his

theory of Modern Jahiliyya, first published in 1939, held that there can be no compromise between modernity and Islam, and that modern states have in essence returned to a state of natural law.(46) Most radical theorists today in fact accept the practical contributions of modernity, such as telecommunications and weaponry, but continue their search for authentic Islamic values.(47)

One of the key problems identified with the western concept of development is its linearity. Nasr objects to the influence of Darwinism/evolutionism on the cultural and religious life of the Islamic world. The concept, he claims, is "metaphysically and logically absurd," and in "overt contradiction with the teachings of the Quran."

The general tendency among Moslems affected by the evolutionist mentality is to forget the whole Islamic conception of the march of time.... Just the one hadith of the Prophet that asserts that the best generation of Moslems are those who are his contemporaries, then the generation after, then the following generation, until the end of time, is sufficient to nullify, from the Islamic point of view, the idea of linear evolution and progress in history.(48)

Fortunately, other scholars do not regard "Islam" and "development" as contradictory concepts. While Islam may not take a positive view of linear progress, in the western sense. Hassan Ahmed Taha and Abdelrahman Ibrahim ElKhalifa insist that the religion encourages change and development. Taha takes as his starting point the particular nature of a Moslem state as a political and religious entity:

According to Islam, a society is either ruled by the will of God or by the natural law. If people accept the words of God, they abide by His commandments as specified in Sharia. To apply the Sharia Law they have to select a "wali" or "Khalifa" and give him bayaa. In "bayaa" the people endorse the Wali or Khalifa to apply the comprehensive law of Sharia. On the other hand,

the society that is ruled by natural law is called "Jahiliyya"... Thus Moslems have to think of themselves as "umma," i.e., a nation that strives to maintain the will of God on earth and to eradicate all forms of "Jahiliyya."(49)

In order to maintain the will of God on earth, a Muslim is committed to a life of activism, Taha observes. "As an individual, the Muslim should do all that he can within the limits of his physical and mental capacity to correct any wrong being done in his environment. Muslims are also required to work as a group and as an Umma, i.e., a nation to eradicate all forms of immorality and evil deeds from a true society which is ruled by God's Commandments." Jihad or Holy War is considered the highest level of devotion or activism; however, this is undertaken only as "a last resort to spread the word of God and remove the evils from the society...."(50) Khalifa also emphasizes the "activist posture" considered appropriate for the Moslem, objecting to the Western stereotype of the fatalistic Moslem. Arguing that adherents of the faith are expected to work actively to change their conditions, Khalifa cites the Quranic injunction to exploit the earth and develop it, and observes that the sunna encourage hard work and development.(51) Taha concludes that as an individual, and as a member of a group and a nation, the Moslem is in fact considered a focal agent of change, although not necessarily change in the Western sense. "Change is conceived as a movement from 'jahiliyya'--ignorance--to the true world God, from man-made rules and resolutions to the commandment of the Creator of the Universe. Man-made rules are not suitable because they are based on trial and error, while God's commandments are suitable because He is the creator-manufacturer who owns the absolute knowledge."(52)

Sayed Kotb's analysis of the activism required of Moslems comes under the heading of "mutual responsibility in society," which he considers a foundation of social justice in Islam. (The other foundations are freedom of conscience and human equality.) The individual is expected to fulfill certain obligations to society, including doing his own work, giving assistance to other individuals, acting as a watchman over society and striving to put an end to evil-doing. Responsibilities of the community include watching over the activities of every individual, the care of weaker members of society and guarding the property of the young, and providing competence for the poor and destitute.(53)

On the issue of political justice, Kotb comments that "collaboration is one of the fundamentals of Islamic politics, although no specific method of administering it has ever been laid down; its application has been left to the exigencies of individual situations."(54) The institution of consultation is known as shura. Sivan, reporting on a textual analysis done by Kotb of the shura chapter of the Quran (sura XLII), comments that Kotb's concept of collaboration is a long way from western ideals of democracy, which Kotb regards as "bankrupt." Rather, "shura embodies the duty of the ruler to consult with at least some of the ruled (usually the elite) within the general context of God-made laws that the ruler must execute."(55) Nevertheless, subsequent theorists have claimed that the institution of shura, and Islam's commitment to the fundamental equality of men, mean that Islam is essentially democratic,(56) although that democracy may not be expressed in the institutions of western liberalism.

According to Kotb, the fundamental equality of all men offered by Islam expresses itself in society as equality of opportunity: "In the Islamic view, values are so very composite that justice must include all of

them: therefore Islam does not demand a compulsory economic equality in the narrow literal sense of the term. This is against nature, and conflicts with the essential fact, which is that of the differing native endowments of individuals. It arrests the development of outstanding ability, and makes it equal to lesser ability; it prevents those who have great gifts from using their gifts to their own advantage and to that of the community, and it discourages the community and the individual from producing such gifts."(57)

Wilson approaches the issue of an Islamic definition of development through the treatment of economic questions in the Quran and the sunna, which deal with growth-related practices such as saving, investment and capital accumulation as well as more equity-oriented problems of taxation and inheritance. He recognizes a reality of Islamic economics that differs from capitalism and from socialism. Saving, for example, is not accorded the priority that it might be in a capitalist state: "The deferment of consumption is not to be encouraged, and certainly not rewarded for its own sake."(58) This approach carries through to the attitude towards investment, and leads to an interesting ambivalence towards economic growth, Wilson observes:

The development which investment can bring is welcomed as it makes possible improvements in the welfare level for the population as a whole. In Moslem societies, however, in periods of economic difficulty, the poor are provided for through almsgiving, as well as through the zakat [a wealth tax administered separately from other taxes to help the poorest members of society]. Development will raise zakat revenues, but not necessarily alms giving, especially if it is achieved by the population becoming more individualistic and possibly more selfish. In these circumstances development will not improve the plight of the poor. It may be a mixed blessing, as the material well-being of the richer members of the society is only improved at the expense of their spiritual well-being.(59)

In his analysis of the key differences between Islamic economic systems and socialism, Wilson makes an interesting observation on the Islamic view of equity: "For believers, an uneven distribution of property can be justified in the interests of efficiency, as long as those with the greater property rights are aware of their obligations to the poorer members of society.(60)

Wilson draws these conclusions on the economic aspects of Islamic development:

It is probably misleading to speak of a complete Islamic economic system which can be presented as an alternative to capitalism or socialism.... The problem is that it is not easy to identify a specifically capitalist or socialist economic system in any case, as there are so many variations between nations, and within nations over time. This is also the case in the Islamic world given the heterogeneity of Moslem states in terms of environment and peoples. Nevertheless, Islam provides a range of fixed rules which can be applied in all these diverse societies. It does not give a detailed plan for development. Moslems themselves are supposed to show initiative. What the Quran attempts is to define the conditions under which economic relations between individuals, families and states can be conducted. The objective is to ensure that spiritual and material aspirations and needs are reconciled.(61)

One testimony to the commitment of Islam to development, however defined, is the multitude of international Islamic development organizations. (The Canadian International Development Agency has been involved in joint financing arrangements with 11 of these agencies.) An example is the OPEC Fund for International Development, which has as its goal to assist the development efforts of non-OPEC developing countries and "to do this in such a manner as to strengthen the bond of solidarity between them and OPEC member countries."(62) Shihata comments that the members of the fund view it as "a collective instrument of common policy

rather than as an instrument of the national policies and interests of particular members."(63) It would appear that the establishment of mutually beneficial relations between Islamic nations, and between Islamic nations and the less developed world, is regarded at least by the members of the OPEC Fund as one aspect of development. (This impression is reinforced by Remba's comment that domestic and external political and economic issues are "not as clearly separated in the Arab world as in other parts of the world."(64)) Shihata advocates increased intra-south cooperation, and warns that developing countries should not assume that "their salvation is dependent on actions to be taken by the North. By making such an assumption they would in fact be depriving themselves of their legitimate right and obligation to develop, and subordinating their economic future to the good will of others, who do not always have the interest or the means to deliver.(65)

This paper takes as a premise the view, supported by what appears to be a significant body of opinion, that Islam and development are not necessarily incompatible; that there exists a reality of development, beyond theoretical constructs, that is universally applicable. While it must involve change, development is not necessarily linear, and is not synonymous with modernization: its goals must be internally generated by the particular or universal Islamic community. These points are in accord with O'Manique and Pollock's definition of development as "a process activated and directed from within the individual or society toward immediate objectives and ultimate goals that are, to some extent, defined by them."(66) These goals would seem to involve, more in Moslem than in western societies, the reconciliation of spiritual and material objectives, and the fulfillment of the will of God on earth. In Islam as in other religions there are varying prescriptions for how best to achieve this.

Many of these involve activity which may stimulate, or take as an intermediate objective, economic growth or development in the more conventionally western sense. There seems to be a consensus, moreover, that this activity is preferably trans-national, a responsibility of the wider Islamic community, with the goal of eliminating dependency on the west.

On the issue of equity, the well-off within Islam are enjoined to provide for the poor. While this does not necessarily involve raising the poor to the level of the rich, it does logically require, on the national level, either substantial economic growth or a redistribution of wealth. This brings us back to traditional definitions of development, in which development is measured by increases in per capita gross national product and a more equitable distribution of the fruits of economic growth.

Insofar as they have been expressed, Islamic definitions of development are not in disagreement with the researcher's interpretation, that development must involve a process of consultation, increased equity, probably economic growth (which may imply increased equity on the international level) and a lessening of dependency. These are not necessarily the goals of development--the ultimate objective of Islamic development is spiritual--but they are included in Islamic concepts of justice and change. For the purpose of this research, then, the essential aspects of development are those involving an increase in the level of participation of the least-advantaged members of a society in its political, economic and cultural affairs. We are concerned with increased participation both in directing the process of development, and in the benefits of that process.

The political aspect of development involves the diffusion of decision-making power beyond traditional elites: at the centre or national level; from the centre to the regions; and within the regions, from vested interests to the "grassroots." (Sectors of society in the Sudan that may have been excluded from actual or effective political participation include women, trade unions, secular and fundamentalist political parties, southerners in general, and the 70 per cent of the population that makes its living in the traditional sector. These issues will be considered.) Relevant decisions might concern government leadership or representation at national, regional or local levels; aid and trade policy; questions of what should be produced, and how it should be distributed; and social decisions, such as which legal system should apply, or whether the educational system should be standardized. Participation need not be measured solely according to "western" criteria, such as voting privileges, or numbers of the target group in democratic institutions: "traditional" forms of political input (such as the consultative process within religious brotherhoods) are also important indicators. However, representation in political and bureaucratic institutions is important to many Sudanese, and will certainly not be discounted.

While perfectly equitable political participation may not be possible or desirable, progress in that direction would constitute development. O'Manique and Pollock comment that the minimum participatory requirement should be the accountability of decision-makers to the populace. "If, as is likely to continue being the case, decisions made by one group of persons significantly affect the economic and social lives of another group of persons, then the decision-makers should be directly accountable to those whose lives are being affected."(67) That would seem to be a reasonable interim goal.

Economically, development involves movement from an initial highly skewed pattern of income, wealth, employment opportunities and access to basic needs to a more equitable pattern, one that implies a higher degree of participation for the society as a whole. Less emphasis is placed on growth, according to this definition of development, as post-war experience has shown that there can be significant growth in gross national product without increased equity. Whether there can be gains in economic participation without growth is an issue. Theoretically, the total wealth in a given society might, if equitably distributed, be sufficient to provide for the basic needs of the population; in such a case, growth in material wealth would be a continuing necessity, in O'Manique and Pollock's formulation, "in order to provide increased satisfaction of higher needs." (68) But even to satisfy the subsistence requirements of a population, in the real world, a no-growth situation would imply a transfer of wealth away from the powerful. The extent to which this is likely in a particular Islamic society is one of the issues considered in this research.

Gauging the level of cultural participation would involve measuring the proportion of the population with effective input into defining the goals of development, the ends rather than the means, what O'Manique and Pollock would classify as "transcendental values." Significant cultural development might be suggested by a situation of substantial representation in decision-making circles of the spectrum of national ethnic groups, in addition to relative freedom of religious, linguistic and other "culture-specific" observance. In the Sudan, the outcome of the debate on the way in which Sharia laws are to be formalized and implemented in the country's legal system, and to whom they are to apply, would be another indicator. Inclusion of a cultural dimension in the paper's definition of

development is indicated by the Islamic (although not solely Islamic) concern with reconciling material with spiritual aspects.

Taha approaches the problem of defining development by reviewing changes in development strategy since disillusionment began to set in with the growth-oriented models of the 1950s and 60s. He describes movement from an emphasis on industrialization to one on agriculture; from urbanization to ruralization; rate of return to basic needs; growth poles to grass roots; foreign trade as the "engine of growth" to self-reliance; and from a top-down to a bottom-up approach. "In other words," Taha concludes, "the trend is toward broadening the participatory role of all the social strata in order to ensure that every one has a full say in major decisions that will control his environment." (69) The evolution of development theory, with some input and support from Islamic thinkers and practitioners, would appear to support a concept of development as participation as outlined here.

The study's analysis of the role of Islam in civilian and military government, its influence on the structure of the Sudanese economy, and ethnic and religious elements included and excluded from the Sudanese power structure will be based on this definition of development.

1.3 Toward a Hypothesis: The Relationship

Our task now is to clarify the process through which it is hypothesized that religion affects development. What the paper will focus on is the part played by elite formation and behaviour as the channel of influence. The study will examine the extent to which Islam was a factor in the emergence of political, economic and cultural elites in the Sudan. The central question is the influence of Sudanese Islam on perceptions, by

elites and non-elites, of how power should be held and of appropriate relationships between leaders and followers. Could Sudanese Islam have contributed towards a tradition of popular non-involvement in the affairs of state and the shaping of development priorities? A second point of analysis is the way in which religious elites exercise power. Have they behaved as elites? That is, have they used the instruments of government (law, policy and force) to reinforce their positions? What use has been made of economic tools (investment, control of high-quality land and water resources) to increase or decrease the number of Sudanese who have a stake in the national economy? ("Having a stake" can mean as little as having adequate access to health, housing and education.) Has there been repression on the cultural level, or have diverse value systems and ways of life been given state support or at least relative autonomy?

This study does not aspire to the formulation of a general rule about the relationship between Islam, elite behaviour and development, but rather aims at a realistic appraisal of what has happened in the Sudan.

1.3.1 The Colonial Influence

It has frequently been argued that the experience of colonialism during the period of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium was a major influence on development. We do not dispute this. The study argues, however, that the influence of colonialism was secondary to the impact of religion. The structure and patterns of behaviour of Sudanese elites grew out of the specific character of Sudanese Islam. Colonialism did not disrupt this "system;" in fact, Lewis cites the Sudan, along with northern Nigeria, as "the best examples of territories where administrative sympathy and support for Islam was strongly expressed." (70) But it would be a mistake to trace

the emergence of the most powerful Sudanese elites to the colonial interlude, and to attribute problems of Sudanese development solely to the policies of the Condominium. What is of interest is the influence of the colonial era on the evolving relationship between Islam and development; the impact of colonialism on the religious elites and how they reconciled this with their Islamic heritage; the effect of the colonial experience on Sudanese Islam itself; as well as the independent effect (if in fact, it can be isolated) of colonialism on development.

1.3.2 Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that the Islamic religion has been a primary influence on development in the Sudan and that the channel of influence between religion and development is elite behaviour.

A related hypothesis is that the experience of colonialism reinforced structures in Sudanese society that had been established by Islam, and consequently had some effect on the country's style and pace of development.

Religion is conceptualized as an evolving product of social and political structures with a theoretical and institutional core. Development involves an increase in the level of participation --political, economic and cultural --in Sudanese society.

1.4 Methodology

An effort has been made to overcome the lack of field research through correspondence and interviews with Sudanese and non-Sudanese experts on the country's politics, history and society. Almost without exception,

individuals who were contacted have responded, expressing a general enthusiasm for research in the area of Sudan studies. Their input was used mostly in the initial stages of research, in compiling a bibliography and defining the research problem. In addition, data have been collected from published and unpublished sources, by library research.

Assessment of linkages between religion and development requires a strategy for measuring development, always a problem in non-quantitative studies. The statistics, taken alone, can be misleading. Consider that the calorie supply per capita in the Sudan reached 100 per cent of requirements in 1980; yet the civil war, and lack of agricultural and transportation infrastructure, have meant widespread starvation in the south. In the final analysis, the measurement of development when defined with an emphasis on participation must be subjective. Quantitative indicators have been included in table form as additional evidence to verify conclusions.

1.5 Organization of the Study

The second chapter of the thesis will explore the nature of Sudanese Islam, with a view to identifying the characteristics distinguishing it from Islam-in-general and Islam-in-Africa. This will be accomplished by tracing the spread of the religion into the Sudan from the Arabian peninsula, from the Niger-Chad region and from Egypt. The goal will be to determine the origins of certain characteristics of Sudanese Islam, including its identification with Arab culture, its Sufi nature and its Mahdist or messianic tradition. The analysis will consider the implications of each of these characteristics for patterns of elite behaviour, a theme that will be more fully explored in subsequent chapters.

The third chapter will focus on the Condominium years, from 1899 to 1956, and on the experience of British colonialism. In particular, the relationship of the Sudanese administration to Islamic sectarian leaders will be considered. How did that relationship differ from British contacts with Sudanese secular leaders? What actions, in the realm of politics or policy, were taken by British officials to bolster or undermine the political or economic power of the dominant Islamic sects?

Given the devastating effects of the Sudanese civil war, it is important to evaluate the British policy of separate development for the north and south of the Sudan. The role of Christian missionaries in cultivating among southerners a sense of their separateness from northern Sudanese will be examined. To what extent did British policy create, and to what extent aggravate, divisions between north and south? The chapter will consider the argument that the gulf between the two regions at independence was primarily the product of religious and cultural differences that pre-dated the Condominium.

The theme of the fourth chapter will be the influence of elite patterns of behaviour associated with Sudanese Islam on development in the independent Sudanese state. The chapter will consider the role of religious elites in civilian and military government, their influence on the structure of the Sudanese economy, and state and private actions promoting cultural participation or repression.

The "political" section of this chapter will be concerned with the importance of religious ties as a source of political legitimacy in the modern era. Consideration will also be given to the relative power of traditional religious elites (sectarian leaders), fundamentalist Islamic groups and secular movements.

The section on the economy will follow changes over time in the sectors' bases of economic influence. Power stemmed originally from control of high-quality land and water resources and from commercial (especially import-export) activity. Into what sectors have the elites diversified? A second fundamental issue is the extent of linkage (or the amount of overlap) between economic and political elites, and the level of elite influence on state economic policy.

The chapter will conclude with an examination of the degree to which different ethnic groups in the Sudan participate in defining the goals of development. The final section will focus on the issue of an Islamic constitution and on the possibilities offered by a federalist political structure.

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CHAPTER 2

ISLAM IN SUDAN

Why should this study centre on Islam, the religion of approximately two-thirds of Sudanese, rather than on Christianity and animism, the systems of belief that prevail in the south? Since independence, the course of Sudanese development has been charted primarily by Moslem decision-makers. "Islam has always been the dominant ideology in either supporting or undermining the political regime," Taha observes. He defines ideology as "a system of beliefs and ideas held by the individual group or class of people which influences their attitudes and behaviour." (1)

The dominance of Islam can in part be attributed to its power to unify diverse northern Sudanese peoples. In contrast, neither animism nor Christianity has succeeded in forging bonds across different ethnic groupings. Christianity in particular has been fragmented between Protestant and Catholic adherents and stigmatized by an identification with racism and imperialism. This section considers the history of Islam in the Sudan to clarify the sources of its influence.

