

Chapter 5

Pastoral-Sedentary Market Relations in a War Situation: The Baqqāra-Nuba Case (Sudan)

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Introduction

The Baqqāra¹ of South Kordofan/Nuba Mountains in the Sudan, are a typical example of the *pastoral* and *nomadic*² groups that roam across the African arid and semi-arid lands. In the process of their well defined and rhythmic spatial mobility, as integral part of their life forms, they adopt constantly changing types of strategies and coping mechanisms to survive in ecological and human changing situations.³

Most of the pastoral and nomadic groups, including the Baqqāra, are neither proper traders nor have they themselves founded markets. Their economy does not allow them to be self-sufficient. Therefore, they are obliged to rely upon the resources of the local sedentary communities in order to supply their basic subsistence needs, primarily through regular local market exchanges. ‘That is why, in all the areas where these cattle people live, one finds socio-economic symbioses between these two types of society’ (Dupire 1962: 335).

This implies that the spatial mobility pattern of the pastoralists plays a prime role in stimulating the establishment and the continuation of the local markets in the regions they roam. This is in connection with the sedentary traditional economy in particular, and with the general economic system of the country with

1 The term *Baqqāra* (plural), which means cattlemen, applies to ‘an Arab who has been forced by circumstances to live in a country which will support the cow but not the camel. ... The physical conditions upon which his existence depends are a dry district for grazing and cultivation in the rainy season connected by a series of waterholes with a river system where grass and water are available during the summer months’ (Henderson 1939: 49).

2 Despite their distinct differences, of which I am aware, for the purpose of this chapter ‘pastoral’ and ‘nomadic’ terms are used here interchangeably to mean one broad category of mobility as opposed to a proper sedentary category. For some discussion on the distinction between ‘pastoralism’ and ‘nomadism’, see Azarya (1996: 3, footnote 1). See also Gertel (2007: 28, note 2) for some distinctions on ‘nomadism’ itself.

3 Abdel-Hamid (1986), Azarya (1996), Bovin and Manger (1990), Cunnison (1966), Gertel (2007), Haraldson (1982), Henderson (1939), Michael (1987a, 1998), Mohamed Salih et al. (2001).

all its regional and global dimensions. In this context, the complementarities and the constant interactions between the pastoral Baqqāra and the sedentary Nuba of the Nuba Mountains in Sudan are the predominant social and spatial features in the region. At the heart of these interactions a set of local market places act as a multifaceted intermediary spaces (Komey 2008a).

However, it is worth noting that the Baqqāra-Nuba contemporary ‘symbiotic’ relationship has been shaped and reshaped by cumulative and interwoven ecological, socio-economic and political dynamics. These dynamics can be traced throughout the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial stages in the process of Sudanese state formation. The substantial and various influences of these cumulative dynamics in shaping the nomadic-sedentary symbiotic relationship have widely been dealt with in a range of burgeoning literature.⁴

What is fresh, however, is the new and far-reaching impact of the Sudan’s recent civil war (1985-2005) on the long standing history of the relationship between the nomadic Baqqāra and the sedentary Nuba in the Nuba Mountains. Taking a ‘bird’s-eye-view’ of the entire literature, it is evident that little attention has been paid to the impact of war on the cultural practises and the survival livelihoods of pastoralist and sedentary communities in the region. Nevertheless, some clues are observable in a few works that appeared during and after the civil war.⁵ Thus, the novel point here lies in examining war-imposed transformations of the nomadic-sedentary relations, with the focus on the adopted responses, not only in their relentless efforts to maintain their economic and cultural practises, but in their strive for survival in the midst of the severity of war.

During the war, the severe fight between the Government of Sudan and the Nuba-led SPLM/A (Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army) dictated its own logic and dynamics in the region. Shortly after its extension from the southern Sudan into the Nuba Mountains region in 1985, the war took on an ethnic dimension. The majority of the Nuba supported and, therefore, were supported by the SPLM/A against the central government. Simultaneously, the Baqqāra supported and, reciprocally, were supported by the government forces. As a result, the previously coexisting two groups were progressively divided into two heavily militarised politico-administrative zones along ethno-political lines (Manger 2003, 2006, Komey 2008a, 2008b, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b).

Despite this war-imposed antagonism along the Nuba-Baqqāra divides, new and sporadic form of market places and exchanges emerged. Some key actors from both sides were able to ‘strategically essentialise’ themselves and managed

4 Abdalla (1981), Adams (1982), Ahmed (1976), Battahani (1980, 1986, 1998), Håland (1980), Henderson (1939), Ibrahim (1988, 1998, 2001), Komey (2008a, 2008b), Lloyd (1908), MacMichael (1912 (1967), 1922 (1967)), Manger (2004, 2008a), Mohamed Salih (1990, 1995a), Suliman (1999), Trimmingham (1949 (1983)).

5 African Rights (1995), Africa Watch (1991, 1992a, 1992b), Elsayed (2005), Ibrahim (1998, 2001), Johnson (2006), Komey (2008a, 2008b), Manger (2004, 2006, 2007, 2008a, 2008b), Mohamed Salih (1995a, 1995b, 1999), Pantuliano et al. (2007), Suliman (1999).

to develop a new pattern of changeable market places across the war frontiers. The key question is, therefore, how and why the two groups, who were forced to fight each other, were simultaneously able to *collaborate* along economic-driven activities, centred on new forms of market places, spaces and exchanges in a situation of high insecurity and mounting risk?

Against this reasoning, the chapter intends to analytically describe the initiating driving forces, the function and the spatial pattern of the war-born markets in the context of the pastoral-sedentary relation in the Nuba Mountains, Sudan. The chapter pays attention to some adopted survival strategies and coping mechanisms deployed by the involved parties.

The chapter's main line of argument is empirically grounded on field-note-centred ethnographic material, obtained through a series of fieldwork trips, of a total duration of sixteen months, between 2005 and 2008. Theoretically, it is informed by 'strategic essentialism' concept (Spivak 1988), and, in a general way, by a range of conceptual and methodological insights centred on interconnected notions of 'social world' (Strauss 1978), 'social fields' (Grønhaug 1978) and 'social space' (Bourdieu 1985).

After this introduction, part two focuses on the local market institution as place, space and exchange in the context of the pastoral Baqqāra and the sedentary Nuba relations. It starts, however, with a brief description of the Nuba Mountains region as a spatial and social setting, while it ends with some notes on pastoral production and its local-national-global link. Part three focuses on the emergence of new forms of local markets as part of limited choices of survival strategies in response to the war situation. The Baqqāra-Nuba market-centred and locally brokered series of peace agreements are discussed in part four. In conclusion, some key findings are provided in the light of the overall analysis.

