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Post-hunger development in a country at war

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FORCED MIGRATION, ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE AND LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT: LIVELIHOOD SECURITY AMONG PASTORALISTS IN NORTHERN SUDAN[1] - Post-hunger development in a country at war

Key words: Forced migration, environmental refugees, drought and famine, return, livelihood (re-)construction, nomadic pastoralists, long-term development, Northern Sudan.

> *Too many studies assume an immobile population. Migration is a normal phenomenon which contributes greatly and positively to people's livelihoods (de Haan, 1999: 30/31).*

INTRODUCTION

What has happened with the people who were so badly hit by the drought in the Sahelian countries during the 1980s? To what degree have they been able to reconstruct their old livelihoods or construct new living opportunities? What kind of post-hunger development has taken place and what are the impacts of processes of change on people and communities? What about all the displaced people who where forced to migrate because of drought? Have they been integrated in their host communities? Are they still displaced? Are they in refugee camps or have they been resettled or returned to their homelands? Of the many people affected by the 1980's drought, this paper focuses on the *Hawaweer*, a nomadic pastoralist group inhabiting the Northern part of Sudan. The Hawaweer were forced to migrate in the mid-eighties because of drought and hunger. The Hawaweer were selected for study mainly because of a rather successful return process providing empirical evidence that return and post-hunger development are possible if sufficient resources and capable leadership are made available. However, successful return of people who once had been forced to migrate should not be understood as evidence that return is always the best solution. The right to stay where forced migrants settle down might be as important as the right to return to one's homeland. The Hawaweer experience also provides opportunities to increase our understanding of what is forced and what is voluntary migration. Migration is a normal part of many people's livelihoods. But what may seem normal for some may be perceived as forced by others within the same group and situation. The Hawaweer experience also provides an opportunity to challenge the term *environmental refugees* and to illustrate why environmental factors can not be assessed in isolation from a broader political and socio-economic context. The paper also addresses what people do when old household coping strategies have been exhausted and how new ways of livelihood diversification can contribute to disaster preparedness and

[1] Acknowledgement: This paper relies heavily on data collected by social anthropologist Dr Kjersti Larsen. Dr Larsen has also provided valuable comments to the process of developing the paper. In addition, I would like to acknowledge Mr Fadul Beshir Elhaj, Ms Manal Hassan and Mr Khalid Salih Moh for all their kind assistance and willingness to share their experience and insight with us. Without their help, this paper would not have been possible.

decreased vulnerability. It looks, as well, at the impact of forced migration on processes of change, modernisation and long-term development.

Many studies have examined forced migrants returning to their homelands or being resettled in new locations. The terms used to describe such processes of return are *recover, reconstruction, repatriation* and *rehabilitation*. But as Hammond (1999) stresses, these concepts might as well be perceived as *construction, creativity, innovation and improvisation*. The return process is not only about going back in time to conserve something that once existed, it creates a new situation which will be clearly illustrated by the processes of change that the Hawaweer people have experienced when returning to their homeland and constructing new livelihoods.

Many people are forced to migrate in search of a better life. However, conceptualising such migration as being forced neglects the possibility of mobility being a normal part of people's livelihoods. What is forced and what is not forced might be difficult to distinguish. All migration involves some degree of choice. Some people might choose to stay behind, suffering violence, hunger or both (Van Hear, 1998). The majority of migrants are in developing countries. They move from the rural areas to the cities in search of better opportunities or preference for urban life. Added to these are millions of refugees and internally displaced people who have fled across national borders or within countries due to famine, drought, war or environmental degradation. UNHCRa (2000) reports that world-wide there are about 20 million refugees and 30 million internally displaced people (IDP). This study focuses on internally displaced people in the northern part of Sudan who were forced to migrate due to drought and famine. Accordingly, they belong to the disputed *environmental refugee* category. The study investigates connections between normal mobility, forced migration, dilemmas and opportunities of return and the importance of assessing livelihood security and management of natural resources in relation to social, economic and political processes in as well as beyond the forced migrants' communities.

RESEARCH METHODS

The nomadic, pastoralist ethnic group, Hawaweer, living in northern Sudan was selected for the study for several reasons. The Hawaweer were drought victims of the 1980s; many of the Hawaweer people were forced to migrate; at a later stage many were encouraged to return; at present, many of the Hawaweer have constructed new livelihoods based on old traditions; lastly, the context the Hawaweer people is placed within is a country at war. A NORAD-funded agricultural development project, *Um Jawasir*, implemented by ADRA-Sudan and administrated by ADRA-Norway comprised the infrastructural point of entry to the Hawaweer people and their homeland of Wadi Al Muggadam in northern Sudan. A long term collaboration between the Agricultural University of Norway providing technical advice and the ADRA project created the base for the research. Fieldwork was undertaken in the period 1998-2000. It was multi-faceted in time, sources and geographic

sites (Khartoum, Nile region, Wadi Al Muggadam). The research method applied was qualitative, including many tools and approaches such as secondary sources, interviews with key informants (NGO / ADRA project staff, university faculty, refugee camp employees, international diplomats), observations (visits to refugee camps around Khartoum, visits to displaced Hawaweer people along the river Nile, visits to Hawaweer people at different geographical sites within their traditional homeland), interviews with Hawaveer men and women included focus group interviews, interviews with elderly people, individual interviews of Hawaweer with irrigated land in the ADRA / NORAD-funded project as well as people without land in the project, interviews and field visits with local leaders, meetings / interviews with local institutions (popular committee, farmers' committee, women's committee, local government, teachers), interviews with representatives of the private sector (Sherian), observations in irrigated and rain-fed agricultural areas, resource mapping with local leaders, participation in ceremonies (baptising) and social events (party, play, dinner invitations) and participation in women's market. The interviews were all open-ended without any use of questionnaire or interview guides. The people interviewed were purposefully selected on the basis of getting all different groups represented (returnees, stayees, and still displaced Hawaweer people; men and women; old and young people; agro-pastoralists in the project and agro-pastoralists outside of the project; people living inside the Um Jawasir project area and people living outside the Um Jawasir area; project employees, government officers etc.). One limitation of the approach was that we to a large degree were seen as representatives of NORAD, the funding agency. The answers may have been influenced by the people wanting only to inform us about all the positive aspects of the project as relates to processes of return and construction of new livelihoods. However, on the other hand, the project connection gave us the opportunity to get to know the people over a longer period of time, create social relations and build confidence. For example, since rain-fed agriculture is successfully undertaken on average only one in every ten years, it is not easily experienced. However, the 1999 / 2000 season was a good rainfall year with favourable flooding and we were then able to observe rain-fed agriculture and the impact of a good year on people's livelihoods in practice.

This paper does not only comprise the result of data collected by the author, but also includes data collected over a longer period of time by Dr Kjersti Larsen, social anthropologist. The fieldwork was conducted as a team-effort between the author and Dr Larsen. The collaboration with an anthropologist truly contributed to interdisciplinarity in approaches and theoretical frameworks which again contributed to a more holistic understanding of the complexity in the situation.

SUDAN - a generous host to refugees from other countries and at the same time a major producer of its own refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs)

Presently, Sudan is host to about 400.000 refugees, primarily from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Chad, Uganda, DRC and Somalia. Of these, 160.000 are camp-based while approximately 240.000 are in urban areas around the country. The number of refugees have steadily decreased during the last decade from a peak of almost 800.000 in 1989. The refugees arrived in Sudan at various times over the past 35 years (UNHCRb, 2000). According to Karadawi, in the 1970s and 80s, Sudan changed from a country with one of the most constructive and generous refugee policies and legislation, to one beset by growing economic, social and political problems, where the burden of supporting refugees became a further destabilising factor. Huge numbers of Sudan's population are refugees in other countries or internally displaced within Sudan. The population is estimated to include 27,7 million people (UNDP, 1999). In 1995, UNHCR estimated the number of internally displaced people in Sudan to be about 4 million, and constituting the largest number of IDP in one country in the world (UNHCR, 1996). About 1,8-2,0 million displaced people live in camps around the capital Khartoum, others have settled in different parts of northern Sudan, and another 166.000 people live in displaced camps inside southern Sudan (Mail & Guardian, 2000). However, it is impossible to estimate the number of displaced people and give accurate statistics of the situation. Before 1983, about 10 million people lived in southern Sudan. It is estimated that more than 1 million people have died since 1983 in southern Sudan and 4 million have been displaced by fighting and famine (Thompson, 1999).