2.1 The Context: Islam in Africa

There is wide acceptance of the proposition that versions of Islam in

Islam in Africa

Africa are quite different from "pure" or "world" Islam (which may, after all, exist only at the theoretical level). Abdel-Rahman Ibrahim Khalifa blames this divergence primarily on the colonial experience, which he claims delayed the process of Islamic development in Africa. This argument will receive further consideration in the next chapter. Other authors would trace the particular nature of African Islam to the blend of Islamic and indigenous elements, Islam historically having emphasized tolerance rather than eradication of local practices. Trimingham, in this, is representative. In his view, the nature of Islamic culture zones depends on: geographical and ethnic factors, and "the pre-Islamic religio-social substratum;" and external influences, especially the nature of and differences in the historical penetration of Islam.(2)

Scholars disagree on the details of Islam's introduction to the Sudan, although there is a consensus on the essential pattern. Islam entered the country along three main paths: through Egypt in the north, across the Red Sea from the east, and through the ~~Dar~~fur region from present-day Niger-Chad in the west. Arab traders and immigrants from Egypt began to exert pressure on the Christian kingdoms in what is now north and central Sudan beginning in about the seventh century.(3) Influence directly from the Arabian peninsula began later, during the Funj dynasty (between 1557-58, when the dynasty converted to Islam, and its "fall" in 1821.)(4) Also during the Funj, Arab Moslems began to marry into the animist royal class of Darfur; the reign of Sulayman Solong ("the Arab") in Fur is dated at approximately 1640.(5)

2.2 Sudanese Islam as Arab

Egypt was Islamized in the seventh century. As regards the Sudan,

Kuko attaches importance to the campaign of Abdalla b. Sa'id Abi Sarh who, under the direction of the Caliph in Medina, led an army of Moslem Arabs in Egypt to conquer and Islamize Bilad al Sudan in 652 A.D. He describes this as the turning point which "brought down the remnants of the old Christian kingdoms...and opened the way for Islam."(6) Other scholars emphasize the essentially peaceful nature of the process of infiltration of Arab traders and immigrants from Egypt into the Christian Nubian kingdom, following long-established trading routes. There were similarities between Hamitic Sudanese and Moslem Arab social situations.(7) The readiness of the two groups to mix "coupled with the matriarchal system of the Nubians on the one hand, and the Arabian patriarchal organization of the family on the other, had the effect not only of facilitating the assimilation of the immigrants and the spreading of their culture and religion, but also of giving them the reins of power and political leadership in the host society."(8)

The lasting consequence of the introduction of Islam to the Sudan by Arab traders from Egypt has been the Arab identity of Sudanese Islam. Muddathir 'Abd Al-Rahim observes that Somalia, Chad, Niger, Mali, Nigeria, and Senegal are all to a greater or lesser degree Islamic, but none is Arabic speaking to the same degree as the Sudan.(9) Lewis agrees: "More than for most of the other Moslem peoples of Africa, for the Sudanese to be a Moslem is to be an Arab. It is this deep assimilation of Islam and identification with Arab culture and society which is expressed in the universal claim to Arab ancestry and the overwhelming currency of Arabic. Only the Nubians and the Beja have preserved their own languages."(10)

Arab culture unified the various tribes in northern Sudan to the point that, in the view of one scholar, ethnic differences became mainly superficial. There was no similar impetus to unity in the south. One result has been the tendency among northern Sudanese, intellectuals in particular, to emphasize the Arab character of their national identity. An indication of this is the strongly Arab flavor of a certain branch of Sudanese nationalist writing, which reached the peak of its influence during the Condominium period. Muddathir 'Abd Al-Rahim describes the inability of many poets and essayists to identify with their African heritage: "Their non-Islamic present, like their pre-Islamic past, was for them a part of the Jahiliyya, the 'Age of Ignorance' or 'World of Darkness,' and they could not therefore identify themselves with either, any more than the Moslem and Arab populations of, say, Egypt or Iraq could identify themselves with theirs." (11) In more recent years, particularly during the Numeiri era, efforts were made to build on the Sudan's identity as African and Arab. But the Arab aspects of national culture clearly are more ingrained into the consciousness of at least northern Sudanese.

2.3. Sudanese Islam as Sufi

The majority of Moslems who came to the Sudan in the seventh century were nomads, not well versed in Islamic orthodoxy. It was not until the time of the Funj kingdom in the 16th century that Meccan scholars and holy men were persuaded to make the voyage across the Red Sea to impose some discipline on the faith. (12) These men introduced Sufi orders to the country. Trimingham identifies two waves of tariqas that came to the Sudan: the first during the Funj, when the sheikhs were influential mainly in the Gézira area, and the second at the beginning of the 19th century, when their influence spread across the north of the country. Among the

orders that arrived in the second wave were the Khatmiyya, established by Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani (1793-1853), and the Sammaniyya, of which the Sudanese Mahdi was leader before he declared his mission.(13)

Al-Shahi describes the nature of Sufism in the Sudan as focusing on devotion to the sheikh and discipline in personal conduct.

Spiritual devotion is made first to the head of the order, the shaikh, then to the Prophet Muhammad and finally to God. The followers of a particular Sufi order are expected to emulate the acts and prayers of the head of the order and to meditate upon him, leading to the realization of the spiritual bond, love, between them and him. By practising these devotions, the followers will be spiritually transformed into the head of the order and then introduced, so to speak, through him to the Prophet and ultimately to God. In this chain of spiritual hierarchy, grace (baraka) is passed down from God to the followers through the Prophet, who is nearest to Him, and through the head of the order. These two are, therefore, intercessors between God and the followers of the order.(14)

The "crucial difference" between Sudanese Islam and "orthodoxy," in Al-Shahi's view, is the position of saints. "The orthodox Muslim regards worship as a direct relationship between the people and God. To the Muslim Sudanese, however, whether a Sufi or a non-Sufi, belief in the religious position and powers of the saints in performing miracles constitutes part of his living religion."(15) The heads of the Sufi sects are regarded as saint-like, with hereditary powers to intercede between God and men and to perform miracles. Hodgkin observes that an emphasis on the "mystique of leadership" has been an essential feature of the *turuq* since they first began their spread through the Moslem world in the 12th and 13th centuries.(16)

The veneration accorded the heads of the Sufi sects carries with it the potential for considerable political power, and in the Sudan, this potential has been realized. Major political parties have been built around the religious organizations in a way that is unique to the country, and this has given the sects an enduring quality which is lacking in Sufi orders elsewhere in the world.(17) Party politics during periods of civilian rule are dominated by the Khatmiyya and the Mahdist sect or Ansar (which is not strictly a brotherhood, but has the same structure and performs the same social function.) The political power of the tariqa have added a regional dimension to Sudanese politics: the Ansar have traditionally been strongest in western Sudan, while the Khatmiyya dominate in the north and east. The south, obviously, is excluded from this pattern of representation.

An important issue, given the emphasis in this study on participation in development, is the extent to which sectarian voting patterns in the Sudan reflect informed involvement by adherents of the sects and the extent to which political action such as voting is simply a devotion or a duty. Some members of the educated elite, frustrated by the electoral domination of the countryside by the sectarian parties, have argued "that the support enjoyed by religious orders is composed of illiterate people who have blind obedience to the heads of orders and who lack political awareness or understanding." Al-Shahi argues that "[f]rom the point of view of the followers, just as they respect the religious authority of the head of the order, so also should they adhere to his political stand, because of their belief that he knows better and his authority cannot be questioned. In practice, the followers respect the decisions and recommendations of the head of the order because they believe that he has their interests and welfare at heart."(18) It is a question whether this process reflects

grass-roots participation in decision-making. Al-Shahi insists that "people who cannot read and write do not lack political awareness or maturity. Sectarianism and sectarian politics have deep-rooted convictions which have been adhered to by people over generations. While the head of an order has the final say in making decisions, there has always existed a dialogue, channelled through his representatives, between him and his followers." (19) Finding evidence of this dialogue is an important objective of this research.

The relationship between leaders and followers that is expressed in political behaviour has its counterpart in economic affairs. The consequence has been a transfer of resources from individual families to sectarian leaders. One of the channels of this transfer has been the traditional tithe or zakat.

For example, among the heavily khatmi Sha'qiyya tribesmen of Northern Province, perhaps 80% have donated such items as the fruits of one date palm. This is collected by the local khalifa who looks after the Mirghani property in his district and who transmits the contributions and property earnings to his master's headquarters. [Khatmiyya leaders are traditionally members of the Mirghani family.] Some of the wealthier among the faithful may have donated portions of, or entire, fruit and vegetable gardens to the Mirghani estate or facilitated the purchases of suitable pieces of land so that sizable gardens or plantations could be procured. Such plantations and agricultural schemes constitute the second aspect of economic inter-relationships, in which numerous faithful may work as unpaid or only nominally paid cultivators, whose main recompense is physical closeness to the "anointed one" in the present, and promises of spiritual rewards in the hereafter. (20)

'Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi, who established the network of White Nile agricultural estates in the 30s and 40s, was said to pay his workers with balila wa-baraka (porridge and a blessing). (21) (The Mahdist family has since expanded into agricultural development in the west, in Kordofan and

Woodward observes that the influence of the sects in the Sudan has been primarily conservative. In their attitudes towards the south, sectarian leaders have been similar to the British imperialists: the south "deserved the benign assistance of the more developed and cultured north, backed if necessary by firmness." (22) Political radicals were once more comfortable among the Khatmiyya than among the Ansar. The rise in fortunes of the Khatmiyya during the Numeiri era, (23) and the heavy representation of the sect in officer ranks in the army, suggests that this is no longer the case.

The conservatism of the Ansar surprises Woodward, given the radical fundamentalist example of the Mahdi. Ideologically, Mahdism has undergone little development. The concept of jihad has even been watered down, to indicate an essentially peaceful process. Woodward attributes the conservatism of 20th-century Mahdism in part to "significant political collaboration" between the leading Mahdist families and the British. This led to enduring links with British industry and finance that survived the collapse of the political alliance. (24) Religious family ties with international capital have diversified since independence. (25)

The situation in the Sudan, with a structure of hierarchical social relationships built on the turuq institution, is different from that in other nations with a strong Sufi tradition. For example, in Egypt the most powerful sheikhs were deprived of their land holdings by Muhammad Ali (1769-1849). Their main basis of economic influence gone, the Sufi orders gradually ceased being a source of status in the society at large. (26) In the Sudan, the power of the sects has never been seriously challenged. Numeiri was at various times hostile towards the Ansar, and tried, through

the Sudan Socialist Union, to create a new organization for the people's political allegiance; but he abandoned early any plans to crush the religious families. Writing during the era of the Sudan Socialist Union, Al-Shahi gave some reasons for its failure: "There is a consensus among Sudanese [that] their political and religious affiliations are deep-rooted, and that a centrally-imposed party is in contradiction to the democratic tradition to which they have become accustomed. People seek to preserve their political and religious identity and want to be allowed to express their views freely."(27) He offered this assessment of the political future of the sects: "Even if they are banned politically, they cannot be stopped from existing and operating as religious orders, and when the time is right, they can reaffirm among their followers a political loyalty which is fundamentally a religious one. The strength of these orders should not be underrated, in that they play a significant role in the religious life of the Sudanese."(28)

Woodward suggests that the hierarchical structure of the Sufi sects nurtured an acceptance in the Sudan of a particular relationship between leaders and followers, even in non-sectarian institutions. He observes that prominent Sudanese secular nationalists during the pre- and early Independence era tended to come from respectable families, and mainly from the riverain areas and northeast quarter of the country. "If religious movements were organized on the basis of the leaders and the led, with leading families possessing hereditary baraka, why should such a pattern not repeat itself in the sphere of secular nationalism?"(29) This research suggests that the Sufi leadership style has in fact been extended to many Sudanese political, economic and cultural institutions.

2.4 Mahdism in Sudanese Islam

The second wave of Sufi orders to enter the Sudan came during a period of Islamic revival in the 19th-century, marked by the rise of the fundamentalist, Wahhabi tradition in Saudi Arabia. In Africa, the crusade against religious decay engendered a series of revivalist movements, led by "reformist, militant and politically oriented" Sufi orders.(30) These included the Sanusi in what is now Libya, the Fulani in the Niger-Chad region and the Mahdist movement in the Sudan.

Mahdism came to the Sudan from the west, inspired by the Fulani jihads of 'Shehu Usman dan Fodio in the Hausa states, Seku Ahmadu in Masina, and al-Hajj 'Umar in Nioro and Segir. Much of the Mahdist literature circulating in the Niger-Chad region during this period found its way to the Sudan, and the Mahdi's lieutenant and successor, the Khalifa Abdullahi, was born in the area. Indeed, Abdallahi's regime came to be identified with the western tribes of Kordofan and Darfur.(31)

What aspects of the Mahdiya can be said to have changed the shape of Sudanese Islam, and to have affected the way in which power in that country is held and perceived?

The Mahdiya "was a movement of religious origin, which was assisted in its development by political, social and economic stresses in Sudanese society, and which accomplished a political revolution--the overthrow of Egyptian rule and the establishment of an indigenous Islamic state."(32) There are many theories as to the causes of the movement: oppression of the Sudanese by a corrupt Turco-Egyptian administration, and the generalized anti-Egyptian sentiment of the times; partiality shown by the government to the Sha'qiyya tribe and Khatmiyya sect; suppression of the

The Mahdist movement in the Sudan 1881-98

Source: Robinson, Atlas of the Islamic World Since 1500, p. 126.

slave trade. But these were, as Hasan Qasim Murad argues, "simply causes of the success or progress of the Mahdiya. To be more specific, these causes...are of the discontent and resentment of various classes of Sudanese society against the alien government. Certainly, these are not the causes of the origin of the Mahdist movement which...was of religious origin."(33) The Mahdiya was the first historical proof that political power in the Sudan had become tightly bonded to the Islamic religion. The Mahdiya was, and remains to this day, a compelling national symbol. Widely regarded as the first Sudanese nationalist, Muhammad Ahmad unified diverse tribes in a fight for God and against foreign exploitation. The "messianic Islamic community" that he led, although transformed into an autocracy by his successor, Abdallahi,(34) was from all accounts a democracy with extensive popular involvement. Thirty per cent of the top Mahdist leaders were "miscellaneous commoners," with no blood links to the Mahdi or Abdallahi and no claim to tribal authority.(35) Isma'il b Abd al-Qadir, propagandist for the Mahdist state, made this observation: "...when the Prophet called on the people to profess the unity of God (tawhid Allah) and to enter his religion, those on whom God wished to bestow bliss hastened to answer the Prophet's call. The majority of these were tribes who were marked by submissiveness and lack of arrogance."(36) To many Sudanese, the somewhat mythologized era of the Mahdi was a golden age.

Given Muhammad Ahmad's democratic impulses, it is somewhat ironic that his example should reinforce hierarchical models in Sudanese society shaped by the Sufi tradition. The Mahdi created a new image of leadership in the Sudanese context. "In addition to the figures of the local healer and miracle worker (the faki), the tariqa leader and the pious scholar, there was now the figure of the Islamically inspired political activist or ruler."(37) Dekmejian and Wyszomirski argue that the Mahdiya can be

analyzed, in a Weberian framework, as an instance of the exercise of charismatic authority.(38) Although attempts by political leaders to build on (or to create) personal charisma are not unique to the Arab world, the tactic seems in a country such as the Sudan to have deeper social roots than it does in the west, where much of the emphasis on charisma came with the advent of television. Neo-Mahdist leaders in the 20th century, such as 'Abd al Rahman al-Mahdi, adopted and further legitimized the charismatic leadership style. Even former President Jaafar Numeiri tried, with some success, to make himself the centre of a leadership cult.* Writing in 1982, Jackson and Rosberg observed:

He makes regular radio broadcasts to his people to air public grievances; he tours the country regularly, seeking contact with the ordinary people of the Sudan (it is reported that his quest for popular support is not impaired by any personal concern for his own safety); and he has cultivated his role as a devoted follower of Islam, announcing regularly the towns in which he plans to offer up his Friday prayers.(39)

Mass acceptance of a charismatic leadership style may be one of the most enduring legacies of the Mahdiya.

The major place occupied by the Mahdi in Sudanese history has led Voll to consider the issue of the place of fundamentalism in the country's evolution. He defines fundamentalism as a vigorous spirit of socio-moral reconstruction, accompanied by a demand for strict adherence, without compromise, to a literal interpretation of the Quran and sunna of the Prophet. Fundamentalists emphasize the transcendence of God, with the emphasis on his ethical commands, rather than the immanence of a personal God associated with mysticism. In Voll's understanding, fundamentalism stresses also the unity of religious belief, over diversity of local custom; and authenticity, avoiding innovation, over openness in religious interpretation.(40)

Voll suggests that the fundamentalist spirit is found in a wide variety of groups: the Ansar and the Khatmiyya, as well as educated Sudanese in general and the ulama or religious teachers. (He differs from those who would find the stronghold of fundamentalism in the agrarian population, as suggested by Filewod and Nasr;(41) and from those who would identify it primarily with the educated class, as suggested by the strength of the Moslem Brotherhood among the urban elite. His view is supported by the unexpected resurgence of fundamentalism during the latter part of the Numeiri era among erstwhile socialist politicians and army officers.) Voll concludes that while widespread, fundamentalism in the Sudan does not occur in as extreme or rigorous a form as elsewhere in the Islamic world.(42)

The moderate tone in Sudanese Islam might result in part from the importance of socio-cultural aspects of religion in that country. Voll observes that "the old Islamic structures in Sudanese society--the shaykhs, holy families, and 'national' [sectarian] organizations--have survived the pressures of modern political development more effectively than many 'modern' institutions, like labour unions, political parties or intellectual cultural associations."(43) These institutions establish the framework for power relationships. They determine the issues that must be considered in order to gauge the effect of religion on development. To what degree do sectarian leaders solicit and act upon the advice of their grassroots membership? Has the principle of hierarchy and the success of charismatic leadership restricted participation in the development process?

While institutions have tended to be stronger than ideology as influences on political behaviour in the Sudan, the importance of ideology is increasing. The concern with enshrining specifically Islamic laws and regulations in the Sudanese constitution and legal apparatus reflects this.

This chapter has identified and explored the historical roots of certain characteristics of Sudanese Islam; in particular, its strong identification with Arab culture, its Sufi nature, and the Mahdist tradition. It has been suggested that the last two characteristics, taken together, have sanctioned a hierarchical model in Sudanese society, with religious and political leaders given considerable latitude in decision-making. (The institutional nature of Sudanese Sufism has, however, been an influence to pragmatism in politics, just as it has tended to moderate the ideological aspects of Sudanese religion.) The Arab character of Sudanese Islam added a cultural dimension to the issue of who should be included and excluded in the making of development decisions. These themes will be further explored in chapter 4. In the next chapter, we consider the contribution of British colonialism to the pattern of participation in Sudanese development.