Market Institution as Place, Space and Exchange in the Baqqāra-Nuba Relations

The Nuba Mountains: Spatial and Social Settings

The Nuba Mountains region is located in the geographical centre of Sudan and covers an area of approximately 30,000 square miles in the South Kordofan State with Kadugli as its capital (Fig. 5.1). It is inhabited chiefly by a cluster of Nuba peoples of African origin, self-identified as indigenous to the region. They are predominantly sedentary groups that practice traditional rain-fed agriculture as their main means of livelihood. Writers like Lloyd (1908), MacMichael (1912 (1967)), Nadel (1947), Pallme (1844), Sagar (1922), Seligmann (1910, 1913, 1932 (1965)), Stevenson (1965), and Trimmingham (1949 (1983)), among others, agree that the Nuba peoples were the first to settle in the area more than 500 years before other groups came in. Despite their statistical majority, 'they constitute a political minority due to their social and economic marginalization' (Mohamed Salih 1999: 1).

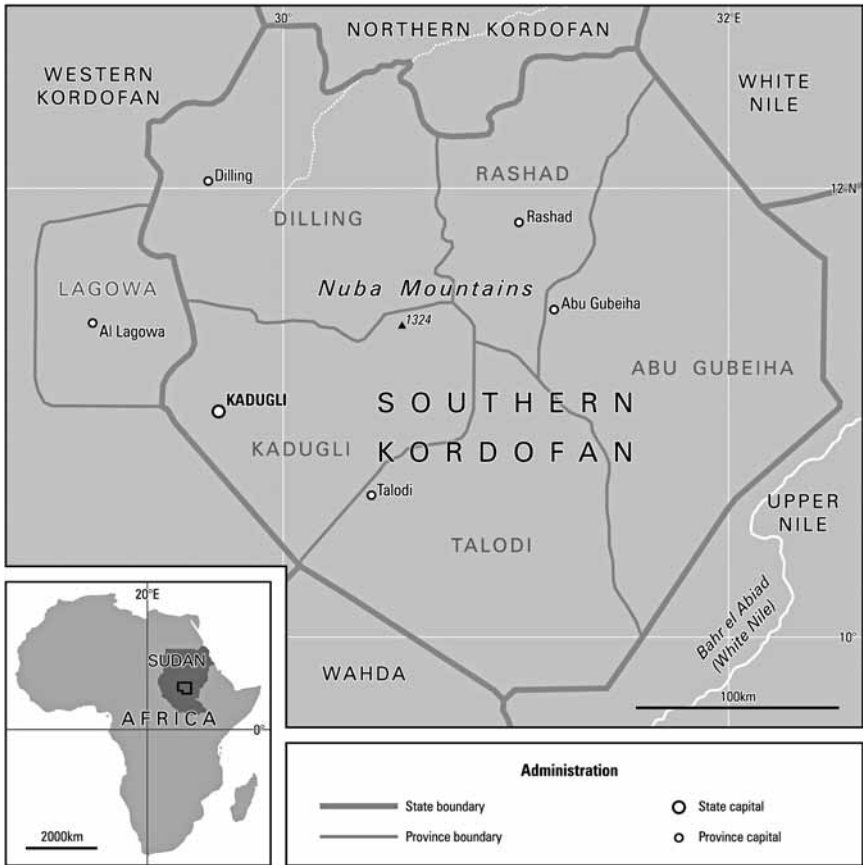


Figure 5.1 South Kordofan state/Nuba Mountains region

Source: Komey (2005).

The Baqqāra Arabs, who arrived in the region over 200 years ago as pastoral nomadic peoples, represent the second major ethnic group in the region.⁶ They move seasonally southwards through the hilly Nuba areas towards the traditional homelands of the peoples of South Sudan during the dry season, and then back northwards during the rainy season. In recent years and due to some ecological and human-made changes, some of these nomads have gradually been transformed into sedentary groups with significant engagement in trading, and in traditional and mechanised rain-fed farming in the region.⁷

⁶ Cunnison (1966), Henderson (1939), Lloyd (1908), MacMichael (1912 (1967), 1922 (1967), Suliman (1999), Trimmingham (1949 (1983)).

⁷ Abdel-Hamid (1986), Adams (1982), Henderson (1939), Ibrahim (1988), Mohamed Salih (1990).

In addition, there is a sizable number of Fellāta, West Africans, who migrated to the Nuba Mountains in search of work as agricultural labourers in the cotton fields in the 1920s. Moreover, there are small, but extremely influential, groups of the Jellāba of northern and central Sudan who migrated in several waves to the Nuba Mountains for slave raids and trade beginning at the turn of the seventeenth century (Manger 1984, 1988, Spaulding 1982, 1987, Trimmingham 1949 (1983)).

The Jellāba merchants' extremely influential role stems from the fact that they control the economic and trade institutions in the region through well coordinated market chains and institutionalised trade networks at local, national, and international levels. Moreover, through their relations to the government, the Jellāba merchants have strong political influence and control over various levels of the state institutions as sources of power and wealth.⁸

Apart from the clearly defined territorial zones of urban settings and mechanised rain-fed farming schemes, the region's dominant land use pattern is characterised by the co-existence of two symbiotic sub-systems of subsistence: rain-fed cultivation and pastoral nomadism. In this context, the pastoral Baqqāra and the sedentary Nuba interact complementarily in farming, grazing, and market activities associated with subsequent far-reaching economic, cultural, and political consequences.

Local Market as a Multi-Faceted Intermediary Space

Prior to the civil war, there were three types of markets in the region: permanent small shops owned by the local Nuba and Baqqāra alike; permanent but usually larger shops owned by the Jellāba traders from the northern Sudan; and weekly markets usually located in villages that function as central places to the surroundings (see Vang and Granville, 2003). Unlike the two types of permanent shops, the weekly markets, which act as connecting points between the sedentary and nomadic groups, tend to flourish during the dry season and cease during the rainy season. The Baqqāra's spatial mobility patterns are compatible, in terms of timing and routing, with the times and the relative locations of the respective weekly markets. Therefore, the existence of the weekly local markets is an inevitable response to the sedentary-nomadic complementarities and symbiotic relationships.

Accordingly, the seasonal migratory routes of the Baqqāra's livestock tend to follow three separate, yet closely interlinked landscape features, namely: (a) the human-made or natural water sources, (b) the sedentary Nuba settlements and (c) the major weekly local market places. Also, the trade routes of the Jellāba merchants from and back to the urban centres in central parts of the Sudan follow a similar spatial pattern (see Fig. 5.2).

The clue here is that the water points and the weekly local market places are usually found within the vicinity of the sedentary Nuba settlements. Acting as

⁸ Battahani (1986), Ibrahim (1988), Komey (2009a, 2009b), Manger (1984, 1988), Mohamed Salih (1984).

