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Women's Chance for Power in Two
Sudanese Nomadic Tribes

by

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Abstract

Observers have frequently commented on the high degree of sexual differentiation that prevails in Islamic societies; particularly, they have been at pains to point out how this differentiation amounts to discrimination against women as a category. Generally, the argument runs, women have no legal or political rights, they remain the legal and economic dependents of men, cannot accede to any political office, participate to a very limited extent in any form of public life, and have no role in the processes of decision-making.

It is essential, however, to take account of how women are differentiated among themselves, within the female sex category, and to assess whether this differentiation alters their social position in any way. Women are differentiated according to their relative rank, status, and prestige, and also by their relative power and ability to influence policy. The most noticeable differentiation, which applies in all social situations, is between the women of different age and marital statuses. The matrons, with children of marriageable age, have established domestic positions, and are frequently consulted about important decisions that are taken. They cannot, therefore, be equated with the young, unmarried girls, who have no right of choice in their first marriage, and who are subject to the authority not only of men, but also of older women.

In comparing the roles of women in different social situations, it is useful to analyse in terms of the relative chances for power of the matrons. It then becomes clear that, where women are members of households that are part of corporate groupings, they can, by the time of their matronhood, achieve positions of public significance and of great influence in the decisions that men take. Clearly, men must take account of the opinions of women in such a situation.

Introduction

The following thesis takes the form of what might best be called a "situational career analysis" of women's chances for power in two Sudanese nomadic tribes. It is "situational" in that it takes full account of the disadvantages that women suffer when compared as a category with men. But, rather than remaining with such categorical statements, I approach the question in terms of the changes in status that women undergo in the course of the only career that is open to them . . . marriage and maternity. In order to assess the significance of such changes in status, I focus on the two extremes of women's careers, their status as unmarried girls, subject to the effective authority not only of men, but also of older women, and their status as matrons, the mothers of children of marriageable age. By focussing on these two extremes, it is possible to speak also of the way in which women's chances for power develop in the course of a successful marital and maternal career. For although women cannot fulfill any formal leadership role, or attain political office, they can emerge to positions which give them considerable influence in the processes of decision-making, both domestic and public. The contrast is clear between the young girl who has no role to play in decisions that are taken about her own future, including her own marriage, and the matron, who has a position of considerable influence over domestic decisions that relate to the interests of both herself and her children and may even have a role in camp and tribal politics.

The ideas contained in my thesis developed in the course of an attempt to explain two seemingly anomalous occurrences. I discovered in the description that Cunnison gives of political life amongst the Humr Baggara, an Islamic cattle pastoral society in Northern Sudan, that women had on one occasion been able to combine and force the men of a camp to action, and that at the time of a marriage, it was the mother of the bride who conducted negotiation about bridewealth, and who had the last word about whom the girl should marry (Cunnison:1966:117 and 95). These occurrences implied that women as a category had some influence over not only the private and domestic decisions of men, but also camp politics; and that within the female sex category, certain women had a greater role to play than others. These implications needed explaining, for I had been led to believe by the descriptions of other Islamic pastoral societies that women were subject always to the authority of men, who were their guardians and providers; and that women had no part to play in decisions relating to their own future. This impression had in fact been confirmed by what I had read in a monograph relating to a neighbouring people, the Kababish Arabs, where women have no role in public affairs, and within the domestic sphere remain subject always to the authority of the male head, usually father or husband. Most indicative of this subordination was the fact that at the time of a girl's

marriage, the mother had a right to be consulted, but the decision lay not with her but with the father (Asad:1970:57).

These two societies, the Humr Baggara, and the Kababish Arabs, share certain features which permit useful comparison, and help to explain the expectations that I had concerning the role of women in politics. They are both Islamic societies subject to Sunni Muslim law in which the legal differentiation of men from women focusses on two major criteria. Women are considered to be perpetual legal minors, and in property allocation, the legal share of a woman is half that of a man's. A woman therefore must have an adult male to act as her guardian and representative of her interests, and is presumed not to be economically independent, for as a wife or daughter she can inherit only half the share of a man. Moreover, as both Gunnison and Asad stress, such legal shares as women are entitled to are normally ignored, and customary allocation of animals works even more against women than if they were granted their legal rights (Gunnison:Appendix 2; Asad:71). They are both nomadic pastoral societies, where women form part of households which are based on the tents that are their own property. These tents may form part of stable and enduring camping units, which move together throughout the seasonal migration, sometimes separating from, sometimes combining with other camping units (see the Humr) or join with other tents on a more haphazard basis with no enduring units (see the commoner Kababish). The division of labour is on the grounds of age and

sex, so that the women are confined to that range of tasks most compatible with their remaining in the camps, while the men utilise the mobility of the animals not only to move between the different areas throughout the year, but also to move in a range of pasture outside the camps. This may mean that some of the men are absent for long intervals (Asad:19) or only that the herds are away from the camp during the day (Cunnison:66). But the stereotype of women as a category to be compared with men, is that they are private, domestic creatures, whose range of tasks and primary roles, duties and obligations focusses on the tent. Whereas men, by the nature of their work and political responsibility are economically dominant and fully involved in the public life of herding tasks and camp politics.

How then could I explain the manifest public significance of the Humr women as a category and the status differentiation amongst women? It would be impossible to account for this if I were to follow the approach that most observers take up in relation to the position of women in society. For generally observers have been content to point out the sexual differentiation operating in all societies to separate women as a category from men. Women have been equated with serfs and slaves:

"The social division of labour involves women less deeply than their menfolk in the central institutions -

...cont.

political, legal, administrative etc. of their society. They are indeed subject to control. But the range of controls they experience is simpler, less varied. Mediated through fewer human contacts, their social responsibilities are more confined to the domestic range. The decisions they take do not have repercussions on a very wide range of institutions. The web of their social life, though it may tie them down effectively enough, is of a looser texture. Their social relations certainly carry less weighty pressure than those which are also institutional in range. This is the social condition they share with slaves and serfs."

(Douglas:1970:84)

And in the specific context of middle-eastern society, this impression is reinforced and reiterated:

"Generally exploited in spite of laws, sold sometimes, often beaten, constrained to forced labour, assassinated almost with impunity, the Mediterranean woman is one of the serfs of the contemporary world."

(Tillion:1966:cited in Gordon:1968:9)

Rather more moderate, but equally non-purposive in his comments is Gabriel Baer:

"Characteristic of Arab society in the Middle East is the different status of men and women. Unlike in many other societies, and particularly in modern western society, women are in a greatly inferior position both materially and spiritually, and discrimination is apparent in all spheres of life. The birth of a son is cause for celebration; not so that of a daughter. A mother of a daughter only is condemned to a divorce that is sanctioned by society. Even in childhood, boys have a preferential status. Complete propriety is expected of a married woman, but not of her husband Widespread is the custom of confining the Arab woman to prevent her from coming into contact with men who are not members of her family segregation of women has assumed great importance. Women are not allowed to share any communal activity, or to assume any public position, and they never appear in men's company".

(Baer:1964:34 and 42)

My dissatisfaction with the usual approach to the question of women's position in society lies not so much in questioning

the facts as stated above, nor in ignoring the fact that anthropologists such as Cunnison and Asad, as well as others, have pointed out how customary allocation of resources operates even more against women. It lies in the tacit agreement to leave the question at that stage, with such statements, and with no explanation as to how women's status and their power potential varies between different societies, and within societies according to different factors. Baer, for example, goes on to point out that Bedouin women are different in that "the desert way of life does not permit of separation from men in the manner practised in settled communities" (idem). But he does nothing to explain why this should be so, or to explain the effects that it has on women's position, or on their ability to operate independently. A more interesting statement comes from Tillion:

"The degradation of the woman is not the result of endogamy, but of the incomplete evolution of an endogamous society The greatest alienation for the women is seen in populations that are changing that is to say, are detribalised by becoming sedentary and urbanised."

(cited Gordon:1968:8)

So far it is clear from these observers only that there is some difference between the status of women in

different societies, and that this must be related to economic and political factors. This is so large-scale and grandiose that it is not conducive to purposive analysis. Moreover, it is misleading, by focussing on a concept which has no basis in social fact. There is no such thing as the status of women in society. The statuses of women vary according to age, marital and maternal position. This has been made clear by E.L. Peters both in statement and in the way in which he approaches the subject of "sexual differentiation". In his article, as yet unpublished, he analyses "Sexual Differentiation in Two Arab Communities" in terms of the life cycle of both men and women:

"The status of males and females, whatever other statuses may be available for capture, will inevitably vary with age. There is no such thing as the status of women - or of men for that matter - and to lose sight of this elementary fact leads to serious analytical distortion".

(Peters:S.D.:8)

Unless this is clearly understood, then we, as anthropologists, are beguiled into moving from general statement, to over-generalisation and creation of false categories. The general statement is most clearly given by Mary Douglas:

"(Women's) place in the public structure of roles is clearly defined in relation to one or two

...cont.

points of reference, say in relation to husbands and fathers. As for the rest of their social life, it takes place at the relatively unstructured, interpersonal level, with other women in the case of women, with other slaves and serfs in the case of slaves and serfs. Of course I would be wrong to say that the network of relations that a woman has with others of her sex is unstructured. A delicate patterning certainly prevails. But its significance for society at large is less than the significance of men's relations with one another in the public role system. A quarrel between women has not anything like the same repercussions as a quarrel between their husbands. If they want to give their social relations with one another a more central structuring, they can only do so by embroiling their menfolk. . . ."

(Douglas:op. cit.:84)

But this is then taken to be not merely a division into sex categories in the role structure of a society, but also a qualitative division into two cultures:

"Here (among the Somali) as in other societies where sexual differentiation is equally strongly

...cont.

engrained, there are in effect two cultures - the dominant world of men, and the subordinate sphere of women."

(Lewis:1971:77)

This further implies that women are not only subordinate but vulnerable, and because of this vulnerability turn to ritual which "celebrates the experience" or allows them to "air their grievances" whenever their social situation is unsatisfactory. This, in the case of the Somali women, seems to apply to most married women: they as a category are members of the possession cults that are predominantly female:

"(the) characteristically female affliction (of sar) operates among the Somali as a limited deterrent against the abuses of neglect and injury in a conjugal relationship which is heavily biased in favour of men. Where they are given little domestic security and are otherwise ill-protected from the pressures and excations of men, women may thus resort to spirit possession as a means of airing their grievances obliquely, and of gaining some satisfaction".

(Lewis:1971:77)

This is a far more general statement than that which Mary Douglas will allow:

"If there is something unsatisfactory about the relation which pins them into the central structure (such as widowhood or an unresponsive husband) (women) are very susceptible to religious movements which celebrate the experience at a low level of organisation."

(Douglas:ibid)

I take the statement of Lewis, cited above, as being the summary of the main line of argument in his survey of "Ecstatic Religion", and the culmination of the way in which the study of women's position in society has been moving so far. I am compelled to take issue with the main trends of his argument which relate to married women: not only because I consider that aspects of it are faulty in themselves, but also because as an anthropologist who has worked in a Muslim nomadic society, his words carry authority in an area of study in which I am myself interested. If his argument could hold, then it would imply that we had a means by which we could identify the most vulnerable and frustrating of social positions in a given society. He would argue that there is a dual aspect to description of participants in possession cults. It is not a question only of the individual participants seeking

relief from frustration, or finding some kind of bargaining counter, for all possession cults have among their participants disproportionate numbers of certain categories of social positions. This must be explained by the particular tensions and frustrations built into those social positions. Among the categories that he identified for the Somali possession cults, that of married women dominated, and this became the basis for the statement that he made above.

However, this argument falls down at several points. The most important of these points is the assumption of a sex category in possession cults, despite his own evidence that women as a category are differentiated among themselves, and that men also participate in the cults. Lewis is led by his assumption of a direct relation between high degree of sexual differentiation and powerlessness of women to over-general statements, and to the creation of false categories. He overlooks in his argument that it is not all women in a male-dominated society who participate in the cults. It is only some. Therefore it is necessary for his argument to identify those women who do participate, and the structural situations that have produced the tensions which are either "celebrated" or "alleviated" in the possession cults (see Wilson's article for some very cogent reasoning that this is essential:1967).

The general hypothesis that Lewis puts forward runs as follows: in societies where there is marked sexual differentiation, a development of two cultures occurs, the dominant culture of the men who monopolise the social structure, and the subordinate culture of the women. The women are not merely subordinate, they are also peripheral and deprived, because of their lack of resources, and consequently frustrated. This frustration comes to be expressed in peripheral possession cults, for no other formally sanctioned means of expression exists. The evidence for this thesis lies in the grand survey that Lewis made in different societies, which reiterates his contention that:

"a widespread form of possession, which is initially regarded as an illness, is in many cases virtually restricted to women (And) for all their concern with disease and its treatment, such women's possession cults are also, I argue, thinly disguised protest movements directed against the dominant sex. They thus play a significant part in the sex-war in traditional societies and cultures where women lack more obvious and direct means for forwarding their aims. To a considerable extent they protect women from the exactions of men, and offer an effective vehicle for manipulating husbands and male relatives".

(Lewis:1971:30 and 31)

This hypothesis is inadequate either as a general statement concerning the effects of marked sexual differentiation on women's ability to operate in their own interests, or in explaining who participates in possession cults and why. It anticipates a division between the interests of men and of women, and assumes that there are occasions where these interests will clash. It ignores the positive aspect of women's position in marriage, which is to grant them resources by which they can "manipulate husbands and female relatives". And it overlooks the fact that a thesis such as he presents must explain not only the presence of certain categories of people, but also the absence of others.

When speaking of women in "male-dominated" societies, it is not possible to refer to a single status for women, nor to summarise it in terms of jural and political discrimination. Women, by virtue of their legal and economic dependence on men have rights in respect of which they can make claims on the men. Their status is not immutable and unchanging in relation to men, but develops and alters in the course of a marital and maternal career. The power of women will vary according to their structural position in marriage, for the demands that women make and which they hope will be met "are always in respect of specific relationships" (Werbner:1972:235).

This point was made by Werbner when he was himself involved in analysing "ritualised modes of fixing moral

responsibility for illness" among the Kalanga of eastern Botswana, for as he clearly demonstrated, the power of the women as hosts in these rituals was not the power of the weak:

"a host mediates and makes her demands as a relative - a kinswoman or an affine - and she may make these demands, during spirit possession, only in a residential context clearly defined according to kinship. No principal in the rituals of possession makes demands indiscriminately against a category, such as males or females; demands are always made in respect of specific relationships".

(op. cit.:235)

Therefore one would be mistaken to analyse the participation of anyone within these rituals without assessing their structural position in terms of the specific relationships involved in the action. Moreover, it is misleading to assume that all women necessarily are of lesser structural importance than men:

"A woman's structural importance cannot be summed up by her jural status as a legal dependent of a man, or by the determination of her residence by her husband's. Being a legal dependent of a man entitles a woman to rights. These, like a woman's interests vary from one society to another, and within a

...cont.

single society, vary from one status or phase in her life to the next. She need not be barred, because she is the legal dependent of one man, from having a cluster of rights and interests in sets of other men and their goods. Indeed, her structural importance may be great precisely because it is only through her that such a cluster may be combined with the different rights and interests of a legal ward."

(op. cit.:237)

My thesis is concerned to demonstrate exactly this point: that all women who are married have some structural importance by virtue of the rights they have as the dependents both of husband and agnatic kin. In addition they gain importance with the strategic interests that are involved in their marriage. Such strategic importance of marriage varies as between societies and within a single society, and this in turn affects the possibilities that individual married women have for protecting their interests and welfare. Those women whose marriages are of great strategic importance are mediating economic and political links between men and groups (Peters:S.D.: and my Chapter One) and they have the possibility of manipulating such links; whereas those women whose marriages are of limited strategic importance lose this resource (see the commoner Kababish women).

Werbner's statement is well backed up by Lewis' own material on the Somali as presented in different sources. This is best demonstrated by the emphasis that he places on the strategic links involved in marriage and the prevalence among marriages of those arranged to link lineages. In his pamphlet of 1962, Lewis makes explicit mention at several points of how "the nature of marriage", the rights and duties established by matrimony between individual and lineages, has to be viewed in relation not only to the exclusiveness of agnation, but also in relation to the importance which affinal and matrilateral ties often assume in linking lineages" (7). Marriage between lineages, which predominates over all other kinds of link through marriage (25) "does have economic importance and at least some political implications" (23) for where agnatic ties are weak or non-existent, "marriage is regarded positively as a means of establishing useful connection between groups". (25)

Where marriages serve the interests of men in such a manner and where links established between men via a woman are of such importance as he makes out, then the women involved have resources of which they can make use in protecting themselves and their interests. They will not be isolated within the marriage and subject to the authority of one man only, they retain the interests of their agnatic kin, are therefore mediators, and possible manipulators. The general

trend is in fact for the agnatic kin of a woman to retain legal responsibility for her, which gradually loosens in effectiveness as the woman becomes incorporated "morally" into her husband's group, as she bears him sons. This implies a gradual loosening of the ties that she has retained with her natal kin and suggests that she can never be totally subordinated to her husband, for other men have interests in her and her welfare. A woman is never cut off finally from her natal kin, and a woman's brother and other close male agnates are very much concerned not merely with the maintenance of the marriage but also with her well-being. "Indeed the anxiety that the pastoralists display in maintaining effective relations with their affines is to be understood not only in relation to economic and political considerations but also to the continuing moral interests of a married woman's kin in her welfare and security" (33). I can find no evidence that Somali women are left alone to the extreme exactions of their husbands, without other men also being involved.

This would seem clear enough and amounts in itself to serious criticism of Lewis' argument. But it is even more telling to find at least one instance of a woman being able to force through a divorce against the wishes of her husband, and against the economic interests of her agnatic kin. Here a young woman, married as a second wife to a man who had retained one wife and divorced another, was complaining bitterly

of the treatment meted out to her by her senior co-wife. She wished not merely to alter the treatment of her senior, but to end the marriage. Neither the husband, nor the brothers were willing to end the marriage, and the woman ran away several times only to be returned to her husband by her brothers. Eventually the woman's persistence was such that the divorce was arranged, despite the reluctance of her brothers, who were forced to part with some camels, and also a much prized rifle (36-7). It was clearly unjust that the woman should ever have been put in this position, and to that extent it was clear that she was subordinate to the men involved. However, she was not helpless, she was eventually able to force the hand of the men and get a divorce.

If I were to attempt to account for this in Lewis' terms, there would be some very real problems raised. For, at no point does he mention this woman turning to possession as a means of exacting what she wanted. And I would not have expected her to, for she turned to the kind of action that would be most successful . . . in this case running away from her husband and to her brothers, until they could no longer resist the claims she was making on them. She had the right to insist on their supporting her moral welfare, and ultimately it was an appeal that they could not resist. Somali women have a great advantage in their marriages, which does not apply for example to most Kababish women.

They retain the active interests of their agnatic kin. As they pass through successful marital and maternal careers, the respect and prestige accorded to them increases, along with the security of their personal position. Or so it would, were it not for the threat of polygyny and of the husband taking a second wife. This is a very real threat for the Somali women, as Lewis' figures indicate, for of a total of 77 men, 44.2% had one wife, and the rest had two or more (1962:8). Whereas for either the Humr women or the Kababish women, this is not so (Cunnison:1:94; Asad:41). The threat lies in the public challenge that the new wife offers to both the status and prestige of the older wife. For one thing, the older wife is intensely vulnerable at this stage, for she has a great deal of her interests invested in the marriage, through the children she may have and the way in which she has become absorbed into the kin of her husband and children. The options open to the older wife are few, and women placed in such a position will resist strongly.

Unlike the new wife referred to in the case above, the older woman has little opportunity to turn to agnatic kin, or simply to remove from her husband's camp. She was "trapped" in her marriage, and, although we are not told this, I would suggest that she would be the woman who would resort to spirit possession in this situation. In this suggestion I

am borne out by Wilson, who in a note to his article makes the following comparison:

"Comparison of the Somali with another society cited by Lewis, the Hausa, raises the questions of the relationship between ranking of polygynously married wives and the status of the 'seized' wife. Among the Somali it is the established wife who succumbs to possession, but among the Hausa it is the new wife the status of a Hausa senior wife is not threatened by the advent of the new wife - in fact it is enhanced. The new wife is placed in an inferior position, and it is she who succumbs to possession. Among the Somali it is the established wife's position which is threatened, and consequently it is she who is likely to be seized by spirits". (Wilson:1967:377)

It is reasonable to assume that it is the older married women who are in the greatest danger of having a new wife brought into their marriage. It is also reasonable to assume that the new wife will be quite a bit younger, and still closely attached to agnatic kin, and frequently wishing to have a divorce rather than be part of a polygynous household. This puts her in a radically different situation from

the established wife, whose interests lie in maintaining the marriage, but altering the conditions of that marriage if possible, i.e. by getting rid of the new wife, or where that is impossible, gaining some kind of compensation from her husband. The real battle therefore is between the women, not between the women and the husband.

"The threat is not her husband, it is the new wife, not a male, but a female. The husband is the agent who is instrumental in bringing about the situation of tension, and he remains the focus of the conflict between the two women".

(Wilson:op. cit.:370)

Moreover, the battle is unequal; for whereas one wishes to change only the conditions of her marriage, the other wishes to end the marriage altogether.

