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HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE, DECISION-MAKING, AND THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND LEGAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN MOGADISHU, SOMALIA

By

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ABSTRACT

HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE, DECISION-MAKING, AND THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND LEGAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN MOGADISHU, SOMALIA

By

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Anthropologists such as Meyer Fortes (1958) have explained the changes taking place in households with reference to the "developmental cycle" model which comprises three specific phases, namely, expansion, dispersal and replacement. The model posits a rather simple explanation for the transition from nuclear to extended family households. It is argued in this dissertation that the household does not proceed through a sequence of phases, since various factors and circumstances may cause changes in the household at various periods in its development, which in turn have a dramatic impact on the status of women.

A model of "continuous fragmentation" is introduced to indicate a new dimension in the study of households and women. The model focuses specifically on fragmentation and breaking up of the household, and the dynamics involved in the actual mobility of household members. A distinction between decision-making processes that are culturally determined (male domain) and those that are economically determined (female domain), is drawn to elucidate changes in household social structure, and to show why it is that changes in the household effect womens' statuses and roles.

The theoretical perspective summarized above is illustrated with reference to households and women in Mogadishu, Somalia. A total of one hundred and fifty heads of households and one hundred and fifty women were intensively studied from September 1986 to August 1987. A sample of seventy women market traders was also part of this study.

The physical form of households in Mogadishu change according to economic conditions and the decision to migrate. The progression in the housing sequence is dependant upon economic opportunities a migrant has access to in Mogadishu. The social structure of households change due to certain decisions that derive from both the male and female domains. The decision to marry, to have more than one wife, and to dissolve a marriage are the prerogatives of the male domain, cause fragmentation of the household and exacerbates the already subordinate economic, social and legal status of Somali women. The decision to migrate and to engage in income generating activities are priorities of the female domain, and may cause fission, but also affords women an opportunity to gain autonomy and control over the fruits of their labor. Moreover, bridewealth transactions regulated by the cultural system attempt to cement unions and to increase household security.

Somali women make choices conditioned by dire economic circumstances and constructively contribute to the survival of the household, despite the constraints of a cultural system that favors men over women.

To
my parents who taught me that the quest
for knowledge is unlimited

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wisdom and intellectual stimulation to Professors Judy Pugh, David Dwyer, Barry Stein and Charles Morrison for the expert guidance given to me as members of my doctoral committee.

To the numerous Somali families, especially the Somali women who made this study possible, I owe many thanks and would like to say mahadsaniid. To them I will always remain dumashi, for the friendships formed would not have been possible without their confidence, total trust and acceptance of me not only as a member of their community, but also as a friend for a lifetime. I made many friends in my informants, the Somali women, many of whom were willing to spend several hours sharing their trials and tribulations- to them I extend my gratitude and sincere appreciation.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

My interest in Somalia is an outcome of multitudinous interests, some of which derive from intellectual persuasion as well as personal experience. This dissertation is therefore the result of a number of factors. The purposes of this study are two-fold. Firstly, the study of how changes in household structure in Mogadishu affect the status of Somali women, is intended to add to the great paucity in the literature available on Somalia. There is no substantive literature of any type dealing with these issues. Numerous writings especially in Italian and English present only certain aspects of Somali history, focusing specifically on Arab influence and the brief period of Italian colonial rule.[1] A major study of the morphological and geographical aspects of the city is presented by William Daniel Puzo (1972). More recent writings on Somalia reflect a tendency to concentrate on the historical reconstruction of Somali history (Lee Cassanelli, 1982).

Secondly, I had initially set out to study the social and cultural principles involved in the organization of household food management systems in Somalia, and to investigate how

these variables affect household decision-making regarding the procurement of food. On my arrival in Mogadishu in September 1986, I was, however, confronted with a rather unique phenomenon in Somali society. Keeping in mind that Somali society is primarily nomadic and rural I was astounded to find that the city was so overcrowded.

Residential districts were cluttered with "old" and "new" dwellings lying side by side. It seemed that wherever a vacant site existed, people flocked to set up their simple dwellings. Another striking feature that caught my eye after visiting several households was the lot of the Somali women. In a number of households visited during my first week in Mogadishu, I discovered that in most cases the husbands were working abroad, were unemployed or held no regular paid job. After my first week of initial visits to a few households, I soon realized that the mobility of the household members, especially the head of the households had a great impact on the economic status of Somali women. Somali women were engaged in various kinds of economic activities in order to insure the survival of the household.

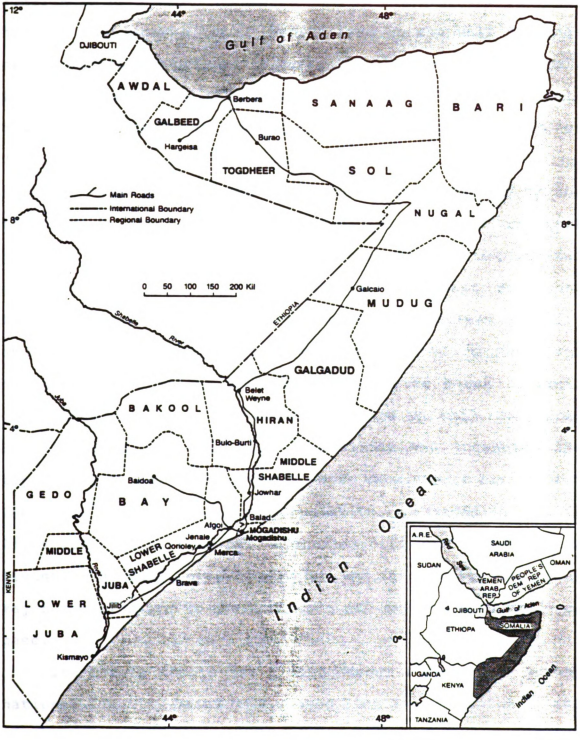
I thus realized that there was a significant process occurring in households in Mogadishu. I set out to formulate a proposal that would attempt to adequately explain factors accounting for the dramatic flux in households in Mogadishu, and to evaluate the impact that these changes had on the social, economic and legal status of Somali women. I decided

that the household would be the main unit in this study of changing household structure and the status of women in Mogadishu. In this dissertation I shall attempt to provide an analysis of the changing status of Somali women via the formation and fragmentation of the household. The impact of social and economic changes on the roles and life experiences of women in Somali society is thus the primary focus. I will argue that the changes in household social structure (the changes themselves conditioned by decision-making processes both culturally and economically determined), significantly alter the position of women in Somali society. Furthermore, I suggest that Somali women have to be viewed as actors seeking to rewrite their histories despite the constraints of a cultural system that favors men over women. It is only by viewing women as actors, deliberately utilizing techniques to minimize and manipulate their subordinate status, will we be able to understand the dilemmas and contradictions in their lives.

The Study Area

The Somali Democratic Republic is located in the Horn of Africa and has an area of 637,700 sq.km. The coastline stretches for over 3,000 km. along the Gulf of Aden in the north and the Indian Ocean in the east. The main part of the country is made up of a large plateau that gradually slopes

Figure 1
Map of Somalia



towards the east from the Harar Highlands to the Indian Ocean. Somalia is no longer the Land of Punt, the legendary fertile home of the incense tree, immortalized in the wall drawings of the ancient Egyptians. A harsh and arid land, effectively isolated from its neighbors by stretches of forbidding semi-desert, it has never been part of East African life or development.

The semi arid climate of Somalia is determined by its location in the equatorial zone and by the low rainfall pattern. There are basically four seasons, two wet and two dry determined by the northeast and southwest monsoons. Traditionally the rainy seasons are known as times of "milk and honey" and the dry seasons as times of "drought and hardship." No matter what the season, the harsh climatic conditions have produced a situation where the well recognized Somali talents of mobility, flexibility and ingenuity are repeatedly called upon to wrest a mere subsistence living from the land. More than half the population is engaged in rearing livestock, the principal economic activity in Somalia. Livestock herding, crop production and fishery are the three major contributors to the country's GDP and its food resource base.

The Somali people are a homogeneous race with a strong national identity based on a shared linguistic, cultural, and religious background. Somalis are of Hamitic stock and are virtually all Sunni Muslims. They speak the Somali language,

although Italian and English are the semi-official languages used by the government in education and in commerce.[2] Somalia is also predominantly a patrilineal society where the lifestyle is suited to men's conveniences and the traditional role of women buttresses and supports this orientation. Women are depended upon to perform a biased division of labor, which for the pastoral family includes moving the family encampment, fetching water, collecting firewood, cooking and milking the sheep, goats and cows entrusted to their care. Meanwhile the men sit under the shade of the tree discussing where to graze, where to settle and when to move.[3]

The city of Mogadishu is one of the larger urban centers in Africa with a population of approximately one million inhabitants. Mogadishu dominates the political, cultural and economic life of Somalia and is perhaps the most important urban center in the country. It is located on the Indian Ocean Coast of the Somali Democratic Republic. The city is centrally situated in relation to the more populated areas of former Italian Somaliland on the coast south of the Shebelli River Basin and the interriverine plateau between the Shebelli and Juba rivers. The Shebelli and Juba rivers and the plateau between them are the most populated and productive large areas in Somalia.

Mogadishu has no direct ties to urban centers and areas outside of Somalia. The city and its hinterland are effectively detached from the northern region of Somalia,

formerly British Somaliland. The Somali have no urban tradition and all the major towns in the country have been founded by either Arabs or Europeans. In nearly all cases, the towns and cities of Somalia, including Mogadishu, are now populated almost exclusively by Somalis with only a few percent of the urban population comprised of Asians and Europeans. The urban system is one which has only recently been adopted by the Somalis and many adjustments and adaptations have yet to be made.

The Fieldwork Experience

On my arrival in Mogadishu in September 1986, I made contact with the Somali Academy of Arts and Sciences (SOMAC). I met with the researchers and staff of the Womens Research Unit of SOMAC. The President of SOMAC granted me permission to do my research and requested that urban families be helpful and cooperative in providing me with information for my research. Another letter from the Governor of Mogadishu instructed all District Commissioners to grant me permission to visit and study households in their districts and to provide any help that I might need. No doubt these initial steps greatly facilitated my research and I was able to commence data collection not long after my arrival in Mogadishu.

I also tried to obtain written information in the way of special reports and publications concerning women and urban households in Mogadishu. The only substantial piece of literature I was able to locate was a "situational analysis" titled Women and Children in Somalia prepared by the Ministry of National Planning and UNICEF (1984). Other literature pertaining to women was provided to me by the Womens Research Unit, and focused primarily on the practice of female circumcision and infibulation.[4] No literature concerning urban household structure was available.

In defining the target population certain factors were taken into consideration: the first involved defining the section of the population to be studied and the second, delimiting the geographic area to be covered. A farrago of research methodologies were used namely, participant observation, survey interview questionnaires, informal interviews and case studies. A total of one hundred and fifty heads of households and one hundred and fifty women were intensively studied from September 1986 to August 1987. A sample of seventy women market traders was also part of this study.

The five districts of Wadajir, Hodan, Xamarweyne, Yaaqshiid and Wardhiigleey were relegated as the main geographic areas to be studied. Mogadishu comprises thirteen districts or degmo of varying size, composition and history. The five degmo of Wadajir, Hodan, Xamarweyne, Yaaqshiid and

Wardhiigleey were purposively selected on the basis of information given to me by the Womens Research Unit. These districts represent various economic, cultural and social structural strata and dimensions of households in Mogadishu. Below is a description of each district selected indicating the reasons and the criteria used in selection.

Wadajir was established just over a decade ago as an overspill area for the rapidly increasing population of Mogadishu. The increasing rate of urban migration has resulted in a heavy burden for Wadajir as it has far exceeded its original dimensions. This district was selected since it is recently established and reflects to a great extent the rapid urbanization of Mogadishu. Hodan, which was my home for a year, is also one of the most highly developed residential areas and covers the periphery of the city. As the city spread inland from the coast, Hodan was established. It is the most affluent section of Mogadishu with the largest proportion of higher income households and was thus selected.

Xamarweyne comprises the original site of the city said to be founded in the thirteenth century or earlier. Even today Mogadishu is often referred to as xamar or town. This district forms a separate social and economic structure with a resident community composed mainly of the old established town-based families who are still involved in trade, commerce, and property ownership. Its unique cultural aspects were a basis for selection. Yaaqshiid is one of the poorest districts and

was therefore selected to represent low income families. Like Hodan it is situated at the periphery of the city. Wardhiigleey (meaning "tales of blood") is a vast residential area that has spread inland. Originally the site of a small village that functioned as a livestock holding area, its graphic name is said to derive from the violence and disputes that formerly characterized the location. Today the district extends to the very edge of the city and has seen successive ways of residential construction and an increasing concentration of inhabitants. It is representative of a poor to middle class area.

The five districts chosen for study are representative of various economic and social strata. The districts were purposively selected and the households were randomly selected. It should be pointed out that identifying poor homes from middle to upper income homes was based on physical characteristics of the homes. Upper income homes usually have huge gates and a watchman guarding the home. The economic status of the households divided into poor, middle and upper income was based on an observation of physical characteristics, namely, structure of the building, household furnishings, availability of electricity and running water, and the monthly income of the household. The monthly income was based on the earnings of the head of the household as well as other family member's income generating activities. The contributions made to the household by individual, immediate

family members living away from the household were also included in calculating the monthly income.

My easy acceptance into Somali society may be attributed to the fact that I was married to a Somali. My Somali informants were quite willing to dispense with information on learning that I was "Somali." In no time at all, I was everyone's dumashi or sister-in-law. During the course of my study of households and women in Mogadishu, my research assistant, Xalima and myself were always surrounded by many people, neighbors and passers-by, all eager to know what my intention was. In most instances Xalima and I would sit outside in the yard under shady trees fanned by a gentle breeze because of the extreme heat, especially if the homes were constructed of wood and iron. This setting was more common with low income families. When interviewing upper income families, however, we were always invited inside the home in a more private setting, away from the noisy and tumultuous crowds in the street.

My research experience in Mogadishu was not without event. On one occasion Xalima and I clashed with staff of the Census Bureau who were visiting households in Hodan compiling the 1987 census. I presented the letters of permission allowing me to carry out my research. The staff were not convinced and marched us to the District Commissioner's office. I explained my field of study and research plans to the deputy District Commissioner making it very clear that my

interests were purely academic. Once convinced, he allowed us to go. On another occasion, when interviewing women traders in the Xamarweyne market, Xalima and I were confronted by a rather unpleasant situation. We had been accompanied by a woman who was the Deputy District Commissioner of Xamarweyne. While interviewing a woman trader who sold eggs, a few teenagers tried to disrupt our interviewing. Within seconds we were surrounded by a large group of people all anxious to know what was going on. Eventually the Deputy District Commissioner brought the situation under control by calling a militiaman to disperse the crowd and reprimand the teenagers. We were able to continue with our interviewing in the Xamarweyne market without any further ado.

Approach to the Study

The approach that I present in this study, is more in line with Jane Guyer's (1981) and Robert McCNetting's (1984) study of the household, laying great emphasis on social structure and decision-making processes. Meyer Fortes's concept of the "developmental cycle" as applied to household composition and structure is challenged, and an attempt is made to introduce a new dimension to the study of women in urban households in Mogadishu. It will be argued that the household does not go through a sequence of stages in its development, but that any one of the stages may operate at

different time periods. I will be analyzing the forces at play in households in Mogadishu, by propounding a model of "continuous fragmentation." The model presented here focuses on the disintegration and breaking up of the household at various phases in its development. The model of continuous fragmentation focuses specifically on decision-making processes in both the male and female domains. The decisions that radically alter the structure of households are those concerning marriage, divorce, polygyny and migration, and form part of the male domain and are culturally conditioned. The decisions that ensure the survival of the household on a day to day basis are those concerning the female domain and are economically determined. In essence then, this dissertation is an attempt to explain the contradictions and dilemmas present in the status of Somali women. On one hand the cultural system enforces their subordinate status and excludes women from participating in decisions relegated to the male domain. On the other hand the economic sphere allows a woman to have a certain degree of autonomy and control over her destiny and in particular her ability to secure the survival of the household.

In view of the above, I have organized the dissertation in the following way. Chapter two presents a discussion of Mogadishu in light of the factors that explain its rapid growth and expansion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I believe that this is an important step towards

understanding why a country that is primarily nomadic is advancing towards an "urban culture." Furthermore, chapter two sets the stage for the analysis of the changes taking place in households in Mogadishu, the subject of later chapters. Chapter three analyzes the anthropological approaches to the study of households and outlines a conceptual framework for understanding the urban Somali experience.

The formation and composition of households is the subject matter in chapter four. Moreover, the model propounded in chapter three will be explored in relation to the dynamic processes taking place in household social structure in Mogadishu. The processes in household decision-making introduced in chapter four will be analyzed further in chapter five, paying particular attention to the factors that actually account for the changing economic status of Somali women. Chapter six focuses on the social and legal status of Somali women by exploring the mechanisms involved in marriage transactions that may in fact decrease or increase household security. Chapter seven summarizes the arguments set forth in this dissertation and draws certain conclusions for such a study.

Notes

1. For a discussion of these aspects see Ali Abdirahman Hersi, The Arab Factor in Somali History: The Origins and Development of Arab Enterprise and Cultural Influences in the Somali Peninsula (1977); the numerous writings of I. M. Lewis (1955a, 1958, 1960, 1961a, 1965a, 1965b); Lee Cassanelli, The Shaping of Somali Society (1982) and Edward Alpers, "Mogadishu in the Nineteenth Century: A Regional Perspective," Journal of African History, (1983) vol. 24, pp. 441-459.

2. The Somali language is now a written language and the advantages of its use as a medium of instruction in the lower schools have already been proven by results achieved in elementary and secondary levels.

3. A variety of perceptions as to the work-loads of both men and women exist. Women are responsible for work stemming from both their reproductive and productive roles, while men are responsible for work connected with only their productive roles. When assessing work responsibilities women recognize two categories while men tend to only recognize productive work as real work.

4. See H. T. Laycock, "Surgical Aspects of Female Circumcision in Somaliland," East African Medical Journal, vol. 27 (1950); Raqiyya Haji Dualleh Abdallah, Sisters in Affliction (1982); Dr. Mahdi Ali Dirie, Female Circumcision in Somalia: Medical and Social Implications, (1985); and Sadiya M. Ahmed, Aamina Warsame and Aud Talle, Social and Cultural Aspects of Female Circumcision (1985).

CHAPTER TWO

THE EVOLUTION AND URBANIZATION OF MOGADISHU IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

Introduction

Mogadishu was founded in the year 900 A.D. by Arabs and is one of the oldest cities in Africa south of the Sahara. The Arabs dominated Mogadishu for nearly a thousand years, yet in its evolution and rapid expansion from a coastal town to the most important city in Somalia, factors other than the Arab influence have affected Mogadishu's growth. Much ink has been spilled in a tediously repetitious fashion on the nature and peculiarities of the Somali social system. I will dispense with unnecessary details and present in this chapter a discussion of the main factors that drastically altered the size and composition of Mogadishu in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The concerns presented in this chapter are two-fold. The first is devoted to an analytical discussion of the patterns of urban development in the nineteenth century, including the beginnings of the formation of a dominant class in Mogadishu. The second evaluates the dramatic revival and growth of Mogadishu in the twentieth century.

Patterns of Urban Development of Mogadishu in the 19th Century.

Between the years 900 A.D. and the fourteenth century, Mogadishu evolved from a small coastal settlement to one of the two largest cities on the East African coast and its importance has continued to rise ever since. Mogadishu in the nineteenth century was a shadow of its former splendid self. The famous description given by Ibn Battuta in 1331 shows Mogadishu in its heyday (Neville Chittick, 1982, pp. 45-62). Five centuries later the picture presented of Mogadishu showed a city whose heyday had long since passed.

A slight digression at this stage will help explain the reasons as to why dramatic fluctuations in the size and composition of Mogadishu existed. When the Portuguese entered the Indian Ocean, Mogadishu was apparently still a wealthy community which drove an important overseas trade based on its complementary relationship with the Arujaan imamate of the interior (Lee Cassanelli, 1982, ch. 3). Certainly there was no commercial collapse, for in the middle of the seventeenth century its principal towns- Mogadishu, Marka, and Baraawe traded independently with small vessels from Surat (John R. Jensen, 1973, p. 46). During this period, however, the gradual infiltration of Mogadishu by Hawiyya Somali groups of the hinterland brought about a major transformation of the town, including the abandonment of certain quarters which had existed in medieval times an apparent reduction of its total

population. By about 1700 the entire political structure of the town was altered with the ascendancy of a new line of Abgaal Yaquub imams who resided in Shangaani, the northern moiety of the town, but whose power base remained among the people of the interior (Lee Cassanelli, 1982, pp. 73-93). The Abgal domination of Shangaani left the older elite of Xamarweyne, the other moiety of the town without significant allies in the interior.

Against the background discussed above, I will now turn to explore the factors that help explain the ebb and flow in the growth and expansion of Mogadishu as a primate city, in particular paying close attention to the division between the two moieties of the city, namely Xamarweyne and Shangaani. The discussion of Mogadishu in the nineteenth century follows closely the arguments set forth by Edward Alpers in his magnificent reconstruction of the historical development of Mogadishu (1983). The primary sources of Commander Thomas Smee and others are quoted from Alpers' article.

By the early years of the nineteenth century Mogadishu and two others principal towns, Marka and Baraawe seem to have settled into a pattern of regular if modest trade with boats plying the maritime routes between India, Arabia,and Zanzibar. Figure 1 gives some indication of the initial cite and location of Mogadishu. Exports included cattle, slaves, ivory and ambergris. Commander Thomas Smee learned in 1811 that Mogadishu "is not very considerable, may contain 150 to 200

houses, it has not any river near it, and has but little trade" (Thomas Smee, 1811, pp. 93). W.F.W. Owen, a British naval captain gave the following description of Mogadishu in 1833.

> Mukdeesha, the only town of any importance upon the coast is the mistress of a considerable territory...At a distance the town has rather an imposing appearance, the buildings being of some magnitude and composed of stone...It is divided into two distinct towns, one called Umarween, and the other Chamgany, the latter of which with justice may be called 'the city of the dead' being entirely composed of tombs. Umarween has nearly one hundred and fifty stone houses, built in the Spanish style...Arab dows visit this place..., to exchange sugar, molasses, dates... for ivory, gums, and a particular cloth of their own manufacture, which is much valued by the people of the interior (Owen, 1833, pp. 357-358).

Owen's statement is the first documented reference to the town moieties by name and is accurate in so far as Shangaani does contain a large number of monumental tombs than does Xamarweyne. It is also noteworthy for its reference to the importation rather than the exportation of slaves at Mogadishu.[1]

The division of the town into two distinct moieties is also referred to by Charles Guillain. Tracing the decline of the town back to the seventeenth century he concludes:

> Its division into two quarters was produced by the abandonment, then the collapse of the intermediary buildings, and the disunion between the inhabitants of both became easier when the existing government was no longer sufficiently equitable or respected to maintain them in harmony of views and interests. Nevertheless, it is only in the last years that the inhabitants of Shangaani have ceased attending the mosque of

Xamarweyne (Guillain, 1844, pp. 525-6).

On the basis of the literary evidence then, it would appear that the long process of differentiation into two spatially separated moieties was brought to a rapid climax during these troubled years.[2]

Given the various disruptions of this fluid decade, it is not surprising that when William Christopher visited the town in 1843 he described most of its inhabitants, some 3,000 to 4,000, as living in "filth and poverty" and commented that its buildings were "half in ruins" (W. Christopher, 1843, pp. 87-88). Guillain's impressions of Mogadishu four years later differ little from those of his British predecessor. Notwithstanding a few new or restored buildings, most of the old stone houses were in a state of disrepair, while the beehive stick and mud huts of the Somali, with their straw roofs, were scattered among them "like the nests of sparrows crouched among the ruins" (Charles Guillain, 1833, pp. 507-526). The total population, including slaves, he estimated to be about 5,000. Of these Guillain reckoned that three quarters resided in Xamarweyne, which he lauded for its tranquility under the firm rule of Sheikh Muumin Xassan, in contrast to the unsettled state of Shangaani. Guillain's conclusion was that "the state of misery and depopulation where it is found today," would lead in fifty years to the total collapse of Mogadishu if the process of decay was not

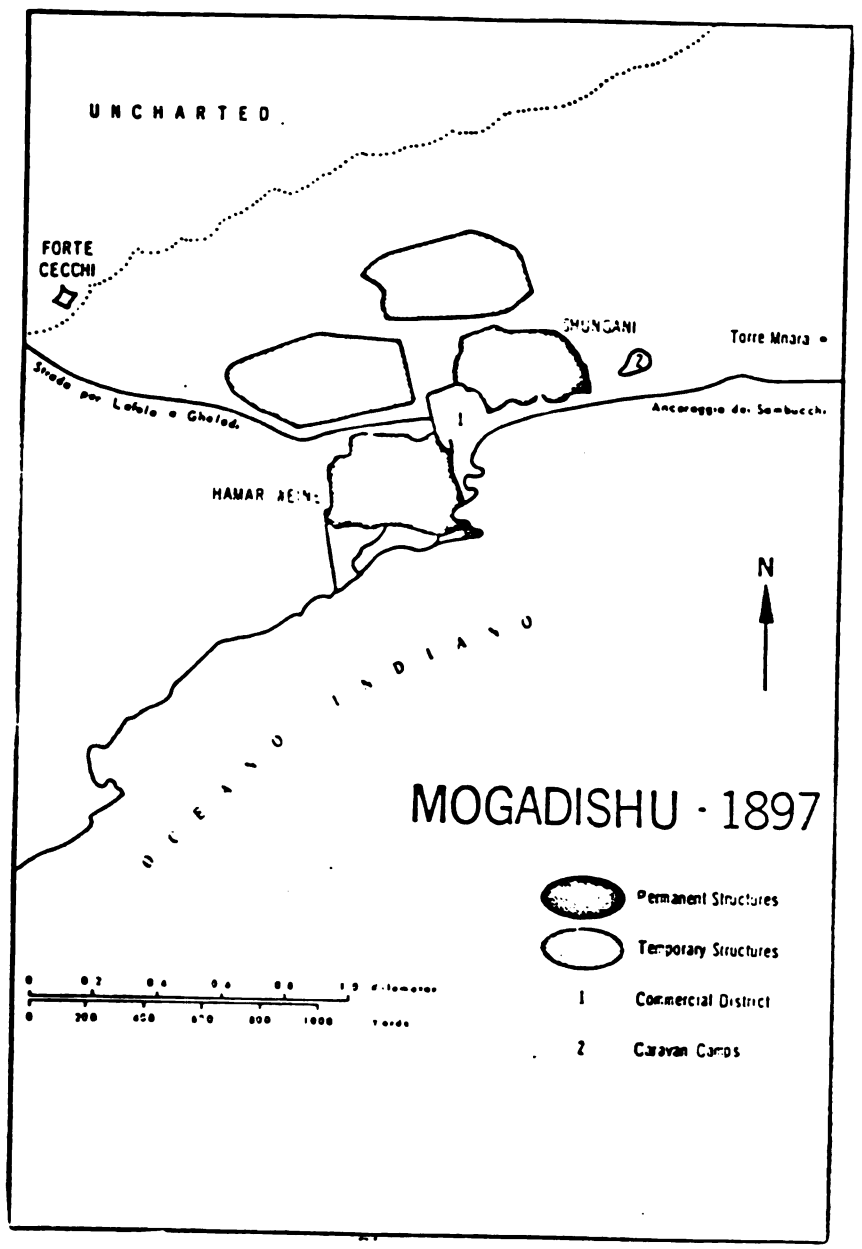
halted (Charles Guillain, 1833, pp. 507-514). The face of Mogadishu in the nineteenth century is shown in Figure 2.

Manifestly, Mogadishu did not collapse. In fact it experienced a significant revival in the second half of the nineteenth century which was based on the steady integration of Mogadishu and its hinterland into the economic orbit of Omani Zanzibar through the medium of Indian merchant capital. More specifically, Edward Alpers (1983) suggests that there is a strong case to be made for the proposition that this upswing in the fortunes of the entire Benaadir region was based upon the rapid development of commodity production based on slave labour.[3]

Unfortunately, little is known of the slave population of Mogadishu until the end of the century. Georges Revoil, who spent several months there in 1882, notes only that two-thirds of the town's population was either slave or habishi, which he defines as the liberated great-grandchildren of slaves (1885, p. 39). He also comments that due to the high price of camels at Mogadishu, the numerous sesame-seed oil mills in the city were powered by slave labor. But it is not until 1897 when the Italian administration was confronted with the problem of slavery throughout its new colony, that we get any sort of detailed picture of what had become a developed slave-labor economy.