Civil war, food crisis and environmental collapse

Sudan consists of 56 ethnic groups and 597 subgroups, the basic division being between the African culture in the south and the Afro-Arab culture in the north (Deng, 1993). The on-going civil war started in 1983, when Shari'a law was introduced by the government in the north, however, the conflict may be traced 500 years back in time. The central question in negotiating peace is how to facilitate power sharing between the three major Sudanese population groups (Arabs, Southern Christian Africans and Eastern / Western non-Arab Moslems) (Prunier, 1998). IGADD is presently in charge of the peace talks which give hope of a solution. However, if peace can be established, the question will still be for how long? According to Prunier (1998), the aim of the different groups in the peace talks appear to be to improve their respective political and diplomatic positions, possibly even their military capacity, in the hope of achieving through peace exactly the same objectives that they were trying to achieve through war. According to Achem (personal communication, January 2000), the main differences between the north and the south in the peace talks are where / how the borders should be drawn between south and north, the issue of religion, the length of an interim period, what kind of federation might be established between south and north and how to allocate resources between these areas.

The present picture of Sudan as perceived by the global community is what Amnesty International and other sources document of *human rights violations from virtually all sectors of society, from Northern Sudan, the war torn South and the Nuba mountains* (Amnesty International Report, 1997: 293). The government in Khartoum is categorised as Moslem fundamentalist and hence, internationally not of great popularity. The latest changes in the government and the prospect of peace give hope that the situation will improve. However, the challenges are enormous with a current fiscal crisis and both the government and opposition forces have used horror and violence as well as food and hunger as weapons to control territory and people (Soysa & Gleditsch, 1999). Presently 2,6 millions people are in need of emergency food aid and one third of the countries children are malnourished (Messer, Cohen & D`Costa, 1998). In 1990, the World Bank estimated that over 50% of the population in North Sudan was facing either chronic or transitory food security problems. It is estimated that about 250.000 people starved to death as a result of the drought and famine in northern Sudan (Darfur and Kordofan) in 1984-85 (Devereux, 2000). According to Olson (1993), drought and market failure were the prime causes of this famine. The severe rainfall deficit in 1984 resulted in huge food price increases, food was readily available at national level but the mechanisms for redistribution of food were inadequate (explained by policy failure e.g. regarding resource allocation and transport facilities in favour of traders, more than market failure). De Wall, 1997:91 describes the situation as follows: *The drought and the famine were an embarrassment and a distraction …. Nimeiri's anti-famine strategy was simple: he denied that the problem existed … an entirely preventable tragedy cost an estimated 250.000 lives.* Today, Sudan is indeed a country associated with a deep food crisis. In the north and in the south of Sudan, people have starved and are starving because of different, but at the same time interrelated reasons. In Sudan, the war, the food crisis and the collapse of the environmental equilibrium are in many ways products of the same socio-economic and political processes (Elmekki, 1999).

THE HAWAWEER PEOPLE

What does the civil conflict, the food crisis and the so-called environmental collapse mean for the people of Sudan, for a relatively marginal nomadic pastoralist group called the Hawaweer? Apparently, the recent Hawaweer experience is a story about how to go from drought, hunger and forced migration to relief, return, reconstruction and long-term development. In a way, it is surprising how this kind of successful post-hunger and post-drought development has been possible in a war-torn country as Sudan, which due to its unpopular regime to a large degree been excluded from outside assistance except for relief support in the south and activities in support of refugees and IDPs displaced from the south to the north. However, also in war-torn societies, life goes on and development takes place. Ordinary people will basically be in favour of nothing else than peace and sustainable livelihoods regardless of what party they are supposed to support and regardless of where in a country they happen to live.

The Hawaweer people inhabit four states of Sudan, but the majority of the Hawaweer people live in the Northern State. They embody about 20 % of the people in this state, about 300.000 individuals (Moh, 1999) and are the third largest ethnic group in the state after Hasania and Kababish (Fadul Beshir Elhaj, personal communication, January 2000). However, the most influential ethnic group in the state is *Shaigia* who live around the Nile towards the border to Egypt. The Hawaweer people are nomadic pastoralists and their traditional homeland in the Northern State is Wadi Al Muggadam in the middle of the Bayoda desert, a dry tributary of the river Nile which starts from Kordofan in Western Sudan and join the river Nile in Korti in northern Sudan (Moh, 1999). Um Jawasir is situated in the middle of Wadi Al Muggadam and a tradition focal point for the Hawaweer people (re map 1 and 2 in appendices). About 10.000 live in Um Jawasir area. During the tough period of drought in the mid 1980s not all that many families remained in Um Jawasir, basically, women, children and old men. The people who could, would also move the women to safety. The ones who were fit went to seek work north, south, east and west. Many went north to the Nile, some went to camps in Omdurman. Some went as far as Saudi Arabia. The men worked in whatever way they could, on farms, in construction, service, and some women in house cleaning, on farms etc. Among the Hawaweer today, there is general agreement that it was extremely difficult to find work, and if they were lucky and got some kind of employment, the working conditions were poor with long hours, very little pay, no job security and a lot of humiliation. Although the Hawaweer are perceived as hard working, there was such a shortage of opportunities that to be characterised as being hard-working did not help much. Also women worked on the land / picking dates etc. as well as in house cleaning and cooking. To a large degree, the Hawaweer, both men and women, have learned agricultural practices in the North / Nile area where they have gone for seasonal labour opportunities as a part of a diverse and mobile livelihood strategy. However, the Hawaweer have also learned agricultural practices in the Nile area as a result of the distress migration. In addition to the experience from the Nile area regarding agricultural practices, the Hawaweer also undertake traditional rain-fed cultivation of sorghum when rainfall and flooding allow and also sometimes traditional irrigation of other crops.

From relief to long-term development and the establishment of the Um Jawasir project

Development is when people become open in their minds (Hawaweer/Rubab statement, Um Jawasir, 2000)

A majority of Hawaweer in the Um Jawasir area lost most of their animals and where displaced in the 1980s because of the droughts (Johnsen et al., 2000). Drought years of the 1980s forced large numbers of the Hawaweer to migrate to Omdurman or most of all to the Nile valley where they live as environmental refugees in the outskirts of major settlements along the Nile strip between Marawi and Dongola. Those living along the Nile, still consider

themselves as belonging to the Wadi Al Muggadam (ADRA-Sudan, Ministry of Agriculture, Sudan & Andrews University, MI, USA, 1995.). Relief phased out in 1986, rehabilitation planning started. University of Khartoum was contracted by UNEP in 1985 to do a feasibility study and found that Wadi Al Muggadam possesses a rich fresh water aquifer at reasonable depth and soils of good quality suitable for irrigated agriculture (ADRA, LUDCA & IES, 1999). After a long period of planning, trying and failing, the Um Jawasir project funded by ADRA / NORAD emerged in 1994. The project is based on irrigated agriculture and provides user rights to irrigated land to selected Hawaweer pastoralists.

The Um Jawasir project area consists of about 370 feddan / 385 acres / 154 ha. A recent evaluation found that the agricultural activities in the project are financially sustainable and that both collective (revolving fund) and individual (livestock) savings are undertaken at a satisfactory level (Johnsen et al., 2000). The evaluation states that the project has been a major success in transformation of the drought inflicted nomadic pastoralists into semi-settled agro-pastoralists (ADRA, LUDCA & IES, 1999). Presently, about 105-117 families (1000 people) are farming in the project. Most people have temporary shelters in the project and more permanent in the Wadi, for example they will walk or go by donkey / camel 5-10 km every day to come to the project and work on their land (ADRA, LUDCA & IES, 1999). The project has to a large degree contributed to environmental rehabilitation of the desert area by increasing vegetative growth. The only environmental problem of today appears to be sand creep in the old farm. Shelterbelts of e.g. mesquite (Prosopis chilensis) are planted to resolve this problem (special permit obtained for planting mesquite). Livestock are integrated into the project. Fodder is produced in the farm and used for feeding own animals as well as sold to other pastoralists. The farm surplus is often used to invest in new animals. Instead of seasonal moving to Northern Kordofan, larger number of Hawaweer prefer to be closer to the project where water and fodder are available. The number of animals in the extended Um Jawasir area appear to be small mainly because poorer Hawaweer people with few animals were selected to get irrigated land (ADRA, LUDCA & IES, 1999). In the past, the Hawaweer depended mainly on camels, sheep and goats, but to a limited extent they practised crop production in years of good rainfall. In the project, the Hawaweer farmers cultivate wheat, beans, dates, vegetables, alfalfa in addition to the traditional cultivated crops of sorghum, okra, and watermelon. The Hawaweer people use a traditional method of irrigation, *Matra*, a hand dug well for lifting water by animal or manual power for irrigation of crops (Moh, 1999). The Hawaweer will study the stars to forecast the rain. Sometimes, they will have to sow 2-3 times to get a crop, because flooding will take away the seed. On average, rain-fed cultivation is only possible every tenth year when the flooding in addition to the rainfall, is favourable for crop production.