Lewis' error has been to point out different features of the Somali's women's position within their marriage, without relating them together. It is for example difficult to account for the effect of the "frequent" divorces that take place without knowing more of when they occur. First of all, I am not sure how he measures a "high" rate of divorce, for by comparison with the Humr, the rate he gives of 26 divorces out of a total of 135, i.e. 19.3%, is low. Within the Humr, out of a total of 139 marriages considered, 76 were ended in divorce,

i.e. 55% (Cunnison:1:90). And if it were possible to break down further the figures so as to know at what stage in a marriage divorce occurred, then some useful analysis could follow.

It would be important to know, for example whether the attempts of men to introduce a new wife into a household would be reflected in a rising proportion of divorces. A second point is that the occurrence of divorce is not in itself necessarily a factor of insecurity among women. For, as the example of the Humr women shows, the largest proportion of divorces occur among first marriages, of which the greatest number are in-surra marriages. After this first marriage girls are free to choose their second partners, and the arrangements made about provision are such that they are not left destitute.

The situation with which Humr women, with very few exceptions do not have to cope, however, is of being in a polygynous household. It is this factor that is crucial to the Somali women's security and power. Whereas a Humr woman who has successfully established herself as a matron in a household has a strong and proud position which gives her a voice in public affairs, a Somali matron is threatened by the possibility of a new wife being brought in, challenging her status, diverting her husband and ultimately usurping her position. These are the women whom one would expect to

find most represented in the spirit possession cults. For these are the women whose social position is most vulnerable and who are the least able to find the support necessary to change their situation.

The method by which I was able to identify which category of married women among the Somali would predominate in the possession cults demonstrated my initial contentions about how one can usefully analyse the question of women's roles in society. It proved necessary to adopt a form of "situational career analysis", demonstrating that the progress of a Somali married woman to the position of highest status and prestige, that of matron, was threatened by a factor beyond her control, i.e. polygyny. It also made clear that whereas Lewis held that divorce was the important factor of instability among married women, the rate of divorce was not nearly so high as among the Humr, and could not be assumed to be a major cause of insecurity. Rather than divorce, it was polygyny which was the major threat to Somali women's chances for power. Despite the corporate interests held in women, and the gradual incorporation of the long-married wife into the group of her husband and his children, one could not predict that the matrons were the women with positions of greatest power and prestige amongst the Somali women.

The plan of the chapters in my thesis indicates the lines along which I have charted the path of the careers of the Humr and Kababish women, and clarifies the reasons

why I consider the status of matron to differ radically between the two societies. In Chapter One I explore how a woman moves from the status of unmarried girl to that of matron through a successful marital and maternal career, and the changes that occur in the course of this career.

Primarily these changes can be related to the fact that, once a woman is married, she has a sphere of domestic influence by virtue of the claims that she can make on her husband, and because she is the focus of links between men mediated through her marriage. Where these links between men are operative, and serve their strategic interests, then she has the possibility of not only mediating links but also of manipulating them in her own interests by virtue of the claims that she has on the different men. The corporate interests that the Humr men retain in women as female agnates allows the married women this role of mediator/manipulator, and allows for complexity in the set of claims that a Humr matron has over men. Most Kababish women lack this role, and consequently do not extend the range of their influence beyond the domestic sphere where they are each subject to the authority of one man, the head of the household, normally the husband.

When women and their children remain the focus of interests of agnatic corporations, then those women who have complex marital careers can build up material resources from

the provision that is made for them and their children. When, in addition married women have the chance of making a profit from the housekeeping provision made to them, it is possible that some women might accumulate sufficient material resources in the later stages of their marital careers to have freed themselves from the authority of any one man, and have some choice about where to live. This accumulation is illustrated in Chapter Two by the Humr women, and by the Humr matron, who by a combination of all these factors was able to establish herself in an independent household, and with her economic resources to subsidise an important political event. Such a possibility is beyond the reach of any Kababish woman.

Chapter Three explores the implications of women not being able to survive without the assistance of other women at times of crisis, and suggests that some greater solidarity might emerge amongst women who could be mobilised to confront the men. This is proved to be unfounded, for the only occasions where women do combine in action are in units either larger or smaller than the range over which the support network of an individual woman extends, and it cannot be shown that the support network of a woman develops into any form of action-set for political purposes. The conclusion is that whereas the structural importance of Humr women in marriage is such that it allows for some matrons to emerge to positions

of prominence and independence, the same is not true of the Kababish matrons. They lack the basic resource of corporate interests being held by natal kin in a woman after her marriage, and consequently remain subject always to the economic dominance and effective authority of one man.

Chapter One

Section A: The Meaning of Marriage

A marriage taking place causes new relationships to be created and realignments in previously existing relationships, and these changes and realignments focus on the central nexus of familial relations of father and son, and mother and daughter. The marriage of a son indicates his economic independence of his father, and grants him the status of household head separate from the domestic authority of his father. And the marriage of a daughter is the occasion on which the matron, the mother of children of marriageable age, will seek to exercise her power to influence the course of events. The marriage of a daughter is a critical time for her, and where she can effectively influence the course of negotiations, or delay the time of marriage, then this is indicative of great changes having taken place since the time when she was herself married. It implies that a matron has been able to accumulate resources which give her an effective role in decision-making, a role which was certainly denied to her prior to her own first marriage. So the moment of a marriage is a suitable index of how changes in familial relations come about.

Marriage establishes a new household, and in so doing involves a realignment of familial relationships, for the bride and groom in establishing a new domestic domain in the tent of the bride are removing from their natal households. In the realignment of

relationships that this involves, the crucial nexus is that of the groom and his father, and the daughter and her mother.

The groom in order to marry must be able to furnish sufficient animals to maintain the new household, and the provider of such animals is his father. And the bride is now mistress of her own domestic domain and no longer subject to the effective authority of her mother. The bride can now make claims in her own right, and is for the first time at the centre of a realignment of those rights, duties and responsibilities that are held with respect to her by men.

The marriage of a son involves necessarily a realignment in the relations of a father with his son, for the time of his marriage is a statement of his actual or potential independence of his father, and involves his removal from the domestic authority of the father. But whether this realignment amounts to a crisis or not is dependent on several factors. The most important of these are how provision is ensured for the son's household, and in what manner the father has become dependent on the son. During the course of the son's maturing, there may well have been a subtle shift in familial relations, whereby the continued viability of the household rests on the son and his labour contribution. In the two societies to which I refer, the clearest index of whether a marriage creates a crisis in father-son relations seems to be whether a father can delay a marriage taking place.

It is possible for either the marriage of a young man or the establishment of the new household to be delayed, for the two events are not necessarily simultaneous. But any delay that arises

seems not to be so much related to the economic status of the potential groom, as to the manner in which he receives the animals that are necessary for him to marry and maintain a household. The Humr do not delay marriage for economic reasons; but both marriage and the establishment of a new household can be delayed for the Kababish groom. The necessary animals may still be in the control of the father who uses this fact to try and influence his son's decisions.

In neither society is inheritance of animals of major importance in familial relations. "Most men who manage to attain old age have almost invariably disposed of all their property to their sons by the time the youngest is married and set up" (Asad:70). And with the Humr, the distribution of animals left after a death is decided by a family council, and any common pattern that emerged in the few instances that Cunnison recorded was that "after provision for the widow, men were given shares which were considered equitable in view of the holdings they had already while women were admitted only in respect of great personal need" (Cunnison:1:35).

The major form of distribution of animals is through donations, particularly from father to son. These commence in childhood, and with the Humr continue spasmodically till the son's animals amount to sufficient, through the process of natural increase, by the time that he reaches marriageable age (Cunnison:1:34). There is no special donation around the time of marriage, and marriage is not delayed for such reasons. Whereas, the Kababish

father is in a strong position to delay, if not the marriage of the son, then the establishment of his separate household, for the largest and final donation that a Kababish man makes to his son is at the time of the son removing his bride from the tent of her mother and establishing her in her own tent (Asad:74). "The amount that he gets at this time will depend on his father's capacity and the temper of personal relations between them. But it will usually be enough - together with what he has been able to amass previously - to enable him to provide for himself and his wife and any young children he may have. (Indeed the young man will usually delay the removal of his bride from her mother until such time as he is certain that he has sufficient animals of his own to maintain the new household)" (Asad:74). The structural strains indicated by change in property relations appear to lead to a radical alteration in relations on the occasion of the son's marriage, which may provide a crisis to the authority of the father.

This crisis appears to be not of the same degree as that described for the Bedouin father by Emrys Peters. Here the crisis is such that "the father feigns aloofness from the start of the negotiations until after the wedding celebrations have ended" (Peters:1965:122), and even after the wedding celebrations are complete, there is maintained a fiction that nothing has happened. Each morning the son must leave his bride's tent and be at his father's side as previously, and he continues to eat with his father. In effect, this means that "marriage does not mean the immediate creation of a wholly separate domestic unit. Save for

the appearance of a new tent, the ordinary run of daytime activities is scarcely altered" (Peters:123). And in that important aspect of father-son relations, property, the marriage of a son leads to no alteration. At this stage there is no transfer of wealth from father to son, either at the time of marriage or after; and the son must await the death of his father to come into his inheritance. This is, in fact, the clue to the degree of the crisis that is felt, and the stress that there is to maintain the fiction of nothing having happened.

Although political authority over a son is divided between the father and the agnatic corporation (Peters:127), there are yet discrete areas of authority that remain to the father. "In the tent his authority over the son is so overwhelming as to keep the son in almost complete subordination. The son is referred to as a slave, and in daily life has to behave as one. He must obey every command, for, were he to rebel, he would find little or no support among his agnates, whatever the extent of the provocation." The alternatives to accepting the dominant authority of the father are few; to move means losing the chance of gaining animals in the future and the son has none of his own until the death of the father. And the only chance of earning animals of his own is to work as a shepherd with some other group. This would mean losing status, not merely in taking on employment, but also in forfeiting his agnatic rights within the corporation.

So, despite the fact that the son is unable to proffer effective challenge to his father at the time of his marriage,

the marriage of a son is the first attack on a bastion of authority that is so tight and absolute, that it strikes as a crisis. The tightness and absolute control of the father over his son rests ultimately on his continued control of property, and so his authority continues beyond the time of marriage. But marriage also introduces other realignments in relationships and creates new relationships, of which most important is that of the groom with his father-in-law. Despite the continuance of his legal dependence on his father, and his continued economic dependence, the creation of a relationship that is nearer to him than to the father permits some manipulation that was previously not open to him, "a man can cajole his father-in-law, and (through his wife) wealth, in the form of animals may pass from the former to the latter" (Peters:130). Despite his continued dependence, the son has gained some power through the network of his relationships having altered, and part now being focussed on him independently of his father. This enables him to manipulate one link against another.

So, where a large part of the father's continued authority rests on maintaining his economic dominance over a son, then it is likely to follow that the more opportunities the son has for independent accumulation of wealth, the greater is the challenge that is offered to the authority of the father. And such a crisis becomes manifest where the passing of wealth from the father to the son is not the gradual accumulation of the Humr, but the spasmodic donation of the Kababish, with the single greatest amount being tied to the time of marriage. However, unlike the Bedouin,

where the first moment of such challenge is in the opening of negotiations for the marriage of the son, the crisis for the Kababish can be presented earlier. The Kababish sons have alternative means for accumulating sufficient animals to marry; they do not have so much to lose by working as shepherds.

In both societies, the theory is that the father should, by the time of the son's marriage, be able to provide him with sufficient animals. This is a problem for all but the wealthiest households, and is one of the greatest tests of the viability of a household, that balance between the resources available to a household and the demands that are being made on those resources by the members of the household (Stenning:1958). Where the resources of a household are manifestly insufficient to supply future demands, among them the demands of a son for his marriage provision, alternative means must be found. And where such means imply the economic independence of the son, then a radical alteration in that aspect of father-son relations which is based on domestic authority has taken place. A Kababish father who is unable, or unwilling, to provide for his son, faces a crisis, in that the son can withdraw his labour from the household. By contrast, many Humr young men have left the camps to work on wage labour, and to build up their herds through cash earnings; and yet this appears not to be such a crisis.

It is impossible to estimate exactly the extent to which households break up in the time prior to a son's marriage. But there are certain precipitating factors that operate differently in the

two societies. The Humr camps that Cunnison studied appeared to be facing a particular shortage of animals at the time of study, and the households were forced to cluster together around those with more cattle. In the previous history of the Baggara, there have been constant relations with market-centres, which provided the essentials of diet which the cattle-herding Baggara could not themselves provide. Consequently, the migrations of the tribe have been along the belt of land that is ecologically suited to cattle-herding, and that is in some proximity to the market-centres (Cunnison:1:2). Now, the pattern of trading of cattle and household surplus is focussed on the market-centre of Muglad and seasonal migrations are within range of the weekly markets that are held in Muglad and other places (Cunnison:1:28). So, a recent development has been that men facing a particular shortage of cattle at any one time can now work for wage labour in the market-centres, and build up their own herds through their cash savings.

Those most likely to be affected by such cattle shortage are the younger unmarried men; in the surra of 'Iyal Ganis, men of both camps were away earning enough money to start herds (Cunnison:1:79); and they are thereby removed from their fathers' household, and return only to establish their own households when they can marry. This, however, is not the crisis that it would be either to the Bedouin father, or to the Kababish father, for certain interests in returning to the natal camp remain. It is in the natal camp that a young man has agnatic rights to pasture and through his father that he inherits cultivable land (Cunnison:1:75). But a far more

pragmatic approach to agnatic shares is maintained than is true of the Bedouin. It is only within a broad outline that a cattle-owner chooses where he shall camp; and there is a conspicuous lack of territorial divisions among the Humr. "Throughout the year Humr exploit their joint rights to grazing and surface water and tolerate the exercise of these rights by others. Significantly the only disputes over the use of grazing which came to my attention were not amongst Humr, but were between Humr and various other groups that use their country" (Cunnison:4:27). The only property rights specifically attached to the home camp are the tracts of cultivable land that are passed from father to son. "Humr have communal grazing rights over the whole of their country but they own garden land as individuals: whereas in a broad sense grazing land is abundant, land suitable for cultivation was in the past comparatively scarce. Individual ownership gives garden land a special meaning; more than any other place the Humrawi nomad looks upon his garden land as his 'home'" (Cunnison:4:74). All other wealth, namely animals and rights to grazing, is mobile. I am inclined to question how much longer the pattern of young men leaving for short periods of wage labour and then returning to build up their herds will continue. But at the time of Cunnison's writing, it seemed that this was the pattern.

Sons return to their camps, with their herds, and they then establish their separate married households. But this has presented little crisis to the father in another aspect, that of

the son's absence having removed his labour. If the son were absent on wage labour, one could presume that there was a shortage of animals in his household. And this would mean that less labour was required than in other households of more cattle. But more significant is the fact that for the Humr, the primary cattle-herding unit is not the family household, or even a group of cooperating households. "Cattle husbandry involves cooperation on the basis of the camp . . . cattle herding invites large-scale cooperation, and in some circumstances a few members of a camp have a joint responsibility for all the cattle. At all times the members of one camp recognize general responsibility for all their cattle" (Cunnison:1:66). In neither property nor in labour considerations does the removal of a son present a crisis to the Humr father on the scale of that presented to a Bedouin father.

Nor is it of the same scale as that for the Kababish father; father-son relations are more internalised to the domestic sphere in Kababish households and are consequently more vulnerable to change in any aspect of these relations. The Kababish fathers attempt to operate property considerations to force a son's decisions; and at the time of marriage, they are vulnerable to the possibility that the son might move to the camp of his affines, taking with him his labour and animals. But the strategy that is open to a man of property differs widely from that of a man without property.

Again, inheritance plays a small part in the total distribution of animals within the economy; and trade operates in

a different manner from in the Humr economy. The Kababish are not moving in close proximity to large market-centres and their main provisions are purchased in varying quantities and at different times of the year; "the Kababish need cash for consumption and not production" (Asad:33), and the two transactions of selling animals for cash and the purchase of essential commodities are typically quite separate. The sale of animals is in the long-distance trade of camels, and the irregular sale of small animals such as sheep and goats, brings in the cash necessary for consumption. But there is a "virtual absence of the practice of using cash to found a herd most nomads either possess sufficient animals to subsist on or find it fairly easy to acquire animals directly in Dar Kababish without having to secure cash first through temporary employment in towns" (Asad:15). Within the economy, redistribution of animals is through donation and contract; the second being the means by which men without animals are able to build up a herd sufficient to maintain a household. And contracts for herding are the means by which sons whose fathers cannot provide sufficient animals can independently gain their own herds.

Where a man has few or insufficient animals for his own needs then he seeks work as a herder and becomes attached to the household of a richer man. This does not imply any permanent dependence, for the basis on which relations are established is contractual. The owner gives an agreed number of animals to the herder in exchange for his services; and often herders move between households. This amount of animals given accumulates by natural

increase, and poorer households concentrate on those animals of greatest natural increase, sheep and goats, and exchange camels earned by herding for the smaller stock. Animals can be earned through odd jobs, or through regular herding, and the second is the alternative "favoured as a solution by young men from poor households who have no hope of acquiring animals from their own fathers. In this way a young man who detaches himself earlier from his parent household relieves it of part of its burden" (Asad:53). The problem to be faced by household heads in the Kababish economy is twofold, not merely maintaining a sufficiency of animals, but also to ensure an adequate supply of labour to cope with the seasonal differential demands.

The labour allocation necessary for herding the different animals is one that must be faced by individual households, and not by any corporate group who are economically cooperating. And it is this factor that creates a demand for herders, and thereby gives poorer households the means to adjust their insufficiency by earning more animals, and sends their sons out earlier to earn their own herds. But it also creates a crisis in those households that have sufficient animals, for the withdrawal of a son's labour could be crucial in herding management of the father's household. It is for this reason, allied to the custom of the father withholding the sons' portion till the time of their marriage, that the marriage of a son creates a crisis, for once the son has received his portion, he is independent, and free to move away if he chooses. There is nothing apart from attachment to his natal household to retain him

in his natal camp. And where a son estimates that his better interests lie in removing to the camp of his bride, and to working with his father-in-law, then he will do so. Abdallah, in the case cited by Asad, pp. 95-99, decided to remove his sheep to the camp of his bride, and to assist his father-in-law in his herding. Despite the general feeling that he should remain loyal to his father, or at least make some provision for him, the fact was that other than personal sentiments, there were no constraints on his leaving if he chose to do so.

It is only for the Kababish fathers that the moment of marriage of a son comes as a crisis, and among the Kababish fathers it is only these who can provide for their sons. The moment of marriage comes as a crisis to those fathers who can provide, for they attempt to use their final donations as a weapon to force the decisions of the son. Crucial in these decisions is the question of where he will reside, for the problem of labour allocation is endemic to almost all households (Asad:122) and the removal of a son would precipitate an internal crisis. By contrast the Humr manner of allocating animals obviates a crisis arising, and the Humr father faces no critical problem such as that of a Kababish father. In neither case is inheritance the precipitating factor of crisis.

If inheritance is not the deciding factor in the property relations between fathers and sons, then no more can it be in male-female relations. Women are discriminated against in both legal and customary terms in property rights, but it is not inheritance

that is the most important feature of this discrimination. Women are subject to disabilities in inheritance in both societies: in neither society do they inherit land or rights to land. And in relation to animal wealth, they have effectively no rights at all. "In inheritance . . . all Sudanese Muslims are legally subject to Sharia rules. But in practice, the formal rules followed by the Kababish are very different and . . . the amount inherited by women is insignificant, for women rarely possess more than a handful of animals at any given time" (Asad:69 and 71). "Islamic law accords a number of disabilities to women and in many respects Humr custom gives them fewer rights" (Cunnison:2:24). But I have already stated that the prime means by which animals are distributed through the two economies are other than inheritance. The fact is that women do possess some animals, though they are consistently fewer than those of men.

Each of the means by which animals are distributed involves women to some degree. Humr women have access to animals through donation, and through cash purchase. Kababish women receive animals in donation, and are given animals in part of the marriage arrangements. They also have their own form of property, to which they accede on marriage. This is the tent in which the new household will reside, and a minimum of household goods. But prior to marriage, the number of animals that a woman possesses is dependent on the generosity of her father. "Soon after birth, the father gives a cow or a cow-calf to his child of either sex. This is the 'cow of the navel', for the navel-string is cut and tied to the animal's

tail. A girl has no other customary gifts in childhood" (Cunnison: 1:34). A Kababish man "donates animals to his daughter (especially at birth, circumcision and marriage) and to his wife. But these are invariably few in number, and usually consist of odd sheep and goats" (Asad:75). In no case are the animals of a woman sufficient to maintain a household, and the animals of the Kababish women are subject to the demands of the male who is herding her animals.

After marriage, the means by which women obtain animals can diversify. A Humr woman has access to cash from the surplus of the household provision and this cash can be invested in more animals that she can hold in trust for her children, particularly her daughters (see next chapter). And a Kababish woman who is married receives animals from friends and relatives on various occasions, particularly from guests who have been entertained (Asad:75). But at all times, women are subject to the management control of men over their animals. And arrangements as to which men shall herd their animals must be made.

