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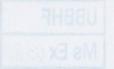
Between **Tradition and Modernity**

- Girls' Education in the Northern Sudan, 1899-1956.



Hovedfag thesis by Renate Lunde. University of Bergen, May 2001.







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Acknowledgements

A long journey has reached its end, but hopefully it is just a beginning! It has not only been a journey in distance and cultural diversity, through fieldworks in Durham and Khartoum, but also a journey in mind. A process of maturity has been activated in professional reasoning, in interpretation of foreign literature and sources, in analysis, but most important I feel maturity has commenced in matter of reflection.

Several institutions and many people made this journey possible, and they all deserve my gratitude and thankfulness. This is therefore my speech of thanks.

First of all I would like to thank my sponsors that enabled me to go to Durham and Khartoum at the fieldworks, which proved so priceless. Birgit Wiig's Stiftelse, Kvinner og Utvikling deserves my deep gratitude, without your support in particular, my trip to Khartoum would have been impossible. Nils, Katrine og Knut Kvåle's Legat, Internasjonalt kontor at the University of Bergen and Voss Kommune also contributed with invaluable financial support.

The personnel at the Sudan Archives in Durham took great care of me in the spring of 1999, and constantly provided me with invaluable source material. In the Sudan, I was fortunate to meet Dr. Ali Salih Karrar at the National Records office in Khartoum. He became, already from day one, my tutor, my advisor, my contact to the significant people and places, and most important my friend and anchor in the Sudan. I don't think one day passed by without Dr. Ali and Awatif, also at the NRO, giving me help, attention, and of course tea! Abbas at the University Library of Khartoum provided me with help far beyond his obligations. Even when I was not present he sought fro literature and sources for me, and I am deeply grateful. Dr. Fadwa, she works in the History Department at the University of Kharotum, provided me with support beyond parity. Without her help I would never have been able to get in touch with such interesting persons as Nafisa Ahmed el-Amin, Hagga Kashif Badri and Souad Ibrahim Isa. She organized interviews for me, drove me all over Omdurman, Khartoum and Khartoum North in the middle of her own very busy days. She even prepared a great meal of which I can still smell the diversity of delicious spices. The pioneer women, Nafisa, Hagga Kashif and Souad Ibrahim Isa I interviewed also deserve my gratitude for opening their homes to talk about their memories from the colonial period. Dr. Yusuf Fadl Hasan also offered his help to me, and unfortunately he crashed his car on his way to deliver me some unpublished manuscripts to my hotel.

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In Bergen my deep gratitude go to my supervisor Anders Bjørkelo, who has been optimistic and encouraging throughout the whole process. Your advices and interesting conversations has been most helpful. I also want to thank Munzoul Assal for doing a great job of translating my Arabic material. Inger Marie Okkenhaug has given me some valuable references and ideas, and Edgar Hovland and Harm Schröter have proved their brilliance in their evaluations at the manuscript seminars for students. Hovland and Schröter have used much of their time to evaluate our manuscripts and the critique has been most significant and helpful for us, and speaking for myself I owe them both a huge hug, which soon will be materialized.

My fellow students at the manuscript seminars: thank you for reading my manuscripts and giving me encouraging critique. Åsta have proved to be a great friend who is always there to support me when both professionally and socially. My grandmother has taken care of my nutrition no matter late or early, and mum, you owe my thanks for having unconditional trust and faith in me. Last but certainly not least, Erik, my dear partner whom I owe great thanks due to your understanding, support, warmth and love, and because you manage so easily to take my mind off the thesis when I needed it the most.

Thank you all!

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Who shall ensure the education of women? For they Are the source of failures in the East. The mother is a school; equip her well, And you have equipped a nation sound in root...¹

1. Approaching girls' education in the Northern Sudan

Women in the Northern Sudan today possess positions within various fields like law, medicine, engineering and architecture. They dominate the areas of teaching, nursing and health services, and constitute a large part of the university students in the Northern Sudan. Girls' attendance at the University of Khartoum passed boys' attendance in the Faculty of Arts in the beginning of the 1980s, about the same time as in Norway. Considering the Northern Sudanese women's previous position as limited to their homes, this indicates a remarkable development the last century.

We know that social change does not occur overnight, nor without some degree of often painful disruption. Sudanese women's noteworthy development thus becomes especially interesting when considering the slow expansion of girls' education during its initial stages in the colonial period. Educational achievements are associated with development and modernity, and it is therefore natural to study the educational history of women in an attempt to comprehend the forces that may have activated the significant development of women in the society. The Sudan is, however, a diverse country in many ways and the issue of education for girls differed greatly from the mainly non-Muslim south to the Muslim, Arabic speaking north. My discussion is limited to the Northern Sudan and there mainly to the urban areas. This thesis thus attempts to identify the forces behind the development of girls' education in the Northern Sudan during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium rule, 1899-1956.

The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Agreement of 1899 provided a joint administration of the Sudan by the British and Egyptian governments, but Egypt played only a nominal role already from the outset.² Radical changes were made as the basic routines of a modern government were established, and as a part of the programme, the government had to

¹ This is the first verse in a poem by the Egyptian poet Hafiz Ibrahim (1871-1932). Cachia, Pierre, "Tradition, Imitation and Originality in Poetry", in *An Overview of Modern Arabic Literature*, Edinburgh 1990, p. 179-200.

² Warburg, Gabriel 1985: Egypt and the Sudan – Studies in History and Politics.

devise an educational system. The few opportunities of schooling that already existed were confined to the traditional Koranic schools, the *khalwas*, which provided rudimentary education for a small number of boys.³ The British administration from early on established a system for educating a selected group of Northern Sudanese boys in which the Gordon Memorial College soon became the top of boys' educational pyramid. A group of young intellectual Northern Sudanese men thus eventually emerged and expanded.⁴

It is, however, worth noticing that girls' education was actively opposed from the outset. The earlier literature on girls' education mentions especially Muslim traditions and customs as hostile to change and thus causing the slow development of girls' schools.⁵ Girls' education did appear radical at the start much because a school life meant a life outside the girls' homes and this contrasted with social customs and traditions. The Northern Sudanese urban Muslim society was a predominantly Arab community characterised by patriarchal traditions and customs where men, first her father and brothers and later husband and sons, were meant to protect the woman from her believed weaknesses. The urban Northern Sudanese women were therefore for the most part confined to the female environments of their homes.⁶ Women and girls had little idea of the world beyond the women quarters, and many girls became easily apathetic and ignorant. The majority of Northern Sudanese thus opposed girls' education in the beginning as this was regarded a revolutionary development in contrast to their traditional life. British opposition was, however, also visible, but the previous literature merely mentions the administrations' economic constraints that affected girls' schools in addition to concerns of administrative security. The development and provision for girls' schools thus lagged behind boys' education from the start of the Condominium, and a further investigation is needed to examine whether the situation was like the previous historical works suggest.

- Was the provision for girls' schools mainly ignored and placed on the sideline?
- Was the Northern Sudanese opposition so strong that the British administration could not provide many girls' schools?

³ See more about the *khalwa* in chapter two.

⁴ A further educational and historical background will be provided in chapter two.

⁵ See below about the earlier literature.

⁶ See for instance Kenyon, S. (ed.) 1987, *The Sudanese Woman*. Oxford, Cloudsley, A. 1983, *Woman of Omdurman*. London, Hall, M. and Ismail, B. A. 1981, *Sisters Under the Sun*. London, Hagga Kashif Badri 1986, *Women's Movement in the Sudan*. New Delhi, and 1987: *My Experience as a Female Researcher*. Khartoum.

- How was the British administrators' position towards Northern Sudanese girls' education?
 - What influenced the British and Northern Sudanese actors' position?

The above questions will be discussed in chapter three, where the actors will be identified and the discussion will revolve around the previously held argument that girls' education was slowly developed because Muslim traditions limited Northern Sudanese demand. I challenge this view by discussing the British administration's supply of girls' schools against the Northern Sudanese demand for such. Furthermore I will go beyond the study of the demand for and supply of girls' education in chapter 4, and analyse the following questions:

- Which arguments and rhetoric were employed to emphasise one's position regarding girls' education?
- Official arguments represent the actors' in one way, but can we trace any underlying motives and attitudes as well?
- What were the motivations and intentions beneath the actors' positions?

This approach to Northern Sudanese girls' educational history claims originality, as I have not found literature discussing the fundamental raison d'être in the development of girls' education in the Northern Sudan. As we shall see below, a large part of the earlier literature provides the reader with narrative summaries of the development, and general conclusions, without giving a much deeper analysis. I seek the both the Northern Sudanese and British actors' motivations and intentions, while there previously has been an emphasis on merely Northern Sudanese factors that impeded the development. I will now enlighten the reader with an account of the above mentioned earlier literature on girls' education, before I stress my position, sources and methods when studying Northern Sudanese girls' education.

2. Northern Sudanese education in previous research

Previous research on girls' education in the Northern Sudan reveals some curious features. There naturally exists a variation in the literature both in time and position of the authors, but considering the diversity in period and position, however, the historical writings do not, with a few exceptions, differ very much in either content or perspective. We may divide the literature that mentions Sudanese education into three groups. The general historical literature covers many aspects of the Sudanese history and politics like Holt and Daly, Warburg and Mansfield.⁷ They provide interesting surveys of the history of the Sudan supplying good backgrounds for more specialised studies. Other historians cover the general educational history in the Sudan characterised by an emphasis on boys' education, like in the works of the historians Mohamed Omer Beshir and Nazir el-Seed Mohamed.⁸ The third group of writers and researchers have specialised in one way or the other. Qarib Allah studies the history of the *Khalwa*, the traditional Koran school, Vincent L. Griffiths is mainly concerned with boys' education and teacher training, while Lillian Sanderson, Ina Beasley and Hagga Kashif Badri primarily study girls' education.⁹

The fact that girls' education in the Sudan lagged far behind boys' education from the start has proved to be a theme repeated in most of the literature on Sudanese women. Several historians have described the slow progress of girls' education, and interestingly enough the scholars show a striking similarity when explaining the slow development.

When Lillian Sanderson, for instance, indicates that Sudanese traditions and religion caused the slow development of girls' schools she unites with the majority of historians dealing with girls' education in the Sudan.¹⁰ She refers to girls' submissive position in the Northern Sudan, and the Muslim prejudices that prevailed concerning women and education. Dr. Mohamad Adham Ali is among those joining with this view, when referring to traditions and customs as "the most significant influence hindering the rapid development of girls' education".¹¹ Another assumption is that the British was afraid of interfering with Sudanese

⁷ Holt, P.M and Daly, M.W. 1988: A History of the Sudan - from the coming of Islam to the present day. London. Daly, M.W. 1986. Empire on the Nile - the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1898-1934. Cambridge. Warburg, Gabriel 1971: The Sudan Under Wingate. Frank Cass & Co. Ltd. London. Mansfield Peter 1991. A History of the Middle East. London.

⁸ Beshir, Mohamed Omer 1969. The Educational Development in the Sudan 1898-1956. Oxford. Mohamed, Nazir el-Seed. 1969. Educational Development in the Northern Sudan 1898-1965. Ph.D. Edinburgh.

⁹ Qarib Allah, Abasalih Muh 1993. The Philosophy and History of al-Khalwa in the Sudan. Michigan. Griffiths, Vincent L. 1953: An Experiment in Education. London. Sanderson 1961. Beasley, Ina 1992: Before the Wind Changed - People, Places and Education in the Sudan. Oxford. Hagga Kashif Badri 1986: Women's Movement in the Sudan. New Delhi.

¹⁰ Sanderson, Lillian: "A History of Education in the Sudan With Special Reference to the Development of Girls' Schools", M.A. Thesis 1962, unpublished. Sanderson, L.: "Survey of Material Available for the Study of Educational Development in the Modern Sudan 1900-1963", in *Sudan Notes and Records*, XLIV 1963. In addition to Sanderson the early essay of Miss Evans states the same view: Evans, J. D. 1930: "Education of the Sudanese Girl", in *Overseas Education: a journal of educational experiment and research in tropical and subtropical areas*, vol. II, No. 1. October 1930, and Mohamed Adham Ali: "Development and Problems of Girls' Education in Northern Sudan", part 1. Econ. & Social Research Council, August 1983, p. 5 ff., 15ff. Beasley, Ina 1992: *Before the Wind Changed*. Oxford, Hall and Ismail 1981. *Sister Under the Sun*, and Sharkey, H. 1998: *Colonialism and the Culture of Nationalism in the Northern Sudan*, *1898-1956*. Princeton University, also put more weight on this aspect than other explaining factors.

traditions and religion and thus would not force girls' education on the Sudanese in fear of riots, like those experienced in the Mahdi-period.¹²

Hagga Kashif Badri, a Sudanese pioneer woman who participated in the establishment of the first women's organisation in 1952, is an exception to the abovementioned tendencies because she challenges the conventional opinion about girls' education.¹³ She admits that traditions and customs were delaying factors, but she stresses the British role in procrastinating the development of girls' education. Kashif Badri even claims that the British delayed girls' education on purpose.¹⁴

Strengths and weaknesses in the literature

Earlier research on girls' education in the Northern Sudan includes some valuable works that contains interesting overviews of the development during the Condominium rule. Former employees in the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium have written much of the historical works on this issue, like J. D. Evans, the Controller of girls' education throughout the 1920s, Ina Beasley, the Controller of girls' education between 1943-1948, and Lillian Sanderson, headmistress at the second secondary school for girls' in the 1950s. Their experiences provide us with valuable works that enables later researchers to study the working methods in the colonial Education Department, and they also provide the researcher with inside knowledge of the Northern Sudanese society from a British point of view. Historians like Beshir, Mohamed, Warburg and Daly add detailed descriptions of the general educational history that are a most significant contribution, and Toensing stand out as an exception when contrasting other scholars in his argumentation and documentation of the relationship between Sudanese and missionary schools.

In addition to their valuable contributions, it is, however, my opinion that there are some limitations in the earlier research. The narrative historical literature rarely continues into a documented and justified analysis, and it seems like few scholars writing on particularly girls' education have examined the available source material thoroughly. The variety of sources available on girls' education thus seems only partly utilized and I argue that conclusions are made without securing documentation and correspondence between the descriptive contributions and the totality in the source material. The authors rather seem to

¹² See below in chapter two about the Mahdi period.

¹³ Hagga Kashif Badri 1986.

¹⁴ Kashif Badri 1986, p. 14 and 20.

rely on other scholars' work.¹⁵ This might lead to a scholarship of similar authors, with only limited variations in direction and approach. It may therefore be hard to spot the nuances and the depth in the important issue of Northern Sudanese girls' education. Scholars should rather consider the descriptive contributions as a tool to cover the details in a way that correspond with the sources. One would then enable a more thorough comprehension through analytical examination. I do however, acknowledge that a historian like Lillian Sanderson usually include explanations of the observed phenomena in her works, but I still miss the justifying aspects in which the aim is to understand from within. She repeatedly concludes that the Sudanese Islamic traditions are responsible for the slow development of girls' education, but this is a view seldom documented. In 1962 Sanderson for instance claims, without any footnoted references or other supported facts, that the Koran, "influence Sudanese psychology making people more resistant to education for girls and to their progressive emancipation".¹⁶ Furthermore she merely concludes that the greatest impediment to girls' schools was Muslim traditions concerning women.¹⁷ While only summarizing and concluding without a deeper explanation and justification of her arguments one must raise questions about the adequacy of such statements. I used Lillian Sanderson's generalisation as an example because she is a leading figure in this field and many scholars rely on her works. I thus find it important to emphasise the importance in seeking the sources and documenting and justifying the conclusions we arrive at.

Halim Barakat says that the oversimplifying and static argumentation is a tendency seen in Western scholars in studying the Middle East, what others have called 'Orientalism'.¹⁸ He has seen many examples of this poor argumentation and thus expressed the phenomenon in a phrase: "the always and the never". He means that the nuances and different interpretations of Islam and Muslim societies are ignored in a static approach, and at the same time he is requesting a more dynamic and critical approach. Barakat hopes the scholars will develop "beyond the always and the never".

Without adequate explanation and justification that corresponds with the sources, the descriptive literature becomes both a problem and a challenge for new scholars. We must, however, remember to utilize fully the narratives and attempt to emphasise their obvious

London cites other scholars without documenting their references.

¹⁵ For instance Mohamed Adham Ali: "Development and Problems of Girls' Education in Northern Sudan", part 1. Econ. & Social Research Council, August 1983, and Hall, M. and Ismail, B. A. 1981: Sisters Under the Sun.

¹⁶ Sanderson, 1962. P. 41.

¹⁷ Sanderson, L. "The Development of Girls' Education in the Northern Sudan 1898-1960", in *PAEDAGOGICA HISTORICA*, VIII, 1, Gent Blandijnberg, 1968, p. 121.

¹⁸ Barakat, Halim. "Beyond the Always and the Never", in Sharabi (ed.) *Theory, Politics and the Arab World.* New York, 1990.

value. The previous literature represents important historical material that not only should be employed for further analysis but it is also valuable because it triggers our curiosity for the past. I have particularly benefited from Heather Sharkey's study of the culture of nationalism in the Northern Sudan, and also Lillian Sanderson's articles that provide useful overviews of the historical development of girls' schools and thus serve as a motivation for further studies.

3. My own position, sources and method

I argued above that I would challenge the former historical conclusions on Northern Sudanese girls' education, and presented an approach and a set of questions to be studied further. My approach includes an examination of the demand and supply in girls' education in order to study the actors' positions. In addition I will analyse the intentions and motivations beneath the arguments and positions expressed. The scholarship on Northern Sudanese girls' schools mainly reflects an Anglo-biased history, where the Northern Sudanese positions are limited to bearing the responsibility of the slow and impeded development. The abovementioned literature thus leaves certain aspects unspoken by leaving the relationship between effect and intention unresolved. Most of the historians of Northern Sudanese girls' education thus free themselves from the obligation of determining the motivating forces. The questions about what lie behind the events are not asked, and thus the shaping discourse or informing ideas are left unsettled in most of the previous literature.

Nikki Keddie says that a great deal of methodological problems occur when studying Middle Eastern women, and the most obvious problem, as I encountered myself, is that only a few serious historical works have been published. ¹⁹ Furthermore she argues for the importance of making more use of a 'different' source material when studying women's history. She mentions for instance anthropological reports, traditional folktales, and prose, poetry and arts. The historians ought to take such sources into account when considering their presentation of an 'accurate picture of the past'.²⁰ In my fieldtrips to Durham and Khartoum I therefore sought sources of a broader variety than are usually found in the official documents. In the Sudan Archives in Durham most of the available sources are, however, British documents, either as personal papers from British officials or as official papers, documents, and reports. I felt, however, that something was missing. The Sudanese view was more or less

¹⁹ Nikki R. Keddie: "Problems in the Study of Middle Eastern Women", in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, p. 225-240. 1979.

²⁰ Keddie, 1979, p. 226.

reduced to a few reports from Sudanese government officials in addition to the memoirs of 'the father of girls' education', Babikr Bedri.²¹

My fieldtrip to Khartoum provided me with sources that reflected the Sudanese point of view. I visited and sought after sources in various institutions like the National Records Office, the University Library of Khartoum and the Ahfad Women College in Omdurman. I was able to collect sources that are considered especially valuable in studying female history: poems, songs, and texts by Sudanese pioneer women. Magazine and newspaper cuts were also collected and analysed. In addition I was able to conduct a few interviews with some pioneering Sudanese women who were educated and organised in Sudan Women's Union before the end of the Condominium.

I am aware of the special problems in analysing oral sources, especially when conducted on a language neither parts employ as mother tongue. In addition we must recognise the problem connected with cultural and age differences that may have affected the interviews and particularly the analysis of them. I therefore only employ the interviews and conversations as supplementary sources. I find, however, the interviews especially interesting in the fact that they provide me with a Northern Sudanese female voice of the Condominium period, which unfortunately is rendered rather invisible throughout the thesis and source material. This is regrettably because wives, sisters, and daughters did not participate in literary explorations in the Northern Sudan, and the recapturing of the female voice thus becomes more difficult than when working with for instance Bengali women who wrote autobiographies already in the nineteenth century or the Egyptian women who early contributed to the press.²² The minimal access to education throughout the colonial period, which is our focus of discussion, thus limited the women's chances of literary expressions.²³ Yet women appeared very much in the literary debates of their menfolk, and the variety of these sources are rich and provides us with an innovative insight of the intentions beneath girls' educational development. The source material found for this thesis thus has an original potential.

²¹ Babikr Bedri was the first Sudanese to establish a girls' school. More details about him later.

²² Chatterjee, Partha 1993. The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories. Princeton University Press. Chapter 6 and chapter 7, pp. 116-157. Vatne, A. 1998.

²³ I tried to find the 'female voice' in recorded oral traditions and folktales at the University of Khartoum, but I was told that there unfortunately was no record of oral sources of my interest.

4. Theory

New publications are frequently enlightening, but they could, however, be far more so if they were less empirical and more theoretical. Keddie says that to write good history one ought to go beyond empiricism and employ theoretical foundations. I recognise the value in employing theories as a vehicle for understanding the empirical and qualitative data. For my purpose, which is to give an analytical presentation of both the British and Northern Sudanese positions and motivations in girls' education, I found it useful to employ an overall theory that derives from Michel Foucault's *notion of discourse as a form of power*.²⁴ With this notion as a foundation for my analysis I argue that whatever the actors, either British or Northern Sudanese, said, wrote, read and did mattered in the evaluation of their positions and intentions. Marianne Bloch, professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in Wisconsin, claims that the language discourses play a central role in shaping social life, and thus in shaping the educational policy for women. I fully recognise that other aspects also contributes in shaping the society and its institutions, but my approach to girls' educational history will be investigated by employing theories of language and cultural discourses as vehicles for comprehension.

In addition to the basic theories of language discourse I will employ more specific theories for the examination of the actors' rhetoric and belief systems. Geert Hofstede and Edward W. Said have proved valuable tools for the analysis of the forces and motivations behind Northern Sudanese girls' education. The employment of both qualitative method and a theoretical approach is part of my original contribution to the scholarship of female education in the Northern Sudan, and possibly in the Middle East as well. Concepts and further theories will be explained as we encounter them in the text.

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²⁴ Foucault, Michel. 1972. The Archeology of Knowledge. Routledge.

Chapter 2

Education policy and identity trends, ca. 1821-1900

1. Foreign influences and internal reactions

Three factors predominate in the modern Sudan, which all influence the society, including education.¹ Holt and Daly refer to the indigenous tradition, a product of the intermingling of Arab Muslims with Africans. The fusion began over a thousand years ago and is a continuing process. This lies at the base of the Sudanese culture, religion and nationality. The second factor is the influence of Egypt, which in its earlier years was late Ottoman rather than purely Egyptian.² British influence represents the third factor predominating in the modern Sudan. With their re-conquest of the Sudan in 1898 they established a joint formal administrative rule with the Egyptians, which lasted until 1956. With the Condominium act the British brought the Western cultural influence directly to the Sudan.

The first steps toward the making of the modern Sudan were taken in 1821 when the soldiers of Muhammad Ali Pasha, the Ottoman sultan's viceroy in Egypt, brought under their master's rule the territories of Nubia, Sennar and Kordofan. The imposition of foreign rule in 1821 resulted in deep changes throughout the Sudanese societies and cultures.³ A completely different political system was established, and eventually it brought a vast area and numerous ethnic groups, languages and religions under a single administration for the first time. The tribal system, which had survived under the Funj kingdom of Sennar, (1504-1821) was mostly destroyed by the Turco-Egyptian administration after 1821.⁴ Khartoum was made capital of the Egyptian province in 1824, and the governor-general had the chief authority in the Sudan, with Muhammad Ali Pasha as supreme head.

The Turco-Egyptian rule in the Sudan was established for economic reasons. They tried to utilise the resources available in the country, and among other things, gold and slaves were pursued.⁵ Muhammad Ali was disappointed to see that the reserves of gold weren't as immense as expected, and the slaves who were to take a great part in building the new and reformed Egyptian army, died in huge numbers from epidemics and climatic related diseases.

¹ Holt and Daly 1988, p. vii.

² The Turco-Egyptian rule lasted for sixty years in the period 1821-1881.

³ Bjørkelo 1989, Prelude to the Mahdiyya. Cambridge. p. 34.

⁴ Bjørkelo 1989. The "Funj Sultanate of Sinnar has been defined as a feudal state and many features would seem to point in that direction". The Turco-Egyptian administration, however, introduced a quite new concept of government derived from the Ottoman system of administration. A system of local officials was established, *mamurs* and *mudirs* who served in a system of districts and provinces.

Reform, exploitation and financial misery characterised the Egyptian administration in their modernisation program. In 1821, when Egypt put the Sudan under a formally combined Egyptian-Ottoman control, Muhammad Ali Pasha was adopting modern European techniques and methods to his reform policy. Educational reform was soon established as one of the keystones in this reform policy, and eventually this was echoed in Sudan, although to a lesser extent than in Egypt.

An educational dualism may be indicated during the Egyptian rule. The traditional religious schools, the *khalwas*, developed side by side with the modern secular government schools, the *kuttabs*. ⁶ Both the *khalwa* and the government schools were essentially for boys, but *kuttabs* were no success in the Sudan because the Sudanese feared that the government schools would recruit their sons to military service.⁷ The Sudanese historian Yusuf Fadl Hasan says that the attempt to establish modern education for boys in the Sudan was motivated by the Egyptian prospects to ensure a proper utilisation of the Sudan's wealth including maintenance of an efficient and relatively cheap administration.⁸ With an aim to exploit rather than to improve the local population, the miseries of the people was aggravated rather than lessened. The land was undeveloped and poor, and with the additional burden of a foreign garrison the severity of the economic conditions increased.

In 1881, relief came with Muhammad Ahmad (1844-85), the self appointed Mahdi ("The Rightly Guided One").⁹ The Mahdi intended to show the Sudanese the path to the true and proper Islam, as well as to lead the people against the foreign powers. The Mahdi was convinced that one of his religious duties included a revival of Islam among the inhabitants, and purification from both local superstition and foreign influence.¹⁰ He had many devoted supporters in the ruined and famine struck Sudan, and they won several battles that finally enabled the Mahdi to take control over both Khartoum and the rest of Muslim Sudan in 1885.¹¹ Muhammad Ahmad the Mahdi died from typhus in June 1885 only a few months after his conquest of Khartoum, and his successor Khalifa Abdullahi brought the revolt onto a new

⁵ Holmedal Bjarne Osvald 1988. *The Gordon Memorial College at Khartoum - agent of british imperialism or cradle of independence?* Hovedfag thesis, Bergen.p. 8.