FORCED MIGRATION AND INTERNALLY DISCPLACED PEOPLE

Forced migration is defined as *movements of a significant number of people from areas or countries where national authorities and communities are unwilling or unable to provide for the protection of their fundamental human rights and/or their basic human needs* (NFR, 1994: 11). Accordingly, internally displaced people are defined by the Representative of the Secretary General on Internally Displaced Persons as *person or groups of persons who have been forced to flee or to leave their homes of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflicts, situations of generalised violence, violation of human rights or natural or man-made disasters; and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border* (UNICEF, 1997:2). The Hawaweer people clearly fall within these definitions of *forced migrants and internally displaced people*. Climate change and rainfall failure caused drought, hunger, breakdown of livelihoods and distress, forced migration. For many people, the choice was either to stay and starve to death or to go somewhere else in search of work opportunities. At the same time mobility and different kinds of migration have always been part of the Hawaweer's livelihood strategy. In addition, not all the Hawaweer perceived the situation as forced. Some people chose to stay behind. Among these, some were in a situation where migration was close to impossible because they did not have access to the necessary number of animals needed for migrating. For them, the reason for staying was not because they chose to stay, but because they were forced to stay (Larsen, forthcoming). This implies that what was forced and not forced vary within the same group of people. People can be both forced to stay and forced to migrate and at the same time there is a certain degree of choice related to both staying and migrating. Some people within the same group and situation are more adversely affected by shocks and disasters than others and less prepared to cope. Usually poor people will be the ones hit worst. Skeldon, 1997 states that the very poor are generally excluded from migration opportunities. Accordingly, Van Hear (1998) stresses that it is the better off who can afford the cost of migration.

For the Hawaweer, the social networks were of crucial importance for survival regarding both employment opportunities, and facilitation of the possibility of returning after the whole household had migrated. Families with migrant workers in the Gulf, established in the Nile area or Omdurman were less seriously affected than the others. The number of animals owned was an important factor in the beginning of the drought, but after a while, animals played a less important role as a coping strategy because the value of animals fell dramatically. Elmekki (1999) reports that under normal circumstances the price of a goat would buy a sack of millet while in 1991 buying a sack required the sale of 20 goats. He concludes that the selling of animals to buy grain was exhausted during the first year of famine and that Khartoum-based export companies increased their profit by a minimum of 1000% during the years of the drought. As one local Hawaweer leader expressed it: R*ich animal keepers lost all their animals and became servants in the north* (Nile area). The Hawaweer sub-tribe of *Harrarine* where really bad hit because they mainly had camels and survived in the open desert. Hawaweer

sub-tribes owning sheep and goats in addition to camels and who stayed where there was a little bit of vegetation (not in the open desert area) fared less badly. Regarding the importance of social networks, some people who migrated as whole households left animals with relatives or neighbours within the Hawaweer sub-groups as a way of securing a possibility of returning if the rainfall situation improved. These animals were taken care of, multiplied and made it easier for people to return when the rain came back. The Hawaweer need animals to be able to migrate from their homeland as well as to be able to return.

Mobility, forced migration and coping strategies

Van Hear (1998) underlines the importance of regarding forced and voluntary migration as a continuum. As shown above in the case of Hawaweer, voluntary and involuntary migration are not satisfactory categories because all migration involves some kind of choices. Some choose to stay and thereby suffer violence or hunger, some are forced to stay because lack of resources prevent migration, while others leave of free choice or because they feel forced to migrate. On one end of the migration continuum, is voluntary migration (choice, options) and then towards the other end less choices and fewer options until the migration is forced (little choice, few options) (Van Hear, 1998).

It was not a new dimension of the Hawaweer people's livelihood to migrate for work opportunities. They had always been mobile as part of their nomadic lifestyle and livelihood diversification. For decades, many Hawaweer people had been seasonal labourers in the Nile area. Others had gone to Omdurman or the Gulf. Others again had been involved in trading of animals and gone to the borders of Chad and Egypt to trade camels. What was new due to the drought of the 1980s, was that many people went not of a free choice but due to a desperate search for survival and a desperate need for feeding a hunger-struck family. The practice of migration was old and well known, but the context was new and created different realities than previously experienced. The old coping strategy of seasonal labour migration was not sufficient to keep hunger away, neither the nomadic lifestyle of trading animals and moving according to pasture opportunities. The Hawaweer people's food entitlements had always been dependent upon their ability to exchange labour for wages and to sell animals in times of difficulty. However, during the drought, the labour marked was over-flooded by able hands willing to do all kinds of work. In the Nile area[2], the Hawaweer people who had been used to finding manual work at reasonable wages were now faced with extreme difficulties in finding work. Elmekki (1999) reports similarly from the whole of northern Sudan, not only of the Hawaweer, about the oversupply of labour, that migration began earlier than usual, that the rate of migration had

[2] It takes about 3-4 days to go by camel from Um Jawasir to Korti (Nile area). Presently, there is no road, only wheel tracks in the sand (a road is under construction). However, there are daily buses between Khartoum and different places in the Nile area (Dongola, Karima etc.). The bus connection has resulted in the camel drivers basically loosing their transport market.

risen rapidly and that there was an increase in whole-family migration which indicates the stress phase of migration. The characteristic of seasonal work migration being regarded as a normal part of the Hawaweer's livelihoods, changed in this process of more people migrating on a more permanent basis than before. The labour resource the Hawaweer people constituted in the peak seasons, used to be appreciated by the Nile people. However, as the number of Hawaweer people increased, they gradually became perceived as a threat by the local communities. As work opportunities grew less, the Hawaweers were increasingly faced with difficulties and humiliating situations. One Hawaweer told us that he felt treated worse than a dog and that he was not even allowed to drink from the same water source as the local people. The Hawaweers had been an important and cheap labour force in developing the commercial agricultural production in the Nile area (e.g. date plantations) and the local Nile people had benefited from their labour resource. The importance of cheap labour has also been important in agricultural development in other parts of Sudan. Kok (1989) and Kuhlman (1990) document how cheap Ethiopian labour fuelled the expansion of commercial agriculture in eastern Sudan. In southern Sudan, Ugandan refugees contributed to rural growth and market development.

The new situation of labour surplus, unemployment and permanent migration contributed to the Hawaweer people not being welcome in the Nile area. The local people where not willing to share their resources with the migrants who they regarded as primitive nomadic people of low social status in spite of the Hawaweers being Arab Moslems. Regarding environmental degradation due to forced migrants, there is in general not empirical evidence for claiming that displaced people cause natural resource depletion (Black, 1998). However, refugee host communities often perceive this degradation as real (Black. 1994). The widespread feeling of being humiliated by the local people in the Nile area, has probably enforced the strong tie of the Hawaweer to their homeland and to their customary institutions which again contributed to successful processes of return for many of the Hawaweer people. However, the extremely poor conditions of many Hawaweer displaced in the Nile area, make returning difficult, the reason given that they do not have the necessary number of animals to be able to make the move.

ENVIRONMENTAL REFUGEES

In the above, the displacement of the Hawaweer has been described. The term which has been used by national and international organisations to categorise the Hawaweer is *environmental refugees.* According to Woods (1994) there are three overlapping international forced migration categories defined by the cause of the forced migration:

- War / political instability
- Ecological crisis / life-threatening economic decline and
- Ethnic / religious conflicts

The Hawaweer people became environmental refugees during the serious drought of the 1980s when about 250.000 people starved to death in northern Sudan (Darfur and Kordofan) (Devereux, 2000). In this regard, it is important to assess what an *environmental refugee* is, as well as to what degree such a term is appropriate? The term *environmental refugee* may to a certain degree prove to be useful when it comes to national and international attention in the form of relief activities. However, this attention did not prevent 250.000 people from starving to death during the drought in northern Sudan in 1984-85. Other terms, for example *food as a human right* which is recognised by most countries in the world, prove not to be very effective in securing food for poor and hungry people (Haug, 1999). The category *environmental refugees,* describes groups of people being displaced by environmental changes (Myers, 1993; Trolldalen et al., 1992; Lassailly et al., 1992). Environmental refugee were first time used as a term by International *Institute for Environment and Development* (IIED) and *United Nations Environment Programme* (UNEP) in 1984-85 (Jacobsen, 1988; Ramlogan, 1996; Black, 1998). The definition of the term is broad enough to include migration attributed to climate change and rainfall failure. Environmental refugees are defined as *people who have been forced to leave their traditional habitat, temporarily or permanently because of a marked environmental disruption (natural and/or triggered by people) that jeopardise their existence and/or seriously affect the quality of their life* (El-Hinnawi, 1985: 4). Many migration and refugee specialists and agencies have now explicitly rejected the term *environmental refugees* (McGregor, 1994). Not because the problem of environmental degradation does not exist, but because the term is used much as the same as economic migrant in the form of distress migration (Suhrke, 1994). At the same time, the stress on the environment as an underlying cause tends to take the attention away from other factors of great importance such as socio-political factors (Ramlogan, 1996; O'Lear, 1997). Environmental refugees as a term is, today, basically perceived as a way of simplifying the understanding of a situation which is usually much more complex than what can be illustrated by environmental categories (McGregor, 1994). McGregor (1994) states that by reducing the complexity of real situations, the term environmental refugee can also reinforce the images of Malthusian squeeze (re the carrying capacity dispute, Malthus, 1798 and 1803) and take the attention away from other factors of crucial importance to understanding the situation. Kibreab (1997) argues that the term environmental refugee was invented at least in part to de-politicise the causes of displacement.