While unmarried, any animals they possess are herded along with those of their father and brothers; and the most frequent arrangement is for their animals to remain with the natal herds when they marry. In the case of the Humr women, this is an aspect of the continuing interest and responsibility that their male agnates retain in them. A woman who marries out of the natal camp leaves behind her cattle to be herded with her brothers. "Humr give two reasons for this custom. Firstly it is a kind of insurance against

the day when the girl may be obliged to part with her wealth as compensation. When she marries, she remains squarely in her natal lineage, who continue to be responsible for her, morally, economically in a broad sense, and legally. "The only responsibility of which they are relieved on her marriage is that of day-to-day maintenance. They remain responsible for her debts. Secondly, they retain the cattle as an insurance, more generally, against the girl's old age, and the minority of her children" (Cunnison:1:93). Such cattle as are left are known in her name, and she may claim them at any time that she should return. Leaving the cattle with her brothers is indeed an insurance not only for her agnatic kin, but an effective insurance for the woman herself.

The arrangements that are made for the animals of Kababish women are more problematical. On her marriage they are left ^hbehind in her father's herd, and any more animals that she accumulates are herded with those of her husband. But in neither event does she have the insurance of them being retained for her later use. Those herded with her father are "acquired on his death by her brothers who hold them nominally in trust for her in the event of divorce. In the long run these animals are in effect assimilated into the property of her brothers" (Asad:91). And the management of a woman's animals can become the bone of contention between a father and his daughter, or between a husband and his wife. Ultimately, the only choice that a woman has is whether her animals should be herded by her husband or her father. This gives rise to tensions such as were manifested in the argument between Hamid and Zaynab over how

the animals should be allocated in a particular instance. Important in this discussion was the participation of Amni, the married daughter who was visiting. Hamid recognised that her dilemma lay in whether to leave her animals with her father, and risk his taking what he considered necessary, or to remove them, and have them assimilated into his herds. At least in leaving some animals with her father, she retained some lever to operate against her husband (Asad:87-89).

The arrangements made over herding the animals of a married woman and the manner in which such arrangements continue indicate the changes that occur on the occasion of a woman's marriage. A Humr woman retains the interest and overall responsibility of her agnatic group, and only gradually becomes incorporated into the kin of her husband. The Kababish woman leaves her natal home and becomes subject to the almost total authority and management of her husband. Once beyond the initial stages of marriage, the assumption is that the Kababish husband has assumed responsibility for her maintenance and her moral welfare. A Kababish woman moves from one focus of domestic authority to another, for familial relations are largely internalised to the domestic sphere.

The most important change that occurs in the realignment of male relations at the time of marriage, is the assertion by the son of his economic independence from his father. Where familial relations are contained within the domestic unit, this means that the son has also asserted his freedom of his father's authority. So marriage for a young man is clearly the definition of his adult status when he accedes to his majority, and gains autonomous

political status as a household head. This is the culmination of the fourth phase in the period between the birth of a son, and his attainment of jural adulthood, if one considers a person's life cycle in the context of the domestic group and its development (Fortes: 1958:9). Of these four stages the last is that in which the person is admitted to the "politico-jural domain". "This confers on him actual or potential autonomy in the control of some productive resources, the elements of jural independence, rights of access to ritual powers and institutions, and some rights and duties of citizenship, as in warfare or feud the culmination of the fourth phase is marriage and the actual or incipient fission of the natal domestic group." (*ibid*) As the Bedouin example has shown, this last fourth phase can be long drawn out where "actual control of some productive resources" is strictly limited by having to wait for inheritance. And the other two examples have shown that marriage can end any sharing of common interests between father and son, where they have no corporate economic cooperation, nor corporate interests of other kinds to bind them together. A Kababish son achieves actual autonomy at the time of his marriage, and asserts his majority status. A Humr son also achieves actual autonomy, but continues to share corporate interests with his father.

Women are classified as permanent minors both in jural-political status and in the underlying economic base, where they remain dependents. So for a woman, marriage has a different meaning. It provides, as for the son, the definition of her adult

status; in the sense of her now being mistress of her own domestic domain, separate from her mother. And also like the son, new links are created around her, which are no longer mediated through her parents. The combination of these two factors frees her of the effective authority of her mother and allows her to make claims within her domestic capacity, and may permit for the extension of the influence she has, as a married woman, outside the domestic sphere, and into public decisions.

The relationship of mother and daughter is particularly intense in these two societies where there is marked sexual segregation, and the daughter is consistently confined within the private domestic domain of her mother's household prior to her own marriage. This intensity is mitigated to an extent by the constant involvement of women from different households in shared tasks, and the support that they offer each other at time of crisis. But at all times the relationship between mother and daughter is seen as one of special significance. The loss that a mother experiences in the marriage of her daughter is recognised in the payment of bridewealth to the mother; and a measure of a mother's power is the extent to which she can influence the timing of and negotiations for the marriage of a daughter.

The intensity of the mother-daughter relationship arises through the consistency and prolonged nature of the life that they spend together from the time of the girl's birth and infancy to the time of the girl's first marriage. These are societies where the sexual division of labour is such that a girl, unlike a son,

does not leave the matri-centred domestic domain in the later stages of childhood. From about the age of seven, boys begin to participate in the male tasks of herding and the care of animals and the relations of a son with his mother then modify. This is the "third stage of childhood", as Fortes would call it, where the sexual division of roles and activities becomes effective. From now on "boys are attached to their fathers and girls to their mothers" (Fortes: op. cit.:10), and the new range of tasks to which a son is introduced is indicative of his maturing to jural-political status, and to economic independence.

The ties that exist between mother and daughter are of a constancy and endurance that cannot be cited for other familial relationships. As stated, those between a father and his son are modified according to the stage reached by the son in his life-cycle. And the son's relations with his mother are modified even earlier when, by his participation in male tasks, he is no longer subject to her demands for assistance in domestic chores, nor constantly present in the private sphere of the household's tent. The father's relations with his daughter are compounded by the clear division of labour that exists between them, though this is to an extent modified where, as is true of the commoner Kababish, the father is dependent on the daughter's labour in some herding tasks. But by contrast, a mother and her daughter are constantly resident together in the privacy of the tent, working together, with the mother training her daughter to the higher skills of those domestic tasks, and gaining increasing support and assistance from her.

Mother and daughter are rarely separated till the time of the daughter's marriage. All these factors combine to induce ties between mother and daughter that are of a strongly affective nature. And these ties continue after the marriage of the daughter, with the mother demonstrating reluctance to lose her daughter and her moral support, and the daughter seeking the advice and support of her mother in the early stages of her marriage.

The special ties that exist between a mother and her daughter are recognised in both societies. Humr men adopt a specially affectionate attitude to the children of their sisters, make special arrangements to ensure that a girl continues to reside with her mother till her marriage, and recognise the continuing influence of a mother in early marriage. But the particularly strong role of senior women among the Humr is noticeable at an earlier stage, in the participation of the mother in the courtship of her daughter. "The girls have good allies in their mothers, and indeed in other close female relatives, who are all concerned that courting should be possible . . . Mothers and daughters, who sleep on the same bed, have many many secrets in common; and if the suitor seems to the mother to be a satisfactory person, with a brave or wealthy father, she gives him consent to enter (the tent)" (Cunnison:1:28). Such participation in the courtship of a girl is possible through the more open life of the Humr women. For, as Cunnison says, "they lead a very open

life and the form of their camps prevents segregation. They never go veiled. While they are guarded with some severity by their men there are ways around this" (op. cit.:25). And while his argument must be modified to be able to account for the participation of brothers in the courtship, it is certainly true that the mothers of marriageable girls can compromise potential suitors.

It cannot be merely the mothers and senior women who connive at the courtship of a girl, for the suitor in order to enter the tent must pass by the father and brothers who sleep outside (Cunnison:1:47). They are the moral arbiters of an unmarried girl, and it is a matter of shame to them if someone succeeds in courting their kinswoman. So, the mother, in permitting a suitor to enter the tent compromises not only the suitor by allowing him to enter, but also must have some tacit assent from the male kin concerned. (This is a point for which I am indebted to Professor Peters, who refused to accept that brothers were unaware of a girl's courtship).

A successful suitor is therefore compromised by the mother's participation in the secret affair; and it is not surprising to find that Humr men bewail the rapacity of females, and bemoan the constant interference of the mother in the daughter's marriage (Cunnison:2:27-28). And this is by deliberate contrast with the usual reference to women as female agnates, and to their children. The sister's children are a matter of particular interest, and the possibility of a sister marrying into another camp is a matter of great concern. Noticeable in this concern is the particular affection

that is held to exist between the children and their mother's brother; this is by contrast with the father's sisters, who, it is thought, "tend to share in the father's more authoritarian attitude" (Cunnison:4:92). Moreover, among the children of a sister, particular attention is paid to the daughters as opposed to the sons. It is felt right that a girl should continue resident with her mother. Special arrangements are made for the return of a son at the age of seven or thereabouts to his official guardians, where the mother is living away from his father's kin (Cunnison: 4:53 and 56), although this provision is one that can be waived in the best interests of the son (see the example of 'Ali:56). But no mention is made of the return of a daughter. This would be quite against the prevalent philosophy concerning women, which recognises their special role in being the source of affective, non-authoritarian roles, centred on the person of the mother and her kin.

The evidence that I can collect from detail given by Asad is more fragmented and inconclusive. I suspect that daughters are singled out for special concern when children are returned in the event of a marriage breaking up, but have no evidence. However, it is consistent with the greater internalisation of familial relations among the Kababish that the marriage of a daughter presents even more of a crisis to the mother, than is true of the Humr mother. Asad claims that "many women, especially those with an only daughter, attempt to delay the removal of their married daughter for as long as they can" (Asad:63). And this attempt relates to the serious loss of moral and physical support that the daughter's

removal implies, and to the mother's lack of being able to ensure that the daughter continues to reside close to her. Even when the daughter marries a man living nearby, the continuity of camping patterns is so slight that she may well move further away.

The loss that a mother experiences is recognised in both societies by the payment of bridewealth to the mother. This can be interpreted as some compensation to the mother for the loss of domestic services that the groom gains and the mother loses (Asad:62); and this undoubtedly refers more to the mother than to any other figure. She has the effective authority over her daughter till her marriage and the only claim to her services; but in marriage the groom acquires these services as a right. This bridewealth is limited in number, and is mostly swallowed up in the wedding expenses, but is an important indicator that the person most closely involved in the marriage of a daughter is the mother. It is essential to contrast those changes that take place in the father's relations with his son at the time of marriage, with those of a mother and her daughter.

The marriage of a girl is the first change that takes place in her status and establishes her as an adult personality in her own right. From this time her status changes further as she becomes the mother of children, and as these children, in turn, grow to marriageable age. When considering the status of women in these two societies, it is essential to remove purely static consideration of their rights

as defined by law and custom. It then becomes possible to study the dynamic processes by which a woman, in performing her primary role as a child-bearer and provider of domestic services, changes her status further in the course of her marital history. It also becomes possible to consider how such changes can provide her with a power base from which she can operate.

Section B: The Ages of Women

It will by now be clear that I am making no reference to the possible roles that are open to women who do not marry. Analytically, it is impossible to account for such women and to make reference to them. There is no evidence presented in either monograph of how many women remain unmarried, and the prevailing sentiment expressed by both Humr and Kababish is that all women must be married and as early as possible (Asad:63). The only reference that I have found to this topic is in the article of Emrys Peters, where he accounts for the "remarkably high number of women" who "are destined for a life of spinsterhood", among the Learned Families of a Lebanese village, and compares their lot with the miserable one of the single spinster that he met among the Bedouin. "Her lot was a miserable one; lacking any rights to property she was forced to rely on the compassion of her near kinsmen", whereas "spinsters of the Learned Families may come to occupy positions of eminence" (Peters:S.D.:54). Their different position lay in the fact that as women they inherited property

equally with men and "where women are permitted to inherit and wealth is available for transmission, spinsters are likely to hold high status" (op. cit.:55). Moreover, the interests of their class, in ensuring that the property should not pass out of their control, lay in preventing the spinsters from marrying. It was property considerations that prevented these women from marrying, and then gave them high status, and a degree of independent power.

I have already made clear that I consider inheritance to play a smaller part in the distribution of wealth in the societies of the Kababish and the Humr, and also that inheritance can therefore play a reduced role in male-female relations. Furthermore, it is in the interests of no one for a woman to remain unmarried. The only possibility would be one such as the solitary Bedouin spinster, who "was found to be sexually deformed on the first day of her nuptials" (Peters:S.D.:54) and their lot would, like that of the Bedouin woman, be miserable, for spinsters would remain permanent dependents, and not acquire the status and power of married women. A new age opens for women in these two societies only with their first marriage, and until then no change can occur in their status.

On marriage, a woman acquires a new bundle of roles that permit her to make claims in her own right and that establish her as an independent personality. She becomes the mistress of her own domestic domain, has the potential of motherhood, and is the mediator of links between men. Each of these factors creates a dependence of men upon her, and this dependence becomes the source of her power.

The sexual division of labour is such that the provision by a woman of domestic services in her own tent is not merely a duty but a right. And all men in order to gain these services must live in the tent of a married woman. It is only on the occasion of her first marriage that a woman acquires the tent and household goods that are her own property (Asad:37; Gunnison:2:26). And no man can provide these services for himself, through the attachment of feelings of shame for a man to carry out the work of a woman. A husband is therefore dependent on his wife for the provision of such services and in exchange for these services he provides for the maintenance of the household and its dependants. Moreover, a husband is dependent on his wife for provision of sexual services, and for the birth of legitimate children. His successful marital career is dependent on his wife, and the potential that she has for motherhood. And the source of a woman's power lies not so much in the threats that she can make to withdraw her services as in the continued everyday dependence of her husband.

This everyday dependence is compounded by her role as a mediator of links between men, and this ultimately is the real source of a married woman's power. Where she lacks this role, or where it is severely restricted, then her power base is limited, for, as I shall explain, the source of women's power lies in the set of claims that they can make over men. Where this set of claims does not develop in the course of her marital career and becomes more complex, then her power is limited both in degree and range. Marriage is the first qualification for this set of claims

to develop, for a married woman becomes the focal point of a network of links with men.

The mediatory role of a woman in marriage is one that is highlighted by Emrys Peters in his consideration of Bedouin marriage. All Bedouin women have this role in marriage, and for some it is of overt political significance, while for the majority it serves to differentiate between agnates of the corporation. Within the corporation, marriage can serve the economic strategy of a woman's father, or of the groom. But "the argument that a woman in marriage mediates relationships comprehends all marriage whatever the particular form it takes or the territorial distance it covers" (Peters:S.D.:37). The political significance of this mediatory role is overt in marriage between corporations and gives high status to the woman involved. A woman is endowed with high status through the payment of a high bridewealth, and this enables her to become a kind of chief woman of a camp. "She occupies this role because the responsibility of mediating a major political role has been allocated to her. Other women may succeed in becoming prominent in camp life, but they do so largely by virtue of their individual personalities, and my evidence is that they succeed only in the absence of a woman who occupies the role of political mediator" (op. cit.:22). The problem of whether such women of prominence do emerge in the camps of either the Humr or of the Kababish is one to which I return (see Chapter Three).

For my present purpose, the mediatory role with which I am concerned is that relating to men's economic strategy. Within

the corporation of the Bedouin, marriage serves to "differentiate between agnates" and a euphemism used for marriage is "making a relationship", specifically an affinal one. "Relationships between a man and his father-in-law are diverse and are used in various ways in different situations. Here the particular aspect which needs to be stressed is that a man can cajole his father-in-law, and (through his wife) wealth, in the form of small animals, may pass from the former to the latter" (Peters:1965:130). So that a son who remains economically dependent on his father has some degree of independent strategy opened to him through manipulation of his affinal links. The continuance of such interests is dependent on the continuance of the marriage, for it is through the marriage that the differentiating links are maintained. In order for the marriage to continue, the claims of the bride must be met.

The claims of a bride lie in her links with men, and her power lies in the economic interests that are served in the continuance of the links that she mediates between men. So the first principle to establish is that the claims she acquires through marriage do not cause earlier links to lapse. When earlier links do not continue, when new ones are established in marriage, then marriage does not provide a mediatory role, but a mere transfer of a woman from one man, or group of men, to another. Humr marriage clearly fulfills this mediatory role, for agnatic interests in even those women who marry away from the camp continue,

and within a camp a special relationship is acknowledged between a man and his father-in-law. But for the Kababish, the mediatory role of women in marriage is not so clear. Their links with natal kin appear to lapse after some time, and except in those instances where a man's economic interests lie with his father-in-law, the mediatory role of women in marriage is strictly limited.

The case of Abdullah, see page 13 , was an example of how a man uses the new relationship created by marriage to his own advantage. In this case the continuing interests of the wife were considered, For as Asad states, "he did not inform his father that he had married the girl on the understanding that he would not remove her far from her mother" (Asad:97). However, the decision was related more to the groom's own advantage than to the ties that continue between a mother and her daughter; for "this latter difficulty might have been overcome in time had Abdallah been eager to live near his father. He was, however, unwilling to do this, partly because of his grievance that, in the past, his father had appropriated his animals unjustly, and partly because he anticipated that he would receive more assistance in the future from his father-in-law than he would from his own father" (idem).

With the Humr also there can be explicit economic reasons for particular marriages, and for continued residence near the father of the bride. The daughter of Hurgas, the leader of the main camp of 'Iyal Ganis' was married to Abu Dik, who had chosen to reside in the main camp, rather than in the splinter camp, where his father's brother resided. Abu Dik was a poor man who had

married after his elder brother had failed to have children in his failed marriages. And his hope was that through marrying Hurgas' daughter, "in great hardship he can rely - if not on his account, then on account of his wife and her children - on his richer affines" (Cunnison:a:79). The wife of Abu Dik, like the wife of Abdallah, had a mediatory role that could to an extent be a source of power to her, for in order for these strategic marriages to be maintained, the claims of the wife, and her specific desires, must be met.

The difference between the women of the two societies is clear when they are not resident in their natal camps. In the case of a Kababish woman, her power is then effectively confined to her husband's dependence on her services in the domestic domain, whereas a Humr woman carries with her the continuing interests of her natal kin. Most indicative of this is the provision that is made for children that are born of a marriage, and how this affects the property of a woman. No marriage is considered complete until the birth of children, and the period between a woman's marriage and the birth of her children is one that is kept to a minimum. Consistent with the fact that the interests of male natal kin in a woman are effective for only the early stages of a marriage, is to find that provision for children is strictly laid down, and cannot operate through a woman. And conversely, where a woman as a female agnate retains the interest of her agnatic male kin throughout her life, provision made for children is not so strictly regulated.

In the event of a marriage breaking up, and divorce following, after the birth of children, a woman normally retains with her the children that are infants. And in moving back to the household of her father or a brother, provision must continue from the father or his kin. The Kababish mother leaves behind any animals that she has accumulated for her sons to inherit, and it is expected that the son will be returned to the father when he is old enough (Asad:91). (No clear statement was made by Asad with reference to daughters, and where they are expected to reside). So that the Kababish woman can make no economic gain from a divorce and possible subsequent remarriage. A Humr mother is in a radically different position, for not only do the rules apply more pragmatically, but she continues to receive maintenance for her children from their agnatic kin, may well keep her son with her, and is sure to have her daughter with her till the time of her marriage (Cunnison:2:26). By these means the contrast between the women of the two societies is becoming clear. The Kababish woman is always dependent on one man effectively, and constantly subject to his undivided authority, while resident with him. The Humr woman, as she acquires further status in marriage and motherhood, frees herself of dependence on one man alone, and gains thereby a freedom of choice that is not open to the Kababish woman. A woman who has had a complex marital career may well free herself of dependence on any one man, and through the provision made for her children, specifically her daughters, be able to reside where she wills, rather than with her closest male kin (see next chapter).

Being a mother has the potential of creating new links from which a woman may gain power, but as I have shown this is limited for the Kababish mother. However, in considering the ages of ^a woman, it is essential to consider how motherhood changes her status. Once she has children, the chances of her marriage continuing are increased, and her security of provision being made for her is ensured. A marriage is not considered complete until the birth of children. The removal of a Kababish bride from the home of her mother is frequently delayed until this time (Asad:59). And reference is made by both Gunnison and Asad to the early stages of marriage being fragile, with the chances of success increasing with the passage of time and the birth of children.

But apart from the time element involved, there are other important senses in which the status of women change with motherhood. They are now not merely the links between men, but also the link between generations. And whereas there is an element of competition in the intergenerational relations of men, with the son ultimately usurping the authority of the father, the links that women provide are those of continuity. Especially where elaborate agnatic genealogies are not remembered, descent through women becomes important. This was what Asad found when he asked the Kababish young men about their agnatic links. In answer to his questions, they would reply that they could "tell you the names of my mother's kin and my father's mother's kin, but I cannot tell you the names of our distant ancestors" (Asad:106). And where women are remembered as female agnates, the links that

they provide between generations becomes even more significant; men are concerned that proper care should be taken of the children of their sisters (Cunnison:1:92).

A mother also has open to her a degree of security that did not previously exist. As the mother of infants, she is the source of their care and upbringing and provision must be made to her for these children. As long as her children are dependants, and continue in residence with her, she is assured of maintenance. And as her sons mature, she is assured of maintenance in the future, "because in the event of divorce or widowhood in old age she can expect to be cared for in the household of one of her independent sons" (Asad:65). "A widow or divorcee with a son over the age of about fourteen is looked after by that son and usually she lives in the camp of her former husband (for there her son is at home) rather than with her brothers" (Cunnison:1:47). A married woman without children returns to the care of her brother, but with him she has not the position of senior woman in a household. And a woman in this position has no recognised rights in how the affairs of the next generation are arranged.