Notes for Chapter 2

- 1 Taha, Educational System, p. 119.
- 2 J.S. Trimingham, "The Phases of Islamic Expansion and Islamic Cultural Zones in Africa," in I.M. Lewis (editor), Islam in Tropical Africa, International African Institute, London, 1980, pp. 103-104.
- 3 Lewis, "Regional Review," p. 77.
- 4 P.M. Holt (editor), The Cambridge History of Islam, Volume 2: The Further Islamic Lands, Islamic Society and Civilization, Cambridge University Press, 1970, p. 330.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Mustafa Hamza Kuko, An Evaluation and Analysis of the Effects of Regional Economic Development on Internal Migration in the Sudan, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California at Riverside, December, 1984, p.36.
- 7 Lewis, "Regional Review," p. 5.
- 8 Muddathir 'Abd Al-Rahim, "Arabism, Africanism and Self-Identification in the Sudan," in Dunstan W. Wai (editor), The Southern Sudan and the Problem of National Integration, Frank Cass, London, 1973, p. 30.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Lewis, "Regional Review," p. 5.
- 11 'Abd Al-Rahim, "Arabism," p. 39.
- 12 Hasan Qasim Murad, "The Mahdist Movement in the Sudan," Islamic Studies 17 (1978), p. 112.
- 13 J.S. Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., London, 1965, p. 196.
- 14 A.S. Al-Shahi, "Sufism in Modern Sudan," in Denis MacEoin and Ahmed Al-Shahi (editors), Islam in the Modern World, Croom Helm, London, 1983, p. 59.
- 15 Ibid, p. 60.
- 16 Thomas Hodgkin, "Tradition and Reform in Muslim Africa," West Africa (September 22, 1956), p. 727.
- 17 Thomas Hodgkin, "Sectarianism the Sudan," West Africa (October 27, 1956), p. 849.
- 18 Al-Shahi, "Sufism," p. 68.

- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Bechtold, Politics in the Sudan, p. 76.
- 21 Peter Woodward, "Islam, Radicalism and Nationalism in Sudanese Politics Before Independence," in Gabriel R. Warburg and Uri M. Kupferschmidt (editors), Islam, Nationalism and Radicalism in Egypt and the Sudan, Praeger, New York, 1983, p. 100.
- 22 Ibid, p. 107.
- 23 Collins, July 1986.
- 24 Woodward, "Islam, Radicalism and Nationalism," p. 100.
- 25 In reference to the Ansar, Collins describes "complex financial arrangements ranging widely through the international monetary markets and particularly with the financial entrepreneurs of the Arab world." Details of investors from Saudi Arabia, Libya, Britain, France and Germany are carefully guarded.
- 26 Gilsenan, Saint and Sufi, p. 194.
- 27 Al-Shahi, "Sufism," p. 66.
- 28 Ibid, p. 67.
- 29 Woodward, "Islam, Radicalism and Nationalism," p. 102.
- 30 E.E. Evans-Pritchard, The Sanusi of Cyrenaica, Oxford University Press, London, 1949, p. 12. The first sheikh of the Sanusiya brotherhood was Muhammad b. Ali al-Sanusi, a student of Ahmad b. Idris al-Fasi (1760-1837). Another of the Moroccan teacher's famous students was Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani, founder of the Khatmiyya order. The Sanusiyya led the Bedouin of Libya in their resistance to Italian colonization.
- 31 Saburi Biobaku and Muhammad al-Haj, "The Sudanese Mahdiya and the Niger-Chad Region," in I.M. Lewis (editor), Islam in Tropical Africa, International African Institute, London, 1980, pp. 232-234.
- 32 Peter Holt, quoted by Murad, "Mahdist Movement," p. 155.
- 33 Murad, "Mahdist Movement," p. 158.
- 34 Holt, quoted by Murad, "Mahdist Movement," pp. 155-156.
- 35 Richard H. Dekmejian and Margaret J. Wyszomirski, "Charismatic Leadership in Islam: The Mahdi of the Sudan," Comparative Studies in Society and History 14 (1972), p. 211.
- 36 Haim Shaked, The Life of the Sudanese Mahdi, Transaction Books, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1978, p. 71.

- 37 Voll and Voll, Unity and Diversity, p. 120.
- 38 Dekmejian and Wyszomirski, Charismatic Leadership, p. 193.
- 39 Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, Personal Rule in Black Africa, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1982, p. 135.
- 40 Voll, "Islamic Fundamentalism," p. 115.
- 41 Ian Filewod, Interview, June 1986.
- 42 Voll, "Islamic Fundamentalism," p. 116.
- 43 Ibid, p. 137.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONDOMINIUM AND THE BRITISH LEGACY

In his analysis of dependency theory, Medani M. M. Ahmed argues that its major shortcoming is "the failure to recognize the central role of domestic factors in explaining the problem of underdevelopment in LDCs.... The significance of the external forces in explaining underdevelopment varies from one country to the other. Yet the investigation of [a] complementary role properly comes after investigating the dynamics of the internal process of development." (1) We have considered some of the aspects of Sudanese Islam that may have contributed to the formation of hierarchical structures in society, thus potentially reducing the possibility of meaningful participation for a broad cross-section of the population. This chapter investigates the role of British colonialism in reinforcing these structures.

The influence of colonialism should be reflected in details of the relationship between the British administration and Islamic sectarian leaders. Did the British colonial structure benefit from the close links between the leaders of the tariqa and their followers, from Sudanese reverence for their religious and political teachers? Exploration of this theme should enable us to examine the British administration's "southern

policy" of separate development for the north and the south in a somewhat different light. The question is not, did the policy delay the development of the south?: the evidence is fairly solid that it did. Rather, to what extent were British administrators serving their own or colonial interests with the southern policy; to what extent were their motives altruistic (concern for the future of the south certainly played a role); and to what degree could the adoption of the southern policy be explained by the British relationship with Islamic sectarian politicians? The easy answer to the last question is, not at all: northern politicians were vocal opponents of the southern policy during the last few years before independence and after. But the dynamics between the British administration and the Islamic establishment were more complex than this simple observation reveals.

3.1 Rulers and the Ruled? British and Islamic Sectarian Leaders

The British attitude towards Sudanese Islam, and official policy towards the various representatives of Islam, was internally inconsistent, and also markedly different in different historical periods. There was an attempt, in the early years following the defeat of the Mahdi's forces in 1899, to undermine the position of Sufi leaders and to create an orthodoxy along Egyptian lines by setting up a "Board of Ulema" to advise the governor-general on religious matters. By the end of the First World War, the Administration was shifting its support to the heads of the tariqa, and in particular was assisting the Khatmiyya and the Mahdist families to transfer the loyalties of rural and village Sudanese from local leaders to themselves. Although the Administration at first favoured the Khatmiyya camp, by the mid-1920s Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi, with the assistance of government land grants, irrigation rights and contracts for agricultural

supplies, had built a power base rivalling that of the Administration. The Khatmiyya turned to the Egyptians as allies. The government, now recognizing the danger posed by Abd al-Rahman's state-within-a-state, attempted to curtail his activities, in particular his efforts to win the Sudanese intelligentsia. An alternative power base was promoted in conservative tribal leaders, and representative political institutions were gradually established. By this point, however, the traditional competition between the Mahdist and Khatmiyya parties had been enshrined in the evolving socio-political structure of the Sudan.

British policy towards Islam between 1899 and roughly 1918, described by Voll as "a case study of British imperial attitudes toward Islam,"(2) was designed by Lord Cromer, British agent and consul-general, Sir Reginald Wingate, the first governor-general of the Sudan, and Sir Rudolph Slatin Pasha, inspector-general of the Sudan government until the First World War and a former prisoner of the Mahdi's successor, the Khalifa Abdallahi.

These men recognized the need for support by "Moslem opinion"; however, they were wary of any resurgence of Mahdist feeling, and suspicious of the Sufi sects. This suspicion may have stemmed from a lack of profound interest in Islamic doctrines "unless they had a direct bearing on administration."(3) Egyptian ulama, consequently (Egypt after all was titular ruler of the Sudan along with Great Britain in the Condominium government) were able to persuade British policy-makers that the local Sufi brotherhoods were deviations from Islam. In addition to forbidding the tariqa leaders from restoring mosques and tombs of saints destroyed during the Mahdiyya, the administration attempted to bolster Islamic orthodoxy by sponsoring the creation of an Egyptian-trained ulama, establishing a network of sharia courts, working to revive the pilgrimage (thus making

available the labour of West African pilgrims who passed through Sudan) and lending support to the building of orthodox mosques.

Difficulties with this early British policy are best illustrated by the example of the Board of Ulema, mentioned above. Warburg comments: "The Board of Ulema was intended to give the official Muslim stamp to the decisions of the government, which was primarily Christian, and thus to render it unnecessary for the European officials to interfere directly in Muslim religious affairs. Because of this the Board had no real authority and its influence was limited. Its functions were never clearly defined, but from the evidence that remains of its work it would seem that most of its discussions and recommendations were instigated by the governor-general or Slatin and were not the result of any initiative on the part of the 'ulama' themselves." (4) Members of the Board were at one point given a tour of the Gezira scheme, the cotton-growing megaproject, in an attempt to counterbalance nationalist objections. (5) On another occasion, 'Abd al-Qadir Imam wad Habuba was sentenced to death, along with 12 of his followers, following a revolt in Blue Nile Province. The Board of Ulema objected angrily when the British reduced the sentences.

If the Board of Ulema was essentially a rubber-stamp to administrative actions, British efforts to build mosques and to promote sharia courts were likewise poor concessions to Moslem popular opinion. The Administration never had sufficient funds to build an adequate number of mosques, much less to staff them with imams and teachers. Involvement of Egyptian money in this mosque maintenance project further weakened what might have been a useful initiative.

With the promulgation of the Sudan Mohammedan Law Courts Ordinance in 1902, sharia courts were empowered to hear all cases related to the personal status of Moslems. The Grand Qadi, who was responsible for the organization and procedure of the courts, and who was an Egyptian for most of the Condominium era, was subordinate to the British legal secretary and, in the provinces, to officials of the department of justice. Although bureaucrats and police officers were legally obliged to carry out sentences passed by the sharia courts, many refused to do so. The plan to establish a network of Islamic courts also ran into the Administration's chronic money problems; in many regions there were no qadis, so that the administration of justice fell to the local Sufi teachers, just what the British were trying to avoid.(6) The biggest problem, however, was that the formal legal system; especially staffed in large part by judges from the movement for sharia reform in Egypt, was not relevant to the majority of the population. "The Islamic loyalties of the northern Sudanese tended not to be influenced by reformist or legalistic developments."(7) Although Sudanese did not shun the courts, they remained fundamentally Sufi.

Official British policy towards the Sufi tariqa was confused. The intent was suppression; and certainly, messianic revolts were put down, sometimes violently. But there are some indications that unless they actively opposed the administration, local teachers were left alone, performing their traditional functions of education, interpretation of the law and collection of taxes. In fact, British energy spent on creating an Islamic orthodoxy may have permitted a resurgence of popular Islamic practice, of the "basically anarchic forces of popular Mahdist Islam."(8) A relevant but possibly unanswerable question pertaining to this period is: did rural and village people then have more control over the decisions that shaped their lives? Certainly later a large measure of that control was

lost to the larger tariqa, the Khatmiyya and the Mahdists, which gradually absorbed the local teachers.

In these early years, the British were concerned with suppressing these larger holy families (in particular the Mahdists: Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi was essentially under house arrest, with a pension from the British government, until the outbreak of the First World War). Yet even this effort was inconsistent. Warburg observes that "the influence wielded by the Sufi fraternities and their leaders in various parts of the Sudan forced the British civil service in the provinces to work in coordination with them. For example, the Isma'iliyya in Kordofan received special treatment, and the leaders of the Majdhubiyya planned their activities in coordination with the governor of the Red Sea province." (9) The Khatmiyya sect received not only freedom from government restrictions but active support; their mosque in Kassala was rebuilt with public money, and the Khatmiyya leader, Sayyid 'Ali al-Mirghani, was made a Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George in 1900. (It is worth noting that during this early period, al-Mirghani was essentially apolitical and that he opposed, vehemently, any Egyptian influence in the Sudan.)

By the time of the First World War, the influence of the fakis was in decline, as increasing numbers of the local teachers became associated with the larger religious groups. The British administration, "because of the need for real rather than theoretical popular support," (10) increasingly turned to the leading religious families, the Mahdist and other tariqa in addition to the Khatmiyya. Wingate made a speech on November 8, 1914, to which the heads of the Sufi tariqa were invited as well as the ulama and tribal chiefs, in which he painted Britain as the defender of Islam, and enjoined his audience not to obey the call of the Ottoman Caliph, ruler of

Turkey, for jihad. Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi responded with the "Sudan Book of Loyalty," a collection of pledges made by Abd al-Rahman and 500 religious leaders of full support for Britain and its allies. The relationship between the British administration and Sudanese Islamic leaders had reached a turning point. "The step of turning to the traditional religious leaders in the Sudan, who up to the outbreak of war had no official standing, was in effect an indirect admission of the failure of the previous religious policy." (11) From then on, Britain would have to work within the parameters of the Sudan's Sufi and Mahdist nature.

The period between the first and second world wars was the time when, with the assistance of the Administration's confusion regarding all things Mahdist and with direct British assistance, Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi built his empire.

Mahdist economic power is based on land, water and cotton: the land, in the Kosti area of the White Nile and between the two Niles, the most fertile in the country; the water, control granted by the condominium of pump schemes for irrigation; and the cotton, the Gezira Scheme, the capital project that was the administration's proudest achievement. Villages in the Gezira area supported the Mahdi (12) in the 19th century, and with the exception of the militant Gezira Tenants Union, which has a strong Communist Party affiliation, have been loyal to Mahdist sectarian leaders and political parties in the 20th. (13) Field representatives of the Sudan Gezira Board, which controls production, today tend to be Mahdist sympathizers. Barnett observes, "there is a distinct line between the administrative class under the Mahdiyya, and the administrative class under the colonial regime, and this group of the field staff." (14)

Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahman al Mahdi, the Mahdi's posthumous son, was a shrewd and charismatic leader. As early as 1911, still under house arrest, he had presented himself to Wingate as the spokesman for the inhabitants of the White Nile. The war had presented an opportunity, as 'Abd al-Rahman and his followers "were natural allies of Britain. Hatred for those in Turkey and Egypt who were perverting Islam, which had formed one of the main subjects of the Mahdi's letters, continued to animate also his heirs, so that they did not hesitate to join Britain against the Turks."(15)

After 1918, British administrators were split on the issue of how to handle 'Abd al-Rahman. Hardliners regarded him as a major threat. The conciliatory school, represented by C.A. Willis, director of British intelligence in the mid-1920s, argued that the "Sayyid" was too influential to be destroyed. These officials wanted to avoid any showdown between the administration and the Mahdist community. The result was incoherent policy that permitted that community to thrive. In 1921, 'Abd al Rahman's activities were curtailed after a revolt in the west was blamed on the work of his agents. Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim describes the leader's ability to prosper within the framework of British restrictions:

In his relations with the government, al-Sayyid...displayed considerable adroitness in abandoning positions attacked by the authorities and swiftly consolidating others equally useful to himself before the government realized that he had changed his ground. Thus when directed to disperse colonies of westerners from Aba Island [the Mahdist stronghold on the White Nile] he literally complied with the order, but in the meantime established other colonies on the west bank of the Nile, on sites just as convenient as the island itself from al-Sayyid's point of view, and just as undesirable for the government. By 1926 roughly twelve thousand muhajirin worked for al-Sayyid in his cultivation colonies. Similarly, though readily obeying government directives to withdraw his agents, al-Sayyid had apparently tried to capture the government's own machinery of umdas and shaykhs. Moreover, al-Sayyid himself was reported to have

announced to J.A. Reid, acting governor of White Nile Province, his desire to withdraw his agents from that province and to depend upon his "friends," the umdas, to look after his cultivation. By acting against the spirit of the 1923 restrictions, al-Sayyid had thus somehow managed to maintain the organization and influence of his sect.(16)

The newly-arrived Governor-General in 1925, Sir Geoffrey Archer, was of the conciliatory school. Looking for a public display of co-operation from 'Abd al-Rahman, he agreed over the protests of his advisors to make an official visit to Aba Island. The political service in the Sudan was throughout its history unusually independent of its masters in and from Britain, and Sir Geoffrey was ousted the following year. He was replaced by the hardliner Sir John Maffey, who spoke of making the Sudan "safe for autocracy,"(17) and who adopted a policy of curtailing 'Abd al-Rahman's political activities while giving free reign to his commercial schemes,"in the hope that they would prove a diversion."(18) The Mahdist leader was made a Knight Commander of the British Empire in 1926, "when it was noted, 'This honour was far greater than his services invited, but this excess of payment was intended to be a consolation to him for the abandonment of ambitions which the Government's policy of the preceding years had done much to encourage'." 'Abd al-Rahman "professed himself bewildered by a policy which gave with one hand and withheld with the other."(19)

While the administration was performing this political tango with the Mahdist family leader, the Khatmiyya, once the strong allies of the Condominium government, were frozen out. (The only vestiges of former British support were occasional financial contributions to Sayyid 'Ali al-Mirghani.)

The Khatmiyya had traditionally, from the time of the 19th-century Turco-Egyptian regime, been quietly on the side of the ruling administration. They had been more concerned with protecting family interests than with advancing any political ambitions. (The Khatmiyya have an interest in and a talent for prosperity that has continued into the modern era. The first villagers in the Sudan were members of this brotherhood, drawn from the tribes along the Nile. They were later the first town merchants, and "the first to be integrated into the modern sector of the Sudanese economy."(20))

However, there was a nascent rivalry between the Mahdist and the Khatmiyya that would not, in the long run, permit 'Ali al-Mirghani to accept the growing influence of 'Abd al-Rahman. (One of the most disturbing rumours from 'Ali al Mirghani's point of view was that the Mahdist leader was ambitious to be King of the Sudan. Given that the British had supported the creation of a number of monarchies after the First World War, 'Abd al-Rahman might have had grounds for his aspirations). Ali al-Mirghani began to feel that the Khatmiyya might need allies.

The basis of geographical support for the Khatmiyya is in the eastern province of Kassala and in Northern Province. Many members of the brotherhood have family and financial interests in Egypt. Despite his personal distaste for the Egyptians, and his own essentially apolitical nature, 'Ali al-Mirghani began to look north for support. Thus were sown the seeds of the institutionalization of sectarian rivalry in Sudanese politics.

The growing involvement of the major Sudanese tariqa in national politics, and the intensification of their rivalry brought about by the British administration, was significant because it coincided with the flowering of the nationalist movement. The policies of the Condominium would help to decide the players in the independence game, and would contribute towards shaping the Sudanese political identity.

The notion of a popular nationalist movement, one involving a broad spectrum of society, did not belong to the British vision of the Sudanese path towards independence. Nationalism, the Condominium officials believed, was confined to a small group of the urban population "to whom no political concessions should be made at the expense of the overwhelming mass of Sudanese in the countryside, who remained untouched by ideas of nationalism and democracy." (21)

In 1938, in part to pre-empt the efforts of Sayyid Abd al-Rahman, who was looking for allies among the Sudanese intelligentsia, the administration supported the establishment of the Graduates' General Congress. (Not to be outdone, the Mahdist leader transferred his efforts to local Congress committees in Northern Sudanese towns). The Congress was intended as a sort of informal discussion group, an outlet for informed opinion on a range of subjects; it was in no way meant to be a political or representative organization. And so when the Congress came to Civil Secretary Sir Douglas Newbold in 1942, with claims to be the spokesman of Sudanese nationalism, Newbold (pressed also by the war) rejected the demands out of hand.