Figure 2

Mogadishu in the 19th Century



Source: W. D. Puzo (1972)

According to the Royal Commissioner, Giorgio Sorrentino, "the fields are cultivated by slaves, who also take care of all domestic duties; the arts and crafts are the work of the same slaves, of Arab, of vanias, and Indians" (Giorgio Sorrentino, 1912). If the use of slave labor among the artisans of Mogadishu was more pronounced at the end of the nineteenth century than previously, however, this did not represent a major disruption of the social division of labor, as all artisans did work which was regarded as being "undignified and shameful" for a free man to do (Edward Alpers, 1983, pp. 79-84).

According to Robecchi-Bricchetti, in 1891 the ivory trade of the entire Benaadir was almost completely in the hands of Indians and vanias (Muslim and Hindu Asians). There were few Somali and Arabs, he reports, 'who possess sufficient money to acquire an appropriate piece of cotton stuff to serve as medium of exchange' (1904, p. 593).

The Italian anti-slavery campaigner, Luigi Robecchi-Bricchetti, actually made a careful census of the entire slave and liberated population in Mogadishu in order to illuminate the problem for the Italian public and claimed that the results give "an approximate and realistic figure of the true free and slave population of the country" (1904, p. 58). The results of this remarkable document reveal that out of the permanent population of nearly 6,700 more than 31 percent were still slaves, while another 4 per cent included in the free

population had been liberated since 1894 (Robecchi-Bricchetti, 1904, pp. 68-70). By itself, however, this hypothesis does not explain the driving force behind the transformation of Mogadishu and its hinterland in the second half of the nineteenth century. For a complete appreciation of this process we must return to the role of the Indian merchant capitalists. Evidence points to the increasing domination by their trading houses of the commerce of the entire Benaadir (Edward Alpers, 1983).

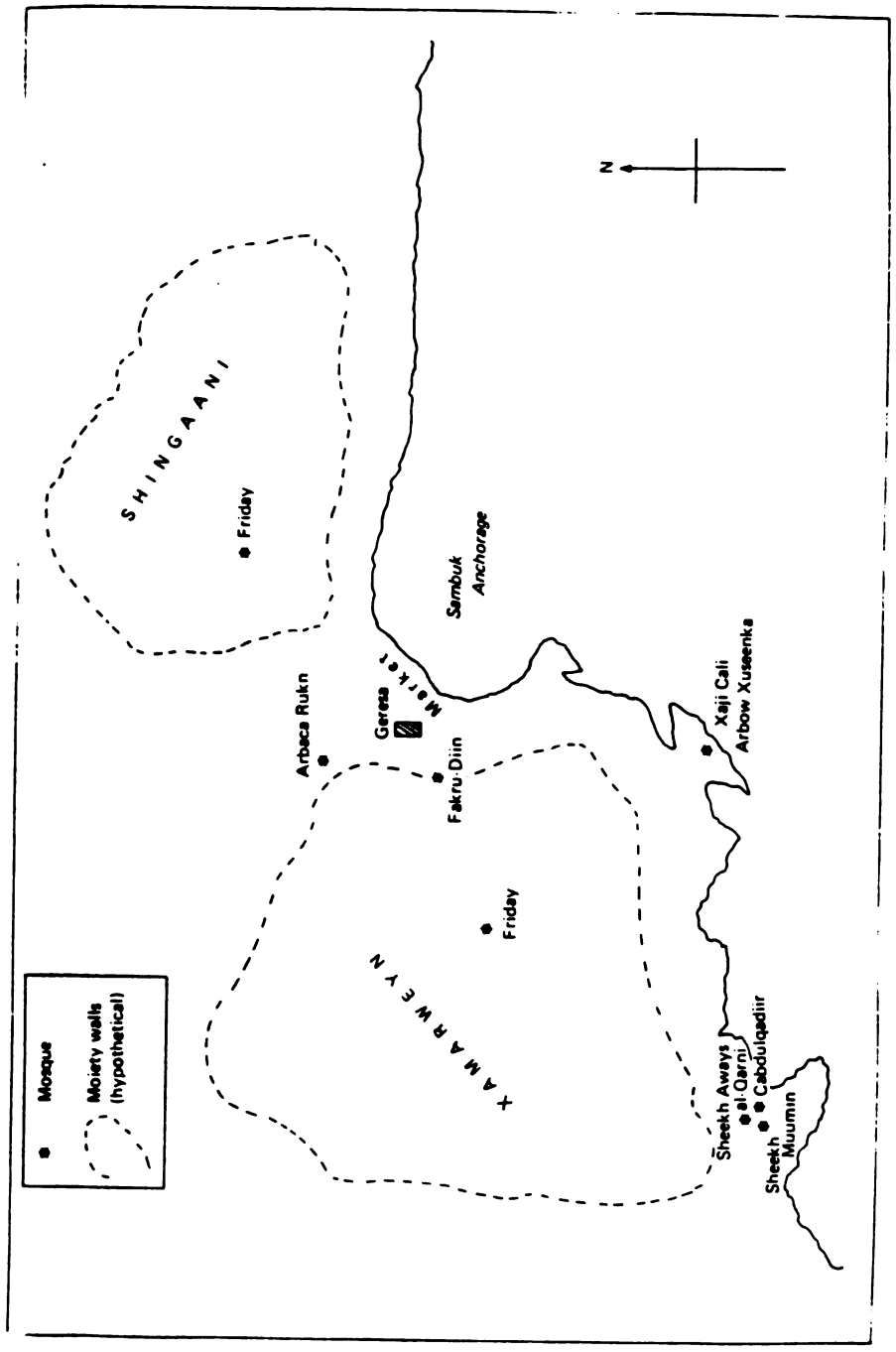
It remains to say something about the persistent problem of moiety competition in Mogadishu. Georges Revoil provides plenty of evidence for the sharpness of the rivalry between Xamarweyne and Shangaani in 1882, and took care "to preserve an absolute neutrality in order not to offend the sensibilities of the hostile parties of Mogadishu" (1885, p. 39). He was impressed by the wall erected to protect Xamarweyne against hostile incursions of the inhabitants of Shangaani, and by the fact that the doors of the ancient Fakru Diin mosque which faced the garesa and bordered the central market area, had been walled up so that the mosque was absolutely reserved to the inhabitants of Xamarweyne. One element in the pattern of competition may prove to be the willingness of each moiety to conclude external alliances in order to overcome the dominant position of its rival. For example in the 1840s Shangaani seems to have been still considered the more established, if perhaps not dominant half

of the town, and there was apparently no obvious challenge from Xamarweyne to the imam's appointment of an abbaan for both Christopher and Guillain from the Ashraaf of Shangaani.[4]

Xamarweyne's indifference to Europeans which was based on its combined domination of the trade of the interior and the official Zanzibar connection, ultimately turned into outright hostility as the nineteenth century political economy of the town was increasingly threatened by European colonialism. In 1891 Robecchi-Bricchetti was menaced at the gate of Xamarweyne and called the quarter anti-European while six years later the Italian Governor's residence had been built in Shangaani, because it was believed that Shangaani had always been less hostile to whites than its rival. The larger history of resistance and realignment in the hinterland of Mogadishu, including its bearing upon coastal town politics, has been carefully reconstructed by Lee Cassanelli (1982). The point to be made here is that quite apart from any other considerations, familiar interpretive questions of resistance and accommodation or collaboration must also be understood in light of the nineteenth century tradition of intense moiety competition between Xamarweyne and Shangaani.[5] Figure 3 shows the permanent and temporary structures and the spatial separation of Xamarweyne and Shangaani.

Figure 3

Spatial Separation of Xamarweyne and Shangaani



Source: Edward A Alpers (1983)

Whatever the patterns of urban development in Mogadishu in earlier times may have been, it clearly conformed to wider coastal East African dynamics during the nineteenth century, when the intensified penetration of Indian merchant capital under the overlapping umbrellas of British India and Omani Zanzibar began the process of transformation that would lead ultimately to Italian colonial rule. And while it is evident that the process of Hawiyya penetration that dates back to the seventeenth century gave Mogadishu a resolutely Somali cultural tradition that marks it off from the major towns of the Swahili coast, it is equally certain that the urban characteristics of Mogadishu place it firmly in the regional context of the coast of East Africa.

During the nineteenth century Mogadishu experienced a significant revival in its fortunes after several centuries of gradual decline from its medieval heyday. While it remained on the periphery of the Omani empire on the coast of East Africa, steady commercial penetration of Indian merchant capital based at Zanzibar inexorably drew the entire Benaadir coast into the Omani orbit. Massive infusions of slave labor transformed agricultural commodity production in the Benaadir hinterland and created a new basis for ruling class collaboration between town and country. At Mogadishu these external factors intertwined with established internal rivalries which were based on moiety competition and the traditional search for supporting alliances in the hinterland.

The end result of this complex process was increased competition and tension between the town moieties that affected both the spatial segregation of the two quarters and enabled first Omani Zanzibar and then Italy to insinuate themselves into a dominant mediating position within the urban community. At the end of the century the urban culture of Mogadishu had also been influenced by the incorporation of a large slave population. While all of these changes indicate that Mogadishu was integrally part of the wider coastal region of East Africa, other cultural evidence establishes no less that it was still uniquely Somali within that context.

The Growth of Mogadishu in the Twentieth Century.

The nineteenth century may be termed the period of decline and constant rivalries in the city of Mogadishu. The twentieth century however, reflects an increasing revival of the city, especially as its relates to urbanization. Three years after the colony of Somalia was established by the Italians, the basic law of April 5, 1908 united all the areas of southern Somalia into a single administration at Mogadishu under the name Somalia Italiana (Hess, 1966, p. 102). The strong, central colonial rule thus established in Mogadishu provided a considerable stimulus to growth for the city.

During Luigi Cufino's visit in 1914, Xamarweyne and Shangaani still accounted for most of the estimated 12,000 in-

habitants of Mogadishu (L.Cufino, 1916). Due to the increased population many migrants to the city were living in huts outside of the old sections and within the standing ruins outside the city. Cufino found Xamarweyne to be larger, older and populated almost exclusively by Somalis. Shangaani in 1914 was still almost purely Arab, containing the richest merchants in the city. Cufino noted some Asians mixed in with the Somalis and Arabs in the two quarters of the city (1916). The Indians were primarily merchants and money lenders, controlling much of the finance of the city at the time.

Cufino also makes reference to "arabi somalizzaati," or Somalized Arabs in relatively large numbers. These people are essentially Arab, but have mixed with and live with the Somalis. Cufino also mentions Swahili and Galla elements within the Somali population (Cufino, 1916, p. 130-31). He speaks of the construction of Italian housing on the beach east of Shangaani and an evolving "white" section to the west of the city. At this time, construction of housing for government employees and other Italians was apparently much in demand. Many of the Italian civil servants were living in dilapidated stone houses rented from Indians. The Italians were concentrating their building efforts in the direction of commerce and public agencies (Cufino, 1916, pp. 134-37).

When the Italians first took possession of Mogadishu it was a small town of about 10,000 people. At the conclusion of the Italian period, Mogadishu was a considerable center

with a population of nearly 100,000. The structure of the city changed not only in numbers, but also in composition under Italian rule. The number of Somalis in the city increased to the point that they became by far the greatest majority of the city's population. The number of Asians remained at just a couple of thousand and they became an increasingly unimportant minority in the city. The most dramatic change during the period involved the number of Italians. From just a handful in 1905, the Italian population increased to over 20,000 just prior to World War 11. After the war their numbers declined (W. Puzo, 1972, p. 123).

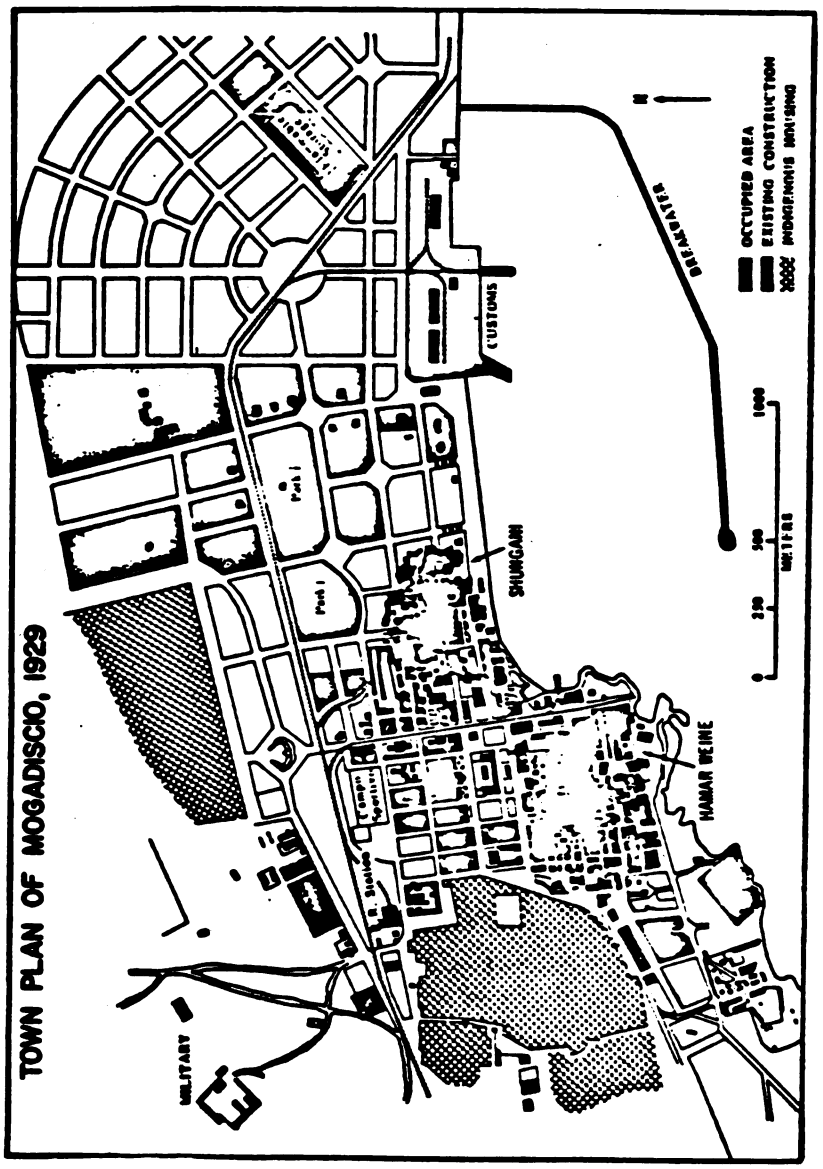
By 1924 the official population estimate for Mogadishu was 20,611. That there was an increase is not surprising. One fact that would have contributed to a dramatic increase in Mogadishu's population at this time was the construction of transportation routes connected to the interior. The increased employment opportunities in construction and commercial activities would have accounted for a marked population increase. Mogadishu's most spectacular growth period occurred in the years just prior to World War 11. This was the time of Italian expansion in northeast Africa, including development and expansion in Mogadishu. A new plan was formulated by 1939 (Gli Annali, 1939). The major proposals of the new town plan included construction and widening of streets, especially in the new and old Somali sections, the construction of new public buildings, expansion

of Italian residential areas, the movement of the Somali population from the section east of the port, the construction of a new Somali locality to the northwest of town, and expansion of the port facility (Annali, 1939). The population increased by over 350 percent between 1931 and 1939 to a total of approximately 72,000. This was a period of tremendous in-migration of Somalis from the interior, attracted by real and assumed opportunities for commerce and employment in the city.

Under the Italians, Mogadishu grew from a small town of about 10,000 inhabitants to about 100,000. The Italians instituted urban planning in Mogadishu and their imprint on the morphology of the city is still very much in evidence. William Puzo (1972), in his study of Mogadishu states that most of the present functional areas of Mogadishu were planned by the Italians. The Italians were the first to formulate and effect city planning in Mogadishu. Most of the functional zones in the city today are a result of the Italian spatial ordering of Mogadishu. The growth and expansion of Mogadishu in the 1920s and 1930s is shown in Figures 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4.

Figure 4.1

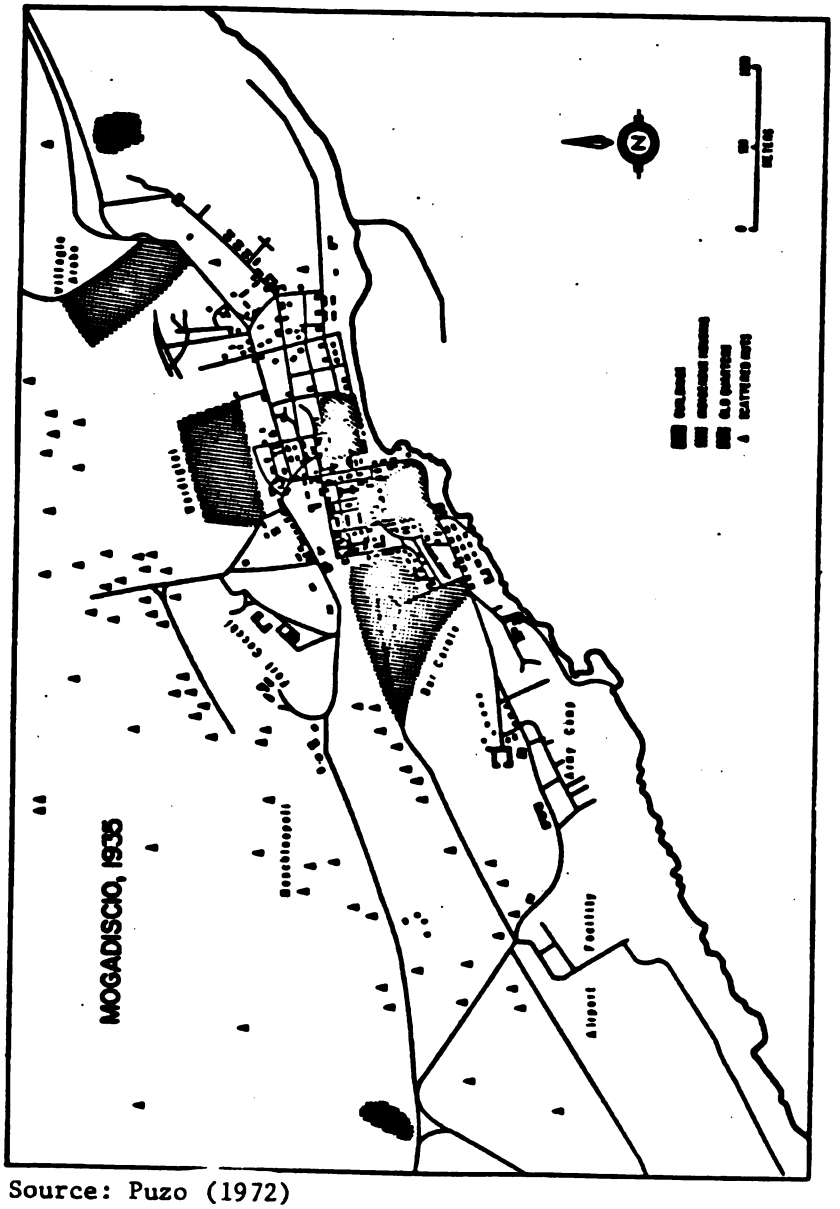
Town Plan of Mogadishu-1929



Source: Puzo (1972)

Figure 4.2

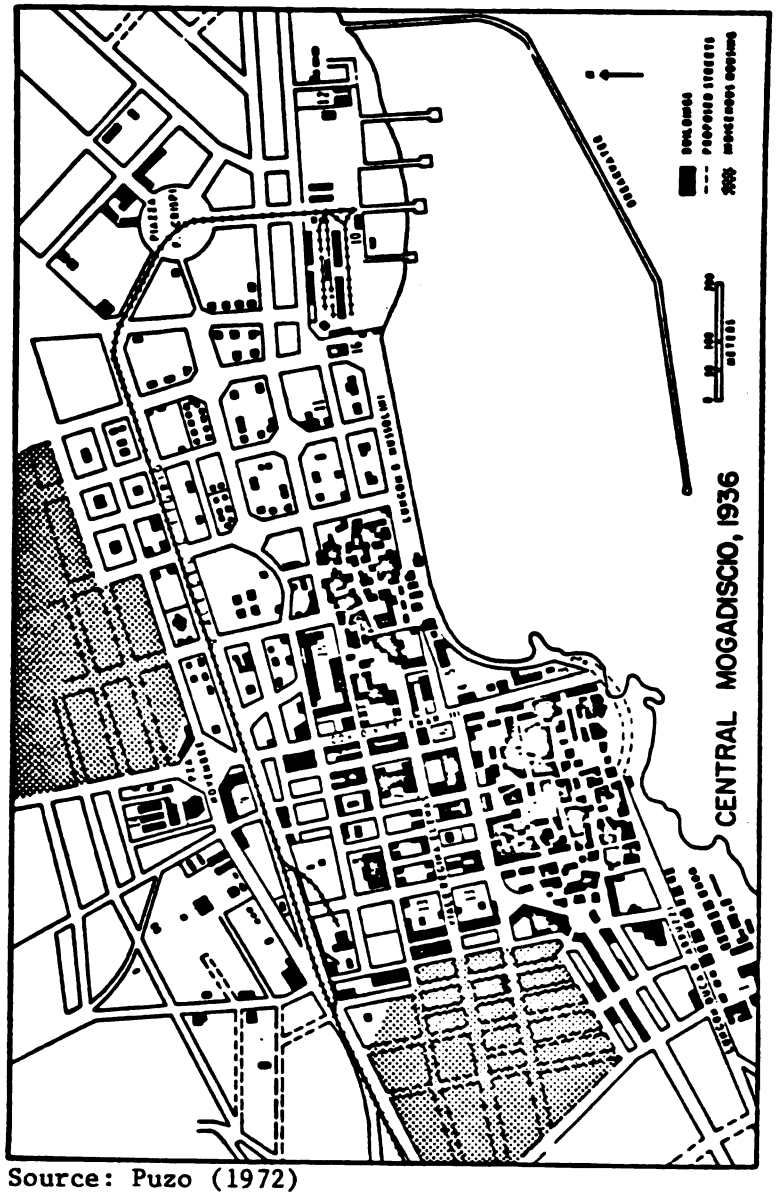
Mogadishu in 1935



Source: Puzo (1972)

Figure 4.3

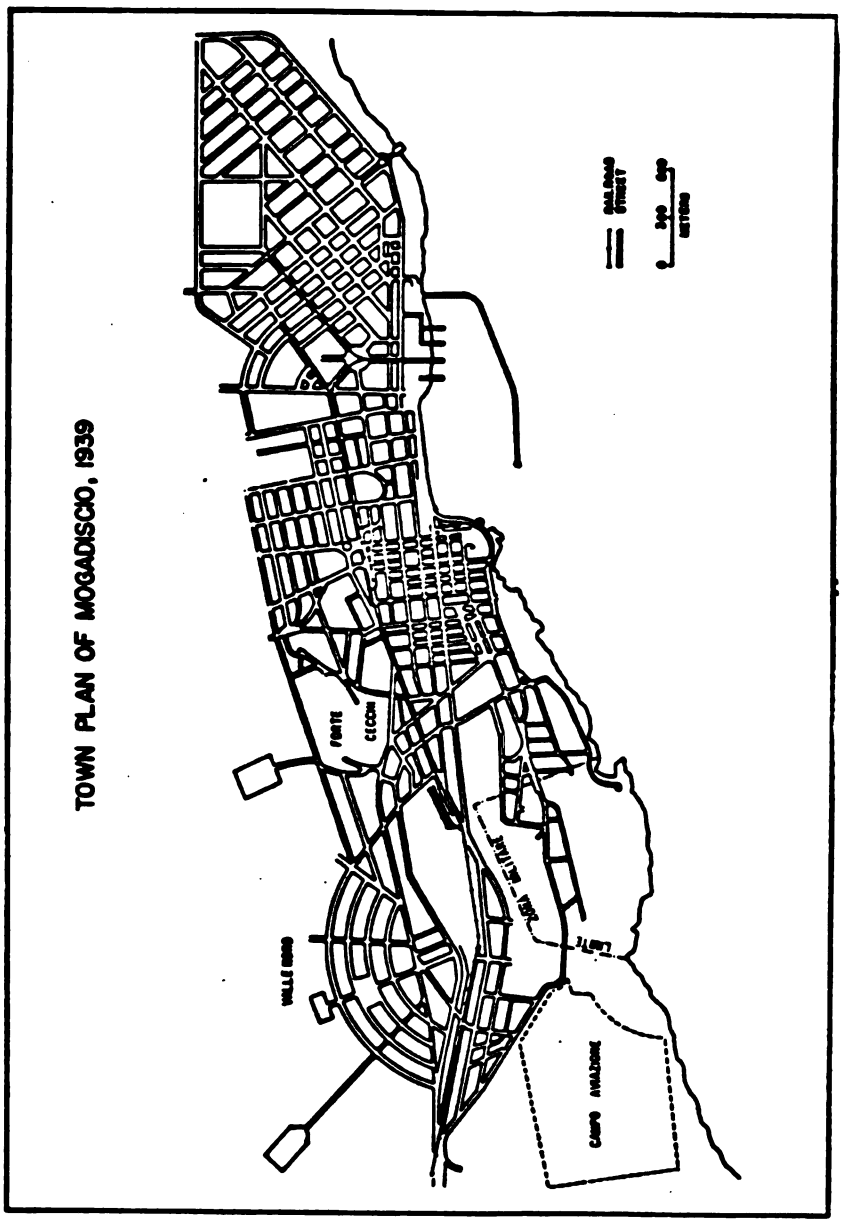
Mogadishu in 1936



Source: Puzo (1972)

Figure 4.4

Town Plan of Mogadishu-1939



Source: Puzo (1972)

Under the Italians functional zones were established and settlement controlled. The Italian plans for land use along the city's coast and central districts have been maintained to this day. They established administrative and military facilities along the coast to the west of the city's core. (Puzo, 1972). One of the most important accomplishments of the Italians was the construction of the port and related facilities. Surrounding the old Arab quarters, a commercial and administrative district was established. This district is still the commercial heart of the city.

Urban planning was instituted, particularly through the town plans of 1929 and 1939. The streets of Mogadishu were organized on the basis of a grid system. Relatively spacious European residential sections were established and the Somalis were directed into spacially built localities around the central city. A central business-cultural district was established and a great number of public buildings and projects were constructed.

The peak of Italian efforts in the city occurred in the late 1930's. The Italians were in political control in Somalia and Mogadishu from 1905 to 1941 and again from 1950-1960, in the first instance as a colonial power and the second as administrator of the Trust Territory of Somalia (I.M. Lewis, 1965). During World War 11 and British occupation, Somali in-migration continued at a slower rate while the Italian population of the city decreased significantly. This

affected a balance between immigration and emigration to and from Mogadishu and the population remained just over 70,000 until after the end of the war.

The period just prior to World War 11 was one in which the Italians invested their greatest energies. Ethiopia had been conquered and the Italian Empire in east Africa had been essentially formed by 1936 (I.M. Lewis, 1965). Government expenditures reached their highest levels as did the Italian population. Special attention was paid to improving Mogadishu's transport, communication, military and commercial functions. As a result, increasing numbers of Somalis were attracted to the city and government organization of them into orderly localities was not able to keep pace. The population of Mogadishu rose from about 30,000 in 1933 to 50,000 in 1935 and 72,000 in 1939, an increase of roughly 250 per cent within a period of six years (Zanichelli, 1935, p. 234). During the same period, the Italian population increased from 730 to an estimated 20,000. A large part of the Italian decrease was in military personnel.

By 1950, the population of the city had declined considerably to about 55,000. The Trust Territory of Somalia was instituted in 1950 and the Italians were reestablished in Somalia. The renewed economic opportunities tied to the return of the Italians in the area led to a renewed increase in migration to Mogadishu and a resultant increase in the city's population. The estimated population of Mogadishu

between 900 A.D. and the 1950's is shown in Figure 5. Between the years 900 A.D. and the twentieth century, Mogadishu evolved from a small coastal settlement to one of the two largest cities on the east African coast.