The Hawaweer people became so-called *environmental refugees* in the 1980s because of rainfall failure followed by desertification and famine. According to elderly Hawaweer, they have no memory of any drought as serious as the one in the 1980s although they have experienced many droughts in their lifetime. The desertification process was not caused by overgrazing or other human factors. The Hawaweer people as most other people depending on nature for survival, manage their natural resources in a sustainable way knowing very well the consequences of endangering the ecosystem because if they do they endanger themselves (Kibreab, 1997). The expansion of Sahel

during the 1980s was in general more due to rainfall failure than to overstocking (Tucker et al., 1991; Luseno et al., 1999). Olson (1993) reports from a 30 years study of Northern Sudan that no signs of man-made induced desertification could be found, that the northern cultivation limit did not change significantly, and that no widespread changes in vegetation cover took place that could not be explained by climatic variations.

Environmental refugees and refugee degradation of natural resources

In the literature, environmental degradation is given as a cause of forced migration as shown above in the discussion of the term *environmental refugees*. At the same time, displacement of people are often perceived as an environmental problem because forced migrants are usually regarded as environmental degraders. In general, Kibreab (1997) states that degradation is more a problem of misguided government policy rather than activities of the poor, whether it be before the people have been forced to migrate or after they have been displaced. The connections between environmental degradation and population displacement have been extensively debated in the literature. How to separate the effects of environmental degradation from other potential economic and political factors that affect migration decisions has proven difficult (Ruitenbeek, 1996). Uvin (1996) argues that ecological, economic and political processes can not be separated from one another. This is the situation both regarding environmental degradation as a cause of forced migration and as a problem caused by displacement of large number of people. Resource scarcity can drive economic decisions and be used as political tools. According to Kibreab (1997), there is no difference between environmental degradation among refugees and surrounding villages. He effectively rejects the myths that refugees degrade resources because of poverty, lack of secure tenure rights, uncertainty, unfamiliarity with host environment, spatial segregation or depletion of resources by animals belonging to the refugees.

In the Hawaweer case, shortage of rainfall triggered the situation of forced migration, which could have been avoided if appropriate action had been taken by the government or international agencies. To be hindsighted in this way is of course much easier than taking action when needed. The rainfall failure was disastrous, but a committed government with some outside help could probably have prevented the severe famine and displacement which followed the drought. To what degree the situation would have been different if there had not been civil war in the country, is difficult to determine. Whether or not the civil war causes most resources to be invested in running the war or whether or not a marginal ethnic group such as the Hawaweer would have received the necessary attention if there had been no war is impossible to judge. It is probably a combination of several factors such as lack of Hawaweer empowerment (influence and voice in the society), lack of political will in the government and lack of resources because of the war in the south. It is impossible to assess how the situation might have developed without the war. It appears to be a relationship between conflicts, drought

and famine, but the causal relationship is probably not as straight forward as we might be deceived to believe. A war most often contributes to situations of famine, but on the other hand there is no guarantee that ending a war also will end the occurrence of famine. Woods (1994) claims that drought combined with repressive regimes and violent militias, create terrible situations and have claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in the horn of Africa over the past decades). In general, famines in Africa are caused neither by production failure nor by market failure, but by policy and institutional failures (von Braun et al., 1998). In addition, Amartya Sen's famous statement, that there has never been serious famine in a country with a democratic government and a free press, should be recognised (Sen, 1993). Droughts, conflicts or other disasters are generally blamed for creating famines, however, according to Devereux (2000), it is the interaction between underlying processes and shock events that produces famine, both predisposing and triggering factors. The emphasis on vulnerability and poverty in explaining famines might be insufficient when trying to understand the full picture. As shown in both southern Sudan (re Devereux, 2000, and the Dinka experience) and regarding the Hawaweer in the north, the rich can be as vulnerable as the poor when a triggering factor strikes, that being either an *armed conflict* or *rainfall failure*. Rich Hawaweer pastoralists in northern Sudan became poor servants in the Nile area. At about the same time, rich Dinka pastoralists in the south lost their cattle in raids by government militia and neighbouring groups resulting in famine and displacement, many Dinka people becoming servants in the Khartoum area. According to Devereux (2000), famines are always political, no matter how diverse the triggering factors.

FACILITATING PROCESSES OF RETURN

A returnee considers return to be more of a new beginning than a return to the past (Hammond, 1999).

Many Hawaweer people got the opportunity to return to their homeland in Wadi Al Muggadam. At the same time, many others did not get this opportunity or did not want to go back even if they could. The right to stay where forced migrants settle down, is as important as the right to return. What is best for some people within a group might not be the best solution for others within the same group. Some people integrate much easier that others, some people create new livelihoods that they prefer to maintain more than returning to something that once existed. Article 13 (2) of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human rights declared that *everyone has the right to return to his country*. This is confirmed as well in the 1966 International Convention on Civil and Political Rights. The right to return is much more recognised than the right to stay. The important challenge is how to make both of these two rights operational. The issue is often not a question of a human rights, but of how to make a living (livelihood security). According to Kibreab (1996), legal rights are worth nothing if livelihood options are not there. In economic poor areas, homecoming is indeed intertwined with livelihood security as a whole

as well as access to important services within health and education. Hammond (1999) states that repatriation has often meant a significant drop in the availability of health care and educational services. She poses the question of why returnees should choose to forgo a higher standard of living for the pleasure of going back to their country of origin. There are three possible outcomes of forced migration: Integration, resettlement or return to homeland. All three are difficult. What is needed to make people wanting to return is formal provision of collective or public goods and services (Moser, 1998). The Hawaweer people who decided to return, were not so concerned about access to services within health and education. They were willing to take the risk that such facilities would be provided as time went on. However, some people decided not to return because of children's schooling or health problems. The most important factor for the Hawaweer who chose to return was the new livelihood opportunity created in their homeland. This new livelihood opportunity was based upon traditional rights to the land. Without the traditional rights of the Hawaweer to the land as well as effective traditional institutions, the new livelihood opportunity would probably not have succeeded.

There have been many efforts towards voluntary repatriation of displaced people. Often the different repatriation projects have, to a limited degree, been successful due to a whole range of different reasons. Getachew (1996) reports that UNCHR's repatriation and rehabilitation programme, made several mistakes in relation to displacement and return of pastoralists in southern Ethiopia. UNCHR staff lacked knowledge and understanding of the local situation, no serious consultations with the returnees were carried out. Problems included inadequate resources, corruption, inadequate monitoring, and decisions taken without preliminary or on-going research. Successful return has proven difficult for many reasons. Repatriation is not only physical, but also social, economic and political. Returnees often introduce new ways of performing, for example gender roles have often changed during the displacement process and new ways of behaving and interacting have developed.

The Hawaweer who returned to Um Jawasir are in many ways different from the ones who left. New social positions, social differentiation and patterns of living have developed. The Hawaweer did not return because of a nostalgic notion of home, but because they could claim rights in the area and because the Um Jawasir project could provide the most secure livelihood option. Also the categorisation of people as *refugees, returnees and stayees* is misleading because of constant movements and mobility. Migration had always been an integral part of surviving. The categories *refugee, returnee and stayee* should be regarded as a continuum and not clearly defined groups of people. The issue of belonging is important in processes of migration and return. Stølen (2000) gave evidence of returnees in Guatemala who perceived that the place of belonging was where they found sustainable livelihoods. For the Hawaweer, the feeling of belonging is not necessarily connected to secure livelihood. They feel they belong to one place and at the same time they might have their

livelihood at another place. For example, for many Hawaweer people, the feeling of belonging is towards Um Jawasir, but the Nile area is where they make a living. The feeling of belonging should not necessarily be equated with secured livelihoods. People might choose to live where they have a secure livelihood, but this does not automatically imply that they also feel that they belong to this place. In the Nile area, many Hawaweer people would state a feeling of belonging to Um Jawasir, but because of livelihood opportunities and service facilities, they choose to stay in the Nile area.