This action by Newbold was a pivotal event in Sudanese history. With the rise of the independence movement, the tariqa, and in particular the Mahdist and Khatmiyya communities, had been searching for ways to protect their interests. But it was not until Newbold's display of British intransigence that the "secular" nationalists (insofar as anyone could be described as secular, during the Condominium era in the Sudan(22)) recognized that they too needed allies. Holt claims that until the secular nationalists made this realization, that they required the organization and legitimacy of the holy families, ancient religious and dynastic rivalries had been dying out among the Sudanese(23)). This writer contends that the Mahdist--Khatmiyya contest had been fanned by British policies even before the nationalist movement erupted during the second war; but the inability of nationalists to realize their ambitions without the help of the tariqa led to the institutionalization of that rivalry in the Sudanese political system. Consequently, the actions of British officials at least to some extent influenced who might participate in politics after independence.(24)

This is not the place for an account of the Sudan's path to independence: the accelerating sequence of British concessions towards self-government, the struggle between Great Britain and Egypt to control the nature of the Sudan's sovereignty, a debate that reached the United Nations Security Council. The important point is that in the Sudan, as in no other African nation, the Sufi tariqa became tightly linked with political parties, the Khatmiyya with the Ashigga and its successors, which initially favoured a pro-Egyptian foreign policy, and the Mahdist tariqa with the Umma Party, which in the early years supported the British policy of step-wise progression towards an independent Sudan. So keen was the competition between these two in the years after 1945 that one British official was prompted to comment: "They divide and we rule."(25) The

Mahdist-Khatmiyya rivalry is a feature of Sudanese politics to the present day.

What were the implications of this style of democracy? Woodward comments: "although democratic institutions are intended to provide a sense of popular participation, this was not always encouraged by the political parties themselves. The basis of much political mobilization in the rural areas of northern Sudan was the major religious sects, and both stood for the maintenance of a form of social discipline rather than individual expression. There were of course occasions when the parties encouraged political demonstrations, but there was a marked degree of control involved.(26)

In December of 1951, something happened to challenge the tariqa's claim--never tested--to the allegiance of rural Sudan. The Socialist Republican Party was launched, an alliance of a small group of liberal intelligentsia and conservative tribal leaders. What was interesting was the all-out campaign launched by agents of the Umma party against this feeble competitor. The Umma claimed that the SRP was a personal attack on 'Abd al-Rahman, in the name of atheistic socialism. The episode suggested that the tariqa were not, in fact, confident of their influence in the countryside.

The merger between sectarian religion and politics meant that the growth of nationalism in the Sudan became little more than "a new input into the well-developed struggle for political influence" between the leading holy families.(27) In other words, British expectations of the elitist nature of the independence movement in the Sudan were realized in the capture of that movement by the tariqa. (We will leave aside, for now, the issue of democracy and participation within the tariqa framework.)

According to Sanderson, the peripheral role of popular movements in the era before independence is reflected in the ineffectiveness of such movements in the modern Sudan. During the Condominium, popular nationalism, if "not quite a mere spectator, was at most a kind of Greek chorus, reacting to events rather than initiating them." Consequently, "the popular--as opposed to the elitist--political style in the Sudan has shown a marked leaning towards ostentatiously radical gestures and policies, quite often in matters of apparently very minor importance." (28) Holt observes that politics [in the Sudan] since independence has been a private game for the players, rather than a civic education for the people." (29)

3.2 The South and Separate "Development"

Although the British brought some benefits to the Southern Sudan, including peace, security, and more efficient organization for food production (if at a subsistence level), (30) they did little to develop the region, and much to aggravate divisions between the north and the south. As Rafia Hassan Ahmed observes:

This problem of regionalism between the north and the south involves, among other things, differences in socio-cultural institutions, different historical experience, numerical imbalance, and educational, technical, economic and political inequalities. It is a by-product of many factors, geographical, social and cultural, colonial administrative policies and the attitudes of national politicians and parties, including the role of southerners themselves, especially the educated elite. The role of the British administration in exacerbating the problem was remarkable. (31)

Did in fact the condominium rulers exploit a divisive society "to strengthen their grip on the country and to delay as long as possible their evacuation from it?" (32) (Was an administration as incoherent in

policy-making as this capable of such a strategy?) Without neglecting the role of imperialism as a motivating factor, this section attempts to explain British policy in the southern Sudan in part by the differential relationship of the British with northern and with southern Sudanese.

Collins feels that the tone of subsequent condominium policy was set in the first two decades of British rule in the Sudan. In these early years, British administrative officials in the south were almost always military officers. Only nine were members of the political service, and of these only five were on duty in the south for more than a year. The civilians who soon dominated British rule in the Sudan carried out their administrative service in the North, where their experience was confined to Arab, Moslem Sudanese.

At worst, they adopted Arab attitudes toward the Africans of the Southern Sudan, regarding them as savages compared with the more sophisticated northerners. At best, they ignored the Southern Sudanese, hoping that they could be controlled with as little expenditure as possible. Throughout the Condominium many members of the Political Service had neither understanding of nor sympathy for the southern Sudan and its peoples and made little effort to acquire either.(34)

On the issue of the attitudes of British administrators towards northerners and southerners, Deng interviewed eight Sudanese, most of whom had been senior civil servants under the British. He quotes Yusuf Badri, on the British penchant for "gossip" about Sudanese tribes:

Some of them did it in an uncharitable way which aroused hostility. When they went to the Western Sudan, the English were told to behave in such-and-such a way because the Western tribes are rather fierce and that most of them belonged to the old Mahdist rebellious tribes. When they went to the East, they were told that the Eastern people were wild, and that they might kill a person without any cause, that life was nothing to them. When they went to the

South...they were told that the Dinka were a very arrogant people.... They usually tried to give the impression that there was a great difference between the South and the North. "You Northerners," they would say, "are the slave traders and you treat Southerners like Abeed! (Arabic pl. abid, slaves). Don't call them Abeed! They are no slaves any longer." And they would say about the Southerners that they were lazy people, that they were contented with what they had and were impervious to any progress." [Another of Deng's respondents, Amin Hasun,] agreed that the British "were highly impressed with people who came from the North," attributing this to their greater familiarity with Northern Sudanese. But Ahmed Mahjub, a Northerner, simply pointed out that strong regional loyalties were espoused by individual British administrators, and that "in nine cases out of ten the English had more confidence in a Southerner."(35)

Grandin observes that it was only in the south and in regions of the Funj and Nuba Mountains that anthropologists, such as the noted E.E. Evans-Pritchard, were employed by the British to complete studies of the conquered peoples.

Dans les régions arabisées du Nord, les problèmes soulevés par l'administration n'ont été nulle part, semble-t-il, tels qu'ils aient pu justifier aux yeux des District Commissioner l'intervention d'un expert: les études qu'ils pouvaient réaliser eux-mêmes dans les domaines de l'histoire locale, des coutumes et traditions, leur paraissaient suffisantes et l'approche ici se faisait sur un plan de quasi-égalité humaine, sinon culturelle.(36)

After all, in the minds of many Britishers, "...Islam was one of the great monotheistic religions of the world, a religion of the Book, which would hardly be dismissed as a barbarous cult like so many of the animistic religions of the Southern Sudan."(37)

Until the late 1920s, the southern provinces did not receive a great deal of attention from the central government, except when occasional insurrections required the expenditure of troops or money. Even the first Christian missionaries intended their proselytizing efforts for northern

rather than southern Sudan. When the Church Missionary Society (of the Church of England) and Bishop Llewellyn Henry Gwynne arrived in Khartoum in 1899, their ambition was to Christianize the Sudan in order to avenge the death of General Charles Gordon. "The Society displayed little interest in the Southern Sudan at that time, for the memory of Gordon could most appropriately be consecrated by working in the Northern Sudan, among the people to whom he was devoted and by whose name he had died." (38) It was the British who, wishing to "conciliate Moslem sentiment," (39) directed the missionaries' efforts towards the south. Chronically short of money, the administration also relied on the missionaries' assistance in providing health services and education.

In the early years in Bahr el Ghazal, both Islam and Christianity were acceptable to the Condominium rulers. (This made sense, as the western part of the province had been Islamized in the 19th century by ivory and slave traders, officials of the Turco-Egyptian administration and Mahdist forces.) In approximately 1904, however, Sir Reginald Wingate, then Governor-General, in a foreshadowing of the attitudes of later British officials, acted to stem the spread of Islam, on the grounds that Islam was not the religion and Arabic not the language of the majority of the inhabitants of Bahr el Ghazal. (Neither was Christianity.) When the south was divided, for proselytization purposes, into spheres of influence, the province was assigned to Catholic missionaries. (40)

The considerations mentioned at the outset of the chapter in connection with the southern policy of separate development (which existed from the early years of the Condominium, although it was given official formulation only in 1930) were imperial self-interest, British altruism towards southern Sudanese, and indirectly, the relationship of the British

with northern Sudanese sectarian leaders.

It is hard to see what Britain, as a power, had to gain from the southern policy specifically. (Obviously, there was strategic significance in controlling the southern Sudan; but nominal control and a "developmental" strategy as drastic as the southern policy were two different things.) The policy was enormously difficult to implement; in Woodward's terminology, it was not pragmatic. It would have been much easier for Britain to permit the Sudan to continue a gradual drift toward adopting northern cultural and religious institutions.(41) Instead, according to the policy announced in 1930 by Sir Harold MacMichael, Civil Secretary, the south was to be maintained as "a series of self-contained racial or tribal units." Among other herculean efforts, this involved the creation of a class of native southern traders to replace the northern gellaba, and the disruption of age-old tribal relationships between southern Sudan and neighbouring Moslem peoples of Darfur and Kordofan. "Tribes like the Banda, Dongo, Kreish Feruga, Nyargulgule and Togoyo who had always been in contact with Arabic-Islamic culture were moved from their regions and rehabilitated in areas away from the influence of northerners. This was followed by the creation of a 'no man's land' between the southern Sudan and Bahr el Arab river as a barrier to interaction."(42)

The southern policy was internally inconsistent. One of the functions of Christian missionaries imported into the South was to consolidate the control of the central government. But many missionaries resented their submission to the national state and were not above expressing this opposition. Sid Ahmed observes, moreover, that the goal of Christianization conflicted with other objectives of the southern policy,

such as the revival of tribal customs.(43) (In fact, the process of colonialism itself had weakened the potential viability of "self-contained racial or tribal units." As Collins argues: "The administrative demands of the conquerors had not only undermined traditional prerogatives (in particular, to provide leadership against aggression) but had reduced the chief to a servant of the government rather ~~than~~ the leader of his people. The authority of the chief was reduced to that which the administration through ignorance or opportunism permitted him to keep--not by virtue of his position among his people but at the convenience of the government."(44))

On the issue of altruistic motives behind the southern policy, certainly there were some British officials who feared that "without protection the southerners would not be able to develop along indigenous lines, would be overwhelmed and swamped by the north and would deteriorate into a servile community hewing wood and drawing water for a supposedly superior Northern aristocracy."(45) This was in contrast to the sentiments of many northerners, who had long felt that the problems of the south were not intrinsically different from those of many of the least developed parts of the north, and that a first step should be to treat the region as a part of the whole country."(45)

If altruism had been the explanation, however, it seems that these concerns might have survived the Sudanese nationalist movement. Instead, in 1946, the southern policy was abruptly reversed. Within the next few years, as representative institutions were established for a united Sudan, Arab traders were again permitted to operate in the South, freedom of religion was reinstated, and Arabic became the official language of the Sudan.

The analysis of British motivation behind the southern policy, then, remains incomplete. There were imperialistic considerations, in particular the protection of the White Nile, but if these were everything some other strategy might have been devised, involving a smaller expenditure of administrative energy and money. Some British officials, certainly, were concerned about the future of the south; but the evidence suggests that altruism was a peripheral factor.

We have seen that the north and the south received differential treatment almost from the beginning of the Condominium era. In the north, the British took advantage of the close relationship between tariqa leaders and followers. If they did not, at first, understand Sudanese Islam, they were able to transform at least the political aspects into something familiar. That is, once the loyalties of the rural Sudanese had been transferred from local Sufi teachers to competing national religious families, the British had a divide-and-rule situation with which they were comfortable. (The degree to which Khatmiyya and Mahdist leaders actually commanded the allegiance of Sudanese is another issue.) In the south, there was no similar unifying structure, nothing upon which the Condominium administration could piggyback. This, combined with a lack of financial resources, and possibly, a lingering wariness of northern Sudanese intentions, led to the policy decision: to contain and isolate the south today, and possibly, to develop it tomorrow. (Consideration was even given to annexing the southern Sudan to Britain's East African territories.) In short, the British did not know how to handle the south; and so, the south remained essentially undeveloped for more than 40 years.

By the time independence was approaching, the North was clearly dominant in every sphere of Sudanese society. Economically, the major manufacturing and agricultural developments are in the northeast riverine area. While

some efforts were made to bridge the gap..., wartime industry in the Khartoum conurbation further strengthened the axis of economic power in the core region. In terms of education, the English policies of the Southern schools clearly put most Southerners at a disadvantage when the time came for them to compete with Northerners for government positions that required the use of Arabic. In addition, it seems that the education system in the South left many Southerners ill-prepared for the Sudanese job market; an unhappy District Commissioner wrote, towards the end of Condominium rule "...perhaps the most disappointing aspect of the Southern Policy is the failure to produce in 10 years any Southern staff trained for executive work.(46)

In this chapter, we have considered how the influence of British colonialism reinforced hierarchical structures in Sudanese society, thus potentially reducing the possibility of meaningful participation for a broad cross-section of the population. Early confusion in British policy towards Sudanese Islam gave way to unsuccessful efforts to co-opt the major religious families, and the clumsy way in which these efforts were made institutionalized the rivalry between the Ansar and the Khatmiyya. The importance of the Sufi sects in northern Sudan during the Condominium administration was almost certainly a root of the differential rates of development of northern and southern Sudan. Condominium administrators found institutional Islam much easier to deal with than the diverse religious and political structures in the south, and for this and logistical reasons (the harsh southern climate, transportation and communication difficulties) focused their development efforts on the north.

At independence, the economic and educational dominance of northern Sudan were well established. So was Britain's other legacy: an elitist pattern of political participation, with Sudanese politics dominated by what amounted to an aristocracy of religious family leaders. The impact of these structures, as they pertain to the influence of Islam on the

development of the modern Sudan, will be considered in the next chapter.

Notes for Chapter 3

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- 3 Ibid, p. 213.
- 4 Gabriel Warburg, "Religious Policy in the Northern Sudan: Ulama and Sufism 1899-1918." Asian and African Studies 7 (1981), p. 96.
- 5 Voll, Popular Islam, p. 214.
- 6 Warburg, Religious Policy, pp. 99-102.
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- 8 John Voll, "The Evolution of Islamic Fundamentalism in Twentieth-Century Sudan," in Gabriel Warburg and Uri M. Kupferschmidt, Islam, Nationalism and Radicalism in Egypt and the Sudan, Praeger, New York, 1983, pp. 119-120.
- 9 Warburg, Religious Policy, p. 122.
- 10 Voll, Popular Islam, p. 216.
- 11 Warburg, Religious Policy, pp. 118-119.
- 12 Tony Barnett, The Gezira Scheme: An Illusion of Development, Frank Cass, London, 1977, p. 61.
- 13 Peter K. Bechtold, Politics in the Sudan: Parliamentary and Military Rule in an Emerging African Nation, Praeger, New York, 1976, p. 47.
- 14 Barnett, Gezira Scheme, p. 22.
- 15 Warburg, Religious Policy, pp. 115-116.
- 16 Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, "Imperialism and Neo-Mahdism in the Sudan: A Study of British Policy Towards Neo Mahdism, 1924-1927," The International Journal of African Historical Studies 132 (1980), p. 217.
- 17 Robert O. Collins; "Introduction," in Robert O. Collins and Francis M. Deng (editors), The British in the Sudan 1898-1956, The Sweetness and the Sorrow, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1984, p. 20.
- 18 Peter Woodward, Condominium and Sudanese Nationalism, Rex Collings, London, 1979, p. 17.

- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ruth First, The Barrel of a Gun, Allen Lane, London, 1961, p. 132.
- 21 Gail S. Schoettler, "The Genial Barons," in Collins and Deng, The British in the Sudan, p. 105.
- 22 In correspondence with the author (February 2, 1987), John Voll commented: "... you raise the question of how the relationship between the British and Islamic sectarian leaders differed from that between the British and Sudanese secular leaders. My own reaction to this is to ask if there were people who could be called 'Sudanese secular leaders' in the Condominium era. There may have been some educated Sudanese who adopted an anti-sectarian position but I personally wonder if any of them can really be considered to be 'secular leaders.' My own first contact with Ismail al-Azhari [founder of the Ashigga party, and first Sudanese Prime Minister] (often spoken of as a secular leader) was when I was wandering through the streets of Omdurman and came across a dhikr of the Ismailiyyah Tariqah--which was taking place in the courtyard of Ismail al-Azhari's house."
- 23 P.M. Holt, A Modern History of the Sudan, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1961, p. 146.
- 24 Woodward (Condominium) comes to the same conclusion, using a somewhat different argument.
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- 26 Ibid, p. 171.
- 27 G.N. Sanderson, "Sudanese Nationalism and the Independence of the Sudan," in Michael Brett (editor), Northern Africa: Islam and Modernization, Frank Cass, London, 1973, p. 99.
- 28 Ibid, p. 107.
- 29 Holt, Modern History, p. 182.
- 30 Francis Deng, Correspondence, March 31, 1986.
- 31 Rafia Hassan Ahmed, "Regionalism, Ethnic and Socio-Cultural Pluralism. The Case of the Southern Sudan." In Mohamed Omer Beshir (editor), Southern Sudan: Regionalism and Religion, Ithaca, London, 1984, p. 26.
- 32 Ibid, p. 55.
- 33 Robert O. Collins, Shadows in the Grass: Britain in the Southern Sudan 1918-1956, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1983, p. 14.
- 34 Francis M. Deng, "In the Eyes of the Ruled," in Collins and Deng, The British in the Sudan, p. 232.

35 Nicole Grandin, *Le Soudan Nilotique et l'Administration Britannique*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1982, p. 219.

36 Woodward, *Condominium*, p. 192.

37 Jack Bermingham and Robert O. Collins, "The Thin White Line," in Collins and Deng, *The British in the Sudan*, p. 173.

38 Ibid, p. 194.

39 Damazo Dutt Majok, "British Religious and Educational Policy: The Case of Bahr El-Ghazal," in Beshir, *Regionalism and Religion*, p. 243.

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41 S.M. Sid Ahmed, "Christian Missionary Activities in Sudan 1926-1946," in Beshir, *Regionalism and Religion*, p. 243.

42 Ibid, p. 255.

43 Collins, *Shadows in the Grass*, pp. 30-31.

44 Woodward, *Condominium*, p. 79.

45 Ibid, p. 93.

46 Denis D. Leclaire, "Rural Development in Southern Sudan: The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations." M.A. Thesis, Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University, August, 1981, p. 47.

CHAPTER 4

RELIGIOUS ELITES IN MODERN SUDAN

The Sudan achieved political independence on January 1, 1956. Between 1956 and the end of 1987, fewer than nine years had been spent under civilian rule. In the course of those nine years (1956-1958, 1964-1969, 1986-present) there were seven governments in the Sudan. Recent history illustrates the political dilemma. In May 1986, following several weeks of negotiations, Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi was able to form a "Government of National Unity," including representatives from the (Mahdist-dominated) Umma Party, the (Khatmiyya-dominated) Democratic Unionist Party, and a group of southern Christian politicians. In August 1987, the coalition government collapsed, the result of a dispute between the two national parties. "Since taking power from the military regime of General Siwar al-Dahab in May last year," the London Times reported, "the Prime Minister has been unable to make any progress on the intricate web of military, political and economic problems confronting his Government: the rebellion in the south, the controversy over the introduction of Sharia or Islamic law, and the economic reforms needed to secure a debt from the International Monetary Fund--each of which are widely regarded as insoluble in their own right."(1)

This chapter considers the role of Islam in the development of the modern Sudan, primarily through examining the part played by religious elites in civilian and military government. (Never has the military held a monopoly of power; the leading religious families, and of late Islamic fundamentalists, have always had a major impact on the evolution of internal and external policies.) A major issue will be the degree to which Sudanese Islam influences perceptions by elites and non-elites of how power should be held and of appropriate relationships between leaders and followers. The second part of the chapter will focus on the influence of religious elites on economic policy and on the structure of the economy, and will give some consideration to the overlap between politico-religious and economic elites.