⁶ More detailed description of the *khalwas* and *kuttabs* below.

⁷ Yusuf Fadl Hasan: "Interaction Between Traditional and Western Education in the Sudan: an attempt towards a synthesis" p. 121 in Brown and Hiskett (eds.) 1975: *Conflict and Harmony in Education in Tropical Africa*. London.

⁸ Hasan 1975, p. 121.

⁹ Mansfield, P. 1991. A History of the Middle East. London p. 97-98, Ayubi, N. 1991 Political Islam - Religion and Politics in the Arab World, p. 105. London. Vikør, K. 1993, Ei verd bygd på islam. Oslo p. 218-219.
¹⁰ Vikør 1993, p. 218-219. The Mahdi was expected to arrive before the End of Time and Judgment Day.
¹¹ Vikør 1993, p. 218

stage, and he ruled the Sudan with severe force until 1898.¹² Abdullahi bolstered up his position by skilful propaganda, and a personal bureaucracy with a strong military power. His primary problem was to restore order and make the administration effective over a vast area where the obedience had been broken by several years of devastating warfare.¹³ His rule was, however, weakened by repeated civil wars, bad harvests, famines and epidemics. These devastating problems paved the way for the Anglo-Egyptian re-conquest in 1898.

The educational dualism initiated by the Egyptians disappeared completely during the Mahdia as a result of the firm policy that attempted a return to a puritanical type of Islam including an abolishment of all innovations introduced by the Turco-Egytpian rule. In practice the Mahdi kept several convenient foreign innovations; he employed the clerks, accountants, telegraphers and technicians, but he removed all the schools that produced them.¹⁴ The traditional religious school, khalwa, was kept and primarily provided schooling for a minority of the Sudanese boys. We do not, however, know much about the lives and lifestyles of Sudanese women as men have primarily produced our knowledge of society in the Sudan, and in this process women have, for the most part, been rendered either invisible or deviant. This fact may, however, serve as manifestation of the idea that women operated in a personal or private domain while men inhabited the public world.¹⁵ We know that women rarely had any chances of education before the twentieth century, with some exceptions mentioned in for instance the Tabagat, which reveals that some women entered the male dominated Koran schools, the khalwas and underwent training to become Sufi saints.¹⁶ This was, however, far from typical. For the vast majority of Sudanese girls there was no education other than oral tradition handed down from mother to daughter before the Anglo-Egyptian re-conquest of the Sudan in 1898.17

Despite the recognition given by the Prophet to the rights of women, the patriarchal nature of pre-Islamic society in fact continued to dominate and the customary laws largely over-rode many of the enlightened ideals. Women remained in an inferior position, penalised by legal and social disadvantages. The male superiority in the society exposed itself in various ways. The society was exclusively a man's world, where the ideal status was to have the

¹² Holt and Daly 1988, ch. 7 describes the reign of Khalifa Abdullahi.

¹³ Holt and Daly 1988, p. 112.

¹⁴ Hasan 1975, p. 122.

¹⁵ Zeinab Bashir Elbakri and Al Haj Hamad M. Khier 1989: "Sudanese women in history and historiography: a proposed strategy for curriculum change", in *Sudanese Women's Studies Towards a Curricula Development for Higher Education*. Paper presented at the workshop on Women's studies in Sudan. Feb. 7 – 9 Khartoum.

¹⁶ Sanderson refers to the chronicle Kitāb al-Tabaqāt by Muhammad Al-Nur Ibn Dayf Allah.

¹⁷ For more details about oral traditions and Sudanese folk stories see Al-Shahi and Moore 1978: *Wisdom of the Nile*.

means to maintain a polygamous household and keep his wives shut behind the walls of their home. Even within their homes the urban women were not able to move freely if they had any male visitors. The harem was separated from the male department of the house, and the women were not allowed to enter the male dominion when he had guests.¹⁸ The male and female social spheres were therefore not only a phenomenon outside the house, but the 'spheres' existed inside their houses when the homes became 'public' and guests arrived. This social norm did not, however, merely segregate women from the men's world, but also excluded men from taking part in women's activities when friends visited her.¹⁹ Men spent their leisure time with male friends outside the house and women remained in their quarters occupied with household chores. Urban women were usually not allowed to walk outside her home without in the company of a male relative. This societal organisation may be identified as more patriarchal than Islamic, but even though these influences were not derived from religious doctrine they gradually acquired an aura of divinity, which often confuses the traditions with religious doctrines.²⁰

At the time of the Anglo-Egyptian re-conquest little was left of the nineteenth century Turco-Egyptian administration, and warfare, famines, and following epidemics had destroyed the relics of the Mahdi's personal bureaucracy. The Anglo-Egyptian re-conquest in 1898 was undertaken with the stated aim of recovering the provinces that the Khedive had lost in the Sudan. The establishment of a colonial administration was the responsibility of Lord Kitchener,²¹ and he realised that he had to educate his own Sudanese officials for administrative purposes to avoid dependency upon Egypt.

According to the historian Heather J. Sharkey, the British authorities reinforced rather than reshuffled the existing patriarchal social hierarchy in their capacity as educational decision makers.²² Admission policies for the Gordon Memorial College, the apex of the

¹⁸ The system of Harem was adopted mainly under the influences of Persian traditions, and it became tied to notions of respectability and piety. It was mostly women of the better classes that were segregated from men within the precincts of the home. For more details see Hall and Ismail 1981.

¹⁹ For an interesting discussion around the public and private spheres and power relations between men and women, see Cynthia Nelson: "Public and Private Politics: Women in the Middle Eastern World", in *American Ethnologist* 1, No. 3, 1974, p. 551-563. She focuses on women's power and suggests that women can and do exercise a greater degree of power in spheres of social life that has not been appreciated earlier.

²⁰ Definitions of patriarchy may vary. Here I want to present two forms: Catherine Odora argues that patriarchy is a 'male solidarity to enable power over women'. Brock – Utne extends the definition when she says patriarchy is "power-over" other people, mostly the power of some men over other men, women, children and nature.
²¹ The British soldier Herbert Horatio Kitchener (1850-1916) was the first earl of Khartoum. Much of his early service was spent in surveying Palestine and Cyprus before he in 1882 entered the Egyptian army. His appointment as sirdar of the Egyptian army in 1892 marked the beginning of his plans for the 're-conquest' of the Sudan. He played a major part in the establishment of the Gordon Memorial College and became the first president of the college. He was the governor-general of the Sudan in the short period 1898-1899.
²² Sharkey, H. J. 1998, p. 40.

educational system, privileged those who were male, Muslim, Arabic speaking, "Arab" and of high status, and who came from the central riverain North. The beneficiaries were those men who later developed ideologies of nationalism, these were also the men who helped redefine the "Sudanese-ness" in their own image, by making it into a label of national identity that placed great value on Islamic and Arab culture.

2. The emergence of modern Sudanese education from 1899

An official educational policy was not formulated until James Currie was engaged in 1900 in the joint position as Principal of Gordon College and Director of Education. Mr. James Currie was Lord Cromer, the consul-general's choice, handpicked for his pragmatic mind in educational matters.²³

The British political and economic goals had to be considered when devising an educational system. The pacification of the country emphasising the removal of whatever still existed of a Mahdist, or populist threat was one of the main political goals. According to Chris Toensing, the British were also eager to limit the Egyptian influence in the Sudan.²⁴ Warburg agrees with this view and argues that the growing nationalist feelings in Egypt may have been the motivation behind this policy.²⁵

The British wanted to keep the Sudanese Muslim opinion calm, as they were sure that the smallest provocation would trigger a populist riot or sympathy for the Egyptian nationalism. The British administration thus needed to balance between their fears for a revival of Mahdism and religious riots, in addition to the fear of nationalist influences from Egypt. Whatever tendencies of religious uprisings that appeared were severely struck down, as governor-general Wingate believed that large sections of the Sudanese Muslims were still Mahdists at heart.²⁶ The British administration thought that the most important object in this regard was to make the off springs of the religious notables loyal to the government, and thus limiting the chances of further popular riots. The best way would be to educate and include some Sudanese men in the lower posts of the bureaucracy. Further the government eventually supported and was entrusted with support from the religious orthodoxy in the Muslim Sudan, which the government aimed at re-establishing then proving that the religious beliefs of the population would be respected.²⁷ This apparent paradoxical scenery of a British

²³ Holmedal, B. O. 1988, p. 20.

²⁴ Toensing, unpublished, p. 1

²⁵ Warburg 1971, p. 19ff.

²⁶ Warburg 1971, p. 100.

²⁷ Warburg, 1971, p. 184.

administration that supported religious orthodoxy enabled the administration to pay more attention to the feared Egyptian nationalistic influences.

The prevailing attitude in the administration was that a vocational education had to be stressed, as it would contribute to the recruitment in the lower administrative posts and the military. This would also directly contribute to the Sudanese economy. The pragmatic Director of Education, James Currie, devised the educational aims that became the fundament of the Sudanese educational system:

- 1. "The creation of a competent artisan class.
- 2. The diffusion among the masses of the people of an education sufficient to enable them to understand the machinery of government, particularly with reference to the equitable and impartial administration of justice.
- 3. The creation of a small administrative class, capable of filling many government posts, some of an administrative, others of a technical nature".²⁸

The Gordon Memorial College (GMC) was initiated by Lord Kitchener who already in 1898 called on the British upper class for financial support for this educational venture, in order to avoid 'barbarism'.²⁹ The Gordon Memorial College was finished in 1902 and as the first educational project for boys it soon became the zenith of educational institutions in the Sudan. The Gordon College would, however, have to rely on a recruiting system from elementary schools creating the foundation of the system. A dualistic system was created that depended on the Muslim *khalwa*, the indigenous educational institution, in addition to the *kuttab*, which had its roots from the more secular elementary school implemented by the Turco-Egyptian rule.³⁰

3. The Khalwa and the Kuttab

The traditional *khalwas* were kept by the British administration as Islamic elementary schools, which particularly became important in the rural areas. As an originally Sufi seat for meditation and prayer the *khalwa* had developed to a learning institution which stressed Islamic teaching in addition to some reading and writing. Daly says that the *khalwa* was eventually supposed to be replaced as the basic institution for elementary education by the *kuttab*.³¹ After the Condominium agreement the *khalwa* was meant to be a simple school for the elementary teaching in the local villages and tribes.³² The traditional religious school,

²⁸ SAD: Currie, James: "The Educational Experiment in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1900-33", in *Journal of African Society*, vol. XXXIII, 1934, p. 6.

²⁹ ULE: The Scotsman, 30.11.1898.

³⁰ *Kuttab* is an Arabic word made from the root letters k-t-b which are the basic consonants in the Arabic word 'to write'.

³¹ Daly 1986, p. 386.

³² Daly 1986, p. 381.

khalwa, was supposed to give the villages plain knowledge in religion, reading, writing and some arithmetic.

Both the khalwa and the kuttab were directed towards boys in the same age groups, but they had different aims.³³ The *kuttab* aimed to a larger extent at giving a secular education needed in a modernising society.³⁴ This idea was carried on and further developed by the British. The syllabus in the kuttab was consequently different than in the religious based khalwa. In addition to reading and writing the kuttab also had courses in arithmetic, geography, history, hygiene and farming.³⁵ Islamic teaching was part of the syllabus in the kuttab as well as in the khalwa, only to a lesser extent. According to Hasan, the British included the Islamic teachings in the syllabus to reduce suspicion and dissatisfaction with the newly established addition to boys' educational provision.³⁶ The local community school, khalwa, and the government school, kuttab, became, however, organic parts of the educational system by recruiting boys to the "apex of the whole system", the Gordon Memorial College³⁷.

4. Gordon Memorial College

James Currie's main task was to merge the indigenous education system with the Western

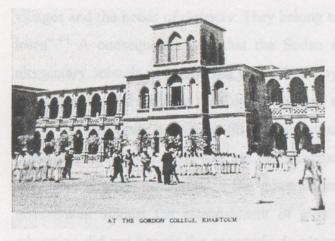


Figure 2.1. Postcard of Gordon College, Khartoum³⁹

form presented in the Gordon College.

The elementary stage for boys was covered by the khalwa and the kuttab, while the only primary and secondary education available were offered at the GMC. Due to generous donations from the British upper class and Sudanese taxation money, the college was ready to receive its first pupils in October 1903.³⁸ The school comprised a Training

³³ Holmedal 1988. Elementary schools for boys, the *kuttab* and the *khalwa* catered for boys from age 7 to age 10. ³⁴ Holmedal 1988, p. 24. The more secular basis reflects the origins of the kuttab. Established during the Turco-Egyptian rule as a complementary to the khalwa, Muhammad Ali had decided that the new state of conditions required more than the simple knowledge provided by the khalwa.

³⁵ Hasan 1975, p. 123.

³⁶ Hasan, 1975, p. 123.

³⁷ SAD: Currie, James: "The Educational Experiment in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1900-33", in Journal of African Society, vol. XXXIII, 1934, p. 7.

³⁸ SAD: 667/8/20, University College of Khartoum; history of the College. Lord Kitchener made a strong appeal for donations from the British people to avoid "barbarism" in their colony. For more about the British donations see ULE: The Scotsman, 30.11.1898, and ULE: Mohamed Nazir el Seed 1969, p. 171. ³⁹ SAD 792/2/26: Bishop Oliver Allison papers.

College, to qualify students for professional positions in the departments of Education and Justice, and an Upper school, for boys who had completed their primary schooling for professional training as engineers, surveyors and teachers.⁴⁰

Following Currie's aims for education, GMC became the cornerstone for recruiting young boys to vocational professions in both the departments and in the industry. Secondary education was a natural consequence and in 1905 governor-general Wingate confirmed the initiation of secondary education at Gordon College.⁴¹ Holt and Daly claim that the vocational emphasis reflected that education was considered an "adjunct to administration and a necessity for technical progress, but never as of value in itself".⁴² According to Holt and Daly the basis of the policy was founded by the insufficient finances provided and the feeling on the part of some British officials that 'over-education' created a greater threat to the country than no education at all.⁴³

5. Selective system of education

The educational system privileged the few. Lord Kitchener said that a question naturally would rise as to who exactly should be educated, and he immediately answered the question by stressing that "we should begin by educating the sons of the leading men, the heads of villages and the heads of districts. They belong to a race very capable of learning and ready to learn".⁴⁴ A consequence was that the Sudan Government filtered the applicants from the elementary schools and only the best-gifted boys from the prominent families were wanted. To secure a social standard the College charged a fee for each pupil.

It was never a goal to fill the classrooms of Gordon College at any price, and the question of admitting girls' was not even discussed. The Director of Education, James Currie was against girls' education in the government education system at large. He advised the government against the establishment of girls' schools, among other things because girls' education did not benefit the economic development of the country since women traditionally were not employed outside their homes.⁴⁵ The Condominium education policy was geared towards employment and the creation of a loyal male elite and thus naturally excluded girls when devising the educational plan. Government girls' education consequently lagged far

⁴⁰ Holmedal 1988, p. 26.

⁴¹ Holmedal 1988, p. 33.

⁴² Holt and Daly 1988, p. 124.

⁴³ This will be discussed later in the examination of motivation behind the slow education provision.

⁴⁴ SAD: 657/1/1, Beasley official papers.

⁴⁵ SAD: SudA PK 1561 GRE: Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan, 1906, p. 234.

behind boys already from the start, and after two decades of colonial rule there was only established 5 government girls' schools.⁴⁶

The selective British policy and attitude towards education may confirm Heather Sharkey's claim that the British reinforced the patriarchal and social hierarchy of the Northern Sudan when devising an educational plan that excluded half the population from attendance. The urban Northern Sudanese society was segregated by gender before the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, and the British administration contributed to solidify this tradition in their male emphasis. In this atmosphere, where institutionalised traditions were reinforced even by foreign powers, how did Northern Sudanese respond? Was girls' education an issue among the Northern Sudanese at the commencement of the Condominium? How was the demand compared to the provision and supply of government girls' education in the first years of the colonial regime?

⁴⁶ See more details below.

Chapter 3

Slowly but surely - demand and supply in girls' education 1899-1956

In the field of education, one is constantly concerned with a number of inter-related aspects ranging from the equality of the teaching and learning process to the internal efficiency of the education system and the impact of education. The level of demand for and supply of educational opportunities is also a significant factor, which may enable a comprehension of the forces behind the educational system, both within the internal educational system and at the level of participation. A study of the early demand and supply in Northern Sudanese girls' education, 1899-1920, will form the foundation of this chapter. The demand for education will be determined by factors like participation, access to education and active request for such. The supply will be registered from the internal efficiency in the educational system; is there correlation between expressed aims and executed policies, and from the equity in the educational system.¹

Obstacles and resistance to gender equality in education persists in various parts of the world, especially in areas where traditional attitudes are predominant and the education supply is insufficient to meet the demand. In the coming discussion I will challenge the former historical views that emphasises the traditional Sudanese attitudes and customs as the main obstacle to girls' education in the Northern Sudan. In the urban Northern Sudan I argue that factors on the supply side were predominant as compared with those relating to the demand side, when considering the obstacles and the consequently slow development in girls' education. At the same time I recognise that the relative importance of the demand and supply factors may vary among local communities and population groups inside the country.

We saw that Northern Sudanese females had no place in the Government's earliest education projects. The first girls' government school was consequently not a reality before 1910, and by 1925, after more than two decades of colonial administration, there were only eight government elementary schools for girls, compared with ninety-four elementary schools for boys. Slowly girls were provided more government elementary schools, including a teacher training college in 1921, which eventually resulted in increased numbers of elementary schools. The girls had, however, no chance of a government education above the elementary level until 1940, when the first government intermediate school was established. It

¹ UNESCO: "Gender-Sensitive Education Statistics and Indicators. A practical guide".

was still some years before there was an outlet for the girls that wanted secondary schooling and university attendance. Historians like Lillian Sanderson and Ina Beasley claim that because of this relatively slow development girls' education was still in its infancy by Independence in 1956.² Was this a consequence of a limited Northern Sudanese demand or perhaps insufficient government supply?

Northern Sudanese opposition to girls' schools is, as mentioned in the introduction, a recurring theme in historical literature about the Northern Sudan. Both the early writings of Mohamed Omer Beshir and the recent work of Heather J. Sharkey claim that slow provision of government schools was mainly a result of a conservative and traditional attitude among Northern Sudanese.³ Lillian Sanderson similarly says that, "Muslim traditions for women are largely responsible for the slow development of girls' education in the Sudan".⁴ She argues that the British administration would therefore not force the pace of girls' education, but instead waited for the Northern Sudanese demand before expanding educational facilities for girls.⁵ The government arguably feared that the establishment of girls' schools at that time would be considered as an interference with the traditions of the country and thus a provocation of "the Moslem fanaticism".⁶ From the above it appears that the British administration, in respect of the Sudanese and in fear of popular riots, would not force anything upon the Northern Sudanese people, but they would rather wait for requests. According to most of the earlier literature the slow development therefore indicates that only a very limited demand existed for girls' education among the Northern Sudanese since only five government girls' schools were established in the Northern Sudan until 1920, compared to Egypt where 54 Ministry elementary schools for girls were founded by 1919.⁷ Do these historical arguments survive a thorough examination?

The study and diagnosis of the educational situation, with the relevant figures, documentation and analysis of primary sources to corroborate facts, can provide the support necessary to comprehend the Sudanese and British positions in the dawn of girls' educational

Sudan", p. 91. Only 4 % of the Northern Sudanese women were literate at Independence in 1956, while 30 % of the men enjoyed their literacy. For specific literacy rates on age groups of both boys and girls, see NRO: Dep. Rep. 6/3/32. Literacy and illiteracy in the Sudan (educational statistics) 1956.

² Beasley 1992. Sanderson 1961, "Some Aspects of the Development of Girls' Education in the Northern

³ Beshir 1969. Sharkey 1998, p. 40.

⁴ SAD: 751/2/1-3: Sanderson papers. Quote taken from the draft of an article on "Secondary Education for Girls in the Sudan – Expansion Since Independence", by L. P. S. Published in *African World*, Feb 1963.

⁵ Sanderson 1961: p. 91. For a departmental documentation see for instance SAD: 662/1/33.

⁶ Mohamed 1969, p. 104. More on the fear of Sudanese 'fanaticism' in the "Introduction" by G.N. Sanderson in Bedri 1980, p. 37ff.

⁷ The Egyptian numbers used for comparison are found in NRO: Rep. 2/5/14: Reports on the Finances, Administration, and the Conditrions of Egypt and the Sudan 1914-1919, paragraph 32.

development. A comprehensive examination necessitates additional approaches in the study of the demand and supply, and it must be emphasised to identify the actors in girls' education, both the Northern Sudanese and the British.

It is natural to suggest that the actors' positions, attitudes and ideas affected the educational development for girls, and it is thus important to identify the actors and attempt to distinguish some of the factors that influenced their positions. Who from the Sudanese society wanted education for their girls? What influenced the supportive elements in Northern Sudan? Is it possible to identify the general attitudes towards girls' education in the Northern Sudan? Who were the British men recruited to the Sudan Political Service? How were they recruited? In chapter 4 we will go more in depth in the actors motivation behind their positions in girls' education, and it is therefore necessary to establish the actors' background at this stage. An attempt to assess the actors will therefore constitute the first part of this chapter in order to enable a fuller understanding of the forces in the demand for and supply of girls' education, which will be examined in the latter part of this chapter.

1. The Sudanese positions

The 'father of girls' education' in the Sudan - Shaykh Babikr Bedri

The competent headmaster Shaykh Babikr Bedri combined the traditional Islamic devotion to learning with his own, and then, radical idea of providing secular education in addition to religious instruction to both boys and girls. He began his educational innovations in 1903 when he started a primary school for boys in Rufa'a. The next year he sought support for the establishment of a girls' school and he continuously asked the government, between 1904-1906, for support and allowance to open a girls' school in Rufa'a. When he first raised the matter in 1904, the Director of Education, Sir James Currie, claimed Bedri's madness.⁸ Bedri's proposal was also mentioned with great surprise in the 1905 annual report: "From Rufa'a comes the most startling suggestion of all, no less a request for the establishment of a girls' school side by side with that for the boys".⁹

Bedri was consequently denied permission, but in 1906 he was finally allowed to open the first national girls' school on the conditions that he opened the school in his own house

⁸ Bedri, Babikr 1980. Beasley 1992, p. 416.

⁹ SudA PK 1561 GRE: Report on the Finance, Administration and Condition of the Sudan, 1905, section II, Education, p. 42.

and at his own expenses.¹⁰ The Director of Education agreed to Bedri's desire as an experiment; then the Government could both satisfy the local demand in Rufa'a, and at the same time they were not directly responsible for the outcome, which they could study in quiet with no responsibility.¹¹

Shaykh Babikr Bedri established and opened the first Sudanese girls' school in 1907 in his hometown Rufa'a. 17 girls, nine from his own family, attended the first year. Babikr Bedri was convinced that there was a need to develop facilities for girls' education, and with similar arguments as the Islamic modernists in Egypt he challenged his own family, the majority of the Northern Sudanese people and the British administration. Who was this pioneering Sudanese? Why was he particularly interested in girls' education?

Bedri himself was educated from the traditional Islamic school, thus the title Shaykh, and he had eventually become a devoted follower of the Mahdi. His dedication to the Mahdi's preaching led him to imprisonment in Aswan, Egypt, where he enjoyed the company of a group of Sudanese women who's characters impressed him strongly.¹² After his return to the Northern Sudan he attempted a merchant career, but he failed to prosper and thus embarked upon a new career as an educator. He established a boys' school in Rufa'a where he was the headmaster, but he wanted to expand the school provision to include girls as well, but as we saw, it wasn't until 1907 that the government were persuaded to allow his new venture. Is it possible that the years of captivity in Egypt influenced his pioneering ideas about girls' education? We know he enjoyed the company of several women in Aswan, but what we don't know for sure is whether Babikr Bedri was influenced by the Islamic modernisation and reformism that was strongly present among the intelligentsia in Egypt at this time. Sudan had since 1821 been under Egyptian rule, and some interconnection was unavoidable. Perhaps the waves of Islamic reformism reached Babikr and his colleagues through the reformers' urge to spread the new ideas. In the attempt to identify the Northern Sudanese actors that supported girls' education already at the commencement of the Condominium we ought to investigate a possible Egyptian influence.

¹⁰ Bedri 1980. Beasley 1992, p. 417.

¹¹ SudA PK 1561 GRE: Annual Report, Education Department, 1906, p. 224. "I think Moslem opinion will be satisfied for some little time, and a breathing space will be afforded to us in which we can study the question. If it were desired, it would also, as an experiment, be possible to begin at Rufa'a where the very efficient local Kuttab is under an extremely competent and interesting local man, who is very anxious to be allowed to try the experiment."

¹² See Bedri 1980 and Sanderson 1963, p. 123.

Islamic reformers expressed thoughts and ideas of how Islam ought to be interpreted in their own time, and they stressed that Islam is consistent with modern life and society.¹³ During the second half of the 19th century the Islamic renaissance, *al-Nahda*, and Islamic reformism became the leading way of thinking among the new and growing male educated elite in Egypt.¹⁴ Islamic reformers like Rifa'a Badawi Rafi' al-Tahtawi (1801-1873), Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897), Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) and Qasim Amin (1863-1908) were among those who expressed ideas of how Islam should be interpreted and understood in correspondence with their own times.¹⁵ These reformers also proclaimed new ideas about women and their position in the society. They wanted the conservative and orthodox Islamic period to be challenged by the new times, in which they emphasised the importance of being flexible in the interpretation of the Koran and Hadith, the Prophets life and traditions.

It is tempting to suggest that Babikr was inspired and influenced by the liberal milieu in Egypt at this time. This is likely considering our knowledge of Babikr's pioneering work for girls' education after his return from Egypt. His ideas about the need and the importance of girls' education show clear similarities with the early Egyptian reformers ideas.