Um Jawasir project

Repatriation is not the end of the refugee cycle. It marks the beginning of a new cycle for returnees as a new notion of home is explored and created realising that both social and physical reconstruction are part of the return process (Koser & Black, 1999).

It is difficult to say exactly how many families returned to the Um Jawasir area after the drought because the defined categories are not all that appropriate for the situation. Some people will claim that in the Um Jawasir area only about 30 families were really stayees during the droughts while others will claim that this number was much larger. Presently, the population of Hawaweer in Wadi Al Muggadam[3] consist of about 6630 people and 1220 households (Moh, 1999). There are more people in the Um Jawasir area today than before the serious drought of the 1980s, however, the number of animals are still less than what it used to be before the drought. Um Jawasir is recognised as the homeland of the Hawaveer (Wadi Al Muggadam). In the midst of the drought, a Hawaweer local leader dug a well with manual workers and bought a waterpump. The purpose of the well was to provide irrigated water supply to the area where sorghum was usually cultivated in years of good rainfall and flooding, in average every tenth year. The well was dug where the soil was most fertile and where the Hawaweer people had traditional cultivation rights to the land. Unfortunately, the chief was not able to dig deep enough to secure sustainable access to water. Later, more or less the same concept was applied by ADRA when they established an irrigated agricultural development project in the middle of the Wadi Al Muggadam.

However, ADRA did not choose the most fertile area which used to be cultivated during good rainfall and flooding. In the area of the first hand-dug well, the land was distributed to the different Hawaweer sub-ethnic groups and families in a traditional rights system marked by rocks according to the rock-throwing principle. ADRA did not want to interfere in this system of traditional cultivation rights. Also the government did not want to provide land to the project which already had the traditional cultivation user-rights attached to it. In the traditional land rights system, each Hawaweer sub-group was entitled to a fair share of the flooded and most fertile land. When the project area was established, the land was selected from a geological assessment and not in accordance with the most fertile soil which had traditional individual user rights attached to it. The staff wanted to avoid

[3] Wadi El Muggadam is 10-20 km wide and 130 km long (Moh, 1999)

individuals claiming the land after it had been irrigated and distributed to needy Hawaveer people. The project land was also the homeland of the Hawaweer people, but as a common property grazing land without individual user-rights to cultivate.

When the irrigated plots in the project were distributed, the local Hawaweer leaders decided who should get irrigated land. Each of the nine Hawaveer sub-ethnic group was given a certain percentage of land to distribute among their people in accordance with the size of the sub-ethnic group. For example if one sub-ethnic group makes up 28% of the Hawaveer people, the local leader of this group would get 28% of the land for the use by members of this group. The local leaders distributed the plots to poor and needy Hawaweer people in accordance with the following criteria:

- generosity (the farmer should be known as being a generous person)
- many dependants
- fitness for farming (strong and healthy)

A majority of the people who got irrigated plots in the first phase of the project were stayees during the 1983-84 drought. The establishment of the project resulted in many more Hawaweer returning than those getting plots. The agricultural activities create casual labour opportunities and provide fodder for the animals not only regarding people with irrigated plots, but also for extended groups of Hawaweer people. The returnees who got irrigated plots are today better off than the returnees without irrigated farms as well as better off than the women returnees (Moh, 1999). Also, the rainfall situation has kind of improved and been more favourable than what was the situation in the worst years of the 1980s, which again, has made it possible for some Hawaweer people to return. The years 1984-88 were years of serious drought. 1988 was a year of good rain with flooding and rain-fed agricultural production, 1993 had some rain and 1999 was again a good year. However, in average, annual rainfall is declining. The level of rainfall used to be in average around 150 mm, but today the recent trend appears to be less than 60-75 mm on average pr year (re fig 1 in appendices).

The Um Jawasir project is widely recognised for having succeeding in providing a sustainable livelihood opportunity for Hawaweer people who have returned to Um Jawasir and for the people who stayed during the drought. An indicator of the success, is that a semi-private company working in collaboration with the government to develop the drylands of the northern Sudan, have acquired land in the area and would like to start a similar project. The Hawaweer local leaders have agreed that a share of their common property grazing land is given to the *Sherian* company on the condition that Hawaweer people should do all the manual work in establishing the project and that Hawaweer people should get the irrigated farm plots in a similar way as for the Um Jawasir development project.

Strong leadership, institutions and social networks

The reasons why the Um Jawasir project is perceived as a success by most people might be explained in different ways. First, the commitment of the ADRA project staff and the excellent leadership of the project, has contributed significantly to the success. Second, the funding agency, NORAD was willing to take the risk of digging wells for some nomadic people in the desert of northern Sudan, basically an area where no other donors had any interest of investing anything. However, what might have played the most important role is the strong traditional Hawaweer institutions, leadership and social networks. The Hawaweer form the third biggest ethnic group in northern Sudan and a rather marginal group regarding influence and status in the Sudanese society. The Hawaweer are divided into nine sub-ethnic groups (Rubab, Harareen, Habasab, Salhab, Goudtab, Tamaseeh, Fazarab, Khamaseen, Mowalka) and each sub-ethnic group is divided into lineages. Sub-ethnic groups and lineages are important to social relations, sustainable natural resource management, livelihood security and survival, politics and governance. The Hawaweer sub-ethnic group of *Harareen* have the *Nazeer* who is like a king for the Hawaweer. In addition, the Hawaweer local leaders constitute four *Umdas*, seven *Sheiks* and the *Agawids* which consist of elder wise men. In addition to the traditional Hawaweer leaders, the government has established a system of *Popular Committees* (PC) which function as local governments with a wide mandate and authority e.g. the Popular Committees can fine and arrest people as well as establish taxes. The Popular Committees are elected at a big conference. The PC[4] in Um Jawasir is active and performs well in the interest of the people (Fadul Beshir Elhaj, personal communication, January 2000). It is the duty of the PC to organise people, to keep records of the number of people, recording the movements of people in the area. In addition, the *mobile court* is an important institution in local governance and conflict resolution. The different sub-ethnic groups provide members to the mobile court. In addition to the traditional and governmental institutions, the Um Jawasir development project has established different committees to basically run the project. The most important committee is the *farmers' committee* which more or less has the same members as the Popular Committee. Several sub-committees have emerged from the farmers' committee on issues such as *women, health, education, grinding mills, stores, fuel, ploughing, marketing, revolving funds* as well as six different *wells committees.* Well-functioning and effective traditional, local governmental and project institutions and organisations are the backbone of the successful implementation of the Um Jawasir project. According to Von Braun et al. (1998) institutional and policy failures are the most important contributing factors to famine in Africa. The Hawaweer experience indicates that successful institutions at local level and a committed NGO, may compensate

[4] Um Jawasir area has seven Popular Committees (Um Jawasir North 780p / 150hh, Abusider East 1200p / 220 hh, Al Haras two 750p / 150 hh and 800p / 130 hh, Umitub North 800p / 140 hh, El Brega West 1300 p / 230 hh, Um Jawasir South 1000p / 200 hh). About 6630 people and 1220 households.

for the problem of policy failure at national level given that funding is made available from the outside.

LIVELIHOOD (RE)CONSTRUCTION

A poor person is somebody who does not have anything to give to guests (elder Hawaweer/ Salhab in Wadi El Braiga, 2000)

As stated above, Hawaweer people who returned to Um Jawasir did not seek to move backward in time to recapture a life they once had, but rather the opposite to construct something new and better than what was before (re Hammond, 1999). The aim of the Um Jawasir project is to rebuild local capacities for food production in a post-hunger effort to create sustainable livelihoods for as many as possible of the Hawaweer people. In order to achieve this aim, the project has transformed *nomadic pastoralists* who practised successful rain-fed agriculture on average every tenth year, and took on casual farm work in the Nile area every now and then, to *semi-nomadic agro-pastoralists*. The Hawaweer people who have got irrigated plots in the Um Jawasir project tend to identify themselves as *farmers* although they are also *pastoralists* and several of them *nomadic pastoralists*. However, the patterns of movement have changed. In the past, the Hawaweers moved in big groups trading animals in exchange of sorghum, sugar and tea. Today, it has become common only to move as a family unit within a smaller geographical area.