The culmination of a woman's ageing comes when the children she has borne are reaching marriageable age, for she then has a recognised status as a mother whose wishes must be consulted, and as a senior woman whose relations with men have eased with the passage of time. This also is the period in which the set of claims that she has over men becomes most complex, and when she is best

able to manipulate the different links between men to her own advantage. And in comparing the power potential of women in these two societies, it is crucial to my analysis to compare the status of women as matrons, the mothers of children of marriageable age. The Humr women by this stage have a recognised public and political role to play, whereas the Kababish women continue in their essentially private and domestic roles. The Humr matron can wield considerable power in decisions concerning her children and can combine with the other women of the camp to force men to action. The Humr matron has achieved a set of claims that is complex and wide in range. But the Kababish matron does not and cannot. In the process of a Kababish woman ageing, those claims that she creates in the course of her marital career cause others to lapse.

Section C: The Power of the Matrons

Implicit in the analysis so far has been a distinction that should be made ^{between} the sphere of influence that is open to all women who are married, and the possible extension of that range of influence to involvement in decision-making outside the bounds of the domestic domain. All women who are married have some degree of influence, for their husbands are dependent on them for the provision of services which they cannot themselves provide; and this influence relates therefore to the interdependence of conjugal roles in a society where strict sexual division of labour operates.

This interdependence allows for a woman of strong personality to exercise great influence over the decisions of her husband that relate to her own interests in property, or to her children, especially her daughter. But for there to be any security of her being consulted in these decisions, other pressures must operate, and these relate to the other resource that women have in the development of their power potential. This lies in the strategic interests that are involved in the continuance of a particular marriage, and the continuance of effective links with men that a woman can operate in her interests. Where effective links continue with men other than those with whom she is presently resident, she has some claims which she can make. The more complex the set of these links that focusses on a woman, the greater are her chances for power.

The importance of strategic interests in a marriage, and of the continuance of other links with men have already been indicated, for on page 15 I referred to the arrangements that were made over the property of a woman when she marries. Even the Kababish women had some sanction to operate in the threat of removing animals from the household of the father, and the Humr women are welcome at any time in the camp of their agnates. And the case of Abdullah on page 13 indicated the strategic interests of the groom and father-in-law in the marriage as arranged. But not all marriages have either such strategic interest or the continuance of effective links with other men involved, and these marriages reduce the range of a woman's influence to her domestic domain.

The best measure of a woman's power lies in the time of her matronhood, for it is then that she will have consolidated her marital status by having borne children, and will have the greatest opportunity for exercise of her power. If the set of her links with men has been able to develop, it will then be at its most complex, and there will be some chance of her exercising the claims that she has in the interests of her children, most importantly her daughters. And the clearest index of a woman having matured to power in her matronhood is to estimate how far she can influence the course of events surrounding the marriage of a daughter.

True of the senior women of both societies is the effective authority that they can exert over their daughters within the domestic domain. However, the power of the Kababish matron is strictly limited by two factors, her containment within her domestic domain, and resulting subordination to the authority of the household head; and by her inability to combine with other women in any form of public action. This containment may well lead to a woman of strong personality exercising great influence over her husband, as Asha was accused of by the agnatic kin of her husband Hamid (Asad:119); but unless she has close links with other men who are involved in some action, her influence cannot extend to any public decisions. It is significant in respect to Asha, that the man who was most restrained in action on this occasion was her uterine half-brother. But for most Kababish women, the lack of structural continuity in resident units and the lack of agnatic solidarity removes any

public concern in familial relations, and likewise reduces the range of her influence.

By contrast, the Humr women as female agnates, and the object of corporate responsibility have a distinctly public role to play as married women and matrons. They lack any overt political role (even in the sense to which Peters refers, see page 28, where women who mediate particularly important political links are given high status from the marriage itself), and there is no sense of a hierarchy of status for women other than that of age and marital status. The women of the Humr camps combine in camp hospitality, a public event which gives them an opportunity to participate in public decisions, and as matrons they can combine in opposition to the men over negotiations for the marriage of a girl.

The clearest contrast in the power of the matrons of the two societies is seen at the time of a marriage. The Humr matron has the absolute right of final decision, whereas the Kababish matron must accept the decision of her husband.

The Humr mother will frequently have connived at the courtship of her daughter, and thereby have influenced the course of events. Her consent is necessary for the marriage of a daughter, not merely as a formal acquiescence but also because she can prevent a marriage taking place. A suitor makes her a few presents to begin with, but as the time of marriage approaches "the old woman steps up her demands, and the negotiations over the amount

of money to be handed over as bridewealth, which she conducts directly with the bridegroom, are apt to be harrowing for him" (Cunnison:2:28). At the final stages she combines with other women of her family to demand the payment of bridewealth, and the last stages of negotiations are not conducted between the men of the two families, but by the men of both families in opposition to the women. "The men of the girl's family show little interest in trying to fix the bridewealth until at the end they attempt to persuade the mother to be reasonable in her demands" (Cunnison:1:95). And Cunnison categorically states that "the final word is that of the bride's mother absolutely. One way she can try to stop a marriage that she or her daughter do not want is to refuse to lower the price" (fn:ibid). As a matron, a Humr woman has a high degree of control over negotiation which comes to her through the bridewealth payment being not merely a nominal payment and purely symbolic of her status as matron, but being the subject of bargaining. The bridewealth is not distributed among the men of the family, but retained by the mother and put toward wedding expenses. Any surplus remaining is hers to allocate as she wishes. The other women become involved not through material interests but through the solidarity of the women of a camp, for where camps form corporations as they do for the Humr, then the women as female agnates and affinal kin also share corporate interests. They have a public role to play in camp hospitality, and can combine to spread the reputation of men.

Given the corporate public role of the women, and given the recognised interests that they have in their daughters and the marriage of daughters, the Humr men cannot deny the matrons the decisive voice in the marriage of a girl. The Kababish men can and do, for although the bridewealth is negotiated between bridegroom and bride's mother, hers is not the final decision about the marriage taking place. The father retains the right to give consent, and this is "more than a passive right of veto, for a man may himself indicate his daughter's marriage to the person who will in his view prove himself a suitable son-in-law. And the affinal relationship established between a man and his son-in-law is a purely personal one, based on their mutual concern for the welfare of the bride" (Asad:64). I question the last statement, as I consider that many Kababish marriages are arranged with more of an eye to the economic strategies of father and son-in-law than purely to the welfare of the bride. But the other points are valuable, for they indicate the limitations that the Kababish matron has to individual action even at this time. She continues subject to the effective authority of her husband and the father of the bride, and unless the father's interests are also served by the mother's delaying tactics in negotiations, she will be unable to effect any change. Each decision taken comes to rest on the operation of purely personal factors, and while this allows for women of strong personality to have great influence, it serves as the limitation to the power of most women.

Women in both societies pass through age statuses which culminate in matronhood. But it is clear that the patterning of their power within this status is different in the two societies. It remains now to explore more closely why it is that the set of claims that a Kababish woman can develop remains constantly so much less complex and more restricted than that of a Humr woman.

Chapter Two

Section A: The Division of Labour Within a Household

Within households of these two economies, division of labour is on two simple criteria. Work is allocated to and persons are trained to carry out tasks according to their age and their sex. Among children, the differences become clear as they mature. The son is trained to those tasks that are part of the male, public sphere, and which will eventually bring him economic autonomy. The daughter is trained to those private domestic tasks in which she increasingly helps her mother, and which eventually she carries out in her own marital home. Such sexual differentiation in tasks serves to maintain the logic of male-female roles, where men are not merely the jural-political majors, but are also the providers of dependents. Women remain as the dependents of men, for they are denied not only legal majority, but also the economic means by which they can assert any independence.

The functional aspect of strict division of labour between the sexes is to ensure a mutual interdependence between the sexes, for men cannot carry out the tasks of women, any more than women can carry out the tasks of men. But more than that, it also divides the sexes into mono-groupings in terms of the assistance that can be proffered at time of crisis. Whereas it is clear that in both economies the men of households are

reliant at times on recruiting support from other men, it is not so evident that women are likewise dependent on other women. I maintain that it is necessary to look closely at the support that is offered between women, and whether this has any economic aspect, for where exchanges of different kinds are being conducted between women, this may be independent of any control by men.

Age is relevant as a criterion in two senses. It is only as children leave the earliest stages of their childhood, that sexual division of labour becomes relevant. And it is the most senior person within a household that allocates the tasks that must be carried out. In the earliest stages of childhood, where both son and daughter are contained within the matri-centred domestic cell (Fortes:1958), little distinction is made between a boy and a girl as they develop their physical capabilities and become strong enough to carry out some range of tasks. They are subject to the effective authority of the mother and assist her in her tasks. But as soon as the son reaches the age where claims over him by kin are relevant then he also participates increasingly in male tasks which remove him from the domestic domain of his mother. For, as is clear for the Humr, the age of physical ability for a child to participate in male tasks is also the age at which his agnatic kin can exert their jural rights. At the age of seven, a son begins to join in herding tasks, and this is the time when his kin, if he is living separately, can claim his return (Cunnison:1:53). This assertion

of claims can involve the physical removal of the son from his mother if she is separated from the pater, and thereby indicates the maturing of the son, a process which ultimately removes him from the sphere of the mother's authority. The physical removal of the son in such a case amounts to a more dramatic statement of what is usually a gradual development; for a mother always lacks jural authority over her son, but this only becomes relevant in the course of his maturing physically and socially.

By contrast, a daughter would never be removed from her mother in this way. Given the strict division of labour between the sexes, the mother remains the appropriate person to train and educate the daughter from the time of her infancy till the time of her first marriage. This is the time when the rights of agnatic kin over a daughter first become relevant, with the right of the father's brother's son to first refusal in marriage (Asad:58; Cunnison:1:90). Until the time of her marriage, the daughter and her mother are locked together in their mutual minority and economic dependence. And in the uninterrupted development of their shared interests and tasks, their relationship has a unique consistency. This unique nature of their relationship is recognised by the men of both societies (see page 21), and is the basis for the development of solidarity among other women. One aspect of the strict division of labour between the sexes is to create not only an interdependence between men and women, but also a potential solidarity of interests between members of one sex. Most indicative of this is the continued

support that a girl seeks and finds in her mother after marriage, and the continual exchanges that are conducted between women of neighbouring households.

The sexual division of labour in these two societies is based on an inner logic, which does not negate the other functions that it fulfills. The logic lies in the fact that these are both societies where all people are expected to marry and have children, and where a premium is thereby put on parental roles. Specifically, the emphasis on marriage and parenthood serves to define the dominant roles of women in terms of their maternity, and thereby to limit the range of roles that are open to them (Nadel:1957:61). For unlike some other societies, such as Western industrial society, where it is possible to separate out some stage of a woman's life where she can have an independent economic career (Myrdal: 1968:13), these are both societies where the maternal phase of a woman's life is most likely to be the longest and most enduring. Any pre-marital career is precluded by the early age of marriage and the strict control exercised over unmarried women. No marriage is considered complete until the birth of at least the first child, and from that time on, most women are closely involved in the bearing and rearing of children. Maternity involves not merely the bearing of children, but also their rearing, boys till about the age of seven and girls till the time of their first marriage. It is therefore logical to find that sexual division of labour should be based on the initial

principle that women are trained to and carry out those tasks that are most nearly compatible with their maternal roles.

But once the inner logic is viewed, it does not negate the other functions of the division of labour between sexes. The strict sexual division of labour within a household serves to maintain the interdependence of male-female roles which are based on inequality, for it ensures that men are as dependent on women for the provision of certain services, as women are on men for their maintenance. And, outside the household, sexual division of labour creates the potential of solidarity between members of the same sex.

One side of the argument relating to the consistency of male-female roles has been presented by several writers, particularly focussing on the logical fit of the economic dominance of men with their social dominance (see Nadel:1954; Cohen:1969; Smith, M.G.:1962). Increasingly the strains that are inherent in a situation of change, especially where women are gaining a new economic autonomy, are becoming a focus of analytical concern. Where women can effectively offer a challenge to the former economic dominance of men, some conflict in sex roles is likely to arise, for the new independence of women and resulting removal from the absolute dominance and authority of the men is rarely compensated for the men by other factors. Such conflict in sex roles is one that Nadel analyses as latent in the antagonism between the sexes where men are created the socially dominant sex, and which becomes

manifest under certain conditions of change. If the social dominance of men is reduced by economic factors such as the development of a market system, and the opening of trade in cash to women, this is likely to lead to women either "exceeding" their proper roles as wife and mother, or to their rejecting such a role (Nadel:1954:175). Where women are able to achieve either such "excess" or "rejection", men must find some compensating factors. And Nadel analyses the predominance of fears of evil female witches, and their association with the market system of the women as an indicator of a basic antagonism having developed into conflict of sex roles among the Nupe (op. cit.:169-181).

Basic to this transition from the latent antagonism to open conflict was the change in the economic power of women. For the Nupe woman now had open to her a market system of trading which gave her economic freedom and independence. Her husband could become indebted to her for loans, and also dependent on her for provision made to the son (op. cit.:174) and a challenge was offered by the women to the congruence of the men having both economic dominance and domestic authority. The man's proper status as "breadwinner" was reduced by his wife's independence, and his authority was further reduced by a richer wife's inheritance being of greater importance than his own. In terms of action, this meant that women were able to exert greater influence not only over the men who were officially their providers and guardians, but they

were also able to usurp their authority over sons and daughters, who became dependent on inheritance from the mother.

The balance between sex roles, based on the dichotomy of women as dependants and giving of certain services to men, and men as providers but dependent on women for these services within the domestic domain, had broken down. Although, as I demonstrate in the next section, the Humr women have achieved a degree of economic autonomy not open to the Kababish women, they by no means offer such a challenge to the men. Both Humr and Kababish women remain dependent on men for provision in a household; this dependence is maintained by the sexual division of labour which in these economies excludes them from the economically profitable tasks for the most part. And yet it is the same principle of the sexual division of labour which ensures that men remain dependent on them for domestic services, for the duties of a woman to provide services within her domestic domain are conceived of as a right. Men are precluded from attempting to provide domestic services such as for cooking themselves, except at the rare intervals where they are absent from the camp on long herding trips, and they can only receive such services in the tents of women who are, or have been, married. Men are precluded by the feelings of shame that would be associated with their indulging in female tasks beyond the earliest stages of childhood (Asad:44; Cunnison:1:47-48). But even more they are precluded by the fact that "the abrogation of a particular task by men would be interpreted

by women as the loss of a right" (Peters:1965:137). Each of the tasks of a woman is her prerogative, and a sign of her independence within her domestic domain. It is only on marriage that a woman frees herself of the effective authority of her mother, and is able to conduct her range of domestic tasks within the domain of her tent.

The strictness with which the sexual division of labour operates differs between the two economies, for it is found that the Kababish women are regularly expected to proffer assistance to men in the male tasks of herding, whereas the Humr women play no part in herding. But the rule that men have no part in the tasks of women remains intact and the work of women tends to be greater than that of men if one considers the cycle of work through which a household will pass (Asad:47). And this dependence of men on women for carrying out some of their tasks compromises the division between the sexes for outside assistance. In the case of the Kababish, the emphasis on the independence of the nuclear family household units leads to men avoiding, if possible, the recruitment of other men at times of labour shortage. This leads to the women being asked to involve themselves in herding tasks, and to a greater dependence of the head of the household on the women to maintain his herding policy. But men never participate in the tasks of women, and women are frequently unable to manage independently of any outside assistance. Where members of one household cannot turn to each other for assistance at times of crisis, then they must turn to neighbours or friends. And in the

analysis of Kababish camp life, it becomes clear that the women of different households, unable to rely on men for assistance, create and maintain relations of mutual aid with women of neighbouring households (Asad:128, 131). One important aspect of the sexual division of labour has remained intact for the Kababish; the men do not participate in the tasks of women. Women are reliant on each other at times of crisis, and this applies by clear contrast with the position of men. If the sexual division of labour were strictly carried out, then this solidarity of the women would apply to men also.

This solidarity of the women in terms of the aid that they can proffer each other in time of crisis centres on the close links that are maintained between the women of one family when they are separated by marriage. The closest and most enduring link is that between a mother and her daughter, but also sisters can seek to remain near each other after their respective marriages. And where households of the separate women remain near each other, in the same camp for example, the pattern of visits and exchanges made between the different households is clear (see Asad:45). Where a daughter remains close to her mother the continued influence of the mother, to whom the daughter turns for advice and assistance has already been indicated (see p. 21). And even where mother and daughter are separated by camps, there is maintained a pattern of visiting, encouraged by the seasonal movements of the camps, which might well bring the women closer

to each other at certain times of the year (Asad:22). The need for these continued close links between women lies in the nature of the work which is allotted to them in their domain. Theirs is the responsibility for raising and educating the young children, caring for the sick, and ensuring that at all times the household is supplied with food and drink. It is in the nature of this responsibility that crisis can strike at any time, and usually is unpredictable. So that unlike the cycle of men's work, which tends to follow the seasonal demands for labour in herding and watering, the work of women is increasing and liable to crisis at any time, and some insurance must be made for other women to come and aid in times of need.

It is for these reasons that among the women of a camp there is a constant interchange of visits and small exchanges, especially of food items. Each woman is concerned to ensure the readiness of other women to assist. And among the women of a camp, certain women will exchange more frequently than others. These will be the women who are kin and/or neighbours. Where mother and daughter remain close together, the pattern of exchange, intervisiting and assistance will focus most closely on them.

However, the pattern of exchanges between women of a camp although contributing to the cohesion of camp life, does not have any important economic aspect as compared with the exchanges between men. The potential for developing the network between women of different households as a base for economic exchanges and

for inter-household trading is not one that has been developed. No woman becomes the centre of a large accumulation of credit, and the extent to which they can independently accumulate wealth is strictly limited. Although the Humr women are able to make some profit from the provision made to them by their husbands, and are also able to use this profit to invest in animal wealth, it is never sufficient in itself to provide any degree of economic autonomy. The only important aspect in which the links between women operate in the economic relations between men and women is in relation to the mother's trusteeship of animals for her daughter. This only occurs among Humr women who are separated from the agnatic kin of their daughters. As I have indicated, women in all cases remain with their mothers till the time of their first marriage. This involves not only that the daughter goes with the mother in the event of marital separation, but also that some kind of provision must be made for her, by her agnatic kin. This provision is mediated through the mother, who is given a number of cattle, the title of which is vested in the name of the daughter, and the children of the daughter. And the mother retains the use and increase of the animals that she has in her keeping (Cunnison:1:34). The only women who become the focus of important economic links are those who have many animals in their keeping. And the chances of this happening are confined to those women who have gained trusteeship over animals belonging to others.

True of both societies is the continued economic dependence of women on men, for although some degree of economic

autonomy is open to Humr women, this can only come as the result of accumulation over time, and does not present any real challenge to the main dichotomy in sexual roles. Where the two societies differ is in the degree to which women participate in the main sphere of tasks. Labour allocation is a real problem to the heads of the Kababish households, and they come to rely on women assisting them to some degree in their tasks. Although the Humr women participate in more aspects of the economy, they are not expected to help in what is defined as the male sphere of herding and care of animals.

In the Kababish example, it would seem that sexual division of labour has broken down to an extent, and that this alters the pattern of dependence of men and women, for a Kababish man is closely dependent on his wife for her labour, and also on the subsidy that he gets through her being helped by other women. But no woman in either society is dependent on any man for assistance in her tasks. The female sphere remains intact.

Section B: The Extent to Which Women are Involved in Tasks Relating to Production

It has sometimes been maintained that the single most important change in the economic status of women comes as a result of households no longer being production, as well as consumption units. This results in women either gaining an independent role by working for wages themselves, or in being restricted to

domestic tasks, and their labour consequently being devalued by removal from production. It is assumed that where women are still parts of producing households, productive tasks may be compatible with their dominant concern in maternal and domestic roles. In my two examples, this is confirmed, for the confinement of women to that range of tasks most nearly compatible with their dominant roles does not necessarily remove them from the productive process. Their involvement in production is determined by the nature of the economy.

It is true that in nomadic pastoral economies an amount of productive activity must be conducted at a distance from the home base of the tent and the camp. But for the greater part of the year the distances covered by men in their herding tasks do not remove them from the camp for any length of time. And in any case, the proportion of time spent away from the camp depends on the nature of the animals herded, and the other factors that must be taken into account in herding policy. The women of the camps are most closely involved in such tasks as centre on the home base of the tent, but this range of tasks can include some cultivation, and certainly includes the milking of animals which can be the base of a household's supply of cash.

The logic of the premise on which the sexual division of labour is based has been proved, both in terms of the primacy of maternal roles, and in the consequent duration and intense involvement by women in the domestic familial domain. Such involvement is not merely nominal, but implies a deal of hard work. Gunnison,

Asad and Peters all comment on this fact, suggesting that the cycle of work is different for a woman from that of a man, and that the older women are grateful for the assistance that they receive within a household from the younger more able women. The toil of women is unceasing and continuous, involving the everyday routines of food preparation and serving. In addition, there are the large variety of tasks relating to the care of the children. And also the periodic repairs and maintenance of the tent and the household goods. And the assistance that a woman can receive from other women in the household tends to be in inverse proportion to the work-load at that stage in the cycle. For the woman with the greatest work-load is one who has several small children, with none yet old enough to be of any real assistance; the woman with the smallest is one who has several daughters nearing the age of marriage. And, as compared with the men, there is little seasonal pattern to her work-load. Some alteration occurs at the time when watering the animals is most difficult, and long distances must be covered to the water-point; but overall the great majority of her tasks are daily and not seasonal in routine (Peters:1965:136-138; Cunnison: 2:25; Asad:43-47).