The two periods of most rapid growth in Mogadishu's recent history, in the late 1950's and 1960's were periods when migration into the city must have been responsible for about a seven to ten per cent increase in Mogadishu's population. In the late 1950's, the economy of the city and country was being revitalized by the Italians in the last years of their Trusteesship and the country was anticipating the independence of 1960 (I.M Lewis, 1955). There was also a period of severe flooding followed by severe drought during those years, which would affect migration from rural to urban areas. An extremely severe drought in the mid-1960's precipitated another mass exodus from the interior to Mogadishu and other cities.

Mogadishu is one of the largest cities on the east African coast. In the 1970's the estimated population was over a quarter million. After a period of relative stagnation after World War 11, Mogadishu has been growing at one of the highest rates on the African continent. This dramatic growth is shown in Figure 6.

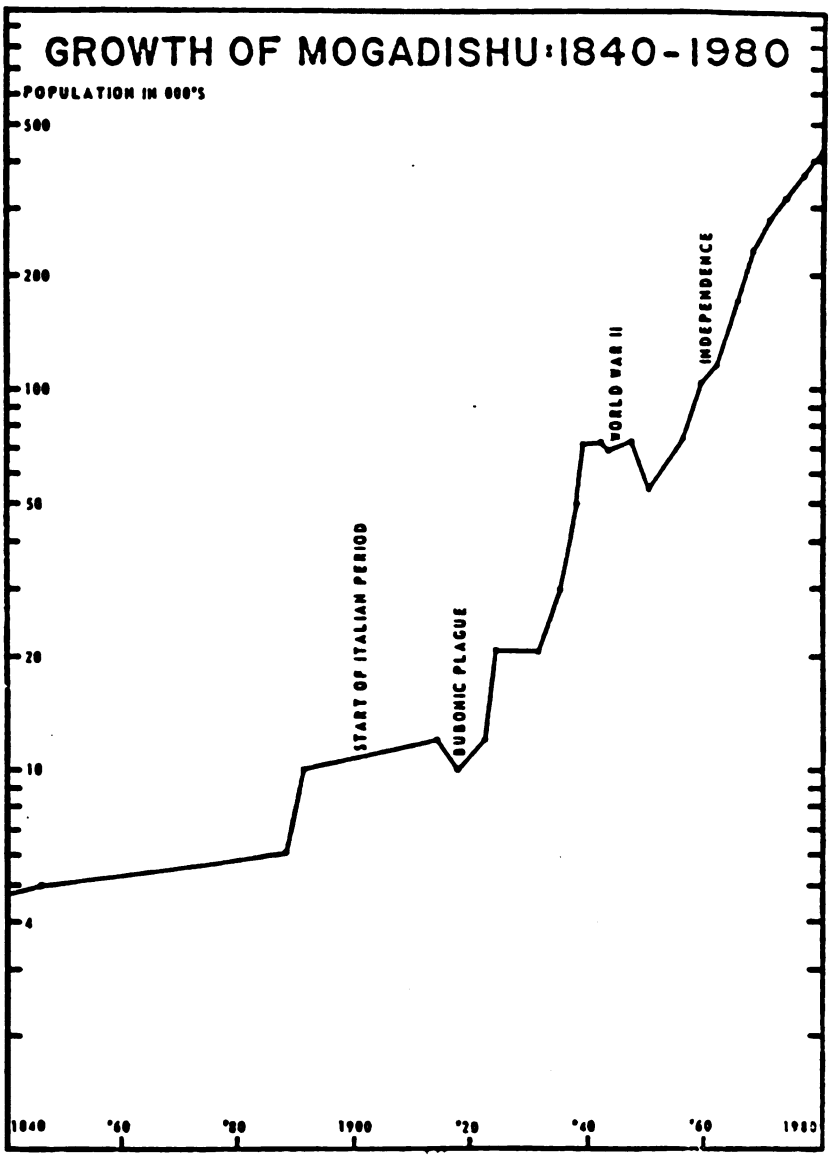
Figure 5

Growth of Mogadishu From 950 A.D.-1958

Source: Puzo (1972)

Figure 6

Growth of Mogadishu from 1840-1980



Source: Puzo (1972)

Mogadishu is also the primary urban city in Somalia. An increasing concentration of economic, administrative and military functions in Mogadishu in relation to other towns in Somalia has produced this situation. Immigrants have had a considerable impact on the composition of Mogadishu's population.

Forty per cent of Mogadishu's population in 1966 had been born outside of Mogadishu. The older localities in Mogadishu near the center of the city have the lowest proportions of persons born outside of Mogadishu. Somali immigrants to the city form about forty per cent of the populations of the newer, peripheral, localities. Mogadishu is an exception to the accepted generalization that the majority of African towns are a melting pot of "tribal" affiliations. Although different Somali clans migrate to the city, once settled they have a tendency to blend into a homogeneous urban population.

Mogadishu Today

Mogadishu has added to its importance considerably since Somalia's independence in 1960. The population has grown remarkably as government and commercial activities have increasingly been centered there. There are not many economic foci in Somalia besides Mogadishu and the government has tended to concentrate its limited investments there. The capital city is Somalia's dominant city in terms of

population, its leading port and commercial center, the primary focus of transportation routes from the interior, the only manufacturing area; the center for national and international development projects, and proximate to the country's only significant hinterland. The population is increasing numerically and proportionately faster than any other city in Somalia.

The morphology of Mogadishu is unlike that of any other city in Tropical Africa. In the city center is the old town, Xamarweyne, consisting of ancient Arab quarters. The old, original Arab quarters still stand on Mogadishu's original site, and Arab influences in architecture and commercial activities are still widespread. Arab-Persian and perhaps Indian groups accounted for virtually all of Mogadishu's population, from its inception to the mid thirteenth century (I.M. Lewis, 1955, p. 47).

One of the basic aspects of the morphology of Mogadishu, then, is the establishment of a colonial city adjacent to and surrounding an old indigenous core. Though Mogadishu was well organized by the Italians, one would be hard pressed to ascribe to it orderly theoretical sectors, 'concentric zones,' particular nuclei, or any notion regarding its total form. Most of the ancient Arab -built quarters of Xamarweyne and Shangaani still stand with their multi-storied buildings crowded upon one another, separated by narrow and winding pathways. The ancient core areas of Mogadishu fit in many

ways the characteristics of the "typical" Islamic -Arab city propounded by A. Hourani (1974, pp. 9-24). Firstly, both Xamarweyne and Shangaani were originally walled, and the old walls are still apparent in some places. Secondly, the prominently situated garesa served as a citadel for the defense of the old city. The third characteristic of an Islamic city does not apply as well in the case of Mogadishu, probably because the city never reached an appropriate magnitude. In this case one would expect "a central urban complex, which would include the great mosques and religious schools, and the central markets...with special places assigned for the main groups of craftsmen or traders" (A. Hourani, 1970, p. 21). Mogadishu possesses all of the above, particularly a large central market, but the great mosques and religious schools are smaller and more dispersed than is implied in the above quotation.

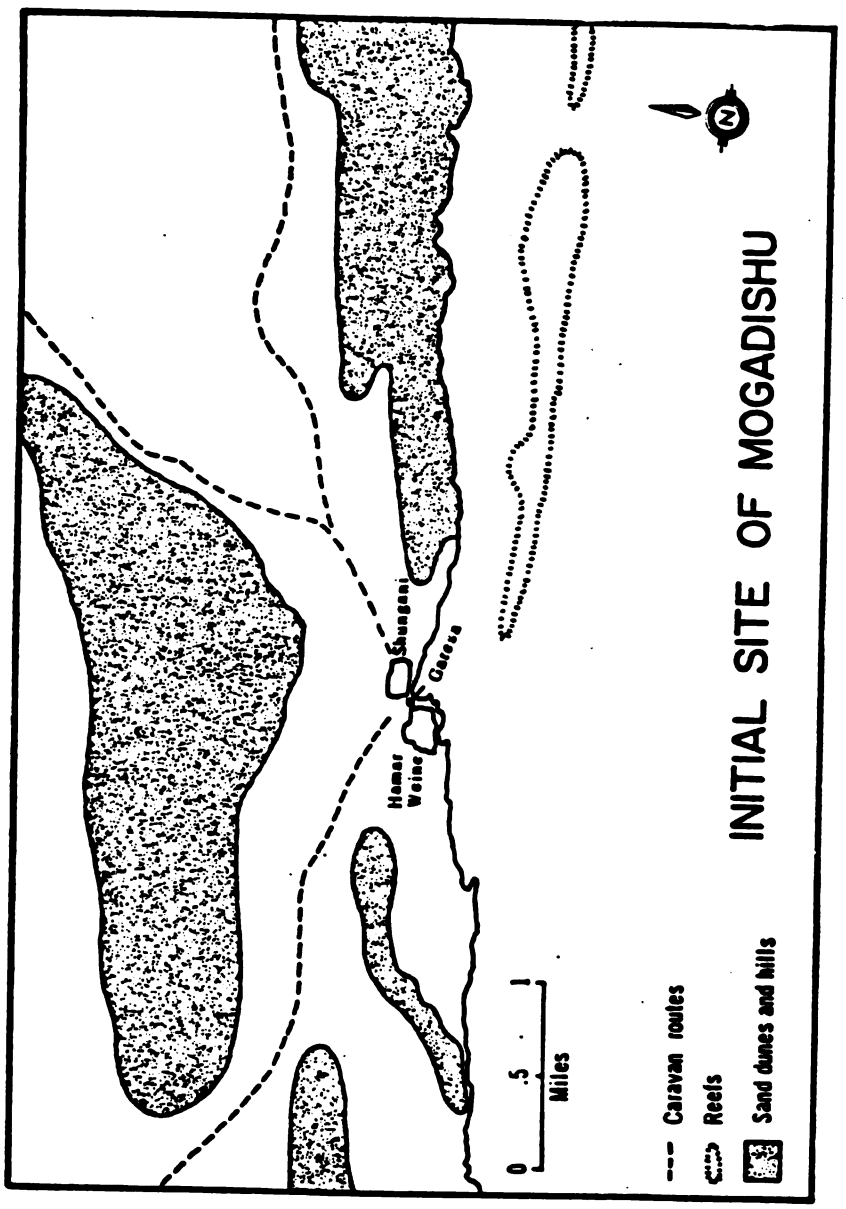
The internal pattern of circulation in Xamarweyne and Shangaani still resembles that of most ancient Arab cities. The absence of a general grid organization, the haphazard, periodic additions to buildings, the winding, narrow pathways suited to pedestrian and small cart traffic, and the tendency to vertical additions to buildings within the walls rather than horizontal expansion of the area outside of the walls, are very much in evidence in Mogadishu.

The colonial imprint is clearly discernible in Mogadishu. The Italians were responsible for the establishment of the

The Italians were responsible for the establishment of the functional zones in the city. The Italian planned quarters in Mogadishu are very distinct visually from the old Arab quarters or from newer Somali localities. The differences between the more spacious, relatively appealing and impressive 'colonial city' and the old Arab quarters or the newer Somali planned sections are readily apparent. Most Somalis in the interior of the country are nomadic or semi-nomadic and are thus quite mobile. This coupled with periodically severe conditions in the interior and the attractions of Mogadishu often account for great numbers of Somalis moving into the city today. There are no quarters of different Somali clans in Mogadishu. Immigrants settle wherever there is space available. Figure 7 shows the initial site and location of Mogadishu.

Figure 7

Initial Site and Location of Mogadishu



Source: Alpers (1983)

The functions of Mogadishu are representative of those of a leading city in a typically preindustrial, emerging nation. Somalia is one of the world's poorer emerging states. The city's importance as a political center outweighs any other considerations. Administrative and military activities in Mogadishu account for most of its economic base. It is the only area in Somalia where modern economic development, though limited, is occurring at a substantial pace. Muslim-Somali traditions are being integrated into rapidly evolving legislation; the Somali language is being developed into a written one, and the majority of post-elementary education occurs. In a nomadic country, formerly divided into two separate colonies, Mogadishu provides the only significant forum for the exchange and gradual fusion of the disparate folkways of the country's population.

The city is Somalia's leading industrial and commercial center and the most important port. Manufacturing consists primarily of small-scale manual enterprises. Commercial and service activities are also very small in scale. Nearly all of the economic activities of Mogadishu are at the tertiary level as the city has not yet developed a substantial secondary sector. Unemployment in Mogadishu is high and labor force participation is low, particularly among women. Employment in government services, especially the military, provides the main economic basis upon which Mogadishu functions.

The city is composed of thirteen districts or degmoyin. Each district is headed by a District Commissioner and deputy officials. The city itself is governed by a mayor. The physical setting of the districts display similar features with the exception of Xamarweyne, which comprises an entirely different physical and cultural environment. The inhabitants of Xamarweyne, the "reer Xamar," are the oldest coastal inhabitants of Mogadishu. Most of the ancient Arab-built quarters of Xamarweyne still stand with their multi-storied buildings crowded upon one another, separated by narrow and winding pathways. These mysterious looking buildings are reputed to be centuries old. The physical structure of these dwellings are of concrete and usually comprise two or three stories. The entrances to the buildings are in the narrow alleyways on the ground floor or street level. A flight of concrete stairs leads to the main living quarters. A number of little rooms, ie., living room, and bedrooms form a circle and surround the central courtyard. The courtyard has two primary functions: (1) it is a place where kitchen chores are performed, such as cooking, pounding grain, and washing, and (2) it serves as a gathering area where friends and relatives meet to exchange news. The buildings themselves usually have small openings in every room which function as windows; the columns across the windows are made out of steel or wood. Unpaved alleyways form passages between the buildings and comprise shops, Indian and Arab owned premises, selling

imported perfumes, clothing, and household wares. The "reer Xamar" also run little shops selling desserts or sweets called xalwo. Street sellers crowd the narrow passageways selling expensive imported silk and chiffon fabric for ladies garments known as the guntino or dhira.

The Xamarweyne market situated in the city centre is the main area where daily food produce such as fruits, and vegetables, and other foods such as eggs, pasta, oil and meat are sold and purchased daily. Peddlars also line the entrances to the market, selling their wares which include fabric, perfumes, kitchen utensils, and gold jewellery. A fish market run by a cooperative is situated along the beachfront entrance to the "reer Xamar" dwellings. A variety of Somali and Italian-owned restaurants are located along the Lido beach area. A number of mosques are also found in the city centre. Xamarweyne's impressive, age-old concrete buildings are a significant reminder of the precolonial existence of Mogadishu. This relic quarter of Mogadishu is by no means an unimportant part of the city. It is the pulse of city life housing several thousand inhabitants who have occupied the buildings over many generations.

The other districts of Mogadishu also unique in their own way, differ radically in physical type to the "reer Xamar" dwellings. As a result of the increased rate of urbanization, almost all residential areas are overcrowded. Poor and upper income households lie side by side. In predominantly poorer

districts, however, a number of clusters of poor homes vividly sketch the landscape. Mud, thatch, wood and tin form the main materials out of which poor homes are constructed. The design of these dwelling units consists of little rooms with an open courtyard in front. A vast majority of poor income families raise cattle, sheep, goats, and chicken as a means of supplementing their income. Livestock enclosures or pens are usually constructed in the open yard in front or alongside the unit. Most homes in the overcrowded districts do not have access to electricity or water resource facilities. Kerosene lamps and well water purchased in huge drums are the substitutes for such shortages. Cooking is done with charcoal and the main yard area is constantly occupied with household activities and chores. Upper income households display the following characteristics: western-styled concrete and brick structures, electricity and running water, huge iron gates in front of the house guarded by a watchman, lavish furnishings, servants quarters, and a hut shaped patio or outside social gathering and recreation area. These plush homes are in marked contrast to the simple dwelling units of poorer families.

Features characteristic of all districts is the presence of a central market selling food produce and other items, similar to that of Xamarweyne. Street sellers are also common, especially teenage boys and girls who sell sweets and cigarettes. Small mini markets, clothing shops, and

pharmacies are located in all areas. All main roads are tarred, while roads within the residential districts are primarily unpaved, sandy pathways. Administrative and financial activities account for most of Mogadishu's economic base. It is fast becoming a major financial centre and is the only city in Somalia where modern economic development is occurring at a substantial pace.

Summary

The nineteenth century was a period of decline for the city of Mogadishu. External factors that help explain this period are trading enterprises fostered by Indian merchants and the massive influx of slave labor. These external factors combined with internal strife in the form of rivalries between the two moieties of Xamarweyne and Shangaani, only served to exacerbate these rivalries.

The twentieth century rekindled the importance of Mogadishu as a primate city through its rapid growth and expansion. Italian rule stimulated the rapid evolution in the size and composition of Mogadishu. The colonial imprint is still clearly discernible in Mogadishu. The Italian planned quarters are quite distinct from the old Arab quarters or from newer Somali localities.

Migration to the city from the early 1900's to the present time has resulted in a rapid increase in the

population of Mogadishu. The revitalization of Mogadishu began with the establishment of Somalia Italiana in 1905. The selection of Mogadishu as the colonial capital instigated the rapid expansion of the city's population. Despite the availability of adequate economic opportunities in the city, and the increasing rate of unemployment, rural folk are still attracted to the city for a farrago of reasons. One may speculate that Mogadishu will continue to hold its own despite setbacks in economic growth.

The establishment of Mogadishu, its accession as one of the most important ports on the East African coast, and the evolution of its population from Arab to Somali were the most important events during the evolution of the city. With the arrival of large numbers of Somalis into the city, a basic aspect of Mogadishu was established which continues to this day.

Notes

1. Owen's description of the respectful manner in which his ships' officers were subjected to a manner of imprisonment, but with liberty to ramble about, reflects the coastal custom of managing visits of strangers through local mediators drawn from the ranks of the community notables known in Somalia as abbaan. See Lee Cassanelli, The Shaping of Somali Society, 1982, pp. 156-159.

2. Edward Alpers suggests that such a hypothesis is reflected in the available evidence from the 1840s into the early twentieth century. The most critical aspect of economic activity in the Benaadir was the remarkable growth of agricultural exports produced by a system of plantation slavery. See Edward Alpers 1983, "Mogadishu in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century: A Regional Perspective," Journal of African History, vol. 24, pp.441-459.

3. William Puzo states that the fact that Xamarweyne became a Somali section and Shangaani the Arab quarter is supported by the translations of the two names. Xamarweyne translates into 'great city' in Somali; Shangaani means 'on the sand' in Swahili, the language used by Arab merchants. See William Daniel Puzo, "Mogadishu, Somalia: Geographical Aspects of its Evolution, Population, Functions and Morphology," 1972, p. 104. Ph.D Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.

4. The larger history of resistance and realignment in the hinterland of Mogadishu, including its bearing upon coastal town politics, has been carefully reconstructed by Lee Cassanelli, The Shaping of Somali Society, 1982, pp. 207-253.

5. Mention is made by Georges Revoil, however, of the "great native festival" called lab, a communal festival which emphasized town unity while incorporating elements of ritual battle. See Georges Revoil, "Voyage chez les Benadirs, les Somalis, et les Bayouns en 1882-1883," Le Tour du Monde, 1885, p. 55, vol. XLIX.

CHAPTER THREE

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES OF THE HOUSEHOLD AND WOMEN

Introduction

This chapter reviews the anthropological approaches to the study of households and women, and outlines a conceptual framework for understanding the urban Somali experience. Issues concerning the household, community and family dominate the writings of social scientists studying African societies. The last thirty years has witnessed major shifts of approach in the study of households (Dan Bauer 1977; Jane Guyer 1981; Robert McC Netting et. al 1984). The "developmental cycle" model developed by MeyerFortes (1958) to bring order to the welter of household forms has aroused serious debate because of the high degree of flux in households, which cannot be adequately accounted for by such a model.

Furthermore, terminological constructs such as "household" and "community" provide an explanation of local forms of social organization in relation to their position in the regional, national and international economic and political structures.[1] In recent years there has been a great controversy as to whether the household model is applicable to African society as evident in the studies by Jane Guyer (1981), and in particular to the analysis of women in

households (Christine Oppong, 1981). In this chapter I will argue that the household is the primary unit of investigation for the changing status of women. The household as a unit makes this possible, for it is the locus of economic resources and decision-making processes.

With the above in mind, this chapter is divided into the following sections. The first part is an analysis of Fortes's (1958) theory of the "developmental cycle" as well as Dan Bauer's (1977) use of Fortes's paradigm in his study of Tigray households. The second concerns critiques levelled at the household model, focusing especially on Jane Guyer's mode of analysis and study of households in African society. The third attempts to explain why a revitalization of the household as a unit of investigation is taking place in the 1980s with reference to Robert McC Netting's volume entitled, Households (1984). The fourth is an attempt to formulate a new dimension to these controversies by introducing a model of continuous fragmentation.

The Developmental Cycle and Path Analysis of the Household

The key concepts used by Meyer Fortes (1958) to explain changes taking place in the domestic group or family are conceived of in terms of "time" and "social structure" or "social system." In formulating his paradigm of the "developmental cycle" Fortes isolates and conceptualizes the

time factor in conjunction with the social system. His definition of a "social system" is as follows:

> A social system by definition has a life. It is a social system...only so long as its elements and components are maintained and adequately replaced; and the replacement process is the crucial one because the human organism has a limited life span. Maintenance and replacement are temporal phenomena. It is the processes by which they are ensured that concerns us when we study the time factor in social structure (Meyer Fortes 1958, p. 1).

How then does a social system maintain itself and how does replacement contribute towards this end? Fortes argues that this is conceived of in terms of replacement of its two vital resources, namely, human capital and social capital. The former consists of the total body of knowledge and skills, values and beliefs, laws, and morals embodied in the customs and institutions of a society, and the utilities made available for supporting the livelihood of its members through the application of culture to natural resources. The domestic group must remain in operation over a significant period of time, long enough to rear offspring so that the society can maintain itself. This is what Fortes identifies as a "cyclical process" (1958, p. 2). Moreover, the group as a unit is said to retain the same form, but its members and activities go through changes during the cycle, thereby resulting in the dissolution of the original unit and its replacement by one or more units of the same kind.

Fortes distinguishes three main stages in the developmental cycle of the domestic group, namely, expansion, dispersal and replacement. Fortes states that expansion begins at the outset of the marriage of two people up until the completion of their family of procreation. The biological determining factor is said to be the duration of the wife's fertility (1958, p. 5). During the expansion phase the offspring are economically dependant on their parents. The second phase of dispersion is defined as fission, commencing with the oldest child and continuing until all the children are married. The third and final phase of replacement is characterized by the youngest child assuming responsibility for the household, culminating in the death of the parents and the replacement in the social structure of the family they founded, by the family of their children (1958, pp. 5-7).

Fortes makes reference to specific ethnographic examples to show how these phases operate. Among the Iban studied by D. Stenning (1958) if the oldest and youngest children of the bilek are both male, then the formers marriage marks the onset of the dispersal phase and he will reside uxorilocally. On the other hand the marriage of the latter marks the end of the cycle and his wife will reside virilocally. Fortes characterizes these as contrary choices as " phase-specific" expressions of the same set of structural factors. It is apparent, however, that the most significant process that Fortes discusses as influencing household structure is that

of marriage. The marriage of the oldest child marks the dissolution and replacement of their domestic group and are said to be the critical episodes in the developmental cycle. Hand in hand with marriage goes residential patterns, which according to Fortes, is the primary index of the boundaries of the internal structure of domestic groups and are the crystallization of the developmental process at a given point in time.

The concept of the "developmental cycle" as propounded by Meyer Fortes is a viable tool in the analysis of households. The developmental cycle sees both nuclear and extended families as part of the same kind of household as it changes over time. Fortes's formulation of the model has given us a starting point from which to analyze changes in household structure. Despite the advantages of the model and the explanation of household forms with reference to three specific phases of development, the model fails to adequately explain the following matters. Firstly, nuclear families may indeed over a significant period of time, change into extended families. An explanation of household forms, however, appear too simplistic if considered primarily in terms of the transition from nuclear to extended families, with marriage as the major factor in this process. What needs to be accounted for are the dynamic processes involved in household social structure; these need not be time-bound such as migration, divorce, polygyny, and rules of inheritance. This

criticism is equally applicable to the replacement phase which may not only be characterized by death of parents, but rather death of either parent, and the creation of households headed not only by the families of the children who remain. Female-headed households may also be a consequence of migration, when husbands seek work in the urban centers as the case of Somalia so clearly demonstrates.

Secondly, it is not clear from Fortes's analysis whether we are looking at the whole process from the point of view of the household or domestic group. Thirdly, Fortes states that his paradigm can be applied equally to all social systems (1958, p. 8). While we may be able to relate all three phases to "all social systems," we cannot help but get bogged down in the debate over cultural universals. For example, the dispersal phase is not always characterized by the marriage of the oldest child. Rural-urban migration and conflict among family members may also result in the dispersal of household members.

Dan Bauer (1977, 1985) has questioned Fortes's use of concepts such as "domain" and "field" used to differentiate social structure and social organization. According to Bauer, it is not always clear whether a domain is defined from the actor's point of view or from the outside observer's point of view. Bauer overcomes this ambiguity in his analysis of the Tigray household in Ethiopia by using terms such as "structural field" to refer to the actor's point of view and

"organizational field" to refer to the observer's viewpoint (1977, p. 35). Bauer's paradigm for the variation of household forms in Tigray household is based on the Fortesean developmental cycle with some modification. His analysis goes beyond that of Fortes's by showing that factors not time-bound affect household organization thereby resulting in diversified patterns. Among the Tigray, these factors are identified as death, divorce, gender of offspring, climatic and environmental factors. Moreover, Bauer is concerned with the relationship between kinship systems and the domestic cycle on one hand, and the household as an economic and farm management unit on the other.

In order to reduce the confusion that may result from the complexity involved in the multiple pathways that household processes may follow, Bauer introduces a path analysis (1985, p. 83). The use of a flow chart in the part analysis illustrates which processes and options are open to the household at each stage in its development. Following Fortes, Bauer equates the expansion phase with marriage, and further demonstrates that the birth of the first child changes the composition of the household and the social definition of the unit. Bauer carries his analysis further by discussing economic expansion and personnel adjustment as factors involved in the expansion phase. Personnel adjustment is regarded as the integral part of the economic expansion process, with labor utilization as an important factor. Bauer

classifies the dispersal phase with the marriage of junior members and divorce resulting in the creation of two separate households (1985). Death of one partner and the distribution of household property are factors in this regard. Moreover, Bauer's path analysis of the farming household stresses time and decision-making as significant issues altering household form. A household is confronted by a series of decisions that affect its wealth and composition. The order in which these decisions must be met is partly a function of time. For example, seeking a new wife comes after divorce, and is partly the result of the outcome of previously made decisions. The path analysis is designed to account for all forms of households found in the community and to draw attention to certain critical phases in the developmental process at which households may take off or decline. Bauer's analysis is a significant contribution to the study of household flux for it demonstrates how resources are passed on from one generation to the next.

Contradictions and Controversies of the Household Model

I now turn to an evaluation of Jane Guyer's critique of the household model. Guyer's main concern is the use of models to relate changes in the household to changes in the larger institutional structures, for example government policy. She believes that incorporation into state structures

provides boundary conditions within which other processes take place (1981, p. 106). National and international political structures have transformed and continue to effect the ways in which differentiation, commoditization, and new forms of association can take place. The power of the state embodied in administrative and legal structures, is a factor which enters into all situations. Guyer states that the most obvious way in which the state penetrates local systems is through alteration of authority structures and power relationships. The state alters political conditions under which local and kin-based groupings operate, and penetrates them more directly through the legal system. The state has intervened in family law with explicit political aims with unforseen consequences.

Guyer discusses in detail differential access to resources (1981, p. 109-111) with varying consequences and refers to studies on Lesotho by Andrew Spiegel (1980) and Sally Falk-Moore's study of the Chagga (1975). She also discusses monetarization of two important products which enter into domestic relations, ie., food and bridewealth. Studies by Reyna (1977) demonstrate that elders keep control over the labor of junior men in food production by controlling bridewealth transactions, and the ability of the younger generation to establish their own domestic groups. Monetarization has also allowed young men to earn their own

bridewealth; their fathers use bridewealth receipts for other purposes (David Parkin, 1980).