Al Nahda – a possible source of influence?

Egypt was in many ways the Middle Eastern forerunner in spheres of modernization, reform and education. Cairo became a cosmopolitan centre for new ideas and movements, which also included nationalism, imperial resistance, feminism and Islamic reform.¹⁶ Early debates on women's rights, the emergence of male reformers advocating women's rights and the position of 'the new woman' in Egypt might be assessed as background in the search for a possible influence from Egypt to the Sudan.

The Egyptian Shaykh Rifa'a al-Tahtawi¹⁷ might have introduced some modern ideas in the Sudan in the mid nineteenth century during his years as a government teacher in Khartoum. Al-Tahtawi, the intellectual and high-ranking government official under Muhammad Ali returned from studies in France with the manuscript *Takhlis al-Ibriz Takhlis Paris*, published in 1834, that reflects his admiration for educated women in general. This was the first book in Arabic to deal with women's position, and Rifa'a is regarded the first Arab

¹³ Ayubi, Nazih. Political Islam - Religion and Politics in the Arab World, p. 57. London, 1991.

¹⁴ Ayubi 1991.

¹⁵ Aybui 1991, p. 57.

¹⁶ Jayawardena, Kumari 1989: Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World. Zed books Ltd., London.

¹⁷ Rifa'a al-Tahtawi had been a student and a teacher at *al-Azhar* in Cairo before being employed by Muhammad Ali. He was employed as Imam at first, but was later chosen for the education mission, which he devoted his life to. The School of Languages was placed under his directorship, and he had been called upon to share in the reorganisation of the schools in Egypt. See Heyworth-Dunne, J. 1968.

thinker in modern history to advocate female education and a change in their status.¹⁸ In the middle of the nineteenth century he laid the seeds of an Islamic reformation among the Egyptian intelligentsia where he stressed the importance of a public education for both girls and boys, and he emphasised that women should become educated to secure a harmonious marriage and the best possible upbringing for the children. Further, al-Tahtawi meant that education would make it possible for women to become employed and save them from emptiness and idle gossip in the harem.¹⁹

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani²⁰ and Muhammad Abduh²¹ became the leading men in carrying on the Islamic reformation, and they were most active in the Islamic modernisation during the years of Bedri's stay in Egypt. Afghani and Abduh strongly believed that Islam needed modernisation at Islam's own premises. Abduh was particularly dedicated to modernise the schools to create a link between the existing Muslim schools and the modern secular schools in the transitional phase between a traditional and modern society.²² With his ideas about education and women Abduh created the foundation, which his followers could carry on developing regarding the liberation of women. Especially one of Abduhs disciples, Qasim Amin, showed great interest in the women question.

Qasin Amin²³ belonged to the new class of intellectuals in Cairo that was inspired by 'Western' thoughts, and it was mainly the question of women's position in the society that attracted him. In 1899 his first book was published on the subject of women: *The Liberation of Woman*, a book that encourages debates both today and in his own lifetime.²⁴ Amin was, like al Tahtawi, concerned with female education and he meant that not only alphabetisation

¹⁸ Baraka, Iqbal: "The Influence of Contemporary Arab Thought on the Women's Movement", in *Women of the Arab World*, ed. By Nahid Toubia. London, 1988. The book *Takhlis al-Ibriz Takhlis Paris* was twice reprinted during the authors lifetime (1834 and 1849), and a third after his death (1905). ¹⁹ Vatne 1998, p. 19.

²⁰ Sayyed Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897), was born in Iran, educated in the rationalist tradition of Avicenna and became the best-known radical agitator, social reformer and pan-Islamist in the Muslim world. He lived in turn many countries, India, Afghanistan, Turkey, Egypt, Russia and Europe, and was expelled from several countries because of his activities against the regimes. More in Jayawardena 1989.

²¹ Shaykh Mohamed Abduh (1849-1905) had studied in Paris and eventually came under the influence of Afghani. He was one of the pioneer reformers that started a debate on religion and on the rights of women in Islam. Abduh established the Salafiyah movement and together with Afghani Abduh formed both a political party in Egypt and published a journal in Paris. More in Jayawardena 1989.
²² Vatne 1998, p. 20.

²³ Qasim Amin (1865-1908) was educated in France and judge by profession. He created a furore in 1899 with his book *The Liberation of Woman*, where he advocated on the basis of religious texts that female seclusion, the veil, arranged marriages and the divorce practices were un-Islamic. His book was praised by the intelligentsia but denounced in orthodox Muslim circles. Amin answered his critics in a second book, *The New Woman* in 1900. More details see the introduction of Amin (1899) 1992, Jayawardena 1989 or Vatne 1998.

²⁴ See Ahmed 1993. Leila Ahmed is among his critics and she considers Amin to be influenced by Lord Cromer and the European missionaries view. She also accuses him of accepting the European superiority too easily. p. 155-165 for details of recent critique of *The Liberation of Woman*.

should be included in the curriculum.²⁵ The knowledge of alphabetisation should only be considered a mean to reach higher learning. Amin argued that women should be educated to learn self-sufficiency and to be made aware of their own rights and duties. Amin was, however, not a devotee of equal education for both sexes, but instead he meant that girls' elementary education should be comparable with boys' education at the same level.²⁶ Qasim Amin was, like the other leading reformers, convinced that girls' education would be beneficial not only to herself but to the whole society. The family is the most important institution in Muslim societies, and by allowing women to educate as well as men, their marriage would be more in balance and she would become a better housewife and mother.

We have no documentation that confirms the Egyptian influence, but we may suggest that some connection is more than likely. Bedri used the same kind of concrete arguments as the Islamic reformers in Cairo in his struggle to persuade both the local Sudanese population and the British administration to accept and support his new venture. His argumentation included a positive appreciation of educated women's abilities as wives and mothers, like the Islamic reformers, a somewhat modern element linked to a more traditional and preserving mentality where the family was the main focus, not the female individual's development. It was, however, not easy to implement this fairly modern mentality into the Sudan.

In his effort to persuade parents to send their daughters to his new girls' school in Rufa'a Babikr went from door to door in the neighbourhood. He stressed female education's preserving element in regard to the traditional family values. He claimed that their daughters would most probably increase their values as wives among the educated Sudanese men if the girls themselves had some education. This might also stop Sudanese men from preferring European wives.²⁷

This approach was only effective to some extent in the beginning. Some claimed that Bedri wanted to make their daughters 'European', but this allegation did not set root when Bedri strongly repudiated this accusation.²⁸ Before the inhabitants of Rufa'a managed to deeply ingrain the prejudice that girls' education would make their girls wayward, Babikr employed a local woman to teach the girls embroidery and sewing. By this initiative he proved to the inhabitants that he really emphasised domestic activities and values in the education of girls. These efforts soon drew some more girls to his school.

²⁵ Vatne 1998, p. 23.

²⁶ Amin (1899) 1992, p. 29.

²⁷ Bedri 1980, p. 132. The issue of Sudanese men preferring educated life-partners, as most of the British female officials were, is well described in Edward Atiyah's *The Black Vanguard*.

²⁸ Bedri 1980, chapter 3.

A gradual but still limited change in public opinion appeared, however, when the school in Rufa'a proved to be a success both in matter of learning, the girls quickly grasped the alphabet, and in matter of attendance. In 1912 it was reported that, "the attitude of the people generally towards education continues to be favourable".²⁹ Slowly but surely more parents were convinced to send their daughters to Shaykh Babikr's school, which soon expanded.³⁰ Babikr Bedri's success was noticed by the Education Department and after some enquiries and inspections at the school the government accepted Bedri's suggestion that the government should take over the school and hire himself as headmaster. Consequently, in 1910 the first national girls' school, opened by Sudanese private initiative, became the first government girls' school in the Northern Sudan.

With the opposition in mind, from the British administration in addition to the disapproval of the majority of the Northern Sudanese, Babikr Bedri's effort comes into a broader perspective. For his great work for girls' schools Shaykh Babikr Bedri is regarded the father of girls' education in the Sudan. His girls' school in Rufa'a is seen as the starting point of national education for girls and a landmark for the advancement of women. Hagga Kashif Badri is among those scholars emphasising Babikr Bedri's role in women's liberation, and she refers to his school as "a nucleus for formal education for women".³¹ He did not only initiate the first national girls' school in the Northern Sudan but he also contributed in changing parts of the public attitudes into favour of girls' school, which led to a local demand for girls' schools from the people in Rufa'a.³²

The Northern Sudanese divided

Although Babikr Bedri was a unique pioneer in girls' education he was not the only Northern Sudanese in favour of girls' education. The support for girls' schools came from parts of the educated elite in the Sudan, which included a group of educated Sudanese men; both traditionally educated *shaykhs* and the soon growing group of *effendis*, educated at the modern, secular government schools.³³ In the beginning of the Condominium period there

²⁹ SAD: SudA PK 1561 GRE: Annual Report of the Blue Nile Province, 1912 no.1, p. 47., "The inhabitants of the place [Rufa'a], too, have petitioned repeatedly to the same effect [girls' schools]"

³⁰ SAD: SudA PK 1561 GRE: Report on the Finances, Administration and the Condition of the Sudan, 1908, p. 29. The expansion of the school was visible already the year after its establishment and in 1908 the girls' school in Rufa'a was reported as attended by 46 pupils as against 17 in 1907.

³¹ Badri, H. K. 1986, p. 20.

³² SAD: SudA PK 1561 GRE, Annual Report of the Education Department 1906, p. 224.

³³ The concepts 'effendi' and 'shaykh' refer to men with particular education and careers. 'Effendi'-hood was the preserve of those men with secular educations (Gordon Memorial College) in preparation for employment in the colonial government or with a European firm. In the Northern Sudan the *effendi* manifested his position by wearing a suit, tie and a hat. The *shaykh*, wore by contrast the traditional robes and turbans, and signalled their

where probably a majority of shaykhs that supported girls' schools, as the modern schools were only just begun. Eventually parts of the effendis, those men provided with a secular education, became supportive to girls' education. Many of these 'Arab' educated Northern Sudanese were the graduates of one single institution, the Gordon Memorial College, opened by the British in 1902.34 The GMC offered important advantages to its students, which other sites of learning like the village Koran school or missionary schools did not. Direct access to colonial jobs were provided, often at the highest level open to Northern Sudanese, and the GMC thus gave its students a strong literary education in both Arabic and English; provided access to new communications technologies as typing and printing, and consequently the GMC promoted an ethos of self-sufficiency and group spirit among the students. The graduates of the Gordon Memorial College thus possessed both the knowledge and confidence necessary to proclaim new ideas. Heather Sharkey says that the college thus served as a 'laboratory for colonial nationalism', as did other similar educational institutions throughout the colonial Africa.³⁵ The modern educated men thus eventually outran the traditionally educated Northern Sudanese in the field of promoting girls' education, much because of their constant contact with new ideas, technologies and communications. Those provided with merely a traditional religious education did not have the same opportunities to merge ideas from Europe and Egypt with their own, and they consequently lagged somewhat behind and stagnated in comparison with the secularly educated men.

In 1906 a petition was initiated by the male educated elite in the Sudan, in which they demanded the opening of a government girls' school in Khartoum. This petition was reported in the Annual Reports of 1906, but it was emphasised that, "the majority of the signatures were no doubt Egyptian officials anxious that means of education for their daughters should be brought within their reach".³⁶ The Sudanese effendis were only a minority, but nevertheless a somewhat visible progressive element in the development of girls' education that initiated demands for such. Arguments of an Egyptian reforming influence in the case of Babikr Bedri is also applicable in the case of his fellow educated Northern Sudanese men. The Egypt-Sudan relations that stretch at least back to 1821 may have experienced

status as educated in Islamic studies at a local *khalwa* or *kuttab*. The titles, *effendi* and *shaykh*, became part of one's name and were used in both British colonial contexts and among Northern Sudanese colleagues. More details in: Sharkey, H. J. 1998, vol. 2., p. 242ff.

³⁴ See above, in chapter 2.

³⁵ Sharkey 1998, p. 8. Heather Sharkey also mentions Sadiqi College in Tunisia, Makerere College in Uganda, Victoria College in Egypt, Ecole William Ponty in Senegal and Fourah Bey College in Sierra Leone as other examples of colleges where the colonial nationalism emerged.

³⁶ SudA PK 1561 GRE: Reports of the Finances, Administration and Conditions of the Sudan, 1906. Annual Report Education Department p. 223.

interconnections both ways. We know for sure that Egyptians came to the Sudan as officials, soldiers and merchants.³⁷ It is thus likely that some of the Egyptian officials mentioned in the "numerously signed petition" for girls' schools have contributed in spreading liberal ideas from Egypt. An interconnection like Babikr's example is perhaps neither unique, where Sudanese men stayed for a longer or shorter period in Egypt and thus came under the influence of the new intelligentsia in Cairo. Young Sudanese men were also selected for education in Egypt, during the Turkiyya rule, for both secular and religious training.³⁸

The majority of the Sudanese, however, revealed severe prejudices towards girls' education.³⁹ An educated woman that might take employment outside her home was a totally alien thought. The majority of the Sudanese public was used to a mentality where the traditional patriarchal norms of the Sudanese society shaped their identity. The introduction of girls' schools consequently represented a foreign development that triggered different types of opposition. A characteristic feature of the opposition to girls' education was non-participation and apathy rather than violent hostility, even though some claimed that girls' education was a morally destructive force.⁴⁰ The public attitude was also characterised by doubt and fear that the consequences would be irrevocable and that things would never be the same again. There was, according to Ina Beasley, the former Controller of Girls' Education, a widespread apprehension that girls' education was a revolutionary development, and in such environments it takes great courage to understand and admit that this change eventually would be for the generally good.⁴¹

The traditional conventions that segregated urban men and women made it difficult for parents to send their daughters to school. Babikr Bedri especially mentions two groups of opponents: "the religious leaders, insofar as matters of belief are concerned; and the heads of tribes, in matter of custom".⁴² This was especially true in the beginning of the enterprise, according to Babikr. These opponents were prominent groups in the Sudanese society and the fact that they favoured conservative and traditional ideas made the enterprise with early girls' schools even more challenging. The Northern Sudanese thus experienced a confrontation between their traditions and customs and the more modern mentality that supported female education for the sake of the families and thus the national community.

³⁷ Holt and Daly1988.

³⁸ Bjørkelo 1989.

³⁹ Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim, "Hasaduna khilal `ashrin `aman" (Our Achievement during twenty years). No date, no publisher.

⁴⁰ Beasley 1992, p. 390. Hall and Ismail 1981, p. 54.

⁴¹ Beasley 1992, p. 390.

⁴² Bedri 1980, p. 140.

The Sudanese actors were, as we have seen, divided between the small but increasing progressive group of some traditionally educated men and students and graduates from the Gordon Memorial College on one side, and on the other side a majority of opponents to girls' education, which ranged from apathy to active opposition as in the religious leaders and heads of tribes. In the progressive Northern Sudanese's attempt to persuade local inhabitants and the British administration to support girls' education, they attached a particular language discourse to the issue of female education in the Northern Sudan. We saw the similarities in argumentation between the Egyptian reformers and the Northern Sudanese progressives. The discourse attached to female education made extensive use of familiar and traditional values, emphasising women's abilities as mother and wife in addition to the argument directed at the parents: A daughter's marriage value would increase with education. The preserving and traditional element in this discourse, which was constantly emphasised, also included modern aspects, aspects of improvement: Education would give 'better' mothers and housewives, and an 'increased' marriage value.

On the other side the Northern Sudanese opponents stressed arguments where educated girls' were feared to become 'wayward' and 'Europeanised'. The British who controlled the provision for girls' schools at all levels, seemed, curiously enough, to adopt the conservative and patriarchal attitudes of the religious leaders and tribal heads instead of supporting the progressive Sudanese men to whom the British had introduced a broad secular and modern education.⁴³ One immediately expect the British to show a more liberal view than the Sudanese regarding women and education, but what we will see is that the British adopted the conservative and patriarchal views and thus affected the educational system. It is thus necessary to continue the evaluation of the actors, in order to attempt a characterisation of the British as well.

2. The Sudan Political Service – the crème of British men?

The three first governor-generals in the Sudan, Kitchener (1898-1899), Wingate (1899-1916), and Sir Lee Stack (1916-1924), were all soldiers. The unsettled state of the country at the commencement of the Condominium and the priority of establishing law and order resulted in an overwhelming majority of British officials with military background.⁴⁴ Consul-general Lord Cromer was not, however, happy with a purely military administration in the Sudan. He

⁴³ Bedri 1980, p. 140f.

⁴⁴ Holt and Daly 1988, p. 123.

believed the soldiers lacked both political flexibility and financial prudence; and that the harshness of their rule would tend to provoke rather than to cow resistance. The fear of provoking the Sudanese was considered significant in a country believed to be so prone to 'fanaticism' as the Sudan.⁴⁵ Cromer therefore insisted almost from the outset, that civilian university graduates should be recruited to the Sudan. Cromer's final decision in June 1900 to recruit civilian administrators was taken after his experiences of Lord Kitchener's brief, but harsh military rule 1898-1899, and the first civilians were therefore employed already from 1901, and in 1905 a system of recruitment was established.⁴⁶ These civilians composed the Sudan Political Service.

Several stereotypes exist in regard of the British civil administrators, and a survey will either help to reinforce, refute or revise the stereotypes of the British administrators as 'first class hearties with third class minds'⁴⁷ or as commented by a British newspaper 'athletic public school boys accustomed to hard work rather than to hard thinking'.⁴⁸ The latter remark is attached to the striking importance that was held to athletic achievement among the recruits, hence the stock phrase that the Sudan was 'The Land of Blacks ruled by Blues' (at Oxford and Cambridge Universities a 'Blue' is awarded to those who have represented their university at a major sport in the annual contest between the two universities).⁴⁹ Who were these young British men, what were their social background and educational records? How were they motivated and selected for the Sudan Political Service? How far was the 'Blues' syndrome true? How was the academic level of the officials, was there any truth in the stereotype that concluded that the service consisted of 'brawns but little brains'? When we are more acquainted with Britain's overseas administrators we are better equipped to study the demand and supply of girls' education and thus enabling a fuller comprehension of the forces behind girls' education.

The Ideal – a 'Blues' imperative?

First of all we should study what kind of ideal the Sudan Political Service had in mind? The applicants were preferably graduates from either Oxford or Cambridge who earlier had enjoyed the attendance at a good public school. Students from other universities were

⁴⁵ Muddathir 'Abd al-Rahim 1969: *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan*, Oxford. Also see G.N. Sanderson in the "Introduction", p. 11 in Bedri 1980.

⁴⁶ The recruitment procedures will be studied below.

⁴⁷ Kirk-Greene, A. H. M. "The Sudan Political Service", in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. XV, No. 1, 1982.

⁴⁸ Holt and Daly 1988, p. 123.

⁴⁹ Kirk-Greene 1982, p. 1. Daly 1986, p. 85.

sporadically accepted, but the preponderance of Oxford and Cambridge over other universities is striking: an overwhelming majority of 90 percent of the graduates in the Service had attended Oxbridge.⁵⁰

The respectable background from good public schools and the universities of Oxford or Cambridge was, however, not enough to ensure the selection. According to A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, Lord Cromer had a vision of the kind of men who would 'carry out successfully an Imperial policy...active young men, endowed with good health, high character and fair abilities'.⁵¹ The first priority was active men, which meant athletic individuals, a fact H.C. Jackson who arrived in the Sudan in 1907, also reflected upon: 'I think we had been chosen mainly because we were athletes'.⁵² Reginald Davies, who joined the Sudan political service in 1911, had the same feeling and attributed his selection to his success in the 1910 boat race where he was awarded a 'Blue' title.⁵³ The athletic abilities of the administrators were argued as an advantage because the enthusiasm for sports developed the sense of responsibility, teamwork and fair play. In addition it gave them a similarity of outlook and attitude, which was reflected in the administration. Disadvantages are also observed in regard to the similarity in the administrators background, and Kirk-Greene quotes the American Robert O. Collins who argues that tendencies were seen that solidified the conformity and uniformity of the service. He also reflects upon the paradox that the service produced a sound and competent, but often little imaginative and less creative administration.⁵⁴

The 'Blues' imperative is often viewed as a confirmation of limited academic qualification within the Service. It is commonly indicated that brawns and brains do not go together, and we must therefore look at the recruitment principles and process to consider the actual demands that rested upon the recruits. Was academic achievements a part of the criterions for the ideal administrator?

Generally speaking only those who had taken an honors degree were accepted. The majority of the candidates had taken a second or third class degree, but as much as ten percent of the candidates to the civil service enjoyed a first degree at their university. This was regarded very impressive in a colonial service and Kirk-Greene says that only the Indian Civil Service was likely to have registered as many first degrees as the Sudan Political Service.⁵⁵ From among those with acceptable degrees the final choice did, however, fall upon those who

⁵⁴ Kirk-Greene 1982, p. 7.

⁵⁰ Kirk-Greene 1982, p. 12, 15.

⁵¹ Kirk-Greene 1982, p. 4.

⁵² The quote is found in Kirk-Greene 1982, p. 6, who has quoted H.C. Jackson's 1954 book: The Sudan Ways.

⁵³ Warburg 1971, p. 82.

⁵⁵ Kirk-Greene 1982, p. 21.

had achieved an athletic distinction. The priority was thus unmistakable, but although the main emphasis was athletic achievements we have seen that 'brawns' were not synonymous with intellectual exclusion. The before mentioned athlete Reginald Davies, may serve as an example of both a talented athlete and academic. He was one of those, however few, who had achieved both a 'Blue' and a First Degree at his university.⁵⁶ The Sudan Political Service obviously managed to attract the crème and receive applications from those young men who attained both athletic and academic achievements and thus, apparently, enjoyed the dual brilliance of men who could think as well as act. How did the Sudan Political Service manage to motivate the crème of British university graduates to apply for an overseas career in the rough climate of the Sudan?

Daly says that the recruits were probably not attracted by the prospect of helping the Sudanese, and they had no, or at least only a limited sense of commitment to the Sudanese people before the interwar period.⁵⁷ He further argues the more obvious, namely that the candidates were attracted of the career opportunities in combination with the good bonus deals. The candidates were probably attracted by a career that promised an outdoor life, good salary, excellent leave arrangements, independence and authority to a large degree and the additional power that followed. The bonuses did not stop there, but also included retirement at the age of 48. If we also add the extra year at the university that was offered the candidates, and proved very attractive, one can perhaps understand why the Sudan Political Service attracted some of the best of Britain's young men. During the extra year they were required to pass an exam in Arabic and in addition they attended anthropology classes, which, however, might indicate that the visions of the 'wild', 'exotic' and 'primitive' country were appealing and captivating.

Recruitment process

We have seen that the level was high both in academic and athletic achievements, and this may therefore be a suitable place for studying the recruitment process that faced the applicants. J. A. Mangan mentions the very unusual method of selection of recruits to the British Service and he refers to this method of selection as a regressive development back to the patronage system of the pre- Northcote- Trevelyan era.⁵⁸ Application forms were available at the universities, in particularly at Oxford and Cambridge. There was no competitive

⁵⁶ Kirk-Greene 1982, p. 31.

⁵⁷ Daly, 1986, p. 84.

⁵⁸ SAD: SudA PK 1543.5 MAN: Mangan, J. A. "The Education of an Elite Imperial Administration: The Sudan Political Service and the British Public School System", 1982, p. 3.

examination, selection was done only by interviews, which was held annually in London after informal interviews at the universities conducted by 'talent-scouts'. Appointed university 'dons' were the first to interview the possible recruits to the Service, and then the Board of serving members conducted the final interviews. The Board was composed of British representatives of the Egyptian and Sudan government, and for instance, between 1904 and 1905, Wingate was a member of the board.⁵⁹

Kirk-Greene admits the likeliness in that recruiters looked 'for a replica of themselves, Blues and all'.⁶⁰ The rather unusual method of selection makes it liable to suggest that Kirk-Greene's indication is coherent. Selection by interviews, and not examination in skills that the candidates would need in the Sudan, may lead us to consider the recruits as having more or less the same attitudes and opinions as the selecting Board, otherwise they may not have been selected. Warburg mentions that irregularities were observed in the recruitments as it is found that applicants have been selected according to political considerations.⁶¹ The recruiters were therefore probably looking for brave men from the same social class as themselves, the British upper-middle class, with similar attitudes and morality as the selection board. Daly also argues that social and political influence was significant in the selections, after the academic and athletic distinction of the candidates had been confirmed.⁶²

Through our knowledge of the ideals, principles and procedure surrounding the recruitment process, we might therefore suggest explicitly that is likely that the Service sought after boys who held similar attitudes as the Service. In addition both Daly and Kirk-Greene argue that the Sudan Political Service and its selection board had a special capacity to shape the culture of the Service.⁶³ In this regard we may also include that R. O. Collins believes that the large concentration of men with similar intellectual and athletic achievements encouraged conformity and duty rather then creativity and initiative, and paternalism rather than guardianship.⁶⁴

The 'typical' British official

If we, by considering the abovementioned criterions in combination with the recruitment procedures, should attempt at presenting a picture of the 'typical' recruit, several characteristics appear. He attended a good public school, he usually had a good Oxford or

⁵⁹ Warburg 1971, p. 81.

⁶⁰ Kirk-Greene 1982, p. 12.

⁶¹ Warburg 1971, p. 82.

⁶² Daly 1986, p. 86.

⁶³ Daly 1986 and Kirk-Greene 1982.

⁶⁴ Kirk-Greene has quoted R. O. Collins: "The Sudan Political Service".

Cambridge degree, he showed athletic abilities sometimes to the point of distinction, and he was likely from upper-middle class.⁶⁵ The Sudan Political Service recruit showed a strong bond of loyalty within and to the Service, and this loyalty was largely a product of a 'public school tradition shared by the majority of the service's members.⁶⁶ The culture or ethos of the service was the same as the culture of the public school: A good birth and good manners counted more than unusual intelligence, and strict morality and distinguished sportsmanship was considered as important as academic honors.⁶⁷ This ethos must be considered most significant when we study the forces in girls' education.