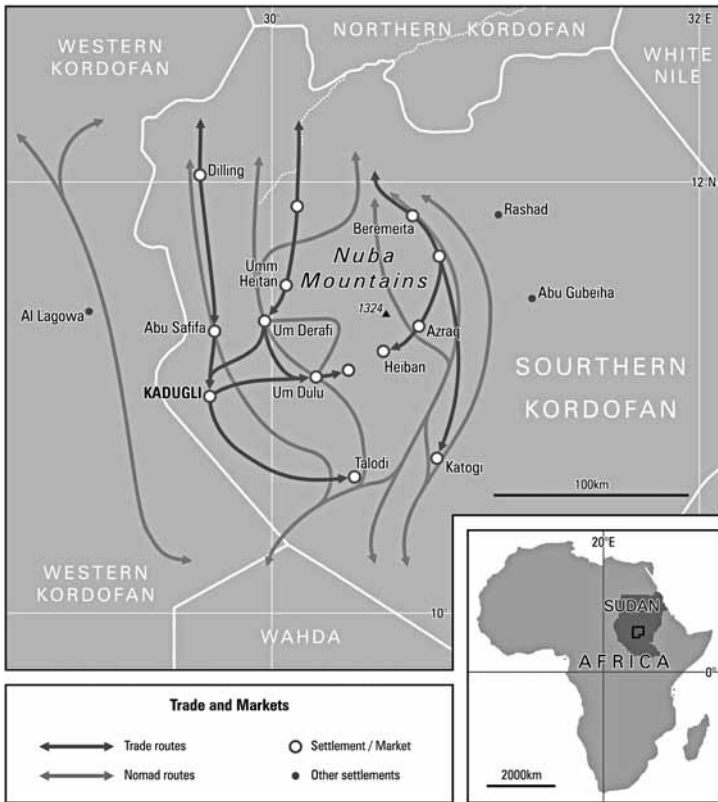


Figure 5.2 Relationships between Nuba settlements, Baqqāra mobility and trade routes during the pre-war situation

Source: Author's fieldwork.

intermediary spaces, these weekly markets bring together the farmers with their agricultural produce, the pastorals with their animal resources and the related products, and the Jellāba traders with their urban goods from the major towns of the northern and central parts of Sudan.

My participatory observations in a number of local markets in selected field sites reveal that local markets are not mere places for commodity exchanges. Rather, they are multifaceted intermediary spaces, full of interwoven social fields with significant implications for the involved actors. The weekly market place of the Keiga Tummero village, about 42 kilometres north of Kadugli, is a case in point. As a market place, Keiga Tummero acts as a set of socio-cultural, political and economic fields in the course of sedentary-nomads interactions (see Komey 2008a). The Friday weekly market brings together different societal actors with their respective functions and interests. It, thus, manifests the interdependent relationship between the pastoral and the sedentary groups in the area. Taking a

critical look at the various forms of the transactions and interactions during that market day, it was palpable that the Keiga Tummero local market functions as:

- a. A centre for economic and commercial transactions and exchanges among the involved local communities with their different ethnic, political and economic affiliations. The economic complementarities between the pastoral and the sedentary produces, on the one hand, and the Jellāba merchants' dominant role, on the other, are strongly felt during the market transactions. During the market exchanges, economic-driven interests tend to supersede all other political or ethnic-based interests or considerations.
- b. A meeting point for networking and information exchanges between different actors. For example, information related to lost animals is usually found in the market where nomads from different farīq (livestock camps) meet not only for market transactions, but also for exchanging relevant information, views and news about their possible schedule of the migratory movements, potential grazing zones, available water sources, and other issues of common interests.
- c. A forum for political campaigning and mobilisation by different political actors. For the government and non-governmental institutions, the market place remains the most effective institution in a rural setting for disseminating the relevant information. Most importantly, it also provides less expensive conditions for the state institutions to perform certain functions such as immunisation, agricultural extension, veterinary services, and tax estimates and collections.
- d. A meeting point for negotiation, mediation, reconciliation, and conflict settlement including the payments of fines incurred as a result of court verdicts or gentlemen's agreements. Most conflict cases are mediated by the elders or native leaders during the market session because everybody can easily be voluntarily found or, otherwise, caught there. Equally, the weekly market and its ability to bring together people of different ethnic groups can also be a place that frequently triggers collective or individual conflicts, and the subsequent tendencies for retaliation.
- e. An appropriate medium for developing social ties and acculturation among different socio-economic and ethnic actors. The selection of Friday as a market day in Keiga Tummero has a religious dimension as well. Its main mosque, located at the centre of the marketplace, represents one of the distinctive cultural landscape features. All Muslims of different ethnic backgrounds come together to perform the Friday communal prayers in that mosque. Furthermore, some friendships and personal relationships between people of different affiliations are stimulated and strengthened through market interaction. For instance, this can be observed in a gathering around a woman serving tea to customers from different ethnic backgrounds. By its very nature, the market imposes certain conditions of physical proximity to different people, to the extent that some warring parties may

find themselves forced to peacefully face each other, simply because a third party has brought them face to face without prior arrangement.

The flow of the Baqqāra from their nearby *farīq*, and their effective participation in the market exchanges is a decisive factor that determines the success or failure of the market function. Indeed, the weekly markets in the Nuba Mountains tend to flourish during the dry seasons characterised by an intensive presence of the pastoral Baqqāra. As the rainy season approaches, the Baqqāra start their rhythmic movement northwards while the Nuba engage in cultivation. At this time, the flourishing markets start to shrink gradually to the point of complete but temporal disappearance awaiting the return of the Baqqāra in the following dry season to flourish again.

Pastoral Local Production and Its Link to National and Global Markets

While local market places act as intermediary spaces, where the pastoral Baqqāra and the sedentary Nuba interact, the Jellāba traders act as controlling agents of market exchanges. They have a long history of exercising effective control over most of the traded commodities at different levels of the market chain. In doing so, the Jellāba supply urban manufactured goods to the local peoples at expensive prices; while siphoning off cheaply local agricultural produce and animal resources.⁹

In this way, the local market operates as a starting point in a wider set of trade chains that systematically subjugate local economies to national and global markets. This implies that the multifaceted dynamics taking place in local markets across the different social fields are not merely local dynamics. Rather, they are, in most cases, local manifestations of national and globalisation processes with all their social, political and economic dimensions (Battahani 1986, Johnson 2006, Manger 1984, 1988, 2001, 2008b).

Taking pastoral production as an example it is not difficult to trace its local-national-global link. Local markets are collection and assemblage points for pastoral production, supplied by different households before they are transported for consumption at national and/or global markets. Two examples of this are: a certain type of traditionally processed white cheese, made primarily for national consumption; and the livestock trade transactions for export purposes.