The cultural dimension of development will be considered last, although in many respects it should have first place. Within the realm of cultural participation lie issues related to a society's "transcendental values," including the goals and objectives of development. In the Sudan this issue has crystallized around the ongoing constitutional debate and in particular, the role of Islamic law. In this final section we will focus more on the ideological aspects of religion than on the socio-cultural aspects, and consider their potential to bring about fundamental changes in Sudanese society.

Statistical indicators related to participation in the process and benefits of development are included in tabular form in the appendix to this paper.

4.1 The Political Kingdom

Every period of civilian government in the Sudan has been

characterized by a large degree of political freedom. There has been vigorous and unrestricted debate in parliament and the press and in institutions of higher education. More than 40 parties competed for power in the last (April 1986) elections, prompting one writer to comment that "Sudan has more freedom of expression than anywhere else in Africa or the Arab world." (2) This is a real indication of political participation, and one which illustrates the deep interest of the Sudanese people in the political kingdom.

Yet scratch the surface, and these liberties seem fragile and exclusive. There was no polling during the 1986 elections in half the southern districts, because of "rebel activity." For much of the south, armed resistance appears to be the only route to effective political participation. Even in the north, the circle of participants in political freedom is restricted, and the permitted freedoms are often curtailed. In the wake of a series of strikes by government employees this spring and summer, Ahmed Ali al-Mirghani, president of the Supreme Council, declared a state of emergency, making use of an instrument not infrequently employed in the modern Sudan. The official explanation was the need to control the black market and to end smuggling and the illegal hoarding of food.

In gauging the extent of popular participation in Sudanese politics, one must also give adequate weight to the role of the military, which has controlled the country for (including the Numeiri era) 24 of the last 31 years. Given what we know about the importance of religion as a source of allegiance in the Sudan, it is clear that there must be some interdependence between the military and the major sects. The Sudanese military has traditionally defended Sudanese from Sudanese, from leaders who were unable, for one reason or another, to run the country effectively.

Endowed with a "presumptive sense of its entitlement to rule,"(3) the military is the only institution with the ability to assume control when the apparatus of government breaks down. This has proven invaluable to fractious sectarian leaders, with whom the generals also share a basic social conservatism.

Ibrahim Abuoaf completed, in 1985, a Ph.D. thesis in which he examined the degree of political participation among educated Sudanese. Abuoaf used the chi square technique to determine the extent to which electoral and campaign activities, office seeking, attendance at political meetings and participation in demonstrations were dependent on level of education, age, social background and marital status. He found a close relationship between political participation and social background; in particular, individuals from traditional rural backgrounds were more likely to seek public office at local and national levels, and to become involved in campaign and mobilization activities.(4) (Abuoaf made no comment on the connection between "traditional rural backgrounds" and allegiance to the Mahdist family, which, as we have seen, is highly influential in parts of rural Sudan.)

Some of Abuoaf's most important findings, however, were outside the parameters of his actual research. He observed that two important (and interrelated) variables to be considered in any study of political life in the Sudan are tribal life and Islam. These are the basis of Sudanese norms and values. The methodology of determining political participation in industrialized societies (which Abuoaf adopted, for want of an alternative), measures most appropriately a type of participation based on competitive, individualistic values and norms. This is not appropriate in the Sudan, where "cultural norms and values are derived from a cooperative,

group-oriented model of life emphasizing consensus and compromise rather than competition." Where western political institutions are imposed, "the functions of society will continue to be performed outside the formal structure." (5)

Abuoaf's study supports our efforts, in this section, to assess political participation more through historical analysis than by emphasizing political institutions. The approach will also provide a framework for the later consideration of the economic and cultural dimensions of development.

4.1.1 Issues in History

4.1.1.1 The First Parliamentary Period (1956-1958)

The classic rivalry of Sudanese politics, between the Mahdist Umma Party and the party favoured by the Khatmiyya (which has had several incarnations) conceals intra-party splits of importance to our understanding of the dynamics of religion and politics in the Sudan. For example, there is on occasion a division within a mainstream party between sectarian and non-sectarian interests. In the 1953 elections, the National Unionist Party (NUP) was the one backed by the Khatmiyya; but it was also the party of the charismatic Isma'il al-Azhari, who had the support of younger members somewhat hostile to a sectarian affiliation. The party won 46 of the 92 seats in the House of Representatives. "It was not Sayyid 'Ali [al-Mirghani]'s influence alone which had made success possible," Woodward observes, commenting on the popularity of al-Azhari. (6)

However, the "secular" leader's popularity proved to be his downfall. "Once al-Azhari began to show some independence of the religious patron...he encountered a sustained and ultimately successful attempt to remove him from power. Sayyid 'Ali al-Mirghani and Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi, arch-rivals since the 1920s, came together to ensure the preservation of their political influence into the independence era." What al-Azhari did that initiated Sayyid Ali's defensive posture was to begin making contacts with Mahdist notables. (There were other areas of disagreement; this was the catalyst.) Sayyid Ali pre-empted him by arranging to meet with Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi himself. At the first meeting of the two leaders in 20 years, it was agreed that some members of parliament from a splinter party, who were followers of Sayyid Ali, would vote with the Umma Party against al-Azhari's government on the budget. Rather than producing an Umma-Khatmi coalition government, however, this effort generated violent street demonstrations in support of al-Azhari. The Sayyids' second effort was more successful. The Umma party supported Sayyid Ali's call for a national government of all Sudanese political parties. One month after independence day, al-Azhari reluctantly formed such a national government. Five months later, on July 5, al-Azhari was replaced as Prime Minister by Abdallah Khalil, an Umma party member who nevertheless headed a coalition of khatmi MPs who now called themselves the People's Democratic Party.

In opposition, al-Azhari had little choice but to espouse a more radical "secular nationalism." His party's campaign banner in the 1958 elections was "'la qadash fil-siyasah'--no holiness in politics."(7)

This account of back room dealings at the micro level could be repeated, with variations, for every parliamentary period in Sudanese political history. The Mahdist Ansar and Khatmiyya were ancient rivals, but they had more in common with each other than had either with outside actors, including secular and perhaps until recently fundamentalist politicians. Their rivalry has made parliamentary government unworkable in the Sudan, and their mutuality of interest--the conservatism of the "establishment"--has worked against meaningful participation for "outsiders" in the political process.

4.1.1.2 The Abboud Regime (1958-1964)

Once al-Azhari had been removed, the process of government should have run more smoothly. Instead, Prime Minister Abdallah Khalil quickly found himself out of control. He was unable to persuade Umma Party leaders to accept "reasonable" prices for cotton, although low-priced Egyptian cotton was capturing Sudan's traditional markets. (This had disastrous results: Sudan's foreign currency reserves sank from U.S. \$177,940,000 in 1956 to U.S. \$80,360,000 in May 1958.) Egypt, long-time supporter of the Khatmiyya, made trouble for the Umma prime minister in other ways. The country refused to budge from its assertion that a 1929 agreement concerning the division of the Nile waters should be the basis of a new accord between Egypt and the Sudan. The Sudan objected both to the terms of the agreement and to the fact that it was signed while the country was "occupied." The second bone of contention concerned Egyptian border claims renewed February 1, 1958, a few weeks before the scheduled Sudanese elections. Finally, Egypt was maintaining a quiet economic blockade against its neighbour. Sudanese holding jobs in Egypt suddenly found themselves unemployed, and Egypt cut down drastically on its purchases from the Sudan. There began to

be rumblings in Khartoum that another leader could perhaps deal with Egypt more effectively than Abdallah Khalil. This view was especially popular given Khalil's advocacy of an aid agreement with the United States under the Eisenhower doctrine. The Prime Minister was becoming known as the "Nuri Said," or pro-Western leader, of the Sudan."(8)

On November 16, 1957, Prime Minister Abdallah Khalil, realizing he could no longer control the government, handed over power to General Ibrahim Abboud.

To Abdallah Khalil, the coup was to be the continuation of his politics by other means. It was some days before the irony of the situation sank in. Abdallah Khalil, the pillar of British establishment tradition in the Sudan, pioneer member of the advisory council, of the legislative council and then of Parliament, who had climbed all the carefully placed rungs to self-government and independence, had used a British-trained army to dismantle the whole structure--and with it the generally accepted British army tradition that soldiers do not meddle in politics.(9)

Khalil intended the period of military rule to be short. Abboud, however, eliminated the former prime minister's place in the post-coup government and imprisoned him.

The question of interest to this study is, why was the handover permitted, without protest, by the Sudanese people? Why has the "strongman" become such an accepted part of the country's political history? Part of the answer lies simply in the country's diversity; short of some system of proportional representation, or a decentralized federal arrangement, a powerful leader who can appeal to national unity is essential for integration.(10) But the tradition of the Mahdi, must, at some level, play a role. "The messianic doctrine of Islam is...an

exceedingly important element to be taken into account in the constitution of the Muslims of Africa," Trimmingham comments. "Whenever the people have been oppressed by their rulers, Mahdis have tended to arise in response to their longing for a deliverer."(11)

Perhaps at no time in Sudanese history was the link between sectarian and military interests stronger than during the Abboud era. "The support of the Khatmiyyah establishment became crucial to the regime's survival (or at least to its retention of any claim to legitimacy)."(12) The length of Abboud's rule may be considered a testimony to the power of combining religious loyalty with coercive power as sources of allegiance in the Sudan.

In return for their support, the Khatmiyya were raised by Abboud to a position of economic influence. In part because of the favouritism shown by the British towards the Mahdist sect, the Khatmiyya came to Sudanese independence as small town and country traders. It was only with the Abboud regime and the coincidence of interests of the sect with the military that the Khatmiyya rose to national prominence. The military was interested in prestige expenditure--dams, roads, bridges, street lighting, factories. In some cases, such as the building of Port Sudan, the projects supported directly the trading interests of the Khatmiyya. These were also bolstered by the preferential granting of import licences.(13) In other projects, supporters of the sect expanded their role to become contractors, wholesalers, and middlemen between indigenous firms and representatives of foreign states, which had begun to pour investment and economic assistance into the Sudan. Despite the foreign capital, the junta accumulated a national deficit of \$75 million.(14) In the process a new elite was born.

2 of/de 2

elements of Northern Sudanese society. In Numeiri's hands, the issue culminated in the invocation of the September laws and the re-kindling of war in the south.

Mansour Khalid (who, as a key bureaucrat early in the Numeiri era, may not be totally impartial) observes that the Numeiri years did make a difference in the Sudan, in terms of increasing the circle of political participation. There are certain realities about the Sudan, he wrote in 1985, that the sectarian parties currently in control must accept. Among others, these include the experience of southern autonomy; and regionalization, "with the different regions accustomed to exercise certain powers and reluctant to give them up." (30)

Nevertheless, it seems that the fundamentals of Sudanese society remain the same. The ease with which the traditional parties stepped into Numeiri's shoes in the April 1986 elections suggests that there has been no disruption of the age-old understanding between the rulers and the ruled.

4.1.1.5 To the Present

The interpretation offered of the events of April 1985 by the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement is that there was initially a popular uprising against Numeiri; and then, a seizure of power from the people by the military.

General Swar el Dahab, head of the transitional military council (TMC) that ruled the Sudan for a year following the uprising, is an affiliate of the Khatmiyya sect. He was considered the least objectionable candidate to the majority of political factions in Khartoum. (31) Twelve northerners, six from the Gezira, made up Swar el Dahab's Cabinet, although some southern

debates. Between the parties, "such differences as existed were personal rather than ideological." (16) Leclaire comments that the governments of Ahmed Mahgoub (1965-1966), Sadiq el Mahdi (1966-1968) (the current Sudanese Prime Minister) and Ismail al-Azhari (1968-1969) "were preoccupied with simple survival and were never able to properly deal with issues confronting them." (17)

It was during this period that regionalist parties became active in the Sudan, including the Beja Congress and some parties in the west. The situation in the south worsened, dramatically so after the massacres of civilians in Juba and Wau by Northern soldiers in July 1965. The bloodshed seemed to highlight the failure of the Khartoum Round Table Conference, organized by the interim government of Sir al-Khalim al-Khalifa in March 1965 to find a political solution to the "southern problem."

Bechtold comments that neither parliamentary nor military regimes in the Sudan have performed well at providing channels of communication between the ruler and the ruled. (18) In fact, it is during periods of civilian rule that the elitist style of Sudanese politics is most apparent, if only because of the contrast with the ideal of democratic participation. Not that political leaders form a clique, unapproachable by outsiders. In fact, there is every appearance of lively political activity. Bechtold draws the distinction: "Although individual politicians, like most of their countrymen including military officers, have been personable and accessible, their many social contacts amounted to little more than "talk." But kalaam and especially kalaam fadi (Arabic for "talk" and "empty talk," respectively, a favourite local description for much of the ongoing conversation and argumentation) could not lead to genuine "interest aggregation," because major political decisions remained the prerogative of

a few selected individuals. Everyone else was viewed as not sophisticated enough to participate meaningfully, and was therefore expected to follow the edicts of the leaders."(19)

We know that the links between religion and politics are strong, and that Sufism in the Sudan is characterized by a respect for hierarchy and by a tendency towards exclusiveness. Modern Sudanese history seems to confirm that political actors are influenced in their behavior by these values. There is at least circumstantial evidence that the problem of a lack of meaningful dialogue between the rulers and the ruled, without which true political participation is impossible, may be linked to religious aspects of the Sudan's political culture.

4.1.1.4 The Numeiri Years (1969-1985)

General Jaafar Numeiri came to power with a commitment to destroy sectarian influence in the Sudan. As Numeiri has family connections to the Ansar, and in light of subsequent events, some doubt the sincerity of that commitment, but propaganda of the May Revolution certainly included the replacement of the ruling clique as a prominent goal. In any event, it seems that the loyalties of Sudanese were such that, despite his undoubted charisma, Numeiri was unable to transfer political allegiance completely to himself. Moreover, although he broadened the ranks of the economic elite with some of his close supporters, the strong relationship of Sudanese capitalists and economic decision-makers with the sects did not diminish during the Numeiri years. During the latter part of his reign, Numeiri had to deal with the growing strength of fundamentalism in the Sudan, as ideological aspects of religion grew almost to match institutional elements in their importance.

Numeiri entered political life as the figurehead leader of a group of leftist civilians. He quickly assumed control. In contrast to Abboud's example, Numeiri chose not to ignore the leading religious families but to eliminate them. His first move was to attempt (unsuccessfully in the long run) to break the army's traditional links with the Khatmiyya sect. Then, on May 29, 1969, all political parties except for the Communist Party were outlawed. In March of the following year, Numeiri ordered the bombardment of Aba Island, the Mahdist party stronghold, by MiG fighters. Three thousand people were killed, and the backbone of the Ansar private army was destroyed.

Mansour Khalid maintains that it was not Numeiri who had wished to destroy the Ansar, but people around him, in particular members of the Communist Party. Numeiri's family owes allegiance to the Ansar and Numeiri "refused all attempts by the axe-grinders among the Communists and Arabists to go ahead and destroy Ansarism." In fact, he decided to refurbish the Ansar mosque in Omdurman and resurrect the Mahdi's mosque in Gadir, western Sudan."(20) The issue of Numeiri's commitment is important, as in fact the power of the sects was not broken. Did Numeiri owe them some grudging respect, or was his failure to challenge sectarian influence simply another illustration of the endurance of a religiously-based social structure?

The current popularity of Numeiri-bashing obscures the fact that at least during the first years of his rule he managed to break the political deadlock that had immobilized the Sudanese government. "In the decade from 1969 to 1979 more was achieved than during the whole of the post-independence period before it. It was only in the latter years of his presidency that Numeiri took too great a degree of personal control and strong leadership turned into dictatorship."(21)

In terms of political institutions, Numeiri built an elaborate participatory network. This included popular (for youth, women, village development, and so on) and functional (based on profession or occupation) organizations; peoples' local government councils, in a pyramid structure based in every village, town section, market area, industrial area and nomadic encampment; the Sudan Socialist Union (SSU), the only legal political party for most of the Numeiri years; and central government institutions, of which the most important were the presidency and the people's assembly. Constituencies for the latter were based on geographical boundaries, but popular and functional organizations and local government councils were represented, and some members were appointed by the president.(22) --

Niblock observes that the political institutions of the Numeiri era were for the most part conceived while the regime had a radical perspective, but had their principal development after that perspective had changed. (The general's flirtation with the left was short-lived. The witch hunt of Communists in government, the civil service, the police and the military began in 1970. By 1971, when Numeiri was restored following an unsuccessful Communist coup, the idealistic soldier had been transformed into a pragmatist.) "The institutions were purveyed, therefore, more as representative channels through which the Sudanese population as a whole, regardless of class, social group or previous political allegiance, could determine the policies through which, and the people by whom, they were governed."(23)

During parts of the Numeiri era, the people's assembly functioned relatively effectively as a forum for national opinion. In the course of three elections held during the 1970s, Numeiri's opponents often won seats,

owing to splits in the SSU vote. There were open debates in the National Assembly following the 1978 elections.(24)

Essentially, however, power remained at the centre, and the political institutions did not serve as effective channels of communication between the ruler and the ruled or more importantly, the ruled and the ruler.

The Sudan Socialist Union was intended as a grand instrument of national integration. In 1981, Woodward, observed that "the SSU, with some five million members [out of a Sudanese population of 21 million] has never functioned effectively, and frequently confuses rather than clarifies the process of governance when its members act in competition with the civil service and constitutional instruments of government."(25)

According to Niblock, research undertaken between 1974 and 1977 indicated that very few of the SSU basic units were active in any sense, and that those that were remained almost totally uninvolved in liaison between the SSU leadership and the people. "While the SSU was not totally moribund at the basic unit level, therefore, it did not constitute an effective vehicle for political communications: either for the communication of popular perceptions to the leadership, or of the leadership's perceptions to the populace."(26)

Niblock also observed that the Sudanese people were more confused than enlightened by the welter of institutions at the grassroots level; they could not distinguish between the SSU basic units, local government councils, village development committees and branches of popular and functional organizations. Moreover, at the local level, these tended to involve all the same individuals.

For purposes of this study, we must ask to what degree the failure of Numeiri's democratic experiment had to do with Sudanese political culture, in particular the religious elements.

Jackson and Rosberg attribute the SSU's lack of success to "a generic feature of efforts of personal rulers to found new organizations based on modern rationalist principles--namely, that neither the ruler nor his organizational builders ordinarily are free of the personal-factional forms of suspicion and rivalry that the organizations they are attempting to build are intended to supplant." There is no reason why the ruler should trust his organizational builders any more than he trusts others. "In practice, he cannot place his full confidence in them, nor they in him." (27)

Broadening the circle of political participation--political development, in our definition--was one of the key objectives of the May revolution. Regional development is an important measure of a country's overall political development, particularly in a heterogeneous country such as the Sudan with a predominantly rural population. Despite a lot of rhetoric, however, this seems not to have been one of Numeiri's personal goals.