Regarding girls' education a moral conservative attitude becomes visible in the British colonial administration, which perhaps could be connected with the argued ethos in the Service that probably originated from the ethos in the finest public schools for the uppermiddle class boys in Britain. General Wingate used the strategy to leave the question of women's education almost untouched. Chris Toensing is very clear on this issue suggesting that the Victorian female ideals may be an explanation for the procrastinating attitude towards girls' education.⁶⁸ It was not only in the Sudan that the society valued the woman to stay at home taking care of the family and the house. This period in England experienced a very conservative upper and upper-middle class regarding the role of the woman, and I quote: "To the married woman this meant striving for the ideal household - clean, warm and comforting (...), and the married missionary woman strove for such households in the fields".⁶⁹ It has, however, not been found explicit expressions of such a moral conservative attitude to women, but several indications are visible. The Annual Report for the Education Department in 1913 suggest a conservative attitude in the Service, when it says that the opposition towards girls' schools must be countered alike by the conservative Sudanese and the sceptical British official.⁷⁰ Lillian Sanderson actually also admits in a few sentences that, "in Britain itself there was some prejudice against higher intellectual development for women. This attitude was shared by some British administrators in the Sudan'.⁷¹ Some British officials still feared public hostility to change in the traditions of the country, and the authorities therefore only concerned themselves with what they considered the right education for girls: slow development of elementary education that fostered home and village activities. If we combine

⁶⁵ According to Daly 1986, p. 86. The recruits were usually not drawn from the aristocracy, or the gentry.

⁶⁶ Daly 1986, p. 86.

⁶⁷ Kirk-Greene 1982, p. 23.

⁶⁸ Toensing, p. 5.

⁶⁹ Toensing, p. 5.

⁷⁰ SAD: SudA PK 1561 GRE: Annual Report of the Education Department, 1913, No. 2, p. 241.

⁷¹ Sanderson, L. "The Development of Girls' Education in the Northern Sudan 1898-1969", in *PAEDAGOGICA HISTORICA*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, p. 138. Gent, Blandijnberg. 1968.

our knowledge of the Victorian British female ideals with the policy towards girls' education in the Northern Sudan, we might suggest that the attitudes of the upper-middle class crème of British young men might have been 'transferred' to the Sudanese scenery, and consequently British attitudes was practised in the Northern Sudanese society.

Wingate was thus apparently in company with other British officials that hesitated in regard of girls' education. Some individual officers also displayed the vices of arrogance and pointless harshness. Wingate himself considered that it was sometimes necessary to be harsh as a matter of policy. He believed that if a group of insurgent 'fanatics' were allowed to score even a minor success in a skirmish with a handful of troops, 'fanaticism' would spread so rapidly and universally that his administration would probably be unable to contain it. The only safeguards were, in his view, constant vigilance - 'never to relax for a moment our precautions'; and a determination to crush all overt resistance almost mercilessly, in its inception.⁷²

Wingate was nevertheless a pragmatic, while the Sudan Political Service consisted of academics and athletes that distinguished themselves from the pragmatic military officials through their intellectual approach to administration. Paradoxically, the more reflective and 'intellectual' approach often generated policies, which tended to be considerably more hostile to change and 'progress' than Wingate's pragmatism. G. N. Sanderson argues that nowhere is this effect more marked than in the field of education. Here, 'the intellectual approach to administration went far to create an intellectual desert'.⁷³ As we have seen in chapter two the original objectives of the educational policy in the Sudan were to provide an adequate supply of inexpensive Sudanese clerks, artisans and minor officials for an administration. In addition the education department wanted to promote male education in secular subjects as an antidote to the 'ignorance' and 'fanaticism' which traditional Sudanese education in Koranic schools was believed to foster.⁷⁴ If khalwas seemed likely to foment 'fanaticism', girls' schools seemed certain to provoke it by reaction.

We suggested that the Sudan Political Service consisted of administrators that might deserve the characteristic of the crème of British men. They distinguished themselves in both academic and athletic achievements, and although the selection board attached a great emphasis to athletic prowess, confirming the Blues imperative, we must also remember that the stereotypes of a service with 'brawns but little brains' must be refuted. Athletic excellence

⁷² Bedri 1980. See the Introduction by G. N. Sanderson, p. 37.

⁷³ Bedri 1980, p. 39.

⁷⁴ Beshir 1969, p. 28-31.

was thus not synonymous with intellectual exclusion, but the overwhelming importance attached to athletic achievements prove that the aphorism mentioned above, 'The Land of Blacks ruled by Blues', can be reinforced. A most interesting aspect in regard of the service is their apparent similarity in attitudes and morality. Several other historians like Warburg, Mangan, Kirk-Greene and Holt have observed that the Sudan Political Service had a special ability to mould the ethos of the selected administrators, and this was possible much because of their similarity in social background, as well as in their athletic and academic bond. These apparent attitudes may possibly have affected their policies and especially the execution of politics, and an attempted study in this regard will be made below. We will thus consider the actual development of girls' education with a special emphasis on the Sudanese demand and the British supply of girls' schools.

3. Limited demand or insufficient supply?

The modern educational history of Northern Sudanese girls starts with the missionary pioneers that established the first girls' schools in 1900. Mostly daughters of European officials attended the first classes, but the number of Muslim girls increased soon. Lillian Sanderson, one of the leading historians of Sudanese girls' education, asks in one of her articles, "why, at the beginning of the century when most of the population was so violently opposed to education for girls, so many girls attended the Catholic schools".⁷⁵ Sanderson's question will form the basis of the study of the early demand for and supply of girls' education in the colonial Sudan.

The missionaries' educational project for girls

During the 19th century missionaries wanted to suppress the slave trade and reach African countries on their path of evangelisation. Some of the missionary societies opened schools in the Sudan, but these early attempts were not successful. After prohibition of missionary activities during the Mahdia the missionaries saw a new opening with the re-conquest in 1898. At the commencement of the Condominium the Church Missionary Society exposed their evangelising plans for the Sudan to the governor general Lord Kitchener (1898-1899).

⁷⁵ Sanderson 1961, p. 96.

They wanted to resume their work in the Northern Sudan as a part of their missionary dream of a chain of missionary stations from the Cape to Cairo.⁷⁶

This time, however, the missionaries were at first refused permission to do missionary work in the Muslim Sudan, but the government relented somewhat and soon allowed the missionaries to carry out educational and medical tasks. The British administration was consequent in their careful attitude towards religion in the Northern Sudan and the missionaries had to sign a 'treaty of influence', which limited the evangelising influence.⁷⁷

The first girls' schools opened in the twentieth century Northern Sudan was established by Christian missionaries in 1900.⁷⁸ The Coptic School was opened in Khartoum in 1902 and in 1903 this became the first Church Missionary Society (CMS) School for girls. The CMS Khartoum school soon enjoyed a majority of Sudanese pupils.⁷⁹ Girls' education in the Northern Sudan had started.

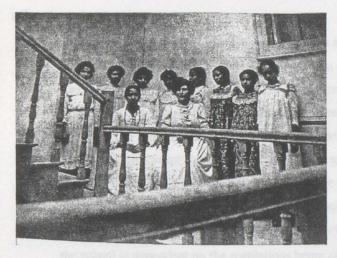


Figure 3.1. The First CMS girls' class.⁸²

The Church Missionary Society, in particular, played an important role in the development of the girls' schools in the Sudan. The Bishop, Llewellyn Gwynne⁸⁰, was one of the pioneers in girls' education, and he also had great influence in the early discussions of government education for girls.⁸¹ Nearly all the girls were Christians, Copts and European children when the

⁷⁶ ULE: Mohamed Ph.d 1969, p. 104. The CMS pioneer J. P. Krapf had advocated the missionary dream of a chain of Christian missionary stations from the Cape in South Africa to Cairo in Egypt.

⁷⁷ Badri, H. K. 1986, p. 26. The 'treaty of areas of influence' included limitations upon the missionary activity in the Sudan. According to this treaty the Northern Sudan, to the north of latitude 10° became the exclusive preserve for the Islamic activities and the south for Christian activities. A further sub division of the Christian area was done: Upper Nile Province under the influence of the American Mission, Equatoria under the Church of England and the Catholics got the Bahr el Gazal region.

⁷⁸ Beasley 1992, p. 418. The Verona Fathers Mission, that established St. Anne's School in Khartoum in 1900, opened St. Joseph's School in Omdurman the same year.

⁷⁹ SAD: 689/2/30-44: Bulkeley, R. I. P. papers. 'A brief outline of the history of education in the Sudan', by Ahmed Mohamed Saad Hiderby, p. 35. Department of Teacher Training, Ministry of Education, Khartoum. August 14, 1973.

⁸⁰ The Rev. Llewellyn H. Gwynne was the first CMS missionary to be sent to the Sudan. He sailed from England in November 1899 and shortly after his arrival he was asked by Lord Kitchener to act as a chaplain to the troops. In this way Mr. Gwynne succeeded in gaining confidence of the authorities, and with the dual position as a missionary and a chaplain to the administration he became very influential, a position continued to be held by Gwynne until his retirement in 1946. When he retired he had become the Anglican Bishop of Egypt and the Sudan. For more details about Mr. Gwynne see ULE: Mohamed 1969, p. 105-107, unpublished Ph.d.
⁸¹ See below.

⁸² SAD: Bishop Gwynne's photographic material.

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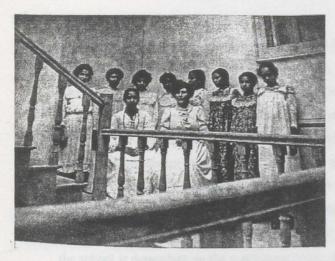


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Church Missionary School first opened in Khartoum, but this was soon to change. The Europeans didn't wish their children to be taught in the same classes as the Muslim children and thus invariably withdrew their children from the Church Missionary Society Schools. Gwynne said that the CMS schools were, however, established for the children of the Sudan.⁸³

The need for more classes was a definite demand even acknowledged by the administration. In the Governments 1904 report, the consul-general Lord Cromer wrote that, "an active demand, which the Government is unable to meet adequately from its own resources, exists, on the part of both Moslems and Christians".⁸⁴ In 1905 the CMS therefore opened another girls' school in Khartoum.

The Government did, however, stipulate regulations for the missionaries' educational activities, well aware of the difficulties that might arise from the establishment of missionary schools.

(1) Before Mohamedan children are permitted to attend a Mission school the Director or Head of the School will satisfy himself that the parents or guardians understand that the school is a Christian school. (2) The full consent of parents or guardians must be obtained by the Director or Head of the school before any pupil is given religious instructions, no matter of what nationality or religion the pupil may be. (3) When religious instruction is being carried out no other children, except those whose parents have given the necessary consent must be present.
 (4) The school shall be open at all times to the inspection of the Governor-General or his representative. (5) The Director or Head of the school will be held responsible that the above regulations are strictly adhered to. It must be clearly understood that the permission to carry on the school is dependent on the regulations being observed". ⁸⁵

According to the historian Nazir el Seed Mohamed these regulation turned out to be more of an anticipation of what might take place rather than a prevention of it. In Khartoum particularly some Muslim parents were eager to send their daughters to school, but the Government had decided to use its limited financial resources on boys' schools and thus left girls' education to the private initiators.

Muslim parents did not have any alternative schools for their daughters and in the beginning some had a feeling of embarrassment and sensitivity towards the missionary schools.⁸⁶ Some parents did, nevertheless, as the reported demand suggests, send their

⁸³ Mohamed, Nazir el-Seed. 1969., p. 136.

⁸⁴ SAD: SudA PK 1561 GRE: Annual Report 1904.

⁸⁵ Mohamed 1969, p. 112-113.

⁸⁶ Representations in form of a petition were made to the Government in 1906 regarding the opening of a government girls' school, as we shall see later.

daughters to missionary school already within the first ten years of the Condominium. The Omdurman girls' missionary school, opened in November 1906 at the request of the inhabitants, had in less than two months twenty pupils, and each parent had individually been visited by Mrs. Hall, the British teacher who had carefully explained the work and the conditions of the school.⁸⁷ Whether the Muslim parents gained confidence in the missionary teachers or a yearning for the education of their children and a lack of alternative schools is a matter of reflection. Different opinions circulate among the historians, and one of them, Chris Toensing has revealed some of the negative aspects with the missionary work.

Chris Toensing claims that the missionary groups, whether American or European, saw the establishment of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium as an opportunity for the values of Christianity to take root in the Sudan.⁸⁸ Toensing further argues that the Presbyterians perceived the area as a virgin territory where their primary duty was to stop the advance of "the backward faith" of the Mahdi.⁸⁹ He argues that the missionaries sometimes tried to convert Muslim girls to Christianity to keep them from quitting school by reason of early marriage.⁹⁰ Two strategies were used to fight the problem of early marriages, according to Toensing. The first was an intervention of government authorities. If a girl above the age of 21 professed her Christian faith before a colonial official, he could give the missionaries permission to baptise her. Toensing says that Presbyterian correspondence has revealed a second method, which was simply to hide the girl from her family and baptise her in secret.⁹¹ He has not found any available statistics on how many girls the missionaries were able to prevent from marriage by baptising them, but in 1921 there were documented three cases in a period of six months, a number which, as Toensing argues, might indicate that this was not a seldom act.⁹²

Whether Toensing's study indicates a general tendency or rather some rare incidents are not evident. It is, however, unmistakable that the number of Muslim girls in attendance at missionary schools increased in spite of the alleged sensitivity and possible problems between

⁸⁷ Mohamed 1969, p. 132. He refers to correspondence and notes by Gwynne.

⁸⁸ Toensing, "The Shaykh and the Saviors: Conception of Gender in Two Approaches to Girls' Education in the Northern Sudan, 1907-1921", p. 4ff. Unpublished. Toensing refers to the Presbyterian records where he has found indications of a strong evangelistic attitude, "The Presbyterian records show that evangelism and conversion were always foremost in their minds. Furthermore, their zeal to bring Sudanese girls into the Christian fold belies historians' statement and often resulted in serious antagonism with the local population".
⁸⁹ Toensing p. 4f. He refers to letters among the Presbyterians.

⁹⁰ Northern Sudanese girls were traditionally married at an early age of between 12 and 16 years. Girls' married at earlier ages have also been seen, but this was not common.

⁹¹ Toensing, p. 7. Though Islamic law permits a Muslim man to marry a non-Muslim woman, the social opprobrium would have been prohibitive in most cases.

² Toensing, p. 7.

the Northern Sudanese and the missionaries. Although most of the girls in the earliest classes were Christian children of Syrians and Egyptians, several Northern Sudanese Muslim girls were entrusted to the schools in the early days. By May 1904 80 girls were attending the CMS classes in Khartoum.93 These numbers increased rapidly and by 1912 more than 500 girls attended the missionary schools.

reactions by th	No. of Schools	No. of Pupils			No. of Teachers			
		Boys	Girls	Total	Men	Women	Total	
Boys' Schools	14	469	-	469	37	1	38	
Girls' Schools	5	-	386	386	4	17	21	
Mixed Schools	2	29	119	148	-	14	14	
Total	21	498	505	1003	41	32	73	

Table 3.1. Schools in	the Sudan	conducted by	missionary	or religious	societies.	1911-1912. 94

These numbers might suggest that the relationship between missionaries and the Northern Sudanese were not completely destructive, but rather a relationship based on mutuality. Some Northern Sudanese saw the advantage of girls' education and thus acknowledged the missionaries as useful contributors and pioneers to the cause of girls' education. The Sudanese historian M. O. Beshir argues this view. He claims that the missionaries were, despite their Christian foundation, most tactful and diplomatic and they were not considered blended by the aim of proselytising and spreading Christian faith and values.⁹⁵ The Sudanese woman pioneer Hagga Kashif Badri,⁹⁶ educated during the Condominium, claims that religious differences seldom were an issue, the missionaries merely provided classes for girls, which were appreciated by the parents that saw the need for girls' education.⁹⁷

Beshir and Badri indicate mutuality between the missionaries and parts of the urban Sudanese population. A further indication based on the findings of Beshir and Badri's experience might suggest that the British exaggerated the precautions between missionaries

⁹³ SAD: SudA PK 1528.9 SAN. Lillian Sanderson "The Development of Girls' Education in the Northern Sudan, 1898-1960", p. 128. Five elementary schools with a total of 80 girls in 1904. The schools were open to all nationalities, but the vast majority of the girls were Muslim. The subjects taught: scripture, Arabic, English, and

needlework. ⁹⁴ SAD: SudA PK 1561 GRE: Reports on the finances, administration and condition of the Sudan, 1912, no. 2, p. 289. ⁹⁵ Beshir 1969, p. 50.

⁹⁶ Hagga Kashif Badri completed her elementary, intermediate and secondary education in Omdurman and graduated from Khartoum University College in 1956. She is one of the pioneer activist women in the Sudan, and joined in political activities when she was in secondary school. She is one of the founding members of the Sudan Women's Union in 1952 and during her career she has held many different posts and written several articles and books about women studies. She is now a teacher at Ahfad Women College in Omdurman. ⁹⁷ Interview with Hagga Kashif Badri, 29/01/00, in her home in Omdurman, Sudan.

and Northern Sudanese when devising strict regulations and controls in this relationship.98 Gauri Viswanathan, a former student of Edward Said, claims that the vulnerability of the British was reflected in the defensive mechanisms of control devised in anticipation of what was considered a certain "native" rebellion.99 Although Viswanathan studies the Indian colonial experience I argue the similarities between the Northern Sudanese colonial experiences based on the British expressions of fear of riots from "Muslim fanatics", and the consequent British regulations of the missionaries educational activities. The anticipated reactions by the "native population" to, for example, the teaching of the Bible, is often in excess of accounts of actual responses. This leads one to surmise that a scenario unfolded in British policymaking that did not necessarily correspond with what was in reality occurring in the subjugated population. The increasing attendance of Muslim girls in the missionary schools combined with Hagga Kashif's testimony reveals that the heterogeneity in the Northern Sudanese society was glided over by the British in the rush to appropriate it to the suitable colonial setting. This leads us to a conceptual and cultural discussion about whether the British construed a stereotyped homogeneous 'reality' about the 'natives' and thus about 'women', and how this affected the educational policy. Before we carry on this discussion we must, however, continue the path of evaluating the early Northern Sudanese demand.

We must go beyond the issue of whether the Sudanese accepted the missionaries or not. The important aspect is that an increasing number of Sudanese parents allowed their girls to attend missionary schools, in spite of the Christian and foreign ideals that created the principles and emphasis in the missionary schools. Lillian Sanderson asked why so many girls attended missionary schools when the population actually opposed girls' education. The majority of the Northern Sudanese population did most likely disapprove of girls' schools in the beginning. This presentation does, however, recognise the evidence of a clear demand from parts of the urban Northern Sudanese inhabitants. The first years of the Condominium reveals an early and visible, however not immense, interest in girls' education in the urban Northern Sudan. The demand for girls' education was presented to the British administration in the form of an increasing number of Northern Sudanese girls in missionary schools, numerous signed petitions and as concrete requests for the establishment of girls' schools as Babikr Bedri's effort.¹⁰⁰ Without any government alternatives for girls' schools some

⁹⁸ See above.

⁹⁹ Viswanathan, Gauri 1989: Masks of Conquest, p. 10ff. New York.

¹⁰⁰ See above about the "father of girls' education".

Northern Sudanese embraced the existing facilities, independent of the schools religious basis. This aspect was further demonstrated in the 1905 annual report of Egypt and the Sudan:

"(...) whereas but a few years ago the whole of the Moslem population of Egypt were apathetic even if they were not hostile, to the education of girls, now it is regarded as a grievance – not merely by some Cairene Moslems, but also by some of the relatively backward population of Khartoum – that no facilities for female education are at once established in a country in which, as yet, only the rudiments of civilisation can be said to have been introduced".¹⁰¹

Government girls' schools, 1900-1920

However minor the attendance might seem in this early period of the Condominium, it must be stressed that some urban Northern Sudanese took an active initiative for girls' education, which the British administration could not have failed to see. The pioneering venture initiated by the remarkable Shaykh Babikr Bedri was for instance substantially commented on in the departmental records.¹⁰² Inhabitants outside Rufa'a also requested government girls' schools, as we saw above in connection with the petition presented to the government in 1906. The Director of Education, James Currie, said after some enquiries that the petition "represents a demand which will every year become more persistent".¹⁰³ Sir James Currie was, however, still reluctant regarding educational involvement in Sudan. He focused mainly on the vocational training of boys for the recruitment of staff to the lower administrative posts and military service.¹⁰⁴ He saw it as his duty to proceed carefully and not to risk anything because the important issue was to build up the Sudanese economy that was devastated after several wars and famines.¹⁰⁵ James Curries aims therefore corresponded well with both the apparent attitude and the main goals of the British involvement in the Sudan, which excluded women from the early education system: girls' education was not considered necessary from the government point of view. 106

When Bedri's success in Rufa'a was a fact the administration did include girls' schools in the financial estimate of the educational programme proposed in 1907.¹⁰⁷ This might suggest a serious consideration of the demand for female education. The financial

¹⁰¹ SAD: SudA PK 1561 GRE: Report on the Finances, Administration and the Condition of Egypt and the Sudan, 1905. Section III, p. 43.

¹⁰² See below for more details about the Northern Sudanese pioneer in girls' education Shaykh Babikr Bedri.

¹⁰³ SudA PK 1561 GRE: Reports on the finances, administration and condition of the Sudan, 1906, p. 234. SAD: Currie, James: "The Educational Experiment in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1900-33", in *Journal of African Society*, vol. XXXIII, 1934

¹⁰⁴ Beshir 1969, p. 28. See chapter 2, the educational aims.

¹⁰⁵ Holt and Daly 1988, Daly 1986.

¹⁰⁶ Sanderson 1961, p. 93.

¹⁰⁷ SAD: SudA PK: 1561 GRE: Report by His Majesty's Agent and Consul General. 1907. Appendix B, p. 604.

estimate was, however, limited and consequently vulnerable, and the development of government girls' schools therefore depended, more than boys' education, on individual and apparently remote events.¹⁰⁸ The most specific case and maybe the most devastating setback to girls' education was an event that modified and slowed down the possibilities of opening government girls' schools from the start: The slump in Egypt in 1907 and the following period of financial depression in the Sudan.¹⁰⁹ For this reason the Educational programme of 1907 collapsed and the establishment of Khartoum Girls' Elementary School had to be indefinitely postponed.¹¹⁰

After 15 years of Government education for boys the Missionaries had established several schools for both boys and girls, and the demand from the Muslim population was every year becoming more persistent. Two elementary girls' school, one in Rufa'a and the other in Kamlin, included the total government provision for girls' schools in 1913. A change is, however, seen, on paper, in the annual report from 1913 when the Department of Education admits that although the missionary schools are doing a good job, they do not command the confidence of the "backbone of the Sudan community – the Mohammedan Arab", and they further wrote that, "after fifteen years of legitimate delay, a beginning ought to be made".¹¹¹ The year before, however, in 1912, the attitude of the Sudanese people towards girls' education was stated in the annual report to be favourable and in 1914 it is mentioned to have continued to change for the better, but still the Government provision stands still, reportedly because of lack of finances and staff.¹¹²

The written words in the annual reports indicate that the government were concerned with and wanted to develop the supply for girls' schools. At a closer look, however, we can see that the annual reports, the expressed aim and policies, represents a contradiction to the executed policies. On one side the administration repeats itself when recognising the increasing demand from the Muslim population and stating that "a beginning ought to be made" with real government provision. On the other side the contradiction appears when we observe the execution and administrative practise, which reveals a continuing low priority of girls' education. There was always presented 'legitimate' reasons for the low priority of girls'

¹⁰⁸ Beasley 1992, p. 342f.

¹⁰⁹ SAD: Beasley papers 657/1/18. The financial collapse was also affected by the unfavourable trade conditions that prevailed throughout the world.

¹¹⁰ SAD: SudA PK GRE: Report of the Finances, Administration and the Condition of the Sudan, 1908, Annual Report Education Department, p. 157. "Up to last October it had been definitely decided to build a girls' school in Khartoum, and the necessary funds for building purposes have actually been provided. But the collapse of the educational programme settled in 1907 has made indefinite postponement inevitable".

¹¹¹ SAD: SudA PK 1561 GRE Annual Report Department of Education 1913. SAD: Beasley papers, 657/1/20.

¹¹² SAD: SudA PK 1561 GRE Annual Report of the Blue Nile Province 1912, no 1, p. 47.

schools. Lack of finances is a recurring explanation and it was a fact that the economy in the Sudan was suffering at the commencement of the Condominium. It is nevertheless interesting to observe that in the 1914 annual report governor-general Wingate praises the economic revival at the same page as it is mentioned that girls' schools stand still because of lack of funds¹¹³:

"The wonderful economic revival of the Sudan during these years is a matter of history: that the educational development has kept an even and equal pace with the progress in other spheres is Mr. Currie's great achievement. (). The three Government girls' kuttabs and the missionary schools provide the only facilities for girls' education in the country, and, valuable as their work is, much more ought to be done as soon as funds can be provided".114

Holt and Daly also remark the favoured economic conditions, especially after 1914. The First World War had a positive effect on the Sudan's economy and government revenue increased from £E1,857,856 in 1916 to £4,425,340 in 1920.¹¹⁵ Although the economy was devastated at the commencement of the Condominium and naturally required a careful attitude to expenditure, the increased government revenue, as commented by Holt and Daly, suggests a generally low priority of girls' education in practice since the limited fulfilment of demands for education were still argued in economics.

In addition to the financial argument there was a tendency to assign the responsibility for the slow development of girls' education to the Northern Sudanese inhabitants and their culture, religion and traditions. The British education official Nicholas Udal¹¹⁶ confirmed this government policy both in 1926 and 1938 when he said that girls' schools were only opened at the request of the parents, due to the suspicions and prejudices of the Muslim inhabitants.¹¹⁷ Udal does, however, also reveal that the policies was not even executed when the demand and request was established. The sources reveal that although the government expressed recognition of the Sudanese demand in the annual reports after 1910, they only to a limited scale took responsibility for the change in public attitude and increasing Sudanese demand by

¹¹³ The optimism in the Sudan economy continued through the First World War, and the consequent increase in revenue gave the Sudan administration considerably more financial elbowroom. For more details see "Introduction", by G.N. Sanderson in Bedri 1980, vol. 2, p. 15.