The primary roles that women fulfill and the tasks that they perform as an aspect of such roles, require their almost continuous presence within the tents. And the spatial immobility of women within the camp is to be compared with the frequent movement of men. In fact, women can be absent on visits to other

camps and at times in trading ventures. But in such an event arrangements must be made for another woman to provide the men with domestic services. This presents Kababish households with something of a problem (Asad:44), and Kababish men try to prevent women going away for extended visits. By contrast, it seems relatively easy for a Humr man to attach himself, either temporarily or permanently to another household (Cunnison:1:48). But in either case, the general principle is that the women are permanently resident in the camps and close to the tents. And this is a point essential to the social organisation of nomadic pastoralists, for there are times of the year when not only mobility, but also dispersal are necessary. At these times, the herding units become separated from the camping units and the mobility of the animals is utilised to range as far as possible in the search for water and pasture. Now, the camps, centred on the tents occupied by the women and children, become the real base and communication centre of the dispersed units. The further that the range of mobility of the animals extends at such times, the less likely it is that women will be involved in their everyday management, for they will remain with their tents in the camps. Consistent with this principle is to find that the Kababish women are precluded from any management or involvement in tasks associated with the camels, although they assist in the watering and herding of sheep and goats. And also consistent is to find that the Humr women cannot be precluded from involvement with the single animal of their economy, the cattle.

The nature of these two economies is such that even by virtue of those tasks that they carry out relating to the consumption demands of a household, women are involved in production also. It is in virtue of their domestic roles that men make provision to them of the staples of the household diet; chiefly millet and milk, with some meat. The Kababish grow no millet, but must purchase it through the sale of their surplus animal production. The Humr cultivate some millet, but rarely sufficient to meet household demands, and the rest is purchased through cash, which is the source of everyday supply to the household. And the women of the Humr are involved not merely in the cultivation of the gardens that lie close to the camp, but also in the sources of everyday cash on which the households depend. The Humr women are fully involved in the process of production by helping to cultivate the grain that is consumed, by milking the cows, and then processing the milk products, the surplus of which may be sold for cash, and which forms the basic supply of everyday cash of the household. Moreover, a woman in a richer household, with a larger number of cattle has access to surplus in the milk products that she makes. The cows must always be milked except when in calf, and the proportion that is consumed within the household lessens as the milk supply increases, so that her milk products can be sold in the market for cash, which she may use as she wishes, and even invest in cattle. The limitation to a woman's independent source of income increasing with the wealth of her husband comes if he should marry again, and the allocation of milk from the herd then be divided equally

with the other women (Cunnison:1:48). But it is an important point that Humr men cannot so closely control the household provision of women as can the Kababish men.

The Kababish have a mixed animal economy, from certain spheres of which women are effectively excluded. Women are excluded from trade, and confined to tasks relating only to the smaller animals of goats and sheep; they therefore have little chance of accumulating surplus from the provision made to them, and even less of any independent investment. Like the Humr women, an important part of everyday provision in a household is a regular supply of milk. For this purpose all households keep a number of goats close to the tent, and it is the responsibility of the women to milk the goats twice a day, and to prepare the milk not consumed as clarified butter (Asad:44). Any surplus that she may have after household needs have been met she may sell, and in those households that have many goats, this surplus might well accumulate. However, goats are animals that are the smallest unit of value for sale and for exchange, and household heads with any surplus seek to exchange goats for sheep and ultimately for the animal of greatest prestige and value, the camel (Asad:15 and 52). The sheep women cannot control so closely, for they have to be herded at times away from the tents in search of the more succulent pasture that they require. And camels, within a wealthy household, would be the source of important investment. Camels are the animals over which women have least control, for they are herded away from the tent, and

their range of mobility is utilised by the man in the season of shortage. So, within a successful household, the pattern of herding policy operates against the possibility of a woman's provision rising proportionate with that of her husband. The form of investment that men seek to make is away from those animals in which women have closest control and which could provide them with an important source of income.

The Kababish women are ultimately dependent on the generosity of the men with whom they are resident; for the provision made to women in respect of their domestic roles can be closely controlled and part of a deliberate herding strategy. The men control the herding of sheep and camels, and also the purchase of the grain which is the staple of a household's diet. And in this way the Kababish women, though part of producing/consuming units, are diverted into those spheres that deal with consumption more than production.

This could in itself be an important source of power to women, if hospitality, the sharing of consumption with others, were an important concern in the everyday management of a household, for where hospitality is extended, women are involved and must have generous provision made to them. It is true that Asad lays stress on the importance that Kababish give to the extension of hospitality to guests, because the presence of a guest calls for the display of karam - the offering of at least a minimal quantity of food and refreshment. "Indeed such generosity reflects on the host's

honour and the more generous he is the greater the honour he brings on himself and his household" (Asad:39/40). But such extension of generosity is closely limited by the calculations made about those who have overstayed their welcome, or who are constant malingerers in a household. "Visitors who habitually outstay their welcome in the hope of being present when the food is served are publicly criticised" (ibid) and the Kababish "assert the manifest reasonableness of refusing a visitor hospitality if the latter has previously denied it to the person he now visits or has behaved in a stingy or hostile manner towards him" (Asad:86).

Compared with the overwhelming importance that the Humr attach to their concept of "generosity", and their everyday concern with extending hospitality to either household or camp visitors, the Kababish seem to be singularly "ungenerous". A Humr man with cattle would be horrified at the idea of calculating whether his guest should be treated generously. Men move easily between different households, and can attach themselves to a household even when they make no contribution to it (Cunnison:1:48). And "whether he wants it or not, a man with cattle attracts followers to him - poorer kin who have perhaps no other camp in which they can drink milk" (op. cit.:32). And each member of a camp is involved in the extension of hospitality to camp guests. To refuse to help entertain a guest would be to avoid the obligations of hospitality, and to cause a split in the camp (see the splinter camp of 'Iyal Ganis surra who entertained separately:72-74).

In the calculations that the Kababish men make about hospitality, the potential role of women in publicly important entertainment, such as that of the Humr camps, is reduced. And their restriction to primarily consumption tasks does not therefore provide an alternative patterning in provision by men. The Humr women have a significant role to play in the politically important extension of hospitality. If they were restricted, like the Kababish women, primarily to consumption tasks, then this in itself would be a source of strength to them, for men to be generous in hospitality need to be generous in provision. However, they not only have this resource, they also play a significant part in production, and also in cash transactions that are made. Humr women cannot be excluded from the cash aspects of production and they therefore have access to cash which they can use as they wish after household demands are met. Among the uses to which they can put their cash surplus is investment in the animal that is the source of wealth and of greatest prestige, namely cattle. It would seem that the Humr economy by concentrating on the herding of one animal is more vulnerable to the involvement of women in production and also to the possibility that the women may gain a significant degree of economic autonomy.

Section C: The Trade in Household Surplus

When we turn to consider the part that women play in the trade of the two economies, and to their involvement in tasks associated with the sources of everyday cash supply to a household,

this vulnerability of the Humr economy appears even greater. The Humr women have some surplus in the housekeeping provision, can trade this themselves for cash, and can accumulate cash to the point where they can invest in animals, the title of which is theirs or of their children. There would seem therefore to be a whole sector in the economy over which men cannot exert control, and where women have a degree of autonomy that might lead to an effective challenge to the economic dominance of men. This supposition is encouraged by the way in which other authors have discussed the effects of women gaining a new economic role, especially in trade. They make it clear that even some small shift in women's economic potential can have disproportionate effects on men's control of women. However, in considering this supposition, it becomes clear that the economic potential of the Humr women can serve to free them of the control of any one man, but does not thereby make them altogether independent.

Neither economy is self-sufficient but must trade in order to gain the basic essentials of diet, and additional items that they do not produce themselves. In this respect, they share a common characteristic with other middle-eastern nomads all of whom must have trading relations of one kind or another with settled peoples. And as E. Bacon maintains, this places them "in a pattern of symbiosis which ties them to the larger society of the Arab world" (E. Bacon:1954), making them to some degree dependent on their relations with settled cultivators and the market centres. The Humr have always moved on the "southern flanks of these settled populations (and) seem to have been

in two minds about the sultans at times they fought them; at times they entered opportunist alliances with them. The nomads had no desire to pay the tribute the sultans would impose, but at the same time they were dependent on merchants and settled peoples in the sultans' domains for certain goods" (Cunnison:1:2). The Baggara were dependent on such markets particularly for grain, the basic to diet, which they bartered for liquid butter, and since they have settled in their present territory, they have regular relations with the market centres nearby. Weekly cattle markets are held at Muglad, Abyei and other smaller centres according to the season.

"There is a good market for butcher meat in all the large towns of Sudan, and most of this is supplied from Baggara herds" (Cunnison:1:36).

The Kababish also must trade in order to survive, and their grain can be obtained either from the major market centres, or directly from cultivating villages south and south-west of Dar Kababish. The principal source of cash is the sale of livestock, and such sale is conducted through the long-distance trade of camels to Egypt, the sale of smaller stock in the markets to which they travel, and to a smaller extent by sale to the merchants in the larger damars (Asad:30-34).

However, as indicated, there are important differences in the pattern of trade as conducted by the two economies. Whereas the Humr have regular weekly access to market centres, and all their seasonal movements keep them within range of the markets, the Kababish vary the pattern of trade according to the seasons. When gathered in the summer watering-places, the merchants can do a "fairly brisk trade",

but most of the buying and selling takes place just before or just after the rainy season. The purchase of the main provisions is in varying quantities and at different times of the year, mostly involving travel over some distance. And, as far as I can estimate, this seems to imply that, unlike the Humr who have established themselves in the most important trading centres, the Kababish have no regular trading relations with any one centre, or any degree of dependence on local merchants. At all times, they are able to use their greater mobility to travel to the places where sale and purchase is most favourable.

The two economies also differ in terms of how far cash has permeated as a generalised commodity and means of exchange. The cash interests of the Humr are rapidly developing in the use of cash to build up herds, the cultivation of the cash crops of millet and cotton, the regular trading and especially in the numbers of Humr men who are absent earning cash in the towns on wage-labour (Cunnison:1:63). And this process has been accelerated by the recent heavy losses suffered by some Humr, e.g. the surra of 'Iyal Ganis, where herds were depleted greatly. Those men who are away on wage-labour are assumed by Cunnison to be saving cash in order to purchase the herds which will be the basis of their later subsistence. By contrast, the Kababish have retained certain sectors of their economy intact from the monetarisation of exchange. Herds are built up through exchange within the economy, supplemented to an extent by the purchase of small animals. Those men who are short of animals can earn subsistence through attaching themselves as herders or hiring out their services on a temporary

basis, and in exchange they receive animals, not cash. These animals they can build up and systematically exchange until they are able to own the animals of greatest prestige and with the single greatest unit of value - the camel. The camel, though sold on long-distance trade, and an important source of income, is not bought on the open market. Moreover, no men are absent on wage-labour, for the means of adjusting a situation of shortage seem sufficient within the economy itself (Asad:15).

How such factors relate to women's economic potential is in the effect that they have on the everyday sources of cash for household expenditure and provisions. For, as I have already indicated, women in these societies have no independent career prior to marriage, and once married are dependent on provision made to them in respect of their domestic and maternal roles. Prior to marriage they can exert no control over property, but once married and established in their marital household, then they have control, at least in one sphere - that of the provision made to them. Customarily, it is the right of a married woman to dispose of any surplus that may accrue after household consumption demands have been met. But the chances of the women of the two societies vary in the possibility of their accruing surplus, in how this surplus is disposed of, and in what they may invest any such surplus.

In both economies it is the prerogative of women to process the milk products which are consumed within the household and which have some cash value in sale. The Humr women have an increased likelihood of such surplus regularly being found, through the fact

that the provision made to them must be as generous as possible. The larger the herd of her provider, the greater the amount of milk that can be used (see p. 57), and many households rely on the sale of milk products in the nearby markets as the chief source of everyday cash. These cash transactions are conducted by the women themselves in the markets, and any cash remaining from household demands is theirs to use as they wish. The first priority is on accumulating household goods for daughters not yet married, but they can also invest in cattle, the title of which is granted to their daughters or the children of their daughters. The Humr women therefore regularly handle cash, accumulate cash, and can invest in the most important animal of the economy, cattle. By contrast, the Kababish women are likely to have a smaller surplus in milk products, handle cash less independently, and cannot invest in the animal of greatest prestige and value. The smaller surplus arises through the fact that those households regularly producing surplus to consumption needs are highly unlikely to concentrate on goats, the milk-producers, as herd animals. The number of milk animals that a woman regularly has at her disposal is thereby controlled. But some milk products are sold, though they never bring in enough income to provide for other household demands. The source of everyday cash comes in the sale of smaller animals, and periodic trips by the men into the market centres. The only time at which women conduct their own cash transactions is in the summer dammars, where men can continue to exert close control over their purchases.

So that the likelihood of a Kababish woman gaining any economic autonomy through provision and gifts made to her is minute. At all times they are precluded from any significant accumulation, and therefore from any investment independent of their husband or father.

As indicated, the Humr women have not only trading possibilities, but also investment possibilities in the strategic sector of the economy. If the economy is in fact vulnerable to a challenge by the women of the men's economic dominance, then it is here that it will take place. As other studies have indicated, it is not so much women's trading role per se that affects the former balance in sexual roles, but the possibility that this opens up not merely for accumulation, but also investment. In some situations, it would appear that even a small shift in women's economic possibilities can have great effect (see T.S. Epstein: 1962:318), for in Wangala, the economic relations of man and wife have altered, "increasing the prestige of women within the new status criteria". But, where women also have investment possibilities, the changes are even greater.

The further that cash has permeated an economy as a generalised commodity and means of exchange, the more vulnerable it is to challenge of men's former economic dominance by those women who can earn and accumulate cash savings. Such challenge can be as effective as that described by Nadel for the Nupe. For in this instance, many women, as traders, have built up their

position to the extent where the men are heavily in debt to them. The men rely on the women "for money for tools, for some unforeseen heavy expenditure, and even for such items as the brideprice of a son or funeral expenses, which it is the man's duty to defray" (Nadel:1954:174). Male authority is further diminished by another factor: for with the Nupe kinship organisation sons normally look to the father and male kin for economic support. But, as frequently happens, "where the mother is the richer, the inheritance she will leave will be at least as important, and even while she is still alive her sons or daughters will turn to her for financial help". This offers an effective challenge to the father's role, which is to meet the economic requirements of the household. And, as Nadel points out, "the economic independence of the women connotes the inadequacy of the men" (op. cit.:175).

This challenge to the economic dominance of men reduces their control over the women in other aspects, for the social dominance of men is inextricably bound up with their economic role. The Nupe men cannot exert the same moral control over the women as previously. "The women traders are proverbially 'bad' wives and 'bad' women, that is, women of loose and immoral character. Going on long journeys as they regularly do, they neglect their household duties and, while away from home, live the life of prostitutes" and even more significantly, the women traders are notorious for their desire to avoid having children. "It is they who are the most regular customers of the various dealers in 'contraceptives'.

They thus pile one iniquity upon another, having chosen not only unchastity but that utterly unnatural and despicable thing, voluntary barrenness" (ibid). The Nupe women have gained an economic role that is separate from marital status, and which permits them truly independent economic status. Their challenge is not merely to the economic dominance of men, but also to their social dominance. For they have gained this autonomy outside the constraints of marriage.

As long as women are dependent on marital status for any economic autonomy, and as long as their accumulation of wealth is directed into "harmless conspicuous expenditure", men can effectively exert continued control over women and their property, and the potential of the women for challenging their economic superiority is contained. The only women over whom the Hausa men cannot exert control are the prostitutes; and these are also the women that despite their "exciting, free and independent life" are not well-off but possess only a few "glossy gaudy dresses and very little, simple furniture" (Cohen:1969:66). Politically the prostitutes would seem a more significant factor than are the secluded, settled housewives. For the prostitutes have played a formalised and organised role in the politics of the Quarter, forming separate female branches of the two major south Nigerian parties, the NCNC and the Action Group. Whereas the housewives have not voted in any of the elections nor taken any part in party politics (op. cit.:63). However, behind the seclusion of the housewives important trade is operating, and the proportion of housewives to prostitutes has changed over the years with the number of housewives increasing. There are distinct

economic advantages for a prostitute in marrying, and they are the second favourite choice of the men in marriage (the first being Sabo-born girls).

Immediately on her marriage a woman is entitled to a marriage payment and she can use this to start her own business. As a housewife, she can regularly take "cuts" from the household money, over which she has control. In addition, she has the profits of those girls, her daughters and fostered girls who sell in the streets of the Quarter. And the accumulation of these profits through the trade between the women of the Quarter is sufficient to permit many married women to amass a significant amount of wealth. In Sabo the main contrast that must be made with reference to the position of women is that "the prostitute is free to participate in public life but cannot acquire much wealth. The housewife, in comparison, can accumulate a great deal of wealth". (op. cit.:67). Where wealth is accumulated, it can be invested in creating debt, and resulting relations of dependence. And it would seem that the Sabo women can unite politically as prostitutes, without any economic base, or remain divided as housewives, with a strong economic base.

However, as long as women are dependent on marital status for such economic base, then men can continue to exert effective control. In Sabo this control of men is aided by the seclusion of married women, which prevents them (as Cohen says) from entering into competition with men. But this is inadequate explanation in itself, for the wealth of women is sufficient for them to invest in those relationships that would reduce the control of men. (Compare

how the Nupe women in being able to aid their sons financially cut away at an important aspect of paternal authority). And this does not necessarily involve breaking the rules of seclusion. What is more relevant is that the wealth of women increases if they invest in female rather than male relationships, for among the ways that a married woman increases her wealth is to attract to her household young girls whom she fosters and uses to conduct her trade. Married women, instead of accumulating cash, which could be invested in either male or female spheres, restrict themselves to the female sphere by sinking their profits into acquiring ever-increasing numbers of Czechoslovak-made, brightly coloured, enamelled bowls. "Within the world of Sabo housewives, these bowls have become the most important status symbol and women are ranked in status in proportion to the number of bowls they possess a housewife continues to accumulate bowls and when her own daughters or her fostered daughters get married, she gives them part of her treasure, usually in proportion to the length of time the daughter has served her" (op. cit.:67-8). By investing in their bowls, the women remove their wealth from the control of men, but they also restrict the range of relationships in which they can make economic investment.

The Humr women would seem at first sight to share more of the features of the Hausa women than of the Nupe women, for their economic status is dependent on their marital status. No woman until she is married has any control over her property, nor has she independent claims to make for provision (see p. 49). Part of her increasing economic status comes through the cuts that

she can make from household provision, and this surplus she can invest in what she wishes. For the most part, this is in household goods for her daughters, which they take with them when they marry. "At her daughter's marriage the mother . . . will no longer be able to ride in caravan showing off her daughter and the fine goods that she has prepared for her, to all and sundry. When her daughter leaves, taking the finest of the household goods with her, the old woman will simply be an old woman on a dirty bull laden with sooty pots that attract miriads of flies" (Cunnison:2:28). Like the Hausa married women, Humr women invest most in relations with their daughters.

However, Humr women also have access to the commodity of single greatest prestige and value in the economy, for they can invest money in cattle. In some cases this can free a woman of the control of any one man, if she has the use of sufficient cattle to provide for a household. And to this extent, the Humr women could proffer some sort of challenge to the economic dominance of the men. Kababish women are effectively precluded from any such challenge, as already demonstrated. But Humr women are strictly limited by one important factor. This is the continuance of the division of labour within the camps, which removes women from management control of their cattle. The men of the camp herd the cattle, and theirs is usually the final decision as to the allocation of beasts for sale, or for slaughter to feed guests. No Humr woman, as long as she remains in the camps, is free from the management by men of her property. Humr women are subject to the control of men

through their dependence on marital status and in the continuing sexual division of labour. But unlike the Hausa women, who are strictly secluded in one household, and therefore subject to the control of one man, the Humr women can free themselves of the control of any one man, and can therefore exert influence over a wider range of decisions that are taken.

Section D: An Illustration of the Significant Difference between the Economic Position of the Humr and the Kababish Women

When one compares the composition of the different households comprising the camping clusters of the commoner Kababish, and the camps of the Humr, an immediate contrast is struck. All the Kababish households are based primarily on nuclear families, with the addition of other dependants, mainly female kin of the husband. All Kababish households are based on the wealth of men, and their dependants bring little additional property into the household. By contrast there are several examples in the Humr households where women, though nominally members of households headed by men, have a significant degree of autonomy in the running of the household. And in at least one instance, that of the widow Hamidy of the splinter camp of 'Iyal Ganis surra, men had formed a household around the property of a woman. This occurrence is possible through the accumulation of factors that permits a Humr matron a significant degree of economic autonomy. In the course of her marital career, she is the focus of generous provision from men, the use of which she retains. This retention of rights to provision enables

her to be mobile, and to accumulate a complex set of claims. Whereas, the Kababish women have restricted access to provision, and have no chance of establishing a complex set of claims over men, which would ultimately remove them from the control of any one man.