Darfur, arguably the most underdeveloped region in the whole Sudan, can serve as an example of how Nimeiri operated.... In 1980 Nimeiri appointed el-Tayeb el Mardi as governor of Darfur. Yet the people of Darfur rejected him in a violent protest. The issue was not el-Tayeb or his qualities. He was from outside the region. The people wanted one of their sons to manage their affairs. Ahmed Ibrahim Derieg, their choice, was so obviously popular with his people that Nimeiri reluctantly appointed him, to arrest further problems there, but refused absolutely to give him any central government support. At the time Derieg was appointed governor, Darfur was suffering from an acute supply problem. Yet Derieg was in Khartoum for several months endeavouring to talk to Nimeiri about the difficulties

of his region. Nimeiri would not give him audience so Derieg never had the chance to meet him and eventually left the country in protest. Darfur was then left for more than eight months, in spite of serious problems, without a governor, as a lesson, doubtless, for having a mind of its own."(28)

As a country divided, in part by sectarian differences, the Sudan responded well to rule by a charismatic strongman. Once that leader had forsaken the democratic ideals with which he came to power, however, he was not easy to replace. There were few alternatives; and the tendency of the Sudanese to respect authority, an attitude in part religiously engendered, helped to protect Numeiri in his last years.

Gurdon dates the beginning of the Sudan's slide into political and economic chaos to the 1976 coup attempt by Sadiq al-Mahdi and Sharif El Hindi, the Mahdist leaders (supported by Libya, Ethiopia and indirectly by the USSR). In 1977 Numeiri initiated a "national reconciliation" with these enemies (in order to co-opt his rivals), but this initiative "led to a far greater degree of sectarianism and chauvinism in the Sudan and also increased the role of Islam."(29) In addition to offering Sadiq al-Mahdi a seat in Cabinet, Numeiri made overtures towards Hassan el-Turabi, leader of the Moslem Brotherhood. This marked a watershed in Sudanese politics, as Numeiri was reaching outside the circle of pragmatic politics in which he and the traditional families were locked, to appeal to an essentially ideological organization.

Exactly why he did this will be dealt with more fully later in the chapter. Perhaps Numeiri felt that he required support at some level of the intelligentsia, and he was unwilling to give that support to leaders of the Communist Party. But Numeiri's concern with bringing about an Islamic restoration in the Sudan mirrored a longtime preoccupation of certain

elements of Northern Sudanese society. In Numeiri's hands, the issue culminated in the invocation of the September laws and the re-kindling of war in the south.

Mansour Khalid (who, as a key bureaucrat early in the Numeiri era, may not be totally impartial) observes that the Numeiri years did make a difference in the Sudan, in terms of increasing the circle of political participation. There are certain realities about the Sudan, he wrote in 1985, that the sectarian parties currently in control must accept. Among others, these include the experience of southern autonomy; and regionalization, "with the different regions accustomed to exercise certain powers and reluctant to give them up." (30)

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ministers were appointed "as an afterthought." "In effect the absentees from the Cabinet were not only Southerners; elements from other marginalized areas and sections of the society were also absent, for example, the Fur, the Nuba, the Beja and women." (32)

The TMC will be remembered for its inability or unwillingness to alleviate the hardship associated with the Sudanese famine. Famine relief was left largely to Sudanese individuals and groups, and to the international community. The TMC was "more concerned about political issues than the wider issue of famine." (33)

The results of April 1986 elections seemed to confirm expectations that Sudanese politics would return to a pre-Numeiri mode. Represented in government were, from the Umma Party, Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi, two members of the five-member Supreme Council and eight Cabinet ministers. The Union Democrat Party, which has Khatmiyya leadership, contributed the Chairman of the Supreme Council, Ahmed Al-Mirghani, one other Council member, and seven Cabinet Ministers. There was one southerner on the Supreme Council and three southern cabinet ministers holding minor portfolios (Local Government, Irrigation and Hydro-Electric Power, Transport and Communications.) The Minister of Peace and the (so far phantom) National Constitutional Conference, Mohamed Ahmed Yagi, came from the "new forces," which included the trade unions. (34)

Sadiq al-Mahdi had led the government before, one of the series of short civilian-led regimes that followed the October Revolution in 1964. "In the opinion of many astute Sudanese and foreign observers, Sadiq al-Mahdi set up the first effective political machinery since the country had won its independence." (35) Unfortunately, opposition to his economically progressive policies from inside his own party had led to

Sadiq's downfall. The collapse of the Sudanese government in August, 1987 suggests that history is in the process of repeating itself.

4.1.2 Insiders and Outsiders

The historical survey above should give some indication of the Sudanese political system, of the predominant role of the Mahdist and Khatmiyya sects and of the recurrence of military strongmen who have taken control when the machinery of government has broken down.

To conclude this section of the chapter, we would like to give some consideration to who has been left out of the arrangement.

It is clear that southerners have always been on the periphery of the system, and that Sudanese from other regions, in particular the west, have not always received adequate consideration in political decision-making. Some authors feel that the problem is racial; that there is a "subconscious prejudice" in the north not only against southern Sudanese, but against others of non-Arab stock--the Nuba, Beja, Fur and Ingassena, among others.(36) These issues will receive further consideration later in the chapter.

Women in the Sudan have achieved a certain level of political (as well as economic and educational) participation. At independence, the handful of women who had completed a secondary education were entitled to vote under terms of the graduates' constituency. Following the 1964 revolution, all adult women acquired the right to vote at eighteen and the right to stand for election at the age of 30. Numeiri's constitution prohibited discrimination on the grounds of sex, and more employment opportunities were made available to women in the professions and in government.

In theory, the fundamentalist atmosphere that pervaded the latter part of the Numeiri era might have supported increased involvement by women in Sudanese political life. "Islamic doctrine in essence undoubtedly protects woman, elevates her to a status almost equal to that of man and guarantees certain privileges which were withheld from the Western woman for centuries."(37) However, due in part to the patriarchal society that pre-existed Islam, there are still "countless number [of women] who are...ruled by the law of the family which acknowledges no higher authority than that of the father."(38) Until social progress brings about changes in family law and in attitudes, meaningful political participation on a large scale will be impossible.

Traditional women tend to be strong supporters of Sufi orders. In fact, "the solidarity of women in their support of the Khatmiyya surpasses that of the men."(39)

Although the Communist Party of the Sudan (which was legalized only in 1964) has played an important historical role, in particular in the October revolution that overthrew Abboud and in the early Numeiri years, the party remains on the fringe, an option of the urban intelligentsia who in recent years have turned more and more to fundamentalist organizations.

The overwhelming political importance of the tariqa makes it important to consider the degree of political participation permitted within the framework of a Sudanese brotherhood.

Ahmed al-Shahi observes that followers have direct access to the hierarchy of an order, especially to its head. Most Sufi orders maintain headquarters in Khartoum, where followers can call in to receive baraka or to ask for help.(40)

The sects recognize and are making adjustments to cope with the political challenge of fundamentalism. For example, "if the young support the khatmiyya politically, such as at local and national elections, then the Order's hierarchy does not pay much attention to their religious commitment, though it hopes that one day they will return to the fold." (41)

Adherents of the brotherhoods believe that the Sufi organizations stand for flexibility and moderation in religion and politics. Certainly on the political spectrum, if fundamentalist and Communist parties are considered radical, then the tariqa-based parties are essentially conservative. They offer security to their adherents, in this world and the world to come. But this is quite a different concept to the notion of individual participation in decision-making, at whatever level. In fact, leaders of the orders have tended to see themselves as intermediaries between the masses and the educated people in power. (42) The attitude is well summarized in the political slogan of the Khatmiyya party in the 1968 election: "Hurry, or you will get lost, the Khatmiyya is Noah's Ark." (43)

4.2 Winners and Losers: Islam and the Sudanese Economy.

4.2.1 Politics and Economics

In correspondence with the author, Ahmed al-Shahi, while affirming the influence of Sufi orders in politics, commented, "There is no clear economic policy specific to Sufi orders." He observed that "economically, the orders depend on the followers and not, on the whole, the reverse." (44) This study cannot, therefore, offer a clear-cut analysis of the economic platforms of the Sudanese tariqa. Instead, we examine the links between the politically and economically powerful; and then observe the indications of tariqa influence on Sudanese development decisions.

In her groundbreaking analysis of the Sudanese bourgeoisie, Fatima Babiker Mahmoud emphasizes the close relationship between the political and economic elites. Her study is based on interviews with 100 of the most wealthy businessmen in the Sudan, and involves tracing the origin of their wealth through three generations. Of cases studied, 84 per cent belonged to one of the mainstream sectarian political parties--and the interviews were done in the latter years of the Numeiri era, when open identification with these parties was potentially dangerous. Nor is there evidence that elite linkages are breaking down in the new generation; of the younger businessmen studied, 75 per cent belonged to the Umma Party alone.(45)

Among a number of profiles of these "capitalists," Mahmoud tells the story of Banaga, the oldest and most famous trader in Nyala, in the western province of Darfur. Although he was one of the richest men in the province in the 1920s and 30s, Banaga "failed to develop into a wealthy capitalist." His refusal to tap into the political system was one of the main reasons:

Since he was not a member of any of the important religious sects during the colonial period he did not identify with the political system in the Sudan. The possibility of profiting from the colonial government was eliminated by his open hostility to them. His distaste for politics continued into independence and he remained unaligned with any political party.(46)

In what ways could sectarian/political affiliation provide economic advantages? Obviously, through control of economic policy, a consideration that will be examined later in the section. The granting of licences for large-scale agricultural production during the colonial era was made according to British strategic criteria that favoured sectarian leaders. The awarding of import licences, notoriously during the second civilian regime,(47) was not necessarily based on merit; and access to finance is a recognized fringe benefit of sectarian allegiance, given the large

involvement by the tariqa in the Sudanese banking system.

There are three types of banking in the Sudanese system. "The traditional form of money-lending, known as the shail system, is one of the principal causes of rural poverty for farmers and wealth for Northern merchant families."(48) International banks have come into the Sudan mostly to finance agricultural megaprojects, and thereby lend further support to the traditional elites. Islamic Banks, which are a key source of support for the Moslem Brotherhood, have tended to be run by small traders and entrepreneurs. However, the Khatmiyya brotherhood has also profited. "It set up the Islamic Sudanese Bank, which led some observers to believe that its leaders were more concerned with making money than continuing the political debate."(49)

Seventy-eight per cent of the businessmen interviewed by Mahmoud were acquaintances of ministers and deputy ministers. There were also significant instances of ex-ministers forming partnerships with Sudanese businessmen or otherwise becoming senior corporate executives, and of direct familial links.(50)

There is clearly a close relationship between wealth, sectarian allegiance and familial connections. Hence the story of the famous Kameer family, which established the basis for its wealth during Mahdist rule. The family included some of the Mahdi's tribesmen and strong supporters. In the present day, "members of the family were found by the present study to be among the leading 12 in Nyala and among the leading 15 in Port Sudan. In the south, a member of the Kameers was found to be among the leading 12." Three of the leading capitalists in Khartoum are related through marriage to the family, and other wealthy family members reside in Gadarif, Port Sudan and Nyala.(51)

The network of familial connections, of course, extends beyond the very rich. Mahmoud found that the leading members of wealthy families frequently give capital to relatives so that they might invest in retail and trade activities and distribute the wholesalers' and importers' goods.(52) Thus the circle of economic participation is further restricted.

The links between wealth and sectarian allegiance were reinforced during the colonial period. The trading relationship of the Ansar with Great Britain was established, and connections between the Khatmiyya and Egypt were strengthened. According to Mahmoud, agrarian capitalists had "particularly close connections with imperialism."(53) At independence, four of the handful of wealthy merchants in the Sudan were leading members of the Umma party, three of them involved in the production and export of cotton.(54) Two leading merchants were members of the Ashigga party, and their business was the export of livestock.

Although the economic interests of the opposing sects were traditionally different, this changed after the condominium era. "Prior to independence it was possible to relate the Umma Party to the agricultural bourgeoisie and the NUP party to trade. After independence...the overlapping re-investment pattern characteristic of the post-independence period has made such an identification impossible. The local bourgeoisie scattered its investments over all sectors whilst retaining, on the whole, their political affiliations."(55)

The leading group of Sudanese capitalists were found to have the following characteristics: 1) the vast majority of them started business in trade; 2) most of them invested in agriculture but generally maintained their trade activities; 3) they eventually started investing in industry, mainly after independence; 4) patterns of investment thus revealed an intricate overlapping. Although trade was the common base for almost all of them, they generally invested in more

than one sector in the economy and the richest four capitalists in the country were leading businessmen in all four main sectors of the economy.(56)

In 1970, following the massacre on Aba Island, Numeiri confiscated all the property of the Mahdist family. Also, in May 1970, in keeping with the originally socialist objectives of the May revolution, there were sweeping nationalizations and confiscations encompassing banks, trading, agricultural and industrial firms. Mahmoud observes, however, that some of the nationalized firms had already transferred capital outside the Sudan, and that "the new boards of directors appointed by the state proved to be no different from the previous ones. The end result was that the majority of the enterprises taken over by the state incurred heavy losses through mismanagement and profiteering."(57)

In fact, in the course of his "reign" Numeiri found his freedom of action, in the field of economic policy, curtailed by the Sudanese elite. He might choose to limit ties with the Khatmiyya, but he could not overlook the fact that 50 per cent of his government's revenue came from taxes on international trade.(58) Likewise, Numeiri might choose to diversify the Sudan's economy away from cotton. In fact, he attempted this, and ran squarely into determined Mahdist opposition.

The occasion was the much-heralded Breadbasket Strategy of the mid-1970s. The Sudan proposed to re-orient production towards growing food for export. Ambitious targets were set: oilseed exports would increase by 200 per cent by 1985; grain, by 810 per cent; and meat and fish, by 1,070 per cent.(59) The government would do this by pouring resources into the rainfed agricultural sector, a strategy which implied the diversion of money away from the irrigated (cotton) schemes.

Heralded in the Five Year Plan of 1970-75 (which was extended to 1977), the Breadbasket scheme, although it fell far short of targets, in fact achieved impressive increases in mechanized crop production, irrigated area and area under wheat, groundnuts and sorghum.(60) Unfortunately "horizontal expansion of agriculture was achieved at the expense of vertical expansion. The area under production, particularly for food and export crops, increased dramatically during both the extended Five Year Plan and the initial period of the Six Year Plan [1977/78--1982/83]. Because of inadequate water, chemicals and harvest labour, as well as insect infestation and poor weather, however, yields and therefore production of essential crops fell dramatically."(61)

Gurdon cites the Kenana sugar project as a prototypical example of the poor planning associated with the Breadbasket project. The sugar plant was built on new land with Arab money and Western technology and had the ambitious goal of not only making the Sudan self-sufficient in sugar, but also a major exporter. But the transportation infrastructure to bring equipment from Port Sudan to the construction site of the project was almost nonexistent, the power supply was sporadic, and the project was completed two years late. Costs rose from £70 million to £200 million (Sudanese currency). Once in production, managed by expatriates, Kenana performed reasonably well. But the plant barely managed to take up the slack from the three government-run sugar plants, which suffered from poor maintenance, a lack of spare parts and a shortage of seasonal labourers to cut cane. (There have been more recent efforts to rehabilitate these plants. The Sudan is not exporting sugar, but has recently become self-sufficient in that commodity.)(62)

A number of reasons for the failure of the Breadbasket Strategy involved the Mahdist elite. The scheme was forced to rely almost completely on capital from the Arab oil-exporting states. There was indigenous capital in the Sudan, but Sudanese capitalists proved risk-averse. In the long run the strategy failed because the Sudan was not a good place to invest. This was the case largely because projects suffered from insufficient indigenous managerial skills.(63) In fact there were qualified Sudanese managers--in the Gezira, in the bureaucracy, on short-term contracts in Saudi Arabia--who chose not to be involved. The Breadbasket Strategy was starved by the withholding of Sudanese capital and talent.

4.2.2 Economics and Development

What has been the effect of sectarian/political influence on Sudanese economic policies? It is clear that the "system" that has emerged is inequitable for millions of Sudanese, in particular traditional farmers and nomads and people living in the regions.

Between 1956 and 1969, economic policy did not escape the framework set up by the Condominium administration. Until 1962, private sector productive investment was concentrated in the pump schemes and afterwards, in the mechanized dry farming sector. The Abboud Regime's Ten Year Plan of Economic and Social Development, with its emphasis on import substitution and the modern sector, illustrates the neglect displayed by successive Sudanese governments for small farmers and nomads. For the mechanized dry farming sector "the state has built roads, made available research results and advice on agricultural techniques, prepared land and cleared it for cultivation, imported agricultural machinery and offered it to the favoured

few on easy terms. These big agriculturalists were able to obtain loans through the Sudan's Agricultural Banks to finance their operations, and the Bank could also give assistance with the storage and marketing of crops."(64)

The growth of mechanized farming, and the maintenance of the cotton economy that was established during the Condominium era, have depended on the destruction of subsistence farming. This has been done partly through neglect--scarce resources are allocated where they may have a chance of earning foreign exchange--and partly as a matter of strategy. There has been a major effort to absorb pastoralists into commodity markets, and their land has frequently been seized for mechanized farming or meat production schemes. The deterioration of life in the villages and among the nomads has produced literally millions of migrant laborers for the irrigated and mechanized schemes. These labourers have been drawn in large numbers from the west and the south.

Not only can the goals of Sudanese economic planning sometimes be questioned, but there have been problems in the implementation. Money invested by Sudanese administrations in industry has not brought the returns expected, in large part because of the reluctance of private investors to follow up on projects. Between 1959 and 1969, various governments spent £523 million (Sudanese) to establish nine factories (canning, sugar, milk dehydration, onion dehydration, cardboard, and a tannery). Private investors were encouraged, but generally declined, to share in ownership. "Private investment in industry as a whole remained very light."(65)

Khalid makes these observations on the fate of pre-Numeiri plans and strategies:

The Sudan has known development planning since independence, but the fractious party politics did not make it possible for any plan to be carried through. General Abboud's regime, free from partisan dissensions, made an impressive initial attempt on development, e.g. railways, irrigation and agricultural expansion, industrialization, etc. The dissent-ridden regime of the parties that succeeded Abboud did not take off from where the military regime had stopped in spite of all the cries for change, modernization and development voiced in October. The priorities of the parties were completely elsewhere, outfoxing the adversaries in order to capture power. What to do with power was immaterial.(66)

The rhetoric of Numeiri's revolution led to the hope that "the centralized authority of the state could be used to intensify the development effort and bring benefits to a wider cross-section of the population."(67) In fact, economic participation in development worsened during the Numeiri years. The notion that development would require radical changes in the structure of the economy was given up almost at the outset. However, there were hopes for ambitious development projects, which were to be financed with Arab and IMF money. In addition to the Breadbasket Scheme, these included massive public expenditure in transportation and communications, new electric power stations, the exploitation of oil in the Southern Sudan, and the Jonglei canal, which was to divert 20 million cubic metres of water a day away from the Sudd marshlands to irrigate millions of feddans of land in central Sudan and Egypt.

Niblock blames a combination of internal and external factors for the unsatisfactory outcome of many of these projects. The first problem was a deficiency in planning. "The costs and benefits of each project seem to

have been assessed individually, with little attention given to the impact which all the projects together would have on the economy."(68) Nor was incompetence the only problem. "Corruption played a major role. The motivation for many of the projects which materialized at this time could be found more in the financial gain which would accrue to individual ministers and officials than in an impartial assessment of their real value to the economy."(69)

Niblock feels that the Sudanese government lost control over the economy. Large numbers of Sudanese professionals migrated to the Gulf states, and those that stayed at home were rewarded with high salaries and a loosening of exchange and import controls. Migrant remittances were used to purchase imported cars, consumer durables, houses and land, creating a need for more fuel and electricity, and driving the price of real estate (including agricultural land and food) up.(70)

On the theme of corruption, Khalid is the bitter source of many details. He writes of an "Unholy Trinity" of individuals trusted by Numeiri who frustrated development plans (as well as eventually dismantling the political structure established in the early 70s). These included Adnan Khashoggi, the Saudi Arabian billionaire and head of the TRIAD corporation; Dr. Bahaa El Dien Mohamed Idris, Numeiri's state minister for Special Affairs who, among other accomplishments, enlisted South Korean help to establish an audio-visual communications network monitoring the President's office; and Salim Eisa, the Sudanese businessman who made the initial contacts with Khashoggi.