¹¹⁴ SAD: SudA PK 1561 GRE Memorandum of Sir Reginald Wingate on the Finances, Administration and Conditions of the Sudan, 1914. p. 45. ¹¹⁵ Holt and Daly 1988, p. 129.

¹¹⁶ Nicholas Robin Udal was an official in the Education Department in the Sudan. He was the Chief Inspector of Education in the Blue Nile and Kordofan provinces between 1915-1918, before he served as the Assistant Director of Education in the years 1918-1930.

¹¹⁷ SAD: 662/1/33 and NRO: Dep. Rep. 6/2/26: N. R. Udal . Education in the Northern Sudan, 1938.

providing schools in correspondence with the demand. A request for education was thus apparently not enough in practise. The government had to approve the demand as well, which they did not always do. Wad Medani inhabitants were, for example, anxious that a girls' school should be opened in their town and they approached Sir James Currie in 1909. He found that the request could not be approved "as the number of pupils likely to attend the school was not sufficient to guarantee the necessary funds".¹¹⁸ The Wad Medani inhabitants could, nevertheless, enjoy the facilities of a girls' school in 1911. The government had not changed its mind, but the Right. Revd. Bishop Gwynne in the Church Missionary Society, was willing to set up a girls' school on the request of the inhabitants.¹¹⁹ The British policy, which apparently was meant to protect the Sudanese from British interference in traditions and customs, actually "protected" half the population from attendance in the modernisation of the Northern Sudan and during the ten years between 1910-1920 the Department of Education established only 5 girls' schools in the Northern Sudan. In 1920 there were therefore government elementary schools only at Rufa'a, Kamlin, Dongola, El Obeid and Merowe, and these schools were opened only after a recognised and approved demand in the respective towns.

A study of the interwar period and the time up till independence will provide a more complete picture of the demand and supply relationship in the Northern Sudan. Was there any change in the gap between demand and supply for girls' education?

4. Extensive but limited potential: demand and supply 1920-1956

In the commencement of the colonial rule we saw that girls' education depended, more than boys' education, on seemingly remote political events that created setbacks for the development of girls' schools.¹²⁰ Finances were a recurrent argument that legitimated the slow development, and behind the economies more attitudinal aspects surfaced which included fears of the 'fanatic' Muslims. The cautious financial policy was also apparent in the interwar period, although the country had prospered after the First World War as confirmed by Holt and Daly.¹²¹ We saw above that the country's income increased, which also was seen in a greater demand for luxury goods. Economy was nevertheless a major argument for the

¹¹⁸ Reports of Agents' Department, Blue Nile Province, 1909, Education for girls, p. 223.

¹¹⁹ Reports of the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan, 1912, no. 1, p. 48.

¹²⁰ Above we saw that the slump in Egypt in 1907 resulted in the indefinitely postponement of the establishment of girls' schools.

¹²¹ Holt and Daly 1988, p. 129.

British administration to keep from supplying schools in accordance with the Northern Sudanese requests.

The Omdurman Girls' Training College - serious consideration of girls' education?

The difference after the war, compared to the first two decades of the Condominium, was that the government more and more acknowledged the positive Sudanese attitude towards girls' schools, and eventually seemed to recognise the importance of girls' education.¹²² The establishment of the Omdurman Girls' Training College may be seen in this positive context. The relative high quality in girls' schools in this period was largely due to the foundation of the training college for elementary schoolmistresses in 1921. The Omdurman Girls' Training College was supposed to provide more teachers and thus an increasing establishment of girls' elementary schools. The Training College consequently became the apex of girls' educational expansion for many years to come. The success of the training college was in large part due to the headmaster Miss J. Dorothy Evans' organising capacity and tireless devotion to girls' education.¹²³ The need for teachers was pressing and Miss Evans worked very hard in her effort of increasing the number of teacher students. The aim set for Miss Evans was to train a nucleus of schoolmistresses and introduce a practical and enlightened curriculum for them to follow. To be able to undergo this task she spent her first month after arrival in travelling and visiting the existing schools and the families of notables.¹²⁴ Miss Evans focused on giving the girls a practical training that might enable them to raise the standards of their home environments. She studied the local hobbies, crafts, folklore and moral values of the people in order to organise a suitable curriculum.¹²⁵ The milestone that the training college represented may come more into view when we consider British correspondent's comments that girls' education actually did not begin until 1920.126

¹²² NRO: Rep. 2/5/14: Reports by H.M. High Commissioner on the Finances, Administration and the Condition of the Egypt and the Sudan. 1914-1919, p. 132. "The attitude of the people towards girls' education has changed very much for the better, but want of funds and staff has prevented Government from availing itself of this change; the Government has five elementary girls' schools in the provinces, but the only higher girls' schools are managed by missionaries, English, American and Austrian".

¹²³ SAD: SudA PK 1528.9 EVA. "Education of the Sudanese girls", by J. D. Evans in *Overseas Education: a journal of educational experiment and research in tropical and subtropical areas*, vol. II, No. 1. October 1930. Miss Evans was a Welsh lady with a previous educational engagement in Egypt, and in November 1920 she arrived in the Sudan with an appointment to organise a system of elementary schools and teacher training for Muslim girls.

¹²⁴ SAD: SudA PK 1528.9 EVA.

¹²⁵ SAD: SudA PK 1528.9 EVA, p.28. For more details of the curriculum see SAD: 552/6/25: Table of the working periods at the Training College.

¹²⁶ SAD: 658/5/6: Beasley papers. 20.11.1953.

The Northern Sudanese appreciation of the Training College was hesitant in the first year but soon they saw the advantages as mentioned in the education departments' annual report from 1922, "there can be no doubt that the admirable training given at Omdurman [...] is warmly appreciated in the native community."127 The local prejudices apparently gave more and more way to interest in education for girls. The Sudanese urge for female education was steady rising, and a more active initiative was thus seen from both the missionary groups and especially private Northern Sudanese people.¹²⁸ The Northern Sudanese continued to accept the Church Missionary Schools as a choice for their daughters if they failed to gain entrance at a government school. The relationship between the missionaries and the Northern Sudanese did, however, start to deteriorate in the 1920s. Mohamed Nazir el-Seed says that the tragedy was that while an increasing number of Muslims wanted education for their daughters they did not want evangelisation, from which they feared that the missionaries could not restrain themselves.¹²⁹ Mohamed believes that what kept the schools going was the Sudanese urge for education. This ambivalent relationship was a give-and-take situation characterised by the mutual need for each other. The ambivalence with the missionaries in addition to the slow government provision triggered some progressive Northern Sudanese to found private schools already from the early 1920s. The Training College only provided one class for teacher training the first 15 years, and thus could not satisfy the 'excessive' demand.

Theoretical and practical acknowledgement?

The governmental efforts regarding the Training College were nevertheless optimistic and constructive, and one might suggest that the establishment of the teacher training college indicated that the government for the first time seriously considered girls' education. The government had already constituted a vast gap between boys and girls, and perhaps the time now had come to attempt in limiting this gap? A change was also seen in E. N. Corbyn's report from 1926. Corbyn said that theoretically there should have been as many girls' schools as boys' schools, and he acknowledged that numerous requests had been made for such, but he also emphasised the financial liabilities surrounding an increased backing of girls' education.¹³⁰ His positive approach to girls' education included a recognition of the vital importance of girls' education for the future, but it is interesting to note that his arguments

 ¹²⁷ NRO: Reports 1/9/32, Reports on the Finances, Administration and the Condition of the Sudan, 1922. p 44f.
 ¹²⁸ Sanderson 1961, p. 133.

¹²⁹ Mohamed 1969, p. 159.

¹³⁰ NRO: Finance 1/8/41: Educational Policy, Sudan Government 1923-.

only assert the male benefits from girls' education, 'Unless the young men of the future can find wives who will be real helpmates, every household will be divided against itself'.¹³¹ With an apparent attitude that acknowledged the significant value of female education one might suggest that a quantitative increase would be prioritised. The Governments educational progress was, however, reported as still being slow in the late 1920s, and the low priority was striking both in boys and girls' education.

	1925		1926		1933		1934	
	School	ls pupils	Schools	pupils	Sch.	pup.	Schoo	ols pupils
Gordon Memorial College	1	235	1	303	1	436	1	384
Boys' intermediate school	10	1101	10	1153	10	970	10	937
Boys' elementary school	94	7852	88	8196	91	9323	93	9978
Girls' training college	1	28	1	22	1	30	1	22
Girls' elementary school	8	397	10	555	22	2203	24	2715

Table 3.2. Number of Government schools and pupils between 1925-1934¹³²

In 1932 the educational commission The Winter Committee, headed by the Director of Education R. K. Winter, recognised the importance of girls' education and a steady advance was recommended. Again a seemingly positive recognition of the importance of girls' education, but as Mohamed Omer Beshir says, the committee report constitutes a contradiction, similar to what we may observe continuously in the government reports. Two other recommendations, which the committee made regarding girls' education made the first object difficult to achieve. They recommended the reduction in the number of students admitted to the Teacher's Training College in Omdurman, and also the abolition of the system of bonuses given to every teacher that completed four years of training.¹³³ Financial problems were the reason given for these latter recommendations, in addition to the argument that it was difficult to absorb all the trained teachers in the system.¹³⁴ These recommendations, given in the same report, represent a major contradiction and Beshir says that one explanation given to him by the Headmaster of the boys' teacher training college, Vincent L. Griffiths, was that the administration was a male dominated administration that only paid lip service to girls'

¹³¹ NRO: Finance 1/8/41: Educational Policy, Sudan Government 1924, section 7, p. 6.

 ¹³² This table is made by figures found in NRO: Reports 1/9/36. 1926, p. 171 and Reports 1/10/42. 1934, p. 68.
 ¹³³ The bonus was initially recommended and practised with great success to ensure that more girls continued their teacher career before they were married. For more details see Evans 1930.

¹³⁴ Beshir 1969, p. 100.

education, but forgot about it in practice and in the political execution. The administration was constantly looking for economies to be made and the axe fell on girls' education.¹³⁵ The observed recognition of girls' education, which distinguished the interwar period from the first two decades of British rule in the Sudan, was thus possibly only fine words with limited practical reality.

Supportive Northern Sudanese also declaimed recognition of female education. The educated Sudanese in favour of girls' education spared no efforts in their propaganda for girls' education. In addition to the poems, plays and songs created for the advancement of girls' education, were several Sudanese newspapers established that included women's issues in their newspapers.¹³⁶ Speeches were also made in favour of girls' education and Abd al-Rahman Ali Taha, who later became Director of Education, made a speech in 1926 where he praised the education of girls.¹³⁷ Ali Taha warned against the illiterate mother in regard to raising the children, and thus encouraged girls' to become educated especially to be better equipped in childrearing.¹³⁸ There were, however, not only fine words but also practicing of theory from the Northern Sudanese progressives. As the number of parents in favour of girls' education increased the number of private schools raised. In the annual reports of the Education Department the continuous change of attitudes among the Sudanese are acknowledged and the increasing demand is also reported of. "This demand comes from educated men, who now seek wives who can give them the order and cleanliness in their homes which they have been taught to appreciate".¹³⁹ The Education Department admitted in 1938 that the demand continued to increase and that the administration had not opened as many schools as there were applied for from Sudanese parents.

Hagga Kashif Badri says that the Sudanese women that already by the 1920s had gained some academic training also devoted themselves to help their uneducated sisters. These active women opened classes called 'Needlework homes'.¹⁴⁰ The girls were given training in various household arts like sewing, needlework, ornamentation, cooking and other household affairs as well. These 'homes' were spread in all towns, and with their start already

¹³⁵ Beshir 1969, p. 100. He refers to this as personal information from V. L. Griffiths.

¹³⁶ The *Al-Hadara* newspaper are mentioned as one of the first to tackle women's issues. Already in the early 1920 did this newspaper print poetry about women and education. In the 1930s more newspapers started dealing with this issue, and debates continued.

¹³⁷ ULK: Nageela 1994, part 2. pp. 276-285.

 ¹³⁸ Abdelrahman Ali Taha did for instance say that illiterate mothers don't know anything else than breast-feeding, and if the children are sick she usually yields to the traditional types of medicine that might bring severe consequences upon the child. For more details from this speech see: ULK: Nageela 1994, part 2. pp. 276-285.
 ¹³⁹ SAD: 552/6/24. Annual Report of the Education Department 1930/31.

¹⁴⁰ Badri 1986, p. 38 f.

in the 1920s the 'Needlework homes' gradually became more active and thus popular in the 1930s, and they may have reflected the desire many women had to join some sort of educational cycles.¹⁴¹ Girls that were trained at these centres were believed to become better housewives, and they therefore became popular among the educated men. Poems and songs from the period reflect the popularity of these 'homes'.¹⁴²

In addition to the governments more theoretical, and less practical recognition of girls' schools, however, it is obvious that in the interwar period the unstable political conditions constituted a major factor in reducing the educational supply. The Northern Sudanese graduates from the Gordon Memorial College and other progressives joined in clubs, salons, and societies where a sense of national consciousness emerged and was continually put on their agenda. Girls' education was, for instance, a frequent theme when the progressives met and declaimed poetry, songs, and occasional plays in the clubs and salons, an aspect that will be thoroughly discussed in chapter four.¹⁴³

Politics impeding - girls' education still take second place

The government had since the very start feared the influences from Egypt and the Egyptian nationalistic ideas, and their educational policy had thus been constructed to avoid the same scenery as in Egypt and India.¹⁴⁴ The tensions that had been building up since the Egyptian nationalistic revolution in 1919, which had resulted in a British imperative to minimize the Egyptian participation in the Sudan's administration, was relieved by the crisis in 1924. Political developments in the Sudan were reflected in deteriorating Anglo-Egyptian relations, and when the new Egyptian constitution, framed in 1923, referred to the king of Egypt as sovereign of the Sudan, then the British intervened, and for the first time in Anglo-Egyptian relations, the Sudan government played a decisive part. The governor-general of the Sudan, Sir Lee Stack, did everything to prevent a continued Egyptian role in the Sudan administration. The Northern Sudanese graduates consequently entered the streets and in the summer of 1924 there occurred anti-British demonstrations with 'alarming frequency and increasing seriousness'.¹⁴⁵ The British feared compromise with the Egyptians and Stack said

¹⁴¹ ULK: Badri, H. K. 1986, p. 39.

¹⁴² Ahmed Mohamed El Sheikh composed for instance the romantic poem and song "Sameeri" where he mentions the "Needlework homes". See the collection of poems by Ahmed Mohamed El-Sheikh gathered and published in 1998: *Andaleb El-Gagrew*, pp. 43-45. Merowe for publishing and distribution.
¹⁴³ See Sharkey 1998 and Najila 1994.

¹⁴⁴ Warburg 1971, p. 19ff.

¹⁴⁵ Holt and Daly 1988, p. 134.

that what they needed was an excuse for drastic action.¹⁴⁶ In November 1924 the excuse was provided when the governor-general Sir Lee Stack was murdered in Cairo. A period of reaction was ahead of the Sudanese, and the British forcibly removed all the Egyptian troops and Egyptian civilian officials, including the teachers. The government now tried to fully implement a system of Indirect Rule. It was considered an antidote to the growing power of religious leaders, especially that of Sayyid Abd al-Rahman, who became a strong supporter for modern education for girls and boys. Indirect Rule was, however, also a reaction against the 'effendi class', whom the British disliked, and they believed the effendi class to be designed by the 'mistrusted' Egyptians. With all the Egyptians out of the country the British sought to make the Indirect Rule function, which required tribal cohesion and a strong tribal leadership. The education system was severely affected since the British attempted to avoid a continued advance of the nationalist tendencies, and both boys' and girls' education suffered under these political circumstances.

The governor-generalship of Sir Stewart Symes, 1934-1940, brought, however, a reversal of the Indirect Rule policy. Under his governor-generalship a new urgency was seen in the educational development, but again girls' education suffered under low priority, to such an extent that an educational commission reported the disturbing status of girls' education in the Northern Sudan in 1937. The Lord De La Warr's Educational Commission thus recommended an expansion of girls' education at all levels.¹⁴⁷ In the report the demand for girls' education was emphasised as urgent and pressing, "As one of them (Sudanese) expressed it: "with the educated Sudanese the gap is becoming unbridgeable between the two halves forming the pillars of the home life".¹⁴⁸ The commission did, however, only mention girls' education briefly, after dwelling on the progress to be made in boys' education. Priority was given to the provision of more boys' schools and an upgrading of the Gordon College. This procrastination was regrettable particularly because the attitude of public opinion had changed very much the last years towards girls' schools even at higher levels. This is a fact recognised by Lillian Sanderson, and she says that even in some rural districts were parents keen to send their daughters to school.¹⁴⁹ The rather dilatory policy and the arguments stated in favour of the hesitating policy claimed that they feared public hostility if they interfered with the traditions of the country. The Government therefore pursued a 'safe' policy,

¹⁴⁶ Holt and Daly 1988, p. 134.

¹⁴⁷ NRO: civsec 17/3/13 Lord De La Warr's Educational Commission 1937.

¹⁴⁸ NRO: civsec 17/3/13, chapter 2: girls' education.

¹⁴⁹ Sanderson 1961, p. 137.

concerned with what they considered the right kind of education for girls - education that emphasised domesticity and aimed at fostering home and village activities.

In spite of the successful establishment of girls' Teacher Training College and the elementary schools opened in the wake of it, girls' education was as we have seen continuously given less preference than the public demand indicated. The Training College, which appeared to be the first serious acknowledgement of girls' education suffered under low governmental priority due to finances and politics. Throughout the British rule girls' education had to take second place, and slowly expanding elementary schools was until 1940 the only educational outlet for a Sudanese girl, however promising.

In the late thirties and early forties when the development could have been speeded up, it was delayed again because of the general attitude of some British officials - the attitude that education for girls was only of secondary importance.¹⁵⁰ A chance was lost of pressing ahead with girls' education under skilled British teachers at a time of comparative political stability. The demand for girls' schools, even at higher levels, became explosive after the war.¹⁵¹ The supply of both schools and teachers provided for by the Government did not at all correspond with the demand, a fact felt by both British officials and the Sudanese parents. Michael Legge, who joined the Education Department in 1937 as Master of Rural Studies, wondered about the Sudanese enthusiasm for education and he admitted that the demand for education was spreading faster than the supply.¹⁵² A Sudanese official commented the situation, "I have eight children and of course I want them to get no less [than Secondary education]. But what do I find? Only two of the boys and one of the girls has got into a Secondary school".¹⁵³ The main problem for Sudanese parents was that the number of applicants greatly exceeded the number of available places in the various schools. The lack of teachers and thus the low number of schools also frustrated the parents in regard with the distances their children had to walk to be able to attend the nearest school. Some parents worried about their young children that had to walk several miles to join an elementary school, and consequently some of them preferred to keep their children at home.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Sanderson, Lillian 1963, p. 121.

¹⁵¹ NRO: Reports 1/11/51: Reports on the Administration of the Sudan. 1945. paragraph 340: "The popular demand for girls' education is constantly growing and the request from the provinces for new government schools are far in excess of the number which can be provided in the immediate future. Further evidence of this demand is provided by the opening of private schools at Sinkat, Atbara, Port Sudan, Ashkeit, Mahala, Khartoum, Khartoum North and Omdurman".

¹⁵² Legge, M: "Education in the Northern Sudan", in Geographical Magazine, vol. 25, 1953, pp. 542-552. London: IPC Magazines. ¹⁵³ Legge 1953, p. 543.

¹⁵⁴ See the example of Mustafa Ibrahim in Legge 1953.

The staffing problems were attempted reduced by recruiting British teachers from England in 1944. Some of the British staff was, however, incapable of teaching the young Sudanese women. These poor circumstances agitated some of the girls that eventually had been able to attend a government Secondary school, and thus in 1949 a demonstration was organised by the girls in the third secondary school batch. The woman pioneer, Hagga Kashif Badri, said that her class was the first girls' class to organise a strike in a girls' school.¹⁵⁵ The strike was against having the British teachers, and Hagga Kashif stressed that this was not because they were British, but because they were not qualified. Most of them were the wives of the administrators, and they were usually only intermediate graduates or only elementary graduates. Hagga Kashif complained that the British teachers used to come and do nothing, which became a problem for the young girls eager to go ahead with their education. Most of the British staff were just sitting and chatting, while the girls used to comb their hair and play with them.

"And you know, we go at night, we didn't sleep, we get the books from the boys, from the Ahliyya schools. We go and see the curricula for the Cambridge or Oxford certificate, and we brought the books and curricula and we studied ourselves. We sit in a group and study. But in the class we play with them and they don't know anything. With the exception of one, I remember, Mrs. Reed, she was a teacher of history, and she was the only one who had qualifications and education, university qualifications".¹⁵⁶

A government Intermediate school did not start until 1940, in 1945 a secondary class started, and thus at Independence in 1956 only 52 girls attended the University of Khartoum, as compared to 1164 male students.¹⁵⁷ The Intermediate School in Omdurman received 40 appliances for thirty available places, but by 1944 the number of applicants for 30 places had risen to 150.¹⁵⁸ It was an inordinately long interval to wait thirty years regarding the demand for higher education that continuously increased. The British administration fully realised that

¹⁵⁵ Hagga Kashif Badri: Interview 290100, in Omdurman, Sudan. Hagga Kashif Badri completed her elementary, intermediate and secondary education in Omdurman and graduated from Khartoum University College in 1956. She is one of the pioneer activist women in the Sudan, and joined in political activities when she was in secondary school. She is one of the founding members of the Sudan Women's Union in 1952 and during her career she has held many different posts and written several articles and books about women studies. She is now a teacher at Ahfad Women College in Omdurman.

¹⁵⁶ Hagga Kashif Badri: Interview 290100, in Omdurman, Sudan.

¹⁵⁷ Sanderson, Lillian 1963, p.120

¹⁵⁸ NRO: Dep. Rep. 6/2/15: proposals for the expansion and improvement of the education system in the Northern Provinces, 1949-1956, p. 7.

the providing of post-elementary education for girls might lead to the next step of education, secondary schools, and consequently a fuller emancipation and participation in all aspects of life might become inevitable. The demand for secondary education was, however, still rather small in 1940, but considering the general attitudes towards girls' education the government should have been able to calculate a coming demand at this level as well.¹⁵⁹ Ina Beasley, the Controller of Girls' Education, 1942-1949, reported to the government that the moment was fitting for annunciating "broad and clear principles, which should determine the orientation of a long term policy".¹⁶⁰ Although it was late her efforts ought to be recognised as the first sign of a government plan being formulated for the development of girls' education. Dr. Ina Beasley devoted herself to the cause of girls' education in the Sudan, and her efforts and reports on girls further educational development identified important issues that somewhat pushed the Education Department to action, but Dr. Ina Beasley had regrettably to see girls' education take second place throughout her stay in the Sudan.¹⁶¹

Summary

The administrative awareness of the Northern Sudanese demand were reported and documented, as seen above, and Sanderson's question, introduced above, of why so many Muslim girls attended the Catholic schools may therefore be answered at this point: The Northern Sudanese population were not a homogenous group that altogether opposed girls' education, as is the impression one has after reading much of the secondary literature, but the Northern Sudanese rather consisted of different groups representing a diversity in thought and accomplishment where some actively supported girls' education. This chapter shows that the supporters were visible and they produced a demand for girls' schools even in the early years of the Condominium, identified by attendance in missionary schools and an active request for increased access to secular government girls' schools. We have also heard that private schools were established and that girls' education was a frequent issue at nationalist meetings, and the support for such was declaimed in various forums with various styles. The supporters' arguments to a large degree focused on the preservation of traditions through modern education in that their girls' would become better wives and mothers and thus secure the Sudanese family base. The most obvious evidence that the government and education

¹⁵⁹ SAD: 657/1/53: Beasley papers, Note on girls' elementary education in the Sudan, December 1940. "The fact that the education of girls is now more or less accepted anywhere in the Sudan as a theory, however much local enthusiasm may vary in practice, must rank as a definite achievement but is nevertheless simply a foundation". ¹⁶⁰ SAD: 657/1/53. Beasley papers, Note on girls' elementary education in the Sudan, December 1940.

¹⁶¹ Beasley 1992.

department recognised these requests for girls' schools are found in their own reports and official documents.

The interesting aspect is, however, that the theoretical acknowledgement is not in correspondence with the executed policies and the government's practical reality. Finances were the most recurring argument for the continuously delayed and 'indefinitely postponed' development, but we have also seen that the government's hesitation has been explained by pushing the responsibility over to the Northern Sudanese. Muslim traditions and customs have been employed as explanations, and Lillian Sanderson's conclusion may here serve as representative to much of the earlier literature: the overriding aim of the government was administrative security, and the Sudan was a fanatical country. Interference with the customs might therefore have led to sedition, in British opinion.¹⁶²

The language discourse employed by the British, especially during the first two decades, is revealed as overwhelmed with negative connotations that perhaps suggest a bias and prejudice towards the Sudanese even before the re-conquest. This bias further seemed to be instrumental in their explanation of the slow development, as we have seen from the Sanderson example. The Sudan Political Service's attitude to the Sudanese was also characterised by paternalism rather than tutelage, and Wingate actually believed that he was in a better position than the Sudanese to know what was best for them. It may therefore be appropriate to repeat Holt and Daly's observation: "A feeling on the part of some British officials that 'over-education' posed a greater threat to the country than did no education at all".¹⁶³ Warburg argues that this attitude manifested itself in the British attempted penetration of the Egyptian nationalists, who was regarded not only evil, but as contrary to the better aspirations of the Sudanese.¹⁶⁴

The Sudan Political Service was, as we have seen, composed of British men, who held a very intellectual and uniform approach to the educational policy. The education department thus showed reluctance to progress and change that consequently affected both girls and boys' education, but most markedly the female schooling as this part was not yet developed much. We might therefore suggest that the earlier literature that stresses the Sudanese traditions and customs as the greatest impediments for the development of girls' education may be refuted through a thorough investigation of the various source materials. If one only relies on the written words in the annual reports it is understandable that one come

¹⁶² Sanderson 1963, p. 121.

¹⁶³ Holt and Daly 1988, p. 124.