Among the households that Cunnison described for the two camps of the surra of 'Iyal Ganis, was one which was based on the wealth not of a man but of a woman. This woman's wealth was sufficient not only to provide the economic base for a household, but also to be the focal point around which the whole of the splinter camp had clustered; and great enough to have been the economic base to the challenge offered to the main camp leader, for this camp had broken from the main camp in the course of a dispute with the main camp leader, Hurgas. If they had not had any cattle, the splinter camp could not have formed, for they would have remained dependent on the cattle of Hurgas, the richest man in the main camp. Hamidy was the rich widow around whom the splinter camp formed, and the cattle was available to them because she had chosen to reside in the camp of her brother, rather than with her son. She had been able to take this decision because she was not dependent on her son, who would normally, as her official provider, have taken her into his marital home. And within her own household, she had a great influence over decisions that were nominally taken by men. Not only were they dependent on her wealth, but she had a great degree of autonomy in her management. The brother who was nominally head of the household was mostly absent for long periods, residing in the camp only when it was near Muglad

(Cunnison:1:61). So that any action nominally taken in his name could only have been with the consent, if not at the instigation of Hamidy.

Initially it would seem that such a household offers an anomaly in terms of what I have been stating so far, for this would appear to be an instance of a woman able to challenge not only the economic dominance of the men, but also their social dominance. For Hamidy was undoubtedly richer than her brother, who was nominally head of her household; and was also richer than the other men of her camp. This wealth had given her freedom to choose where to reside, and by creating relations of dependence in the other men, had undoubtedly given her great influence in decisions taken. The vulnerability of the Humr economy to challenge by women seems clear. However, the manner in which Hamidy had accumulated her wealth indicates more of the limitations that are imposed on women, and that her case was truly exceptional. Hamidy had her wealth through having arrived at the status of matron, a woman with married daughters, and the cattle of which she had use were not her private property, but in the title of her daughters and their children.

The cattle that she held were in trust for the children of her daughters; and this wealth had accumulated by various means. To begin with, she was herself a widow, and would perhaps have been allocated a small portion of her late husband's estate (see Appendix 2: Cunnison:1:198-200) but would certainly have been the recipient of provision for her daughters if they remained unmarried at the time of his death. The proper place for her daughters, if not yet

married, is with their mother. Provision would be made for them in the shape of cattle in their name, and the use and increase of which Hamidy would have for herself. In addition, Hamidy would translate any surplus that she could accumulate from household production into the tent and household goods that each would require at the time of marriage. Hamidy had six daughters, each of them was now married, and two resident in her own camp, and one son who had moved to the natal camp of his wife (Cunnison:1:61). At whatever point in time that her daughters were married, i.e. before the death of her husband or after, she was the appropriate recipient of bride-wealth paid by the grooms. As I have earlier stated, such bridewealth is in the form of cash and it is for the mother to allocate as she desires. A large portion will be put to wedding expenses, but the likelihood is that some amount will remain. Like the cash surplus that she can gain from her milk-processing, this can be invested in cattle. And this cattle, like the provision made in respect of her daughters, will not be in the title of men. But it will be hers to use, and vested in the title of her daughters and their children. Given that Hamidy had a large number of daughters, and consequently has been accumulating provision for them over some period of time, and has been using the cash surplus of milk products to invest in further cattle, it is not surprising to find that her wealth has accumulated to such an extent.

That it should however come to be the basis to a household, and moreover be the single largest amount in one camp, is the result of further factors which are beyond her own control. There was a

shortage of cattle in the surra of 'Iyal Ganis at that time (Cunnison:1:79). And this had led to a clustering around those who had larger amounts. To a great extent, the economic supremacy of Hurgas, the leader of the main camp, and the number of his dependants was the result of this depletion of the herds. This had caused the differential between his property and that of others to be increased. He had become the single biggest owner in either camp. The only persons who could challenge his dominance within the surra were those who also had some large amount of cattle. The split in the two camps had come with a dispute between Hurgas and Hamdan, the brother of Hamidy, over the question of the marriage of one of the women of the surra (Cunnison:1:77). Hamdan, in the course of the dispute, moved from the main camp and refused to participate in camp extension or hospitality. But lacking property himself, he could only do this on the basis of the property of his sister, Hamidy. In fact, were further details available about this incident, it would be interesting to explore the probability that a woman such as Hamidy, was not merely a passive pawn in the discussions, but in fact an instigator of the precipitating events. Given the frequent absence of Hamdan, his involvement in the events leading up to the split cannot have been as great as that of his sister. And it is quite likely that Hamidy called on Hamdan to act as her male spokesman in a matter which concerned her most nearly.

It would be mistaken to interpret this household as an instance of a woman's effective challenge to male dominance. Those women who achieve some significant autonomy are only those matrons

who are separate from their marital kin; and of these women only very few can hope to achieve the prominence of Hamidy, or of Ghubeysha, the sister of Hurgas (see Cunnison:1:52-3). The limitations on women's economic autonomy are strict. They are dependent first of all on marital and then maternal status, for it is in the second capacity that they receive provision for their children, even when removed from their marital homes. Even though this retention of material claims can lead to the enrichment of a woman when she is receiving provision from another man, the likelihood is small, for few women can guarantee being members of a few rich households among the Humr camps. It is true that, by comparison with the Kababish women, the Humr women have a range of autonomy within the household provision, and a sphere of economic action where men cannot exert close control. And this enables them regularly to handle cash and to invest the surplus. But the amount of investment that is possible for them is strictly limited. They cannot hope through generous household provision alone to compete with the wealth of men.

The significance of the instance of Hamidy lies elsewhere, namely in the contrast that the status of the Humr matron has with that of the Kababish matron. By the time she has arrived at the stage of matronhood, a Humr woman is of undoubted public significance. She is at the centre of a network of links with men, that in some cases has become extremely complex. The clearest indication of the complexity of this network is to find that a woman is receiving provision from several men at once. And this can only happen where

she has moved from her marital home, taking with her the continuing interests of affinal kin in her children, particularly her daughters. By comparison, the Kababish woman does not and cannot develop a complex set of links with men, for those claims that she establishes in one area lapse if she moves to another. Kababish women remain tied to the one man presently acting as provider, some Humr women can free themselves of the control of any one man.

Chapter Three

Section A: The Personal Networks of Men and of Women

In her consideration of the relation between conjugal roles and social networks, Elizabeth Bott formulated a hypothesis that can be summarised in the following terms. "The degree of segregation of conjugal roles is related to the degree of connectedness in the total network of the family. Those families that had a high degree of segregation in the role-relationship of husband and wife had a close-knit network; many of their friends, neighbours and relatives knew one another. Families that had a relatively joint role-relationship between husband and wife had a loose-knit network; few of their relatives, neighbours and friends knew one another". The hypothesis came to be drawn out on the basis of her data as: "The degree of segregation in the role-relationship of husband and wife varies directly with the connectedness of the family's social network" (Bott:1971:59-60). For where both spouses continue to be drawn into activities with people outside their own elementary family, "rigid segregation of roles will be possible because each spouse can get help from people outside" (idem) and not have to rely on the other.

In order to explain the high value placed on the segregation of conjugal roles, and on the strict sexual division of labour and other activities that prevails among many non-industrial societies, Gluckman expanded this point further. He stated that "we could

assume that families in all tribal societies were the centre of close-knit networks; they live surrounded by the kin of both spouses and these kin were therefore neighbours, friends and workmates The close-knit network of nearby kin who also participate together in economic activities produces both segregation into mono-sex groups and in conjugal roles and the tighter the fit between these variables, the more likely it is that segregation of roles will be not merely the habits of individual couples, but contain a high degree of convention passing into ceremonial and even ritual practices and occult beliefs" (Gluckman: Preface to Bott 1971 edition:xviii and xxii).

At first sight it would appear that these two societies share that feature. For the families which comprise the households of the camping units are resident with kin, and in the division of tasks in the economy, there is a clear division of labour on grounds of sex.

However it is already clear that such a generalisation would be misleading. For the camps of the Humr are "associated with a lineage of a kind known as a 'surra' the ideal camping, migrating and cattle-herding unit, as well as the limit of intimate and undifferentiated brotherhood" (Cunnison:1:59). And, despite the lack of such a high degree of concentration of agnatic kin as is true of the Bedouin camps, for example, the camps of the Humr are focussed on a core of agnatic kin, which gives each of the camps a corporate identity. The camps of the commoner Kababish are divided into clusters of associated households, none of which "corresponded to permanent structural units; they were neither stable nor organised

as wholes it is always multiple individual links and not membership of a group that creates a camping cluster" (Asad: 129 and 131). Even more significantly the contrast between the residential units of the two societies can be made with reference to economic cooperation. Whereas the Humr camps share responsibility for the herding of animals, and therefore avoid the possibility of an individual household suffering an acute shortage of labour, the Kababish households must each manage their own resources separately. Herding partnerships are made on a primarily contractual basis, implying no further solidarity, and almost all households face at some time an acute problem in the allocation of labour.

This is an important factor in itself, for as Gluckman has pointed out, "the close-knit network of nearby kin who also participate together in economic activities, produces both segregation into mono-sex groups and in conjugal roles" (see above). And it would seem that this has an important bearing on the problem that is raised, namely why the Kababish men are prepared to compromise on the sexual division of labour. This compromise is divisible into two aspects, within the domestic domain it would seem to indicate more "joint" conjugal roles. Outside the domestic domain it indicates a breakdown in the mono-sex groupings in economic activities. Seemingly this compromise over the sexual division of labour is related to the more "loose-knit" networks of the Kababish families, where co-resident kin are not economically cooperating.

The Humr are jointly responsible within a camp for the herding of the animals. And this permits men to leave the camp, as and when necessary in the assurance that their animals will still be cared for properly. It also ensures that a man who has insufficient labour to meet demands in his own household can call on the services of others in the camp, for his animals will continue to form part of a herding unit (Cunnison:1:67). A Kababish man who leaves his animals behind has problems, even when he hires a herder, for, as the case of Salim, a trader in the Abu Sufyan damar, indicates animals can be left unattended both by herder and family. His herder went off to attend a wedding nearby, and his male kin were reluctant to intervene (Asad:83). In the altercations exchanged about who was responsible for this neglect, the women of Salim's household were involved, being accused of dereliction of their duties.

But again this is insufficient in itself, for another question must be answered. There is compromise about the involvement of women in male tasks, but there is no compromise about men helping the women in their tasks. As Asad has clearly stated, "women are frequently called upon to perform men's tasks, but rarely if ever the other way around. Women are therefore more likely in general to be overworked than men" (Asad:47). Not only do the men come to rely on the labour of their own women in their sphere of tasks, they also rely on the support of other women. As I shall show, women must always have the support of other women at times of crisis; and where they could not share some of the burden of their tasks with other women, they would not be free to work with the men. The mono-sex grouping of the women in their tasks remain intact.

So it became clear to me as I considered these problems, that some modification of the original hypothesis of Bott was necessary, for her analysis rested on the point that the relative "jointness" or "segregation" of conjugal roles was connected with the relative density of a family's network. Where this network was close-knit, conjugal roles were segregated, where this network was loose-knit, conjugal roles tended to be more joint, with shared activity between husband and wife, and a breakdown of the mono-sex grouping in leisure and recreation (Bott:1955,1956,1957 and 1971). By using her concepts I could advance no further than already outlined. Some more exact measure of the components of the social networks of families was required. In this modification I was greatly helped by reading the forthcoming article of Bruce Kapferer, where he emphasised the point that the density of familial networks bears little relation to the jointness or segregation^g of conjugal roles. He found that it was more important to consider separately the individual networks of the spouses, and the manner in which their separate networks were interlinked.

Mitchell in 1969 pointed out that some clarification in the terminology accumulating round the concept of "network" was necessary. And he suggested that a starting point should be agreement that "the point of anchorage of a network is usually taken to be some specified individual whose behaviour the observer wishes to observe" (13) and again "the point of view taken in these essays is that a network is most conveniently anchored on an individual" (15). So that the network, now called personal network or ego-centred network,

is focussed on the lowest level of abstraction possible, namely the individual. And he further argued that it was necessary for a network to be defined in this way if further refinements were to be made.

This was the very point taken up by Kapferer in his forthcoming article, for, as he stated, once the focal point of a network becomes not a couple, but an individual, it is possible to identify a number of structural aspects of those networks. In his own analysis, he found five to be relevant, and I mention them all so as to explain why some I have used, and others I have had to discard in this analysis. I am aware that this is an unusual exercise in which I am indulging. I am using concepts framed for intensive study of extremely detailed material, when I have very limited data to hand. But, by using certain of his concepts, the answer to my problem began to appear.

He first reduced the density of a network to manageable proportions by limiting it to "the number of actual relationships between the individuals in ego's network, excluding ego's own direct relationships to these individuals, over the number of possible relationships". He then pointed out that the span of a network related to the number of individuals with whom ego has a relationship. No precise measure of span is possible as "in the context of this argument it is relative". Three types of zones, intimate, effective and extended, could be distinguished. The first two being marked-out primarily by the content of relationship with ego. Within the intimate zone relationships "tend to be instrumental

in content and many-stranded"; in the extended zone "individuals are linked to ego by an interactional relationship which is more associated in content". And the extended zone he refers to as "that set of individuals whom ego personally knows, but with whom he has not established any regular interactional relationship". Within the network there may or may not be a tendency for individuals to be clustered into independent cliques, an aspect of network that is referred to as the degree of clustering. Closely related to this aspect is the degree of cross-linkage; within an egocentric network this refers to "the number of interactional relationships out of the total possible linking the members of the separate clusters within the network". But as between separate egocentric networks it refers to the different types of cross-linkage that are possible; star cross-linkage referring to the extent to which the two egos are directly linked to the same individuals in each other's networks, and zone cross-linkage to the extent to which individuals in the network of one are connected to the individuals in the network of the other (Kapferer:17-18).

The proposal that he made was "that joint or complementary role relationships are most likely to be found where a) there is high density in the separate networks of husband and wife; b) there is a low degree of clusterability within each of the separate husband and wife networks; c) there is a high degree of star cross-linkage between networks, in the sense that both husband and wife are directly linked by social relationships to

the same individuals; and d) there is a high degree of zone cross-linkage between the networks, in the sense that the individuals located in the various zones of the respective networks are directly linked by social relationships to each other" (22-23). Most importantly for my purposes, "it is stressed that the likelihood of joint or complementary conjugal role relationships being present is increased where the cross-linkage involves relationships which constitute high investments, where the cross-linkage occurs predominantly between the intimate zones of the husband and wife networks and where these relationships involve individuals who are key to the set of relationships of the respective spouses. Conversely, segregation in the conjugal role relationship, for example, is most likely to occur where the separate networks of the husbands and wives have a high degree of clusterability and consist of few or no relationships cross-linking the separate networks". (23)

Within this formulation, it is clear that certain aspects cannot be tested by the material that I have available: I do not have the detailed information that he was able to gather about individual networks. I cannot measure density except in very general terms, but I do have some information about the span of networks. My information agrees with that of Kapferer, where he noted that the spans of the networks of the women were restricted as compared with those of the men (19). For, as earlier suggested, the restriction of women

to their maternal and marital roles, serves to limit the number of relationships that they can establish. Of the zones to which he refers, I am able to make some assessment of the crucial intimate zone, within which are located the most important of the links that a person has with others. Moreover, although I cannot assess adequately the degree of clustering between persons, I can indicate the degree of cross-linkage between networks. Particularly, I can assess to what extent there is cross-linkage between the intimate zones of separate networks.

The way in which I can achieve this assessment, is by analysing in terms of those mono-sex groupings of people that are mobilised at times of crisis. For both men and women are subject to crises with which they cannot cope alone and which may be seen as times of stress (Boswell:1969:256). Those people to whom they turn in times of crisis I consider to be grouped around ego as a "support network". Where this support network is located within the intimate zone of a person's network, then the frequent mobilisation of such persons can be an important aspect of solidarity developing.

The crises that strike in the sphere of male tasks are different in nature and rhythm from those of the women's sphere. They are primarily concerned with the availability of resources adequate to supply a household, and come to focus on two main aspects, availability of animals and of labour. Where the head

of a household faces a shortage of animals, through factors beyond his control, some means to adjust this shortage must be found. The Humr avoid this possibility as far as possible, by the insistence on the egalitarian principle that fortunes should be equalised in inheritance. In the allocations listed by Cunnison in Appendix 2, men frequently shared out the portions, and where some were clearly richer than others, they were excluded in favour of others. But there was a shortage of animals in the surra at the time, and in any case inheritance played a small part in the total distribution of animals (see page 11). More importantly, Cunnison indicates that an aspect of agnatic solidarity was for loans of animals to be made to poorer kin and for men with few cattle to cluster around those with many (Cunnison:1:79). Of those poorer men who had clustered around richer kin, a form of dependence with the wealthier man had developed for "a man who has given or loaned a cow attaches the recipient to him in perpetuity" (Cunnison:1:80). The only alternative for poorer men was to leave and work in the towns for wages and to build up their herds that way, so that, of the men who mobilised support in the crisis of cattle shortage, all who remained in the camps became recruited to the personal network of a richer man.

By comparison, the Kababish seem not only to avoid such dependence developing as a result of poverty, but also to avoid the opportunity to aid when wealthy. Various arrangements are possible for a man who is short of animals: he can work as hired

herder to a richer household, and receive payment of the smaller animals that he can build up into his own herd, or he can hire himself out for odd jobs at the wells, etc. (Asad:53). But in neither case do the arrangements imply any further dependence. Even those men working as regular herders can leave after a few years, and the relationship is primarily contractual, an exchange of services for payments in kind, there is no binding obligation for richer kin to assist their poorer relatives. For example Hamid (see Asad:152) was able to neglect the interests of his own brother while trying to stress his solidarity with his richer agnates, Salim and Abdurrahman. In each case, the arrangements made for aid in time of shortage of animals were the result of individual contractual arrangements and not indicative of any greater solidarity.

Even when, as is true of many Kababish households, the problem of labour allocation arose, the different arrangements that were made implied no permanent dependence. "Most households find it difficult if not impossible to muster enough hands from within to care for the animals on which they subsist. These do not include families which possess enough animals to enable them to hire regular herders who then become members of the household. But such households are comparatively few in number: out of my census sample of 130 households only 15 had hired herders" (Asad:122). Of the remaining households at least 42 were unable to stretch their resources to meet labour demands, and they were

consequently dependent on extra-household labour. In only one type of herding arrangement, where two or more households herded all their main varieties of animals jointly, was there an implication of extra-household solidarity. And this was the least common arrangement, most men preferring to herd only one main variety of animal jointly, and thus minimise the involvement with another household. (Asad:124-5). Herding partnerships are frequently the source of mutual recrimination, and changes in partnerships occur often.

As previously indicated, such problems of labour allocation do not arise for the Humr. As long as the basic requirement of household composition is met, that a man should have animals, and be living in the tent of a woman who provides domestic services, and takes care of the milking and processing of milk products, the joint responsibility of the camp for the herding reduces any chance of his having to recruit extra help. In addition, any man who is wealthy immediately attracts dependents to him, who can either reside attached to the household of a woman that he is maintaining, or can live nearby so as to share in the camp hospitality, and attract assistance when required.

This has important implications in terms of the structural aspects of the personal networks of the men of the two societies. For by Kapferer's definition, the intimate zone of a network is characterised by relationships that are instrumental in content and many-stranded, and it would therefore

seem that the Kababish men are seeking to avoid any extension of this intimate zone. In order not to compromise household autonomy, they seek relationships that are primarily contractual, and not instrumental in content, and attach to their households men with whom they do not have close and multiplex links of an enduring nature. By contrast the wealthy Humr man attaches to his household dependants with whom he has multiplex links of common agnation and kinship. The content of their relationship does not remain with the economic imbalance, but develops into a further solidarity which focuses the households comprising a camp around the households of the richer men.

The Humr men do not seek to avoid the implications of support in their economic strategy, for it serves the interests both of the rich and of the poor. Within the main camp of the surra of 'Iyal Ganis, the poorer men such as Abu Dik, had attached themselves to the richer households and ensured maintenance for themselves (Cunnison:1:53 and 79). And the only limitation to such support was the overall shortage of cattle within the surra, which had caused some men to leave for wage labour in the neighbouring market centres. This shortage had reduced to an extent the ability of a man such as Hurgas, the leader of the main camp, to attach to himself even more dependents. But it had increased the differential between his own wealth and that of others, so that he was the undoubted leader of the camp and surra, and at the focal point of the network that was the single

largest in span and which bound most people to him. For men such as Abu Dik, who were dependent on him for economic support, this amounted to cutting across other ties within their intimate zone. He, for example, was unable to openly express his sympathies with Hamdan, his father's brother, in the camp dispute (see Cunnison:1:79) and maintained a more neutral position.

Within the Kababish camps, economic differentiation leads to a minimal clustering around individuals. Each man, whether rich or poor, is concerned to maintain household autonomy, for that is the mainspring of his authority. Political office among the Kababish is the prerogative of an elite, the Awlad Fadlallah lineage and the purposes to which an accumulation of dependants could be turned are very limited (Asad:237). The political advantage of a richer man gaining permanent support from those men he aided was minimal, and households remain at the centre of multiple individual links rather than being drawn into the expanding span of a richer man's network. Moreover, it is in the strategic interests of all men to reduce their intimate zone to a minimum, refusing even the claims of a poorer brother, such as Hamid had done (see earlier).