When Hawaweers are asked whether it is possible to be both a farmer and a nomad in their heart, many will answer that it is better to be a farmer because you can not survive as a nomad, it is just too risky. And they will tell about the rich Hawaweer nomads who lost all their animals and became servants in the Nile area. They will continue to say that the sub-ethnic group of *Rubab* are the best farmers, but add that all the Hawaweer are both farmers and nomads. The feeling of identity (pastoralist, farmer or both) is connected to livelihood opportunities. Having experienced that it is not possible to survive as nomadic pastoralists, livelihood diversification has led to multiple belonging and identity. For the Hawaweers, it is not a problem to fit in to more than one category. It is not a problem to be both a *semi-nomadic pastoralist undertaking agriculture once in a while* and a *semi-settled agro-pastoralist moving every now and then*. Multiple identities imply that the Hawaweers are able to combine being both a farmer and a nomad which are the two «extremes» at each end of a continuum. Most Hawaweer will fit in somewhere in between these two categories and exactly where on the continuum will vary with time and opportunities.

The Hawaweer use every opportunity to minimise risk and diversify food supply and income generating activities. The Hawaweer appreciate being more involved in farming, because farming does not mean that they would have to give up animals, but rather the opposite; the farm surplus can be invested into more animals and the farm production provide fodder for the

animals. Although farming implies that people become more settled, both men and women welcome this change (Larsen, forthcoming). Many people who are semi-settled in the Um Jawasir project area or close to the project, move to Wadi Gummur (re map 2 in appendices) with their animals for grazing and rain-fed agriculture (sorghum production), and might stay there up to 9 months. Some people have two houses, both in the project area and in the Wadi. In the Wadi Gummur, both Hawaweer people attached to the project and Hawaweer people who have been forced to migrate to the Nile area, will return for grazing and rain-fed agriculture. Hawaweer people who live in the Nile area will be told through social networks (e.g. Hawaweer sub-groups) when rainfall and flooding are favourable for sorghum production and grazing, and then they will return to their homeland with their animals to grow sorghum. They have their traditional rights as Hawaweers to cultivate the land of their grandfathers and there is no shortage of land. The right to cultivate land follows the sub-ethnic groups and is regulated by customary law. Regarding grazing of animals, the pasture is for all Hawaweers without reference to sub-groups. The limiting cultivation factor is the very low rainfall, not availability of arable and fertile land.

When reconstructing old livelihoods and at the same time establishing new livelihood opportunities, it is important to recognise that a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and non-material social resources) and activities required for a means of living. Carney (1998: 4, 1999) defines a sustainable livelihood as follows: *A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain and enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base.* In order to analyse the livelihoods of the Hawaweer to better understand the complex interactions and diversity in the different activities as well as the sustainability issue, the different forms of capital assets are assessed as follow(Carney, 1998 adapted from Scoones, 1998; Farrington et al., 1999; Ellis, 1999):

- **Natural capital**: Grazing land (plenty when rainfall is favourable), rain-fed agricultural land (plenty when rainfall / flooding is favourable), irrigated land (scarce), firewood (enough of both dried, dead vegetation (trees) and farm residue), irrigated water (scarce), rainfall (scarce, drought is the «normal» situation), traditional irrigation «Matra» (temporary well, hand-irrigated, laboursome to use this kind of water for pasture improvements or agriculture), drinking water (adequate permanent wells, temporary wells in the rainy season), wildlife (decreasing gazelles, fox, birds), biodiversity (very little vegetation), agro-biodiversity (high degree of seed security, excellent management of seed, both farmers and nomads experiment with sorghum varieties)
- **Social capital**: At national level, the Hawaweer ethnic group is perceived as a marginal group consisting of nomads of low social status. At the same time, the traditional rights of the different ethnic groups to natural resources are being respected and protected at least in the northern Sudan. At local level, the Hawaweers have strong traditional social networks

(ethnic groups, sub-ethnic groups, lineages, families), the Hawaweer leadership (Nazeer, middle level Hawaweer leaders, elderly men's council, Agaweeds), and in addition, the local government function of popular committees, as well as the mobile court. At project level, well-functioning organisations have been established (farmer committees with many active sub-committees), and the project staff is available (some employed by ADRA, some employed by the government). There is also the private company, Sherian, working with the government to provide services to the people in northern Sudan such as mosques and Muslim schools. Then you have a few tourists from the Gulf, some of whom have been very generous to the Hawaweer people.

- **Human capital**: The Hawaweers are perceived as hardworking people with skills in farming (rain-fed sorghum cultivation, traditional irrigation, flooding management, improved date production) and animal husbandry (camels, donkeys, goats and sheep), weather forecasting by interpreting stars and other indicators, school facilities (inadequate), health facilities (one health officer, but in general inadequate)
- **Physical capital**: Transport facilities (camels, donkeys, some restaurant owners have pick-up cars, some project cars, buses), road (under construction north to the Nile, good road from Khartoum / Omdurman to the Um Jawasir project area, about 3 hours drive), market availability (local markets, produce being effectively transported to the Nile area and to Khartoum / Omdurman) shelter (no brick houses, no really permanent housing), energy (firewood), communication (few have radios)
- **Financial capital**: Animals are the most important financial capital, marketing of produce from the farm, some remittances from relatives working e.g. in the Gulf, Omdurman etc., micro-credit possibilities through the Um Jawasir project, subsidised fertiliser, seed, fuel for the diesel pumps etc. through the project.

The reasons given by the Hawaweers for returning to Um Jawasir, are closely tied to livelihood opportunities such as *returned to get a farm* (irrigated land), *returned to cultivate grandfather's land* (both irrigated and rain-fed agriculture), *returned to get a job* (agricultural labour such as watering, digging of canals, harvesting, threshing), *returned to get a technical job* (pump operation, tractor operation, grinding mill operation), *returned for marketing/trading purposes* (consumer goods, sale of animals, crops and vegetables) (Moh, 1999). Women have also returned to Um Jawasir on their own as well as accompanying their husbands. Women have not yet received individual plots in the project, but several women are able to secure a livelihood or contribute to the family income by working on the land as labours e.g., weeding, harvesting of wheat and beans, picking okra, harvesting sorghum, cutting alfalfa, threshing sorghum; and by doing petty trading. In addition, the Um Jawasir project includes a women component with micro-credit possibilities where women sew clothes, make soap and pasta for sale and home consumption, cultivate the land, produce fodder, organise local markets, run a local school etc. (Larsen, forthcoming). When explaining why people have returned to Um

Jawasir (re livelihood opportunities above), most people will add that they failed to find a sustainable source of income in the Nile area, that life was very poor in the Nile area and that is why they returned. Accordingly, the reasons given for people not returning to Um Jawasir are also closely related to livelihood opportunity, but do also include access to services. People have not returned because they did not receive a irrigated plot in the project, but because they have a job in the Nile area, because children are in good schools, because they prefer a more urban life, because there community services are lacking in Um Jawasir, and because they are uncertain regarding the sustainability of the Um Jawasir project (Moh, 1999).

RETURNEES, STAYEES AND RESOURCE CONFLICTS

It is often assumed that migration processes carry with them conflicts over resources. Such resource conflicts may take many different directions and might be based more on subjective perceptions than on reality. When the Um Jawasir project was established, there was competition between the different Hawaweer sub-groups regarding the distribution of irrigated plots. Naturally, each sub-group wanted as much land as possible for their group. The Um Jawasir project staff was accused of favouring the *Rubab sub-group*. The reason for the Rubab sub-group got many of the plots, was that they already consisted of 70% of the Hawaweer people in the Um Jawasir area. The competition among the different Hawaweer sub-groups to get as much access to irrigated land as possible, shows how important this farm livelihood opportunity is for the Hawaweer and how committed the sub-group leaders were to securing land for their people. The sub group Rubab (*Amashien lineage*) is the dominant sub-group in Um Jawasir. Both the Sheik and the Chair of the Popular Committee are from this group. Many of the Rubab / Amashien stayed in the Um Jawasir area during the drought. When other Hawaweer people from different sub-groups started to return to Um Jawasir, different kinds of conflicts emerged between the stayees and the returnees e.g. regarding representation in the farmers' committee and contributions to the project revolving fund (Moh, 1999). Luckily, the *Nazeer* was able to solve these problems. According to Moh (1999), each sub-ethnic group tries to be the dominant leader in the Um Jawasir project. When there are differences between different sub-groups, the Agaweed (decision-making mechanism of elder men) and the Sheikh work together and consult each other in solving problems.