¹⁶⁴ Warburg 1971, p. 188.

up with the conclusion that the British administration attempted a development of girls' education in correspondence with the Sudanese desires. If one, on the other hand, study the reports more critically in connection with each other and in relation to the missionary sources, and most significantly, in correspondence with the executed policies, the picture will change. The suggested conformity and paternalism in the Sudan Political Service was thus arguably reflected in their educational policy that consequently affected the development of girls' education in the Northern Sudan, and the conclusion thus argue that an insufficient supply impeded girls' educational development in the Northern Sudan more than the Sudanese traditions and limited demand.

The result was that at the day of independence only 4.4 percent of the Sudanese women were literate, as compared to 23.1 percent literacy among men.¹⁶⁵ Problems that the boys had encountered thirty years earlier in a period of comparative stability faced the girls at a time of rapid change and national instability. The motivation behind the British policy may therefore be addressed, and indications should be made as to what was behind the arguments of financial stringency and caution in regard to Sudanese traditions, why was it apparently only in the words that girls' education was recognised? Will we find the recruitment of officials as significant in this regard? It will also be interesting to examine the motivation behind the progressive Northern Sudanese's demand for girls' education, and by such intentional studies of both the British and Northern Sudanese progressive actors we might be able to more fully understand the forces behind female education.

The propagative horithms Suddeeve men employed a rheionic suited to persuade parents to send their children in school, and simultaneously preserving the traditional values in the Sudan A denir horitevite and a better montor were emploated in addition to the agentican argument of an educated girls' increased merrage value. A language was construed that included symbols and representations forming specific belief systems. Specific terms carried a outlan memory and thus wielded power and played a sple in shaping the dynamics of policy and ection. Marianne Bloch, professor in the Department of Carronism and Manmation in Workman, spin and the belief systems, or donor at she calls it has played a central tole in diapsing the caluestonal policy for women in

¹⁶⁵ NRO: Dep. Rep. 6/3/32: Literacy and illiteracy in the Sudan, educational statistics 1956.

Chapter 4

Unveiling the Demand and Supply

1. Basis of analysis

In the previous chapter we saw indications of a certain language employed by the British in the Sudan in the implementation of a political and cultural domination. What is striking in the British administration's writing and rhetoric is their descriptions of 'the fanatic Muslims', as well as the stereotypes about the 'Sudanese'.¹ The only direct contact the British had with the Northern Sudanese was that with the religious leaders and notables, in addition to with their servants.² In the absence of social relations with other parts of the indigenous population, the colonial subject was reduced to a conceptual category, an object emptied of all personal identity to accommodate the knowledge already established and being circulated about the 'native Sudanese'. The strategies of British administrators were all part of an unstable foundation of knowledge, which included their firmly based stereotypes 'confirmed' through the British approval of the Northern Sudanese orthodoxy.

The British seemed to support the religious leaders and other conservative elements in the Northern Sudan, who were connected to values similar to the stereotypes employed. We may ask why the British didn't use the more progressive discourse of the Northern Sudanese intelligentsia, who promoted and requested female education.

Parts of the educated elite in the Northern Sudan, mostly effendis but also some traditionally educated men, challenged the colonial rulers in regard to the educational policy. The progressive Northern Sudanese men employed a rhetoric suited to persuade parents to send their children to school, and simultaneously preserving the traditional values in the Sudan. A *better* housewife and a *better* mother were emphasized in addition to the significant argument of an educated girls' increased marriage value.³

A language was construed that included symbols and representations forming specific belief systems. Specific terms carried a certain meaning and thus wielded power and played a role in shaping the dynamics of policy and action. Marianne Bloch, professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in Wisconsin, says that the belief systems, or *doxas* as she calls it, has played a central role in shaping the educational policy for women in

² Warburg, G 1971: p. 92ff.

³ Beasley 1992, Bedri 1980.

¹ Said, Edward W. 1993: *Culture and Imperialism*. London. Also see Warburg, G 1971: p. 92ff. *The Sudan under Wingate*. London. The British officials regarded the Sudanese incompetent and backward in addition to fanatical.

Africa.⁴ Her approach suggests that language discourses shape social life, and although we may argue that several factors shape social life in addition to the language discourses, we may nevertheless accept Bloch's reasoning that language, as a social indicator thus form the educational development as well. The terms 'Sudanese', 'women', and 'education' carried entire constellations of assumptions, the British officials formed their belief system and the Northern Sudanese progressives another. We saw above, in chapter three, that the discourse in control during the first two decades of the Condominium was no doubt the British officials' as the demand from the Northern Sudanese were not satisfied. The British regarded 'the Sudanese' as prone to fanaticism, and 'Sudanese women' were subjects of no economic value, and because of their traditional position in the domestic sphere they were regarded only as symbols of the Sudanese mores, which were believed to be the basis of fanaticism.⁵ 'Education' was supposed to provide inexpensive clerks to the government bureaucracy and thus promote secular education as an antidote to the 'fanaticism' and 'ignorance' that the Koranic schools were believed to foster.⁶ Female education did not fit in this belief system, and consequently girls' lagged far behind boys already from the start.

The Northern Sudanese progressives who constituted only a minority in the Sudanese community employed a different *doxa*. 'Education' for women was believed to be important in improving the traditional values in the society, especially the family values. 'Women' were symbols of the backwardness in the society and thus needed training to balance this in the process of modernization that motivated and influenced the intelligentsia. The Northern Sudanese who demanded education for girls were, however, in a less powerful position as a minority.

This thesis argues that girls' education was affected by the actors' rhetoric 'reality' and belief systems that resulted in a slow development and an immediate and increasing gap between girls and boys. The main emphasis in this chapter will thus be to examine the rhetoric used on both the British and the Northern Sudanese side with the aim of unveiling the demand for and supply of girls' education. What were the motives and intentions behind the attempt of shaping the educational policy through a certain rhetoric and cultural discourse? A language theory has already been indicated with Bloch's approach to education through the notion that language shapes social life and thus the female educational development. Other theories of language and culture will be employed, like Edward Said's *Orientalism*, and it will

⁴ Bloch, M., Beoku-Betts, J. A. and Tabachnick, B. R. (eds.) 1998: Women and Education in Sub-Saharan Africa, chapter 1, Boulder London.

⁵ Bedri 1980: p. 41 in the "Introduction" by G. N. Sanderson.

⁶ Bedri 1980: p. 39 in the "Introduction" by G. N. Sanderson.

also be most useful to employ Geert Hofstede's theory of *cultural manifestation*.⁷ Michel Foucault's notion of discourse as a form of power provides the basis that motivates for further analysis.⁸

An analysis beyond the established demand – supply gap will follow where rhetoric on the two sides will be discussed. How did the actors express their policies and attitudes, what can we find if we go beneath the words of request and provision? This thesis suggests that the specific language was construed and employed to hide motivations and attitudes that suited the male actors' interests primarily, not necessarily the Sudanese women. The issue of girls' education was employed to suit actors' interests and the language provided a vehicle to do so.

2. Beneath the progressive Northern Sudanese discourse

The significance of oral poetry as a social force has been especially great in non-literate or low-literacy societies, and the tradition of reciting poems goes far back in the Arabic speaking countries. Oral poems provided a vehicle for religious devotion, public censure and ridicule, and proved significant for its mnemonic functions as well, for the preservation of historical memory. The rise of the press transformed the social roles of the literati who contributed to the newspapers, and with the printing possibilities the ornate style of the poems changed toward greater simplicity in structure and wording and the poetry thus became more accessible to a broader section of the population, that is, as wide a reading public as the low literacy rates of the Arab world allowed.⁹ The contributors of poems to the newspapers, who for the most part were highly educated urban men, mostly Gordon College graduates but also shaykhs, became involved in poetry through leisure time activities that enriched their workaday lives. The educated urban literati took on a new role through literature as social reformers, and in the Northern Sudan, as in the rest of the Arabic speaking world, poets came to champion social issues. According to Heather Sharkey the poets also felt a responsibility to guide society forward, and verses were composed that included a variety of social, political and often modernising issues. Dams, railway lines, airplanes and electric light were among the issues praised by the poets, who demanded more of the same technology. Girls' education was an issue that appeared frequently in poetic verses, where they stressed the importance of

⁷ Said, E. W. 1978: Orientalism, Said, E. W. 1993: Culture and Imperialism, Hofstede, G. 1991: Cultures and Organizations. McGraw-Hill Book Company

⁸ Foucaoult, M. 1972. The Archeology of Knowledge. Routledge.

⁹ Sharkey 1998: p. 296ff. In 1899 the British brought the first moveable-type press to the Sudan for the purpose of printing administrative documents, it was not until 1903, however, that the first commercial press arrived and thereby enabled the emergence of a culture for printing.

having educated wives and mothers. The schoolteacher and poet Shaykh Abd Allah Muhammad Umar al-Banna (1890-1985), was among those poets who praised girls' education.¹⁰

There appeared a very sweet girl, skinny and shy When she talks she captivates the brain Her hair is like a dark night, without any star Her face is as shining as the sun She is like the happiness; easy to say but difficult to attain She is like the virtue; easy to see in others but difficult to attain¹¹

The verse above introduced a poem chanted by al-Banna in 1920 in an Omdurman school where British officials and the Sudanese intelligentsia were present to view the evening's theatrical event. He describes an educated girl, stressing her positive qualities and virtues, and already in his third verse he continues by scolding the illiterate woman:

Avoid the illiterate woman because illiteracy destroys the country Their neighbours are always scared of what they say Their husbands are always threatened with poverty Their religion is incorrect and their children are lost

It was believed that girls' education, which was opposed by some sections in the society, needed a vocal and strong criticism of the illiterate mother to show how un-wise such women were. Following Al-Banna's criticism of the illiterate woman he painted a rosy picture of the educated woman, which, according to Hasan Najila, aimed to convince people to educate their daughters.¹²:

Choose the educated woman because angels choose them They are pious and perfect, just perfect They are honest, honourable, and virtuous Children grow up in their passionate selves Children get educated and through education children become brave

¹⁰ Hasan Najila 1994. Sharkey 1998. Other praise poems of girls' education included for instance verses by Mahmud Effendi Anis (1893-1956), the educator Babikr Bedri (1861-1954), and Shaykh Muddathir al-Bushi (1902-1983).

¹¹ Hasan Najila 1994: Malamih min al-Mugtama'a al-Sudani (Features from Sudanese society), pp. 87-97.

Khartoum House for Printing and Press.

¹² Hasan Najila 1994, pp. 87-97.

Addressing social and political issues declaimed at public meetings, the poetry, which has been called 'platform poetry', made deep marks.¹³ The poems were chanted, declaimed, and discussed in literary salons that emerged from the early 1920s, in clubs, formal meetings, and in other groups and societies. Heather Sharkey says that historians writing in English usually have missed the cue that these Arabic writings may serve as an index of social accomplishment and power.¹⁴ History and poetry have coexisted in the Arabic language scholarship, which has recognised the historical importance of poetry as a medium for transmitting ideas on political and social relations. Poetry may therefore not only serve as a source of history, but also as a force of history.

The poems and other literary works composed by the contemporary intellectuals have been saved for posterity in printed journals and periodicals, and the new newspapers and periodicals that rose as the publishing press appeared became a frequently used forum to address and request girls' education. The three major periodicals in the Sudan before 1930, namely *al-Sudan*, *Ra'id al-Sudan*, and *Hadarat al-Sudan*, had lavished attention on poetry in addition to news, since poetry was so important and popular as a medium of expression. The two path-breaking literary journals in the early 1930s *al-Nahda* (The Awakening) and *al-Fajr* (the Dawn) were both noteworthy from a literary perspective, but by this time, not only for their poetry, but also for their patronage of the short-story, the play and the essays – all new prose forms in the Sudan, and vehicles for political debate and expression.¹⁵

Articles on female issues like girls' education, marriage and womanhood appeared frequently in *al-Nahda*, and already in its first issue "Hamdi" (a pseudonym) declared that, 'Woman is half of life! The education of woman is like the education of man; both are a sacred duty'.¹⁶ A great range of opinions was revealed in the stream of articles that responded to "Hamdis's" article. The young educated Northern Sudanese agreed on the merits of 'modernity', which connoted the new, the positive and the 'western', and they embraced the new technology, literature, entertainment, and clothing.¹⁷ The same group was, however, diverse insofar as women were concerned. A few radicals, as 'Hamdi', argued for the full emancipation of women, and some hardliners rejected the 'western' model of womanhood altogether and included girls' education in their total rejection. The majority, however,

¹³ Cachia, Pierre: "Tradition, Imitation and Originality in Poetry", in An Overview of Modern Arabic Literature, Edinburgh 1990, pp. 179-200.

¹⁴ Sharkey 1998: p. 29.

¹⁵ Sharkey 1998, p. 301.

¹⁶ Sharkey 1998, p. 351.

¹⁷ Sharkey 1998, p. 331.

supported and requested the expansion of some formal education for girls. They urged a middle ground between the total transformation of the Northern Sudanese woman and the rather stagnant continuity of 'tradition'.

Fears are reflected in the newspaper articles that relating to the question of whether it was possible to find happiness with an illiterate and uneducated wife, and there was also expressed a fear that the young educated men would prefer to marry foreign women. A constellation of essays emerged from these debates and discussion that called for the education of girls to produce better wives and mothers, as preferred by the majority of the intelligentsia. Heather Sharkey has studied *al-Nahda* and has extracted and translated some pieces into English from the early 1930s¹⁸:

"The editor asks us to think about the man, his education and culture, and the arousal of nationalist sentiment within him. But I would like to ask: how do we accomplish all that if our most important half is paralysed (*mathlul*)? I do not think that the woman ought to be far from our thinking. []. How do we secure the progress of the man if his mother does not participate in his instruction, and his sister does not steer him and his neighbour woman does not guide him and his wife does not support him?

The writers in al-Nahda and participants in other available forums evidently became occupied with the woman question in their social and political engagements:

We are not calling today for unveiling nor do we speak of the mixing of the sexes. Rather, we call for the education of the woman and we wish to declare that her education at the present time is lacking. []. How can you want to live with a wife who is illiterate or little better than that? We do not understand you...¹⁹

In 1926 the Omdurman Graduates Club sponsored an essay competition, which Hasan Najila describes at length in his *Malamih min al-Mugtama'a al-Sudani* as a proof of the intellectual dexterity and modernity of the educated.²⁰ The first Sudanese Minister of Education, Abd al-Rahman Ali Taha, was among the contributors in the social debates of the early twenties, and he contributed in 1926 with the winning essay, in which he followed the same lines as most of his contemporary educated men, discussing issues of raising children

¹⁸ Sharkey 1998, p. 355. The extract is part of an essay by 'Abd Allah Umar Shama in *al-Nahda*, vol. 1, No. 15, January 1, 1932, p. 10.

¹⁹ Sharkey 1998, p. 355. Taken from the same essay as referred to above in *al-Nahda*, vol. 1, No. 15, January 1, 1932, p. 10.

²⁰ Hasan Najila 1994

and the responsibility of parents, especially the mother's responsibility. In addition Ali Taha criticized women's laziness and illiteracy, referring to the importance of songs composed as guides to help women attain a better life. He also urged singers and composers to continue stressing these aspects in their lyrics.

What is the use of woman if she is not an economiser in living and in sincerity What is the use of rosy cheeks if our children are not taken care of What is the use of her if children are just left to play around and engage in evil and bad deeds Do not love a lazy woman who sees as difficult going up the stairs! Love the active and catering woman Love the beauty but do not seek it in an illiterate woman who do not know how to speak or raise children²¹

The play was also a social and political medium of expression, and this genre was for instance employed to show how educated girls' increased their marriage value. Michael Legge, the Master of Rural Studies at Boys' Elementary Teacher Training College, was amazed of the fact that the demand for education for girls' had grown quicker than their emancipation at other levels. He believed one of the causes was found in a play he saw acted in a village.²²

The disgruntled father: "Was ever anyone so unlucky as me? No son at all, but *five daughters*! What have I done to deserve this? How on earth will I ever get them married?"

Enter another villager: "Cheer up – things are not so bad as all that. Why – a girls' school is opening here: send them there and all your troubles will vanish. For they will learn sewing, cooking, hygiene..."

The play ended in a triumph for the girls' school, since the father, with his girls' all educated, was besieged with a rush of people seeking them in marriage.

The bourgeois intelligentsia in the Northern Sudan frequently discussed and demanded girls' education, especially after the First World War, and we saw that the mediums of expression revealed a variety that included both oral and written poetry, songs and plays,

²¹ Najila, Hasan 1994. Part II, p. 276-285.

²² Legge, Michael. "Education in the Northern Sudan", in *The Geographical Magazine*, vol. 25, 1953. p. 552. London.

essays, lectures, newspapers articles and debates. The rhetoric that was employed from the 1920s and onwards was the same as was employed by the minor elite of intellectuals at the commencement of the Condominium and the arguments stressed the importance of family values where the woman stands out as the key to secure the family. We recognize Babikr Bedri's arguments and rhetoric from the early days of the Condominium, who also employed oral poetry as a medium of expression to persuade parents to send their daughters to school. The early intelligentsia that were 'produced' in the Gordon Memorial College, also used the same language when requesting girls' schools either by direct confrontations with the British administration or as arguments when initiating attendance to their privately opened girls' schools.

In order to examine the motivation beneath the Northern Sudanese progressive's discourse it might be useful to employ Geert Hofstede's theory of cultural manifestation to illustrate various depths and levels of culture.²³ He says that symbols represent the most superficial recognition of a culture, and values the most in depth manifestation, with heroes and rituals in between. In Hofstede's model symbols are recognized as for instance in words, terms, gestures and pictures that carry a certain meaning. Symbols from one cultural group are frequently copied by another, which is why symbols are claimed the most superficial level of culture. Heroes are persons possessing virtues that are highly respected in a culture and these heroes thus serve as models of behavior. The rituals, in Hofstede's model, are collective activities that are considered socially essential in a culture, like greeting rituals and various types of ceremonies. Finally the values are considered the core of culture, and Hofstede says that the values manifested are "broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over other".²⁴

When the Northern Sudanese intelligentsia declaimed the significance of better wives and better mothers, they simultaneously attempted to manifest Northern Sudanese core values, the family values. Using Hofstede's model we might suggest that the language discourse and the terms included in the discourse, like 'woman' and 'education' form the symbols of the Northern Sudanese culture as manifested by the progressives. Terms like 'woman' and 'education' carried certain meanings, which also link us to M. Bloch's theory of *doxas*, or belief systems that arguably shape our social life. The Sudanese progressives included a special meaning, suited for the Northern Sudanese intelligentsia, in the common term 'woman', embracing both the modern and the traditional, and women thus became a

²³ Hofstede, Geert 1991: Cultures and Organization. McGraw-Hill Book Company, London.

²⁴ Hofstede 1991, p. 8.

symbol of the family, the nation and therefore the Northern Sudanese culture. The term woman was, however, ambiguous, and it was distinguished between an educated woman and an illiterate woman. The educated Sudanese women became the ideal, the model of behavior that protected the most important institution and thus core value in the Arabic Northern Sudan: the family. We might suggest that the educated woman became a *hero*, in Hofstede's model, as the key to secure the family and further the nation. Educated women were described in grand expressions in the poetry and essays as "pious and perfect" and "honest" and "honorable", while illiterate women were scolded by negative allegation of destroying the country.²⁵ The 'diagnosis' of the family and the nation was therefore measured by the level of women, literate or illiterate, where the illiterate women signaled a backward nation, a view the Northern Sudanese educated men reported to Lord De La Warr's Educational Commission in 1937, "There appears to be little doubt that the inadequacy of women's education is one of the main causes of backwardness in the Sudan"²⁶.

The desirable and the desired

We must, however, go further into the discourse employed by the male progressives in the attempt to reveal the motivation and intention behind the rhetoric used. Settling with a manifestation of Northern Sudanese 'national' core values and the female significance in these, as described by the intelligentsia, will merely leave us on the surface, and we must therefore examine the discourse and statements made by the intelligentsia about their values. Hofstede stresses the importance of systematic research on values and thus distinguishing between the *desirable* and the *desired*.²⁷ The *desirable* is characterized by how people think the world *ought* to be, versus the *desired*, what people *want* for themselves. Employing this theory to the Northern Sudanese intelligentsia means distinguishing between the desirable that represent the Northern Sudanese progressives' theoretical views and belief systems about virtuous values and Sudanese culture, while the desired must be related to the individual's practice within the same culture, their actual behavior when they have to choose, including their less virtuous desires and behaviors. In short the desirable relates more to ideology while the desired relates to practical matters.

It is necessary to try to grasp the intelligentsia at these two different levels in order to interpret the intelligentsia's statements about Northern Sudanese values, as expressed in both

²⁵ See the verse extractions of the poem by al-Banna above from 1920.

²⁶ NRO: civsec 17/3/13 Lord De la Warr's Educational Commission 1937. Chapter 2 p. 13. Girls' education.

²⁷ Hofstede 1991, p. 10.

lyrical and academic genres and illustrated through the demand for girls' education. How did they choose when confronted, in their homes, regarding the question of a daughters' schooling in relation to traditional customs? Was there a conflict between the aspects of the modern and the traditional: between statements and expressed values supporting girls' education and the individual reality surrounding these values?

This study reveals that contradictions sometimes become visible between the *desirable* and the *desired*: The pioneer woman Nafisa Ahmed el-Amin²⁸ reveals that it was not uncommon that girls were withdrawn from school if a suitable 'husband-material' appeared, even though the girls had only just learned to appreciate the school-life.²⁹ She says that this happened even among educated families. The youngest daughter of Abd al-Rahman Ali Taha, confirms this with an example from her own home. Ali Taha's daughter, Fadwa, a historian at the University of Khartoum, said that her father retracted her sister from school, "My father was the first Sudanese minister of education, but my sister Alawiya [?] was in Omdurman secondary school, but she was married at 16 because a good man appeared".³⁰ In the novel *A Black Vanguard*, Edward Atiyah, a former GMC teacher, stressed a similar scene. An Oxford educated Sudanese was married without his own knowledge or presence, after arrangements prepared by his father.³¹ The traditions and customs undoubtedly played a prominent role in the Northern Sudan, and thus sometimes led to a contradiction between the educated elite's stated and practiced values.

A distinct feature thus becomes visible: The prevailing patriarchy in the Sudanese society and the traditional position of women as non-existent as individual persons, but only as mother and wife in the institution of the family. Ina Beasley, the controller of girls' education in the 1940s, reflects upon this and claims that women only contained a transitory importance in so far as it had a bearing upon the lives of their men.³² She refers to the withdrawal of girls' to get married as a common problem, but eventually the problem decreased.

³² Beasley 1992, p. 392.

²⁸ Nafisa Ahmed el-Amin received her primary education in Omdurman and obtained her secondary certificate from London University. She was one of the founders of the Sudan Women's Union, she wrote articles about women and their problems and was very active in preparing broadcasting and television programmes. She has remained active and became deputy Minister of Youth in 1971. Today she works at the Ahfad women university in Omdurman.

²⁹ Interview with Nafisa Ahmed el-Amin, 29/01/00 in her home in Khartoum North.

³⁰ Personal communication with Fadwa Abd al Rahman Ali Taha in Khartoum North and Khartoum in January 2000.

³¹ Atiyah, Edward: A Black Vanguard.

In the early days of the Condominium, when educational initiatives came from the missionaries and a few prominent religiously and secularly educated Sudanese men, it was very common to withdraw their daughters from school at an early age for marriage causes. Sara Bedri, one of Babikr Bedri's daughters, said that, "I still remember that painful day when I terminated my studies to get married and I was only 13 years old".³³ Another early, educated woman, Aisha Mohamed Ahmed Fadl, whose father was a teacher, stresses that her father was very keen to educate all his children despite opposition from their relatives. She was planning to finish her education, but says, "as usual marriage disrupted me and I had to discontinue my education, and that was in 1918".³⁴

Eventually, as mentioned by Beasley, the withdrawal of girls from schools was reduced in proportion. The marriage age was increased by law and in the 1940s and 50s marriage was no longer necessarily synonymous with a discontinued education. The examples do, however show that there appeared a disparity between the desirable and the desired among the Northern Sudanese intelligentsia. This disparity might be linked to the point made by Hofstede, that the symbols, i.e. words, terms and their meanings, that constitute the most superficial level in a cultural manifestation, were regularly copied from one cultural group to another. We have seen, in chapter three, that the Northern Sudanese rhetoric about women and education show great similarities with the more modernized Egyptian rhetoric, and in addition the Northern Sudanese intelligentsia was constantly influenced by European ideas. For the GMC graduate or student, English or European literature provided a medium for ideas about womanhood. Northern Sudanese male readers embraced the stories where young men and women fell in love and, unusual from a Northern Sudanese perspective, the female character appeared literate, articulate, and bold in ideas and action. Heather Sharkey suggests that the greatest source of confusion in gender roles was the cinema.³⁵ The first film screening appeared in El Obeid for a group of notables in 1911, and from the start it was a success. By 1920 the GMC had purchased its own "cinema machine", and by 1921 they showed movies on a weekly basis that attracted large and enthusiastic male audiences from all over Khartoum.³⁶ The cinematic shows were discussed in the newspapers and one anonymous essayist reflected that the only danger to the cinema was that the youths might mistake the Hollywood reality for a realistic picture of the European and American reality.

³³ ULK: Sawt al-Mara'a (Voice of Women), issue No. 62, March 1961, pp. 6-11.

³⁴ ULK: Sawt al-Mara'a, issue No. 62, March 1961, pp. 6-11.

³⁵ Sharkey 1998, p. 347f.

³⁶ Heather Sharkey refers to Reports and Accounts from the Gordon Memorial College in 1918, 1920 and 1921.

The intelligentsia thus adopted the symbols of the 'ideal' woman, with some education, from both the Egyptian modernizing rhetoric and the European 'reality' as it appeared to them in the Gordon Memorial College classes, in the cinemas, novels, and news bulletins from Europe. We can therefore suggest that the Northern Sudanese progressives of the Condominium period appeared in the beginning of their own process of adopting modern aspects to their traditional society and customs. This explains how a disparity between the desirable and the desired might appear, but we must, however, take another step to fully comprehend the motivation behind the somewhat modern rhetoric that proclaimed the support of girls' education. In correspondence with the above observations the desirable reflected the new and modern aspects that influenced the group of educated men, and in this context we might say that the desirable relates to ideology, which not necessarily corresponds with the less virtuous and traditional private desires that relate to practical matters that need longer time to change.