Guyer points out that the household model is inaccurate for Africa since there is the problem of defining household membership and maintaining continuous records on people with high mobility rates (1981). With a household approach one cannot deal with the following ethnographic observations, for example a woman's income is kept separate from that of her husband (Gloria Marshall 1964, p. 189), and that West African husbands and wives seldom form a unified unit of production (Polly Hill, 1975, p. 123). The way in which households are formed and the activities that members pursue together, are deeply affected by the institutional context. For example, Fortes has demonstrated that land use is determined not only by ecology and technology, but by the nature of the social units that work the land (1958). Furthermore Guyer believes that with a methodology based on the household as a major analytical concept, one cannot examine three critical features, namely, the relationship between men and women and the relationships amongst domestic groups in situations where wealth or control of resources may vary widely (1981).

Various criticisms have been levelled at the household as a unit of analysis. Jane Guyer (1981) has criticized such a typology which emphasizes rules and norms while neglecting variability and behavior. She sees the practical problems of trying to record household membership when people move about

a great deal. Others have pointed out that decisions concerning fertility and subsistence production are made by individuals, yet western demographers continue to use the household as the unit of analysis (Christine Oppong, 1981). Christine Oppong (1981) and Elina Haavia-Mannila (1981) demonstrate that researchers also presuppose a male-headed household, with the woman as housewife occupied with consumption, reproduction and child care. Prudence Woodford-Berger states that the household should remain an "unresolved, multidimensional concept" rather than an analytical concept that tends to submerge women and their work within un-differentiated, closed household organizational systems (1981, p. 34). It may be argued, however, that because of circumstances that mitigate against the household, the household is the primary locus for social change. Furthermore, the role assigned to women by virtue of using a household model certainly does not imply that women are only confined to reproductive activities. In fact, I would go so far as to say that the household should be viewed as a unit that allows women to manipulate their statuses and roles. It is the first and foremost outlet available to women enabling them to unveil the yoke of subordination and control by men.

Guyer's approach is rather eclectic. Commentators of Guyer's paper such as Sara Berry (1982) have defined Guyer's approach as an exercise in "fence sitting." Her approach is not clearly Marxist although she uses terminology associated

with Marxist writings. Furthermore, although her approach is not clearly cultural, it nevertheless documents the persistence of different configurations of kinship ideology and domestic organization in different ethnic groups, coming down heavily in favor of comparative social history and social structure. There is great power in an approach to local organization through key cultural concepts and through the way in which people see themselves, an aspect neglected by Guyer.

The concept of the household may be problematic if we try to designate the household as a collectivity or single unit. Household mobility and flux may be a challenge to the household model, nevertheless to exclude such a model on these grounds is to disregard one of the most important units of change in society. The household as a unit makes change possible; it has a locus, resources and labor force and is the seat of power and control for male members of the society.

Revitalization of the Concept of the Household

The use of a household methodology has been greatly strengthened by theoretical developments in the "new household economics" (G. Becker 1965) and Chayanovian theory (1966). These approaches depend critically on the assumption of the household as a unit controlling resources and making joint decisions about their allocation. Consequently, the household has become a fundamental concept in economic analysis of

Africa. Almost all survey data are collected in terms of the household and terminology such as " the small holder" (Anthony et al 1979) and the "family firm" (D. Hunt 1979) are common.

Is the household a significant unit in the description, comparison and analysis of human societies? Social historians and anthropologists have responded to this in a positive manner (Robert McC Netting et al 1984). Robert McC Netting states:

> the household was perhaps the most flexible and responsive social grouping the family household is an institution sensitive to minor, short-term fluctuations in the socio-economic environment and a prime means by which individuals adapt to the subtle shifts in opportunities and constraints that confront them (1979, p. 40).

William Rathje states "the household is society's most commonplace and basic socioeconomic unit" (1981, p.6). Peter Laslett states, " I believe that a convincing case can be made out in favor of the household as the fundamental unit in pre-industrial European society for social, economic, and even educational and political purposes " (1969, p. 199).

Why the sudden surge of interest in the household? Robert McC Netting, Richard Wilk and Eric Arnould (1984), give two primary reasons for this.[2] Firstly, the family or household has evolved from a "primitive," relatively undifferentiated, extended kin group into small, specialized nuclear groups familiar in the west. Secondly, the household is judged as a transitory group that precipitates in each

society from the action of culturally specific systems of kinship, marriage customs and rules of residence (1984, p. xiv). Netting, Wilk and Arnould then draw a distinction between the household and the family. Both households and families are said to be culturally defined; the former are task oriented residence units and the latter are conceived of as kinship groupings that need not be localized. Nonrelatives who live together, as well as servants and lodgers who cooperate in some common activities are household members, whereas non-resident kin are usually affiliated principally with other households.

Is the household then a significant and more viable unit of analysis? Selecting the household as a common focus for social scientific research and analysis has both practical and theoretical justifications. Almost everyone grows up in a household and continues to live in such a unit; there is therefore a pervasive recognition of the reality and relevance of this group. Peter Kunstadter makes the following statement:

> most people in most societies at most times live in households, membership in which is usually based on kin relationships of marriage and descent, which are simultaneously a combination of dwelling unit, a unit of economic cooperation and the unit within which most reproductive and early childhood and socialization takes place (1984, p. 299).

The household is thus the fundamental unit of social organization. The household is the primary arena for the expression of age and sex roles, kinship, socialization, and economic cooperation. Decisions emerge from households through negotiation, disagreement, conflict and bargaining. Decisions to marry, build a house, take in a relative, hire a maid, or to migrate, are seldom made or acted on by isolated individuals, because such decisions necessarily affect household morphology and activities. Pooling and sharing of resources, food processing, cooking, eating and sheltering from the elements tend to take place in the household which has become a standard unit of analysis for ecological and economic purposes. Nutrition is characteristically measured there, the division of labor by age, sex and status can be directly observed. Governments continue to collect basic census data at the household level.

A further reason for the study of the household is that when descent groups break down, as ethnic groups and cities coalesce, the household neither disintegrates nor completely transforms itself. The controversy about the changes in household patterning that appear, such as single-person households, elderly parents in their married children's household, warn us of the cultural and emotional values that surround this form of grouping. Social scientists such as E. A. Hammel have pointed out that rather than concentrating on the household with all its unpredictable, "stochastic

fluctuation", we could more appropriately observe the important behaviors and norms of people interacting by virtue of household comembership (1984). Household studies have been slanted towards coresidential criteria. Sharing of a domicile is one of the several features of the household that depend on the viewpoint of the investigation. Coresidence is a slippery standard when applied to guests and transients. It is also difficult to apply to dwellers under one roof who use separate hearths and food stores, adjoining rooms around a compound courtyard or clustered dwellings.[3]

Though recognizing the practical problems of data gathering and the theoretical difficulties of applying the designation household, Netting states that we should continue to regard the household as a part of our conceptual vocabulary that can be effectively used. The household is more universal and more cross-culturally comparable than many more frequently studied institutions. Netting, Wilk and Arnould (1984) in Households focus their papers on the basic issue of how and why households vary within and between societies or over time within the same society. The proposal in the Wilk and Netting paper is a simple one. Households had previously been assumed to perform certain universal functions or activities, units that share in some combination, production, coresidence, consumption or reproductive tasks. Previously, households were usually described and enumerated on the basis of structural characteristics, namely, size and kinship

composition or generational extension. Some of the confusion about household variation and change derives from conflating the two dimensions, ie., not differentiating what households look like (morphology) from what they do (activity). Wilk and Netting therefore argue that the morphology/ activity dichotomy makes sense out of cases where households are changing or adapting their functions to new economic, political or ecological circumstances (1984).

Sylvia Yanagisako's study of Japanese society shows that while a household can be defined by the activities it performs or by its shape and size, it can also be defined as a symbolic entity, a cognitive model in the minds of the members of the society (1984, p. 44). Anthony Carter convincingly demonstrates that rules and strategies of household systems can be separated analytically and sometimes in practice, from rules and strategies of kinship systems (1984). Carter studied household histories in India, and examines the interplay between household rules and strategies in the individual decisions that lead to particular household forms. Household relationships are ordered by principles of ownership, gender and seniority rather than by specific rules of kinship. Carter also proposes that the link between economic activities of the household and their morphological structure is to be found in the household system. Household systems are culturally defined and set limits on the possible structural solutions to instrumental problems. It is clear

that people's concepts of the household have important and vital effects on their behavior, for example Kunstadter's study (1984) of inter-ethnic groups in Thailand, demonstrates that the household can serve as potent symbols of ethnic identity and historical continuity.

In concluding this section I reiterate the statement that the household is the most important unit of study in attempting to explain the changes taking place in society and especially in the domain of women.

A Model of Continuous Fragmentation: Women and Households

Despite the criticisms levelled at the use of "household" as a typological scheme, I believe that it is the basic unit in society which allows us to examine and evaluate the underlying dynamics of the society as a whole. In formulating an alternative approach that can account for wide variations in household structure and composition, I have found the ideas set forth by Dan Bauer (1977, 1985) and those presented by social scientists in Households (1984) most useful. Bauer's study of the Tigray household helps dispel the notion that the transition from nuclear to extended family is a relatively simple one with marriage as the crucial, all embracing factor (1977). Jane Guyer's convincing arguments in favor of social history, social structure, and decision-making, have further inspired the formulation of an alternate model that can

adequately try to explain why changes in household form affect the status of women. The rekindling of the concept of the household by Netting, Wilk and Arnould (1984), as a major unit of analysis by which we can explore the dynamics of household morphology and activity leads us to provide answers to the questions of how and why households change over time.

I will argue that when the household undergoes change, it is the position of women that is most affected. In order to understand why the household should be reintroduced as the main unit of analysis for the changing status of women, something needs to be said about the literature available on women. There is a consensus among social scientists that women are condemned to lives of servitude. In the 1960s Denise Paulme's book, Women of Tropical Africa (1963) presented a collection of essays by female anthropologists, setting the stage for a new phase in the study of African women. In the 1970s Ester Boserup in her book Womens Role in Economic Development (1970) was the first statement of the negative effect of colonialism on African women, showing that women experienced a substantial loss in their political and economic status.[4] Also in the 1970s, Nancy J Hafkin and Edna Bay's Women in Africa (1976) attempted to show African women from a changed viewpoint, not as objects but as actors constructively seeking to alter their environments and become part of history. The authors analyze women's economic independence and the impact of women's associations as some

of the spheres in which women have control over decision-making. At the same time they realize that women cannot be totally in control of all the social and economic forces which affect their lives. Changes in the sphere of male activities must necessarily affect the other and vice versa, even in societies where there is a rigid division of labor.

A more recent volume, Women and Class in Africa (Claire Robertson and Iris Berger, 1986), is an attempt at reconceptualizing and expanding the debate on women and class. A number of concepts central to this work are the concern with the impact of capitalism and its effect on class formation, ideas of class struggle and class consciousness as it pertains to women, and national and international economic structures as the key to women's oppression.[5] The above studies show the African woman's relatively greater economic potential and independence in a nonindustrialized world. Women's contributions to the economic well-being of the family and community are recognized and respected. Moreover, economic and political change, even when instituted to improve women's position, has detrimental effects on women's economic potential. Change may affect men and women differentially.

I have formulated a model of continuous fragmentation that emphasizes the household rather than the international economy as prime locus in the study of women. The model will elucidate the following factors. Firstly, the mechanisms of control by men over women will be explored and made clear by

using such a model. The model of continuous fragmentation will enable us to explore what the factors are in decision-making, who has control over decision-making, and the cultural and economic factors that determine decision-making. Secondly, activities such as marriage, child-bearing, and family structure will be explained as both cultural and economic choices. The household will be identified as a monolithic decision-making unit and an arena for overlapping social relationships. The household may change with changes in social and economic conditions, and also involve conflict and cooperation amongst its members. Changes in the structure of economic opportunities may lead to shifts in patterns of authority and autonomy, and mutual expectations within the household. Thirdly, changes in opportunities often affect members of the household differently, altering the balance of power within households and influencing the way household members allocate resources jointly or separately. Continuous fragmentation alters the household radically and affects the household in complex ways, , for it involves changing patterns of cooperation, conflict and domination among individuals and households. I will evaluate the male sphere of decision-making (culturally-motivated) versus the female sphere of making decisions (economically determined), in order to evaluate how women have autonomy and control over their lives.

The model commences with the position of the "original household," meaning a unit consisting of a husband, wife and

children. Fragmentation is defined as including factors other than marriage of the children of the "original household." This relates specifically to the stochastic flux in household form stemming from decision-making processes in the sphere of divorce, polygyny and migration. In the case of Somali urban households these decisions may be said to be both culturally and economically determined, thus altering the structure and composition of households in significant ways. Factors such as the death of either spouse and the status and position of remaining children in the household further affect household structure.

This alternate model of the household will focus specifically on how the changes in the household, resulting from certain decision-making processes, effect the economic, social and legal status of women in Somali society. The issues concerning bridewealth arrangements, the division of labor, the allocation of responsibility and decision-making, and rules of inheritance will be explored in conjunction with the model outlined above.

Summary

The "developmental cycle" model formulated by Fortes is useful in explaining some of the factors associated with the transition from nuclear to extended family households. Nevertheless, it is inadequate since there are numerous

factors that cause households to change at various times during their development. While the household model has been criticized on various grounds, it is still an appropriate and viable model if one defines the term household within the context of the society under study. Coresidence, pooling of income and resources, and eating and kinship units are some of the ways in which the household may be conceptualized.

I have formulated a model of continuous fragmentation in order to explain the dynamic processes occurring within households. The model emphasizes the stochastic breaking up and dissolution of the "original household" by focusing on decision-making patterns as an essential component. The cultural and economic spheres are identified with the male and female domains respectively.

Notes

1. The increasing use of such terminology in a global sense is indicative of the work of Claude Meillasoux in his study of Guoro society. See Claude Meillasoux (1968) Urbanization in an African Community: Voluntary Associations in Bamako. Seattle, University of Washington Press.

2. The Wenner-Gren Foundation symposium, "Households: Changing Form and Function," gave rise to this volume and rekindled the interest in household activity and form.

3. A prime example of the limitations of the household as a means of classifying and analyzing domestic groups, concerns the absence of coresidence in Ghanaian Akan society. The concept of a "matricentral cell" is contrasted to the dwelling units of men. Food production, household chores, and transfers of cash are carried out in a number of households in a single day. See Prudence Woodford Berger (1981).

4. It is important to acknowledge, however, that women did not remain passive to the radical changes inflicted upon them by the colonial overlords. The constructive efforts made by women to overthrow the yoke of colonialism is well documented. See A.E. Afigbo (1972), The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in South-Eastern Nigeria, 1891-1929. London, Oxford University Press; Simi Afonja (1983), "Women, Power and Authority in Traditional Yoruba Society," in L. Dube, Eleanor Leacock and Shirley Ardener (eds.) Women in Society and Development. London, Oxford University Press; Judith Van Ellen (1976), "'Aba Riots' or 'Women's War'? Ideology, Stratification and the Invisibility of Women," in Nancy Hafkin and Edna Bay (eds.) Women in Africa. Stanford, stanford University Press; and Christine Oppong (1981) African Women: Their Struggle for Economic Independence. London, Zed Press.

5. Dorothy Vallenga and Simi Afonja emphasize household structure as a determinant of differing access to resources, and the global economy and the household as prime loci of women's oppression in their studies of Ghana and Nigeria respectively. See Dorothy Vallenga (1977), "Attempts to Change the Marriage Laws of Ghana and the Ivory Coast," in P. Foster and A Zolberg (eds.) Ghana and the Ivory Coast. Chicago, Chicago University Press; Simi Afonja (1981a), "Agricultural Colonization in Twentieth Century Western Nigeria," Journal of Tropical Geography vol. 33, pp. 1-8.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DYNAMIC PROCESSES IN HOUSEHOLD SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN MOGADISHU

Introduction

The previous chapters focused on the growth and expansion of Mogadishu and showed that the importance of the city has increased dramatically over the years. In Chapter three I introduced a model of continuous fragmentation that would provide a more adequate explanation for the changing social structure of households and women. It concluded that the changing status of women could be best understood by using the household as the main unit of investigation. In order to understand the operation of the dynamic process of change, this chapter begins by exploring the structure and composition of the household in Mogadishu and the role played by family members.

The main issues discussed in this chapter are as follows. Firstly, the household has to defined within the context of Somali society. An understanding of what constitutes a household in Mogadishu is of utmost importance in order to comprehend the changes that occur during its evolution and expansion. Household type and conditions are discussed in order to illustrate the wide variations emanating out of economic conditions. Secondly, the composition of the

household is analyzed in relation to: (a) the cultural factors accounting for the priority of male-headed versus female-headed households, and (b) the income generating activities and the significance of support networks that provide households with options during times of crises. Thirdly, the model of continuous fragmentation formulated in chapter three is demonstrated with reference to urban Somali households. In this chapter I will focus specifically on the choices and decisions that emanate from the male domain (cultural system) versus that of the female domain (economic system).

Household Structure in Mogadishu

Upon first interviewing heads of households in Mogadishu, one senses that the household is in constant flux, and that the definition of the word "household" has to be made clear within the context of the people under study. The predominance of extended families and multiple family households necessitate a more precise demarcation of the household. Furthermore decisions about marriage, divorce and labor migration must be considered for their effects on the household and its members. Moreover, it is common in urban Somali households for a dwelling unit or compound to include more than one family, thus further adding fuel to the problem as to the conceptualization of the household.

Eileen Messer has listed four conceptual units of

domestic groupings in defining households, namely, eating units, food budget units, child-rearing units and social networks (1983, p. 10). Messer calls these units between the individual and the community, "household units," thus not restricting the analysis to actual units of coresidence. More often sharing of resources takes place among networks of people related by blood or marriage who share resources but not residence. In the case of households in Mogadishu, eating units and social networks are the main indicators in defining households. The term household in this study thus refers not only to family members and other kin resident in a dwelling unit, but also includes those immediate family members who have moved away from the "original household" and live elsewhere. I have defined the household in Mogadishu as comprising the following: (1) eating units, (2) pooling of income by immediate family members including those living outside of the household, (3) coresidence and (4) eating units.

I will now turn to a discussion of physical house-types in Mogadishu. A description of physical structures show clearly the Arab and Italian influence, as well as the economic status of Somali families. There are at least seven different types and structures of houses in Mogadishu, listed as follows:

(a) Sar or daar is a house built of coral stone and or cement block walls and either metal or concrete roofing. Variations

of this type are:

- laba dabag or two storey houses found in the wealthier degmooyin of Hodan, Wadajir and Cabdulcasiis.

- villa or one storey house with at least three rooms, a tiled floor and verandah, a garden and garage space.

- nus villa or a "half" villa with similar features but with a small compound.

- ordinary sar or stone house with a door or small gate opening onto the street directly from rooms or from a small courtyard with bedrooms and a pit latrine.

(b) baraako or house whose walls are built with wooden planks, often second-hand. In the older and more central parts of Mogadishu they are also found with masonry bases up to a metre high. These structures are sometimes transformed in the sar type, when people have legal rights to the land and are not renting.

(c) cariish or house whose walls are built of sticks covered with mud, mixed with cow dung or cement, and with a roof of corrugated iron, consisting of not more than three rooms. Cooking is often done in the attached courtyard. These dwellings do not have cement floors. More often the carshaan (plural of cariish) are located in compounds with two other carshaan in a U shape. Carshaan are the most common form of second-class housing in Mogadishu.

(d) jiingad is a house of two rooms built of iron. Some jiingad are built from the metal of flattened two litre drums

called fuustoyin. Their main disadvantage is that they trap the heat and humidity. Their advantage is that they are cheaper to build than carshaan.

(e) waab, is a hut of one room, built with sticks as the main frame and covered with sacks, plastic, tarpaulin, tin and other material that might be available. These are most commonly found in the obbosibo areas of Yaaqshiid and Wadajir.

(f) aqal Somali is the traditional one room portable dwelling used by Somali nomads. These are rarely found in the districts of Mogadishu.

(g) daash or shelter built of sticks, sometimes in association with acacia trees and mainly used for koranic school or as tea shops.

An indication of the distribution of house types in the districts surveyed is listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Distribution of House Types

District	Sar	Baraako	Cariish	Jiingad
Wadajir	38%	15%	5%	42%
Hodan	70%	0%	0%	30%
Xamarweyne	100%	0%	0%	0%
Yaaqshiid	10%	65%	5%	20%
Wardhiigleey	23%	40%	4%	33%

Xamarweyne is unique for all buildings housing families are made out of coral stone and cement. These massive stone

structures, often three storeys high dot the landscape along the Mogadishu coastline. These mysterious looking buildings are centuries old, having first housed the earliest coastal inhabitants of Mogadishu. At the death of the head of the original household, the son remaining usually replaced the father, thus these concrete dwellings have been passed on from generation to generation.

Travelling along the tarmac roads sarro dominate the landscape and seem to be in the majority. The situation is not the same when walking through sandy unpaved backstreets, where the other types are more common. Similarly, in the outlying degmooyin the largest number of jingaad, baraako, and cariish predominate and are far more numerous. The average for the city as a whole from the sample of one hundred households surveyed is 52% for the occurence of baraako, cariiah, and jiingad house types and 48% for sar type housing with the majority falling in the category of ordinary villa and ordinary sar.

The cariish was once the most prominant house type in Mogadishu and in the 1950s and 1960s housed more of the population than any other house type. Once the migrant to Mogadishu decides to settle permanently, he builds the cariish in place of the akal. The number of households and population of any dwelling unit increases as a Somali homesite moves through the housing sequence. Areas of stone house construction represent some of the highest and lowest

population densities in Mogadishu. The old quarters of casa moro house types in Xamarweyne have some of the cities highest population densities. Housing conditions reflect very clearly the economic status of the households, and are perhaps the most obvious feature in trying to distinguish poor from upper income families.[1] A discussion of the progression in the housing sequence is a vital background to an understanding of how and why changes take place in households.

Household Social Structure and Support Networks

The average age of heads of households in Mogadishu is forty two years. Ninety two percent of households are male-headed, while eight per cent are female-headed. The overwhelming majority of male-headed households may be attributed to the following factors: firstly, Somali society is patriarchal, and secondly Somali society also further circumscribes to the Islamic code. Given these factors we may then try to account for the circumstances that sanction the role of women as heads of households. In Somali society women derived their position as heads of households only due to specific circumstances, namely when the husband was deceased and no elder sons remain in the household to take over the role of head of the household.

In situations were men were working abroad, men were still considered to be the head of the household. In her

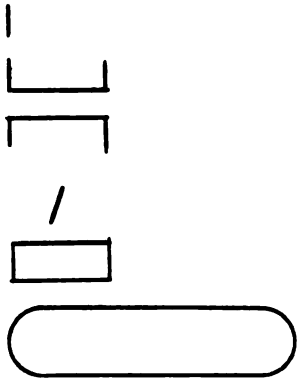
husband's absence one may still consider the wife to be the head of the household, for she runs the home on a day to day basis and makes decisions concerning the household. These decisions concern the daily purchase of food, medical care for the children, house repairs and the expenditure involved during times of religious celebration and festivities. The husband's role is more of a financial nature forwarding the wife money to run the household. Nevertheless, on the basis of Somali norms the husband working abroad is the head of the household despite his absence from the home. The type of household form generated by the above conditions is shown in Figure 8.1 and 8.2

In male-headed households the most represented occupation was that of businessman (ganacsato) followed by those who had no vocational status and were unemployed. The category of businessman includes the following persons: those owning a shop or departmental store, those involved in exporting livestock, and those engaged in commercial activities but do not own their own business premise, and whose economic activities centre around buying and selling various items such as garments, shoes, textiles and imported food products.

Civil servants (shagaale dawlo) comprise the next most represented occupation followed by military personnel and store clerks.

Figure 8.1

Household Form 1 Male Headed Household



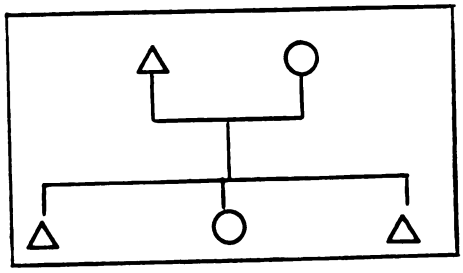
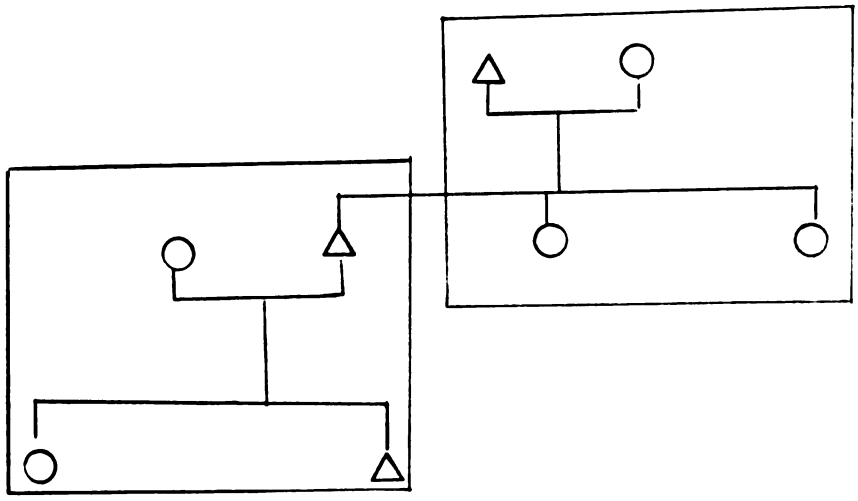


Figure 8.2

Household Form 2 Female-Headed Household



Minority represented occupations were the following: mechanic, sailor, watchman (wardiyo), nurse, student (arday), news reporter, teacher, accountant, pharmacist and peddlar. Shifts from previous to present occupation show a trend towards business-oriented economic activities; this may be attributed to the fact that government salaries are very low and professional occupations such as teacher and doctor also fall into the category of lowest paid jobs. The importance assigned to the above occupations is listed in Table 2. Furthermore, those involved in business-oriented tasks had a flexible working hour and opportunity to earn more money than civil servants. Wage earnings were spent on running the home, ie., purchasing clothing, food, paying rent, medical expenses and transportation. Upper income families, however, indicated that money earned was not only put to household use, but was also invested and used to educate children abroad in the USA, Europe and Saudi Arabia.

Table 2

Occupational Specialization of Head of the Household

Occupation		Percent
Male-Headed HH	Businessman	34%
	Unemployed	11%
	Civil Servant	10%
	Store Clerk	6%
	Military Personnel	5%
	Mechanic	4%
	Work Abroad	4%
	Peddlar	4%
	Shauffer	3%
	Party Representatives	2%

Table 2 (cont'd)

	Company Manager	2%
	Construction Worker	2%
	Engineer	2%
	News Reporter	1%
	Teacher	1%
	Nurse	1%
Female-Headed HH	Housewife	3%
	Makes Mats and Baskets	2%
	Midwife	1%
	Raises cattle/sells milk	1%
	Petty Trade/ sells fruit	1%

Salaries in Somalia, especially for civil servants, including high ranking government officials are extremely low, ranging from six hundred to four thousand Somali shillings per month. The majority of teachers are paid a little more than six hundred Somali shillings per month, less than a domestic servant (adeegto) would receive in food and board alone. Doctors are paid no more than two thousand Somali shillings per month, far less than construction laborers.

The discrepancy between actual income earned from holding a regular job, and daily household expenditure is a common phenomenon in Mogadishu. Renting a modest room or home costs at least seven hundred to two thousand Somali shillings per month. Daily expenditure on basic foods costs at least three hundred Somali shillings per day. Indeed, other income generating activities therefore form a significant part of one's total income. Virtually all breadwinners are forced to engage in other income generating activities in order to

supplement their actual income to eke out a living. More time is spent out of the work place with household heads engaging in a range of activities to make ends meet. Some of the jobs held outside of the work place are performing the duties of a watchman, renting rooms and buying and selling goods. Table 3.1 gives some indication of income earned in Somali households in Mogadishu, while Table 3.2 shows the distribution of households whose income includes rent.