During the dry season, some pastoral households, as an economic unit, make a prior deal with merchants' agents to locate their livestock *farīq* near a local market, a rural centre, or along a main road leading to some major urban centres. They then engage in the production of a set of dairy products, highly demanded by urban consumers, including the white cheese, *al-Jibna al-Bayda*. During my fieldwork in Keiga Tummero village, I came across numerous clusters of cheese

⁹ Battahani (1986), Ibrahim (1998), Komey (2005), Manger (1984, 1988), Mohamed Salih (1984, 1992).

cottage industry. They are not a separate but, rather, an integral part of the pastoral Baqqāra households, as economic units, in their respective camps nearby the Keiga Tummero village, as it is also a local market place.

The processing of cheese is, therefore, a joint venture between pastoral households, who provide fresh milk as the main raw material, and merchants' agents, who provide all other necessary inputs, particularly salt, packing materials and transport. The involved merchants, residing in major towns, either appear on a regular basis or send their own transport means to collect and transport the accumulated produce to the urban markets for final consumption. In this way, the highly localised economic units of the pastoral households are integrated systematically into wider national market and labour systems coupled with some form of the 'sedentarised' pattern (Michael 1987a, 1987b, 1991, 1998). This pattern of survival economies was reinforced during the war situation in response to the excessive and mounting insecurity and risk that restricted the pastoral spatial mobility.

Livestock trade transactions for export, that start at the local market level, are another conspicuous example of the national and global dimensions of the local pastoral production. Indeed, a close monitoring of the chains of the livestock trade transactions demonstrates further that pastoral households, as economic units, are not only linked to the national economic and market systems, but to the global market and labour systems at large (Michael 1987a, 1987b, 1991).

During the weekly local markets, there is always an intensive presence of local agents representing big merchants residing in the main cities. These merchants are connected to the global market system through a set of local production and national/ global-consumption chains. The sole role of their local agents is to buy most of the livestock supplied in the weekly local markets across the region. At some stage, the merchants arrive and pull together all the livestock collected by their agents, from the different local markets, and transport or trek them to the capital, Khartoum. In Khartoum, they are slaughtered and processed as fresh meat for national as well as global consumption. Daily cargo flights of the exported fresh meat from Khartoum and other regional airports to the global market, mostly to the oil-rich Gulf States, attests to this assertion (see El Dirani et al. 2009).

However, the crux of the matter here is that, in most cases, the real beneficiaries of these local-national-global market transactions are the Jellāba merchants residing in the main urban centres of the northern and central parts of Sudan. The local producers receive petty returns. What has been depicted in pastoral production and its national-global link is, to a large degree, applicable to the agricultural produce of traditional farming households as economic units in general.

The cumulative results of these local-national-global market links have been a long standing history of systematic and multiple exploitations and, therefore, marginalisation of the local pastoral and peasant communities. This market-linked economic marginalisation was a contributing factor that stirred up the political grievances among the local communities, particularly the sedentary Nuba. The

Nuba engagement in violent conflict in the context of the Sudan's civil war was partly due to this economic marginalisation.¹⁰

The Civil War and the Emergence of New Forms of Local Markets

The Nuba were forced to resort to an armed struggle when they joined the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in 1985, during the course of the Second Civil War in Sudan (1983-2005). The war's impact on the entire region as a social world was, and still is, enormous.

The Impact of the Civil War Extension into the Region

The extension of the war into the Nuba Mountains region progressively introduced a new dynamic that has had significant repercussions on the historical, political, economic, and territorial relations between the state and the local community, on the one hand, and between the various ethnic groups, particularly the Nuba and the Baqqāra, on the other. The previously shared territory of the Nuba Mountains, was gradually divided up into two heavily militarised politico-administrative zones along ethnic lines: into areas controlled and administered by the government, with the Baqqāra maintaining the upper hand in the political space and in public affairs; and into areas held and administered by the Nuba-led SPLM/A, in which the Baqqāra nomads had no access to their traditional seasonal grazing lands in this part of the region (see Komey 2008a, Manger 2006, 2008a):

During the war years, large tracts of the region, particularly at the foot of hills or in-between mountains ranges became off-limits to pastoralists who feared the SPLA. Pastoralists became less present and the interaction between the Nuba and the Baqqāra decreased. Traditional migration and transhumance routes were disturbed. Reciprocal agreements, both those rooted in tradition and those that were court-brokered, that had governed the passage of herds over agricultural land, fell into disuse. In other areas, farcically displaced Nuba no longer interacted with nomads (Manger 2006: 2).

Consequently, the previous co-existence of, and the cooperation between, the sedentary Nuba and the nomadic Baqqāra in the region ceased to exist. Shortly, there was a complete break-down of the relationships, including their normal and regular interaction in market places (Ibrahim 1998, 2001, Komey 2008a, 2008b, Manger 2006, 2008a).

¹⁰ African Rights (1995), Battahani (1998), Johnson (2006), Kadouf (2001), Komey (2004, 2005, 2008a, 2008b, 2010a, 2010b), Manger (2006, 2007, 2008a, 2008b), Mohamed Salih (1995a, 1995b, 1999), Rahhal (2001), Suliman (1999).

Moreover, with increased war intensity, the Jellāba traders of northern Sudan discontinued their business, following the cutting off of the trade routes between the region and the north.¹¹ Eventually, the Nuba in the areas under the control of the SPLM/A were completely cut off from the supplies of all urban basic commodities and services that used to flow from the major towns in northern and central parts of Sudan. They faced extraordinary hardship and suffering, in addition to the direct impact of the fighting.¹²

Simultaneously, the Baqqāra faced a similar but relatively slighter hardship when their livestock were squeezed into limited and poor grazing zones due to insecurity southwards. In addition, given the situation of insecurity along the war frontiers, there were repeated incidents of livestock looting resulting in enormous loss of animal wealth for the Baqqāra. Most importantly, the Baqqāra's own supply of the basic subsistence needs, particularly grains, which used to flow from the nearby Nuba hill communities, ceased completely.

In short, both communities were subjected to a set of externally induced, powerful, and unfavorable forces, brought about by the war dynamics. Hence, their livelihood and life forms were not only radically transformed, but their very survival was greatly endangered (see Komey 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b). It is within this context that new and sporadic forms of economic-driven transactions emerged. These were part of an extremely limited choice of coping mechanisms and survival strategies pursued by the two groups during the war.

These emerging working relations manifest themselves territorially in sporadic market exchange places, known as *aswāq as-salām* (singular: *sūq as-salām*) (peace markets). They were practiced and continued later in another modified version of cross-line transactions known locally as *aswsāq as-sembuk* (singular: *sūq as-sembuk*) (smuggling markets). Concurrently, these economically-driven and market-centered transactions were reinforced by a series of locally brokered peace deals, between some Baqqāra and Nuba groups in their respective localities. These new types of 'strategic', 'essential', and 'situational' cooperation emerged as an alternative to the pre-war normal symbiotic relations in order to counteract the severity of the formal war between the SPLM/A and the government forces.