A Sudanese identity and cultural nationalism

'Nations' as a political unit is an artificial system into which the world has been divided. It is a recent phenomenon and the nation system followed the colonial system, which had developed during the three preceding centuries. In this period the more technological Western European countries divided among themselves huge territories, and in Africa, in particular, the national borders correspond more to the logic of the colonial powers than to the cultural dividing lines of the local inhabitants. Geert Hofstede says that strong forces have existed for some time within nations toward further integration. This was also visible in the Northern Sudan especially after the First World War where a national consciousness grew in order to manifest the 'Sudanese' cultural values and identity.

Cultural values like language, religion, gender and social customs constitute the basis and ideological substance of nationalistic ideas although the goals are political. Heather Sharkey mentions an important aspect in regard with nationalist ideologies: the mental construction among the inhabitants towards the imagining of a degree of cultural homogeneity among certain groups, which is most significant to the formation of nationalist ideologies. In this process of constructing conceptions or 'images' of national identities we see that the 'woman question' was frequently employed in countries under previous colonial rule, a fact that makes nationalism a most gendered discourse. Jayawardena says that in societies that were subjugated under powerful and welldeveloped nations there appeared a need to modernize itself.³⁷ Several reformers seized the apparent freedom of Western women and believed that this was the key to the advancement of the West. The male colonial subjects thus believed that their 'backwardness' was due to women's contemporary low position in these societies.³⁸ The status of women therefore became a sign of a nation's civilization and the male and often secularly educated progressives who urged modernisation and strove to define a national identity thus began to demand female education. The issue of women's education and position in society has therefore been inseparable with the struggle for national independence, a national identity, and thus the national rhetoric and discourse in Egypt, Iran, Syria, India, and other countries previously under colonial rule.³⁹ Valentine Moghadam adds to this view when she says that laws and discourses pertaining to gender are central to the self-definition of political groups, and certainly signal the political and cultural project of movements.⁴⁰ Hanna Papanek further explains that the 'ideal' woman and the 'ideal' society go hand in hand, although the specific status of women depends very much upon the specific vision of the ideal society.⁴¹

What, then, was the relationship between nationalism and the images of women in the Northern Sudan? What role did the 'woman question', in particular girls' education play in the discourses and programmes of the Northern Sudanese nationalists? First, however, one must ask about the character of the Northern Sudanese nationalism.

In the case of Northern Sudan it was a group of young educated men, mostly graduates and students from the Gordon Memorial College but also some traditionally educated men, who strove to constitute a particular 'Sudanese' culture and identity as the basis in their colonial resistance and eventual claims of political and economic autonomy. It is, however, interesting to observe that colonial resistance and colonial collaboration in the Sudan did not constitute a dichotomy: they were not exclusive categories.⁴² The educated men of the Northern Sudan staffed the colonial regime, performed many of the system's basic functions and thus added body to the bureaucracy. In other words the Northern Sudanese intelligentsia worked to make the colonial rule possible, even while they sought to dismantle it. The

³⁷ Jayawardena 1989, p. 11f.

³⁸ Okkenhaug, Inger Marie: "Nationalism, Feminism and the Issue of Education for Muslim Girls in the Middle East, c. 1900-1945: A Critical Assessment of the Egyptian Experience", p. 3.

³⁹ See Jayawardena 1989, Okkenhaug, unpublished.

⁴⁰ Moghadam, Valentine. "Introduction and Overview" in Moghadam (ed.) Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies. London & New Jersey. 1994.

⁴¹ Papanek, Hanna: "The Ideal Woman and the Ideal Society: Control and Autonomy in the Construction of Identity", in Moghadam (ed.) *Identity Politics & Women*. Westview Press, Boulder. 1994.

⁴² Sharkey 1998, p. 4.

intelligentsia's nationalist ideologies emerged in the course of both their resistance and collaboration in the colonial administration. Their resistance was much a response to professional disappointment, they became aware of their limited prospects for advancement and thus sensed the British contempt for the educated Northern Sudanese.⁴³ On the other side most of the Northern Sudanese educated men admired the 'Western' progress and in their endeavor to affirm their own national identity they adopted aspects from the European 'reality' as they observed it.

The modern thus met the traditional and especially women's position, who constituted the essence in the traditional society as bearers and reproducers of cultural heritage, became a significant part of the nationalist ideologies, and fierce debates consequently arose in the progressive Northern Sudanese' struggle to establish a 'Sudanese' identity. As we have seen, the intelligentsia employed literature to voice social questions, and the vast literary output of the educated Sudanese deserve the historians attention because the Northern Sudanese themselves assigned so much value to it and it may also be valued as an index of social accomplishment and power. The Northern Sudanese men vented many of their frustration through the use of diverse literary means, and they thus constituted the cultural aspect and discourse in their nationalist discourses. Women's position and female education was a frequent theme in the literature and we might therefore suggest that the discourse concerning girls' education served a particular important function in the formation of a national identity, as also was the case in other countries under colonial rule, for instance in Egypt, Syria and India.

How did, however, the attempt to create a Northern Sudanese national consciousness take form, and how does the discourse around female education, employed by the intelligentsia, fit in the total picture of the early Northern Sudanese national awareness?

The schools and modern education had weakened the tribal differences and encouraged the growth of a sense of nationalism, including a search for a 'Sudanese' identity. The similarity in background of the educated class, their way of living and studying in the Gordon Memorial College, and all being employed by one agency, created new loyalties in place of the old and traditional ones. Mohamed Omer Beshir says that the First World War, the outbreak of the Arab revolt in 1916, and the rise of Egyptian nationalism, not only stimulated and influenced the Northern Sudanese progressives, but actually contributed to the growth of a sense of nationalism.⁴⁴ The Egyptian press was widely read by the Northern

⁴³ See below for a discussion around the British position in the Northern Sudan.

⁴⁴ Beshir 1969, p. 77.

Sudanese intelligentsia, the nationalist propaganda was directed towards them and the Egyptian officials in the Sudan made efforts to enlist the support of the Sudanese for the furtherance of the nationalist aspirations. The educated Sudanese organised themselves into clubs and societies and in 1918 the graduates of the Gordon College formed the 'Graduates Club' that became the zenith around which Sudanese nationalism was revolving.⁴⁵

In 1920 the Governor of the Berber province warned his colleagues in the administration of the consequences that might arise if the British repeated the mistakes from India and Egypt by creating an educated and dissatisfied class of Sudanese.⁴⁶ The Director of Intelligence repeated this warning in a similar remark in 1924, the same year as the governorgeneral of the Sudan, Sir Lee Stack was murdered by nationalists in Cairo, as we saw in chapter three. The mistakes from India and Egypt where the colonies had been overwhelmed by nationalism were attempted avoided. The military college was closed and the administrator courses for Sudanese discontinued. Under these political circumstances the British fully implemented the policy of Indirect Rule that affected the educational policy for both boys and girls: The Department of Education sent all their Egyptian teachers and headmasters home after the revolts that took place in 1924, leaving the Sudanese educational system in deep staffing troubles. The British further only slightly increased the number of elementary schools for both boys and girls and reduced the number of intermediate schools for boys in the decade that followed the 1924 riots.⁴⁷ The British position was, according to Holt and Daly, not a reaction simply to the Egyptian nationalists, but also a reaction to the assumption later confirmed by Beshir that Egyptians stationed in the Sudan 'infected' the educated Sudanese with nationalist ideas of their own.48

The British administration stressed the importance of a Sudanese identity, hoping that the Sudan would ultimately be separated from Egypt. The indirect rule thus emphasised the 'native' element in the policy, encouraging tribal leadership and discouraging influences from both Europe and other Arab countries. Beshir observed that although the indirect rule was directed at the tribal leaders and not the educated class, the policy was actually encouraging the Sudanese nationalists, similarly the slow educational development for boys and girls in the

⁴⁵ Abd el Rahim 1969, p. 94.

⁴⁶ Abd el Rahim 1969, p. 109. Mr. Brown, the Governor of Berber province's actual words are: "I think there is now general agreement based on what has happened in India and Egypt...[that]...we must have a definite policy unless we wish to have the same phenomena repeated in countries like the Sudan, the moment they awaken to some rudiments of national self consciousness...It is...our business to strengthen the solid elements in the country, sheikhs, merchants, etc. before the irresponsible body of half-educated officials, students and town riffraff takes control of the public mind."

⁴⁷ Abd el Rahim 1969, p. 109. See table 3.2. in chapter 3.

⁴⁸ Holt and Daly 1988, p. 131.

interwar period encouraged increased establishment of private schools.⁴⁹ This strengthens Holt and Daly's claim that the indirect rule eventually was seen as a political necessity greatly enhanced by the appearances of the vague, but still real indication of Sudanese 'national' feelings, and not only an attractive alternative in the economic and administrative policy.⁵⁰

The nationalism of the educated Northern Sudanese was a cultural project, because it strove to "define the nation-in-the-making", as Heather Sharkey put it.51 The Northern Sudanese endeavored to assign cultural values to the colonial territory known as the Sudan, based on ideas of religion, language, social development including education and technology, and gender. The nationalistic feelings in the Sudan were, as we have seen, stimulated by the younger generation of Northern Sudanese men that had been through government education and had acquired ideas and experience by working in Government offices. Although the government education was geared towards employment it had stimulated the Northern Sudanese men with new ideas, conceptions and interests.⁵² The inspiration to the national consciousness among the Northern Sudanese men have been a dual force, as was common in countries under colonial rule. Jayawardena has presented several case studies concerning the gender issue in nationalism that show similarities with the Northern Sudanese experience where the liberal and secular thoughts and ideas acquired in the schools were mixed with a reaction against the foreign dominance.53 The Northern Sudanese graduates, the products of modern schools, colleges and colonial offices faced the continuing fact of foreign dominance, and, as in other colonies, the intelligentsia became dissatisfied with job opportunities. The irony, as commented by Edward Atiyah, was that the only class in the country that was created by the British was the class that began to resent the British rule.⁵⁴ Sharkey also indicated this 'irony' when she said that colonialism and nationalism went hand in hand; the Northern Sudanese educated men made the colonial rule possible with their collaboration, and nationalistic tendencies appeared when the colonial power disappointed the ambitious Northern Sudanese men. The resistance strategy was thus paradoxical in the fact that it adopted European models to fight European rule, and in this process women became a significant issue in the nationalistic struggle and rhetoric.

⁴⁹ Beshir 1969, chapter V. Also see Hagga Kashif Badri 1986.

⁵⁰ Holt and Daly 1988, p. 131.

⁵¹ Sharkey 1998, p. 275.

⁵² Beshir 1969, p. 77.

⁵³ Jayawardena, Kumari 1989: Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World. Zed Books Ltd. London.

⁵⁴ Commented by Edward Atiyah 1946: An Arab Tells His Story: A Study in Loyaltie, p. 158. London.

Nationalism was therefore a gendered discourse in the Sudan as well as in other previous colonial subjected countries, as seen in Jayawardena's study.55 The increased struggle for girls' education in the Northern Sudan may therefore be seen as paralleled with the nationalistic rise. In the intelligentsias' efforts to define cultural values for the nation the fiercest battles took place on the issue of gender, and in particular of women. Women represented tradition in both positive and negative senses of the term, by symbolizing both cultural heritage and backwardness. In the Northern Sudanese search for a national identity, the emergent intelligentsia sought the 'national' culture: the new woman should be both 'modern' and 'traditional'; she should be modern with some education, but at the same time women had to act as the guardians of national culture, religion and the family and some thus insisted on the propriety of 'tradition' for women. In colonial nationalist ideology and discourse a dichotomy appears in relation to women as symbols of progress and as symbols of tradition.⁵⁶ Jayawardena explains this phenomenon, which often appears in the struggle against colonial powers, as a tension between an appeal for the modern and 'Western', and a wish to preserve the tradition and cultural heritage.⁵⁷ This tension is often seen expressed in issues concerning women, and women's status therefore played a significant role in nationalist debates as symbols of the new 'national identity', which includes both aspects of the modern and the traditional, often patriarchal society.

Textual records show that Northern Sudanese women often held an important place in these discourses of nationalism, as symbols of backwardness in the modern age. The demand grew for 'civilized housewives' in order to improve the modern and 'civilized' image of their country and of themselves, the Northern Sudanese progressives. The intelligentsia explored and 'created' the 'Sudanese' national identity through their poems, essays, articles and other writings, and we saw in the poems above that illiterate women should be avoided because they threatened the future of their husbands, the children, the neighbors, and finally the country. The benefits of education are only mentioned as a benefit to the country, the children and the men, not to the women. In the same way the progress of *men* are claimed hindered if his women are not educated.⁵⁸ Female illiteracy was in this way employed in the nationalist discourse as a symbol of backwardness in the intelligentsia's attempted transition towards a modern Sudan, and the educated elite that strove for a national consciousness therefore

⁵⁵ In addition to Jayawardena 1989, see Moghadam 1994.

⁵⁶ Okkenhaug, Inger Marie: ""Nationalism, Feminism and the Issue of Education for Muslim Girls in the Middle East, c. 1900-1945: A Critical Assessment of the Egyptian Experience", p. 9. unpublished.

⁵⁷ Jayawardena 1989, p. 14f.

⁵⁸ See the poetry and essays extractions above.

struggled in defining the position of women in this new and modern context. The Northern Sudanese rhetoric, which included a request for girls' education, can therefore be recognized as a nationalistic discourse and thus motivated by parts of the intelligentsia's urge to manifest a Sudanese national identity and consciousness seen in debates where girls' education, marriage, female's dress, and other female related customs where frequent issues. This indicates that the educated men in the Northern Sudan strove to define cultural values of gender for the whole of the Sudan, however with the aim to serve their own political goals.

The disparity between the desirable and the desired, as discussed above, indicated that the public statements, request and initial openings of girls' schools, characterized as the desirable, constituted a more ideological view than a genuinely desired and individual wish to emancipate women through some education. We saw that the concern in the rhetoric employed focused on the male and national benefit of female education. The whole concept of 'education' was limited, as in India and Egypt, to mean merely an institution for producing good homemakers. The requests were made for better wives and better mothers, which indicate an urge to improve the traditional customs through modern aspects like education because this was seen preferable to the men and in their views, the nation. Jayawardena said that in nineteenth century India education would not turn the woman away from their familial roles, but rather improve their efficiency as wives and mothers and strengthen the hold of traditional values because women were believed to be better carriers of these values.⁵⁹ The same pattern is seen in the Northern Sudan, and when including our knowledge of the significance that usually were put in preserving cultural heritage in nationalist discourse throughout the Middle East and further, one observe indications that the policies of promoting girls' education were usually not intended to promote female emancipation or independence, but rather as a vehicle in nationalist discourses that consequently reinforced patriarchy. One may therefore argue that what Partha Chatterjee calls the 'new patriarchy' was imposed as a consequence of the focus and emphasis on the male and national advantages through female education. As in the traditional Northern Sudanese society patriarchy was the predominant feature and through the male dominated rhetoric of girls' education men again defined women's position in the home as mother and wife. The somewhat liberal slogans of education for women joined with other cultural slogans used in the nationalistic struggle are therefore, after analysis of the desirable and the desired, and after nationalist examination, revealed as materially based in the intelligentsia's striving to characterize the national identity and gain

⁵⁹ Jayawardena 1989, p. 88.

political power, and arguments are presented that establish the nationalistic discourse as a male and somewhat patriarchal discourse, with modern aspects.

The Northern Sudanese intelligentsia were fraught with assumptions of the meanings of the concepts 'Sudanese woman' and 'education', and thus employed their constructed meanings as a vehicle in their nationalistic and patriarchal discourse, but they did nevertheless demand and initiate establishments of girls' schools, while the British administration hesitated to advance and increase female education. The slow educational development of girls' schools implies therefore not only that the discourse in control were the British colonial discourse, but also that the *doxa*, or belief system, as Bloch refers to, revolving around the concepts of 'Sudanese woman' and 'education' were imbued with different meanings in the British 'reality'.

3. Beneath British reluctance

The study of girls' education in the Northern Sudan and the British position herein opens up for several surprises. When reading and studying the official documents and the annual reports of the education department it is striking how few references and limited number of paragraphs that have been written about girls' education by the British administration. In addition, as examined above in chapter three, the education department continuously seemed to recognize the importance of girls' education and referred to it as something that 'ought to be developed soon⁶⁰. The executive policies, however, showed that there was a gap between the expressed words in the official documents and the practical politics. A great deal of lipservice was consequently offered girls' education as the British official A. W. M. Disney commented in his private papers as late as 1943, that there was 'a great deal of talk but little action' in regard to girls' education.⁶¹ This contrast between the expressed rhetoric in the official documents and the political action may confuse the researcher who attempts to seek the British attitudes and motivation beneath their policy of girls' education in the Northern Sudan. On the first sight it appears that the British acknowledged girls' educational development, but on a closer look, however, the British are revealed as perhaps less interested in girls' schools than the eventually educated elite of Northern Sudanese men.

How then, can we explain the written acknowledgement and recognition of girls' education? First of all it is important to emphasize the evidence of a possible conscious policy

⁶⁰ See chapter 3.

⁶¹ SAD: 716/2/7-9. Disney papers.

regarding the British expressions in their official documents and annual reports. Both Daly and Warburg present documentation of a British administration and Political Service that carefully chose their words put in the official documents.⁶² 'There is no necessity to say so in any official document' said consul-general Cromer to governor-general Wingate in 1905, regarding the fact that non-British men had no chance whatsoever to join the Sudan Political Service. Two of the most prominent men in the early Anglo-Egyptian Condominium reveal that the official documents censored 'unfavorable' information, and then we might suggest that the same was happening in other spheres of administration as well. It is thus tempting to indicate that the same might have happened in the case of girls' education, especially when considering our findings of great contrasts between the reports and the actual accomplishments. I therefore argue that the contradiction observed between the official documents and the political practices appeared because the British administration consciously avoided expressing their own reluctance towards Northern Sudanese girls' education. This procrastination does, however, reveal itself in the study of their executive policies.

The possibly 'censored' official documents create a confusion regarding the motivation analysis. How can we examine the motivation behind the British position through discourse if the language discourse that appears in their reports is in contrast to their actual practices? It is then necessary to analyze whether there existed a possible imperial discourse that was expressed in other more unofficial forums between the administrators, as the example above between Cromer and Wingate, and generally in the variety of literature that exist from the imperial period. If there appear indications of such an overall attitude and mentality then it is naturally to suggest that it has influenced the British administrators' policies and consequently affected girls' education as well as other spheres of policy. How then did the British colonizers think and feel about the subjugated peoples?

'The Always and the Never'

The psychologist Kathryn Tidrick has occupied herself with two interrelating phenomena in her 1981 attempt to combine history and psychology regarding the Anglo-Arab relationship. She says that some British were particularly fascinated by the Arabian desert and its inhabitants, and in addition the British had a notion that Englishmen were gifted with the ability of intuitively understanding the Arabs, which they believed gave them a special right, even an obligation to interfere in the Arabs' affairs.

62 Daly. 1986, p. 87. Warburg. 1971, p. 83.

We call ourselves insular, but the truth is that we are the only race on earth that can produce men capable of getting inside the skin of remote peoples.⁶³

The quote above provides us with a practical reference of her argument, and she claims that the tradition of British 'expertise' on the Arabs was well developed in a diverse literature that exposed the same ethos of "know-how".⁶⁴ Patrick Brantlinger has studied the language discourses that developed through the various literary forms employed by the British imperialists, like the adventure tales, travelogues, and histories. He argues that the literary expressions that was widely read in England, and which exposed a strong imperialist discourse, informed all aspects of Victorian culture and society.⁶⁵ Brantlinger further assumes, in correspondence with Michel Foucault, that discourse is a form of power, and therefore, whatever the British ideas, attitudes and policies towards the colonized. The British revealed a fascination of the 'primitive' and 'exotic' Arabs, but in combination with this fascination of the 'mysterious Orient' many British fully believed in the racial and cultural superiority of white Europeans, and this feeling of superiority over the 'others' was usually associated with conservative attitudes.

The idea of superiority was also visible after the re-conquest and establishment of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium in 1899. The British controlled the future of the Sudan, and according to G. N. Sanderson this controlled development would promote the 'welfare' of the Sudanese – at any rate their welfare as perceived by the 'superior wisdom' of the British.⁶⁶ If we take the British controlled development further, it could, however, also be used to create social and political conditions, which would contribute to the continuance of British colonial rule. Sanderson claims that these two strands of motive, which in British official eyes were by no means contradictory, became inextricably intertwined in the administrative policies of the Sudan government.⁶⁷ Sanderson here indicates the basis of this chapter; that is the urge to examine whether the British motivation beneath the reluctant educational policy might be found in the British need to defend and maintain their idea of British superiority in combination with the desire to manifest and secure their continued colonial rule.

⁶³ Tidrick, Kathryn. 1981. *The Heart-beguiling Araby*. Cambridge. Tidrick quotes a passage from John Buchan's book *Greenmantle* that was first published in 1916.

⁶⁴ Tidrick, K. 1981, p. 1.

⁶⁵ Brantlinger, Patrick. 1988. Rule of Darkness. Ithaca and London.

⁶⁶ Badri 1980. See G. N. Sanderson's introduction p. 39.

⁶⁷ Badri 1980, p. 39.

We saw in chapter three that the officials in the Sudan Political Service consisted of the crème of British men, distinguished both in intellectual and athletic abilities. Paradoxically, the more reflective and 'intellectual' approach to administration often generated policies, which, especially when applied with an enthusiasm that sometimes hardened into doctrinaire rigidity, tended to be considerably hostile to change and 'progress'. The consequences were nowhere more marked than in the field of education. Here, 'the intellectual approach to administration' went far to create an intellectual desert.⁶⁸ The objectives of creating a vocational corps of Sudanese men were based in both economic and bureaucratic practicalities, but we must not ignore that the educational policy were twofold: secular education was also promoted as a solution to outweigh and avoid the 'ignorance' and 'fanaticism' that was believed to be fostered in the traditional schools. Christian mission schools and particularly girls' schools were more than anything believed to provoke the 'fanatics' to rebellious activities.⁶⁹

We also saw in chapter 3 that Gauri Viswanathan, a former student of Edward W. Said, argued that the British devised defensive mechanisms of control in *anticipation* of what they believed was considered certain "native" rebellions in India.⁷⁰ We may argue the similarity with the Sudanese experience when knowing that the British administration for instance attempted to organize the missionary schools through strict regulations, with the aim to avoid anticipated Muslim riots, but the *anticipated* reactions of the local population are often in excess of accounts of *actual* responses. One might therefore assume that a scenario expressed and unfolded in British policies and reports did not necessarily correspond with the subjugated populations real response. The British apparently had their opinion, or 'superior wisdom' of how the colonial subject was, namely 'fanatic', 'primitive', and 'backward', and this knowledge was not easily available for reconsideration. The British thus seemed to have constructed a stereotype of 'Muslim women' as well, however, not only in the Sudan but also throughout their colonial Empire.

Halim Barakat refers to this phenomenon as the problem with the 'Always and the Never'.⁷¹ Oversimplification and generalization of the Arab mind and culture where nuances are non-existent, but where the Arab societies are ascribed homogeneous and uniform

⁶⁸ See chapter 3 about the Sudan Political Service.

⁶⁹ Bedri 1980. G. N. Sanderson's introduction, p. 40.

⁷⁰ Viswanathan, Gauri 1989: Masks of Conquest, p. 10ff. New York.

⁷¹ Barakat, Halim. "Beyond the Always and the Never", in Sharabi (ed.) *Theory, Politics and the Arab World.* New York & London. 1990.

characteristics. Such sweeping generalizations have been, as we saw above, followed by expressions of European, or in this case, British superiority. According to Edward Said, in his study of *Orientalism*, the *strength* of Western cultural discourse has too often been mistaken as merely decorative or superficial, and it is thus necessary to see the political, social and cultural developments in the colonized countries as affected by this exercise of British cultural strength.⁷² To be able to examine the British motivation and attitudes in more depth it is thus useful to further employ Said's theory of Orientalism. A study of Orientalism in relation to girls' education in the Northern Sudan will thus be attempted below in order to examine whether we can reveal the British forces as structured by an Orientalist attitude.

Orientalism in practice – the Sudan Political Service

Said argues that Orientalism can be discussed and studied as an institution for dealing with the Orient by making statements about it, and settling and ruling over it. In short Orientalism therefore is a Western form for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient.⁷³ The major component in European culture is exactly what made that culture hegemonic both inside and outside Europe: The idea of European identity as superior compared to all other non-European cultures and peoples.⁷⁴ The cultural hegemony and belief of superiority thus also includes hegemony of ideas about the Orient, and, according to Said's theory, the Europeans continuously repeated their superiority over the Oriental 'backwardness', a concept which included low education, high illiteracy and women's inferior position, through the constant producing of intellectual, scholarly, and cultural literature. If the British colonial superiority were to be able to continue then the 'backwardness' and other 'superior wisdoms' needed to continue as well: the primitive and uncivilized was thus not necessarily sought developed but rather reinforced.

How does this theory fit in the Northern Sudanese colonial experience? Was the British administration's observed insufficiency in educational supply a consequence of Orientalist attitudes and ideas?

In both India and Egypt there appeared a clear demand and initiative for girls' education from parts of the local population, but only to a limited degree, as in the Northern Sudan, did the British colonial state live up to these requests, in spite of their rich experience in the subjected countries' increasing 'awakening' and demand for girls' schools.

⁷² Said, Edward W. 1978. Orientalism, p. 25, 40. London.

⁷³ Said 1978, p. 3.

⁷⁴ Said. 1978. p. 40.