Table 3.1

Income Earned in Households in Mogadishu

Income/Somali Shilling	Percent
No income	11%
600-1000	20%
1100-3000	32%
3100-10000	5%
11000-15000	12%
16000-20000	3%
21000-30000	1%
31000-50000	3%
51000-100000	2%

Table 3.2

Families Renting Houses or Rooms

District	Own Home	Rent	Rent/pm*
Wadajir	70%	30%	700-1000
Hodan	95%	5%	25000
Xamarweyne	100%	0%	0%
Yaaqshiid	40%	60%	250-1500
Wardhiigleey	68%	32%	550-2300

*in Somali shillings

Income distribution shows that the majority of Somalis earn between eleven hundred to three thousand Somali shillings per month. Moreover, there is a tendency for poorer families to rent a dwelling unit, for they cannot afford the exorbitant costs involved in building one's own house. Xamarweyne is unique in the sense that the old buildings have been occupied by the same family over many generations.

In order to understand how a family on a meager income can eke out a daily subsistence, we need to explore the mechanisms open to individuals. Two main channels perform vital functions in Somali society. The first involves the particular technical and other skills that a person may have, and his/her exploitation of these skills to their utmost advantage. The second concerns the support network provided by extended kin members.

In relation to the first, at least three factors explain why government workers, as a group are not as impoverished as might be expected. Firstly, there are some civil servants who can sell their work skills on the outside labor market away from the normal work place. Civil servants in this category include doctors, electricians, mechanics, plumbers, carpenters and teachers who run private schools. Other civil servants may hold a second job, unrelated to their government position. Secondly, some civil servants are supported by immediate family members and other relatives, who live either in Mogadishu or who are working abroad, especially in Saudi

Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The third form of additional support is peculiar to those who hold key positions in the bureaucracy. People in this category are usually without specialized technical skills which can be used or sold on the open market. Key positions are those where essential documentation is issued or processed, where access to senior staff is controlled, where staff appointments and transfers are made, and where access to physical resources is restricted. Benefits can come to people in these positions in a variety of forms, one of which is termed dhaadac (literally, "things that fall"). These are fringe benefits that come with holding an important position. Dhaadac can be in the form of access to the use of a vehicle or telephone or other vital resources. Another form of benefit that can be received is hawl fududeyn (literally," make work easier"); these are informal payments received for services given, as a part of a person's normal duties as a fee for services rendered. These can be legal services such as stamping and completing a required form in accordance with regular procedures.

A less tangible but equally important benefit is the accumulation of favors owed. People in important positions can negotiate access or assistance in other forms, for others who are in debt to them for similar favors to be done in the future. Use of these favors can result in a large stock of influence being accumulated as well as significant material

and status benefits. Garabsiin or "giving a shoulder," is one expression used in connection with this form of benefit payment. Other income generating activities form the most important means of obtaining income and running the household.

I shall now discuss the options open to female and male-headed households during times of need with reference to "the economy of affection," a term coined by Goren Hyden and used by him in a broader African context (G. Hyden, 1983, p. 8). A question that needs to be raised is: how do females as heads of households generate income and regulate the daily activities of the household? Only a minority are housewives and do not engage in any income generating activities nor do they hold any regular jobs. The majority of women engage in tasks such as making mats, raising cattle, petty trade and midwifery in order to support their families. Table 4 shows the distribution of the occupations of women as heads of households:

Table 4

Occupation of Women Heads of Households

Occupation	Percent
Female-headed households	8%
Housewives	37%
Women working	63%
Women living alone	25%
Households including only children	75%
HH with married children and spouses	37%
HH with extended kin members	25%
HH with non-productive members	62%
HH with productive members	38%
HH receiving support-kaalmo	100%

Support networks and assistance from extended family members thus constitute a vital source of income for female-headed households.

It is well known that throughout much of Somalia many households belong to broad kinship networks. Through these networks individual households can call upon money, goods, information and influence in times of crises or daily need. At other times members of those networks can make demands on individual households for the same kind of support. In Mogadishu, these networks have expanded to include neighbors and friends made at the work place. The term used by Somalis to describe this exchange system is called shaxaat, which may be translated as help given to an individual in the form of cash or kind and not necessarily during periods of urgent need. These support networks have at least two functions. Firstly, they function as an integral part of the market economy mobilizing money and information to be used for both consumption and investment. Secondly, they also function as a welfare system supporting those who are unable to survive solely by their participation in the market economy.

In order to understand fully how the support system operates in households in Mogadishu, two factors need to be taken into consideration. The first involves the economic tasks performed by household members which includes those holding regular jobs, as well as those involved in other income generating activities. The second concerns immediate

family members living away from the original household and the support system that exists between the two. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 give some indication of these trends.

Table 5.1

Productive and Non-Productive Members

District	Husband	Husband/Wife	Children
Wadajir	95%	11%	22%
Hodan	97%	10%	50%
Xamar Weyne	90%	0%	10%
Yaaqshiid	84%	5%	25%
Wardhiigleey	80%	9%	20%

Table 5.2

Support Networks Available to Households

District	HH/Children Out	HH. Aid	Aid HH.
Wadajir	30%	5%	50%
Hodan	35%	51%	44%
Xamar Weyne	35%	0%	42%
Yaaqshiid	10%	50%	0%
Wardhiigleey	30%	17%	65%

The affluent or upper income households in Wadajir and Hodan show a trend towards more women being employed not only in regular government jobs, but also engaged in economic tasks, such as petty trade, and contributing to the income of the household. Moreover, the likelihood of children with an education being employed in the government sector as well as

in the teaching profession is the highest in the district of Hodan.

The support system that exists between the original household and immediate kin living away from the household introduces another dimension to kin relationships. Children of low income families who are living with extended kin in the rural area receive financial and other support from their parents living in Mogadishu. Other instances that warrant the support of children relates to upper income families who finance their children's education at institutions overseas. Moreover, only those offspring who have married and have changed residence, provide support to their family members in the original household. There are many circumstances in which assistance is given freely through people's support networks, often without request. These are: (1) when a couple get married, (2) when a member of the household dies, (3) when medical treatment is needed, (4) when a person is about to travel overseas or to other regions, (5) when a family wants to educate their children in the city, and (6) when a family does not have sufficient for its basic needs such as rent or food, because of lack of employment or insufficient income.

Support networks form a very significant part of household social structure in Mogadishu. In the course of the study of Mogadishu, I inquired about the giving and receiving of both kaalmo (support) and deeyman (loans). Kaalmo was distinguished from deeyman because it is given

without expectation of repayment whereas deeyman are expected to be repaid. Kaalmo is usually sought first whereas deeyman is the next alternative if kaalmo is not available. When the sources of kaalmo received by households in each district is shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Households Receiving Support/Kaalmo

Receive Kaalmo	Wadajir	Hodan	Xamar.	Yaaq.	Ward.
Other HH Members	35%	50%	25%	48%	40%
Kin in Mogadishu	23%	25%	15%	21%	31%
Kin in Somalia	31%	26%	2%	13%	17%
Kin Abroad	7%	31%	5%	11%	9%
Friends	4%	6%	2%	2%	3%
Neighbors	3%	3%	3%	1%	2%

In Mogadishu the borrowing and lending of money occurs as part of both the market economy and part of the informal "welfare systems" that assist those unable to eke out a subsistence by engaging in the market economy. Its welfare function is possible because throughout most of Somalia interest is not charged on loans; this is because of the Islamic prohibition against the charging of interest (riba).

In Mogadishu women also come together to form rotating credit groups. In Mogadishu such a group is commonly called hagbad, shalongo, or ayuuto depending on what part of the country the person is from. Typically a group of women arrange for each one of them to contribute a sum of money of

about one hundred Somali shillings every week to a common fund. Each week one of the members has the right to take the amount given in. Each other member in turn has the right of withdrawal in subsequent weeks. The rotating credit system forms a means of credit extension for those who wish an early withdrawal before making all contributions. This system also serves as a savings mechanism for those who choose to be last in line to receive their payment.

Public attitude towards informal organizations such as the rotating credit system is ambivalent. Some men and women feel that this system is xaraam or forbidden by Islam, because they encourage women to use money their spouses have given them for food purchase and save it for other purposes. Some feel that it reduces men's control over family finances and therefore it should not be allowed. Still others feel that they are entirely legitimate, especially if the women has earned the money herself. Despite such biases, however, rotating credit groups do exist and are made up almost solely of women who have access to some means of making money. The advantage of rotating credit group's are to save money, there is no restriction as to what one can do with the money, and money is available in the case of emergency situations. Furthermore, they are not based on kinship networks but extend across kinship ties to include non-kin members. Women participating in the rotating credit groups used the money for the following purposes: purchase of clothing and gold

jewellery, starting up a business, household needs, house repairs or construction, provide a loan to a family member or friend, and ceremonial festivities.

Religion further sanctions the support network enabling families to survive despite constraints. The set of moral values associated with Islam, especially those concerned with one's social responsibilities to family and extended kin, as well as the poor and needy play a vital role in Somali society. Within Islam there is a strong tradition of helping the poor and needy. There are two designated forms in which this should be done. One is the annual religious tax known in Somalia as seko (in Arabic, zakat). The payment of seko is one of the five pillars of Islam. The other is sadaqo or the voluntary giving of alms to those in need. In some regions of Somalia, the seko is collected by a designated person; this, however, is not the case in Mogadishu. Neither does the government collect the seko nor is there any authorized organization to do so. The government does, however, encourage people, through the media, to give seko at the time of Eid-ul-Fitr. People give seko in the form of food to poor and needy neighbors in particular.

In the Quran, there are a number of statements about who constitute the "deserving poor," to whom sadaqo should be given. They are as follows: the poor, masakiin, ie., the poor who have some means of support of their own but which is inadequate, and faqiir who have nothing and are totally

dependent on the charity of others. Included in this group are the aged and disabled who cannot work. Children who are orphaned are the next category, followed by divorced women, those in debt, those travelling on long journeys without sufficient sustenance, converts to Islam, slaves, and those in charge of collecting the seko. Within Islam in Somalia it appears that most of the assistance given to the poor and needy is done through the individual in his own capacity. Two other significant channels are the mosques and religious communities, especially those located at places like Biyoole, the burial place of Sheikh Aweyis. At the Friday congregation in the mosques, collections of small sums of money are made and given to the poor. In addition to this mechanism people facing special hardship can appeal for assistance through the kitaab.

The "economy of affection " thus plays a vital role in Somali society. In the absence of such a support network, it is unlikely that the majority of the urban poor would eke out a subsistence, and migration to the city would not be at such a high rate. The very strengths of the support system may, however, be one of the major causes in limiting the establishment of better health and educational facilities. In the words of Goren Hyden:

> It must be accepted that the economy of affection imposes social obligations on individuals that limit their interest and capacity to support public concerns outside their community...The economy of affection tends to swamp the public realm, limiting

> the scope for decisions aimed at defending the foundation on which its existence rested (1983, p. 17).

The majority of Somali families in Mogadishu are having a difficult time making ends meet, and the "economy of affection" may thus function to their advantage in the short term only.

The economic status of a household invariably is a deciding factor as to who receives an education or not. The number of people in households in Mogadishu who have attended formal school varies according to the social and economic standing of the households represented in the five districts under study. In poor income households the priority placed on formal education is extremely low, since children provide a valuable reserve for the household. A number of youngsters are involved in petty trade, such as selling cigarettes and peddling other items. A minority of household members claimed to have had some form of schooling and attended elementary, intermediate or secondary school. Furthermore, very few had also attended Quranic school. The most common reasons cited for children not being able to attend school were: (a) children dropped out of school because of household chores that needed attention, (b) children could not be sent to school at all since their labor was needed in the home and (c) children had to contribute to the household income by engaging in trading activities.

In poor to middle income households a similar trend is apparent, though there is a greater emphasis placed on formal education. The percentage of those who have attended intermediate and secondary school is higher than that for Yaaqshiid; more people have also attended Quranic school. In the affluent, upper income households in Hodan, there is a greater number of secondary school and university graduates. The number of those who have had religious instruction is considerably higher than poor and middle income households.

An entirely different pattern emerges from the study of the district of Xamarweyne. The majority of family members had no formal schooling (elementary, intermediate, secondary or university) or Quran school. Cultural and more importantly religious factors account for this trend. The "reer Xamar" or coastal residents of Mogadishu adhere stringently to Islam and Islamic practices. Young boys are encouraged at an early age to get involved in business-oriented activities. The "reer Xamar" are therefore primarily businessmen and traders by occupation. Young girls and women still go veiled and are discouraged from gaining an education. Access to education thus varies according to economic and cultural factors.

The above discussion has focused on household conditions, and support networks in households in Mogadishu, in order to illustrate the economic constraints that most families are confronted with. The underlying dynamic processes that enable households to maintain a certain degree of autonomy and

continuity is clear, despite the obstacles that exist in the urban setting in Mogadishu. We now turn to test the alternate model set forth in earlier chapters. The model will further demonstrate the processes that make for continuity and change in household social structure and composition.

Continuous Fragmentation of Households in Mogadishu

Meyer Fortes's assumption is that nuclear and extended families appear to be of different types, but are nevertheless potentially part of the same kind of household as it passes through different phases, ie., expansion, dispersal and replacement. The alternate model propounded in this study concerns primarily fragmentation of the household, for it this phenomenon that causes dramatic changes in households and the status of women. The following discussion will demonstrate why the alternate model provides a more viable explanation for the continuing flux in household form and its subsequent in the roles and status of Somali women.

The model is considered from the point of view of the "original household," which comprises a husband, his wife and children. Two primary household types may be identified in Mogadishu, namely, **original household** and **stem households.** The original household comprises the nuclear family and no precise factors are involved at this stage of household progression. Stem households, however, are the result of

particular phenomena and processes that over time, eventually begin to affect the original household. Four specific factors are involved in determining the various forms that stem households may take: marriage, polygyny, divorce and migration. Secondary catalysts that may also affect the form that stem households take are economic variables; the differences between low-income families and high-income families are thus readily apparent.

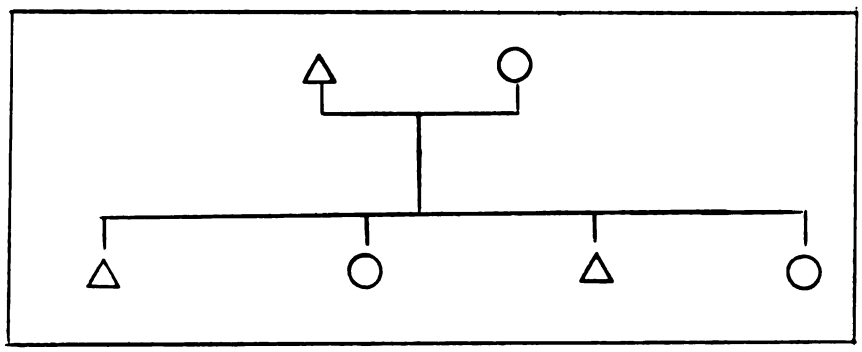
Polygyny results in the creation of more than one stem household and all have roots in the original household. At divorce we have the break up of the original household and the creation of one stem household. When families migrate from the rural areas to the city, a number of stem households may be created. The forms of households stemming from the four processes identified above are discussed in greater detail below.

A number of factors and circumstances may be associated with changes in household form; however I have elected to discuss only those which may be said to have a more direct and rapid affect on household social structure in Mogadishu.

In Mogadishu, the original household begins with a couples marriage and ends with the birth of their last child. This process is characterized as expansion of the nuclear family through the birth of children. Figure 9 illustrates household form as a consequence of this initial process.

Figure 9

Household Form in the Original Household



At the climax of this initial process, namely, marriage and the birth of children, the original household moves steadily towards fragmentation. Fragmentation is defined as including factors other than marriage of the children of the original household. Fragmentation refers specifically to the stochastic flux in households due to the great mobility of members and the continuous fission and fusion that takes place. Changes in household structure during the process of fragmentation arises from a series of decision-making

operations in the sphere of marriage, divorce, polygyny and migration.

I now turn to evaluate how decision-making processes in each of these spheres affect changes in household social structure and the position of Somali women. The departure of children is not desired but nevertheless occurs. All Somali families expect that when their children marry they would live in the household and that there would be no dispersal of family members. A rather small number could, however, meet this expectation. In upper income households married children prefer to set up their own household. Sons aspire to become household heads themselves and to have control over their own resources.

Furthermore cultural norms regulate residential patterns at the time of marriage. Residence at marriage in Somali society is defined by the patrilocal principle. The bride is expected to reside with her husband and his family. From the point of view of the "original household" dispersal is thus sanctioned by specific residential rules at marriage. Daughters leave to set up home with their husbands and their families. Sons of upper income households also move to set up home independently. In poor families the expectation is usually fulfilled when married children bring their spouses to live in their households. Large families are desirable for economic reasons. The pooling of resources and income is essential to eke out a subsistence in a society in which the

cost of living has increased tremendously with a simultaneous increase in unemployment.

The decision to marry is one of the factors that results in changes in household form, namely, the addition or dispersal of family members. Figures 10,1, 10.2 and 10.3 illustrate the household form created by marriage of family members.

Figure 10.1

Marriage of Son in Low-Income Household

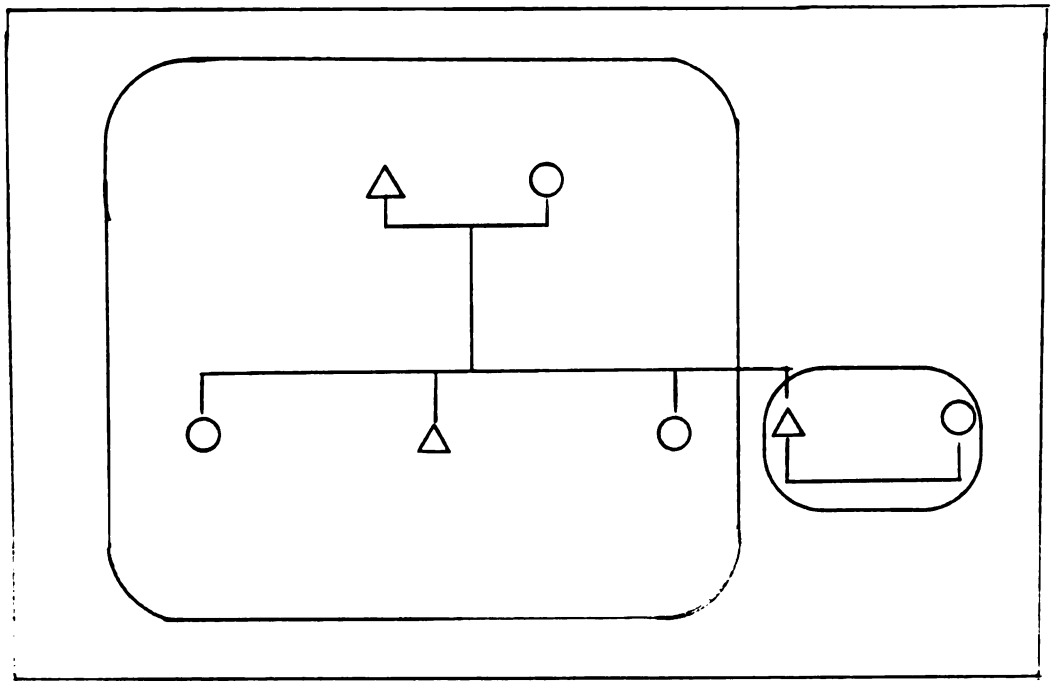


Figure 10. 2

Marriage of Daughter in Low-Income Household

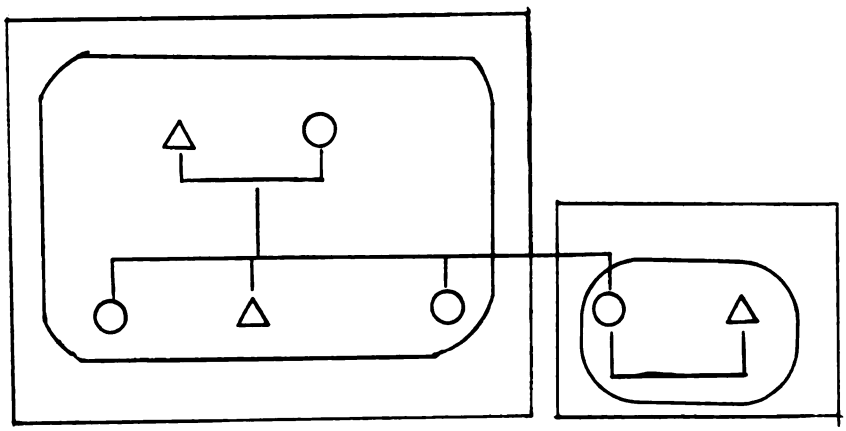
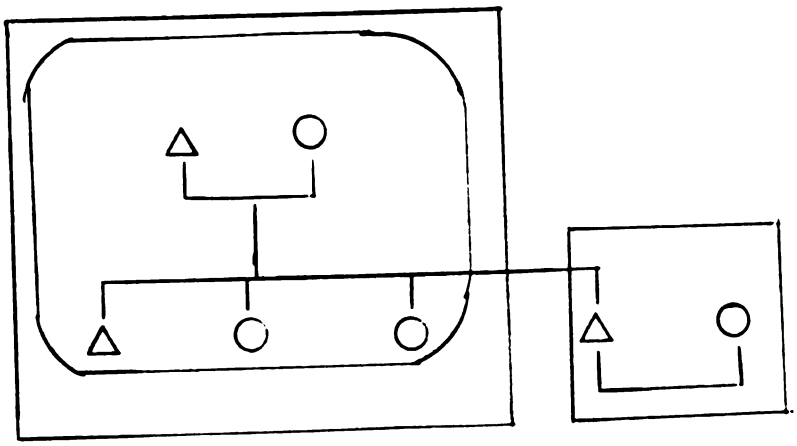


Figure 10.3

Marriage of Son in Upper-Income Household



The households involved in the process of negotiating the marriage do so on behalf of the bride and groom to be. Bridewealth or meher has to be negotiated and agreed upon by both households as parties to the marriage. After the marriage ritual the girl from the original household moves to reside with her husband. The household loses not only a family member, but also her labor which may have centered around marketing, petty trade activities, performing household chores and taking care of younger children. For sons of low income families who bring their spouses to reside in the original household, the household gains a family member who is expected to take over the household chores and other activities that may have been performed by the daughter lost to another household.

The household forms that emerge from the resultant marriage patterns demonstrate that fragmentation of the original household takes place when sons and daughters marry and set up residence away from the original household, creating a stem household. The term stem household is used to describe a household condition resulting from changes taking place in the original household. While marriage may be said to mark the beginning of the fragmentation of the original household, a farrago of factors are at play significantly altering the form and social structure of the original household.

The case study cited below is a good example of how

fragmentation alters the structure of the household and the position of women. Fragmentation of the original household occurs when Xabiba migrates to Mogadishu and later through divorce.

Case Study: Xabiba

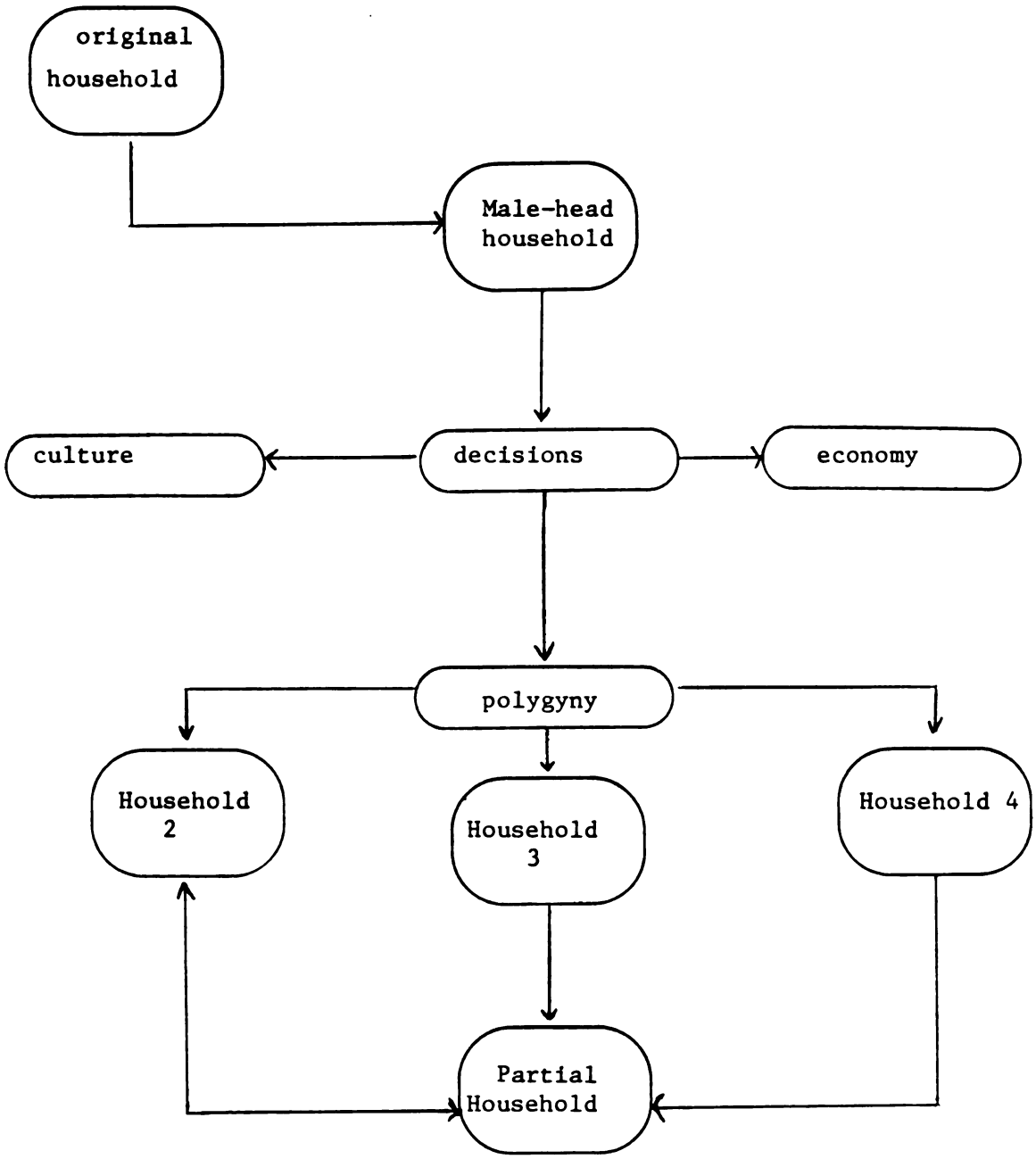
Xabiba was born in the region of Galgudud. She grew up in a rural household of five brothers and four sisters. Her father raised cattle and her mother was a housewife and also milked and tended the cows so that she could sell the milk in the local market. Xabiba remembers that life was hard especially during times of drought. Taking care of the younger children and helping in household chores occupied most of Xabiba's day. As a teenager she decided to migrate to Mogadishu to live with relatives. Her main reason for going to live in Mogadishu was her hope that she would be able to gain employment as a maid or become involved in market trade and thus contribute to her household in Galguduud. She worked as a maid for a year and then became a street vendor for a few months selling cigarettes. Xabiba then got married to one of her cousins, an arranged marriage by her parents. She moved to live with her husband and his family. Her husband decided to divorce her after ten years of marriage. She was left with three children. Her husband did not pay any alimony or child support and Xabiba moved in to live with relatives. Xabiba now has to support herself and three children. She receives

family support sometimes and contributes to the household by engaging in market trade selling eggs.

A second factor that causes fragmentation is polygyny. Polygyny is common in Somalia, although heads of households indicated otherwise when asked, "how many wives do you have?" As a result of polygynous marriages household heads have the responsibility of maintaining perhaps two or three stem households. Moreover, the decision to have more than one wife is both culturally and economically determined. Somali culture is based on Islamic principles which sanction the practice of allowing a man to have up to four wives. The decision to have more than one wife is also based on economic considerations; only those men who are economically well-off with sufficient capital can afford to run more than one household. A rather interesting feature in Mogadishu today is that a young woman of marriageable age is unable to find a spouse of viable economic standing who is able to readily support a wife. The young woman becomes the wife of a man who is already married and who has already established himself as head of a household and who is economically well off. Polygyny is therefore common among high income groups. Figure 11 shows how decisions involving polygyny operate.