The emergence of the *aswāq as-salām* and the subsequent version of *aswsāq as-sembuk*, as new forms of market places, spaces and exchanges, signifies the necessity and inevitability of the Nuba-Baqqāra interdependency, particularly in the economic field. As described before, with the intensification of the prolonged war, the Baqqāra were in need of grain from their traditional suppliers, the Nuba. At the same time, the Nuba in the SPLM/A-controlled areas were indispensably in need of the essential urban goods and services particularly salt, soap, clothes, shoes, medicine, and agricultural tools.

11 African Rights (1995), Manger (2006, 2008a), Suliman (1999, 2002), Vang and Granville (2003).

12 African Rights (1995), Africa Watch (1992a, 1992b), Komey (2009b, 2010a, 2010b), Manger (2001, 2003), Rahhal (2001).

The conditions of the Nuba in the SPLM/A-controlled areas worsened further due to two main adverse political circumstances that reinforced each other: for one they were subjected to total isolation from the outside world by the central government policy that amounted to genocidal intent; and secondly, the flow of military supplies to the Nuba SPLA fighters was cut-off completely from the main SPLM/A in South by the then defected forces of Riek Machar in 1991.¹³ Obviously, the Nuba in the SPLM/A-controlled areas were not only in critical need of the basic subsistence supplies, but they were also desperately in need of an alternative way of getting ammunition supply, in order to be able to continue fighting the government forces.

Aswāq as-Salām (Peace Markets)

In a taped interview with my key informant, Simon Kalo, in Kadugli, 9 January 2007, it was clear that peace markets, and the later version of sumbuk markets, played a vital role in sustaining the Nuba in the SPLM/A-held areas during the critical war time. Kalo was the second SPLA Commander in the Buram area in the Nuba Mountains during the early 1990s. He was in charge of looking for an alternative form of market exchanges with pastoral Baqqāra in the government controlled areas, at the time the government had effectively sealed off the Nuba Mountains region from any outside world contact.

By October 1991, the government had applied a tight network of security checkpoints along the frontiers, prohibiting any travel or flow of people or goods from and to the SPLM/A-controlled areas. By 1992, the SPLM/A controlled areas in the Nuba Mountains were subjected to a complete isolation from any national, regional or international transactions. The government not only sealed off the region, but it also prevented the extension of the UN-led Operations Lifeline Sudan (OLS), to the Nuba Mountains, although the OLS was covering the entire war-torn southern Sudan.¹⁴

The aggregate result was the death of thousands due to hunger, disease and fighting. At the same time, there was enormous suffering among Nuba communities whose survival was endangered, in the absence of basic supplies. Their military capabilities were weakened drastically, to the extent that they were unable to counteract the central government's systematic campaigns of genocides and ethnocide in the context of the waged war (African Rights 1995, Africa Watch 1991, 1992a, 1992b, Meyer 2005).

In this critical context, the *aswāq as-salām* (peace markets) emerged in the rural centre of Buram under SPLM/A control in the early 1990s. However, these peace markets did not last for long. They were soon discovered, and therefore,

¹³ African Rights (1995), Africa Watch (1991, 1992a, 1992b), Johnson (2006), Meyer (2005), de Waal (2006).

¹⁴ African Rights (1995), Africa Watch (1991, 1992a), Johnson (2006), Meyer (2005), de Waal (2006).

targeted by the government through a series of offensive military interventions. My informant, Simon Kalo detailed the initiation, the operation and the demise of the Buram peace market, and the emergence of the aswāq as-sembuk afterwards. The peace market as a practice started initially in the northern part of Bahr al-Ghazāl in southern Sudan, between the pastoral Baqqāra of Meseīriya and the SPLM/A forces. In this regard, Ibrahim reports that:

In 1993, the Meseīriya Arab groups ... and the Ngok Dinka of Abyei area have sat together and through the revitalization of their historic tribal alliances and arrangements came to peaceful co-existence pact. According to the pact, they organized their grazing and farming rights on each other's Dār, i. e., tribal homeland. They as well, have institutionalized their inter-tribal episodic conflicts over these natural resources and to be resolved through these recently revitalized arrangements. Moreover, the pact has granted the trading rights of all parties through what are called peace market. ... These markets are established inside the SPLM/A held areas in Bahr al-Ghazāl. It enabled them to exchange goods and services (i. e., mostly consumer goods such as salt, tea, coffee, clothes and shoes and perhaps, sometimes ammunition according to the official government allegations against and in condemnations of these markets. To the both parties, these peace markets are but a symbolic gesture, for an overall peace in all aspects of the two parties' life (Ibrahim 2001: 47, footnote 25).

What is obvious here is that the pastoral Meseīriya were not interested in trade relations as an end in itself, but as a means to secure access for their traditional grazing land and water inside the SPLM/A-controlled areas during the dry season. This implies that the extension of market-centred relations to the Nuba Mountains was a travelling model. It was initiated by the pastoral Baqqāra of the Meseīriya Humr, who had secret on-going trade relations with the SPLM/A along the north-south border line during the civil war. The initiative was enthusiastically supported by the SPLM/A leaders in the Nuba Mountains. Subsequently, a certain Meseīriya SPLM/A officer acted as an intermediary between the SPLM/A, and his Meseīriya people in the government controlled areas. The plan was to agree and coordinate efforts aiming at introducing some sort of trading transactions led by the Meseīriya in selected local markets in the SPLM/A controlled areas. The initiative was received by the Meseīriya leaders and merchants with a high level of interest.

Towards that end, some pastoral Baqqāra of the Meseīriya sent a delegation, composed of some merchant representatives and native leaders to the SPLM/A-controlled areas. The aim was to negotiate the possibility of establishing some form of market exchange relations with the SPLM/A leaders. The Meseīriya delegation, which travelled secretly without government detection, managed to arrive safely at Buram in the SPLM/A-controlled areas in a situation characterised by high insecurity. Upon their arrival in Buram, they were well received by the Nuba people and their leaders. In a short space of time, the two parties were able to successfully negotiate and conclude an economic-driven and market-centred

peace agreement, known as the Buram agreement in February 1993. In the words of my key informant, Simon Kalo:

We held a joint meeting in Buram under the leadership of Telephūn Koko, the then Commander and myself as second Commander in the Buram area. After we discussed and agreed on the practicality of implementing the initiative, a committee was formed under my chairmanship and entrusted with the task to supervise and ensure safe implementation of the transaction. The required security arrangement was the main concern. This is because of the high risk involved in the expected journeys between the SPLM/A-controlled areas in the central and southern parts of the Nuba Mountains and the Meseīriya areas in the western part of South Kordofan. The challenges were twofold: first, how to provide effective security measures to these commercial convoys during their journeys from, and to, the SPLM/A-controlled areas; second, how to make sure that the SPLM/A's security and military systems and affairs are not penetrated by some possible pro-government elements within the convoys (Author's interview with Simon Kalo: Kadugli, 9 January 2007).