The Hawaweer people appear to have a high degree of problem solving capacity. This capacity has evolved over time and is presently a characteristic that gives status to individuals in the Hawaweer group. We were told that before a man was a hero when he fought with a knife. Now he is a hero when he has many animals, can give to guests and share with others, and when he is able to solve problems and help others in solving problems. We were also told that fighting had decreased and many young men had stopped wearing knives. Before, strangers could be beaten up, but now it is possible to move freely between the lands of different sub-ethnic groups. It used to be that

people had to keep to the area of their own sub-ethnic group. Still, however, people from one Hawaweer sub-ethnic group can not settle down in the land of another group and acquire rights. If people settle down outside their own area, they will have to rely on friends / neighbours for their survival. However, drinking water for people and animals is free for everybody regardless of ethnic group or sub-group. But Hawaweer people without the appropriate kind of rights to the land can not dig a well because then the land will belong to them. Recently, there was a conflict between different sub-groups because a cafeteria owner wanted to dig a well on land where he did not have that kind of traditional right. He was allowed to establish his cafeteria, but not to dig a well. However, regarding wells, people without broad rights may be allowed to dig a temporary well (sefar) from rainwater. But a permanent well (moshra) can only be dug by those who own the land (have traditional rights to the land).

Among the Hawaweer people, there are some conflicts over cultivated land. For example, people might claim that property marcation rocks have been moved. The mobile court decides in such property rights conflicts. There are also conflicts regarding ownership of animals. Although the animals belong to all the Hawaweer people, regarding the right to e.g., use a camel for travel or transport, the animal has to be returned to the real owner. Regarding pasture, water and firewood, there are few conflicts. If somebody cuts a green tree, he will be punished. The firewood situation has improved due to the farm activities. One is allowed to gather dead wood, but not to cut down dead trees. Also the fodder situation has improved, due to the irrigated farms. In addition, there are fewer animals now than before the drought and hence easier to find pasture. There are 99 wadis (valleys) from Omdurman to Korti. The Hawaweer «country» starts at Gerraia (map 1 and 2 in appendices). If all the people go to one Wadi for grazing their animals, they will stay as long as there is grass then move on without getting into conflicts with each other. Regarding wildlife, there are not much animals in the desert, only gazelles, fox and birds. The wildlife is decreasing. The Hawaweers are allowed to hunt gazelles for food, but it is not allowed to hunt for sale. Some Hawaweer earn money on trapping gazelles and selling them alive for a good price to the Gulf, where they are restocking their wildlife. The Hawaweer people do not need permission to hunt, but other peoples do. For example, people from the Gulf hunt gazelles and need a permit for this. To hunt from cars is not allowed. The Hawaweer people will report strangers who do not follow the traditional rules. To hunt from a car will be reported to the *Department of Wildlife* or even more effective, the tyres of the car might be destroyed. In general, the Hawaweer people govern their own land when it comes to management of natural resources. Governance is efficiently regulated according to customary law which is basically being respected by all the different actors involved.

Because of strong local institutions and traditional laws as well as the Sudanese government respecting the different ethnic groups right to govern the natural resources in their home area in Northern Sudan, there appear to

be few real conflicts between the people in Um Jawasir over the use of and access to natural resources. The conflicts which might emerge are not caused by tensions between stayees or returnees in the forced migration setting. Except for the distribution of irrigated land in the Um Jawasir project, representatives in the different local committees and competition among the Hawaweer sub-groups over who should play a leading role in Um Jawasir, there are no serious conflicts among people over the use of and access to natural resources in the area. The issue of irrigated land distribution and representation in local committees would probably have been present regardless of the forced migration situation. Some of the stayees might have a feeling that they should play a more important role than the returnees because they stayed during the drought and had to face all the hardship. From a theoretical perspective, we expected the situation to be more conflictful than what the empirical data revealed. Below, the most important natural resources and their management regimes are reviewed:

- **Land**: Traditional right-based system, strong local institutions to follow-up. Different management regimes for common property land (grazing) and individual user-rights in relation to cultivation (rain-fed agriculture).
- **Rain-fed agriculture**: Traditional user rights to cultivate the fertile, flooded area (rock-throwing principle), enough rain-fed agricultural land for everybody, govern by Hawaweer sub-groups, sub-groups might give permission to non sub-group members to cultivate, local institutions solve disputes over property rocks being moved / having disappeared.
- **Irrigated farms**: Common pasture land given to the Um Jawasir project. Local leaders distribute irrigated plots to needy Hawaweer people in accordance with agreed criteria. User-rights being registered both traditionally and with the local government in Algorer. The irrigated plots managed by the farmers committee and sub-committees. Assistance will be given by Nazeer, , Umdas, Sheiks and Agawids if problems arise.
- **Water:** Irrigated wells / pumps have committees to follow up. Traditional regulations for permanent and temporary wells followed up by traditional institutions.
- **Pasture:** Common land, common management regimes by traditional institutions. Rainfall determines the availability of good grazing.
- **Fodder:** Provided by the irrigated farms, people sell and buy. Farmers' committee and sub-committees.
- **Firewood:** Sustainable use regulated by traditional system. In addition, firewood provided by irrigated farm activities.
- **Wildlife:** Presently a decrease in wildlife (gazelles). Regulated by traditional system. (Hawaweer people benefit from selling live gazelles to the Gulf).
- **Tourism**: Very little. Traditional law regulates tourism activities.

The interesting finding when assessing the different possibilities for resource conflicts, is that drought, famine, distress migration and voluntary return have not contributed to increases in conflicts regarding access to and use of natural resources. The traditional institutions, rights and governance have

survived the situation of displacement of a large number of people and contributed to the smooth processes of return. In addition to the strong local institutions and social networks, the project staff at Um Jawasir have been able to interact and collaborate with local leaders and people, building on what was there and reinforcing the importance of the strong local institutions, traditions, rights and social networks in a way that has contributed to the success of the Um Jawasir development project. The ADRA project staff has worked hand in hand with the local leaders to jointly create a successful project, recognising the importance of understanding the customs and values of the Hawaweer people.

CONCLUSION

The Hawaweer experience from Northern Sudan illustrates how normal mobility, forced migration, dilemmas and opportunities of return are connected and how new livelihoods are constructed based on old traditions and strong local institutions. The Hawaweer people were forced to migrate and some of them were later given the opportunity to return to their homeland. This process of return has been surprisingly successful. However, from such an experience the conclusion should not been drawn that return is always the best solution in situations of displacement. The right to stay where forced migrants settle down might be as important as the right to return to one's homeland. Usually, the majority of those who where forced to migrate would for several reasons not be interested in returning. People have to be allowed to choose for themselves, they need to be given the right also *not to return* (re Black, 2000). In addition, it is important to realise that the people who once migrated have changed in the process of migration. The best solution might not be to reconstruct what was once there, but to construct something new anchored in the past, but not a re-establishment of the past. The main reason why it was possible for the Hawaweers to return was that new livelihood opportunities were created built on traditional values and rights and governed by traditional and local institutions. For migrants, livelihood diversification for food security reasons is of crucial importance. Such livelihood diversification has led to multiple belonging and identity both regarding geographical places and sources of living. You can live and make a livelihood in one place, but still have a feeling of belonging to another geographical area. You can also have multiple occupation identities as the Hawaweers have, regarding being both farmers and nomadic pastoralists. For the Hawaweers, it is perfectly possible to be both a *semi-nomadic pastoralist undertaking agriculture once in a while* and a *semi-settled agro-pastoralist moving every now and then*. Exactly where on the category continuum will vary with time and opportunities.

The Hawaweer people became so-called *environmental refugees* in the 1980s because of rainfall failure, drought and famine. Today, using the term *environmental refugee* is basically perceived as a way of simplifying the understanding of a situation which is usually much more complex than what can be illustrated by environmental categories. If famine should be explained

by only one factor, it is usually not the environment, but lack of political will which is the most important factor. However, famines have often been explained in a *Malthusian* spirit where demography has been the leading discipline and the focus has been on carrying capacity and degradation of natural resources. Famine perceived as a political phenomenon linking famine to lack of lobbying power among the hunger-struck groups of people toward both national and international institutions have been given less attention. The famine experienced by the Hawaweers were triggered by rainfall failure and resulted in both rich and poor people losing all their animals (read livelihoods), being forced to migrate and becoming servants in communities where they were not welcomed by the local people (mainly the Nile area in northern Sudan). In a way, the situation in southern Sudan was similar to the Hawaweer experience in the north. The famine experienced by the Dinka people in the south was triggered by the violent conflict in Sudan and resulting in both rich and poor Dinka people loosing all their animals, being forced to migrate and becoming servants in communities were they were not welcomed by the local people (mainly Khartoum area). In both cases, famine was heavily influenced by underlying political factors, domestic as well as international, and should therefor be recognised as politically aggravated famines.