This choice that the Kababish men have in avoiding multiplex relationships and choosing rather to establish diverse individual links, comes through the different resources that they have at their command. Each man is pursuing an economic strategy in which his resources of animals and/or labour are bargaining counters. It is therefore possible for them to establish relations

of a primarily contractual nature, based on the exchange of one for the other. And it is also possible for such relations to be terminated, as these resources can be sought elsewhere. In this they contrast with the Humr men who bargain with wealth and political support, and they contrast with the women of both societies.

The women are involved not in creating relationships of an associational, or contractual nature, but in investing in relations of a high degree of trust and involvement that are instrumental in content. The support that they recruit from other women is in relation to tasks that require frequent mobilisation of a support network, and a highly emotive content. They are constantly involved in coping with the life-crises of birth, sickness and death which involve not only extra work but also a high degree of stress. The crises which arise in the sphere of women's work seem therefore to be an amalgam of the two definitions that Boswell outlined in 1969. The first definition relates to "situations seen by the participants as ones of great stress, usually with which they cannot cope alone" and secondly as "situations defined as potentially critical by observers, which one set of participants may be able to deal with on their own but which will require extra-familial assistance for others". He was particularly concerned with the "periodic but normal situations where an individual or family is thrown into dependency on others by the nature of events" and this he relates to the second definition (Boswell:1969:256). The crises in the

women's sphere of responsibility are "normal" and "periodic" involving as they do frequently occurring events, but they are also seen as "ones of great stress" where emotional support is recruited. And both the individual women and their families "are thrown into dependency on others" by the fact that women cannot cope alone, and cannot, for the most part, recruit sufficient support from within their households.

The focal point of a woman's support network would be her mother if that remained possible, for as previously indicated, it is the mother with whom a daughter has shared all her experiences till the time of her marriage, and with whom she shares the trust. In the early stages of marriage, it is clear that girls are not anxious to be removed too far from their mothers (Cunnison:2:29; Asad:63). And in some cases the pressures that the women exert to remain near each other can be decisive in the location of the marital home (see Abdallah; Asad:97). But in all cases the women seek to maintain some continuity in the composition of the support network that she can mobilise. Those women most suited to fulfill the supportive roles in times of sickness and childbirth will be those female kin that she has known longest and with whom she has established long-term relationships. The span of such female kin will be dependent on the continuity of the residential units and on the continuing presence of female kin within. And in the case of the Awlad Fadlallah camp of the Nurab clan of the Kababish, and also the camps of the Humar, endogamous marriages within the

co-residential unit serve to retain the women within. It is possible for these women to retain continuity in their support networks.

Even where women are moved in marriage from their natal camp, they seek to keep these links operative, and visiting between a mother and her daughter can be frequent. Moreover, at certain times of the year, the women can be brought closer together in the congregation round the larger damars (Asad:22) concentration of the Humr tribe in the rains and harvest (Gunnison:l:25). In the more predictable events, such as that of childbirth, arrangements can be made for the mother to be present. However, the removal of a bride from her natal camp ultimately involves not merely an extension of the span of her support network, but also significant changes in its composition. The nature of their tasks, and the everyday aid that they frequently require is such that the retention of links with their natal camps is insufficient. From the time of her marriage and her new responsibility in her own domain, the likelihood of crisis occurring, which she cannot meet herself unaided, cannot be ignored. Such likelihood increases with her first pregnancy, multiplies with the increasing number of her children, and the consequent rise in work-load as she nurses her younger children, watches the older, and must still carry out the full range of her domestic tasks, such as cooking and milking and collection of firewood et. al.

This forces on women a short-term philosophy of crisis which is best coped with by investing in relations with neighbouring women. They can be useful in such simple ways as "parking" the children for a short time (Asad:131), and are present in any major crisis suddenly occurring. Where tents of separate households are not linked in other ways, such as by the economic cooperation between the men, or by common membership of an extended family or lineage, then the links established by women stand out in clear contrast. In the camps of the commoner Kababish, all neighbouring tents are linked through the daily interaction of the women. They exchange gossip and small services, such as the loan of a child to help in some tasks, or in the lending of sugar or tea. These exchanges are by no means desultory, but are clearly for mutual convenience and to some purpose. Where residential units have no enduring structural entity, and men do not rely on each other for mutual aid, the women of the households can be called upon to aid the men. In order to cope with these extra demands on top of their already heavy work-load, women must have the aid of other women in reducing their work-load to some extent. This investment in relations with neighbouring women is not merely a short-term strategy, but by being related to the major crises that might occur, involves the creation of a high degree of trust and mutual concern between the women. For the major crises that strike are situations of great stress, where emotional support is required, and where the presence of women of shared experiences is of great comfort. This is not

to state in any way that the men's lack of involvement with the actual work of these crises excludes their emotional involvement. But it does stress again that one aspect of sexual segregation is to divide the sexes into mono-groupings mobilised at times of crisis. The women share their emotional strain with other women.

So the relationships established with neighbouring women are not merely interactional and associational, but are instrumental. They lead to creation of trust and of mutual dependence on each other. The women are bound together by their common interests, and each woman is concerned to maintain or extend the intimate zone of her personal network that is primarily composed of those women of her support network.

This solidarity between neighbouring women serves to increase the corporate interests of a camp where men are economically cooperating. And this increases the chances that women can themselves have some corporate expression of interests, where an occasion is provided. This is true of the Humr matrons, who on the occasion of a marriage have a chance to express their joint interests, and can influence the course of events (see next section). But where men are not economically cooperating, then the solidarity of women in different tents can become a deciding factor in the spatial organisation of a camp. In the camps of the Kababish, close relationship and friendship "especially between the wives of individual households, are often important in encouraging

a measure of spatial proximity" (Asad:28). And in the diagrams that he drew of the camping clusters of separate tents, there was in at least one case a striking preponderance of links between households being through women and not men (Asad:130: cluster three). Where men lack interests in establishing households close to each other, and where they utilise a diverse range of individual links in their economic strategy, it is not surprising that the close and enduring links established between women should come to play an important role in the organisation of camp life.

This role of the links between women is linked to the seeming compromise by the men over division of labour. For it implies that whereas women always have an intimate zone to their personal networks which can influence their choice of residence, the part played by the intimate zone in men's decisions is not so crucial. Moreover, there is some implication that the men by using the women in male tasks try to avoid dependence on other men, and to make use of the assistance that their wife can gain from other women.

Now, as Kapferer has pointed out, the crucial factor in predicting that joint or complementary conjugal role relationships will occur, is that "cross-linkage occurs predominantly between the intimate zones of the husband and wife networks and where these relationships involve individuals that are key to the set of relationships of the respective spouses" (op. cit.:23). The

Humr men and the Humr women both have intimate zones to their networks in which are located their key supportive relationships, and the possibility of such cross-linkage therefore exists for individual spouses. The Kababish women also have this important intimate zone in their personal networks, but the chances that there will be cross-linkage between that zone and the corresponding one in their husbands' is reduced. For most men seek to avoid the dependence that is implied by creating supportive relationships within this zone. And it would seem therefore that the original phrasing of my problem has gone askew, for the relative jointness of the Kababish conjugal roles that is seemingly implied in the compromise over sexual division of labour cannot be related to such cross-linkage between intimate zones.

There are two possibilities of finding an answer. First that the hypothesis, as Kapferer outlined it, cannot be applied. The second that the compromise over sexual division of labour is not, in fact, related to relative "jointness" in conjugal roles, but to some other aspect. In order to unravel this disorder, I test first the hypothesis of Kapferer with what data I can muster. There are two instances of marriages given by Cunnison and Asad, where the intimate zone of the wife's network involves key relationships for the husband. They are the marriages of Abu Dik to Hurgas' daughter, Rabha (Cunnison:1:53-56, 79) and of Abdallah to the daughter of Hamid (Asad:95-98). And in both cases the husbands were resident in the natal camp of the woman.

These marriages were each serving double strategies. The husbands were gaining economic support from the fathers-in-law, and in exchange the fathers-in-law were gaining the services of the husbands. In the case of Abu Dik, the relation between Hurgas and his son-in-law Abu Dik was clearly imbalanced. For, whereas the marriage and its continuance was crucial to Abu Dik, and also to his brother, for Hurgas, it was of some importance, in ensuring political support from Abu Dik, but not critical. Abu Dik had been able to marry Rabha "only through his elder brother Adim's abnegation. Adim had married twice and divorced twice after he saw that his wives were not bearing him children. He then devoted all his wealth to obtaining a wife for his young brother in the hope that he would be more successful, which he was. Now Adim lived on Abu Dik's household, contributing to it" (Cunnison:1:53-5). Rabha was mediating a link between men that was crucial to the economic strategy of not only Abu Dik, her husband, who could rely on his richer affines in time of great hardship, but also of Adim, who had sunk his wealth in this investment. In return, Hurgas, her father, as mentioned earlier, gained the political support of the two men. At the time of the camp dispute, they tried to maintain a neutral stand and avoid jeopardising their relations with Hurgas, who opposed their father's brother Hamdan.

The attachment of Abdallah to his father-in-law's household could not serve any political strategy for Hamid,

for commoner Kababish men are essentially limited to domestic authority and denied political activity (Asad:1). But the presence of the younger man did help to ease the usual problem about labour available. Abdallah's stated intention was to herd Hamid's sheep along with his own and he wanted to remove all his animals from the herd of his father. His father was indignant at the loss both of the sheep, and also at the idea of Abdallah offering his services free to his father-in-law, while refusing them to him. Abdallah removed to the camp of his bride and worked with his father-in-law. But the continuance of these arrangements was dependent on the continuance of the marriage. As long as the economic strategy of the two men continued best served by this arrangement, then the marriage and the residence in the bride's camp would continue.

Clearly the fathers of brides come into the intimate zone of their personal network. And where the groom is soliciting particular support from his father-in-law, then he must pay attention not only to his relationship with the older man, but also to the women mediating this relationship. Now, whereas it is unlikely that strategic marriages such as this will reduce the "segregation in work division between the spouses, it may well increase the "jointness" of conjugal roles in other ways. For where a marriage with strategic investment such as this exists, the women have gains which they make in relationships that they can manipulate. Rabha and the bride of Abdallah had a double advantage - they were able to enforce their claims and

to influence decisions through playing father against husband, and they had the continuing support, if not of their mothers, then of the female kin with whom they had been most closely associated.

I cover this aspect more closely in the next section, for it relates to what potential women can gain for power. But what is now clear is that marriages such as these may well encourage more jointness in decision-making, but they also encourage a continuing sexual division of labour. Both the women and the men have around them the beginnings of the mono-sex grouping which will aid them in their different tasks. Particularly this is relevant to the Kababish man Abdallah; he has the advantage over many other Kababish in that he can count at least on the assistance of his father-in-law, in return for his taking on the care of his animals.

If, in the consideration of performance of conjugal roles, one divides the analysis into two major aspects, the possibility of shared activity, and of shared decision-making,

then the solution to my problem emerges. For, while the Kababish men's lack of effective support network among their co-resident male kin leads to their sharing males' tasks with married women, it does not necessarily lead to these women having a larger share in decisions that are taken. The Kababish women lack the second essential in having effective influence - the possibility of manipulating men against each other. The use that men make of women, and of the fact that the women's support networks operate, amounts to a form of subsidy in the men's work, and does not alter the balance of power within any given household.

If, however, it could be shown that a woman could mobilise certain of the female linkages selected out of her total network, and operate a mono-sex grouping to confront the men, then the combination of women in a camp would increase her personal influence. It is to this aspect of network mobilisation that I now turn.

Section B: The Potential for Power Within the Networks of Women

As already demonstrated, it is clear that married women cannot survive and carry out the full range of their tasks without the assistance at times of other women. Where no specialised agencies exist, the only resource of a married woman facing a crisis is to call on other women; and among the total number of women in her network, some will clearly be more suited than others to assist her. Primarily, a woman will seek, at least in the early stages of her marriage, to retain effective links with her mother and female natal kin, but because of the nature and recurrence of the crises that arise, she will have to turn to the women who are neighbours, in the same camp. This in itself serves to incorporate incoming women into camp life, not merely in the crisis situations, but in the pattern of visiting, small loans and everyday aid that is established between women of neighbouring tents. So that within the camp as a residential unit, the links between the women of the different tents create a pattern of cooperation. This is by contrast with the way in which the Kababish men avoid cooperation, and no prediction can be made about neighbouring men combining in herding tasks, whereas the cooperation between the Humr women further compounds the corporate life of a camp where men are already linked by common agnation and economic cooperation.

Not all women move on marriage to another camp, and then they have the advantage of remaining with their female agnates. This is possible either through endogamous marriage, where a girl is married to an agnate who is also co-resident or through the husband choosing to live in the same camp as his bride's family. Despite the strains of a mother continuing to try and exert her authority over her daughter, the young woman has the advantage of the continued presence of female kin that she has known well and in whom she can place trust. And the solidarity of camp life is further encouraged where the links between co-resident women are so complex.

But even those women who remove on marriage from their natal camps do not lose all effective ties and communication with their female agnates. The pattern of annual movement is such that the camps concentrate at certain times of the year, and kin separated throughout the year move closer together. And mention has already been made of how visiting between close female kin in different camps is observed particularly in the early stages of marriage (see page 96). Across the separate camping units spread the links between women in addition to those between men. It is notable with the Humr, women are free to leave the camps and to maintain contact with other women in the markets, visiting of families, and the ceremonies which they attend (Cunnison:1:63).

It is this second aspect of the networks of women that raises in my mind the possibility that some further

solidarity and group consciousness has developed among the Humr women. For, as Nancy Tapper stated in her thesis (Tapper:1968) it is possible for women in nomadic pastoral society to "take part in two definite spheres of social activity. One is based on camps, discrete localised groups of households; the other is a system of ego-centred circles or dyadic relations, mobilised at feasts and cutting across the localised camps. Separate camp communities of women do not build up into a larger structure, nor do the ego-centred circles form a structure larger than a society-wide network of such circles. However, in both camp activities and feasts women are enabled to maintain and manipulate ascribed and achieved statuses so that similar ranking systems based on a common system of values are found among all Shabsavan women; these systems form a structure and the women of the Shabsavan form a society or culture of their own" (op. cit.:12-13). The necessary conditions for the development of such a "sub-society" were threefold: First, some degree of separation of women's activities from men's. Among the Shabsavan it would seem that this is due to the sexual cum ceremonial segregation which characterises all social activity. Second, an opportunity for interaction among the women - with the fairly large camping units, and women were free to travel, sometimes alone, considerable distances to attend feast gatherings. And third, a medium of interaction, which were the dyadic ties of the "xeir-u-sarr" ("All those people to whose feasts I go and who

come to my feasts") with their implicit reciprocity and obligations of mutual attendance at feasts (op. cit.:144).

Within this sub-society, women were ranked according to their ascribed statuses of birth, age, marital and domestic statuses, but could become "leaders", i.e. with powerful positions in women's sub-society and significant influence in the male sphere, through achieving certain statuses which then gave the woman a public role in life. Typically a leader "arrives at her leadership position after going to Mashhad as a pilgrim or having established herself as a ceremonial cook" (idem:78). But the crucial point in either the development of this sub-society, or the ranking within it, is the medium of interaction; for "it is the institution of xeir-u-sarr which allows for the development and expression of women's relations with other women thus forming a sub-society. In this the leaders arise and their influence can be extended through xeir-u-sarr to distant women who are otherwise unconnected" (91-2). Relations between women are defined and redefined at the feasts which the women travel to attend. And Tapper goes on to state that it is possible to identify a "medium of interaction" for women in other social situations, such as, she suggests, the songs of the Hunr women.

Before I go on to investigate this suggestion, and the implications that it has for women's chances for power, there are several strictures that must be made in advance. Within the residential units of the camps, the position of the

Humr women as compared with the Shahsavan women is clearly different. With certain exceptions, such as between the wives of employed and employee, the Shahsavan have no general pattern of cooperation between the women of different tents (Tapper:60); whereas it is an important aspect of any Humr woman's experience that she will be cooperating with other women in the camp. Where obligations for camp hospitality are such as previously indicated (see page 60), it is impossible for the women to remain isolated within their tents, and it is in their own interests to share tasks, and help out on everyday loans, etc. This suggests that the extension of women's relations within the camp across camp boundaries may well be of a different form from that of the Shahsavan. For my purposes it may well be an extension of group solidarity amongst the women, rather than of the individual dyadic ties to which Tapper refers.

Secondly, any definition of which women among the Humr might most appropriately be called "leaders" must differ from that given for the Shahsavan. The very nature of Humr camp life and corporate responsibility is such that women are at all times public figures, because they participate in politically important events, and express opinions to which men pay attention. In this way, the remarkable achievement of the Shahsavan woman who was able to move up with the men to their hillside discussion about migration (Tapper:85) and to participate more or less equally with the men in conversation and discussion would seem less

remarkable. The context of Humr camp life is such that women cannot be excluded from participation in discussion, even if their involvement is indirect.

To clarify the points I refer again to the famous occasion when the Humr women forced the men to action, and then spread the story of what happened throughout Humrland. A group of Humr had gone on a giraffe expedition into Upper Nile Province and were caught by a party of police who declared that they were poaching. The men invited the police to the camp so as to discuss the matter, and see what action should be taken. Once there, the men agreed to go to the District Commissioner, but the women who had been able to hear the whole conversation started shouting abuse at the men and telling them how ashamed they should be to be taken away by 'abid' - slaves, referring to the Upper Nile police. This incensed the men, and fighting broke out in the course of which some of the police were killed.

The episode did not end there with the intervention of the women, the rash action of the men and the killing of the policemen. First of all, the police sent in reinforcements who took away all the men concerned, except one who ran away. And then, the story was spread by the women's songs throughout Humrland, and was still remembered seven years later. The songs sang to the **praise** of the brave men, and ruined the reputation of the coward who ran away. The men were vulnerable to the opinion of the women first through the presence of the women at the time of the event, and secondly through the fact

that the women's values are so close to those of the men that they are vulnerable to the reputation that women spread. Women cannot be excluded from the public life of the men, for the whole arrangement of camp life is such that discussion and argument are clearly observed and overheard by the women, even though they are separated by the men being grouped around the tree and the women near their tents.

Secondly the men cannot control the spread of the songs. The women have opportunities for interaction within the camp, and in other camps. In the camps they sing around the fires, "then with the changing patterns of residence at all times of the year, the songs, if they are good, become spread around the whole tribe, the men's reputations spreading with them. Men are affected by women singing from the time of their circumcision onwards: for ^{example,} at the circumcision, the girls surround him with the song: "If you cry, I won't sing for you." Every little lapse during his life is likely to bring down a song on his head. At his wedding eve, older women surround him and sing songs about the brave exploits of his ancestors and older kinsmen; and thereafter if he has a reputation at all it is spread by the songs of the women singers (Gunnison: 2 :31). Given the emphasis of the men on their qualities of generosity, virility and wealth in cattle, to which the women sing, it is clear that the Humr women have a tremendous resource in the publicity they can bring to bear on the failings of a man. It is in their own interests to insist on the "generosity" of a man, as I indicated in Chapter Two. For where a man is

generous and wealthy, the women resident with him cannot but benefit themselves (see page 57).

A third point to mark, is how the different generations of women are involved on different occasions. Circumcision of a boy is the time for the young girls to sing . . . marriage is the time for the older women . . . the matrons. The "immense political influence" of which Cunnison speaks as the attribute of Humr women, is not an individual achievement as with some Shahsavan women, but is a corporate asset shared amongst the women of the camps and surras. However, certain occasions clearly belong to certain categories of women, and it is necessary to see whether the different occasions determine a differential patterning of influence, among the women. Secondly, it is important, seeing that the corporate influence of women is broken down into marital categories, to investigate whether certain women have more of that asset than others within their same category. Is it possible in fact to speak of prominent women or of women leaders?

Tapper might argue that the Humr women do not in fact have a sub-society; for after all the very point that I am stressing, about the public life of the women and how the men cannot exclude them from discussions would seem to negate the first principle that she outlined that for a sub-society to form, there must be "some degree of separation of women's activities from men's", in addition to an opportunity for the women to interact, and a medium of interaction among themselves.

This is insufficiently precise as a criterion to compare different social situations. In all societies there is "some degree of separation of women's activities from men's". What should be identified is not the separation itself, but in what particular activities the separation is clearest, and has the greatest significance. For example, with the Shahsavan women, it is not merely the separation of women's domestic activities from those of the men that is important, but also the separation of men from women at the ceremonial occasions that both attend, with men and women in separate tents, and the way in which men remove from women's earshot when they have important matters to discuss (Tapper:85). With the Humr there is sexual differentiation in terms of domestic duties, and range of tasks; there is sexual division on ritual-ceremonial occasions, but the women cannot be excluded from discussion.

So, whereas the segregation of men from women on ceremonial occasions and at times of discussion serves to create a sub-society for the Shahsavan women, and to create an opportunity for some women to emerge as leaders through the prestige of being invited to most feasts (Tapper:82) and to break down the barriers of male participation by joining in discussion (idem:85), the same cannot be held for the Humr. The division between men and women on ceremonial occasions does not amount to segregation. The women participate equally with the men, and in the sight and hearing of men. The two clearest instances of this are the time of circumcision, and the time of marriage taking place.