Two incidents are particularly revealing of Numeiri's attempts, in his latter years, to exclude from development planning all but his closest associates. On the first of August 1974, by terms of a contract prepared by Khashoggi's lawyers, Dr. Idris was named as "the authorized representative of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan for the purpose of negotiating and executing, in the name of the Government, such documents and agreements as are required in connection with development projects of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan. This authority includes the execution of all contracts and required financial and credit agreements for the said development projects."(71) The second incident involved Khashoggi more directly.

Adnan found the whole process, whereby Ministers and technocrats would draw up plans for projects which would then be divulged to him by his sources in Nimeiri's palace, to be too tedious and cumbersome. Things could be much simpler if a team of his did our job and decided what the 'real' needs of the Sudan were. Such a team would have, furthermore, access to some vital information and data on how to maximize the profits of TRIAD. The country should be run from the offices of TRIAD. Adnan brought a team of economic experts, allegedly from Stanford University, to take the economy into their hands. The Minister of Finance and I were invited to a tea party at the Presidential palace and presented with a fait accompli; we were introduced to the people who would do our jobs better.(72)

Within a few days the Minister of Finance was informed that Stanford, through TRIAD, would undertake a study to identify which areas of the Sudanese economy required immediate attention, and to suggest solutions. The Stanford proposals included drawing up medium and long-term development plans and supervising their implementation. The finance minister mobilized the political and bureaucratic machine against the scheme and managed to persuade Numeiri that, as Khalid wryly points out, Stanford was "9,000 kilometres to the right of Numeiri's socialist Sudan."

Perhaps obviously at this point, the majority of Numeiri's development expenditures were at the centre. Although new regionalization policies were announced in 1979/80, "the reality...was that the Sudanese government simply did not possess the resources to support them." (73) The starvation of the regions was a primary factor in the re-kindling of the civil war in 1983.

Some writers believe that the systematic underfunding of the regions was more than a sin of omission. In particular, the inability of southern governments, for lack of revenue, to provide social services and to undertake development projects strengthened the central government, as the regional government came to be viewed as weak and incapable of representing the people's interests. (74)

Regional development efforts would appear to be a responsibility of the central government in the Sudan, as Sudanese capitalists have generally not been interested in investing in remote areas. In fact, Mahmoud observes that capital is regularly transferred from the west, the south and Gezira province to other regions, in particular the Khartoum area, and Kassala province.

Pump-scheme agricultural capitalists who were compensated for their schemes after the 1968 'Agrarian Reform' nearly all re-invested their capital from agriculture in industry in Khartoum.... The South...was a source of commercial capital accumulation since before Turko-Egyptian rule and especially during and after the British rule. Some of the leading old commercial capitalists interviewed in Khartoum and Port Sudan had accumulated their starting capital in the south but eventually transferred all of it to Khartoum and Port Sudan. None of the cases studied transferred any of their capital from Khartoum and Port Sudan back to the south. Only one of the family members of these traders re-invested in the South after independence. (75)

The investment problem, of course, is a vicious circle. As resources for infrastructure are increasingly concentrated in the centre, the capital city region becomes ever more attractive for investors and the leaching of resources away from the regions is reinforced.

Development efforts, even in the megaproject sense, were largely suspended by the mid or late seventies. At one point Numeiri ordered all national banks, including the Central Bank, to stop receiving interest. (Even the Saudi Arabian central bank receives interest.) After the introduction of the zakat law, 15 taxes were abolished and the finance minister was left without a source of revenue. (76) The economy generally became a non-issue after the promulgation of sharia laws.

Between the demise of Numeiri's regime in April 1985 and the assumption of control by Sadiq al-Mahdi's government following the 1986 elections, what economic policy there existed in the Sudan was made by international non-governmental organizations, which became exceedingly powerful during the famine. With the Transitional Military Council "determined to make as few decisions as possible," in effect the non-governmental organizations cut up the country among themselves. A journalist at the time described the Sudan as "a textbook example of what routinely goes wrong in aid operations. Large amounts of food donated to famine victims is still sold in markets, food aid depressed agricultural prices while increasing dependency and the country has been introduced to a level of technology it can neither afford nor sustain."

There have been other disturbing drought side-effects here. Some large-scale farmers withheld their staple sorghum crop, speculating that famine and foreign buyers would push prices higher. A...transportation monopoly engaged in what amounted to highway robbery was broken only by the highly praised World University Service of Canada trucking operation. And some

farmers, assuming the world would feed their countrymen, have shifted from food to cash crops.(77)

(Mahmoud confirms that in recent years, there has been a large increase in dura production, mainly for export, and a large decrease in millet production, which is mainly for local consumption.(78))

One of the questions that was posed in the introduction was whether, given that elites have a good deal of power in the Sudan, they in fact have behaved as elites, that is, in a self-interested manner. It would seem from this account of Sudanese economic development that as a group and with individual exceptions, decision-makers in the Sudan have acted to reinforce their positions.

Given that altruism is not the most characteristic quality of any elite, we must be cautious in making a connection between this type of elite behaviour and Islam as it has developed in the Sudan. It is even more difficult to draw a connection between self-interested elite behavior and sectarianism, as not all economic decision-makers have been sectarian leaders. (Numeiri certainly was not, although the influence of the brotherhoods during his regime has been illustrated.)

Moreover, we have chosen in this section not to highlight external factors that have certainly influenced events in the Sudan. Terms of trade deteriorated by 46.7 per cent between 1970 and 1980. The debt burden is now £12 billion.(79)

A conclusion that can be drawn, however, is that Sudanese Islam has not acted to prevent a worsening of the level of economic development. All of these factors: the focus of development effort on the modern sector, the investment pattern of private capital, inactivity or corruption in government, the deteriorating standard of living of the rural

population--together constitute evidence that the majority of Sudanese are not making the economic decisions that have a fundamental effect on their daily lives.

The government of Sadiq al-Mahdi has tended to put off economic decisions pending a settlement of the Sudanese civil war. The next section will deal with issues involved in that conflict as they relate to the cultural aspects of development.

4.3 Cultural Participation

4.3.1 The Long Road Toward an Islamic Constitution

...as a factor in Sudanese politics, the south, being non-Arab and predominantly non-Muslim, has always served to highlight the issue of the Sudan's constitution, and hence of the relationship between Islam and the state. For the political character of Islam has repeatedly worked against attempts both to take the religious sects out of politics and to find a stable compromise to the problem of the south. The unending debates regarding the constitution and the legal system were an expression of the centrality of this issue.(80)

In the Sudan, long years of soul-searching have gone into the quest for a truly Islamic constitution that respects the rights of Sudanese who are not Moslems. This began as early as December 1955, when "southern leaders were talked into voting for an independent united Sudan only after solemn promises by northern politicians that federalism, granting equality to Christianity and English with Islam and Arabic, would be seriously considered by the constitutional subcommittee. However, in December 1957 southern demands for regional autonomy were rejected out of hand by the northern Muslim majority as an expensive facade."(81) The 1958 elections were fought on the constitutional issue, and southerners boycotted the Constituent Assembly after June 1958. The Abboud regime's use of force to

impose Islamization and Arabization has already been discussed.

The contribution of the succeeding parliamentary regime was a draft constitution, never ratified, that was presented to the Assembly in January 1968. A key tenet was the abolition of all laws that conflicted with sharia. Islam was to be the religion of the State and Arabic its official language, although there would be no restrictions on thought or expression. The Communist Party and the Southern Front were opposed to the work on this constitution, but all of the major (sectarian) parties were involved.

"...within the committee there was close collaboration between al-Sadiq al-Mahdi's faction of al-Umma and the Islamic Charter Front (Muslim Brothers) led by [Sadiq's brother-in-law] Dr. Hasan al-Turabi." The coalition between the ICF and Sadiq fell apart when the draft Constitution was not ratified. "However, on the eve of the May 1969 revolution a new coalition emerged, unifying the two factions of al-Umma on an agreed platform with the Khatmiyya-supported Democratic Unionists, which would have paved the way for an acceptance of this Islamic constitution and the establishment of a presidential republic under al-Hadi Mahdi, the leader of the Ansar. But the "free officers" under Numeiri struck first and, in collaboration with the Communists and other leftist and secular nationalist elements, overthrew the regime.(82)

In Warburg's opinion, "the constitutional conflict can...be singled out as a major factor leading to the demise of parliamentary democracy in the Sudan."(83)

Numeiri's compatriots of the May revolution seemed to have found a solution to the constitutional problem that would ensure a degree of cultural participation for northern and southern Sudanese. This was Article 16 of the constitution promulgated in May 1973:

- a. In the Democratic Republic of the Sudan, Islam is the religion and society shall be guided by Islam, being the religion of the majority of its people and the State shall endeavour to express its values.
- b. Christianity is the religion in the Democratic Republic of the Sudan being professed by a large number of its citizens who are guided by Christianity and the State shall endeavour to express its values.
- c. Heavenly religions and the noble aspects of spiritual beliefs shall not be abused or held in contempt.
- d. The State shall treat followers of religions and noble spiritual beliefs without discrimination as to the rights and freedoms guaranteed to them as citizens by this Constitution. The State shall not impose any restrictions on citizens or communities on the grounds of religious faith.
- e. The abuse of religion and noble spiritual beliefs for political exploitation is forbidden. Any act which is intended or is likely to promote feelings of hatred, enmity or discord among religious communities shall be contrary to the Constitution and punishable by law.(84)

There is some question as to whether such a liberal (in the western sense) constitution would have proven acceptable to elements of Northern Sudanese society even in 1972, if they had been consulted. At any rate, changes in Numeiri's power base (its dwindling) and changes in Sudanese society (the growing strength of fundamentalism) rendered the constitution unworkable by the mid-70s.

Numeiri's adoption of laws in 1983 allegedly based on sharia seemed, to outsiders, to be sudden and without reason. There was no consultation with political advisors inside the Sudan, and neither Egypt nor Saudi Arabia, good friends of the Numeiri regime, seem to have been pre-warned. Yet there was a logic to it, as Khalid points out:

Nimeiri knows that Islam is a potent tool. He has seen his erstwhile adversaries still profiting from it in spite of a fifteen year labour by the May revolution to strip them of authority and weaken their power base.

People, particularly in rural Sudan, are still clustering around el Mirghani and el Mahdi....[Nimeiri] was more irritated with the latter who was ready to use openly whatever was left of his power base to challenge Nimeiri politically under the guise of religion. So if the only power el Mahdi had was the Imamate, then Nimeiri would metamorphose into an Imam, the one and only Imam of the Sudan."(85)

These attempts to "metamorphose into an Imam" included having a bay'aa, a pledge of confidence by the people in their leader, written into the constitution. Every Friday a mubay'aa, or swearing allegiance, would be held in a different part of the Sudan. Numeiri would lead the prayers and deliver a heavily political sermon, and then would receive bay'aa given him by local notables. He called these meetings shura and wassiya or consultation. Individuals who made inappropriate (critical) comments were frequently jailed, sometimes on a charge of "obstructing the Islamization of the Sudan."

In reporting these proceedings Khalid observes that Numeiri's bay'aa was invalid on at least three grounds: bay'aa must be given of free will, not under duress; election of the Imam should be a real choice (as it was not in the intensely centralized Numeiri years); and that "in the absence of an electoral college the people must choose their Imam by a public vote." (In the early days of Islam, when there was still a rigid tribal structure, it was fairly clear who should be included in the electoral college. Khalid observes that this is not true in the present day. "In a modern state, like Sudan, the historical bay'aa institution becomes irrelevant. New methods were devised for ascertaining the will of the people, e.g., the ballot box, and there is nothing un-Islamic about having recourse to it."(86)

In 1977, Numeiri had established the Law Revision Committee to study the Islamization of the constitution and the legal system. The Committee was chaired by Dr. Hassan al-Turabi, leader of the Moslem Brotherhood. This appointment recognized the growing strength of fundamentalism, and of the ideological aspects of religion generally, in the Sudan. But the Moslem Brothers had always wielded an influence disproportionate to their small number. At the Round Table Conference convened after the 1964 revolution to find a solution to the "southern problem," the Islamic Charter Front, the political arm of the Brotherhood, "managed to persuade the two largest parties that unless they stood for an Islamic state and forcefully advocated this in the south, they would lose the forthcoming election. With the Southern Politicians unanimously opposed to such a development, this was one of the reasons that the conference broke down." (87) Today, "though weak in the country as a whole, the Muslim Brothers have the ability to paralyse the capital with riots." (88)

The basis for the power of the Moslem Brotherhood is found in two constituencies: lower middle-class entrepreneurs in the cities (petty traders and small industrialists, who oppose the traditional elites) and students, at the university level and at secondary and post-secondary institutions in the western Sudan. (89) Historically, the Moslem Brothers' movement has stressed religious activism towards the solution of social problems, and has been critical of the relatively passive Islam of many adherents of Sufi sects. (90) But in the Sudan, there are familial links between fundamentalists and tariqa supporters, and the two groups are at least tolerant, and often supportive, of each other.

Even the Moslem Brothers were caught off-guard by the timing of Numeiri's "sharia" laws in September 1983. But in the beginning, the reaction was not universally negative. Many supporters of the Moslem Brothers, and a large proportion of the rural poor, were supportive of what they saw as a check on the widespread corruption in the cities. Numeiri's application of the laws, however, quickly engendered widespread disgust. "Sudanese amputated more hands in one year than Saudi Arabians, 'keepers of the Muslim conscience,' did in 55 years. The Riyadh government was embarrassed by [Numeiri's] acts in the name of Islam." (91) At the University of Khartoum in student elections, the Moslem Brotherhood suffered a major defeat for the first time in more than 10 years. (92)

Many of the people convicted under the September laws were not Moslems, and many others would certainly not have been convicted under any orthodox interpretation of sharia. One observer commented: "In Islam, it is not a crime to steal enough to sustain oneself from hunger if one is a poor person otherwise unable to provide for oneself. Yet the majority if not all of the people 'tried' for theft, whose hands or legs have been amputated under Numeiri's so-called Islamic laws, are poor people from the rural Sudan--especially from the South, the west, and the east--who have been lured to the cities in a search for non-existent jobs." (93) Khalid believes that while Numeiri may have believed that he was divinely guided, the sharia trials (on charges of drinking, theft, etc.) were blatantly used to divert in particular urban dwellers from severe economic hardship. "The Sudanese were being asked to exercise self-discipline and accept their lot in this world." (94)

At a celebration on Aba Island marking the end of Ramadan, Sadiq el-Mahdi made a speech before several hundred thousand people denouncing the September laws. He observed that the laws were unjust, and that justice was a pillar of Islam. Sadiq quoted Moslem scholar Ibn Taymiyyah: "God will give victory to a just nation even if it is non-Muslim." He also invoked the Moslem principle of shura or consultation, observing that there had been no such process prior to the promulgation of Numeiri's laws. Sadiq pointed out that Islamic punishment should be part of an entire social order based on Islamic systems of education and justice.(95)

As al-Mahdi is now Prime Minister of the Sudan, responsible for solving the problem of the Islamic constitution, it is worthwhile giving some consideration to his perspectives on Islam and the state.

In defining his concept of an Islamic state he first of all rejected taglid, the uncritical acceptance of Islamic codified doctrines, which he thought had served a useful purpose historically but was nowadays the source of rigidity and inflexibility within Muslim society. Since the basis of Islam is 'accommodation of change' rather than its denial, al-Sadiq advocated social change within the Islamic state even at the expense of introducing far-reaching reforms within traditionally Islamic ways of thinking. These reforms should embrace even the Islamic legislative system.... Since al-Sadiq's ideal state had to be in tune with modernity without losing its Muslim identity, the Islamization of the legal system could not be fully entrusted to the 'ulama, well versed in Islamic law, but had to be undertaken by a group of scholars trained in modern legal systems, familiar with the contemporary social needs and assisted by economists, sociologists, political scientists and statesmen.... Al Sadiq's concept of an Islamic state thus left the door wide open for the introduction of innovations. The Ansar, under al-Sadiq, seemed to be moving towards far-reaching accommodation with modernity, viewing rigidities in contemporary Muslim thought and politics as a major threat to the future of Islam.(96)

Warburg observes, however, that "this line of thinking was totally unacceptable to most Sufi leaders." In 1978, the Islamic Revival Committee was organized under the leadership of the sheikh of the Khatmiyya, Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani. They demanded the unconditional application of the sharia and condemned the Ansar and the Moslem Brothers alike as "Westernized Muslims." (97)

Since his election in 1986, al-Mahdi has talked about replacing "bad sharia" with "good sharia." For most northern Sudanese, some form of Islamic law is essential to cultural participation. The problem is how to go about deriving or creating good sharia. A Khartoum lawyer, Tada Ibrahim, argues that "unless you try to develop sharia from the eleventh century to the twentieth century--unless you can develop it to the legal standards of the twentieth century--sharia can be only a source, a good source, of our laws and of our social structures. It cannot be the source." Hassan Turabi, of course, disagrees: "It's all there--as you would expect it to be in a body of religious law--mens rea [the concept of premeditation], limited liability, procedures to protect human rights, the philosophy of tort. It is a complete system of administrative, constitutional, criminal and philosophical laws." The fundamentalists admit that sharia has not completely evolved, but feel that scholars can bring it up to date through the process of ijtihad or legal reasoning. (98)

Hasan al-Banna, founder of the Moslem Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928, spoke of the creation of an "Islamic order," based on the sharia but not a re-creation of the seventh century. Banna felt that a just equitable society would be guaranteed by the absence of an "aristocratic" religious class in Islam (the ruler would be chosen by the people and bound to them by a social contract) and by the concept of shura or consultation. "In

Islamic political organization, authority to rule derives from men, not God; the ruler receives this authority from 'the people,' who grant it because he will obey the law."(99)

What about the role of non-Moslems in a Sudanese Islamic state? Some sectarian parties during the 1986 elections felt that the whole question should be shelved until a Moslem state had been established. The Umma Party was "prepared to agree that non-Muslims have the right of citizenship, but through what the party calls the 'citizenship pledge or agreement.' This idea dates from the Medina period and concerned relations between the prophet's followers and non-Muslims."(100) More recently, there has been talk of a multiple tier legal system which would distinguish between Moslems and Christians. The issue is evidently a long way from resolution, and progress is likely to depend on a settlement to the Sudanese civil war.

4.3.2 Cultural Self-Determination: The Political Basis

In this section, our consideration of cultural development comes full circle back to the political issue. As we mentioned, the south agreed to participate in a united Sudan only with "a clear understanding and assurance that the South and the North would be two federal states."(101) More than 30 years later, federalism (rather than succession) seems again to be the choice of the south.

Between 1955 and 1972, the Anya Nya guerrilla movement, with primarily Equatorian leadership, carried on a civil war with successive Sudanese governments, all of which believed that a military solution was possible.(102) Numeiri was the first leader (after Sir al Khalim al Khalifa, and the Khartoum Round Table Conference in 1965) to seriously

attempt a political solution.

By terms of the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972, the Southern Region was granted a degree of autonomy. Thirty-five provinces were to be administered from Juba by the Higher Executive Council, and the People's Regional Assembly was delegated the power to legislate in the fields of public order and internal security, administration and "development in the southern region in the cultural, economic and social fields." (103) The Assembly would also be permitted to raise direct and indirect taxes. The Anya Nya was integrated into the national armed forces and into the prison service, where former guerrillas became guards.