Figure 11

Polygyny and Household Fragmentation

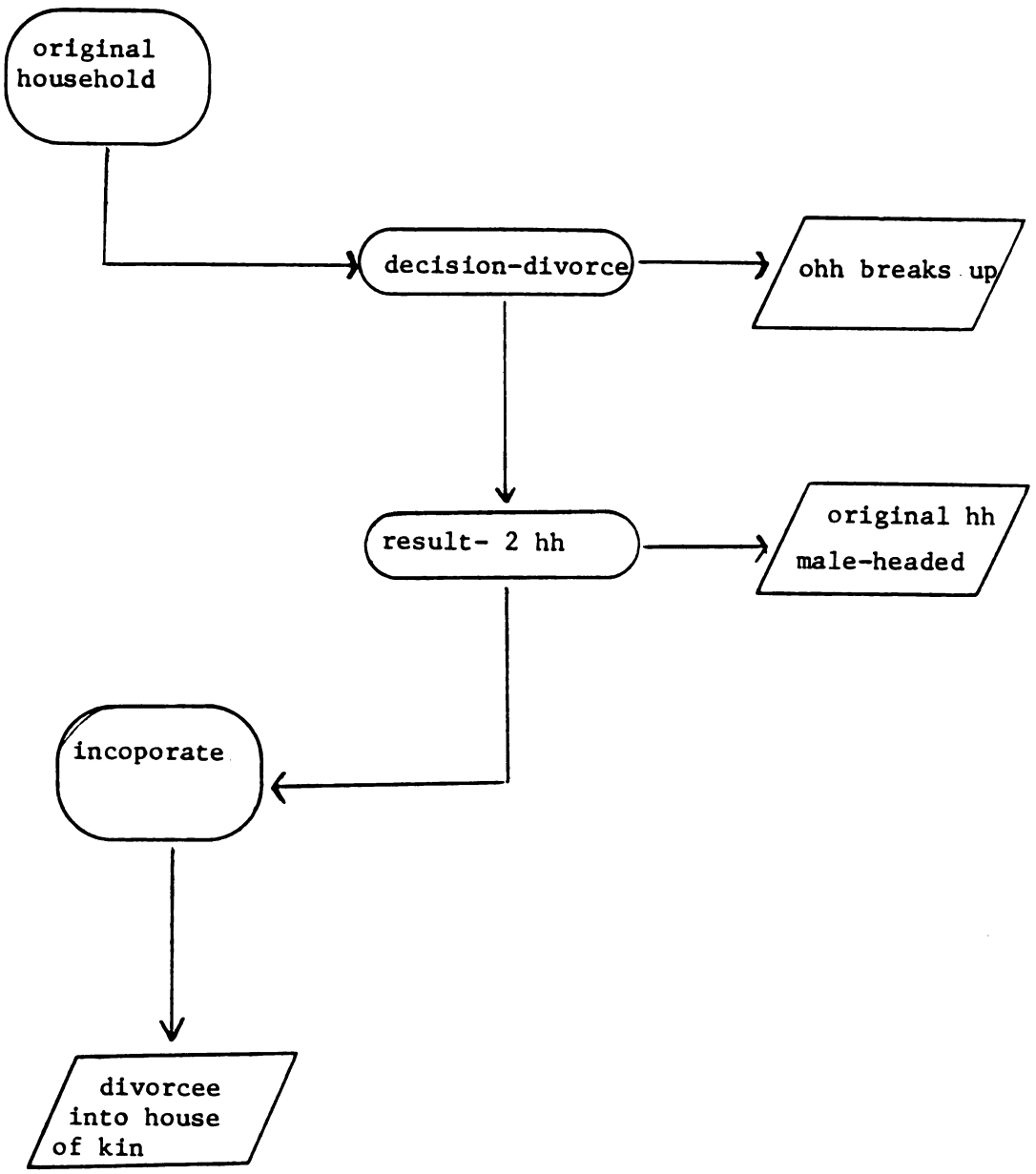


The head of the household is essentially the head of not only the original household, but also the three stem households. The creation of three separate households results in the formation of stem households; the original household is still in existence. The children of wife two, three and four usually reside with their mothers in separate households. A significant feature of households resulting from polygynous marriages is that they share a common household head. Polygyny results in the creation and formation of stem households.

The decision to divorce also results in the destruction of the original household. In Somali society the decision to divorce is vested solely in the husband. Islamic or Sharia Law takes precedence in such matters and no wife is allowed to divorce her husband. The divorce process is rather simple and uncomplicated; the husband has to utter the words, "I divorce you," three times to his wife in the presence of three witnesses. The majority of divorces take place without any court intervention. Divorce in Somali society does not, however, result in the creation of two separate households, ie., one male-headed and one female-headed. The original household ceases to exist and there is therefore a complete breakdown in the original household. Figure 12 illustrates household form resulting from decisions to divorce.

Figure 12

Divorce and Household Fragmentation



The head of the household sets up his own household. The divorcee (garoob) almost always moves to another residence at divorce, that of her extended kin members. Divorce thus results not only in fragmentation of the original household, but also incorporation of the divorced women and her children into the household of her relatives, for example that of her brother.

A third factor affecting household structure is that of migration from the rural to urban areas. Somalia is currently undergoing one of the highest rates of urbanization in Africa. The social, economic and cultural consequences are crucial to the country's development process as the relationship between town and country changes in what was until recently an unurbanized country of Africa. Smaller centers and trade settlements are indeed integral to the pastoral economy, but the original functions of many of Somalia's towns have been rapidly overtaken by urbanization, with migrants coming from within and outside Somalia's borders. Towns like Baidoa and Kismaayo, which according to the 1975 census contained around thirty thousand inhabitants, have doubled in size in the last decade. In the early 1960's Mogadishu had some eighty thousand inhabitants. Two decades later the population had increased ten fold. The currently accepted figure for Mogadishu is 850,000; some sources put the figure at around one million (Ministry of National Planning, 1987).

The process of migration from the rural to urban areas

in Somalia is a common phenomenon.[4] Migration to the city of Mogadishu may be attributed to the following factors: (a) the city represents economic opportunities and a means of supplementing ones income, (b) the vagaries of pastoral, nomadic and agricultural pursuits in a land of periodic and severe droughts has accounted for a tremendous influx of migrants to the city, and (c) Mogadishu is situated near two of the most prosperous and populated areas in Somalia, ie., the Shebelle river and inter-riverine plateau and serves as a focal point for those areas.

Due to the above factors migration to the city occurs at an extremely high rate. Furthermore, there is a tendency for migrants to remain in the city even if economic opportunities are limited and unavailable. Table 7 gives some indication of the place of migration of heads of households in Mogadishu.

Table 7

Origin of Head of Households

Place of Birth/Origin	Percent
Xamarweyne	15%
Mogadishu	4%
Galgudud	14%
Mudug	16%
Lower Shebelle	9%
Hiran	9%
Middle Shebelle	7%
Ethiopia	6%
Bay	5%
West Galbeed	4%

Table 7 (cont'd)

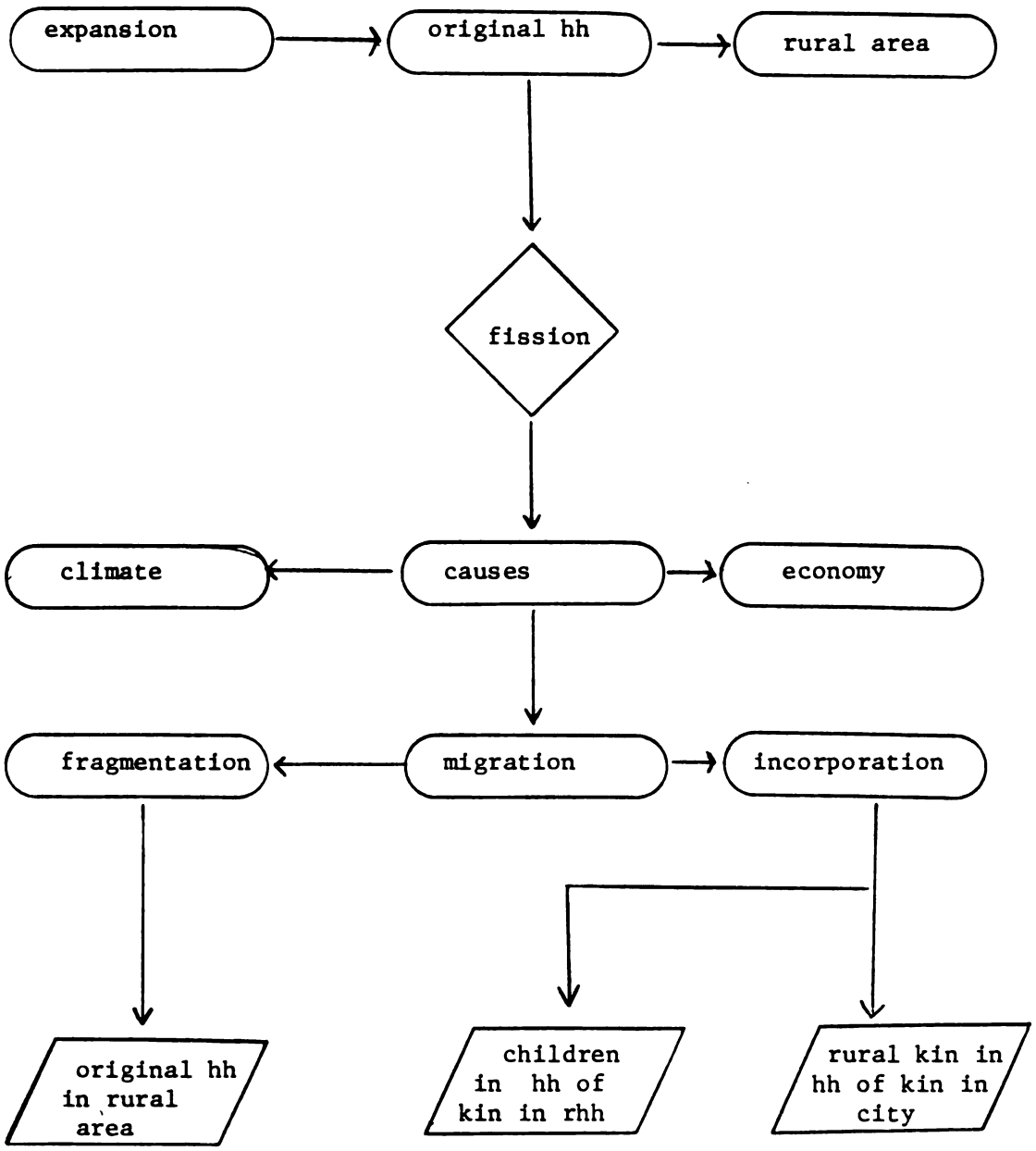
Togdheer	2%
Bari	2%
Bakol	1%
Kenya	1%
Luuq	1%
Sol	1%

Galgudud and Mudug Regions are located in central Somalia and the inhabitants are primarily nomads and pastoralists. it is therefore not surprising that the overwhelming majority of respondents migrated from these areas to the city for economic reasons. Somalis migrating from the riverine area of the Middle Shebelle have also settled in Mogadishu in search of better economic opportunities.

Heads of households from the rural areas have been forced to migrate to Mogadishu. The developmental cycle has therefore been conditioned by decision-making processes constrained by climatic and economic factors. In such circumstances all household heads indicated that their children had to be left with relatives (especially grand-parents and extended kin members) in the rural areas because of insufficient income in the city to support a large family. The decision to migrate radically alters the structure and composition of the original household as shown in the Figure 13.

Figure 13

Migration and Household Fragmentation

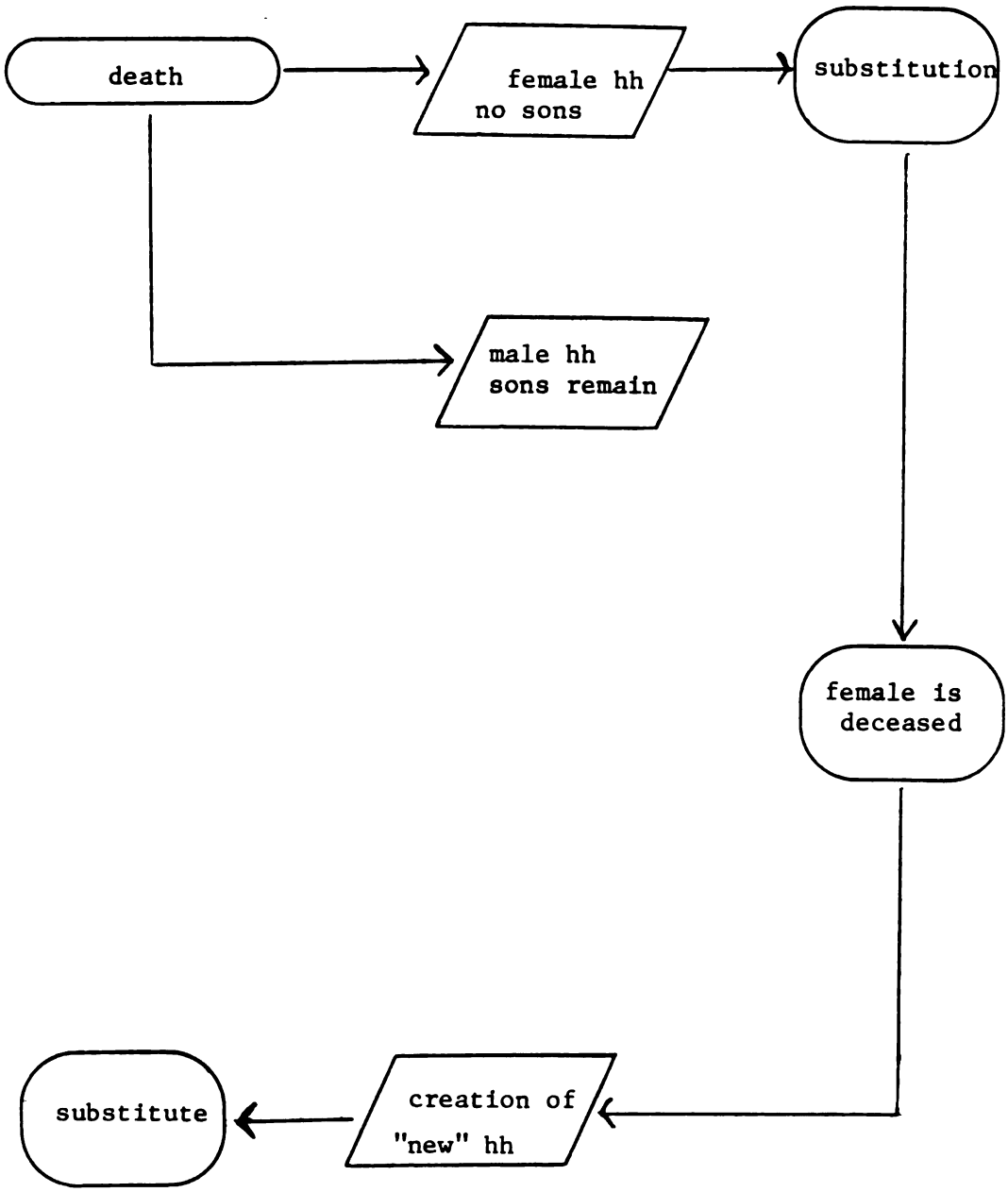


The form of the original household is altered in two ways: (a) dispersal, now defined as leaving children with relatives in the rural area results in incorporation of additional family members to households of extended kin members, and (2) the commencement of a second expansion phase for the head of the household now settled in the city.

The climax in the cycle of fragmentation of the original household occurs through the death of the head of the household. If any adult sons have remained, the eldest will take over the household as his own after the death of his father. At the death of a female in a female-headed household a different process occurs as that for male-headed households, because the dissolution of the household is more likely to occur. The original household is sometimes substituted by the formation of a "new" household, headed by an elder son that remains. The death of the original household head marks the end of the fragmentation cycle. This process is illustrated in Figure 14.

Figure 13

Death and Household Fragmentation



The household takes on the identity of the "new" household head. The existence of the original household and of the partial household is over. No one succeeds to its head. Certain decisions are critical to the households success.

Summary

The household is a significant unit of analysis in Somali society. The various types of household physical structures indicate the social and economic strata of urban households in Mogadishu. Income generating activities as well as support networks provided by extended kin members during crises and non-crises situations are vital to the existence and future security of the household.

A farrago of household forms are generated by a series of decision-making processes in the realm of marriage, divorce, polygyny and migration, or what I have termed the male domain (culturally determined). This contrasts with the decision-making processes of the female domain or economic sphere. Migration, however, is a factor found in both the female and male domains.

Notes

1. The housing pattern in Mogadishu is rather unique compared with other Tropical African cities. Many cities in Africa comprise high quality government housing close to main administrative zones. For a detailed discussion of the housing and residential patterns in Tropical Africa, see Anthony O' Connor, (1983), The African City, pp. 193-239.

2. The high proportion of Somalis in the military have been an ever present phenomenon, including those who hold no regular jobs.

3. See Dan Bauer (1977, 1985), Household and Society in Ethiopia. Bauer applies Fortes's developmental cycle model to his study of changing household form in Tigray society. His study is a social anthropological study of decision-making in Tigray peasant households, and examines decisions which effect the composition and resources of the household. An important theme is the constant flux in the composition and socio-economic positions of households.

4. Several valuable discussions of rural-urban migration already exist. See Clyde Mitchell, 1959, "The Causes of Labor Migration," Bulletin of the Inter-African Labor Institute, vol. 6, no.1, pp 12-47; J.B. Riddell, 1978, "The Migration to the Cities of West Africa: Some Policy Considerations," Journal of Modern African Studies, vol. 16, pp. 241-260; K. Swindell, 1979, "Labor Migration in Under-developed Countries: the Case of sub-Saharan Africa," Progress in Human Geography, vol. 3, pp. 239-259; Michael Todaro, 1971, "Income Expectations, Rural-Urban Migration and Employment in Africa," International Labor Review, vol. 104, pp. 387-413; and J. Nabila, 1979, "The Processes of the Decision to Migrate in Ghana," in R.K. Udo (ed.): Population, Education Sourcebook for sub-Saharan Africa. Nairobi, Heinemann.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOUSEHOLD DECISION-MAKING AND WOMEN'S WORK

Introduction

"Women are a great working force which the reactionaries undermine," President Maxammed Siyad Barre, 8th March 1975 (quoted in Raqiya Haji Dualeh Abdalla, 1982: 57). The words of the President of Somalia vividly echo the economic status of women in Somalia today. There is an overrall consensus that women are exploited and oppressed, have no freedom of action and are held in the lowest terms. Despite the subservient position of women, women interact in their societies and alter their environments, and employ constructive efforts to deal with their world.

Somalia is a country with a pastoral nomadic society. Almost 80% of the population live in the rural areas where survival is demanding and hard. The primary social unit is the immediate family *goys* or *reer*, consisting of father, mother and children, and unlike the nuclear family, extending to the blood relatives of both spouses. Since the Somalis trace their descent through the male, the term *reer* refers not only to the immediate family, but also applies to the man's family and most distant relatives. Somali political organizations are based on kinship, thus an aggregate of

families inter-related and bound together by blood, live, travel, camp and go to war together. In other words the reer composed of lineage or alliance of lineages, share the same properties as kinship groups.

Great importance is attached to the tribe, the clan, to the big family with many sons, and to communal thinking. In nomadic families with frequent local disputes over land, water, women, invaders and other rights, it is essential for each family and lineage to be as large and as strong as possible, and its strength is very much dependent upon the number of sons.

Male superiority is intricately woven into customs and Islamic traditions since the Somalis are patrilineal the nomadic lifestyle is suited to the conveniences of the men. Women are dependent on a traditional division of labor which is heavily biased against them. A contradictory feature of women's position in the family is the belief that without their generous heart, patience, sense of responsibility, hard work, and awareness of kinship, the system would not survive. She is expected to provide wider services to all the extended family members, as this type of family is both a social and judicial family. Yet, she is dominated by the man. The explanation seems to lie in the social institutions, patterns of the patriarchal social order, and on the need of the man for a woman to bear him sons.

Apart from her ties to her children, to enjoy better

economic security and safeguard her livelihood, a typical Somali woman is expected to constantly display an attitude of tenderness, spontaneous self-denial and self-sacrifice, not only towards her family, but also towards the whole tribe or clan of her husband.

Various family structures, household decision-making and changes in household form greatly affect women's statuses and roles. Household decision-making resulting in continuous household flux may have far reaching and unanticipated effects on women's economic activities. The household is the most important unit not only of production and guiding access to resources, but also a unit through which women exert control. Women's participation in activities beyond the closed circle of childcare and household maintenance are clearly discernible. In order to understand the aspirations of the Somali woman, her struggle against all economic and social odds, and her subordinate status, one must view her as actively progressing towards balancing these odds.

In Somalia, a woman is traditionally considered to be the backbone of the family; it is her responsibility to keep the house and bring up the children. The social position of the family is determined by the husband, but it is widely held that a family is mainly what the wife makes it. The influential position of the woman in the Somali family is not easily recognizable since her position is always relegated to the background, while that of the man remains in the

forefront.

In this chapter I will explore the primary importance of the multiple roles of Somali women as mothers and providers at the very core and foundation of their families. Women's networks are studied outside the domestic domain typically associated with women. Furthermore, I will evaluate women's decision-making processes in order to evaluate how women gain control and autonomy in the economic sphere. Work in the sense of income generating activity is an essential part of a woman's life. Furthermore women's time-use strategies must be viewed as an important means by which women maximize their income generating activities. Women's economic decisions must therefore be seen in the context of multiple and inseparable roles understood within the broader spectrum of the society.

This chapter discusses the above issues by focusing on the following: (1) women's economic tasks and income generating activities, (2) the effects of household decision-making on women's economic status, (3) women's trading activities and techniques for maximizing income, and (4) women's time-use strategies and household consumption patterns.

Womens' Work and Contribution to the Household

Very few women in Mogadishu do not work. For the majority of women, their work is within their own home.

Women's work includes child-bearing, child care, food processing, purchasing and preparation, mending and washing clothes, housing cleaning and a farrago of domestic chores. In addition to their domestic work, women are involved in work which enables them to generate an income either in cash or kind so that the survival of the household can be ensured. Women's work is absolutely essential in many cases for the survival of poor families in both female-headed households and in those where there is a male head of the household who may or may not be working. Table 8 lists the distribution of occupations for women in urban households in Mogadishu.

Table 8

Occupational Specialization of Women in Mogadishu

District	Occupation	Percent
Wadajir	housewife	75%
	traders *	10%
	domestic servant	5%
	nurse	5%
	veterinarian	5%
Hodan	housewife	80%
	businesswoman	5%
	civil servant	10%
	medical doctor	5%
Xamarweyne	housewife	90%
	traders	10%
Yaaqshiid	housewife	65%
	traders	35%
Wardiigleey	housewife	85%
	civil servant	5%
	weavers (mats, baskets)	10%

Table 8 (cont'd)

* traders here include those who sell food produce, milk, eggs, sweets and clothing. Women traders work either from home or sell their wares in the local market.

In upper income households more women are involved in government jobs. Professional women also predominate in upper income households. Amongst the more privileged are those professional women working in government and private business. It is well known that women as a whole in comparison to men are under-represented in government positions and employment in absolute numbers. Nevertheless, in some areas of Mogadishu, government employment is as equally an important source of income for women as it is for men. In poorer areas, government employment is the more important source of income for men than it is for women. Working women can be divided into two groups: those who work because they want to and those because circumstances make it vital that they do so. While a majority of women defined their status as "housewife," it is clear that their work involves more than domestic chores alone. In upper income households, more women are involved in government jobs and in professional occupations.

The proportion of women who are government employees clearly declines in poorer areas. Small-scale women traders are the largest single occupational group of private-sector workers. Self-employment is a more common source of employment for women in low income households. Amongst those

who have little education or training are the petty traders and artisans, as well as manual workers in service, for example domestic work, labour and manufacturing.

Small-scale artisans are defined as women involved in weaving mats, baskets, fans, brooms or home-based activitie. In poorer areas the proportion of women earning income this way is much higher. Food producers are defined as home-based working women making bajiya (fried balls of bean flour), muufo (bread from maize flour), and other food items. Women involved in home-based economic activities play a significant role in generating additional income to ensure the survival and continuation of the household. Table 9 indicates the trading activities performed by women and the uses to which their income is put.

Table 9

Womens' Trading Activities in Mogadishu

District	No.HH/Item	Location	Income/day	Use
Wadajir	1 milk	home/market	400 so.sh.	hh
	3 eggs/mats	home/market	flexible*	hh
	4 veg/cigaretts	market	300 so.sh.	hh
Hodan	1 eggs	home	200 so.sh.	hh
	1 icecream	home	200 so.sh.	hh
	1 milk	home/market	400 so.sh.	hh
	1 mats	home	250 so.sh.	hh
	1 hats	home	240 so.sh.	hh
Xamar W.	1 dressmaker	home	680 so.sh.	hh
	1 zambuzi	home	200 so.sh.	hh
Yaaqshiid	3 milk	home/market	400 so.sh.	hh
	3 mats	home	250 so.sh.	hh
	2 eggs	home	100 so.sh.	hh

Table 9 (cont'd)

Ward.	3 milk	home/market	500 so.sh.	hh
	1 vegetables	market	300 so.sh.	hh
	3 eggs	home	200 so.sh.	hh

* Weaving mats involves a great amount of time, in the range of two to three days and therefore income derived through selling mats varies.

Men's and women's incomes are not totally independent of each other since there are customary standards for the division of responsibility and for interpersonal transfers.[1] This, however, is not to deny that there is mutual dependence and complementarity within the household. The nature of interdependence is not easily discernible or readily identifiable in households in Mogadishu. Furthermore, even in the presence of of a certain degree of dependence, complementarity between the sexes may shift in response to changed economic conditions.

Somali women are dependent on the traditional division of labour which is heavily biased against them. Nevertheless, the data shows that wherever women perceive it possible to have a certain amount of economic independence, they are quite prepared to endure the drudgery. Women are, however, weary of having to struggle hard in order to contribute towards the upkeep of the household, and especially so if the husband has no regular employment or is unemployed. A number of women identified their status as "housewife." It is clear, however, that their ability to manipulate their circumstances by

strategic planning and involvement in petty trade and other home-based economic tasks demonstrates their deep concern for the provisioning of the household.

The case studies cited below reflect the lot of the Somali woman and focus specifically on income generating activities.

Case Study No. 1: Faduma

Faduma born in the Lower Shebelle Region is fourty five years old and has been a housewife for many years. She has had no formal schooling but a couple of years of religious instruction or Quran school. Faduma was widowed some years ago and decided to sell eggs in order to generate an income. She remarried at the age of fourty. Her second marriage was arranged by her parents and Faduma was given in marriage to her cousin. Faduma, however, continued to engage in trading activities. She had two children from her first marriage and received support from her mother and sister. Fadumo works seven days a week selling eggs in the local district market. The income derived from selling eggs amounts to approximately five hundred Somali shillings per day. Her second husband is unemployed and financial support provided by her daughter and brother-in-law also help contribute towards the household.

Case Study No. 2: Zehra

Zehra, born in Harar province in Ethiopia, is fifty years old and sells imported wheat products such as spaghetti in the local market. She completed elementary school and a few years of Quranic instruction. Previously Zehra sold sorghum, but found it difficult to obtain during prolonged drought periods. She thus switched to selling pasta. Her daily income is approximately two thousand Somali shillings per day. Zehra's husband is unemployed and she is the sole supporter of her household consisting of seven children herself and her husband.

Case Study No. 3: Aamina

Aamina is thirty years old and was born in Mogadishu. She is married with ten children. She has had no formal or Quranic instruction. Aamina indicated that her husband has been unemployed for over a year. Her daily income from selling shiffon and cotton material is approximately three thousand Somali shillings per day. Aamina is the sole supporter of her household and receives no family support.

Case Study No. 4: Xalima

Xalima was born in the Lower Shebelle Region. She is fourty years old and is divorced with seven children. At divorce she received no support from her husband and had to provide for herself and her children. Xalima decided to sell vegetables

at the local market. She discovered, however, that selling vegetables was not economically productive and her earnings were insufficient to meet the total needs of running the household. Xalima now sells kitchen utensils and her daily income is about two thousand Somali shillings per day.

The lives of Somali women reflected in the case studies may indeed speak for the majority of Somali women in Mogadishu today. Economic autonomy may be the prevailing concern for Somali women. If Somali women did not try to attain some level of economic autonomy and control in providing for the household, the household may actually be in a perpetual crisis situation. Survival in Mogadishu depends upon some form of employment. The women expressed positive feelings towards being self-employed and being able to contribute to the survival of the household. The women studied, were however, still concerned that their husbands were unemployed or unable to provide for the household on a regular basis. The money earned and the fruits of their labour were held in high esteem by women.