At the time of a boy's circumcision, the young unmarried girls surround him and sing; at a girl's circumcision, "the women of a camp join together to draw a line of ashes from the circumcision tent out from the camp to cross a path passing by it. . . . The women lie in wait and as any male crosses (the line), they pounce on him and demand money On this occasion too the women come boldly up to the men's tree, tease them about their unmanliness and demand money from them also." On his wedding eve, the groom is surrounded by older women who sing songs; and at the bride's residence the trap mentioned above is set again, and the girls particularly are involved in the chase of any men, particularly youths who come near (Cunnison:2:31-2).

In terms of analysing this limited data, I am struck by the presence of two main categories of women - unmarried girls, and the matrons. For the unmarried girls, these are occasions where they can meet and encourage the courting of the young men. For the matrons, their involvement at the time of marriage is indicative of the crisis which it forms for them; they remind the groom of the responsibility he bears in carrying on the name of his ancestors and older kinsmen, and with the bride, they have been involved in a long session of negotiations about bridewealth, and preparations for the wedding itself. For a marriage to take place, it is not the consent of the bride, or of her father that is final, it is the consent of her mother, backed by her senior female kin.

Ceremonies associated with circumcision and marriage are most important for the Humr women in being a display of their corporate involvement according to their marital and maternal status. These same ceremonies are for the Shabsavan women occasions to invite or be invited to feasts, to define or redefine individual dyadic relations, and to assess the relative status of the different women.

I can find no evidence in Cunnison of how at ceremonies one could observe women who were notable individually, and I should not expect to find it. Those women who are prominent in Humr camps may have particular influence with men, but I find no reason why they should also be leaders among women. The two women to whom Cunnison refers with particular respect are Ghubeysa and Hamidy (already referred to earlier). They are both prominent, but for different reasons. Ghubeysa manages a large and mixed household in the camp of her brother Hurgas. "She had the reputation of sound wisdom and great strength of character - people said of her that she was not like a woman at all because of this; she was a man" (Cunnison: 1:52). She had come to manage this household through returning to her brother's camp after two marriages, and through her own personal ability, for she had been entrusted with the son from the marriage of one of her daughters, and had some cattle to hold through him. In addition, she had the use of a garden from Hurgas, and the cattle of one of the men who had attached

himself to the household. By contrast, Hamidy in the splinter camp had come to her position through a series of factors that were not in her individual control but which gave her a strong personal position. She was wealthy, through the cattle she held for her daughters and their children; and through the shortage of cattle elsewhere in the camp, this meant that men clustered around her, and that she came to manage an independent household. She was almost independent within this household, both through her wealth, and through the continued absences of her brother in the town. But in addition, her structural position within the splinter camp was such that, if she chose to operate it, her influence was extremely great in camp affairs.

Not only was she independent and managing her own household, she was the sister of the man who offered Hurgas the only challenge to his leadership (i.e. the only challenge within the surra that is mentioned by Gunnison). The issue that came up was to whom the half-sister of Hurgas should be married. Hurgas, because of his position as leader of the camp, and omda, wished to marry her to an influential middle-aged man of the 'Ariya major lineage, and succeeded in forcing the marriage through against the wishes of Hamdan, the brother of Hamidy, who then led away the splinter camp. In the mobilisation of the two men's action-sets at the time of the dispute and in the ensuing breakaway from the main camp, Hamidy held a crucial position. For what each man had to do was to recruit support from amongst the camp and surra,

and in the transactions involved, it was individual ties with the two main participants that were important, not common membership of a corporate grouping (Mayer:1968:112-3). Purely corporate values may well have swung the support behind Hamdan, for he was suggesting that the girl should marry a youth within the surra. Hurgas, by suggesting that she should marry outside, was breaking with the customary preference in marriage. But in the formations that took place as each man mobilised kin to the support of his point of view, it was individual ties, particularly of economic support, that were most relevant.

Cunnison is ambiguous in the reasons that he gives as to why the split came about. He says that there was some previous indication of strain, and that "those who resided in the splinter camp did not have the same kinds of connexions by marriage with Hurgas and his extended family" as did the others who moved with Hamdan. "For those who had such connexions through extant marriages all remained in the main camp" (Cunnison:1:79). Thus he makes it clear that it is marital ties that most constrained people to remain with Hurgas. He leaves the wealth of Hurgas and the economic dependence on him of the people in the main camp as a secondary issue. He states almost as an aside that "no doubt the wealth and prestige of Hurgas as omda added force to the obligation of his surra in-laws to live with him, though sometimes it was a struggle for them to do so". In fact these ties of marriage, and the number of people that they had drawn to Hurgas were created and maintained because of Hurgas'

wealth and the relative poverty of his affines. In some cases, especially Abu Dik and his brother, marriage into Hurgas' family had been deliberate economic strategy. And Abu Dik was forced to maintain a neutral stand within Hurgas' camp, so as to maintain his ties. Had there been no other person with any amount of wealth, no split could have resulted. But Hamidy was wealthy, and it was around the cattle that she held that the splinter camp formed. In the dispute ostensibly between Hurgas and Hamdan, it is clear that Hamidy held the trump card. Her agreement to Hamdan's action was essential.

If we look again at Tapper's description of those women who become leaders among the Shabsavan, then it becomes clear that her analysis is not appropriate to the Humr. I consider women such as Ghubeysa and Hamidy to be prominent, but not leaders. A leader among the Shabsavan women has "a powerful position in the women's sub-society and significant influence in the male sphere" (Tapper:78). The powerful position in the women's sub-society is measured by her continual invitation to feasts, which allows her to communicate with a wide range of women, to have high status and to be consulted frequently. Her "significant influence" is measured by her almost equal participation in men's conversation and discussion. But there are limitations to acquiring a leadership role. Generally only the women who are post-menopause, with a distinctive personality and intelligence and with the specialisation of being a ceremonial cook, or having been on the pilgrimage,

qualify as leaders. The specialisation is necessary to give the women some form of public role which increases the range of their personal networks and consequently the number of invitations to feasts, and the possibility of their being consulted by men (78-87).

The "perquisites of leadership", as Tapper calls them, the numerous invitations to feasts and the influence over men are not individually achieved assets among the Humr women. I cannot predict the way in which the ceremonial gatherings are organised. But, given the corporate life of Humr women in the camp, they are likely to be involved in all camp ceremonies, and will attend at the circumcisions and weddings of kin in other camps, so that the first perquisite of leadership seems appropriate to most women and the second is the corporate asset of all Humr women. The Humr women can at any time approach the men to discuss important matters, they are aware of most of what is being discussed at the tree anyway, and they can on occasion jointly confront the men. As Cunnison says, "a policy decision that the men of a camp or surra make is influenced by the kind of reaction that the women of the group are likely to have towards it" (Cunnison:1:117). They can approach the men individually, or confront them corporately. However in only one instance have I been able to see signs of an individual woman mobilising other women around her to pursue her own interests. That instance is the occasion of the

marriage of a daughter, where the mother mobilises the females of her family to support her in the demands that she is making from the men of both families (see Chapter One, page 39).

I was initially tempted to analyse this occasion as an instance of the matrons being able to mobilise a purposive action-set which might also be turned to other purposes, and might be the basis for differentiation in power among women. There were some grounds for analysing in these terms, for the way in which the women were mobilised had features in common with what Mayer described for the electoral action-set of the Dewas candidate (Mayer:1968). The women were mobilised by an individual, the mother concerned, and had a single purpose in common, to offer support to the mother in confronting the men of both families. There was therefore a "transactional" content in the linkages between the mother and the women, and the other women were aware of being recruited for that specific purpose. In addition, it could be maintained that the mother had significant gains to make if she were successful in exacting high demands from the men. This was after all a moment of great crisis to her, and a threat to her personal interests to lose her daughter. So she could hope to prevent or delay the marriage, or to compensate by material gains in the bridewealth paid to her.

However, I found that such analysis could not hold, on two main grounds. First , the women recruited were not just any members of her personal network that she selected, for it is quite clear that Gunnison refers to the women as

being from "her family" (Cunnison:2:28). Therefore it was more an expression of the solidarity of the women of one family in opposition to the men, than an indication of a matron having the ability to mobilise other women. Secondly, it was impossible to demonstrate that the action-set mobilised on this occasion could be seen in action on other occasions. Even though there is clear differentiation in the power potential of the different age categories of the women, it was not in such individual terms as this would have suggested. There is a general pattern in Humr society of the gradual liberation of women from the close bonds prior to marriage where they are subject to the authority and control of both men (father and brothers) and women (mother and older women), to the time when they have successfully passed through marriage and maternity to become matrons themselves. Within this general pattern it is useful to separate out those women who are prominent, not in terms of leadership, but in terms of their economic independence, and management of separate households. These women, such as Ghubaysha and Hamidy, have the potential of great influence over men's decisions, but they cannot be called leaders among the women.

Conclusions

Ghubeysha and Hamidy were exceptional among the Humr matrons, and few women could aspire to positions of prominence such as theirs. For the factors which brought about their prominence were largely beyond the control of any individual woman, and were related to the fortuitous accumulation of wealth and through the course of a complex marital career. The careers of women in these two societies, while allowing for change of status and development of some control over their own interests, are not directed by the women themselves. However, exceptional though the two women may be, the means by which they came to their independence are indicative of the build-up of power for Humr matrons, which makes their position in society so radically different from that of the Kababish matron.

With marriage, a Humr girl gains a new status, as the focus of links no longer directed through her parents, as the dependent of her husband, while yet remaining the focus of the corporate interests of her agnatic kin, as demonstrated in the visiting and arrangements made about property. The continued interests of agnatic kin not only ensure the fulfillment of the minimum of her rights, but also give her a position as a mediator of links between men. This in turn allows her to operate these links and to utilise them to protect her interests in property and her children. And, because these links between men are of both economic and political significance,

the range of her influence extends beyond the domestic sphere and into the public political sphere.

This extension of the domestic influence of married women into the public political sphere is further reinforced by the fact that the women of other households with whom she cooperates and socialises, are also members of households with whom her husband is economically cooperating. The women therefore are fully integrated into the corporate life of the camps, and because of the public nature of Hurr camp life, with many activities conducted in the open, women cannot be excluded from political influence and public expression of their opinions. Among the Hurr women as a category, the clearest differentiation in status and power is between the unmarried girl and the matron. Although the girl has some public role to play, as her participation in the circumcision songs demonstrates, she remains effectively subject to the authority not only of men, as her guardians, but also of her mother. Until her marriage she has no structural importance, for it is that event which defines her status as an adult and individual personality, with rights and claims to make in her own interests. Once married, she has some freedom of choice, and has found the basis for her power. Given that she is successful in bearing children and retaining the provision made for them, she can by the time of her matronhood have a considerable role to play in the processes of domestic and public decision-making. The progress from the status of married woman to that of matron is

uninterrupted by the frequency of divorce and remarriage, and only in very rare cases is there a threat to a matron's status through polygyny.

Prior to my analysis, the Kababish women would have seemed to hold certain advantages, for infrequency of divorce and absence of polygyny are held by observers to be factors advantageous to women. However, this would overlook the conditions within marriage, and the organisation of households as domestic units. Household organisation among the commoner Kababish is based on autonomous units of nuclear family households, within camps that are not enduring structural entities. Men within a camp have no predictable pattern of economic cooperation, but operate as independent heads of households. This has the effect of isolating women within households, apart from the socialising between women of neighbouring tents. Married women therefore operate for the most part within the domestic sphere only, and are severely curtailed in the influence that they can bring to bear on the decisions of men. Although it is the matron whose position is that of greatest prestige, as the mother of children of marriageable age, and with the right to be consulted as to the future of such children, she is, when compared with the Humr matrons, relatively powerless to avoid the demands of the one man who holds authority over her. Except in the case of marriages of strategic concern, the interests of natal kin in a woman lapse over time, and she is isolated with her husband.

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These conclusions were reached through a synthesis of career analysis, and analysis of the personal networks of married women in these two societies. The career analysis allowed for differentiation between women in different stages of their marital careers, and avoided any possibility of a false sex category being created. The network analysis was severely limited by the lack of sufficiently precise data, but did allow for some exploration of how new relationships with both men and women were created and maintained in the course of women's careers. It became clear that the corporate existence of the Humr camps with both men and women cooperating in their different spheres led to a patterning of individual networks that was conducive to women having important influence in domestic decisions, and that this was reinforced and extended by the ability of women to combine in purposive action. The combination of these two methods led to comparison between the different stages of women's careers in one society, and of these stages within the two societies. Particularly the focus was turned onto comparison between the matrons in the two societies.

The major variable determining the different status of the Humr matrons as compared with the Kababish matrons, and their relative chances of power, is household organisation, and the way that this affects the chances of women having any degree of economic autonomy. Households in both societies are producing/consuming units, within which the work of women contributes to production and is valued as such. But whereas

the organisation of households is among the Humr more complex, involving extended families and some multiple-tent households which include women on their own, that of the Kababish is simpler, generally based on the nuclear family unit. Between the households of the Humr camps, a predictable pattern of cooperation between both men and women is observed, whereas the emphasis in the Kababish households is to avoid outside ties and to remain autonomous. The complexity of the Humr households and the pattern of cooperation are the economic base for the corporate life of the camping units, and it is this corporateness that allows the Humr women some economic autonomy in the later stages of their marital careers. Despite the fact that those women in richer households can gain a regular small surplus to spend as they wish, the deciding factor as to which women achieve economic autonomy as matrons is the pattern by which maintenance of dependents is arranged. Corporate interests of agnatic kin in women and children as dependents is such that, in certain circumstances, a woman can continue to receive maintenance, while separate residentially from the donors. Were the rules relating to women's residence as rigid as they are with the Kababish, then no matron could achieve the position of Hamidy (see earlier).

However, in another sense, household organisation affects the status of married women in these two societies by restricting any chance of women having economic autonomy until the later stages of their marital career. Whatever the

surplus that the woman in a rich Humr household can build up from housekeeping and gifts, it is never sufficient to maintain a household independently. The real boosts to a woman's own property come with the marriage of a daughter and the presentation of bridewealth, as applies to both Humr and Kababish mothers; and with the Humr mother whose daughters' cattle are being held in trust by her. The only substantial amount of these described is the cattle held in trust, and only matrons qualify for this position.

This point about the only chance of women having economic autonomy late in life is of wider relevance, as Chapter Two already indicated, for it frequently happens that women in different societies have some chance of economic autonomy. But it is rare that this coincides with the early or middle stages of a marital career. When this coincidence does occur, then radical changes in women's status and roles can be predicted; for it amounts to a serious challenge to the dichotomy in sex roles, based on the economic and social dominance of men (see Nadel:Nupe:174). Such challenge to traditional division in sex roles does not occur whenever women have economic autonomy, only when this coincides with the early and middle stages of married life.

Career analysis allows for comparison of the patterns of women's careers in different societies and within different strata of the same society. It prepares the way for estimating the developments that have taken place in economic opportunities

for women, and for assessing the changes that result in the total role inventory of women. However, it cannot predict these changes, it can only identify those stages in women's careers that are most affected by changes in work opportunities. For example, it is impossible to predict the changes that will result from the way some Humr women are now leaving for work in the towns, or are able to grow their own cash crop of cotton (Cunnison:1:63). To assess the effects of such developments on women's roles, it is necessary first to know when the women are carrying out such activity, before marriage, during marriage, or as the result of separation from husband, and then secondly to relate these developments to other changes that are taking place, such as the pattern of young men leaving for wage-labour, and returning with the herd that they have built up (Chapter One: Page 9).

The method of career analysis has been used by observers to identify the different phases of women's life-spans in western industrial society, and to assess the developments that have taken place within these phases. The major development has been the greatly increased expectation of life, and the reduction of the period entirely devoted to maternal duties, as the size and structure of the family has changed (Myrdal:1968:13 and 25). In addition, a general pattern has emerged of women having a pre-marital economic career of paid employment in productive work. This period usually lasts for five years to seven years (Myrdal and Klein:1956:31). And now there is observable a

trend for women to return to paid employment outside the home after the childbearing years. But, observers agree, the crucial development will come in relation to those women who are married and engaged in childrearing. As Myrdal states, the most radical development in women's participation in economic and political life will be "the endeavour of a growing number of women to combine family and employment" for, prior to this time, the condition for women being admitted to an increasing number of hitherto "masculine" careers has been "that the women are unencumbered by family ties" (Myrdal:1968:1).

So far, what has happened is that despite the shortening of the maternal phase in women's life-spans, their familial roles have continued to dominate their adult life and economic activity. I cannot agree with Myrdal and Klein's assessment "that women should enter the world of employment is today taken for granted, as a rule, and their right to do most jobs is hardly queried" (1956:29-32), for their own analysis shows how the pattern of women's work is affected by the marital and maternal phase. The evidence of Juliet Mitchell is that not only is the time spent by women in outside employment affected, but also the nature of such work. She made an enquiry into the facts of the distribution and pay of women in various employments and came to the conclusion that the kinds of employment that women undertake are for the most part "extensions of their expressive familial roles" for "at present women perform unskilled

uncreative service jobs" for which they receive far less money than do the men for the manual work that they perform (Mitchell: 1971:149).

The basis to the difference in the interpretations of Myrdal and Klein, and of Mitchell, is that the former are content to indicate the changes that have taken place in the life-spans of women, and to relate these phases to the structure and size of families, without, as Mitchell does, analysing the position of married women within the family, and how it is the woman's role within the family that continues to dominate her adult life, and her economic and political potential. As long as the "familial stage" of women's lives remains intact as the phase where women are private, domestic creatures, who are dependent on their husbands for maintenance, then marital and maternal roles continue to dominate women's adult lives. The assumption is that women will retire at some stage into domestic existence where "their primary identification is as maintained persons within the family" (Mitchell:180). The position of women in the family has remained intact, despite the radical changes that have taken place in the social function and importance of the family as a social unit, and in the organisation of households, of which it forms the base. "Today women are confined within the family which is a segmentary, monolithic unit, largely separated from production and hence from social human activity" (Mitchell:151). Households are no longer

production/consumption units within which the labour of women is valued, but are mainly consumption units producing labour for paid work outside. As long as the adult woman's life continues to be dominated by her familial roles, her social position will be determined by the nature of the family as a social unit.

Within the urban industrial family, there is no opportunity for any build-up of economic autonomy by married women, and there is no clear distinction between the different phases in a married woman's career, unless marked by a return to outside employment. The basic dichotomy in male/female roles has remained intact, with men the economic providers, and socially dominant, while women are typically private, domestic creatures, with little economic potential and little or no participation in public, social life. Marriage is increasingly popular, so that the challenge that could have been provided to this male-female dichotomy by career women who remained single has been dissipated; and within marriage women do not mature, like the Humr and Kababish women, to public status or prestige or to participation in public social life. The careers of women in our society remain dominated by marriage and familial roles, despite the pattern of their careers differing from those of the Humr and the Kababish. Women in our society do have pre-marital and post-familial career opportunities, however limited they may be; but the effect of such opportunities is diminished by the continued

dominance of the marital/maternal phase in their lives. In this phase, women remain the economic dependents and the social subordinates of men.

However, the whole basis to the argument in this thesis has been the attempt to get away from sex categorisation, and to develop a more dynamic approach to the way in which women operate within their disadvantages. I have clarified the ways in which it would be mistaken to regard the Humr and Kababish women as undifferentiated, and powerless, for all women, once married, develop some sphere of influence over the decision that men take, and can in the long run protect their interests to an extent. The Humr women are more successful because of the diversity of claims that they have over men, and because of the public role that they have corporately in camp life. And it remains now to relate this finding to the experience of the married women in their isolated urban households.

It is exactly this area of study in which there has been the greatest concentration of the use of network analysis. In fact, the impetus provided by Elizabeth Bott's study has been such as to "have had the effect of associating the notion of social network almost exclusively with conjugal roles" (Mitchell:1969:6). While this is, as Mitchell says, unfortunate, for it has led to overlooking of fields in which the relevance

of this method would perhaps be more obvious, there are good reasons why this emphasis has developed, quite apart from the initial impetus of Bott's study. There has been a tradition in social anthropology and sociology to place great weight on the study of family and kinship systems, and the way in which people's behaviour is determined by the social pressures operating to demand conformity to normative rules. Particularly in more recent urban studies, there has been developing a further interest in familial roles, as expected and enacted. The use of network analysis is particularly appropriate to such study, by allowing for comparison of the patterning of social relationships in different spheres of a person's life, and relating, for example, family and kin, to friends and workmates. Now, with Kapferer's adaptation of Bott's technique (see Chapter Three), it is possible to compare the personal networks of husband and wife, and to relate the interlinkings between the two to their role relationship.

As I maintain that women's adult careers are still so effectively dominated by their expected familial roles, and the normative pressure on their conformity to such roles likewise appears great, the relevance of such an approach to my own interests is clear. One of the most fruitful areas of study still to be approached is to investigate the conditions under which rapid development and change in the role definition of married women takes place. Some indications have emerged such

as the trend to matrifocality in West Indian families (see Raymond Smith: 1965) while men are absent on wage-labour in the early and middle stages of a marriage; and in the observed rise in neurosis among Zulu women who, left by their husbands absent on wage-labour, are forced to act independently, and to adopt new responsibilities and authority to which they have not been trained (Jaspan:1953). Both the conditions inducing such change in women's roles and the effects of such change must be investigated.

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