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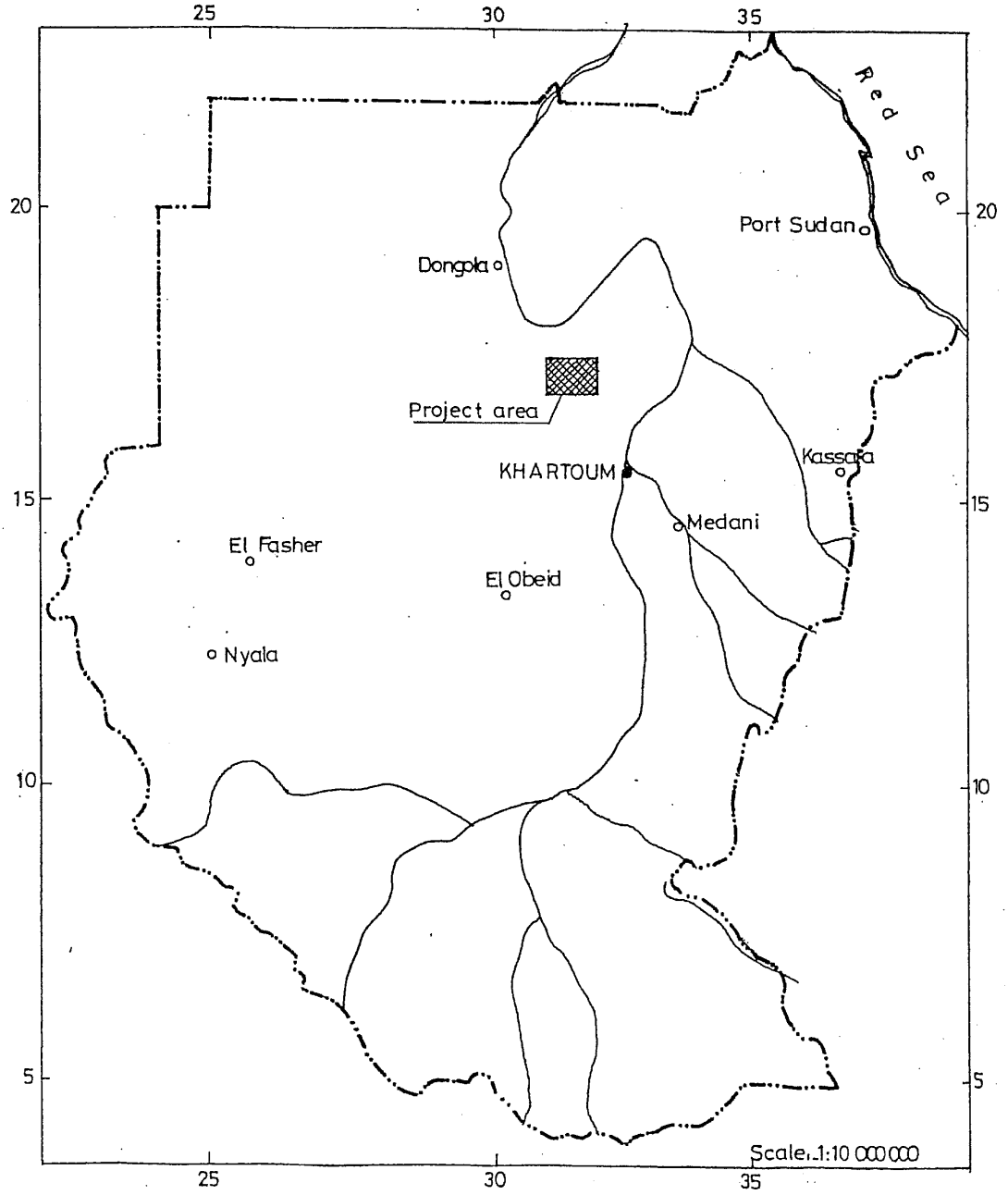
APPENDICES

Map 1. Location Map - Um Jawasir, Wadi Al Maggadam, Bayoda desert, Northern Sudan (ADRA-Sudan, Ministry of Agriculture, Sudan & Andrews University, MI, USA. 1995).



Map 2. Resource Map - Hawaweer area, Wadi Al Maggadam, Bayoda desert, Northern Sudan (drawn by Yousef Mohammed Fadulazid, 2000).

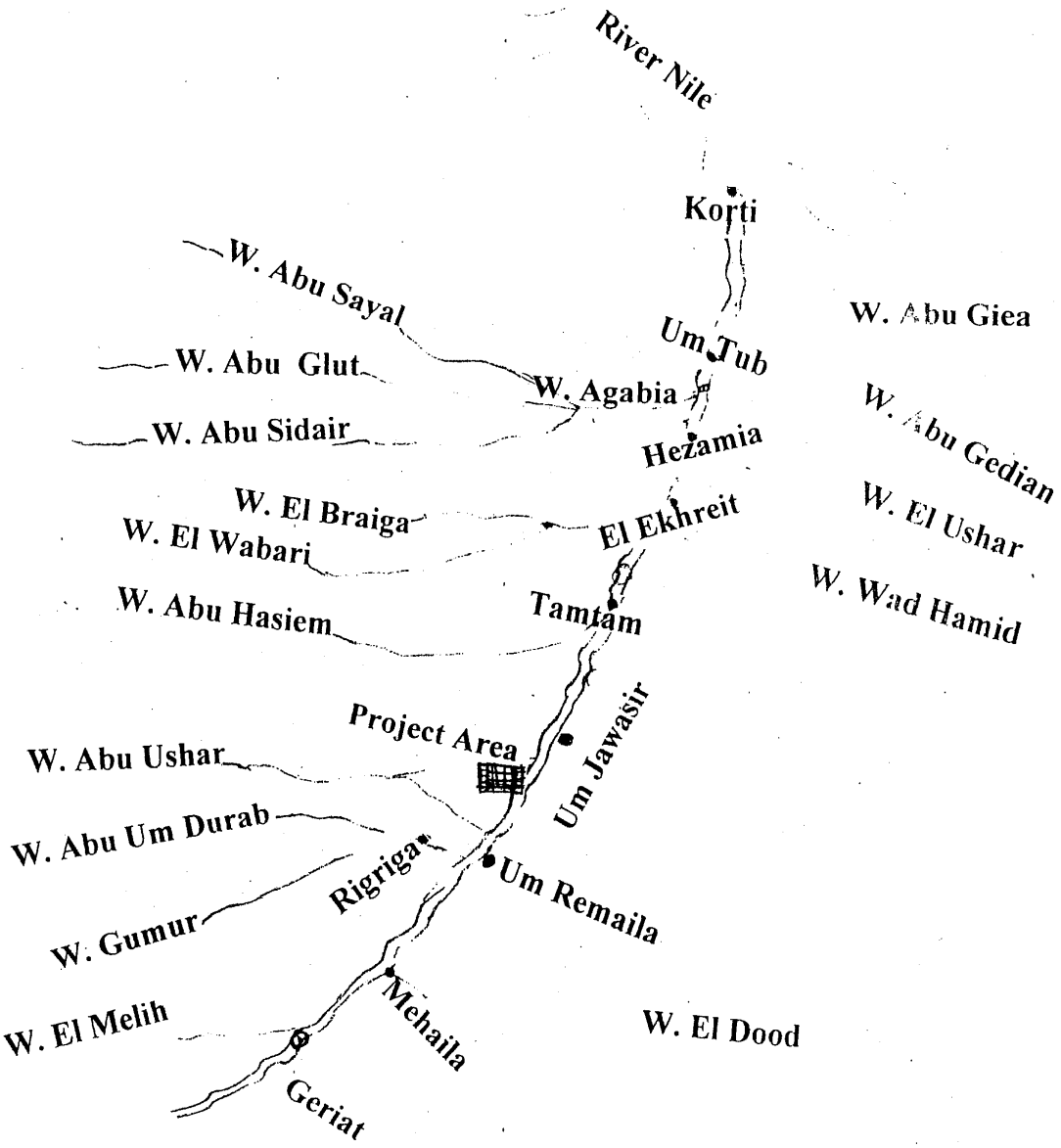


Figure 1. Rainfall data: 1995-1999. Um Jawasir, Wadi Al Muggadam, Bayoda desert, Northern Sudan (ADRA-Sudan Um Jawasir project, 2000).