Missionaries and British residents in the leading cities in India initiated and founded girls' schools and the first Indian girls' school appeared in 1820, established by David Hare in Calcutta.⁷⁵ The British administration did not avail the population with a governmental initiative, but nevertheless, due to privates and missionaries, in 1882 127.000 girls received education. The majority attended elementary schools but there were also 82 secondary schools. The universities in India graduated their first women in the 1880s.⁷⁶ In Egypt girls received organized educational training for the first time under the auspices of Muhammed Ali's administration when it opened the midwifery school in 1832.77 The British colonial state offered some formal education for Egyptian girls from the 1880s, but the Egyptian nationalists did, however, create their own independently funded girls' schools to improve the limited education offered by the colonial state.⁷⁸ The British would, for instance not establish any higher-level schools in Egypt. We saw, in chapter three, that the British were reluctant in the Northern Sudan as well, with only limited elementary education in nearly four decades before the first intermediate school was established in 1940. How come did the British, experienced in local population's requests for girls' schools in India and Egypt throughout the nineteenth century, practice a procrastinating policy also in the Northern Sudan?

When Lord Kitchener appealed for financial support for the establishment of the Gordon Memorial College he revealed a discriminatory attitude towards the colonial subjects:

We should begin by educating the sons of the leading men, the heads of villages and the heads of districts. They belong to a race very capable of learning and ready to learn.⁷⁹

He further explained that a secular educational institution was necessary to avoid the 'barbarism' that characterised the Sudan. From this quote we may argue that Kitchener and the British administration did not consider the general population of the Sudan as 'capable of learning'. Kitchener directly reflects an Orientalist attitude characterized by the absence of social relations between the subjugated people and the colonizers. The colonial subject became reduced to a conceptual category to accommodate the knowledge already established and being circulated about the 'natives'. The 'native Sudanese' were believed to be irrational, backward, uncivilized and fanatic, and this was a wisdom established. Education would, according to this foundation of knowledge not be necessary because the subject would

⁷⁵ Jayawardena, K. 1989, chapter 6.

⁷⁶ Jayawardena, K. 1989, p. 88.

⁷⁷ Badran, Margot 1995: Feminists, Islam, and the Nation. Princeton University Press. P. 8.

⁷⁸ Badran 1995, p. 12.

⁷⁹ ULE: The Scotsman, 30.11.1898. Also see SAD: 657/1/1, Beasley official papers.

nevertheless not be capable of learning. This attitude was reflected in the relations between the British and non-British officials indicating the same arrogance as were mentioned above.⁸⁰

The British community in Khartoum was a rather exclusive society, and the officials had their own club in which they preferred the company of their fellow-countrymen.⁸¹ There were, however, certain occasions where the British officials were obliged to be present, and several accounts exist where the British administrators have commented on the Sudanese ceremonies in unfavorable and less sympathetic ways. A gulf was indicated between the two peoples by the British official who compared a Muslim festivity with the noises made from 'a dog barking'.⁸² The dog was also present when another British official had insultingly offered the food given to him by a Muslim judge to his dog. Relations were somewhat closer in the provinces where weeks passed before the British inspector again could enjoy the company of other British. Warburg says, however, that the evidence that exists indicates that the British inspectors in the districts neither regarded the Sudanese officials very highly.⁸³ The Sudanese were accused of being 'fearful liars', which apparently legitimated harsh treatment: 'Had to beat el-Bashir for lying and playing the fool'.⁸⁴

The British were taught to mistrust the Egyptians and they regarded the Sudanese as incompetent. Edward Atiyah, a Lebanese Oxford graduate who arrived in the Sudan in the 1920s, has commented on the arrogance of the British teachers at the Gordon Memorial College. In the GMC the British tutors were two grades above Atiyah in the government hierarchy although they had left the University and joined the government at the same time.⁸⁵ He said that he disliked the Gordon College immediately because it was more similar to a military than a human institution.

'At the College they [the British] enjoyed the prestige of rulers. The tutors were members of the Political Service. They were there in the dual capacity of masters and rulers, and the second capacity overshadowed the first. The pupils were expected to show them not the ordinary respect owed by pupils to their teachers, but the submissiveness demanded of a subject'. ⁸⁶

⁸⁰ This observation is based on my available sources, and here the broad tendencies of attitudes are reflected. The statements do not cover private relations, and I acknowledge that there might be exceptions in private relationships between British officials and Northern Sudanese that were based on friendship and understanding. ⁸¹ Warburg. 1971. p. 92.

⁸² Warburg. 1971, p. 93, has quoted one of the British officers, Balfour.

⁸³ Warburg. 1971, p. 93.

⁸⁴ Warburg. 1971 quotes the British official C. A. Willis' diary from 1909.

⁸⁵ Atiyah. 1946, p. 138ff.

⁸⁶ Atiyah. 1946, p. 138.

Nevertheless, the British introduced modern and secular education to some selected Northern Sudanese men. We know from above that this education first of all aimed at providing a class of men for the lower posts in the bureaucracy and to keep them away from the 'fanatic' influence in the religious schools. The Northern Sudanese men did, however, soon embrace the chance to develop in both modern technology and in mind. The paradox then appeared in the growing contempt of many Britons for the educated male Northern Sudanese, the effendiyya, because they actually had embraced and adopted the learning made available by the British. The educated Northern Sudanese men's ideas developed in many ways as a by-product of the British baggage of modernization. The British had a more favorable opinion of the 'native' leaders in the Sudan than of the modernizing effendiyya whom the British viewed with contempt.⁸⁷ They regarded the effendiyya as troublesome 'nationalists' who threatened their existence in the Sudan. In the British minds the stereotype of the suit-and-tie-wearing effendi 'suggested an over-ambitious, self-inflated, evercomplaining, potential political hothead'.⁸⁸ Moreover, the adoption of Western modernity had threatening overtones beyond the political aspects, and Sharkey suggests that perhaps the British, subconsciously or conscious, saw a threat in that the Northern Sudanese modernity seemed to expropriate the cultural uniqueness of the Britons who appeared in the colonial context. In other words the Northern Sudanese men challenged the British foundation of cultural superiority with their modernizing tendencies, a threat that might have confused the British as this contrasted with their established 'superior wisdom' of the colonized as backward and uncivilized. The Northern Sudanese was probably preferred by the British to stay inferior and backward, as this conceptual reality confirmed their notion of superiority.

The preferable state of continued Sudanese primitiveness is also reflected in the British officials wish to be stationed in the provinces, far away from the 'problems' of modernity. Khartoum, however, appealed to the educated Northern Sudanese because there modernizing developments were most visible and dynamic. The British official who were, paradoxically, modernizations' greatest agents, were in some way seeking in the colonial periphery what they had lost in the metropole of Britain itself. A gulf thus appeared between the educated Northern Sudanese and the British officials, which was based in their different attitudes towards modernity. We saw above, that British travellers and scholars reflected upon the 'exotic natives' of the Arabian deserts, and they wrote about and studied the Bedouins for centuries. An assumption of the Bedouin society as socially immobile, that the society had not

 ⁸⁷ Sharkey 1998, p. 241ff.
 ⁸⁸ Sharkey 1998, p. 243.

changed from time immemorial was widely held. The social anthropologists of the structuralfunctionalist school confirmed this belief of primitiveness as an unchanging aspect of Orientalist societies.⁸⁹ Tidrick says that the idea of social immobility was fascinating to the Europeans whose society was in a process of rapid change and development.⁹⁰ Those Europeans who believed in progress disapproved of the idea social immobility, and the conservatives admired it, but they all found it incredible that such a society could survive and still exist. The fascination was, however, not an unconditional interest, but apparently it was based on the belief that the British were superior to other people, and the observation of a 'primitive' society was therefore fascinating both in itself and as an assurance of their own superiority. We saw in chapter three that the Sudan Political Service consisted of the crème of British men who came from the upper-middle class, and the selected recruits apparently held the same attitudes and ideas as the ethos in the finest public schools. In short, a conservative group of athletic and academically distinguished men composed the Service. We may thus indicate that the British conservative officials were attracted to the Sudan not only for the fringe benefits offered, but also to seek the 'exotic' and 'uncivilized'. Members of the Service sought to confirm and uphold the primitive characteristics; otherwise, as suggested above, their cultural superiority and well-established 'knowledge' of the Sudanese would cease to exist.

The 'knowledge' of the subjugated population thus needed constant manifestation and reiteration, and the unfavorable British ideas about the 'Orientals' were expressed in a variety of ways, not only in the absence of social relations as Atiyah felt it, or in the visible contempt towards educated Northern Sudanese, but through figures of speech and narrative devices as well. Balfour and Cromer, two highly regarded officials who served in India, Egypt and the Sudan (Cromer as consul-general of Egypt 1882-1907), continuously claimed their wisdom of the subjugated peoples: that they, the Orientals, are a subject race, dominated by a race that knows them and what is good for them better than they could possibly know themselves.⁹¹ Cromer made no effort to conceal that the local populations were only the 'subject races' that he had to rule or had to deal with as an administrator in British colonies:

⁸⁹ The social anthropologist Evans-Pritchard belonged to the structural-functionalist school, and gained influence from his studies in the Sudan.

⁹⁰ Tidrick, K. 1981, p. 13.

⁹¹ Said. 1978, p. 34f.

I content myself with noting the fact that somehow or other the Oriental generally acts, speaks, and thinks in a manner exactly opposite to the European.⁹²

Many terms were used to express the relation between the British and the Oriental, no matter an Indian, Egyptian, or Sudanese. Balfour and Cromer used several terms like the 'irrational' Oriental, the 'depraved', 'childlike', 'different', and it was simultaneously recognized that the British were the opposite: 'rational', 'virtuous', 'mature' and 'normal'. Whether these characteristics and terms represented some sort of correctness is, however, not the interesting part. It is quite possible that Cromer based some of his expressions on experiences, but the important issue is that the British confirmed their cultural strength, superiority and prejudices by employing a language and cultural discourse that manifested the multilevel subjugation of the colonized people. What gave the Oriental world its identity was the whole complex series of knowledgeable manipulations by which the Orient was identified by the West. This knowledge, described as the superior wisdom of the British about the Orientals, was thus generated out of strength, and in a sense it therefore, as Said says, 'creates the Orient, the Oriental, and his world'.93 The authoritative position the British had in the colonized countries in combination with their language and cultural discourse put severe limitations upon thought and action in the respective countries. The discourse thus serves as a symbol of the European power over the 'Orient', and this power had consequences beyond the idea of the Orient, it was closely tied to the building of socio-economic and political institutions. The British controlled the development in the Sudan through their manifestation as a superior power, and thus they created social and political conditions that were preferred from a British view to maintain their position as invulnerable. This immediately brings us back to the discourse's effect upon the educational institutions in the Northern Sudan, and particularly upon girls' education.

We mentioned above the British tendency to *anticipate* reactions that were not in correspondence with the *actual* responses. We can see the effects of this argued Orientalist attitude upon girls' education even as late as 1948. The British anticipated unrest on the expansion of girls' schools even when in after the Second World War when the demand for girls' schools was explosive:

⁹² Said, 1978, p. 39. The quote is found in Cromer 1908, *Modern Egypt*, p. 164.
 ⁹³ Said. 1978, p. 40.

1948 has been another year of steady and unspectacular progress [in founding government girls' schools]. Expansion has continued in a pace which did not result in disruption, but the time was not yet judged ripe for major new ventures.⁹⁴

The British would not carry out more than an "unspectacular progress", apparently in order to avoid uprisings. This constant anticipation of riots from the 'fanatic' Muslims handicapped girls' educational development severely throughout the Condominium rule. The Muslim traditions and customs has repeatedly been employed as conclusive arguments of the slow development of girls' education, but it is seldom, if at all, possible to find any descriptions in the sources or literature of what these 'regressive' traditions included. Lillian Sanderson, headmaster at the second secondary school for girls in the 1950s, has emphasized the idea that Muslim traditions were responsible for the slow development, and she, typically, holds that the administration did not want to be accused of interfering with the religious convictions of people.95 I argue that this is a part of the Orientalist discourse and attitude that seemed indoctrinated within the British colonial administrations. By criticizing the 'other', who already had been established as backward, primitive and irrational, it became easier to describe the Northern Sudanese, or the Orientals as being against progress. The British policy of accusing the Northern Sudanese traditions as hostile to change may thus be recognized as Orientalism in practice. Furthermore it is natural to suggest that the British reluctance towards girls' education, which they argued as caused by the 'fanatic' Muslim traditions, actually reflected their own conservative and Victorian attitudes.

Orientalism - an instrument for maintaining power and 'superiority'

The above argumentation suggests that British policy in the Northern Sudan affected girls' education through its Orientalist attitude and ideas. The motivation behind this attitude appear to have been a combination of an urge to maintain the British feeling of superiority over the non-European 'races' and the continuance of British colonial rule. We saw that G. N. Sanderson claimed that these two motivations were not perceived as contradictory from a British viewpoint and when examining girls' education we have seen that these plausible intentions became intertwined in the administrative policies of the British administration in the Northern Sudan. The British regarded the educated Northern Sudanese men as a threat

 ⁹⁴ SAD: SudA PK + 1528, Annual Report of the Education Department, 1948. Girls' education p. 28.
 ⁹⁵ SAD * PK 1528.9 SAN. Sanderson, Lillian P. "A History of the Education in the Sudan with a Special Reference to the Development of Girls' Schools", p. 125, 195, 227, 232f, 371, 443. M.A. thesis 1962. She employs the same argumentation in her other works as well.

because of their adoption of modern ideas and ideologies. Nationalistic influences from Egypt were feared spread in the Northern Sudan. Egyptian newspapers were thus censored already from the beginning of the century to avoid nationalistic tendencies in the Northern Sudan. The British constantly tried to reduce the Egyptian influence as the nationalism in Egypt was at its heights after the turn of the century. Women played a great part in the Egyptian nationalist work and the educated women continuously claimed attention for the nationalist and 'feminist' case. I believe that the reluctant policy towards girls' education was coloured by the fears reflected from Egypt. The British were arguably motivated to maintain supremacy and colonial rule, and it thus became necessary to reduce every possible force believed to be threatening, including girls' education, which they claimed interfered with Muslim traditions and customs and thus would lead to riots. Lillian Sanderson more or less confirms this policy and we can see the Orientalist attitude reflected:

'The overriding aim of the Government was administrative security. The Sudan was a fanatical country. Interference with the customs of the country might well have led to sedition. The Government therefore, acted with extreme caution'.⁹⁶

The policy towards the Northern Sudanese educated men was, however, not successful as the educated Northern Sudanese men employed the techniques learned from the British in their fight against them. The British established a selective educational system to avoid 'fanaticism' and nationalism, and consequently to provide themselves with a loyal group of educated men, but the policy apparently failed in its objective. Girls' education suffered seriously under an educational policy that sought to dismantle every aspect that was believed to threaten British control and superiority. The British discourse was the discourse in power and thus managed to create social and political conditions that affected the development of girls' schools.

resistance. The eventually increasing relations of progressive Northern Sudstance area who praised girls' elementary education do, however, constitute a significant factor worth nonteng. We can trace worthe Northern Sudmess demands for girls' achoois streasty during the first decade of the Anglo-Egyptine Condominium. This persioner demand sets stressing education for its functions in improving their doughters' capabilities in domestic efficient the menproperties for achonicities to provide bester methers and bester wives. The progressive group also increased for achonicities to provide bester methers and bester wives. The progressive group also

96 Sanderson, L. 1961, p. 121.

Chapter 5 Summary and Conclusion

As I said in the Introduction the previous literature on girls' education in the Northern Sudan offers valuable insights in several ways, but the historical works, with a few exceptions, are rather limited in perspective and content. For example there seems to be a prevalent view among historians that the slow development of girls' education was caused by the Northern Sudanese traditions and religion. Generally the literature emphasise descriptive presentations and consequently pays less attention to the relationship between effect and intention.

The aim of my work has been to change and broaden this rather narrow focus on girls' education in the Northern Sudan. In so doing I have added new knowledge of the forces behind the development, and I have brought our comprehension of girls' education a major step further. I have examined the actors in girls' educational development in relation to a cultural context. The Northern Sudanese educated men have been analysed within their contemporary cultural background, and the British administrators have simultaneously been studied in relation to their British upper-middle class milieu. My findings are also both innovative and significant because they explore dominant cultural discourses in which issues like girls' education were expressed in the Northern Sudan.

I employed the twin term demand and supply in the discussion of the actors and the forces behind girls' educational development. I argue that through the indicator of education we have been able to reveal both the British and Northern Sudanese positions. I have shown that the previously held conclusions are inadequate when they claim that the Muslim Sudanese impeded the development in a degree that rendered the British incapable of providing girls' schools. There is no doubt that the majority of Northern Sudanese were reluctant regarding girls' attendance in public schools. The Northern Sudanese opposition was, however, characterised more by apathy and lukewarm opposition than outright hostile resistance. The eventually increasing minority of progressive Northern Sudanese men who praised girls' elementary education do, however, constitute a significant factor worth noticing. We can trace visible Northern Sudanese demands for girls' schools already during the first decade of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium. This particular demand was stressing education for its functions in improving their daughters' capabilities in domestic affairs: the men pressed for education to provide better mothers and better wives. The progressive group also believed that education would increase a girls' marriage value as well.

It has been shown that in spite of the reluctant elements in the Northern Sudanese society, the small but increasing group of educated men requested more schools for their daughters throughout the colonial period. They confirmed their requests by sending their daughters to missionary schools and some established private schools where there was no access to government education.

The British administrators approached girls' education only very gradually arguing that 'fanatic' Muslims would most probably be provoked and thus violently resist the development. I have shown that this assumption was rather based on the British prejudices and conservative mentality towards the Northern Sudanese 'Orientals'. The British awareness of the Northern Sudanese demand were reported and documented, and still they provided only a very limited number of girls' elementary schools, and the higher levels were not introduced before 1940. Financial arguments were also employed to explain the limited provision and it is no doubt that the Sudanese economy was suffering especially in the early years of the Condominium. We saw, however, that the country's revenues increased markedly before and certainly during the First World War. The British administration nevertheless explained the slow provision of girls' schools with lack of funds while simultaneously praising the great economic expansion. The British official documents tend to confuse the scholar when they acknowledge the expansion of girls' education. I therefore needed to compare their written reports with the executed policies to grasp a more accurate picture. A British tendency to pay merely a lip service to girls' schools was thereby revealed. Their expressions in the official documents are carefully chosen, and even as late as 1943 we saw that the British official A.W. M. Disney revealed in his private papers that fine words were spoken but not acted upon.

My findings have also shown that other factors than those usually held were active in shaping the development of girls' education. I was not, however, satisfied with merely showing the visible Northern Sudanese demand, and the inadequate government provision of girls' schools. I took a further step and identified the British and Northern Sudanese actors and consequently sought after possible influences and motives behind their positions.

The Northern Sudanese educated men apparently showed similarities with the contemporary liberal milieu in Egypt, and hence I suggest an Egyptian influence upon the Northern Sudanese intelligentsia. Furthermore the progressive Sudanese picked up modern influences from the Gordon Memorial classes and later their bureaucratic jobs. Similarly, the British were examined in relation to their own background in Victorian and early post-Victorian Britain, and I have shown that the Sudan Political Service consisted of athletic and

academically talented men who usually came from a rather similar background of the finest public schools. The selected recruits thus shared the social background of a conservative upper middle class and the ethos therein was observed in the Sudan Political Service's general attitudes.

The actors' cultural identity and background consequently affected their positions in relation to girls' education. Female education became an issue of extensive political concern both for the Northern Sudanese and the British officials. The Northern Sudanese intelligentsia's demand thus had to be examined in order to be able to grasp the cultural aspects that guided their behaviour I studied their rhetoric and discourse concerning women. Poetry, plays, songs, essays and articles provided a window into the mentalities of the educated Muslim Northern Sudanese men. The educated Sudanese women were portrayed as an ideal, a model of behaviour. She protected the family by her embracement of both the modern education that made her a better mother, and by her conservation of traditions. The nation's position thus seemed measured through the position of women. Her illiteracy signalled a backward nation, and thus the educated Northern Sudanese expressed her illiteracy as destroying the country.

Geert Hofstede's theory of cultural manifestation proved a valuable tool to further understand the forces behind the Northern Sudanese discourse that proclaimed girls' education. Hofstede's useful distinction between the desirable, how the world ought to be, and the desired, what people want for themselves, was employed on the Northern Sudanese actors. I used an untraditional tool in my study of the Northern Sudanese's demand for girls' education, and the findings that resulted from this change of focus are very interesting indeed. The educated Northern Sudanese were the nationalists of their time and they employed the woman question as a political vehicle to create a common consciousness of the Sudanese identity, and thus to promote their nationalism. They were, however, not necessarily interested in availing their daughters with education unconditionally. Marriage was preferred before education when discussed at home, while the priority in public expressions included some education for girls. These findings reflect that the trends in the Middle East had reached the Sudan as well. Men in Egypt, Syria and Iran all employed the woman question as a cover for political activities. Conversely women took advantage of the nationalist struggle to become more visible in public life. In Muslim countries women's position reflects the family, as the family reflects the nation, thus the woman, as the family core, also 'becomes' the nation. Jayawardena, Moghadam and Okkenhaug are among those scholars who recognise women's role in nationalism. I have, however, employed quite a different port of entrance to

this interesting scholarship. By studying the demand for girls' education through a notion of discourse as power, and by analysing the discourse through Hofstede's theory, I have gone beyond the conventional perspectives on these issues. Nationalism and the creation of a Sudanese identity were found to be important motivating factors for the Northern Sudanese demand.

The British officials were, however, the most significant factor in shaping girls' education in the Northern Sudan. They were the rulers, and enjoyed a powerful position, and their discourse excerted a strong influence on the attitudes to as well as on the actual implementation of an educational system for women. Every school and class had to be approved by the British administration, and they even controlled the missionary and private schools through regulations, principles and subsidies. We saw that they provided an insufficient supply of girls' schools, especially considering the ever increasing demand. Their possible motives therefore constitute a most significant subject for study, which has not been carried out before. The cultural approach provides an important angle regarding the British officials as well.

The British conquered an alien society and had very limited social contact with the local population. We saw, however, that the British had an already established 'knowledge' of the locals. This 'knowledge' derived from travellers' accounts to the 'Orient' through centuries, anthropological reports and through the rich prose and poetry that described the 'others'. The discourses reflected in the literature and thus in the British colonial administrations was a strong feeling of superiority. This idea of supremacy affected their policies seriously and they were constantly on the alert to avoid anything that could jeopardize their superiority and continuance of British colonial rule. Edward W. Said's Orientalism provided an interesting theory in the evaluation of the British motivations and intentions. He refers to the British feeling of superiority over the Orientals as an exercise of cultural strength that naturally affected their policies towards the subjected peoples. They continuously expressed that the Sudanese were 'fanatic' Muslims, backward, primitive and not very capable of learning. This rhetoric signalled an established 'wisdom' that consequently solidified their cultural strength and superiority. We also saw that the abovementioned Orientalist rhetoric and discourse were frequently employed in relation to girls' education. The 'fanatics' would be provoked by girls' schools and thus threaten the administrative security. The British were also on the alert considering the tendencies in Egypt. Educated women in Egypt were known as most active in the nationalist activities and it is thus possible, when considering the British motivation of securing their colonial rule and a

continuing manifestation of cultural superiority, that the Egyptian female example affected British thinking concerning the provision of Northern Sudanese girls' schools. I therefore argue that administrative security and an urge to maintain the British feeling of superiority was the motivation and intentions behind their insufficient supply of girls' schools.

This thesis is a valuable contribution to the scholarship on girls' education because I have provided new perspectives and methods. I analysed girls' education beyond the already established theory of a slow development by emphasising the actors' discourse. I sought the actors' position in relation to their cultural context and examined a source material not often utilised. Culture and worldviews are particularly significant for this analysis.

Even though we have found that girls' emancipation and development was not the main priority for any of the actors' behind girls' education, girls and women's influence and awareness were gradually strengthened through her education. Only four percent of the girls

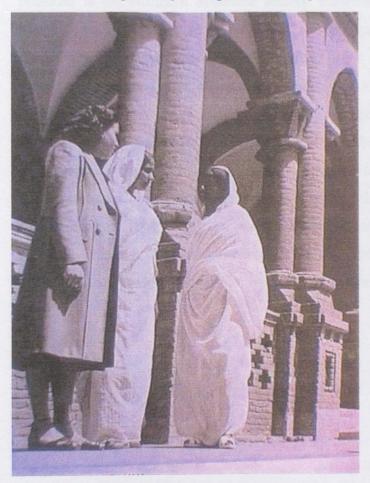


Figure 5.1. Women in the main quadrangle at the Khartoum University College between 1951 and 1959.¹

were literate at Independence but nevertheless they comprised an ever force claimed increasing that attention. The few educated women already from the early 1920s helped uneducated their sisters by establishing 'needlework homes' and night classes in their neighbourhoods. also contributed in the They nationalist activities in more ways than merely symbolically in the male discourse and rhetoric. Some women were active participants and held nationalist meetings in their homes. indicate My findings that most Sudanese men only valued girls' education as desirable, and not

¹ SAD 711/1/4: Three of only seven female students at the University between 1951 and 1959. From left to right: Helen Salib, Fatima Shawki and Asma Ahmad.

necessarily *desired* if a marriage partner arrived. The male use of women as symbols and their small expansion of girls' schools nevertheless triggered female parts of the population, and consequently the first female organisation was established already in the beginning of the 1950s. Their hard work for female rights, of course including more education, activated new perspectives on women's role and position. Eventually the *desirable* and the *desired* met in a collective acknowledgement of girls' education and employment. Women became teachers, doctors, and midwives already before Independence, and women's organisations continued to increase their possibilities both professionally and personally. The strong women of the early education initiated an awareness of women's issues that reflected the Egyptian feminist fights.

Education has obviously led to an emancipation of Northern Sudanese women and today they constitute a large part of the university students and enjoy various significant positions in the Northern Sudanese society. However, the fighting spirit of the early years seems to be gone.Nafisa Ahmed el-Amin and Hagga Kashif Badri miss the will to fight for change and development that they experienced in the early 1950s and –60s. They were among the educated women during the colonial period and initiated the Women's Union in 1952 that fought for women's political, professional and personal rights. Today the numbers of educated women are many times doubled and everybody recognises its importance. A change has apparently happened in mentality and attitude, and the pioneer women of the Northern Sudan ask where the female initiative is today, where is the will to develop and change society further? There may be many answers to these questions. One thing seems clear, however, whatever the Sudanese women have gained in terms of education, access to public life, and career possibilities, will no be taken away from them easily.

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