According to Niblock, over the mid-1970s, the regional autonomy arrangement in southern Sudan operated with a reasonable degree of success. In the elections of 1973 and 1978, there was more genuine competition at the regional than at the national level, and the assembly functioned as a useful critic of high executive council policy. Divisiveness based on tribalism was not a destructive issue in these early years. (104)

But as Numeiri gradually alienated one after another of his power bases, and began to look for a new source of regime legitimacy in Islam, the Addis Ababa Agreement came under siege.

From the perspective of southerners, the renewal of civil war in this decade was the result of a series of actions by Numeiri: his dismantling of the regional government and assembly, beginning in 1980; his changing of the boundaries of the southern provinces (in part to ensure that natural resources "belonged" to the north); the division of the south into three regions (although some southerners, at least initially, agreed with this move); and Numeiri's decision to transfer Southern Sudanese military

personnel to Khartoum.(105)

The collapse of the Addis Ababa agreement, was not entirely the work of Numeiri. Gurdon comments that "it was a result of pressure from the smaller Nilo-Hametic tribes in Equatoria that the Southern Region was redivided in May 1983. They were scared of Nilotic Dinka and Nuer domination and therefore sought greater autonomy and self-government in Equatoria."(106) However, Numeiri's systematic underfunding and neglect of the southern government was apparently one reason why the regional assembly lost, in the eighties, its ability to overcome tribal rivalries.

The Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army, led by John Garang, is not a secessionist movement. Its solution for the Sudan consists of "a form of regionalism (federalism) that will enable the masses, and not just the elites from the regions, to exercise real power for economic and social development of their regions."(107) The SPLA aspires to create a coalition of all the non-Arab groups (such as Beja, Fur, Nuba and Baggara, and the immigrant community from West Africa) and disadvantaged regions in the Sudan, the east and west as well as the south, to overthrow the Sudanese elite.

Gurdon is one who feels that the SPLA cannot succeed.

Northern Sudan... is united by Islam to a far greater degree than it is disunited by tribalism. Although there are many non-Muslims in the North, apart from the Nuba, the vast majority do profess to be Muslim to some degree. Indeed, the Western regions of Darfur and Kordofan--which the SPLA hopes will be its principal allies--probably has a higher proportion of conservative Muslims than any other part of the country. It follows, then that although there have been several groups advocating autonomy for the West for a fairer share of the economic cake, it is unlikely that there would be general support for the socialist SPLA. In addition, there is the traditional racism of Northern Sudan which would render alliance with the

SPLA difficult in any circumstance. There is also the fear that the government created by such a coalition would be dominated by SPLA Southerners--a situation which would be unacceptable to the majority of the Sudanese. In short, while the SPLA looks set to continue to expand its operations into new regions, it is unlikely to succeed in creating a formal alliance with non-Arab groups. In any case, before it could seriously begin creating such a coalition it would have to gain the support of the predominantly non-Dinka region of Equatoria, something which it has so far singularly failed to do.(108)

The subject of the "traditional racism of Northern Sudanese" is one that must be broached in any discussion of cultural participation in development. Gurdon comments elsewhere that, "religious bigotry in various forms has been one of the principal causes of tension and disunity in the country for decades."(109) Similar observations have been made by Bechtold, who describes a "pervasive haughtiness among northerners toward their southern fellow citizens"(110) that dominates relations in the workplace, marketplace, at cultural events and on the playing field. If this is true--and we did observe in the Sudanese Islamic tradition a tendency towards exclusiveness that might engender "haughtiness," if not religious bigotry--then unity in the Sudan will require more than a political solution.

The Sudanese Prime Minister, Sadiq al-Mahdi, is highly regarded in Northern Sudanese and international circles as a moderate. A recent editorial in The Times of London warned that al-Mahdi is believed inside the Sudan to be "the only man capable of unifying the country and confronting its problems. If he fails, the price will be high."(111) Yet as Prime Minister of a coalition government in 1966-67, al-Mahdi rejected a federal solution to the civil war and advocated the spread of Islam and Arabic throughout the country. The south is bound to remain suspicious of his motives.

A new constitutional conference was to be held in June of 1986, which would decide the contentious issues of a political system for self-determination and the role of Islam in the Sudanese legal system. The conference was given high profile in Sadiq el-Mahdi's government, with Dr. Mohamed Ahmed Yagi appointed as Minister of Peace and the National Constitutional Conference (Yagi was one of few members of the Cabinet with no apparent sectarian affiliations.) But with the government in deadlock, economic problems mounting and war raging in the south, the conference has been indefinitely postponed. The framework for cultural development in the Sudan remains, at the time of writing, uncertain.

This chapter has considered the role of religious elites in the modern Sudan. We have observed that neither civilian nor military regimes have provided effective channels of communication between the rulers and the ruled. Because Sudanese Islam has to a large extent determined the players in the political process, and tended to sanction hierarchical arrangements with much of the power at the top, large sections of the population have been excluded from participating in development decisions.

The chapter has also presented evidence of the overlap between political and economic elites, although the influence of religious elites on economic policy is more difficult to trace.

On the issue of cultural development, we have been concerned with the centrality of the debate over the type of Islamic constitution appropriate to the Sudan. How the problem is resolved will profoundly influence the numbers of Sudanese who have meaningful input into deciding the goals of development. Some consideration was given to the possibilities offered by a federalist political structure as a framework for improved cultural participation.

Notes for Chapter 4

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- 19 Ibid, p. 290.
- 20 Khalid, Dis-May, p. 20.
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- 43 Ibid, p. 36.
- 44 Ahmed al-Shahi, Correspondence with the author, July 25, 1986.

45 Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, The Sudanese Bourgeoisie: Vanguard of Development?, Khartoum University Press, Khartoum, 1984, p. 144.

46 Ibid, pp. 88-89.

47 Ibid, pp. 64-69.

48 Charles Gurdon, Sudan at the Crossroads, Middle East and North African Studies Press Ltd., Cambridgeshire, 1984, p. 70.

49 Ibid, p. 117. In Islamic banks, borrowing is often linked to joint ventures for particular projects. The bank may, for example, keep 25 per cent of the profits of a trading scheme and the trader, 75 per cent. Interest is not paid to depositors, although some may receive shares in the bank instead; and the bank may be expected to secure a large depositor's permission to use his money in a particular way (Ibid, p. 70).

50 Mahmoud, op.cit, p. 144.

51 Ibid, p. 82.

52 Ibid, p. 120.

53 Ibid, p. 151.

54 Ibid, p. 136.

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61 Ibid, p. 40.

62 Ibid, p. 39. Also Gurdon, Risk Analysis, p. 21.

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- 65 Niblock, p. 231. Mahmoud characterizes Sudanese capitalists as a dependent and comprador bourgeoisie, rather than as a progressive one that can expand the forces of production (Mahmoud, op.cit, p. 152).
- 66 Khalid, Dis-May, pp. 62-63.
- 67 Niblock, op.cit, p. 233.
- 68 Ibid, p. 283.
- 69 Ibid, p. 285.
- 70 Ibid, pp. 285-286.
- 71 Khalid, Dis-May, pp. 104-105.
- 72 Ibid, pp. 132-133.
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- 104 Niblock, op.cit, pp. 272-279.
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- 110 Bechtold, op.cit, p. 293.
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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This preliminary study of the influence of Islam on the development of the Sudan has attempted to establish the connection between certain concepts and institutions associated with Islam in the Sudan, the behaviour of leaders and followers, and the country's development.

Adopting a definition of religion that focuses on its social and political utility, we have attempted to identify those aspects of Islam, as it is lived by the Sudanese people, that are potentially relevant to the behaviour of the country's political and economic decision-makers.

In theory, the holistic nature of Islam, signifying as it does "the unity of worship and work, of faith and life, of spiritual and material realities, of economic and spiritual values," makes impossible any discussion of particular characteristics. Every decision, every attitude, every personal quality of a Moslem is meant to be an expression of his religion.

In the Sudan, the historical evolution of Islam has favoured the development of a religion with a proud Arab heritage, structured by Sufi brotherhoods or tariqa and relying on Mahdism for many of its images of

leadership.

The religion has traditionally been strongly institutional in its nature; that is, the social and political aspects of tariqa membership have been more important than points of theology. Under pressure of the fundamentalist revival in the Middle East, moral and legal issues are receiving increasing attention and are working their way into the political agenda of the sects. But there is some evidence that in the Sudan, the tide of fundamentalism has peaked. The tariqa institution has survived many challenges, and will certainly survive this one.

In 1984, Gurdon wrote: "The future leaders of the country are linked to the Islamic fundamentalist movement and to socialist and communist elements rather than to the traditional sects(1)." Our study suggests that he was wrong. The Sudanese political and economic elite is so permeated by sectarian membership and influence that individuals guided by fundamentalist, and in particular socialist and communist ideals, are bound to remain on the periphery for a long time to come.

The Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army is guided by socialist ideals. That is one reason why its victory, in the sense of acquiring leadership of a united Sudan, is unlikely. Another reason is the blend of Arabism and exclusiveness in Sudanese Islam. Most Northern Sudanese would be unwilling to accept as legitimate a government dominated by Southerners or for that matter, other Sudanese of non-Arab origins.

In addition to a certain exclusiveness, a tendency to categorize individuals and groups into insiders and outsiders, Sufism has promoted a respect for hierarchy in the Sudan, an acceptance of the notion that leaders and followers have certain prescribed roles. There is mutual

responsibility in this relationship, and certainly Sudanese have risen to reject their leaders when the abuse of leadership has become blatant. But leaders have generally been given a great deal of latitude in making development decisions--a style of government that is essentially in conflict with development as we have defined it in this study. In fact, the passivity displayed by the Sudanese people in this respect is in contrast with the social activism promoted by Islam.

Military strongmen have always played an important role in Sudanese government. This is in part a function of the shared conservatism and overlapping interests of sectarian and military elites, and also a solution to the frequent power vacuum caused by the stagnation of parliamentary government. But the mahdist or messianic tradition in Sudanese Islam may also be a factor. Numeiri, while seeking the destruction of the Ansar or at least their relegation to a non-political role, shaped himself into the type of charismatic religious leader that was the inspiration of his adversaries.

One hypothesis of this study was that British colonialism acted to reinforce structures in Sudanese society that had been established by Islam, and consequently had some effect on the country's style and pace of development. We have given evidence that the Condominium administration acted to reinforce the political and economic dominance of the leading religious families; (although the former, especially, was never its intent), at the expense of "the basically anarchic forces of popular Mahdist Islam."

The inconsistency of British policy towards the Khatmiyya and the Ansar--promoting the interests of first one, and then the other--contributed greatly to institutionalizing, in the political system, the longstanding rivalry between the sects that has "strangled parliamentary government in the Sudan." The alliance of the British with the Mahdist leadership during the flowering of Sudanese nationalism forced the Khatmiyya to politicize their age-old relationship with Egypt, thus adding a foreign dimension to Sudanese sectarian rivalries. The British were also instrumental in forcing an alliance between "secular nationalism" and the tariqa, thereby blocking the development of moderate secular political movements.

The overlap between political and economic elites that characterizes the Sudanese social structure today had its basis during the Condominium era. Essentially, the British attempted to use economic "goodies"--pump schemes and agricultural licences--to divert the tariqa from their political interests. The attempt was unsuccessful. But the reinforcement of political with economic privilege placed permanent restrictions on the circle of development participation in the Sudan.

The Condominium policy of "separate development," a policy which emerged from the differential relationship of the British with northern and southern Sudanese, has been a primary factor in the relegation of the south to last place in development decisions.

While the role of Islam in the formation of political and economic elites is clear, it has proven difficult to directly attribute certain types of behaviour, in the sense of specific development decisions, to the influence of Sudanese Islam.

This is in part because of the answer to another of the study's questions: whether Sudanese elites have tended to act in a self-interested manner. The fruits of government by religious elites in the Sudan have included: sectarian rivalry in civilian regimes, attacks on traditional farmers and nomads, the systematic underfunding of the regions, and the inability of successive regimes to devise a constitution that permits the cultural self-determination of the south. Elites have used the instruments of the state--policy, law, and sometimes force (as well as economic instruments--the directing or withholding of investment) to reinforce their positions.

There has been no significant and permanent broadening of the spectrum of groups represented in decision-making circles. Regional development initiatives, including the historic Addis Ababa agreement, have failed in the long run. And although political talk is a popular Sudanese pastime, and the Sufi sects in theory facilitate communication between decision-makers and the populace, there has been very little meaningful dialogue between the rulers, civilian and military, and the ruled. In this context, the accountability of decision-makers has not been a real issue.

With the economy stagnant, the Sudan would have to depend on a transfer of wealth away from the powerful in order to achieve a genuine improvement in economic development. Despite the altruistic acts of individuals (on which some Islamic societies have tended to rely, rather than on government social services and welfare), there is no indication that this redistribution has taken place.

On the issue of cultural participation, freedom of religious observance has been permitted during various periods of Sudanese history. Marring the record are Abboud's Islamization initiatives (with which the current Prime Minister agreed, in a former incarnation) and excesses committed during Numeiri's latter days. Except briefly during the early Numeiri years, southern Sudanese (as well as many from other disadvantaged regions) have not had effective input into defining the goals of Sudanese development.

While direct causation is difficult to prove--that the exclusive and hierarchical aspects of Sudanese Islam led to these problems--it is obvious that the influence of Islam did not prevent a breakdown in communications between the rulers and the ruled.

This is not a necessary outcome. We have learned that human equality (although perhaps expressed as equality of opportunity) is a foundation of Islam; and that "collaboration [however interpreted] is one of the fundamentals of Islamic politics."

Collaboration would appear to be essential to the solution of the Sudan's constitutional problems. The outcome of the debate over an Islamic constitution will be a test of the country's commitment to cultural development.

The mere fact that the issue has always been on the agenda of Sudanese governments suggests that some form of Islamic legal system (far removed from Numeiri's September Laws) is important to the cultural well-being of northern Sudanese.

The institution of such a legal system is not necessarily incompatible with the effective participation of southern Sudanese. A federal political arrangement, or at the least a variegated legal system, with non-Moslem Sudanese exempt from some sharia-based provisions, might satisfy the cultural development needs of both northerners and southerners. (A proposed "multiple tier" legal system, which has received some attention in recent months, suggests by its name a hierarchical regime in which citizens are classed according to religion. We hope that the label does not come to reflect reality.)

This preliminary analysis has suggested many avenues for further research. For example:

- o The potential within the brotherhoods to involve adherents meaningfully in the political process has perhaps not been fully exploited. Exploration of the nature of the hierarchy within the tariqa might open up exciting development possibilities.
- o More specific data on the economic involvement of the leading tariqa, perhaps in particular sectors, would contribute greatly to our understanding of the workings of the Sudanese macro-economy.
- o Further consideration should be given to Sudanese foreign relations, and to elite linkages with political and economic decision-makers in other countries.
- o The nature of the relationship between traditional Sudanese Islam and the fundamentalist movement merits a more detailed analysis, especially as the new generation of fundamentalist young people attempt to work their way into positions of authority.

This paper has explored the relationship between religion and development in the Sudan. In particular, we have been concerned with the impact of Islam, as it has evolved in the Sudan, on progress towards increased political participation, economic equity and cultural self-determination. We have considered the role of religious elites historically and in the modern Sudan. We have also considered the contribution of British colonialism towards intensifying and institutionalizing elite rivalry. That contribution was substantial. But many of the problems of Sudanese development--especially those related to underdevelopment of the regions, and lack of communication between the rulers and the ruled--have indigenous roots. Although Sudanese Islam includes some principles (such as shura) and institutions (the consultative process within Sufi brotherhoods) which promote widespread participation in the development process, its influence by and large has blocked the attainment of that goal.

Note for Chapter 5

1 Charles Gurdon, Sudan at the Crossroads, Middle East and North African Studies Press Ltd., Cambridgeshire, 1984, p. 118.

APPENDIX A
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Social and Economic Indicators

	1960	1970	1975	1980	Base
Population					
Total (mid-year, 1000s)	11228.0	13849.0	16012.0	18681.0	
Age structure (%)					
0-14 years	43.7	43.7	43.8	44.2	45.0
15-65 years	53.2	53.4	53.4	53.0	52.1
65 years and older	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9
Urban population (% of total)	10.3	16.4	20.4	24.8	19.5
Population density					
Per km ² of total area	4.5	5.5	6.4	7.5	29.5
Per km ² of agric. land	16.7	20.5	23.5	27.3	94.1
Demographic characteristics					
Crude birth rate (per 1000)	46.5	46.7	47.0	46.8	47.9
Crude death rate (per 1000)	24.5	22.1	20.3	18.7	19.2
Life expectancy at birth					
Total (years)	39.6	41.8	43.9	46.2	47.4
Male	38.6	40.6	42.7	44.8	
Female	40.8	41.7	45.3	47.8	
Total fertility rate	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	
Health and nutrition					
Population per physician	33420.0	14060.0	11440.0	8800.0	27420.6
Population per nurse	3030.0	1720.0	1290.0	1410.0	3456.2
Population per hospital bed					
Total	980.0	920.0	1000.0		1183.2
Urban	130.0	190.0	450.0		380.6
Rural	4400.0	5120.0	1760.0		3177.5
Per capita calorie supply					
(% of requirements)	83.3	91.2	90.6	100.7	88.0
Per capita protein supply					
(grams per day)	64.6	65.8	64.0	68.9	51.2
Infant mort. rate (per 1000)	168.0	150.4	138.0	124.5	
Child (aged 1-4) death rate	40.1	32.4	27.2	21.9	25.7
Education					
Primary school enrollment ratio					
Total	25.0	38.0	47.0	51.0	63.9
Male	35.0	46.0		60.0	73.6
Female	14.0	29.0	34.0	43.0	51.6
Secondary school enrollment ratio					
Total	3.0	7.0	14.0	16.0	12.5
Male	5.0	10.0		20.0	16.7
Female	1.0	4.0	9.0	12.0	8.1
Vocational enrollment					
(% of secondary)	3.4	1.4	3.2	4.0	7.3
Pupil-teacher ratio					
Primary	41.0	47.0	37.0	34.0	46.4
Secondary	20.0	17.0	21.0	20.0	25.1
Adult literacy rate	13.1	14.7	20.0	32.0	36.5

	1960	1970	1975	1980	Base
Employment and income					
Labour force participation rate (%)					
Total	33.2	32.8	32.4	31.8	40.9
Male	59.3	58.2	57.2	55.9	53.0
Female	6.4	6.8	6.9	7.0	28.9
Female labour force (% total)	9.6	10.2	10.5	10.8	34.5
Labour force in agric. (%)	86.0	82.0	77.5	72.0	76.9
Labour force in manuf. (%)	6.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	9.8
Percentage of income received					
By lowest 20% of households	5.0	4.0			
By highest 5% of households	20.9	24.3			
GNP per capita (U.S. \$)	150.0	190.0		380.0	254.6
Economic dependency ratio	1.4	1.4		1.5	1.2
Consumption					
Energy consumption per capita					
(kg of coal equivalent)	58.0	170.0	165.0	101.0	79.8
Radio receivers per 1000 pop.	17.0	80.4	71.8	71.2	45.3

Sources: World Bank: Pricing Policies and Structural Balances (1985)
and World Tables: Volume II Social Data (1983).

Notes: "Base" is a reference group of low income sub-Saharan African nations. The group averages for each indicator are population-weighted arithmetic means. Data in each column generally refer to that year but could also refer to a year before or a year later. The base reference is for the period 1979-81.

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