Following their return home, the Meseīriya sent a convoy of over 20 merchants and numerous camels carrying various basic commodities needed desperately by the Nuba people. The day of the convoy arrival at Buram signified the beginning of the agreement implementation. In a short period, a big market in Buram was in operation under the name of 'peace market'. My informant Kalo continued his testimony and described how the Nuba were relieved by the convoy's arrival:

The first Meseīriya convoy, composed of more than twenty camels, arrived and supplied the Buram market with commodities from the government controlled areas. It was an historic day for the local people! Not only for the people in and around the Buram area but all over the SPLM/A-controlled areas in the Nuba Mountains. They rushed into Buram market from all directions to obtain some basic commodities like salt, soap, sugar, clothes, medicine and shoes, after several years of deprivation. Most importantly, the Meseīriya also supplied us with some ammunition at the time our military supplies from the South were cut-off. In return, the Meseīriya went back with a sizable number of livestock. Initially, the exchange system was almost in the form of barter trade because there was no money in the SPLM/A-controlled areas. Since then, the commodity supplies continued to flow regularly through the Meseīriya convoys (Author's interview with Simon Kalo: Kadugli, 9 January 2007).

In the process, new local markets were opened up in Ekurchi in Moro and other places in Kawalib and Shwai. The Buram market was acting as a central place, diffusing the supplied commodities into the different parts in the SPLA-controlled areas. At a certain stage, the government security agents discovered the on-going transactions and started tracing, arresting and eventually killing some of the involved

parties inside the government controlled areas. Despite this mounting threat from the government, the market continued to flourish because the involved Meseīriya in the government controlled areas and the SPLM/A were both determined to sustain it. It was a profitable trade business for the pastoral Meseīriya while it was a survival strategy for the Nuba in the SPLM/A-controlled areas.

Due to frequent ambushes by government forces and the militia, a new pattern of mobility for trade convoys was invented. The Meseīriya convoys started to move in the form of small but well armed groups to protect themselves and their property. These pastoral trade convoys continued to frequently encounter and, therefore, engage in fighting with government forces and militia. Despite this, they continued to pursue their economic gains in collaboration with the Nuba in the SPLM/A-controlled areas. In fact, according to my key informant, Kalo:

The Meseīriya joined their hands with us in fighting back against the government forces in many instances. For example, they sided with us during the big battle of Buram in December 1993 when the government forces launched an offensive attack during a busy market day. The Meseīriya merchants who were present in the market had to join with the SPLM/A in fighting back against the government forces. During the attack the government forces regained Buram and the surrounding plain areas while the SPLM retreated to the nearby hills. The SPLM/A, however, managed to protect and eventually evacuate all the Meseīriya out of the area with no fatalities among them. In this way, these Baqqāra Arabs who were perceived as the enemy of the SPLM/A, proved to be not only supportive, but strategic and trustworthy partners during a very critical period in the history of the Nuba struggle (Author's interview with Simon Kalo: Kadugli, 9 January 2007).

Obviously, this economically-driven and market-centred cooperation contributed, to a large degree, to the survival of the sedentary Nuba as it supplied them with essential goods after several years of isolation. It also reinforced the military ability of the SPLM/A forces through ammunition supply, at a time when their military supplies, from the main SPLM/A in the southern Sudan, had long been discontinued. The demise of the peace market due to drastic war developments on the ground, led to its rebirth in another form, which came to widely be known as *sūq as-sumbuk*.

Aswāq as-Sumbuk (Smuggling Markets)

Historically, the word 'sumbuk' refers to a risky but lucrative trade business of 'slave smuggling' along the Red Sea, during the early days of Anglo-Egyptian rule. In his 'Report on Slavery and Pilgrimage, 1926', C.A. Willis, Assistant Director of Sudan Intelligence (1915-1926), defined *sumbuk* or *sombuk* as an act of 'smuggling or illegal [*sic*] transporting across the Red Sea to Saudi Arabia by cheap but poor quality, and therefore, risky boats, or Dhows' (Sudan Archive

212/2/1-94: 21). The involved risk was partly due to the fact that the British Government in the Sudan was very harsh with slave dealers if caught red handed; because slave trade was already banned internationally. It seems that *sumbuk* as concept and practice was somehow revisited, travelled and re-utilised in similar profitable business, stimulated, this time, by the extremely risky and insecure situation of large-scale civil war.

The recapture of the Buram area by government forces led to an immediate termination of the Meseīriya-SPLM/A market exchanges and the related connections. In fact, it put an end to all peace markets in the SPLM/A-controlled area. However, the closure of the peace markets led, as mentioned, to the emergence of *aswāq as-sumbuk*. The main distinction between these two market exchange patterns is that the *aswāq as-salām* or peace markets operated inside the SPLM/A controlled areas with formal back up by the SPLM/A officials. Unlike the *aswāq as-salām*, the *aswāq as-sumbuk* or smuggling markets were pure community–community transactions with no involvements of the SPLM/A or the government authorities. In other words, *sūq as-sumbuk* was practiced by some community members from both sides, behind the back of the government and the SPLM/A military and security authorities, and their respective politico-administrative institutions. It was a sporadic and highly mobile market exchange, operating in a number of strictly confidential and strategic sites along the transitional war zones.

After the collapse of the peace market and the withdrawal of the Meseīriya dealers, *sūq as-sumbuk* soon became the trading pattern prevailing along the war frontiers, particularly around al Hamra, Umm Serdeba, and Umm Derafi. It was practiced by some local Baqqāra of Hawāzma Rawāwqa, in government-controlled areas, and some Nuba in SPLM/A-controlled areas. The pre-war social ties along the Baqqāra-Nuba line were very instrumental in this new form of market exchanges. *Sūq as-sumbuk* was very lucrative but an extremely risky trade business undertaken by some Baqqāra dealers. For the Nuba in the SPLM/A-controlled areas, the activity was an alternative survival strategy, or coping mechanism, in the context of the war situation.

In *sūq as-sumbuk*, a group of people from both sides of the antagonistic parties, loaded with commodities potentially needed by the other party, meet in a specific, hidden, but agreed upon, strategic site to quickly exchange their commodities before they depart. The next site and time for a similar market exchange is determined depending on the war dynamics on the ground. Thus, the mobility pattern of each group from the Baqqāra and the Nuba sides, with their traded goods, is adjusted constantly in a situation of high insecurity and risk. It is, therefore, secret in timing and location, exclusive in membership, and mobile in nature.