This may be attributed to the fact that in pursuing income generating activities, Somali women have complete control over their economic enterprises. This may appear to be a contradiction, for as previously stated women are dependent upon the traditional division of labour. Nevertheless in cases where men are unemployed or have no regular income, women have a certain degree of autonomy and

freedom of choice in making decisions about economic tasks that can benefit the household.

The division of labour, access to productive resources, and income between the sexes as well as responsibility for providing food and food money is a complex process in Somali households. Some women who make roasted peanuts, icecream and cold drinks, or buy sweets in bulk, use children to sell them in the streets and markets. These children are either paid daily or monthly, take a commission on each sale or are simply supported by their families or relatives in return for their labour. Children employed in this manner can be classified either as wage earners or dependents. Children and relatives are the major source of help for women working in private business.

Ordinarily it is taken as a given that money earned by a woman will be put directly into food purchase, whereas that of a man will not. The details of how food purchase arrangements are worked out, and under what circumstances there are dual household budgets are further complicated by household structure. In Mogadishu, household expenditure arrangements, especially in poor households involves women maintaining the household with all their income being spent on food and other household purchases. Among the income earning strategies which help supplement shortfalls in household food provisioning are the operation of social and economic networks, eg., rotating credit groups and women's

income generating activities. Migration and social networks are also mechanisms that households use to get by economically.[2]

Many women feel that they can contribute more productively to the household by expanding their role in family management and sharing family income which will make a difference in their status. A woman who contributes to the income of the family and who is also a mother cannot be dominated or controlled by a man in the same way as the woman who is entirely economically dependent on a man, whether he is her father, a brother or her spouse.

With a high proportion of households with no men working, income generating activities by women play a vital role. Table 10 gives an indication of the number of households and the number of productive members in the household.

Table 10

Households With Both Spouses Working

Number of households with both spouses working			18%
Number of households with one spouse working			82%
Major decisions:		joint	59%
		wife only	17%
		husband only	21%
		other family members	3%
Salary Use			
	His:	household expenditure	79%
	Hers:	food and household	100%

The overwhelming number of households have only one spouse working. Women who indicated that their husbands were unemployed usually referred to them as "vagabonds" meaning that they had no regular job or income, but would sometimes engage in commercial activities in order to earn some money. Nevertheless, women did not rely on their husbands to purchase food or support the household on a daily basis. The income generating activities employed by women in lower income households are absolutely vital to the survival of the household. In Mogadishu, the term xoog sade is sometimes applied to people who have no occupational identity and who drift from one job to another as opportunities arise.

Another phenomenon explored in relation to the status of Somali women are rules governing ownership and inheritance. Ownership and inheritance indicate that in poorer areas a significant proportion of women raise cattle and goats. The majority of women had acquired these through purchase and owned them jointly with their husbands. Table 11 indicates that sole ownership by women is a rare phenomenon in Somali society.

Table 11

Ownership and Inheritance

District	No./Own Livestock	No.Own Land	Acquired
Wadajir	10 (joint)	15 (joint)	husband Hodan
	7 (joint)	10 (joint)	husband
Xamarweyne	0	0	0
Yaaqshiid	25 (24 joint)	0	husband 1 inherited
Wardhiigleey	30 (joint)	5	1 inherited 3 husband 1 sole own.

The father is head of the family and the ultimate controller of family property. Somali women have no legal identity in the strict sense of the word. Her property and assets are handled by the male head of the family, either the father, brother or husband.

Household Decision-Making and Women's Economic Status

Decisions affecting the status of women in Somali society concern migration and that of divorce. In the case of migration, shuffling of household membership by out-migration of certain members at times of diminishing resources is a strategy employed by heads of households to ensure the survival of the household and its members. Child-shifting is a mechanism for distributing or sharing the responsibilities for the benefits of children. Such strategies remove children from the original household because a parent is unable to

provide for them, and furthermore, the poor household can turn for sustenance at a later point to that household. Labour migration outside of the area is another mechanism. Such migration may contribute in the short term to former residential unit security. Migration, can only be activated, however, if a social support system is available. Table 12 shows the distribution of women born outside of Mogadishu, indicating migration from rural-urban areas.

Table 12

Birthplace/Place of Origin of Women in Mogadishu

District	% Born Outside Mog	% Born in Mog.
Wadajir	70%	30%
Hodan	85%	15%
Xamarweyne	10%	90%
Yaaqshiid	55%	45%
Wardhiigleey	75%	35%

With reference to the "place of birth" category we are able to discern migration patterns. The majority of Somali women in Mogadishu come from the central regions of Galgudud and Mudug. The case of women in Xamarweyne is unique because the "reer Xamar" are the earliest coastal inhabitants of Mogadishu and their forefathers have lived in Mogadishu over several generations.

The decision to migrate affects the position of women in two ways: (1) women ensure the survival of the household by

perpetuating rural income earning strategies, and (2) secure the survival of family members, especially young children left in the rural household of extended kin members. A significant number of rural women now living in Mogadishu indicated that income generating activities of women are vital to the survival of the urban household. In most cases men coming from the rural areas are unemployed and have no steady or regular income. Women migrate to escape poor positions in the social and economic stratification system which limits full participation in the rural opportunity system. They regard the city of Mogadishu as an area of expanded opportunities and resources. Once they arrive in the city they make pragmatic attempts to relate to the urban conditions they encounter, as individuals, as representatives of social groupings and as women. The strategies are in all cases related to economic factors.

The decision to divorce has an even greater impact on social and economic status of women in households in Mogadishu. It is clear that while married women constitute the largest number of working women, the group with the highest proportion of employed are those who are widowed and divorced. Table 13 indicates the proportion of divorced women and the overall effects of divorce in relation to residential arrangements and change in household structure.

Table 13

Divorce and Change in Residence

District	Percent divorced	Change of Residence
Wadajir	15%	10%
Hodan	30%	20%
Xamarweyne	5%	5%
Yaaqshiid	20%	10%
Wardhiigleey	25%	20%

Somali marriage is highly unstable. The continuous flux in household form is demonstrated by this trend towards divorce. Divorced women are coerced into the work force primarily because of the lack of support provided by former husbands. Table 14 gives some indication of the distribution of women receiving financial assistance as well as employing their own techniques for generating an income.

Table 14

Income Generating Activities of Divorced Women

Item	Percent
Received child Support:	40%
Received Meher:	25%
Received Alimony:	0%
Received Family Support:	75%
Other Income Generating Activities:	61%

The majority of divorced women received no child support or alimony from their husbands. The great majority of divorced women have had to rely on extended kin support networks, as well as generating an income by their own economic enterprises. Wage activities comprise the following: weaving mats and baskets, trade in food produce, and trade in other items such as gold jewellery and clothing.

Furthermore, only a minority of women studied received the meher, which is a stipulated sum agreed upon at marriage, to be given to the wife at divorce as a surety. Thus, the decision to divorce greatly affects women's economic position. An increased burden is placed on women, who have to generally fend for themselves in securing the well-being of themselves and their children.

Women Market Traders and Household Security

There are two basic locations for trading activities in Mogadishu. The first are the modern shopfront developments extending along almost every main road in Mogadishu, and especially streets such as Jidka Makka, Jidka Siinay and Jidka Soddonka. The second less visible locations are the village type markets found in every district (twenty three in number). These traditional markets are of central importance to the Mogadishu economy for a number of reasons. It is to these locations that the major part of the produce from the rural

areas comes each day. It is in the vicinity of these markets that the main food warehouses or bakhaaro are located, for example Via Egypt near the Xamarweyne market. The markets are the primary sources for food supplies often purchased daily by the vast majority of households in Mogadishu, and certainly by the poorest households.

The markets are also important for the employment opportunities they offer. A major proportion of the regular workers in these markets are women. It is also to these locations that many young men and boys come looking for casual manual labour. For the Municipality of Mogadishu the markets are the major single source of tax revenue. Every trader in every market must pay a minimum of twenty Somali shillings per day to the municipality. Table 15 lists the kinds of items traded by women involved in the market economy.

Table 15

Women in the Market Economy

Items Traded	Percent
Eggs	5%
Pasta	2%
Pasta and Vegetables	6%
Clothing	3%
Kitchen Utensils	6%
Gold Jewellery	3%
Perfume	3%
Bran	6%
Cigarettes	5%
Canned food	5%
Oil	3%
Rice/Corn/Beans	3%
Garlic/Cloves	2%

Table 15 (cont'd)

Tea/Anjeero	2%
Milk	2%
Grass	2%
Vegetables	3%
Pasta/Oil/Sugar	3%
Corn	5%
Mats	3%
Stallholder/groceries	2%
Fruit	4%
Wooden Stools	4%
Beans	3%

A significant proportion of women engaged in market trade are the only source of support for their households. If they did not work the household would have no regular source of income. The case studies cited below illustrate the predicament of women involved in market trade.

Case Study No. 1: Xabiba

Xabiba is fourty years old and sells eggs for the past year. She was born in the district of Wardhiigleey and did not attend any formal or Quran school. She is divorced and lives alone with her two children. At divorce her husband provided no child support or alimony. In order to support herself and her children Xabiba began weaving mats and baskets for sale. She then decided to sell eggs in the local market. The money earned from selling mats and baskets was used as capital to engage in market trade. The eggs are purchased from an individual who in turn purchases them from the poultry farm. Each egg is sold for nine Somali shillings each and her daily

income averages about five hundred Somali shillings. Xabiba works seven days a week. Daily tax payments amount to twenty Somali shillings per day. Xabiba receives no family support and is the sole breadwinner of the household.

Case Study No. 2: Xawa

Xawa is fifty years old. She was born in Bossaso Region and migrated to Mogadishu as a young girl. She sells tea and anjeero from a stall in the local market and has been doing this for the past two years. Xawa has been widowed for four years and makes all decisions concerning the household. Her ten children assist her in daily household chores as well as operating the stall in the market. Xawa stated that at first she sold fruit, mainly mangoes and then decided to have a stall in the local market. She walks on foot to the market daily. Tea leaves and essential ingredients used in making anjeero are purchased from stores in the market. Tea is sold for five Somali shillings per cup and anjeero for one Somali shilling. The daily tax paid is twenty Somali shillings. Xawa's daily income is approximately two hundred and fifty So.sh. Xawa is the sole provider for her household.

Case Study No. 3: Warsan

Warsan is fourty five years old, was born in Mudug Region and lives alone with her seven children. Her husband is retired and lives in Saudi Arabia for medical reasons. Warsan herself

had lived and worked in Saudi Arabia for a few years. Her husband provided her with the essential capital in order to commence trade in gold jewellery. Warsan purchases the gold jewellery is purchased from private individuals and then sells the jewellery as second-hand on the open market. She travels daily to the Xamarweyne market by bus to sell her wares. Warsan reported that her income is flexible ranging from twelve thousand to fifteen thousand Somali shillings per day. She does not pay tax. She is the sole supporter of her household and works six days a week.

Case Study No. 4: Dheqa

Dheqa is twenty five years old and was born in Hiran Region. Her husband is unemployed and she is the sole breadwinner of the family. Relatives helped Dheqa with the capital to start her trade in vegetables. Income derived from selling vegtables amount to approximately one hundred and fifty So. sh. per day. Her brother also contributes to the support of the household as Dheqa's earnings are insufficient.

Women engaged in selling food produce and other items are in most cases the sole providers for their families. Table 16 shows the distribution of income in the household for market women and the reasons for engaging in this occupation.

Table 16

Family Support and Market Trade

Sole support of household:	
Yes:	64%
Additional support by:	
Brothers and sisters	38%
Children	10%
Parents	20%
Extended kin	32%
No:	36%
Previous Occupation:	
Housewife	78%
Student	6%
Unemployed	5%
Shift from farming to trade	6%
Raised livestock	5%
Reasons for Engaging in Market Trade:	
Additional hh support	60%
Widowed	7%
Divorced	8%
Husband unemployed	17%
Support parents	2%
No job after high school	2%
Help mother in store	2%
Difficult to obtain sorghum	2%
Assistance received from:	
Own funds	33%
Support by husband	12%
Extended kin	33%
Immediate family	22%

Trading activities by women therefore constitute a major source of income for households. Moreover, in a vast majority of households women are the breadwinners. Furthermore,

previous occupation gives some indication of the great shift from that of housewife to market trader. Women are coerced into engaging in some form of market trade due to three primary factors: (1) additional support for the household, (2) the husband is unemployed and (3) divorce. Market trade is not without cost as shown in Table 17.

Table 17

Costs Involved in Market Trade

Costs	Percent
Transportation	
Transportation by bus	56%
Walk on foot to market	44%
Tax	
Payment in tax	84%
No tax-illegal traders	16%
Work-days	
Work six days	64%
Work seven days	36%
Produce/items purchased from:	
poultry farm	4%
stores	63%
private purchase	15%
market	8%
pasta factory	4%
farm	2%
own cattle	4%

Table 17 (cont'd)

Income per day in Somali shillings

100-500	30%
600-1000	18%
1100-3000	23%
3100-6000	16%
6100-10000	7%
above 10000	8%

The main costs incurred as a result of the market enterprise are, transportation to and from the market, payment of tax to the municipality and the process involved in obtaining the produce or item traded.

Womens Time-Use Strategies and Household Consumption

How do women utilize their time in completing both household and other chores? What chores are most time consuming? The most time consuming task according to most women is the time involved in food preparation. Women reported spending at least six to eight hours a day cooking food for household consumption. The principal constraint to women's increased participation in other income generating activities is the tremendous amount of time spent in completing household chores, especially food preparation. Preparation of food is both time and energy draining as indicated by both time-use and questionnaire data. Table 18 illustrates the amount of time spent daily by women in

completing household chores.

Table 18

Womens' Time-Use Strategies

Chores Performed	Performed Daily	Help
Food purchase	92%	56%*
Food processing	74%	43%
Food Preparation	84%	45%
Cleaning house	74%	67%
Washing/mending clothes	75%	69%
Child care*	74%	87%
Weave mats/baskets*	34%	0%
Raise livestock	20%	0%
Time spent completing tasks:		
More than twelve hours a day	84%	
A few hours (additional help reduced hours)	16%	
Leisure time:		
No leisure time	54%	
Had leisure time*	46%	

* help was provided by immediate family members (daughters) and also by extended kin living in the household. In a few cases domestic servants were employed on a fulltime basis.

* older children usually helped with child care.

* women from upper income households were the only ones that reported having leisure time, usually spent in the form of watching television or visiting relatives

Household chores are performed daily by the majority of women. Some women receive help from immediate family members in child care and purchasing food produce from the local market. The majority of poor and lower middle class women are busy all day

working at household chores, preparing food and home-based economic tasks. The upper middle class and upper class woman is able to hire servants to perform household duties thus releasing them from the drudgery of housework and child care. This enables them to have more leisure time and also to pursue work outside the home.

One of the most important strategies employed by women in Mogadishu in order to maximize their time concerns household consumption patterns. In order to gauge womens' time-use strategies modes of household consumption were studied as the main indicators of techniques constructively employed by women. Strategies used in time-use and household consumption involved a study of the prevalence of imported wheat products (ie., pasta) over traditional Somali food (ie., maize and sorghum).

Data concerning the change in the quantity of maize consumed by urban households were collected through formal interviews with women as well as observing womens' daily chores. Questions specifically concerning women's time use strategies centered around the consumption of "traditional" (maize) versus "non-traditional" foods (imported pasta and rice). Questions related to household consumption were: (1) whether the members of the household consumed maize; (2) the changing pattern of maize consumption over the years (increased, decreased, no change); (3) reasons explaining the change in the quantity of maize consumed; and (4) if maize

consumption changed, what were the preferred substitutes.

Results of the survey illustrate the following features and patterns of consumption of urban households and womens' time-use strategies. Virtually all households in Mogadishu consume maize on a daily basis, at least for breakfast in the form of anjeero. Table 19 lists the distribution of households consuming maize, pasta, and rice.

Table 19

Patterns of Household Consumption

Change/Maize Consumption	Percent/Households
Consumption declined	76%
Consumption increased	4%
No change in maize consumption	20%

The survey illustrates that the consumption of "traditional" foods (maize) over the years by urban households varies across different income groups. More specifically, the reduction in maize consumption by poorer households is not as high as that of higher income households. All of the households whose maize consumption had increased and all of the households that reported no change are from poor income families. In contrast all upper income households reduced their consumption of maize over the years. Indeed it is clear that imported wheat products and rice are more readily available to higher income households who possess more purchasing power.

The rapidly changing preferences and tastes of urban households may be attributed to the following factors: (1) locally produced cereals, ie., maize and sorghum are currently available to consumers in an unprocessed form; processing of these cereals in order to prepare traditional dishes such as anjeero, muufo and soor, therefore involves more time and labour input by women; and (2) the opportunity cost of time required by the urban consumer to make a trip to the neighbourhood grain mill has increased due to the following factors: (i) a shortage of labour in the household due to the continuous flux in the household, (ii) the cost of transportation to the mill has doubly increased for those urban households who hire domestic servants to perform this chore, and (iii) pasta and rice are increasingly being preferred for taste and are thus becoming the common urban dishes in an increasing number of households.

The reason most often cited for the decline in maize consumption is the amount of time and labour that is needed in its processing and preparation. The majority of women reported the drudgery and time involved in processing and preparing maize as the sole reason for the shift towards "ready-to-cook" pasta and rice. A few households cited "taste" as the influential factor in the change in household consumption patterns. A rather interesting feature reported by many households is that the younger generation prefer eating imported wheat (pasta) and rice. Poor households

indicated that they eat pasta and rice only when they could afford to do so.

It is important to note that the value placed on time by urban women may in fact be changing as more women are getting involved in work outside the home, as well as spending a great deal of time engaged in home-based and other income generating activities. Furthermore, women's income generating activities form a vital means of contributing to the running of the household. Given the circumstances that a fairly large number of men are either unemployed or have no regular job, the economic tasks performed by women are absolutely crucial. Some of these economic tasks are listed as: weaving mats and baskets, raising livestock, and trading enterprises. Considered in this light the time constraint placed on women no doubt indicates that they would shift to easily prepared foods, ie., pasta and rice.

Patterns of income, consumption and "investments" of households are expected to reflect the constraints under which each sex operates. Women earn small amounts on a regular basis and therefore tend to be responsible for the household. Consequently the daily level of nutrition and standard of living may depend more heavily on the woman's than the man's income. Fluctuations in the income levels of men may not alter the provision of daily necessities, but may have an important effect on lump sum expenditure such as type of housing. Household consumption patterns therefore reflect the

proportional contribution of men and women to total expenditure, and not the level of total income.

Summary

One disadvantage that working women experience is lack of recognition given to their role as workers in the economy and as income earners in households. The conventional notion that most urban women in countries such as Somalia are dominantly self-employed in the so called informal sector is applicable especially so for the vast majority of low income women.[3] In Mogadishu the most significant feature of women's employment is the extent to which 'upper class' women have been able to obtain government employment.

Decisions made by the head of the household to dissolve the marriage further exacerbates the burden placed on Somali women in trying to make ends meet. Despite the support system provided by the extended kin network divorced women still find that it is absolutely necessary to generate an income. Home-based economic activities are perhaps the major outlet for generating an income. Women engage in trading food produce and other items in order to support their households. In a majority of the cases, women involved in such economic tasks are the only means of support for the household.

Womens' time-use strategies center around maximizing time in order to devote their efforts to income generating

activities. Urban household consumption patterns have shifted from locally produced cereals such as maize and sorghum to imported pasta and rice, even though some pasta and rice are currently produced in the country. Women have definite startegies for achieving economic autonomy and improved social conditions. Strategies such as migration, hard work, and manipulation are all vital to the survival of the household. Migration involves mobility and hence escape from obstacles to individual progress in favour of creating or taking up more options. Hard work brings direct rewards for their labour and enables them to feed, support and rear their children. Through manipulation women engage in 'strategic planning' and thus mobilize needed resources and engaged in certain actions that lead to institutional change. Women are social actors with definite views about strategies needed to overcome certain situations.

Notes

1. Phyllis Kaberry pointed out the importance of capturing this interdependence. See Phyllis Kaberry 1982, Women in the Grassfields. London: H.M. Stationery Office.

2. The creation and functioning of rotating credit groups was discussed in Chapter 4. See pp. 86-99.

3. Informal sector activities have been characterized as "small in scale, limited to simple technology, and little capital, (but) economically efficient and profit making." See Keith Hart, 1973, "Informal Income Opportunities and Urban Employment in Ghana," Journal of Modern African Studies, No. 11.

CHAPTER SIX

MARRIAGE TRANSACTIONS, HOUSEHOLD SECURITY AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN SOMALI SOCIETY

Introduction

Any discussion of women's economic status in Somalia must be based on an awareness of the cultural perceptions of its peoples social system. Traditions orally transmitted from father to son, and from mother to daughter, through generations serve as a legal code which delineates the role of every member of the family, and which expresses their attitude towards life. These traditions are all-embracing and clearly defined combining elements of a nomadic social organization and Islamic beliefs. Strong adherence to Islamic ideology and nomadic social ties form the conceptual basis of a masculine Somali culture.

The ideal picture of a man which Somalis refer to as nin ragah (a real man) is seen as strong, courageous, proud, assertive, resourceful, honorable, daring and poetic. The ideal woman is one whose strength must be of a kind capable of concealing her man's weaknesses. A woman is traditionally considered to be the backbone of the family. It is her responsibility to take care of the house and raise the children. The social position of a family is usually determined by that of her husband, but it is widely held that

a family is mainly what a wife makes it.

In Somalia for centuries women have been treated as valuable commodities, not only for the purpose of acquiring bridewealth for daughters and sisters, but also by exchanging them in order to settle disputes and heal old wounds between men and clans. It is also common even today for young girls to be given in marriage to elderly men simply because the bridewealth is higher.

In this chapter I am primarily concerned with transactions that take place between households during marriage, in particular, to evaluate how the cultural system ensures the survival of the household. Much has been said of the effects of marriage but little of how it is established. Let us now consider the transactions which join a couple together as man and wife. Somali marriage further requires complicated matrimonial transactions which we can broadly term bridewealth. This chapter therefore addresses the social and economic status of Somali women by focusing on the following: (1) marriage transactions, rituals and the transference of wealth between households, and (2) marriage instability and the economic position of women.

Marriage Ritual and Bridewealth Transactions

In order to successfully establish and cement desirable unions a Somali marriage has two aspects. The first is that

personal ties between spouses are established, and secondly, a cooperative alliance between their lineages is also established. Even today these two aspects are clearly reflected in modern Somali marriages. Almost all marriages proceed in the following manner. The groom's family makes the initial approach to the prospective bride's kin to ask for her hand in marriage, and offers betrothal payments to the bride's kin. When accepted, the groom proceeds to pay bridewealth in the form of camels or cattle, or money. In earlier times (Italian era) fire-arms such as rifles were also part of bridewealth transactions and currency was in the form of the Italian lira. The bride's family then makes arrangements for the new family's household goods. These may include furniture and other household items. The actual wedding ceremony differs from region to region. Let us now turn to a discussion of the marriage ritual.[1]

In southern Somalia the groom's family will choose an elderly family member to consult with the bride's family. The two sides negotiate payment of the meher or bridewealth. The groom's family will then give to the bride's family gabbati which in a sense insures the proposal of marriage has been accepted. Both families then arrange for the actual wedding ceremony. The groom's family also distributes money or other items to the bride's family generally called yarad. On the wedding day the bride is elaborately adorned with henna on her hands and feet in the most spectacular designs.

It is important to note that all marriages are now under the influence from the West. After the nikah or actual wedding ritual officiated by a sheikh, the families and friends proceed to the reception usually held at a local hotel. It is more common, however, for the nikah to take place shortly after the marriage proposal has been accepted by the bride's family. The actual wedding ritual in the form of a western reception marks the transition of both parties as husband and wife. The reception may even take place perhaps a year or so after the nikah ceremony has been performed. Economic factors were usually given as an explanation as to why there is a long period of waiting from the nikah to the reception. The groom has to accumulate capital during this period so that he is well able to provide for his future wife.

At the reception rings are exchanged and Somali singers perform lilting songs referring to the future happiness of the married couple. The songs also stress the importance of bearing children, especially sons. Food and drinks are provided for the guests. The bride and groom then retire to their household. On the seventh day after the wedding reception has taken place, the shaash celebration is held.[2] This ritual is associated with women only and members from the bride's family predominate at this ritual. The women usually form a circle around the room and an elderly women starts singing a song referring to the marriage. Other women respond

by dancing in the center of the circle. A woman designated as the lead singer plays the drums enticing women to respond to the songs and join in the dancing. The singing and dancing proceeds for a few hours. Thereafter, the bride is brought into the room and the shaash or scarf is tied around her head. It is very important in the shaash ritual that the woman chosen to place the shaash on the bride's head has never before been divorced. The bride is now formally considered a wife with her status incumbent upon the duties relegated to that of a wife.

The shaash celebration is particular only to southern Somalis. Somalis originally from the north now living in Somalia do not perform the shaash ritual.[3] The nikah and reception follows the same pattern as that for the southern Somalis. The ritual that marks the actual transition of the new bride to wife is called gaaf. The gaaf ritual takes place on the fourth day after the wedding reception. The bride's family prepares the heero or what may be described as a dummy representing the bride in all her wedding attire, including shoes and jewellery. It is said that the bride's family spends at least a few days making the heero. The inner structure of the heero itself consists of containers called sati. Inside the sati is a delicacy known as odka made from ground beef, clarified butter and dates. This is to be distributed to the groom and his immediate family members at the conclusion of the gaaf ritual. Events in the gaaf ritual

may be described as follows. The bride and groom are seated in the main courtyard. The bride's family enters with the heero and a number of containers filled with the odka. The collection of containers filled with odka are called diigid. The bride's family are seated separately from that of the groom's who sit in the enclosure with the bride and groom. The events that are to follow are most fascinating indeed.

The most important person in the ritual is a lady from the bride's family referred to as askariyad or soldier and she holds a cane in her hand. It is her duty to call upon the men seated around the heero to undress the heero or dummy representative of the bride. There is a specific sequence as to how this should be done, for example the head dress or veil has to be removed first followed by the gloves and jewellery. The askariyad calls upon a man from the groom's family to start the elaborate ritual. If he defaults by not following the particular sequence as to how to undress the heero he is faced with a penalty. He then has to proceed to two "judges" who are kin members of the bride. The "judges" then hand down his punishment which may include reciting a poem, drinking salt water or singing a song. The songs or poems usually refer to the nomadic way of life extolling the nomad and his camels. If satisfied with the way in which he has handled his punishment, the man may then sit down joining other members of the groom's family.

The askariyad proceeds to call upon the men until the

heero is undressed. This ritual may take several hours or even days. Once the heero is undressed the askariyad calls upon the men to untie the containers forming the actual structure of the heero. It is vital that the beginning of the string used in binding the hidden containers be located first. At the end of this rather interesting and mind boggling ritual, the containers filled with odka are distributed to the people present at the ritual. Several other containers brought by the bride's family are then distributed to the immediate family members of the groom, including his uncles. The undressing of the heero symbolizes the bride's transition to that of a wife.

The particular gaaf celebration that I observed and been a part of, carried on for a couple of days. After having observed the ritual for over eight hours, no progress had yet been made by the groom's family in completely undressing the heero. The men had reached the stage of getting to the string but after several hours were still unsuccessful. The groom's family may have negotiated with the bride's family to open the heero with a knife. This would, however, involve the payment of compensation called haal by the groom to the bride's family in the amount of ten to twenty thousand Somali shillings. The groom's family did not opt for ending the ritual in this manner, and thus proceeded the next day in their efforts to untie the hidden containers.

The gaaf ritual is performed only if the bride is a

virgin. If the bride is not a virgin, her family may negotiate with that of the groom and pay compensation in order that the gaaf ritual may still be performed so as to "save face." Attempts to discern the actual symbolism involved in the gaaf ritual and in particular the events concerned with undressing the heero were in vain. Some individuals indicated that the overall meaning implied in the events showed that the longer the men took to untie the heero the longer it would take the groom to break the bride's virginity.[4]

The shaash and gaaf rituals are both representative of marking the transition of the status of the woman from that of a bride to that of a wife. The personal bond, however, between the bride and groom is established during the nikah ceremony where the groom promises to provide for the security of his wife. The ceremonial rituals following marriage demonstrate the transactions concerning the households of both the bride and the groom.