Several testimonies and narratives of involved actors from both sides of the conflict attest to this claim. The practice reflects that the complementarities between the coexisting sedentary Nuba and nomadic Baqqāra groups are both necessary and inevitable for their livelihoods. Responding to my question as to whether the Baqqāra Hawāzma participated in *sūq as-sumbuk*, one of my key Baqqāra informants, who preferred to withhold his name, affirms that:

Yes, we participated effectively in *sūq as-sumbuk* dealings. Some of our people used to smuggle some essential commodities like clothes, sugar, salt and oil, from Kadugli to the SPLM/A controlled areas especially to Buram, Shat, Kololo and Saraf al-Jamūs markets. They use bicycles, donkeys and camels to carry the smuggled commodities in small groups. The goods are usually either exchanged for US\$ from the international NGOs operating in the SPLM/A-controlled, livestock from the Nuba people, or some automatic weapons from the SPLA forces. To avert risk, we exchanged the US\$ money for local currency in al-Obayed or Khartoum but not in Kadugli.

Sūq as-sumbuk was a dangerous and a risky trading and exchange business; but it was worth it, for it was a lucrative business. Estimates of eight to twelve of our young people were shot dead by the government army and security agents during their *sumbuk* transactions along the frontiers. In fact, during the smuggling journeys, it was safer to encounter the SPLM/A troops than that of the government. On several occasions, the *sumbuk* participants were safely escorted close to the government controlled areas by the SPLM/A army after finishing the transaction (Author's taped interview with an anonymous informant: Reikha, 17 February 2007).

Apart from market-driven relations, there were other forms of economically or socially driven interests and cooperation between individuals or groups on antagonistic sides of the war. For instance, some maintained ties motivated by the fixed economic assets left behind in the SPLA-controlled areas by Baqqāra and Jellāba traders. At the same time, many Nuba communities, who had joined the SPLA, left behind their fixed assets, farming lands, and well established villages in the government-controlled areas. In many cases, these economic assets seem to have facilitated the continuation of some family-to-family ties along the Nuba-Baqqāra divisions during the war and thereafter.

In this regard, my anonymous informant cited above revealed that the Awlād Tayna of Delamīya of Rawāwqa-Hawāzma in Reikha were forced to relocate themselves to Kadugli during the war. Many of them left behind most of their immovable assets like shops, mills, stores and houses. After the signing of the peace agreement, they were eager to return to the area and restart their local trading business. Unlike other Baqqāra who were unable to return to their pre-war areas, Awlād Tayna of Delamīya's return to Reikha was very smooth. They ascribe this to their ability to reposition themselves in such a way that allowed them to maintain their economic interests and personal ties in the area during the war. While staying in the government-controlled areas, they managed to uphold their old ties with the Nuba community leaders, including some of the SPLA commanders. This enabled them to cut across the war zones and practice *aswāq as-sumbuk* at the frontiers.

Hāmid Sattār, the Shaykh of the Baqqāra of 'Yātqa, is another key informant who testified that when the war caught them by surprise, in al-Azraq village in the eastern part of Heiban, they were forced to retreat with their livestock northwards

into the government controlled areas in Umm Berembeita and Kortala within South Kordofan, and 'Alūba in North Kordofan. Several of their settled families in al-Azraq left behind most of their fixed assets. 'My own family', he lamented, 'left behind in al-Azraq several orchard farms with a total of 224 mango trees, in addition to two well built shops and houses. At the same time, we took along with us some of the Nuba cattle which used to be under our care, together with some of their boys, when the insecurity forced us to move out of the al-Azraq area' (Author's interview with Hāmid Setār: Khartoum, 10 June 2006). It is these cross-cutting social ties that maintained some sort of group or individual links across the dividing lines during the war and thereafter.

These narratives, among so many others, indicate that the pre-war Nuba-Baqqāra ties, in terms of neighbourhood, social and economic relationships were very instrumental in facilitating the initiation and the maintenance of the sūq as-*sumbuk*. In this way, Sūq as-*sumbuk* was an opportunity for some individuals, who had strong social ties or economic assets across official conflict lines, to maintain positive connections throughout the civil war. The ultimate objective was to secure a smooth return to their pre-war situation after the accomplishment of peace.

The nature of both *aswāq as-salām* and *aswāq as-*sumbuk**, and the way they were initiated and managed, demonstrates the dominance of the economic-based interests. These interests are rooted in the socioeconomic complementarities between the Nuba and the Baqqāra. These various forms of cooperation, particularly peace markets and/or sūq as-*sumbuk* became an entry point for subsequent, locally brokered peace initiatives in the region between some Baqqāra and Nuba communities. These peace agreements strengthened further the Baqqāra-Nuba market relations, despite the war's intensity and the related high insecurity and risk along the frontier zones.

Some Market-Motivated and Community-Based Agreements¹⁵

In the context of their market relations during the war, different groups of the Nuba and the Baqqāra concluded several community-based deals: the most noticeable ones were the Buram, the Regifi and the Kain agreements. They were brokered by some pastoral Baqqāra communities in the government-controlled areas and their respective sedentary Nuba counterparts in the SPLM/A-controlled areas in 1993, 1995 and 1996 respectively.

There were several reasons these community-based peace agreements were established. For example, the Baqqāra lamented that they had been misinformed by the government and made to fight against the Nuba, despite both being marginalised by the same government. They lost many people and sizable animal wealth and most households were displaced. They expressed their strong desire to trade with the Nuba. Simultaneously, the Nuba emphasised their intention to fight the government and not the Baqqāra; and expressed interest in trading with

15 For detailed discussion on these agreements, see Suliman (1999: 215-18).

the Baqqāra, in terms of exchanging their crops and animals for the urban goods namely, clothes, shoes, salt, soap and medicine, from the government areas.

In February 1993, the first community-based peace agreement took place in Buram. Most of the principles enshrined here were echoed in similar subsequent agreements. Both sides agreed to abide by the following (see Suliman 1999: 215-16):

1. To immediately stop all military actions against each other, and exchange relevant military and security information.
2. To safeguard free movement of people and goods to and from both sides, and to assist them, if necessary, to reach final destinations safely.
3. To settle disputes, or cases of peace violation, through a joint committee.
4. To collaborate in putting an end to the recurring incidents of animal looting across the frontier zones.
5. To safeguard the trade exchanges between people of the two territories.

The direct result of this agreement was the opening up of a trade route into the Buram peace market. This market flourished until the end of 1993, when the government troops recaptured the Buram area and put an end to the market exchanges.

On 15 November 1995, the *Regifi* agreement was reached. It reiterated the principles enshrined in the previous agreement. Both sides acknowledged that a brokered community-based peace agreement was crucial for their co-existence during the conflict. The government did all it could to sabotage the agreement:

It targeted the leaders of the Baqqāra who signed it: ‘Abdalla, the Meseīrya leader at the negotiations, was shot dead; others were assassinated or imprisoned; a few were bribed and skillfully used by the government to undermine the spirit of trust and cooperation between the Baqqāra and the Nuba which had begun to spread in the region (Suliman 1999: 217).