I now turn to an analysis of the marriage prestations that cement this bonding process. Somali marriage is comprised of the following transactions: (1) meher or the bride's dowry, (2) yarad or bridewealth, (3) gabbati or bethrotal gift, and (4) dibaad or dowry brought by the wife. Meher is the primary Islamic component in Somali marriage and no union is sanctified without it. Its nature and value may be a piece of jewellery, money or livestock (sheep, goats, cattle and camels). The actual nature and value must be

stipulated at the time of marriage and agreed to by the bride in the presence of witnesses and an officiating Muslim priest. It is the personal property of the wife and can be given to her during the marriage or immediately at divorce. It need not, however, be transferred by the groom to the bride before or at the wedding. Meher is essentially a divorce surety, guaranteeing a divorced wife a small settlement.

An important part of Somali marriage is the payment of bridewealth or yarad that the bridegroom offers to his wife's kin. Once a marriage proposal has been made and before the actual wedding ceremony it is customary to give a present called gabbati to the bride's kin. Traditionally Somali marriage is regarded not so much as between two individuals as between two kin groups. When asked who requested a girl in marriage, the name of her husband's lineage is usually given. Money, land, buildings, and other items may be given. Most people believe that brideprice constitutes compensation to the bride's family for the loss of a working member, as well as a deterrent factor against easy divorce.

It is also customary that when a girl returns to visit her family, she is given a substantial gift called dhibaad by her father or brother. Dhibaad comes from the word dib meaning hardship and implies the position of the future bride in her husband's household. Dhibaad may also be an occasional gift from the bride's family and may be continuous thus draining the resources of the bride's family. The woman's

social position continues to be defined in part by her membership in her father's house even after her marriage. She keeps her father's name and seeks refuge in his house from mistreatment by her husband. Dual loyalties of the married woman are reflected in the lineage term of address she retains. She retains part of the prestige structure of her father's descent group while in addition becoming incorporated, through her children, into the prestige structure of her husband's domestic group. That her patrilineal kinsmen bear the major responsibility for her behavior in any 'case of honour' demonstrates the continued legal and social identification with her father's group.

Furthermore, economic factors now play a vital role in regulating marriage in Somali society. A common way to initiate a marriage in the face of dire economic conditions, takes place when the prospective groom elopes with his prospective bride. If the woman's family has refused to accept the proposal of marriage presented by the man, then the couple may choose to elope. The couple travel to a specific town where they may get married according to the nikah ceremony. This form of marriage is termed qaadis or dafis meaning "robbery" or "to take." This form of marriage may result in conflict between the families concerned. Such conflict and hostility can, however, be rectified if the groom's family sends a delegation of elders to the bride's family. The appointed delegation takes with them a guntin or

cloth tied with money to the bride's family. The guntin belongs to the eldest maternal uncle of the bride. Conflict and antagonism resulting from such a marriage may thus be resolved in such a manner.

One may ask: "what are the marriage gifts for and what do they do?" In the case of meher and yarad they convey rights in the wife from her kin to her husband's kin. They also represent a tangible public statement of the marriage transaction which they announce and solemnize. Marriage payments are characteristically made in prestige wealth. To an increasing extent marriage prestations now include money and other modern forms of wealth. Table 20 lists the distribution of meher and yarad transactions.

Table 20

Marriage Prestations: Meher and Yarad

Yarad/Type	% Received Yarad	Meher/Type	Rec.
None	51%	none	18%
Quran	2%	goats	3%
Cow	1%	camels	6%
Rifle	2%	money	73%
Camels	14%	Amount in	
Money	30%	so.sh:	
		100	4%
		200	7%
		300	4%
		400	1%
		500	10%
		1000	36%
		1500	1%
		2000	8%
		10000	1%
		20000	1%

There is an indication that the vast majority of households did not receive any yarad, primarily because the economic circumstances of most households does not allow for this. The actual rates of meher and yarad fluctuate with the overall social and economic conditions. Attempts have been introduced, however, to maintain a standard rate of exchange for meher payments which are now officially set at one thousand Somali shillings. The transference of marriage prestations in the form of yarad adds to the economic security of the bride's family. The marriage of a daughter has a more immediate effect on her household than those of sons. The household loses the labor and economic input of a daughter. The blow to the bride's household is softened by payment of the yarad. The groom's household loses capital, whether in the form of livestock or money.

The meher transaction relates primarily to the personal aspects of marriage. It unites two individuals without reference to and without established links between their collateral kin. The initial bridewealth gift gives the suitor preemptive rights in his future wife. If he subsequently marries someone else, he forfeits his gabbati. If the girl and her kin default, they are liable to pay damages to the suitor and his kin. If neither side defaults, the next issue concerns the amount of bridewealth or yarad which the girls kin are prepared to accept. Long and delicate negotiations ensue, resulting if the conclusion is favorable, in an agreed

and detailed settlement.

Whatever its components substantial bridewealth includes contributions from a wide circle of kin, who thus tangibly demonstrate their appreciation of the union as an alliance with their group. The same holds true at the receiving end. An equally wide range of kin on the bride's side receive a share of the incoming yarad, emphasizing their collective sentiment. They have to decide the character and quantity of the dibaad or dowry which the bride will take with her to her husband. This varies with the bridewealth and their assessment of the desirability of the match. By sending a generous dowry, the bride's kin parade their munificence and pleasure. Any subsequent gift from the wife's kin during the marriage is viewed as dowry, illustrating the ongoing character of the relationship.

If a couple elope, marrying secretly in defiance of their parents wishes no affinal connection is created and neither side has any collateral claim on the other. Hence if the wife dies, or is childless the groom has no sororatic rights at all. In the event of her husband's death the widow is free to marry as she chooses and her husband's kin have no claim over her. The bilateral, collective ties of what is considered a proper marriage reinforce the union of the two individual spouses, and the rights and obligations on each side reflect the character of the various marriage prestations. Furthermore, a substantial number of marriages

are arranged and a large percentage of marriages take place between those who are related especially along patrilineal lines. Table 21 illustrates the significance of kin ties and arranged marriages.

Table 21

Kin Ties and Arranged Marriages

Relation	Percent
Kin Ties	
Related:	54%
Not Related:	46%
Arranged Marriages	
Arranged marriage	53%
Not arranged:	47%
If arranged, pleased with decision:	45%
Not pleased with decision:	8%
Wanted to get married:	45%
Did not want to get married:	8%
Why did you accept arranged marriage:	
forced to accept:	21%
to have children:	32%
If forced why accept?:	
migrate to city:	13%
obey parents decision:	8%
Could not refuse or say no:	18%
Could refuse:	3%

Kin ties play a significant role in regulating marriage. A vast majority of women stated that they were not pleased with the decision to get married, and especially so having no voice in decision making and in the choice of a marriage partner. A number of women indicated that the need to start up a family

and have children was the primary motive for getting married, even if the marriage was arranged. Women's decision-making and individual choices are restricted in the sphere of marriage. Nevertheless a large proportion of women "wanted to get married" so as to start up a family and have children. The case studies cited below explain women's choices and other aspects of marriage.

Case Study 1: Fadumo

Fadumo was born and brought up in Hoddur one of the seven districts of Bakool Region. She did not attend formal school nor religious school. As a young girl she spent most of her time occupied with household chores and daily purchase of food from the local market. At the age of sixteen she decided to get married. It was a love marriage and her fiance approached her mother for her hand in marriage as her father had passed away. Her mother readily consented and Fadumo and her fiance got married in Hoddur. Friends and relatives were invited to grace the ceremony, goats were slaughtered as part of the wedding feast and a Somali play and songs formed part of the wedding celebration.

The yarad consisted of two thousand Somali shillings and the meher consisted of six camels. On the seventh day the shaash celebration was held. A goat was slaughtered and lunch was served. During the shaash celebration an old woman, never before divorced, put the shaash or scarf on Fadumo's head.

Fadumo was married for seven years but did not have children. Her husband fought with her because of this and divorced her. He paid her six hundred So. sh. at divorce instead of six camels. At divorce Fadumo moved to live with relatives in Mogadishu. Her second husband was her neighbor in Mogadishu. Her second marriage was also not arranged. The wedding celebration was not as extravagant as the first because she was now a divorcee. Her second husband did not provide any yarad to her family but paid one thousand So.sh. in meher. He is a teacher and a party representative in the Ministry of Agriculture. Fadumo now has four children, two sons and two daughters.[5]

Case Study No. 2: Xalima

Xalima was born in Harar Province in Ethiopia but grew up in Baladweyn located in the middle Shebelle region. She was married three times. Her first marriage was arranged by her parents. Her first husband paid fourty camels, two hundred goats and one rifle as yarad. Meher payments consisted of four camels. Camels were slaughtered for the wedding feast and a Somali play called dhaanto was performed. Her first husband raised livestock, especially cattle. After a year of marriage he divorced Xalima and did not pay back the meher. Her second marriage was to a soldier and was a love marriage. No yarad was paid to her family as she was a divorcee. Her second husband paid five hundred So.sh. as

meher. After a few years of marriage Xalima had to go through a second divorce as her husband did not want her. Her third marriage was also a love marriage. No yarad was given and the meher payment was one thousand So.sh. Her third husband is a mechanic and both Xalima and her husband work at a gas station. Her two sisters live with her and help take care of her three children.

Case Study No. 3: Maano

Maano was born and brought up in Lamadoonka, a village near Afgoi in the Lower Shebelle region. She did not attend formal school nor Quran school. She helped her parents tend cattle. At the age of eighteen her parents arranged for Maano to marry her cousin. A month after they had decided to get married her husband brought an ox, two sacks of maize, two containers of oil, ten kilograms of sugar, ten kilograms of coffee and roasted coffee beans as gifts to her family. He also gave a sum of one thousand So.sh. to her parents as payment for yarad. Meher payments consisted of a cow. During her marriage Maano and her husband argued consistently and finally she asked him to divorce her. He agreed on condition that she repay all the food and other items he had contributed to her family and for the wedding celebration. She repayed all these items but he did not pay back the meher. For three years Maano remained unmarried. Her next marriage was a love marriage also with one of her cousins. The yarad was three

thousand So.sh. and the meher only sixty So.sh. Her second husband was a farmer and they had three children. Her second marriage also ended in divorce and he repaid the meher of sixty So.sh. Maano left her children with her parents in Afgoi and migrated to Mogadishu to live with her brother. After a year in Mogadishu she got a job as a maid.

Case Study No. 4: Hersiyo

Hersiyo was born in Bulo Burti in Hiran Region. She has six brothers and seven sisters. Hersiyo received elementary school education in Bulo Burti and then moved to live with her married sister in Mogadishu. She completed secondary school in Mogadishu. On her sisters death her parents decided to hand her over in marriage to her deceased sister's husband since she would be able to take care of the children as her sister had and because she had lived with them and also taken care of the children while she was alive. This form of marriage is called xigsiino. Hersiyo was married at the age of seventeen. There was no wedding celebration but only the nikah. No yarad or meher payments were made as she was considered as a "gift." After six months of marriage she fell pregnant with her first child. Her sister had three boys and four girls. Hersiyo has three maids who take care of the children and also the household chores.

The case studies cited above clearly demonstrate the dilemmas faced by Somali women and their non-participation in

decision-making processes which are primarily part of the male domain. The role played by Somali women in decision-making is rather limited, especially concerning those aspects of life that directly affect them, eg., the choice of a marriage partner. Moreover, the amount in yarad and meher payments depend upon the social status of the woman. One of the main factors relates to whether she is a divorcee or widow and such considerations substantially decrease bridewealth payments.

Divorce and the Economic Position of Women

Somali marriage is not stable. One might argue that Somali marriage is the frail, brittle thing it is because of strong collateral pressures between actually or potentially hostile lineages. Marriage transfers the immediate custody of a woman from her father and brother to her husband but it does not transfer her allegiance. In the inevitable tug-of-war between her spouse and her kin, her kin regularly take precedence. They are a patrilineal society in which, where substantial marriage payments are made, a man can gain full uxorical rights in a wife without her completely relinquishing her own kinship identity. Throughout her life a Somali woman retains her natal lineage membership. At her death her husband has to contend himself with a sororatic replacement bride from his dead wife's lineage. Requirements of patrilineal descent are met by a form of marriage in which a

woman retains her own lineage identity and is not herself completely absorbed in her husbands group, although full uxorial and genetrical rights in her are transformed to her husband.

According to Islam, divorce is the prerogative of the man. He may divorce his wife at will and without court proceedings. Divorce is very common in Somali society and the unequal relationship between men and women enables a man to divorce his wife for whatever reason he chooses.[6] A woman can be divorced for failing to bear children, sometimes even failing to bear sons. Since a wife's primary duty is to produce children, a Somali woman is well aware that she may be divorced or that her husband will marry another wife if she is unproductive. The value of a woman is equated with her ability to bear children, and her status increases especially with the number of sons she bears. The educated few in Somalia who are prepared to reduce the size of their families favor monogamy. Some young wives, however, find it difficult to abandon their traditional Islamic beliefs towards fertility and family size. Somali marriage is an unstable institution today. Indeed, even a woman who has had several children may still feel that her position is insecure, and must be reinforced by more births, especially sons. This is reflected in the attitude of men who marry a second wife when the first ceases to bear children.

Polygyny is a strongly established practice, and although

less favored by the educated few, it is still widely accepted on all social and economic levels of Somali society. The existence of the institution of polygyny contributes to marital instability, as it is a constant source of insecurity for women. Table 22 indicates the outcome of the decision to divorce and its effects on women's status.

Table 22

Divorce and Womens' Economic Status

Marital Status	Percent
Marital Status	
Not divorced	35%
Divorced	55%
Widowed	10%
Reasons for Divorce	
Co-wife	43%
Always arguing	45%
Did not care during pregnancy	12%
Length of Time Married	
nine months	12%
one year	12%
two years	12%
six years	12%
ten years	29%
twenty two years	12%
Process of Divorce	
Sharia or Islamic law	43%
Sharia and court	57%

Table 22 (cont'd)

Alimony, Family Support, Meher	
no alimony	100%
no child support	100%
received meher	65%
received support/khalmo	71%
none received	29%
Wage Activities	
none	29%
sold mats and baskets	28%
sold food produce	43%
Residential Arrangements	
relatives	72%
did not move	28%

The older and more important men are, the more wives they tend to have. Thus privilege increases familial tensions, not only between co-wives but also between the husband and his son. The main reason cited by women as to why divorce is inevitable is that the husband wished to take on another wife. Moreover, the already subordinate and economically inferior status of women is exacerbated by the decision to divorce. None of the women studied received any alimony or child support.

As stated earlier, meher is a means of safeguarding the economic position of women. However, in many cases meher is not paid to the wife at divorce. Women who want a divorce usually sacrifice their meher in order to gain their freedom. The case studies cited below reflect the frequency of divorce and its effects on womens' economic statuses and roles.

Case Study No. 1: Khadija

Khadija is fifty years old. She was born in the lower Shebelle Region. Her present husband has been divorced three times and holds a job as chauffeur. Khadija has been divorced three times. She has now been married for five years. She divorced her third husband on the basis that he had wanted to take another wife and Khadija severely opposed his decision. He divorced her according to Sharia law and did not pay any alimony or meher. At first she received support from her uncle and other extended family members. Khadija then began making mats for sale and managed to take care of herself by her own home-based economic activities.

Case Study No. 2: Adai

Adai is thirty five years old and has been married twice. She was born in Baay Region. Adai stated that she does not know why her first husband divorced her as he gave no reason for his decision. They had been married ten years. He divorced her according to Sharia law and provided no child support or alimony but paid three hundred Somali shillings as repayment of the meher. Her father took care of her and her two children. In order to contribute towards support of herself and her children Adai, like Khadija began weaving mats for sale. Her present husband does not hold a steady job but is engaged in business activities. She now has two children by her second marriage.

Case Study No. 3: Aamina

Aamina aged fourty has been divorced twice. Her present husband who is a mechanic has also been divorced twice. Her previous husband divorced her for no reason that she could readily identify. They had been married ten years. He divorced her according to Sharia law and provided no support and did not pay back the meher. Aamina had to rely on her family for support and engaged in home-based activities, making baskets for sale. At divorce she moved to Mogadishu to live with her parents. She now has five children from her present husband.

Case Study No. 4: Xalima

Xalima is aged fifty eight and has been married four times. Her present husband has been divorced twice. Her last marriage ended because her husband did not take care of her during her pregnancy. They had been married two years. Her husband's neglect of her is attributed to him having another wife, a situation which Xalima did not approve of. At the time of her first marriage she was living in the Lower Shebelle Region. She was divorced by both Sharia law and court proceedings but did not receive any alimony or child support. At divorce she moved to Mogadishu to live with her brother. She now has thirteen children from her present husband.

Somali marriage is rather brittle and unstable. We may

pontificate as to why divorce is so widespread in Somali society, citing factors such as polygyny and inability on the part of women to bear children.[5] Nevertheless, in order to discover what rights women do have, if any, we need to look to the legal system for answers to this dilemma.

The Family Law passed in 1975 under the tutelage of Somali Womens Groups is considered to be a milestone for women's legal equality and basis for the increasing strength of a woman's legal status in Somalia. The Family Law has given women the right to vote, accorded to them in 1963, and the opportunity to hold political office and participate in decision-making. They can enrol at any level of education, and legally they have land rights with access to credit and training. Many of these changes, however, are not adequately enforced, partially because the Law has a distinct, if unintended urban bias. An example of the tension between modern and traditional rights is found in the process of divorce settlements and payment of the meher. In Islamic tradition the meher must always be promised by the bridegroom in front of the sheikh who performs the wedding, in order that the marriage take place. Payment of a substantial meher has always been regarded as a deterrence against divorce or as a provision for the wife's subsequent welfare if her husband dies. In the south the tradition of meher has been less strong, if only a token promise of one thousand Somali shillings.

Socially conscious Somali women are struggling for the implementation of the Amendments to the Family Law passed in 1975. Women now at least have certain rights in matters of divorce and marriage. There are specific conditions attached to marriage involving second, third and fourth wives. It is strictly conditioned and restricted. Marriage must be based upon mutual consent and respect. Brideprice and the marriage contract were placed under the jurisdiction of civil courts. The legal age of marriage became eighteen for girls and twenty for men, and the consent of at least one parent or guardian is necessary for those under twenty. Divorce can only be obtained by judicial action. Absolute right of the man to divorce his wife as and when he pleases was abolished and both husband and wife have the right to divorce.

The present Family Law states that when a husband initiates divorce he is required to pay his former wife a minimum meher of one thousand Somali shillings, half of his salary or other financial earnings in a year. A first weakness of the law is that it refers to financial earnings rather than to the actual and total economic assets of the husband. Awarded only half of his salary may not amount to much as salaries in Mogadishu are quite low. Thus divorced women who cannot adequately maintain their children after divorce are forced to fall back on their own families for assistance, or on their abilities to find and hold employment. If neither family support nor employment is available to women

who live in urban areas they may be forced to engage in home-based economic and other income generating activities.

A second weakness in the Family Law is that if the wife initiates divorce proceedings the husband is not obliged to pay the meher. The right then for a woman to initiate divorce is dependent upon her financial status. This specific inequity in divorce settlement and difficulties in enforcing other more equitable sections of the Family Law is still a controversial issue in enforcing the legal rights of Somali women. Many educated Somali women question the Law's present ability to adequately safeguard womens' rights unless the divorce sections are changed, and overall compliance increased through media information and community education.

There is, however, a basic agreement that the Family Law has given Somali women a fairly equitable legal status through the establishment of her equal rights of inheritance, her access to some basic level of family support, and her legal ability to initiate a divorce.

Summary

Bridewealth transactions represent the changes taking place in Somalia today. The monetarization of bridewealth reflects the economic changes current in Mogadishu. The suggested determinants of marital stability therefore include social structural factors particular to political, legal and

economic factors. Divorce not only affects changes in household structure but also the economic status of women.

Meher and yarad transactions not only form one of the most important components of marriage in Somalia, but are also dependent upon economic factors. The economic security of the bride's household is jeopardized in cases where yarad is not given. Furthermore the neglect on the part of the husband to fulfill repayment of the meher at divorce makes the divorcee more susceptible to the dire economic conditions prevalent in Mogadishu.

Legal steps have been taken to improve the position of women. Nevertheless such measures, as noted earlier, do not adequately enforce the rights pertaining to women, and especially those concerning divorce.

Notes

1. I have had the wonderful opportunity of being a participant observer in a number of marriage ceremonies, for both the southern Somali and northern Somali households. On one occasion I had the honour of being "best lady" for a gaaf ritual.

2. At one of the shaash rituals that I was allowed to participate in, I was given permission to take photographs as well as question the women directly about the events in the ritual.

3. Regional differences are reflected very clearly in the wedding rituals, for example those of the gaaf and shaash rituals. The marriage institution provides perhaps one of the best indeces by which to gauge regional differences.

4. Numerous attempts to unravel the symbolism embodied in the creation and untying of the heero proved fruitless. The explanation provided here was given by an elderly gentleman. Woman did not attempt to explain the gaaf ritual, and stated that it was merely an occasion for "joking." The gaaf ritual is peculiar only to clans from the northern regions of Somalia, where the practice of female infibulation and circumcision are widespread. One may therefore assume that the explanation provided here may indeed relate to the bride's virginity.

5. Although both polygamy and divorce are legalized by the Islamic religion, the extent to which female circumcision is a factor contributing to the causation of polygyny and divorce is still not recognized. Dr. Mahdi Ali Dirie (1985) states that many women are divorced by their husbands because of the medical implications of female circumcision. See Dr. Mahdi Ali Dirie (1985) Female Circumcision in Somalia: Medical and Social Implications. See "Social and Cultural Aspects of Female Circumcision and Infibulation: A Preliminary Report," by Aamina Warsame, Sadiya Ahmed and Aud Talle, 1985.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The face of Mogadishu has changed remarkably since the nineteenth century. Consequently, household social structure and the overall status of Somali women have also evolved, with dramatic changes occurring in both spheres. In this dissertation I have attempted to show that the changes affecting household social structure are caused primarily by decisions that are both culturally (male domain) and economically (female domain) determined. I introduced a model of continuous fragmentation in order to explain exactly how decision-making processes in the realm of marriage, divorce, polygyny, migration, and income generating activities operate to effect the position of Somali women and household structure.

The way in which the subject matter was handled is summarized as follows. I discussed the ebb and flow in the evolution and expansion of Mogadishu in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Factors such as trade fostered by Indian and Arab merchants, the introduction of a slave population and the competition and rivalries between Shangaani and Xamarweyne contributed significantly to the decline and beginnings of the period of revitalization of Mogadishu in the nineteenth century. The twentieth century witnessed a rapid growth in

the population of Mogadishu primarily a result of Italian colonial rule. Mogadishu's population continued to increase after colonial rule, and today is probably one of the fastest growing cities in Tropical Africa. In discussing Mogadishu as it is in the 1980s, a description of the research area was presented .

I argued that Fortes's "developmental cycle" model could not adequately explain changes taking place in households, as various factors other than marriage and the simple transition from nuclear to extended families, are operating to radically alter the structure of the household. The model outlined by Fortes depends upon three specific phases, namely, expansion, dispersal and replacement. The model of continuous fragmentation which I introduced in chapter three is an attempt to provide a more viable explanation for changing household structure and the position of women. Central to this model is the idea that the household does not proceed through a sequence of specific phases, but that various circumstances, events and decision-making processes greatly alter the household. I have emphasized that decision-making is the most vital factor in regulating such changes. Decision-making on the part of Somali men is seen in the sphere of marriage, divorce and polygyny. All of these decisions exclude women who are not "free" to voice their opinions and participate in decisions affecting their social lives.

I have also discussed how the physical form of households change according to economic conditions and the decision to migrate. Household physical type is also influenced by Arab, Italian and Somali characteristics. The social form or structure of households was also evaluated in relation to specific circumstances, for example, death of a spouse, in order to illustrate how households change and the tremendous flux present in household membership. The strategies open to both male-headed and female-headed households were explored in conjunction with support networks and rotating credit groups. While income generation for male members emanates from their ability to gain influence and initiate business enterprises, the ability of women to have access to this form of income generation is strictly controlled. Women have access to rotating credit groups and also gain autonomy and control in their economic pursuits. Money derived through their participation in home-based economic tasks and market trade gives women autonomy and control over the fruits of their labor.

Despite the constraints imposed upon women, women are able to manipulate their subordinate status through hard work and adopting techniques to minimize their time-use. Women have control over their ability to engage in economic enterprises that ensure the survival of the household on a day to day basis. Women make constructive choices in attempting to regulate the long-term survival of the household. Even in

the face of dire economic hardship and unemployed spouses, women successfully manipulate their circumstances. A woman's sense of dependance on a man is minimized when she is able to have a certain degree of autonomy in engaging in her own economic activities. Time-use strategies analyzed in relation to household consumption patterns is just one of the ways in which women achieve control.

I have also discussed how the cultural context and decision-making in the sphere of marriage controlled the transfer of wealth and goods between households and the continuous drain on the household of the bride. Bridewealth transactions and the actual marriage and post-marriage rituals engaged households in a web of exchange of resources (money and goods). Yarad, meher, and gabbati transactions involved primarily the transference of money and goods to the household of the bride, in a sense compensating her household for the loss of her economic and labor input. The dhibaad transaction in contrast, is a means of continuously draining the resources of the bride's family. The case of marriages termed as qaadis further demonstrates the extensive negotiations between households and the compensatory aspects of Somali unions.

In conclusion, it must be emphasized that the secondary status of women is contradicted in a number of ways. In western cultures, the strongest of a woman's role within a family, is her role as a wife. For a Somali woman, her role as wife is the weakest and least powerful of those she plays

within the extended family system. Her role as sister and aunt to her brothers and his family affords her considerable authority and responsibility over family decisions. As a sister and mother of grown children, she is consulted in all decisions made by her brothers and sons. Her husband is obliged to consult her only in matters concerning household security.

Of prime importance to the status of Somali women, and to the status of all Somalis, is the protection provided by their own extended family. In the case of women limitations are put on the husband by this protection. The Somali proverb, "dhigeeda ma lihid ee waxaad leedahay dhaqmaad keeda," states that a husband does not control his wife's person, only her services. In addition, the important and necessary contribution that a woman makes to the household, enhances her standing. A woman also ensures her own status as a mother with many children. Even today the blessings showered on a bride include the wish that she "sleep on a bed of ten," in other words should produce at least ten children.

It is important to understand both the strengths and weaknesses of womens' traditional status in Somalia. Somali women have a dual image. The first is embodied in the conservative Islamic value system. The second is a more powerful image derived from Somali pastoral heritage. According to a popular legend, women played vital roles in Somalia as peace-makers prior to the advent of Islam. Even

today these contradictory images are found in all aspects of women's lives, but it is rarely understood that they represent equally true, if conflicting realities of female status in Somalia.

In this dissertation I have followed Nancy Hafkin and Edna Bay (1976) in looking at women as actors constructively seeking to alter their status. In conjunction with such an approach I have explored the areas in which women have control over decision-making and those areas from which they are excluded. The formation and function of rotating credit networks is one of the ways in which women reduce mens control over family finances.

An aspect of this dissertation that had a fairly significant impact on policy makers in Somalia is the section on women time-use strategies and household consumption patterns. This data was also incorporated by the Food Security Project (MSU-Department of Agricultural Economics /USAID/Ministry of Agriculture-Somalia) in their study of food security in Somalia. At a workshop held in May 1987, this study (also in the form of a working paper) aroused much debate. Somalia is self sufficient in maize and policy makers were concerned that much of the urban population is consuming imported wheat products (pasta). The Ministry of Agriculture proposed that the Womens Organization initiate programmes to educate urban Somali women to reintroduce maize in the household diet. At the time of my departure from Somalia in

August 1987 this issue was still in the discussion stage.

In conclusion I suggest that if Somalia is to progress it is absolutely vital that women's status be studied and the roots of women subordination investigated thoroughly. Numerous projects funded by international donors exist in Somalia and women should become an essential component of such research. It is only by looking at women (the household as the main unit of study), would we be able to find answers to some of Somalia's problems, in particular those pertaining to Mogadishu, the capital city where poverty and impoverishment is as rife as in the rural areas.

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