The crux of the matter is that the forces that continued to distance the Baqqāra from the Nuba through persistent policies of ‘divide and rule,’ were always generated at the centre and beyond the reach of both. In June 1996, the Nuba began another initiative towards peaceful cooperation with the Baqqāra of Rawāwqa-Hawāzma. A five-person delegation sought the Rawāwqa on neutral ground in Zangura, west of Tima, in the Lagawa area. They invited the Baqqāra to move their market close to the ‘liberated areas’, for example areas under SPLM/A-control for better mutual cooperation along trade and market exchanges. The Baqqāra accepted the initiative, and in 1996 negotiated what became known as the Kain peace agreement. It was almost identical to the previous two agreements. However, a special trade committee was established this time to supervise the implementation of trade and market exchanges. What was remarkable in the agreement was that:

1. The Rawāwqa were so confident in the stability of the agreement that they began to bring in ammunition and army uniforms to sell to the Nuba;
2. The Baqqāra traders began to come unarmed to the markets and were gradually accompanied by women and children; and
3. The first test of the agreement came shortly after signing it, when an Arab attacked a Nuba, took his weapon, and left him [nearly] dead: the Baqqāra brought the weapon back, paid for the treatment of the victim, and promised to deliver the attacker to the Nuba authority (Suliman 1999: 217-18).

Shortly after the agreement began and the market started, government security forces began to clandestinely attend marketplaces in civilian clothes. The attempt was to sabotage the agreement through murder, imprisonment, and bribery. The Nuba leadership became alarmed and ordered the market closed. Yet, the government continued the policy of targeting the leaders on both sides of the divide with murder, imprisonment and bribery: 'In one known case, government officials offered a would-be assassin four million Sudanese pounds and a license for a mill in return for killing a leading Nuba signatory to the agreement (in 1999, 2576 Sudanese pounds [SDP] = 1 United States dollar)' (Suliman 1999: 218).

These community-based peace agreements were driven by mutual interests of both parties. This implies that the macro agenda of the central government proved to be neither appealing nor viable for substantial portion of the common people involved (Ibrahim 2001). But it is equally true that not all Baqqāra or Nuba recognised, or adhered to these peace agreements, as many also sided with the government army and/or the Peoples Defense Forces (PDFs) in the context of the civil war.

Moreover, there were frequent clashes between some Baqqāra armed groups and the SPLA along the frontiers because both were unaware of the peace agreements. Another challenge was that some Baqqāra traders were playing double roles for their own economic interests. 'On the one hand, they traded with Nuba and even sold them ammunition; on the other, they supplied the government with information about rebel troops' (Suliman 1999: 218). Despite these enormous challenges and insecurity, the two groups managed to engage in a constantly changing form of market relations during the entire war period.

Nuba-Baqqāra relations continue this changing after the signing of the Nuba Mountains Ceasefire Agreement in 2002 and the conclusion of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, which allowed for free movement of people and commodities in the Nuba Mountains. However, the impact of the post-war dynamics on the Baqqāra-Nuba relations, which are still in the making, is beyond the scope of this chapter, and, indeed, deserves a separate scholarly undertaking.

Conclusion

The chapter recognises that the current relation between the pastoral Baqqāra and the sedentary Nuba, of the Nuba Mountain region in Sudan, has been shaped and reshaped by various and cumulative historical and contemporary forces. However, the chapter's main point of departure is that Sudan's recent civil war is repressive, with far-reaching and multiple ramifications, not only for the Baqqāra-Nuba coexistence, but also for their respective livelihoods and survival. Focusing on the role of market institutions in pastoral-sedentary relations in a war situation, the chapter analyses the forces, functions and spatial patterns of the war-born economic-driven cooperation among the two groups. Through the narratives of key informants, the study reveals some of the survival strategies and coping mechanisms adopted during the war.

The analysis has generated empirically grounded and theoretically guided insights that may further deepen our understanding of the complex nature of a number of interconnected issues. Firstly, the empirical dimension of this study not only confirms the inevitability of the pastoral-sedentary complementarities but also their reinforcement even during a war situation. The Sudan's prolonged and severe civil war imposed its own logic and dynamics on the livelihoods of both communities in the region. As a result, their shared landscape was progressively divided into two heavily militarised politico-administrative zones along ethno-political lines. Moreover, they were made to fight a proxy war that came to have destructive consequences on their mutual cooperation along their interlinked socioeconomic practices.

Secondly, while the two groups were forced to fight each other, some were simultaneously able to strategically essentialise themselves, and developed a new pattern of cooperation during the war. The cooperation was driven chiefly by the 'economies of survival' (Gertel 2007: 18), resulting in the emergence of a new pattern of local market exchanges along the war frontier zones. It was pursued jointly as part of extremely limited survival choices. Aswāq as-salām (peace markets), aswāq as-sumbuk (smuggling markets), and a number of related community-based and market-motivated peace deals, were nothing but manifestations of survival strategies by the two endangered communities for the sake of counteracting the adverse ramifications of war.

Thirdly, the continuation of the Baqqāra-Nuba relations during the war, though reduced in intensity and sporadic in pattern, indicates that the driving motives that forced them to engage in fighting against each other, in the context of the larger civil war, were not internally generated. Rather, they were externally driven and state induced factors. Some of these factors are empirically traceable through a set of local-national-global chains that tend to constantly push the local communities into unfavourable economic, social and political conditions. In this respect, the partial analysis of the pastoral production of the Baqqāra and their involvement in market

business during the war concurs with a number of similar recent studies in the Nuba Mountains¹⁶ and elsewhere in Africa (see Azarya 1996, Bovin and Manger 1990, Mohamed Salih et al. 2001). Specifically, the study substantiates the assertion that ‘a pastoralist can be involved in several economic activities at once, and revenues from different family members are pooled in a joint household. Here the risks of social reproduction are redistributed among the generations’ (Gertel 2007: 18).

Finally, like other pastoral groups in Africa, the Baqqāra are neither proper traders nor have they themselves founded markets. Despite this, they play a key role in the evolution and the continuation of the local market as place, and space of exchanges. The empirical case of the weekly local market of Keiga Tummero reveals that the flow of the pastoral Baqqāra from the nearby livestock camps, and their effective participation in the market exchanges, is a decisive factor that largely determines the success or failure of such market institutions. In this way, the Baqqāra-Nuba market relations, and their joint unrelenting strive to maintain them, during the war severity, demonstrate beyond doubt the intrinsic and inevitable socio-economic complementarities between the pastoral nomadic and the sedentary communities in the region and elsewhere.

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Interview Partners

Simon Kalo, SPM/A Commander, Kadugli, 9 January 2007.

Anonymous Key Baqqāra Informant, Reikha, 17 February 2007.

Hāmid Setār, Skeikh of the ‘Ayātqa Baqqāra, Khartoum, 10 June 2006.